

TIME AND US

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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	22.2	3.1
JAMMU	28.5	14.9
LEH	17.4	-6.0
KARGIL	16.2	-2.4

SUNSET SUNDAY: 05:36 PM
SUNRISE MONDAY: 06:56 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly clear sky... Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 22°C & 3°C respectively.

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

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CM AT EXPRESS ADDA

CM hopes the dialogue process would create atmosphere for way forward

Says Art 370 a historic commitment by country to JK people, regrets misconception among some sections about spl status

NEW DELHI, NOV 04: Terming dialogue as the only way to get Jammu & Kashmir out of the cycle of violence and uncertainty, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today hoped that the appointment of an interlocutor by the Centre would help in creating a congenial atmosphere for a way forward in the State. She said exploiting the geo-strategic position of the State and opening it up to outside world would herald a new era of prosperity and growth in the region.

Participating in an interactive session-Express Adda-of a leading national daily here today, the Chief Minister said dialogue with all stakeholders in the State is the dire need of the hour to end bloodshed, acrimony and hatred besides heralding growth of business, trade and economy. "For how long can we go like this?", she asked while



stressing on a sustained dialogue process to end the violence and miseries of people of the State, whom she described as the worst victims of this tragedy.

Welcoming the Centre's decision to appoint an interlocutor to take on dialogue process ahead, Mehbooba Mufti said for the first time such an engagement by the Centre has properly been formalised at the highest level. She hoped that

with an illustrious and unblemished track record at his back, Mr. Dineshwar Sharma would be able to steer ahead the process to a substantive conclusion. She also underlined the need for supporting this process by all agencies and not do anything which would disturb the ambience of the dialogue process. "It is all the more important to include all those people in the dialogue process whose ideas about

the State are different from ours", she added. Similarly, she said, both India and Pakistan have to learn to live like good neighbours and resolve all differences through peaceful engagement and reconciliation.

Terming Article 370 as a bridge of faith between the State and rest of the country, the Chief Minister said it is also a historic commitment people of the country made

to Jammu & Kashmir people when the Muslim majority State voluntarily acceded to an egalitarian society of the country. She however regretted the misconception among certain sections in the country about the special position of the State.

On her vision about the State, Mehbooba Mufti said she wishes to make Jammu & Kashmir as the most happening place in the coun-

try with more positive actions, investment, trade and business activity. She said the geo strategic position of the State needs to be channelized by opening all historic and trade routes of the State, thereby making it the gateway to Central Asia. "This can really change the world for our people", she said adding that the impact of opening of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road has led to demands of opening more such routes in the State like Jammu-Sialkote.

On the alliance of her Party with BJP, the Chief Minister said it was a historic decision not aimed at Government formation but getting Jammu & Kashmir out of the turmoil and distress and the Agenda of Alliance clearly lays down a roadmap for this. "It was a reach out to the whole of country given the massive mandate Prime Minister got in the last elections",

she said adding that a leader like Mr. Narendra Modi, whom she described as very considerate on many occasions vis a vis Jammu & Kashmir, has the mandate and courage to change the course of history.

Terming the role of a section of national media as very critical in the context of the State, Mehbooba Mufti said media needs to build a positive and reconciliatory narrative on the State. "We have many success stories among youth in the recent past to follow. They did wonders despite turmoil around but it never got the national media's attention. Tajamul Islam, Zaira Wasim, IAS toppers, sports icons, Rhodes scholar Samir Rashid etc but they did not get as much the attention of the national media as the stuff that promotes hatred", she said. "Some sections

▶ See **CM**...Pg 02

Stop ads if papers print 'anti-national' articles: Centre to J&K

NEW DELHI, NOV 04: The ministry of home affairs has asked the Jammu and Kashmir government to stop advertising in local newspapers that allegedly publish "anti-national articles".

Without naming any newspaper, the ministry has told the state government that some publications were publishing "highly radicalised content glorifying terrorists and anti-national elements".

The Centre has written to the Mehbooba Mufti-led government in the state to deal strictly with such newspapers. In a letter dated October 18, 2017 and addressed to senior officials of the state



government and the Jammu & Kashmir police, the home ministry says: "It is understood that some newspapers in J&K are publishing highly radicalised content glorifying terrorists and anti-national elements. This is against the Constitution of India as well as the Con-

stitution of Jammu and Kashmir." Hindustan Times has seen a copy of the letter.

The letter further says, "...publishing of anti-national articles in the newspapers of the state should be strictly dealt with. Such newspapers should also not be given any patronage by way of advertisements by the state government. This may be circulated to all concerned for strict compliance."

Home ministry officials declined comment.

Shujaat Bukhari, editor of Rising Kashmir newspaper, told HT that

▶ See **Stop**...Pg 02

Indian, Chinese troops in Doklam, but not in eyeball-to-eyeball contact: Army Chief

BELAGAVI (KARNATAKA), NOV 04: Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said on Friday that both Indian and Chinese troops were present in Doklam, but were not in an "eyeball-to-eyeball" contact.

General Rawat said there had been a disengagement of troops of both countries in Doklam, where the two sides were locked in a stand-off that ended in August.

"There has been a disengagement on the condition that we will both disengage so that there is no face-to-face contact. So, that disengagement has taken place," he said.

"The PLA (People's Liberation Army) is still at Doklam, but they are at a reasonable distance from us and we are not in eyeball-



to-eyeball contact," the Army chief said.

He was speaking to reporters after honouring 23rd and 24th battalions of the Maratha Light Infantry at a glittering ceremony here

▶ See **Indian**...Pg 02

Take up Kashmiri Pandits resettlement on priority basis: VHP chief to Sharma

JAMMU, NOV 04: VHP chief Praveen Togadia today urged the Centre's special representative on Jammu and Kashmir, Dineshwar Sharma to give priority to resettlement of Kashmiri Pandits within a time frame.

He also called for abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A of the Indian Constitution and opposed the dialogue process with separatists.

"Unless Kashmiri Pandits are not settled in their homeland, no dialogue is worth its meaning. The fact that they cannot come back to their homes is not only painful, but insulting as well," he told reporters here.

"Therefore, I ask Sharma to give priority to the issue and ensure their settlement within a time frame," he said.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) chief, who arrived here yesterday, is on a three-day tour of Jammu region.

He is chairing a Hindu Helpline convention in which over 100 delegates from across the country are taking part.

Togadia also spoke against having a dialogue with separatists in the Valley.

▶ See **Take**...Pg 02

Appointing interlocutor an eyewash: Civil Society

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: Demanding a blanket ban on sale of liquor, Civil Society Coordination Committee (We the People) said that he proposal of Airport Authority of India to open liquor shop was condemnable.

"Liquor consumption in the valley is on rise," it claimed. "We demand blanket ban

▶ See **Appointing**...Pg 02

Follow 2003 ceasefire agreement in letter and spirit: Dr Farooq to India, Pak

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: National Conference President and Member Parliament of Srinagar Dr. Farooq Abdullah Saturday called upon both India and Pakistan to take effective and urgent measures to restore peace along Line of Control (LoC).

Asserting that the primary concern of both India and Pakistan must be to ensure safety and security of civilians on both sides of LoC, Dr Farooq said, "People on either side

▶ See **Follow**...Pg 02



Dr Farooq, Omar grieved over Ghulam Qadir Tak's demise

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: National Conference President and member Parliament of Srinagar Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Working President Mr Omar Abdullah on

▶ See **Dr Farooq**...Pg 02

'Kashmir issue can be resolved through dialogue, but India should show sincerity: Geelani

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: Syed Ali Geelani on Saturday expressed his deep concern over the prevailing horrendous situations in state, saying that unabated state sponsored violence, arrests, intimidations and killings will further deteriorate the situation.

Geelani as chairman of the Tehreek-e-Huriyat while speaking in executive council said that detainees despite bailed out by court are rearrested and repeatedly slapped with PSA to prolong their detention and added that pro-freedom leaders and activists, since long are languishing in state and outside state jails.

The participants reviewed and discussed the prevailing grim situation in state and it was observed that Indian authorities instead of implementing a realistic and political

▶ See **Kashmir**...Pg 02

Gurpurab celebrated with religious fervor

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: Gurpurab, the birthday (549th) of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev was celebrated throughout Jammu and Kashmir with traditional religious fervour and enthusiasm.

Reports said that people belonging to Sikh community, attired in colourful dresses, paid obeisance at Gurdwaras. The main function was held at Gurdwara Chatipadshahi in Rainawari area of old Srinagar city while as Amira Kadal and Jawahar Nagar Gurdwara's also witnessed heavy rush of devotees. Many religious and social organizations had arranged 'langars' for the devotees at these Gurdwaras.



Gurpurab was also celebrated in different other parts of Kashmir including

▶ See **Gurpurab**...Pg 02

Will never succumb to Gabbar singh approach: Malik

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: Chairman of JKLF, Muhammad Yasin Malik Saturday said that heirs of Maqbool Butt cherish incarcerations and gallows and intimidating them by notices and threats will never work.

"India wants to use Gabbar Singh approach to finish our resistance but is bound to fail," he said while addressing press conference today.

Press conference was called to react to media reports saying that enforcement directorate has issued some notice to Yasin Malik, Mushtaq Ahmad Dar and his wife.

Malik while talking to media person said that no notice has yet reached him or anyone



else. Seemingly this has been first disclosed to the media for initiating a media trial as usual. This is the reality of these farce cases

▶ See **Will**...Pg 02

Hepatitis C, food habits main cause of liver failure in Kashmir: Dr Goyal

'Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi starts monthly OPD for liver failure patients'

SRINAGAR, NOV 04: A renowned liver transplant surgeon of India, Dr Neerav Goyal Saturday said the Hepatitis C and intake of heavy fat diet were the main reasons for liver failure in Kashmir.

"As per initial assessment of patients coming from Valley, I came to know that Hepatitis C and fatty liver are the main causes of liver failure and most of them

▶ See **Hepatitis**...Pg 02

Failed PDP-BJP scared to face people: Slathia

VJAYAPURNOV 04: Former minister and Sr State President National Mr Surjeet Singh Slathia on Saturday said that failed on the governance front, the PDP-BJP coalition partners were shying away from people, as they have nothing to claim as achievement during the past three years.

"The leaders of the two parties

were scared to face the people", Mr Slathia said while addressing workers at Gurah Slathia in Vijayapur Assembly Constituency.

Mr Slathia said failure on governance front and developmental paralysis has exposed the naivety and inexperience of the present dispensation, as the people were realizing the futility of choosing

those who had never ever any will to govern this sensitive state.

The former minister said that the alliance has failed in addressing the political aspirations and fundamental developmental needs of the state, as a result of which the people are losing their patience. He said the developmental tempo initiated and sustained by the Omar

Abdullah led government during six years has come to a grinding halt and all tall claims and promises delivered before and after formation of the government proved to be hoax.

The former minister referred to the problems being faced by border dwellers, saying they were living under constant threat.

Similarly, the people across the state were facing hardships on account of utility services like power and drinking water, with rations becoming scarce at the sale outlets, especially in remote and far flung areas. He said the government has failed on all fronts.

Mr Slathia exhorted the work-

ers to gear up for facing confrontation to the state, as the people were experiencing a nightmarish era under the PDP and the BJP. He lauded the resilience of the party workers in remaining steadfast and reaching out to the people and seek redressal to their grievances. "This is the assigned role of the main opposition, which we will

shoulder with a sense of commitment", he maintained.

Prominent party functionaries highlighted local problems, saying the administration has almost been rendered dysfunctional due to lack of political direction. They expressed concern over growing prices and said that the common man has been hit adversely.

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CM

of national media, unfortunately, choose people of extreme opinions which brings confrontation in the society", she said while advising the national media to play a constructive, even though critical, role while discussing the State and sensitise itself about the pain, tribulations and miseries of the people of the State.

The Chief Minister said the situation in the State has improved considerably since last year and sectors like tourism and trade have started to pick up pace. She said she has directed the security establishments to prefer the return back of local militants to the social mainstream to their killing.

Replying to a question on rising incidents of intolerance and other hate crimes in the country, Mehbooba Mufti said the common citizens are as tolerant and accommodative as they used to be before. "The DNA of this country would not change. That is why we chose to be with India which is as liberal as any other society in the world", she said adding incidents of hate crimes bring disrepute to this tolerant ethos of the country.

On her impressions about the people of the State, the Chief Minister described them as a grateful lot. "Even a small favour you do to them, they would acknowledge it gleefully", she said while narrating many anecdotes from her public life of past two decades or more to drive home the point.

On the issues facing the current polity of the country, Mehbooba Mufti said that it is high time that Women's Reservation Bill is given a proper thought by the Parliament. She laid stress on the social empowerment of women alongside their political and economic empowerment. She said a value system to respect women needs to be inculcated among the children to put an end to atrocities on the womenfolk.

Termining youth as her passion to work for, the Chief Minister said she intends to give them a better and secure future. "I have worked with them since long. I need everybody's help to save them from becoming victims of an uncertain situation. They are full of energy and talent and I want to channelize that for their and society's betterment", she said.

The interactive session was attended by politicians, mediapersons, public policy analysts, academicians, retired civil servants and other informed groups of the society.

Stop

the move was "not in sync" with the Centre's effort to start a dialogue in Kashmir.

"Three major papers of Kashmir, which include Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir and Kashmir Times, have been banned from getting any central government advertisements from the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) for the last eight years. We are already bleeding and now they want us to bleed more by telling the state government to stop state advertisements as well," Bukhari told HT.

A few days after the note was sent, the central government appointed former Intelligence Bureau chief Dineshwar Sharma as its special representative to start a dialogue in the state by engaging all political parties and stakeholders. Sharma will visit the state on Monday.

Bukhari added that local papers reported the ground situation in Kashmir. "The government has expressed concerns over our coverage of militant funerals. National newspapers do the same. So why are local papers being singled out?"

Indian

on Friday. There was a military stand-off between India and China at Doklam on the tri-junction of the Indian, Chinese and Bhutanese borders but it had ended after 71 days in August.

On Jammu and Kashmir, he said there has been no violation of human rights in that state by the Army but it has taken stringent action whenever such incidents occurred.

The Army chief said no one would be spared in case of violation of human rights.

Asked about reports about rise in recruitments of Kashmiri youths by militant groups since 2013 and resentment against the Army, he said some youths are carried away by wrong conceptions due to social media.

He lauded the excellent patience shown by the Army in the area.

To a query, the Army chief said Jammu and Kashmir had a different terrain causing frequent intrusion of militants but the Indian force had been giving befitting reply to such elements.

Kashmir was, is and will be an integral part of India, he said.

He also said Indian Army is undertaking

modernisation of equipment for surveillance along both Pakistan and China borders. The government has been funding defence equipment without any issue, he said.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Army chief commended the outstanding performance of Maratha Light Infantry rights since the First World War in all operational and peacetime commitments.

He lauded the history of Maratha Light Infantry which received five Maha Vir Chakras and Ashok Chakras, 44 Vir Chakras and 15 Kirti Chakras apart from Victoria Cross during the British rule.

The saga of Maratha Light Infantry and its martyrdom will be remembered for a long time to come, he said and exhorted all ranks to continue striving hard for excellence to keep the national flag flying high.

Take

"Those demanding 'Azadi' or self-rule should go to Pakistan as those talking against the constitution are traitors. They have no right to live in this country.

"As far as Pakistani agents are concerned, a dialogue with them will not help as they would not understand. They only understand the language of AK 47," he said.

The VHP leader added that the "factors coming in the way of complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India, like Article 35A and Article 370, be removed to bring back prosperity to the state".

Article 35A and Article 370 accord special rights and privileges to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

In reply to a question about Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's "warning" in July that there would be no one in the state to hold the tricolour, if special rights and privileges to the state will be tinkered with, the VHP chief said, "Praveen Togadia and crores of my associates across the country will come to shoulder the flag".

The controversial leader also remarked that those indulging in stone pelting against security forces in the Valleys should be carpet bombed.

"We should strive to make Jammu and Kashmir terrorism free and those who indulge in stone pelting against soldiers should be carpet bombed," he said. (AGENCIES)

Appointing

on sale of liquor in the Kashmir valley," it said while addressing a press conference here.

Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam Deputy Grand Mufti, Ahmad Ayaz, MPL Board and other civil society members including Mir Javaid, Dr Muhammad Ashraf, Manzoor Ahmad Kirmani, Muhammad Yasin Kirmani, Muhammad Noorani Naqshbandi, G A Qureshi were present during the press conference.

The society as per the KNS correspondent said that corruption and nepotism has crossed its limits and "now the ministers are appointing their blue-eyed persons at top jobs without any merit and qualification. And the government is a mute spectator."

It said that the appointment of interlocutor is an "eyewash and an attempt to befool the people of the state".

The society held the press conference in collaboration with the office of Grand Mufti of JK and State Muslim Personal Law Board.

On adjournment of hearing of Article 35 A petition by Supreme Court, the society said that "it is strange that the GoI appointing interlocutor on the one hand and on the other hand Article 35 A being the constitutional arrangement has co-related with each other."

The society said that the people of JK have bitter experience with past interlocutors and the GoI instead of taking action on the reports have thrown these reports into dustbins. (KNS)

Follow

of LoC have become the primary targets of border skirmishes and are facing the brunt of cross border hostilities between the two nuclear powered countries. It therefore becomes more important for India and Pakistan to follow the tenets of 2003 ceasefire agreement in letter and spirit."

He made these comments on the sidelines of his four day tour to border areas of north Kashmir which commenced from today. After getting re-elected as Party President, Dr Farooq Abdullah started his first public outreach programme of the state from Karnah Kupwara. He will be visiting border areas of Tangdar, Teetwal, Keran and Machhil areas of Kupwara over the next four days to take stock of the situation and register the grievances of general public besides addressing various rallies in these areas. He is accom-

panied by senior party leaders including party Vice President Choudhary Mohammad Ramzan, Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, former Minister Mir Saifullah, District President Kupwara Qaiser Jamsheed Lone, ex MLA Kafeel ur Rehman and other local party office bearers.

In the first leg of his tour, Dr Farooq visited Chahckoot, Teetwal areas where he met a number of public delegations. Later, he also interacted with border dwellers and visited a number of households in the area.

Taking a firsthand account of the problems faced by people in the area, Dr Farooq rued the absence of governance in these areas. "It pains me to see the abysmal condition of people living in these areas. There seems to be no outreach from government to address the problems of people living in the area. The present government has to get its act together and ensure that these people get access to basic facilities including decent healthcare which is shockingly nowhere to be seen."

On the occasion Dr Farooq impressed upon both India and Pakistan to ensure hassle free movement of people from both sides of LoC. "It has come to our notice that unnecessary hurdles are being created to stop people from meeting their relatives on either side of LoC. This has to stop and government must take a lead in providing travel and necessary documents from the concerned authorities to those who intend to travel. So far the present government has miserably failed in addressing such genuine demands," he said.

Dr Farooq

Saturday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of renowned political and social activist from Bijbehara Anantnag Ghulam Qadir Tak.

Expressing shock and grief over Tak's demise, both leaders paid glowing tributes to the departed soul and highlighted his exemplary contributions in serving the people of the State. Dr. Farooq Abdullah extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

National Conference Working President Mr Omar Abdullah extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

NC General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar later presided over a condolence meet at party headquarters Nawa e Subah where glowing tributes were paid to late Ghulam Qadir Tak. Senior Provincial Vice President Mohammad Syed Akhoun, District President Srinagar Peer Afaq Ahmad and scores of other party workers attended the meet.

Vice President Chaudhary Muhammad Ramzan, Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, senior leaders Mubarak Gul, Sakina Ito, MLA Pahalgam Altaf Kaloo, MLA Homshalibugh Adv Ab Majeed Bhat (Larimi), Ex MLC Dr Bashir Ah Veeri, District President Anantnag Dr Shafi Provincial Spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar besides party senior office bearers also paid glowing tributes to Late Ghulam Qadir Tak and expressed grief and sorrow over his demise.

Meanwhile Additional General Secretary Dr. Sheikh Mustafa Kamal led a party delegation to the residence of former deputy Speaker Late Moulvi Abdul Rashid and expressed condolences to the bereaved family. He was accompanied by District President Banihal Mr Sajjad Shaheen and ex MLC Dr Bashir Ah Veeri.

Kashmir

approach for the resolution of issue are following their obsessive dogma.

Addressing the meeting Geelani, as per the statement to KNS, said that harassing the leadership and people is aimed to silence them because they are supporting the cause of people of Jammu Kashmir and they have been kept behind the bars without any trial and that coercive and repressive measures won't break our resolve and despite this will pursue the cherished mission.

Referring to Kashmir issue, Geelani said that it is the world's oldest unresolved issue, and added that it is bone of contention between India and Pakistan and a potential threat to peace in sub-continent.

Blaming Indian authorities for prevailing bloodshed, Geelani said that it is their stubborn and haughty approach, that has turned the whole sub-continent into a slaughterhouse and despite their pressuractics and haughty approach, they couldn't break our resolve and people pursued the right to self-determination, added Geelani.

India is not sincere in resolving the Kashmir issue, said Geelani and reiterated that in principal we are not against dialogue process but we favour only meaningful and result oriented ne-

gotiations.

We have a clear agenda and our viewpoint is unambiguous that Kashmir issue can be resolved through dialogue, however the onus lies on India to illustrate its seriousness and sincerity, added Geelani.

Conducive atmosphere for negotiations is prime necessity, said Geelani and added history stands witness, that India instead of acknowledging its historical perspective, as core and political issue, always treated it a law and order problem, added he.

Dialogue is the only option, said Geelani but unfortunately, India has never assigned any political importance to this issue and while referring to groups led by Ram Jeth Malani, Padgawkar, Congress working group and their recommendations, Geelani asked about the outcome of their recommendations.

Geelani called poll boycott for upcoming by elections to parliamentary segments and urged to follow the spirits as was illustrated by people during Srinagar and Budgam by-polls.

Termining all pro-Indians leaders stooges, Geelani said that their sole mission is to strengthen the Indian occupation.

Meanwhile, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat is organizing a seminar on 'Alama Iqbal on November 9 Thursday at Hyderpora here.

Geelani and other noted personalities are scheduled to speak in the seminar. (KNS)

Gurpurab

Tral and some parts of Budgam where Sikhs are present in great numbers.

Reports from Jammu said that hundreds of devotees including men, women and children paid obeisance at various Gurdwaras, which were illuminated and decorated with colourful bunting.

The main function was held at Gurdwara Yadgar Guru Nanak Devji (Near Bibi Chand Kaur Samadh) at Chand Nagar Gumat, where devotees paid obeisance and offered prayers.

The Governor, N N Vohra, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, National Conference president Dr Farooq Abdullah, State Congress President Ghulam Ahmed Mir and others greeted the people on this occasion.

In their messages, they described Guru Nanak Dev as an apostle of peace and tolerance. "His teachings would continue to inspire generations, leading them to the path of righteousness and brotherhood. Guruji strove all his life for social justice and equality and to bring about peace and harmony in the society," they said. (CNS)

Will

which only furnished to settle political vendetta, and threaten political resistance and force people to join the talk shows on gun point, said Yasin Malik.

He said that the case that has been referred to in media reports is of March 2001. At that time a drama was played to arrest me, as Indian state was too annoyed on the formation of a parallel Independent Election Commission by United Hurriyat Conference. Indian rulers were annoyed because that election commission was my proposal and if it would have been allowed to work, the issue of representative character world have been settled for once and all.

He said that a drama was orchestrated and I was arrested from Srinagar and immediately shifted to Jammu. I was tortured and put behind the bars under black law POTA. After some months I was presented before POTA court in Jammu and I told the honorable judge that authorities in Delhi are claiming that the dollars were handed over by one Altaf Qadri to Mushtaq Ahmad Dar in Nepal.

If Delhi proves that Altaf Qadri had travelled to Nepal, I will have no objection in accepting the charges. I told judge that if Delhi believes that Altaf Qadri was traveling on fake passport but still that passport and his visa form must have had his photograph and because of the cordial relations of Delhi with Kathmandu, it was not hard for Delhi to get those documents. On this argument POTA court granted me bail but it is worth to mention that the case is pending before they said POTA court from last 16 years and regular hearings are being held on monthly basis.

He said that even Jammu Kashmir high court was approached by the government to cancel the statements of the co-accused in this case, who in front of POTA court denied all the charges and displayed the torture marks by police to get their confessional statements at that time, which honorable high court had rejected.

JKLF chairman said that a case is being heard in a court from 16 years and it has yet to be con-

cluded but a parallel case is being initiated from Delhi, in the same case which is in itself a mockery of justice and legal system JKLF chairman said that actually ED notice which has been talked of in today's papers is a sample of how Indian agencies, forces and legal system is run and used by Indian rulers according to their whims and wishes against peaceful resistances in Kashmir; This is the reality of NIA led campaign also. Indian ruling regime with active support from Kashmir stooges is arresting sons, fathers, relatives, friends and other related people of resistance leaders and activists.

Manipulating farce and false cases against them put them on trial and incarcerate them in jail. Indian fascist regime wants to convey to us that shun resistance and if you will not, we will kill you. Defiance you and put you in Tihar Jail.

He said this is what is called as Gabbar Singh approach as Indians want us to talk with a gun on our heads and if we say no, they come up with so-called notices and cases to intimidate and penalize us. Those at the helm in Delhi at present don't understand the love of Kashmiri resistance leaders towards the movement as they didn't exist when people of India were fighting against British. How they can understand the romanticism of a freedom fighter. They only know the language of suppressing the genuine voice by means of military might, had that been the case, no nation in the world would not have achieved freedom. He said that they have issued an ultimatum, and boosted of finishing our resistance till 2022 but these people living in fool's paradise do not know that a peoples movement and mass resistance can never be defeated by oppression and tyranny.

JKLF chairman said that we the heirs of Muhammad Maqbool Butt want to tell Delhi and its Kashmiri stooges do whatever you can and you wish, open the doors of jails and put us on galloes, we cherish these hardships but remember you can never ever finish the resistance of this nation against your illegal military occupation. (KNS)

Hepatitis

needed transplant," he said addressing media on the sidelines of a free OPD.

Dr Goyal, who is a senior consultant Liver Transplant Surgery at Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi said other causes of liver disease among Kashmiri patients are chronic Hepatitis B and Autoimmune Hepatitis.

"In children born the congenital liver defects like biliary atresia, Wilsons disease, Crigler Najjar syndrome are common causes of liver failure," he said.

He informed that Liver Transplant Center of Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi which is one of the best liver transplant centers in the world was planning to start a transplant center in Kashmir in association with some local hospital or organisation.

"Seeing the proportion of liver disease in the Valley, there should a center here also and we are working out on that," Dr Goyal said.

He also highlighted the lifestyle disorders among the local people and chronic conditions which leads to Liver transplant and the procedure for liver donation.

"The liver is the second most commonly transplanted major organ, after the kidney, so it is clear that liver disease is a common and serious problem. It is important for liver transplant candidates and their families to understand the basic process involved with liver transplants, to appreciate some of the challenges and complications that face liver transplant recipients (people who receive livers), and to recognize symptoms that should alert recipients to seek medical help," he said.

According to him the liver has many vital functions. It is a powerhouse that produces varied substances in the body.

"Liver disease occurs when these essential functions are disrupted. Liver transplants are needed when damage to the liver severely impairs a person's health and quality of life. It's rare, but fat can build up in your liver when a woman is pregnant. This could be risky for both you and your baby. A timely transplant done on a patient who is in a reasonable condition, with a good donor liver has excellent outcomes," he said.

"Liver Donation is also possible from a living donor who is a relative of the recipient who can donate half of his/her liver. The donor operation is entirely safe and the half liver quickly regenerates in both the donor and the recipient in a few weeks. In the first few days after operation even when regeneration is not complete, the half liver is enough to maintain normal donor functions due to the immense reserve in the liver.", said Dr. Neerav Goyal.

Hanjura calls on Union Agriculture Minister

'Dussoo Spice Park to be functional this fiscal'

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 04: Minister for Agriculture, Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura today met with Union Agriculture Minister, Radha Mohan Singh here to review the progress on the proposals submitted by the State Government to the Union Agriculture Ministry.

During the meeting, it was decided that Spice Park Dussoo, Pulwama will be made functional during the current financial year and the Saffron will be covered under weather-based insurance schemes for which tendering will be floated shortly.

On the occasion, Hanjura stressed for extension of National Saffron Mission for 5 more years so that the Saffron production can match the best in the world and the benefits of irrigation and Spice Park would reach to Saffron growers of the State.

During the meeting, it was also decided that the DPR for setting up of Saffron Park at Kishtwar will be



submitted within a month to the Centre to give a boost to Saffron production in Kishtwar. It was decided that Saffron

Research Project will be set up at SKUAST (J) which will be funded by the Central Agriculture Ministry. The Union Agriculture Min-

ister assured the State Agriculture Minister of all possible financial assistance to the State to boost agriculture production.

DC Anantnag visits Chattisinghpura, Mattan; takes stock of Gurupurab arrangements

ANANTNAG, NOVEMBER 04: The Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Mohammad Younis Malik today visited Chattisinghpura, Mattan and other areas inhabited by Sikh community to take stock of the facilities provided to them on the auspicious occasion of Gurupurab. On the occasion, the DC congratulated the Sikh community on Gurupurab and said that the message propounded by the first guru of Sikhs on brotherhood, peace and amity is more relevant today. Notably, the DC has already issued instructions to Health, PHE, PDD and other Departments to ensure all the facilities

like essential medicines, ambulance services, potable drinking water, rations and power supply to the people in Sikh inhabited areas. While interacting with the community members at Mattan, the DC instructed the AEE PDD to ensure adequate power availability to the people. He also listened to other demands raised by them and assured that work is already going on in some projects while as other issues shall also be resolved in due course of time.

The DC was accompanied by Tehsildar Mattan, AEE PDD, PHE, officers of Health, Food and other concerned Departments.

Veeri condoles demise of Ghulam Qadir Tak

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 04: Minister for Revenue, Relief Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Abdul Rehman Veeri has expressed grief over the demise of a political figure of Bijbeh-

ra, Advocate Ghulam Qadir Tak. The Minister termed his demise as a personal loss and expressed sympathies with the bereaved family. Veeri said that Tak was a very dedicated social

worker who always worked for the welfare and development of people.

He also said that his welfare initiatives for the people will be remembered by one and all.

DSEK reviews implementation of Kashmiri language in Schools

SRINAGAR: NOVEMBER 04: Director School Education Kashmir, Dr. G. N. Itoo today convened a meeting regarding implementation of Kashmiri Language in Schools in Kashmir Division.

Secretary Academy of Art Culture and Languages, Dr. Aziz Hajni, Director Academics J&K BOSE, Dr Farooq Ahmad Peer, President Adbi Markaz Kamra, Dr. Shujaat Bukhari, General Secretary AMK, Mohammad Amin Bhat, Chief Education Officers, DIET Principals and other concerned were present in the meeting.

On the occasion, the Director School Education impressed upon the Chief Education Officers and DIET Principals to implement the Government order regarding introducing Kashmiri languages in schools.

He advised Board authorities to prepare and keep ready the books with good printing in time so that the languages are taught from the new academic session.

Directions were given to Chief Educations Officers and DIET Principals to make necessary arrangements to teach the Kashmiri Language from the next academic session. Similar directions were also issued in respect of other languages which are to be taught as per the government order. He also asked Principal SIE Kashmir to organize and expedite training programmes to train resource persons immediately who shall, in turn, provide training to teachers in their respective districts.

The BOSE authorities and Principal SIE assured the Director of their full cooperation. Secretary Dr Hajini and President AMK Dr. Shujaat Bukhari also assured their full support in the teaching of Kashmiri Language and implementation of the Government order regarding the same.

DDC Pulwama inspects National Highway upgradation works

PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 04: The District Development Commissioner Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar to inspect upgradation works on Srinagar-Jammu National Highway from Pampore to Awantipora stretch. The DDC was accompanied by Additional Deputy Com-

missioner Pulwama, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, ADC Awantipora, Tehsildar Awantipora, Engineers of RAMKY and other concerned. On the occasion, the DDC was apprised about the works undertaken by the executing agency RAMKY including construction of bridge-

culverts, macadamization, upgradation and construction of dividers on the National Highway. He was informed that maximum portion of the work on the National Highway has been completed and work on the bridge at Awantipora is expected to be completed by next month.

The District Development Commissioner stressed upon executing agency to speed up the work on the said portion of the National Highway by utilizing all available men and machinery so that the completion of remained bridge and culverts is completed within stipulated time.

Nanda inaugurates 2 day cultural Festival at Reasi

REASI, NOVEMBER 04: A two day cultural Festival began here today to showcase the state's folk music and dances. The event would also witness the screening of promotional and educative film shows. The programme has been organised by Triple-A Performing Arts in association with district administration and sponsored by Ministry of Culture, Government of India to promote local folk music, dance forms and other performing arts prevailing in the rural areas. The programme was inaugurated by Minister of State for Finance and Planning Ajay Nanda as chief guest. Deputy Commissioner Prasanna Ramaswamy G and other officers of civil and police were also present on the



occasion. The main attraction on the first day was Dogri, Punjabi and Kashmiri dance and music performances by local girls and boys. Among other items, Dandi Dance and Harn were

also presented by local artists. The artists also presented skits based on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and other social issues confronting the society. Speaking on the occasion, Ajay Nanda lauded Triple-A performing Arts Reasi for making concerted efforts for preserving rich cultural heritage of state through scintillating cultural programmes. The Minister further said that the event is a great step towards elevating Reasi in cultural arena and project it as a hub of diverse cultural and tourist activities. The programme was witnessed by a huge audience. The organizers among others included programme Akram Khan, Advocate Mir and Shadab Khan.

Dy CM emphasizes on taping JK's huge spiritual & religious Tourism potential

KATHUA, NOVEMBER 04- Reiterating Government's commitment to develop areas having tourist potential, Dy CM, Dr Nirmal Singh today said that Billawar has glorious history of religious and economic activities. He maintained that the natural beauty of Billawar makes it unique place to visit with sprawling landscapes and religious shrines. "The place can be further revamped as heritage town to attract tourists to this area" he added. Dr Singh was interacting with the locals after paying obeisance at Ringri Mata temple inside historical Garhi Fort at Thara Kalyal on the occasion of annual congregation of Sumbria Rajput community.



The community members from Punjab, Himachal, Haryana and surrounding areas thronged in large numbers to get blessings of the community deity. Highlighting several initiatives launched to restore the pristine glory of Billawar town, DyCM said that Rs 32 Lakh from his CDF has been sanctioned for the construction of boundary wall along the Garhi Fort for its conservation. He directed the ADC to immediately start the demarcation work. He also said that road connectivity to religious places will also get a fillip to increase the tourist inflow and give impetus to the economic activities in the area.

Dy CM further said that preserving historical monuments and bringing them on tourist circuit provide a great attraction to devotee tourists and heritage lovers. "The end beneficiary in the religious tourism is always local population but they have to work in tandem with the government with a vision where emphasis is laid on infrastructure, awareness, education and training" he added.

Later, the Dy CM also paid obeisance at the annual congregation of Upadhaya community near Thara Kalyal where people from nearby villages also thank him for sanctioning Rs 12 Lakh from out of his CDF for road connectivity and improving PDD infra.

Dorje inaugurates public park on Leh-Manali highway

LEH, NOV 4: Minister for Cooperatives & Ladakh Affairs Tsering Dorje inaugurated a public park here on Leh-Manali highway near Deskit-Tsal (Housing Colony, Leh).

The park covering six and a half kanal of land is developed by Construction Division PWD, Leh at an estimated cost of Rs. 67.84 lakh. The project was funded under H&UDD and AMRUT.

Others present on the occasion were MLA Leh Nawang Rigzin Jora, EC Agriculture Tsering Wangdus, EC Education Dorje Mutup, Councillor Lower Leh Wangdan Shunu, S E PWD Tashi Chombel, District officers, Engineers, concern contractor and residents of Deskit-Tsal.

Addressing the gathering Minister Dorje said that having such kind of a park completed in a short time in Deskit-Tsal is really commendable. He said that there is no shortage of money and gave assurance to get the extension of the park till the end of Deskit-Tsal done in next season.

Dorje recounted the facilities like road, drainage, sewerage, drinking water on priority to residents of Deskit-Tsal and urged them to cooperate in maintaining and proper utilisation of these facilities.

The Minister appreciated the effort of Council and Government officers in successful execution of such projects in Leh and claimed that today Leh is more advanced than many parts of the Country in terms of development.

He also mentioned about the multi-tier parking under AMRUT to be constructed from next year with a capacity of more than 200 cars. He regretted the inconveniences caused to public during the execution period of these projects. MLA Leh R Jora appreciated the hard work of the Council, officers and engineers in completing the park on time and said it's a pride for all Ladakhis to have such kind of park. He asserted that politics is to serve public and the main agenda of every political party is public welfare. He said that whichever Government is in power their aim is to keep Ladakh ahead of any politics and work in unity to address the problems of people of Ladakh and strive to make their life easy and convenient. Councillor, Lower Leh expressed gratitude to Council for developing park in Deskit-Tsal and urged them to complete the remaining part with the sanction of required fund as early as possible. The Nambarder, Deskit-Tsal too expressed gratitude for the park and put forth the problem of garbage disposal in the colony.

DDC Shopian reviews winter preparedness, snow clearance plan

SHOPIAN NOVEMBER 04: District Development Commissioner Shopian, Mohammad Aijaz Asad today convened a meeting to review the action plan regarding winter preparedness and snow clearance arrangements in the district. Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Shopian, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE, PDD, Mechanical Engineering, besides, SDM Zainapora, AD FCS&CA, and other concerned officers and officials.



The meeting was informed that men and machinery have been kept ready to meet any eventuality. It was given out that a control room at Mini Secretariat Arhama Shopian has been established and snow-clearance machinery has been kept in a position of readiness. Pertinently ME Department has the responsibility of clearing snow on 706 kms of road length, while as R&B Department clears 76 kms in the district.

The Assistant Director FCS&CA informed the meeting that 1600 quintals

of sugar have been distributed among the consumers. Similarly, 25600 quintals of rice shall be dumped in advance for 3 months at 80 locations in the district which remain inaccessible during heavy snowfall. On the occasion, the DDC directed the PDD authorities for adopting a concrete mechanism to ensure supply of power as per schedule. He directed for stringent action against those found involved in using illegal power connections. He also took stock of the medical facility being provided to the patients in the hospitals. He directed

the health administration to ensure better medicare facilities to the patients. He also directed the concerned to ensure proper sanitation measures in and around the hospitals. He asked CMO to maintain adequate stock of medicines for the winter months. The DDC further directed the concerned authorities to activate the control rooms and equip them with adequate manpower to cater to the needs of the general public. He sought inter-departmental coordination for effective response to meet out any eventuality in approaching months.

DC visits Chatipadshahi B'la; extends greeting to Sikh community on Gurupurab

BARAMULLA, NOVEMBER 04: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr Nasir Ahmad Naqash today visits Gurudwara ChatiPadshahi to participate in the celebrations of Gurupurab, observed with religious fervour on the birth anniversary first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak.

The DC extended warm greetings to the Sikh community of Baramulla and assured assistance from his administration for smooth conduct of the celebrations.

He directed the concerned authorities to ensure uninterrupted electricity, drinking water and supply of other essential amenities at the venue till the conclusion of the celebrations. The DC had already passed directions for transport facility to facilitate Sikh devotees and ensuring sanitation measures in and around the worship place.

The DC said that religious co-existence, harmony, peace and progress of all has been the way of life of all Sikh Gurus and is the message of every religion.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

TAKE IT SLOW

Last week, the Supreme Court asked the government if it was forcing citizens to link their mobiles and bank accounts with Aadhaar. The Attorney General's answer to this straightforward question did not satisfy the court. "There would be no coercion," K.K. Venugopal told the court. But he refused to give a written undertaking ruling out punitive measures against those who default on the December 31 deadline to link the two essential services with Aadhaar. The government's equivocation has pushed the apex court into constituting a five-member constitutional bench that will examine the validity of Aadhaar. On Monday, a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said the constitutional bench will begin its hearing in the last week of November. Till the bench delivers its verdict, the government should suspend its drive to link Aadhaar with mobile numbers and bank accounts.

The litigation against Aadhaar has seemed at odds with the government's implementation of the scheme. In 2015, a constitutional bench declared "the Aadhaar card was purely voluntary". It also ruled that the scheme should continue to be voluntary till a larger bench decided whether Aadhaar violated the privacy of Indians. The court ruling and the evidently contentious nature of the scheme required the government to go slow on it. But the government started to implement the scheme aggressively after the verdict. Nervous about its lack of numbers in the Rajya Sabha, it pushed the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill as a money bill in the Lok Sabha in March last year. In doing so, the government not only lost an opportunity to effectively engage the Opposition on legislation with far-reaching implications for rights, accountability and the power of the state, it also heightened the building disquiet over invasion of privacy and misuse of data. Less than six months after Parliament passed the Aadhaar Act, banks were asked to distribute forms to link customers' Aadhaar cards with their accounts. In March, the Department of Telecommunications directed all mobile service providers to re-verify existing customers using their Aadhaar number and biometric details.

In Supreme Court hearings in July and August on Aadhaar, Venugopal — as well as his predecessor Mukul Rohatgi — argued that privacy is not a fundamental right. But the apex court's verdict in August in the privacy case has reinvigorated the debate. The government now has to satisfy the court that linking Aadhaar to the delivery of essential services fulfills the test of "reasonable restriction" on privacy. It must answer questions: Does sharing a person's biometric data with a private entity, like a mobile service provider, violate her right to privacy? The five-judge bench constituted by the court on Monday is expected to give its ruling on these contentious issues. Till then, the government should proceed cautiously on Aadhaar.

Sardar Patel, a shared inheritance

The Congress's de-option of Patel was an error, Hindutva's co-option of Patel is an execration

► Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950), whose birth anniversary it is today, is sorely missed. He has been, ever since he died at the none-too-great an age of 75, in 1950. He was the keel that the boat of the freedom struggle needed so as never to tip over, the ballast that the ship of state required to stay steady, move safe.

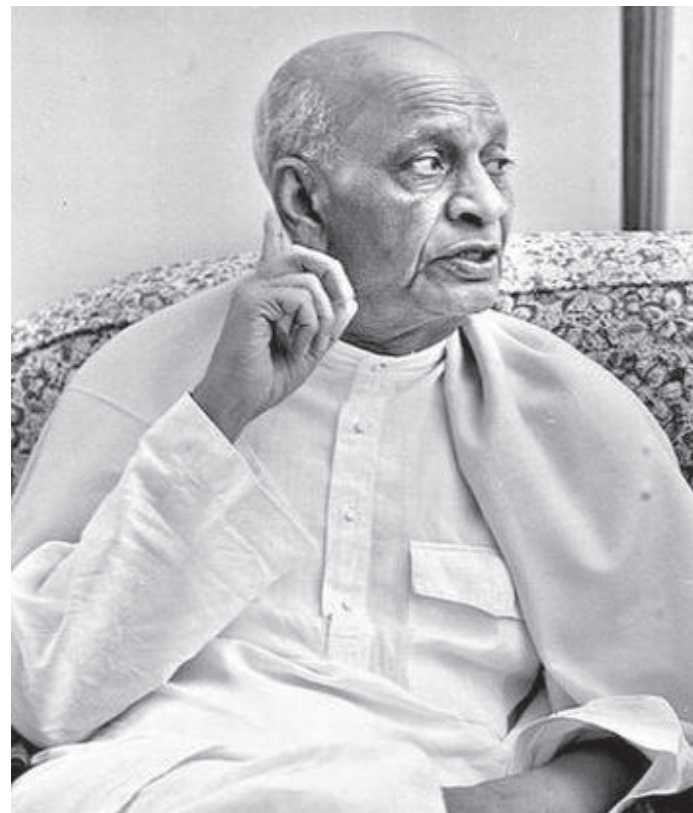
This is because he was, first and last, a patriot. A Congress patriot. And then, a man who knew India. The India which the Congress was seeking to define for itself, for India.

What was that India? Let us have Gandhi answer the question. In 1931, the year that Patel, for the first time, became Congress president, Gandhi went as the Congress's sole representative to the second Round Table Conference in London. He defined at that Conference, the nature of the party, and explained to that gathering how the Congress represented the entire country. He explained, in fact, their inextricable oneness.

Under a big tent

In Gandhi's words: "In as much... as I represent the Indian National Congress, I must clearly set forth its position. In spite of appearances to the contrary, especially in England, the Congress claims to represent the whole nation and most decidedly the dumb millions among whom are included the numberless untouchables who are more suppressed than depressed, as also in a way the more unfortunate neglected classes known as backward races..."

And again, at the Conference's Minorities Committee: "...if you were to examine the register of the Congress, if you were to examine the records of the prisons of India, you would find that the Congress represented and represents on its register a very large number of Mohammedans. Several thousand Mohammedans went to jail last year under the banner of the Congress... The Congress has Indian Christians also on its register. I do not know that there is a single community which is not represented on the Congress on its register... even landlords and even mill-owners and millionaires



are represented there..."

Serving the nation through that party representing 'the whole nation' and its various communities, strengthening that party at its plural grassroots, shaping the resolutions and decisions of its Working Committee and helping it form ministries in eight of the 11 provinces in the elections of 1936-37, Patel then guided it as it took over the reins of the Government of India in 1947. Working for and through the Congress was the Alpha and Omega of Patel's political career.

That made him what he was, the 'indomitable' iron man of India. That also made the Congress, in very great part, what it was — an all-India organisation.

Congress was Patel's life

No Patel, no national Congress. No Congress, no Sardar Patel. Congress patriotism was his patriotism; Congress politics was his politics.

No one, howsoever anxious to wrench his legacy off from that of the Congress, can dispute and much less deny that basic and incontrovertible fact. No one, howsoever

desperate to annex his legacy to that of another body, cultural or political, like the Hindu Mahasabha or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or the Bharatiya Janata Party, can succeed in staging so ridiculous a trapeze show.

Sardar Patel was the Congress's spine. The Congress was Sardar Patel's life.

Does that mean that the Sardar's membership, leadership and stewardship of the Congress was free of tensions? Of course not, because he was human and his party was led and peopled by other humans, each with tempers and temperaments that were distinct. Despite Gandhi's pre-eminence in it and in the hearts of the people of India, the Congress was not a hegemonic party and its most charismatic leader, Jawaharlal Nehru, was, by instinct, self-training and practice, its most natural democrat. Nehru's was a lunar luminosity in Gandhi's Congress. Nehru's glow could brighten and lessen, and on a moonless night plunge the party in inky gloom. Patel, with his seven great skills — resoluteness, clarity, direction,

focus, loyalty, grounded-ness and guts — was the party's saptaarshi, its Ursa Major.

The Congress not only accommodated personality and political variations, it regarded itself as their natural home. It was a place to which people belonged, not a place in which people assembled for a drill. Its sifit, to use a Persian word that stands for essence or ethos, was its diversity. And its Working Committee embodied that sifit. It had, Gandhi apart, Nehru the socialist and agnostic, Patel the conservative, C. Rajagopalachari the liberal, Rajendra Prasad the traditionalist, Abul Kalam Azad the scholar, J.B. Kripalani the scoffer. At different times it had Subhas Chandra Bose the nationalist, Sarojini Naidu the poet. Each Congressman and Congresswoman was himself or herself first, and then a soldier of the party. Each person was 'rare'. Which is why, describing Acharya Narendra Deva in his obituary speech in Parliament, Nehru spoke of him being "...a man of rare distinction — distinction in many fields — rare in spirit, rare in mind and intellect, rare in integrity of mind and otherwise." The Congress's ranking leaders, as indeed its countless 'file', differed, debated, wrangled and even warred, but stayed true to the party's sifit, because the party gave them that 'play', not as a policy but as an inherent personality trait, India's trait.

The mutual differences between Nehru and Patel are no secret. The Congress did not believe in secrecy. Their mutual trust was no secret. The Congress believed in trust.

Their differences are not to be exaggerated. They are not to be minimised. They are to be contextualised. In the democratic spirit of that plural party.

Sardar Patel led a party as its Ursa Major that was anything but a homogenising factory. It was as plural as it was because it saw itself in the words Gandhi used to describe its eclectic rolls in London in 1931.

'India first'

Gandhi, who knew the meaning and action of political variegation, encouraged and succeeded in getting Nehru and Patel to work with coor-

dination and cooperation if not coalescence. And for this, the realism of both leaders has to be thanked. Their realism, and their sense of 'India first'.

India first was part of their idea of India. And 'India first' was integral to their sense of patriotism, their Congress patriotism.

Four days after Gandhi's assassination, in a letter to his senior in politics, in the party and in age, Nehru wrote: "With Bapu's death everything is changed... I have been greatly distressed by the persistence of whispers and rumours about you and me, magnifying out of all proportion any difference we may have."

Patel replied on May 5, 1948: "I am deeply touched... We both have been lifelong comrades in a common cause. The paramount interests of our country and our mutual love and regard, transcending such differences of outlook and temperament as existed, have held us together."

The very previous day, addressing the Congress Party in the Constituent Assembly, Patel described Nehru as "my leader" and said: "I am one with the Prime Minister on all national issues. For over a quarter of a century, both of us sat at the feet of our master and struggled together for the freedom of India. It is unthinkable today, when the Mahatma is no more, that we should quarrel."

The Congress's rank and file should ponder these observations of Nehru and Patel and rectify years of neglect, post-Nehru, of the Sardar's legacy at the false altar of political cronyism. That neglect has lubricated the crassly opportunistic co-option of Patel by the Hindu Right which has no right, logical, political or moral, to that legacy. What the Congress squandered, Hindutva is shovelling in.

The Congress's unwitting de-option of Patel was an error, Hindutva's calculated co-option of Patel is an execration.

'India first' believers should be aware of both.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi is a former administrator, diplomat and Governor

Extend and pretend

► Ila Patnaik

The problem of rising non-performing assets of banks has been simmering beneath the surface for many years. Until now, it was possible to sweep bad news under the carpet. But the pressure arising from bad loans going through the bankruptcy mechanism has made it difficult to continue the game of extend-and-pretend. Recapitalisation of banks is, however, not a reform. It uses taxpayer money to cover up the failure of institutions. To prevent recurrence of such failure, it is important to reform not just governance, but also regulatory oversight.

The problem of hidden bad assets is pervasive across the entire banking system. Both public and private sector banks are part of the story. If one bank had been undertaking fraudulent accounting practices and hiding problems, it could have been blamed, and its management punished, as in the case of Satyam and the conviction of Ramalinga Raju. If the problem was limited to public sector banks, we would have found solutions in their governance. Private banks have also been hiding bad assets. The present NPA crisis appears to be as much a failing of the banking

regulator. For many years, despite its unquestioned powers to regulate, supervise and inspect banks, the regulator did not take action against banks that were hiding their bad assets. Instead, it proposed one loan restructuring scheme after another. None of the schemes, like CDR, SDR, S4A succeeded and stressed assets grew in number and value. It is only now, when credit growth has collapsed, that solving the problem cannot be postponed further and the regulator has become strict.

There has been a lot of discussion about restructuring public sector banks. However, this misses the point that private sector banks are also in a similar situation. The question to ask is: Why did the banking regulator fail to take action against banks that were hiding bad loans? The RBI is a regulator that interferes with bank operations more than any other banking regulator in the world. Given its policy of giving hardly any new bank licences, the RBI has only a small number of bank books to examine. So why did it fail in this core function?

A charitable explanation could be that its staff is of poor quality. It is ill-equipped to inspect bank books. Why did the RBI not see the



problems, like late payment of interest and principal, evergreening of loans, mechanisms that banks created to keep bad loans from being classified as such until 2015? Many regulators, particularly abroad and some in India like SEBI, hire practitioners from the industry to be part of supervision teams. Is it that the RBI does not have adequate lateral entry and depends on people who have not been on the other side, and thus keeps getting outsmarted?

A second, less charitable ex-

planation could be that bank inspection did reveal the bad asset problems. But the inspectors kept quiet. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has said the problem was hidden under the carpet till 2015. In other words, the regulator knew that there were bad assets, but did not press upon banks to declare them non-performing. The regulator did not take action when banks continued to extend-and-pretend. Loans were not declared NPAs despite non-payment of interest or principal. Bank inspectors looked the

other way when banks gave additional loans to defaulting clients to service these loans. If this was the problem, should there not be a question about why the regulator behaved in this manner? A bad loan is a rapidly depreciating asset. The RBI was the only authority with oversight over banks, and allowing extend-and-pretend increased the cost to the taxpayer of recapitalising banks. Who was responsible, who is accountable?

Whatever the correct explanation — incompetence, complicity

or the attempt to hide its own inadequacy — there is no question that the banking regulator, by failing to do its job, has burdened the taxpayer with higher costs. The cost of solving the NPA problem has grown every year that the RBI has hidden it, and the burden on the taxpayer has increased.

The RBI has an annual spend of Rs 13,000 crore at present. It is the only regulator that is not subject to a CAG audit. In the name of independence, the RBI has become unaccountable. All institutions that spend public money need to be accountable, and one that fails in its job cannot be excused for any reason. A mistake as big as one requiring Rs 2.11 trillion of taxpayer money should be followed by an analysis of the failure of the government agency explicitly tasked with preventing this very situation.

In view of the earlier PSB recapitalisations and bank regulatory failures in the past, the Financial Sector Legislative Reforms Commission (FSLRC) had proposed changes to the governance, regulation making, supervision, inspection and data collection in all regulators, including the RBI. The FSLRC also proposed a resolution corporation with powers to inspect banks. While the Financial Reso-

lution and Deposit Insurance Bill that aims to create a resolution corporation for banks has been tabled in Parliament, it does not give it the power to inspect banks and thus to create checks and balances to the RBI's power. Without additional supervision, and without checks and balances, the RBI will continue to be the only supervisor of banks. The resolution corporation will step in only after the RBI declares a bank has failed.

Regulatory failure across the world has led to changes in regulatory regimes, in laws and in institutions. Creating checks and balances is a necessary element of the reform process. Independence and accountability are two sides of the same coin. Regulators must have both.

In conclusion, in the discussions about the reform that should accompany recapitalisation, it is important to remember that it is not enough to reform public sector banks. The problem of hiding NPAs is also present in private sector banks. The failures of banking regulation must be addressed and checks and balances created.

The writer is professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy

Sushma Swaraj seeks report over attack on Sikh boy in US

NEW DELHI: External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj said on Saturday she has sought a report from the Indian Embassy in the US following reports of an attack on a Sikh schoolboy in a city in Washington.

"I have seen news reports about the beating of a Sikh boy in US. I have asked @IndianEmbassyUS to send me a report on the incident," Sushma Swaraj tweeted.

The 14-year-old boy was beaten up by a classmate in Kent city, with his father claiming that the victim was targeted as he is of Indian descent, the media reported.

The incident happened on October 26, less than a block from Kentridge High School, where both the boys are students, KIRO-TV reported.

In the clip that was posted on mobile application Snapchat, a teenaged boy followed the victim and punched him, knocking him to the ground.



The victim was punched several more times as he tried to protect his head and crawl away.

The victim's father said he felt pain each time he looked at the video. "I am feeling so, so bad because this happened with my son."

They beat him from the backside and hurt him too much.

"This is a very big thing for me, here in America..."

"I can't explain... how I am feeling," said the 14-year-old's father, who declined to be identified.

The family said the incident exposed racial divisions in the city. However, school officials said the attack was not religiously or racially

motivated, but was instead a continuation of an earlier classroom dispute.

The victim's parents denied that, saying their son did not even know his attacker's name. "He never interacted with this guy. He never knew his name," said the victim's father.

Calls and messages from people in the region poured in expressing outrage about the incident.

The Kent area is home to many Sikhs. The family said it wants peace for them and everyone. "I don't want to see this again happen with my son or anyone else. I don't want to see this," the boy's father said.

A Facebook thread about the incident generated more than 40 comments from parents and community members who said the teen who beat up the boy needs to be held accountable and people everywhere need to stand up to injustice.

India to ask for Naik's extradition 'very soon'

NEW DELHI: Days after the Malaysian government said India had never sought the extradition of Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, who is wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday said the request for his custody would be sent soon.

MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar told the media that India's "internal legal process" was nearing completion and that the request would be made very soon.

Earlier this week, as per media reports, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had, in a written Parliamentary reply, said that the Indian government had never requested help in the Naik case.

However, he said that action would be taken against Naik if there was any proof of his role in terror-related activities.

The Malaysian government provided permanent resident status to Naik about five years ago, and has not received a citizenship request from him so far.

The delay on India's part in completing the legal process for submitting the extradition request is being attributed to the wait for the



NIA to file a charge sheet against Naik. Chargesheet filed

The chargesheet was filed in a Mumbai court about a week ago. According to MEA guidelines, as mentioned in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) website, any extradition request can be initiated after a competent court — having taken cognisance of the charge sheet — issues orders justifying the accused/fugitive's committal for trial and seeks his presence for the same.

Judiciary best judge of competence: SC Collegium

NEW DELHI: Let judiciary, and not the Intelligence Bureau (IB), be the best judge of professional competence of candidates considered for judicial appointments, the Supreme Court Collegium said.

The Collegium of Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, Justices J. Chelameswar and Ranjan Gogoi made it clear that the IB should not delve into the professional competence of persons shortlisted for the judiciary. The IB does a background check on the candidates once their names are considered for elevation by the High Court Collegium concerned.

Performance observed "We are of the view that professional competence can best be determined by the members of the higher judiciary who have the opportunity to observe his (candidate's) performance on a daily basis," the Collegium noted.

The Chief Justice and his two seniormost colleagues had met on November 1 to decide on the recommendations for judicial appointments to Tripura and Jharkhand High Courts and also to consider the case of three Additional Judges in the Gauhati High Court who were to be made permanent judges.

The Supreme Court Collegium further laid down that only factually proven information supplied by the IB on candidates should be taken cognisance of by the Collegium.

"In our view, it would not be appropriate to take cognisance of any unsubstantiated information based on the discreet inquiries made by the Intelligence Bureau," the Collegium noted.

Nod for elevation In the cases of the three candidates — advocates Rajesh Kumar, Anubha Rawat Choudhary and Kailash Prasad Deo — for the Jharkhand HC, the Supreme Court Collegium found that the IB had come up with nothing on record against their integrity. All three have been recommended for elevation as judges to the Jharkhand High Court.

In all the cases, the Supreme Court Collegium's conclusions show that it has microscopically gone through the IB reports concerning the integrity of the candidates recommended by the High Court Collegiums.

ED cites I-T report on Sterling Biotech funds diversion

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate has included an Income-Tax report on Gujarat-based Sterling Biotech and its sister companies in the money laundering probe into allegations that a major part of the loans taken from PSU banks were diverted.

The group companies had availed themselves of credit facilities of more than 5,000 crore from an Andhra Bank-led consortium of banks. "We have taken note of the Income Tax findings, which are also being investigated. The report identifies about 100 undisclosed offshore and 151 'benami' entities that allegedly had dealings with the companies," said an ED official. Data manipulation The Income Tax report found that the group companies indulged in manipulation of financial data and falsification of documents for getting loan. "Through the undisclosed offshore entities floated by the group, substantial loan funds were shown as having been invested in the Nigerian [business] operations," said the report. For this purpose, back-dated loan agreements between offshore entities were allegedly created and financial data was manipulated to show as if "substantial investment had been made through these entities towards the promoter group contribution. Matching expenses were also booked in the names of the offshore entities." According to the Income Tax Department, huge loans were taken from the off-shore branches of Indian banks based on falsified records. As alleged by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the ED, the Department also stated in the report that bank loans were diverted through 'benami' companies on the pretext of advance for purchase of capital assets or for supply of goods. "The funds so credited to these entities are then found withdrawn in cash using third party bearer cheques," it said.

Illegal gratification Funds were also allegedly siphoned off for personal purposes and also for "payment of illegal gratification." The report alleged the documents seized during the searches against the group companies in 2011 showed that funds were diverted using third-party bearer cheques from the "benami" companies' accounts and withdrawn in cash.

My mission is to transform the nation, people's lives: Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a session of the India's Business Reforms event at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi on Saturday. The meeting was also attended by Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu, World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, Cabinet Secretary R.K. Sinha, Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra, DIPP Secretary Ramesh Abhishek, among other dignitaries.

Here are the highlights from the event. Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu: "All the flagship programmes of the Prime Minister are inter-connected. GDP growth rates will be significantly higher in coming years, thanks to the improved ease of doing business. Ease of trading and ensuring all impediments for entrepreneurs are unshackled, is what we are working on now." World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva: "We are here to celebrate a very impressive achievement. In 15 years of the history of the ease of doing business, such a jump of 30 ranks is very rare. In cricket, I understand that hitting a century is a big milestone."

"Today is also the anniversary of Guru Nanak, reminds me of his words that whatever seed is sown, the plant will grow thus."

"World Bank recognises that

high-level ownership and championship of reforms is very important. And what better example for that than Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is here." "In last three decades, India's per capita income has quadrupled. I have no doubt India when it hits its century of independence in 2047, will be a high/middle income country." Prime Minister Narendra Modi: "The World Bank has recognised the tremendous work done by us to improve the ease of doing business. In the short time of 3 years, we have moved up 42 ranks. Over last 3 years, I have been constantly telling the domestic and foreign investor community that we, in India, are making serious efforts to make it easier to do business. India has delivered with the highest improvement in rank in a year."

"This is important as it's an indicator of good governance, a benchmark for quality and transparency, because ease of doing business also means ease of life. As you know, I have nothing else to do. I have one mission in life — transforming the nation and its people's lives."

"After coming up 42 positions from 142, I don't feel like sleeping. We have created critical mass for a swift take-off. This report doesn't take into account the GST system that impacts many aspects of doing



business. When GST was brought in, they said: Mar gaye! We said we will see for 3 months and analyse the difficulties and resolve them. And the GST Council did that. Where States had differences, committees of Ministers and officials were formed." "Almost all issues flagged by traders and businesses are being positively fixed. And if no state objects to the moves in the Council's meeting on November 9 and 10, then businesses will get genuine relief on their concerns."

"Many other reforms that have happened, need gestation and stabilisation time before the World Bank considers them. There are many reforms that the World Bank and the government are yet to find common ground. This gives me the confidence that we will do better even in the next year's report."

"I wish to list some more global recognition. We have moved 32 places up in the world competitiveness index of WEF. This is the highest rise. We are among top FDI investment destinations listed by UNCTAD."

"Some people don't understand the improvement in India's ranking. They are not bothered. Even today they are questioning the country's ranking. I want to ask such people: if insolvency code and other reforms were done in your time, would this ranking not have come in your regime?" "From 2004, when World Bank rankings started, to 2014, whose government was in place? I am a PM who has never seen the World Bank building. While earlier, there were those who knew the World Bank very well. It is not easy to take all stakeholders along. But in last 3

years, there's been a sea of change both in State governments and the Centre." "For two years, I kept hearing about big-bang reforms, big-bang reforms. That has stopped. We reformed FDI in 21 sectors. More than 90 per cent of FDI is on automatic route." "FDI inflow of 55.6 billion in 2015-16 was an all time-high. Then it touched 60 billion, an ever-high peak. In August 2017, the total FDI inflow stood at 9.64 billion — highest ever in any month."

"The past mindset of excessive control has been replaced with minimum govt, maximum governance. We have abolished 1,200 archaic laws. Similarly, 1000s of important reforms have been carried out by States as well. These don't get reflected in the World Bank report. This ranking may be called ease of doing business, but I believe it also means ease of living life."

"Most of the parameters picked in the ranking affects the lives of our ordinary citizens and youth. Now you can register your company in just one day. Railway reservations have improved, passports are now received faster. Ease of doing is important for large businesses, but is critical for small businesses. The issues they face need to be addressed. If required, we will be happy to share our experiences with other countries."

Punjabi woman stuck in Saudi Arabia returns, thanks Sushma Swaraj for help

Stuck in Saudi Arabia for the last three months, Gurbaksh Kaur finally returned back to India Saturday morning. Upon her return, she thanked minister of external affairs Sushma Swaraj and appealed to the government to facilitate her daughter's return too. I never thought that I will come back this soon after. I am very thankful to Union external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj for her extraordinary work and hope she will bring my daughter back soon," Kaur told Hindustan Times over the phone from Delhi.

Her family, including her husband Gurmel Ram (49) and nephew Jaswant Kumar (36) received her at the Delhi airport on Saturday morning in presence of Union ministry officials.

Gurbaksh (40) and her daughter Reena Kaur (23) of Rahon town in SBS Nagar district were duped by travel agents in August this year. Both had reportedly planned to go to Malaysia but the agent fraudulently sent them to Saudi Arabia, and later demanded money to bring them back.

The matter came to light when Gur-

baksh sent a video to her family, requesting to be rescued last week. In the video, Kaur revealed that they were in a miserable condition. Kaur's family later sought help from the ministry in a separate video message. Following media reports, chief minister Capt Amarinder Singh urged external minister Sushma Swaraj to help the duo. On Friday, minister also tweeted that pursuant to efforts of @IndianEmbRiyadh Gurbux Kaur is reaching India today. "The daughter Reena will return soon," Swaraj tweeted.

Separated at birth: UP, Uttarakhand staff may get last chance to change cadre

LUCKNOW: Around 500 officials and employees of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand governments will get their last chance to change the cadre to either state when a concerned committee meets in December to resolve issues pending since the creation of Uttarakhand from the former in 2000. Some staff of Uttar Pradesh was sent to Uttarakhand during its creation, following which several personnel had raised requests to be transferred to either state.

The Centre had set up a committee to resolve issues pertaining to the change which will meet in December for the final time, following which the committee will be wound



up. Staff of either government has been asked to submit their requests by November 30, failing which their requests will not be entertained.

"The Union government wants to wind up a committee set up by the department of personnel and training (DOPT) to decide about the

transfer of personnel. A last opportunity is, therefore, being given to the personnel who have been asked to submit a request about change of cadre," a senior UP government official said.

Uttarakhand was carved out of the northern hilly regions of Uttar Pradesh on

November 9, 2000, following which several issues, including transfer and distribution of personnel and resources, besides the settling of dues, have been pending between the two states.

So far, top officials of the two states have met a number of times, the latest being the one between chief ministers Yogi Adityanath of UP and Trivendra Singh Rawat of Uttarakhand — both of whom hail from Pauri Garhwal region of Uttarakhand — on April 10, soon after the BJP stormed to power in the two states. Before that, the two state chief secretaries had met in New Delhi on February 2, 2015.

Two men burn friend's wife to death for liquor in dry Bihar's Sitamarhi

MUZAFFARPUR: Two men set on fire the wife of one of their friends when they were refused money to purchase liquor in Sitamarhi district of Bihar, where the sale and consumption of alcohol had been banned more than a year ago. The incident took place on Friday evening at Shivanagar village in Runni Saidpur police station area, 27 km south of Sitamarhi town and 110 km north of state capital Patna.

The woman, identified as Alka Mishra, 30, succumbed to her burn injuries at Sri Medical College and Hospital (SKMCH), Muzaffarpur, 40 km away. SKMCH superintendent Dr GK Thakur said Mishra was brought to the hospital with 90% burn injuries. "She died before we could start the treatment," he said.

Muzaffarpur deputy superintendent of police (city) Ashish Anand said sub inspector of SKMCH police picket Ravindra Kumar had recorded the statement of Mishra before she died. "In her statement, Mishra accused BS Giri and Amit Giri, both friends of her husband, of setting her on fire after pouring kerosene," Anand said.

"BS Giri and Amit Giri, residents of same village, came to our house on Friday noon and asked for some money from my husband to buy liquor. But, my husband refused to pay them the money. They returned in the evening when my husband had gone out for some household work, set me on fire after pouring kerosene and fled," Anand quoted Mishra as saying in the statement.

The DSP said the copy of her statement would be sent to Runni Saidpur police station for further legal action. Victim's husband Rajiv Mishra said he had been working as a taxi driver in Mumbai for the last four years. "I had come to my native place nearly a month ago along with my wife and daughter."

On Friday, when I returned home after making some purchases from a nearby shop, I found my wife in flames. I somehow managed to douse the fire and took her to SKMCH for treatment," he said.

Bihar became a dry state on April 5, last year. Consuming, keeping or dealing in liquor is an offence under the state's new excise prohibition law, which provides for imprisonment up to 10 years.

This is why you should remove digital devices from your kids' bedroom

According to a study, parents who remove digital devices from their kids' bedrooms can improve their sleep. Removing electronic media from the bedroom and encouraging a calming bedtime routine are among recommendations Penn State researchers outlined in a recent manuscript on digital media and sleep in childhood and adolescence.

The manuscript appears in the first-ever special supplement on this topic in Pediatrics and is based on previous studies that suggest the use of digital devices before bedtime leads to insufficient sleep.

The recommendations, for clinicians and parents, are:

1. Make sleep a priority by talking with family members about the importance of sleep and healthy sleep expectations;
2. Encourage a bedtime routine that includes calming activities and



3. Encourage families to remove all electronic devices from their child or teen's bedroom, including TVs, video games, computers, tablets and

4. Talk with family members about the negative consequences of bright light in the evening on sleep; and
5. If a child or adolescent is exhibiting mood or behavioral problems,

consider insufficient sleep as a contributing factor. "Recent reviews of scientific literature reveal that the vast major-

ity of studies find evidence for an adverse association between screen-based media consumption and sleep health, primarily delayed bedtimes and reduced total sleep duration," said Orfeu Buxton, an author on the manuscript. The reasons behind this adverse association likely include time spent on screens replacing time spent sleeping; mental stimulation from media content; and the effects of light interrupting sleep cycles, according to the researchers.

Buxton and other researchers are further exploring this topic. They are working to understand if media use affects the timing and duration of sleep among children and adolescents; the role of parenting and family practices; the links between screen time and sleep quality and tiredness; and the influence of light on circadian physiology and sleep health among children and adolescents.

Social media won't harm your mental health, says study



There is no evidence supporting the view that the amount of time spent on social media increases mental health problems, say health experts.

The increasing use of social media has always been associated with the deteriorating mental health but a new research suggests that it may not affect mental health.

The study found no evidence supporting the view that the amount of time spent on social media increases mental health problems, say health experts.

Instead, some people tend to use the media platform to encourage a moral panic -- a process whereby panic or fear is being created among the masses over an issue -- to create a situation of interest, said the researchers.

"We do not deny the potential for some online behaviours to be associated with mental health problems.

But the research focuses on the behaviour of individuals rather than assuming social media to be the root cause of all socio-personal problems," explained Chloe Berryman, researcher at the University of Florida in the US.

The researchers surveyed youngsters by questioning them over their responses towards the media platforms, social relationships and whether they were mentally affected by some incidents.

The study, published in the journal Psychiatric Quarterly, found that the only concerned part was to do with vaguebooking or social media posts that contain little actual and clear information,

But written in such a way as to solicit attention and concern from potential readers.

Young people who tended to often write such posts were found to be lonelier and had more suicidal thoughts than others.

"Vaguebooking was slightly predictive of suicidal ideation, suggesting this particular behaviour could be a warning sign for serious issues," said Berryman. "It is therefore possible that some forms of social media use may function as a 'cry for help' among individuals with pre-existing mental health problems."

New flu shot may protect you lifelong

Researchers have developed a vaccine combining genes from four strains of influenza which may provide lifelong protection and soon pave the way towards a universal flu shot.

The researchers looked whether a universal flu shot could be created by using a combination of multiple genes shared at the ancestral level by flu strains circulating.

They reported the use of multiple centralised hemagglutinin (HA) genes, identified using protein sequence analysis programmes, to provide the greatest level of cross-protective immunity possible.

"Our idea is that these centralised antigens can set up a foundation of immunity against influenza," said lead researcher Eric Weaver, Assistant Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the US. "Because they are centralised and represent all the strains equally, they could provide a basis for immunity against all evolved strains," he added. The unconventional new vaccine was administered onto mice that survived exposure to lethal doses of seven of nine widely divergent influenza viruses. Those that received higher doses of the vaccine did not even get sick.

On the other hand, mice that received traditional flu shots or nasal sprays all sickened and died when exposed to the same viruses. The deadly pathogens were able to evade the immune responses triggered by the traditional vaccines.

While it is too soon to say the approach could be successfully used in humans, it appears to be a promising avenue toward a universal flu shot, Weaver said.

Drinking two sodas a week enough to up heart disease, diabetes risk

Just two cans of soda every week is sufficient enough to increase your risk of heart disease, stroke, hypertension and diabetes, a new research has warned.

According to a report in the Daily Mail, consuming a 12-ounce can of soda raises blood pressure. The study further noted that a small amount on a weekly basis can increase risk of metabolic syndrome.

Previous studies have associated such drinks with obesity and other health issues, but the growing consumption of these drinks, especially among the youth, has triggered concerns. For the study, data from 36 studies on people who consumed five or more sugary beverages a week and risk factors of the soda were analysed by researchers. A 17% decrease in insulin sensitivity was found in those who drank sugary drinks for 10 weeks. Researchers also found a link between the soda, hypertension and heart disease.

"The increased prevalence of cardiometabolic disorders is strongly linked to greater urbanization and the adoption of detrimental lifestyle choices that include sedentary behaviour, smoking and poor



dietary preferences," study author Professor Faadil Essop, of Stellenbosch University in South Africa, told the Daily Mail. Adding, "For example, excess sugar consumption has surfaced as one of the most prominent global dietary changes during the past few decades and is considered a primary driver of cardiometabolic diseases onset." Essop has also stressed upon the importance of "public education about the harmful effects of excess consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages".

The findings were originally published in the Journal of the Endocrine Society.

CONSUMING FOOD LIKE OUR ANCESTORS MAY BOOST HEALTH

Consuming a highly diverse diet rich in nutrients, like our ancestors did may boost human health, claims a study.

Researchers from Washington University in the US found that consuming a monotonous

diet of staple cereals and ultra-processed foods may be leading to malnutrition.

Malnutrition problems can be traced to poor-quality diets lacking in diversity, a recent phenomenon in evolutionary

history, researchers said.

The study, published in the journal Nutrition Reviews, posits that there is a misalignment of modern diets and the genome formed through time. Evident in the divergence are shared

risk factors for both under- and over-nutrition.

"Earlier diets were highly diverse and nutrient dense, in contrast to modern food systems in which monotonous diets of staple cereals and ultra-

processed foods play a more prominent role," said Lora Iannotti, associate professor at Washington University.

The study focused on higher dietary quality, which points to the need for altered macronutri-

ent ratios - lower percentages of carbohydrates, in particular - and higher concentrations of a variety of micronutrients.

"This review shows that ultra-processed foods, in particular products made from sub-

stances extracted from whole foods, particularly oils, flours and sugar, were not part of evolutionary diets and may be a main driver of malnutrition across most current food environments," Iannotti said.



Major companies commit Rs 68K crore investment in food and agri sector

NEW DELHI: The government on Friday said investments worth Rs 68,000 crore have been committed by many domestic and multinational firms, including ITC, PepsiCo, Patanjali and Coca Cola Co, in India's food and agriculture sector.

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries said 13 MoUs were signed on the inaugural day of World Food India 2017 event here.

"We have already signed MoUs worth Rs 68,000 crore on the first day of World Food India and more investment is set to come over the next few days," Union Minister for Food Processing Harsimrat Kaur Badal said in a statement. While PepsiCo announced to invest Rs 13,300 crore for setting up a food and beverage plant, rival Coca Cola announced

to bring in Rs 11,000 crore for juice bottling infrastructure and fruit processing plants and equipment. ITC and Patanjali also inked MoUs to invest Rs 10,000 crore each. Besides, Amazon, UAE's Sharaf Group and Yes Bank are also among major investors, the statement added.

"These investments will help us realise the goal of doubling farmers' income as well as generating massive employment in the food processing sector," Badal said. While conglomerate ITC said it would invest over Rs 10,000 crore to set up 20 integrated food processing and logistics facilities, PepsiCo reiterated that it along with its partners would invest Rs 13,000 crore in the next five years.

Speaking at the inauguration of event, Nestle Chairman of Board



of Director Paul Bulcke said top priority should be given to investment in building agriculture

capacity amid challenges of scarce natural resources, rising population and growing food demand.

Commenting on India's potential in food and agri sector, ITC Ltd CEO and Executive Di-

rector Sanjiv Puri said, "With a population of 1.3 billion, India's consumption market is projected to triple to USD 4 trillion by 2025 with the bulk of expenditure going into food products."

Unilever Global President Amanda Sourry said, "The world is looking towards India. The opportunities for foods in India are huge. We at Unilever are excited at opportunities in India."

She said rich agri-resources in India create an optimal opportunity to scale up the processing industry here. Hindustan Unilever Ltd CEO & Managing Director Sanjiv Mehta said: "India is an attractive destination by any yardstick which you look at... We are talking about one of the most attractive market and as the economy grows, there would

be more people coming and moving up." Metro AG COO and Metro Cash and Carry CEO Pieter Boone said the recent policy decisions to improve ease of doing business coupled with demonetisation and GST are now driving positive overhaul in the economic environment. Tata International Managing Director and Trent Chairman Noel Tata said that there is a need for significant new investment to increase our scale in food processing, which is dominated by MSMEs. The three day World Food India event was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Latvia Prime Minister Maris Kucinskis and Armenia President Serzh Sargsyan as also food and agriculture ministers from Italy, Germany and Denmark were present at the event.

Hershey to invest \$50 million to scale up India operations

MUMBAI: US-based chocolate and confectionery firm Hershey said on Friday it would be investing \$50 million in India over the next five years to scale up its operations here.

"We anticipate an investment of about \$50 million during the next five years as we focus on growing and expanding our presence in India. India is one of our key International focus markets and we are investing to build this important business said," Hershey India chairman and managing director Praveen Jakate.

"We are excited about the future of our great brands and products in India. Our investments over the next several years will help us to further build upon our positive momentum," he added. The Hershey Company, the world's fourth-largest confectioner



maker, had entered India through a joint venture with Godrej Group in 2008, but dissolved it four years later, buying out the entire stake.

India is among the four key markets for the company globally outside

North America.

Hershey India's product portfolio includes brands like Hershey's Syrup, Hershey's Milk Booster, Hershey's Spreads, Hershey's Milk Shakes, Sofit, Jolly Rancher, Brookside Chocolates,

Jumpin, Nutrine and Smart Cook.

The Pennsylvania-headquartered firm, which recently announced its third quarter global earnings, had said that India has emerged as the fastest growing market, clocking a net sales growth of 16%.

"Constant currency net sales in India increased 16% and slightly exceeded our plan. Growth in the brands we are investing behind continues to be solid. Our transition of the India portfolio is enabling a higher margin business, and we are on track to expand gross margins here by 1,000 basis points in 2017. This is enabling adjustments in the local marketplace that should result in a sustainable operating model," The Hershey Company's chief financial officer Patricia Little had said.

Markets stay the course, hit new peak on inflows, PMI data

MUMBAI: Stock benchmarks Sensex and Nifty on Friday scaled new all-time peaks, riding on more capital inflows and positive PMI data. Earnings optimism among investors and positive global cues after appointment of a new US Federal Reserve chief helped the indices go higher.

The 30-share BSE index firmed up to an all-time intra-day high of 33,733.71 on a flurry of buying, breaching its previous record of 33,657.57 hit on Thursday. Finally, it closed at a fresh record of 33,685.56 by rising 112.34 points, or 0.33 per cent. It broke previous closing record of 33,600.27 hit on November 1. Yesterday, the gauge had fallen from record by falling 27.05 points. The Nifty touched a fresh high of 10,461.70 intra-day, breaking the earlier record of 10,453 reached on Thurs-



day. The 50-share index ended up 28.70 points, or 0.28%, at a new peak of 10,452.50, surpassing its previous closing high of 10,440.50 hit on November 1.

For the second straight week, the Sensex rose, recording a significant gain of 528.34 points, or 1.59%. The Nifty was up 129.45 points, or 1.25%, during the week.

Apple Q4 2017 financial results: India revenue doubled year-over-year

MUMBAI: Apple on Thursday announced financial results for its fourth quarter of this year. The company posted better-than-expected quarterly revenue of \$52.6 billion, an increase of 12% from the year-ago quarter. Apple disclosed that the international sales accounted for 62% of the quarter's revenue while it registered a double-digit growth in India during the quarter. Apple CEO Tim Cook told investors on a conference call discussing Thursday's financial results that "a majority" of the iPhone SEs the company sold in India were also manufactured there, a critical component of Apple's negotiations with the Indian government for market access.

"...revenue from emerging markets outside of greater China was up 40%, with great momentum in India, where revenue doubled year over year," he said during the earnings call. The company offered a rosy forecast for the holiday shopping season, allaying investor concerns about production delays on the new iPhone X and demonstrating remarkable strength across its growing line of products and services. The stellar earnings report came just as the iPhone X went on sale Friday morning in Australia. Long lines were forming at Apple stores around the world, recalling the consumer frenzy that greeted early versions of the iPhone, but had faded with more recent launches. With supplies potentially tight, some Australian purchasers were already planning to sell their phones for as much as \$3,000, nearly double the A\$1,579 selling price.

Apple shares rose 4% in after-hours trading to hit an all-time high, with analysts lavishing praise on Apple CEO Tim Cook and speculating on when Apple might become the first public company worth a trillion dollars. The earnings demonstrate how Apple is able to drive growth across an ever-expanding product line that now includes five different iPhone models along with the iPad, the Mac, the Apple Watch and a suite of fast-growing services offerings. "We had good success, I would say, through the different iPhones," Cook said on a call with analysts.

"We tried hard to have an iPhone that is as affordable as possible for people that really want an iPhone, but may have a more limited budget."

Just a few weeks ago, Apple appeared to be facing a rare stumble with a delay in the iPhone X launch and rumours of production problems that could limit supply.

But Apple executives on Thursday shrugged off the concerns as Chief Financial Officer Luca Maestri told Reuters the company was "quite happy" with how manufacturing of the iPhone X was progressing.

Analysts have been eager to see whether Apple can meet demand for the iPhone X during the crucial holiday quarter, with most saying it will likely take it until next year or early spring to do so.

"Where the demand curve and supply curve are going to intersect, we do not know. It does not have a predecessor product," Maestri told Reuters.

STRONG MARGINS
Apple forecast fiscal first-quarter revenue of \$84 billion to \$87 billion, at the high end of analysts average expectations of \$84.18 billion, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. "A trillion-dollar market cap may now be in Cook's sights in light of these results and guidance around iPhone X," said Daniel Ives, an analyst at GBH Insights, referring to Apple's chief executive. The Cupertino, California-based company's market capitalisation of about \$868 billion already makes it the world's most valuable publicly-traded company.

There are still questions around supplies of the new phone and longer-term demand. Bob O'Donnell, head of Tech-analysis Research, cautioned that if Apple is not able to fill demand for iPhone X over the holiday quarter, it would push buyers to wait until Apple's March quarter, by which time they may have spent their money elsewhere.

"What we don't know is, how long will this first group of (iPhone X buyers) last?" O'Donnell said. Apple said it sold 46.7 million iPhones in the fourth quarter ended Sept. 30, above analysts' estimates of 46.4 million, according to financial data and analytics firm FactSet. However, average selling prices of \$618 fell short of forecasts of \$638. The company's net income rose to \$10.71 billion, or \$2.07 per share, in the quarter, from \$9.01 billion, or \$1.67 per share, a year earlier. That beat the average analyst estimate of \$1.87 per share.

Invest in India, doing business here easier now: PM Modi to global investors

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday invited global investors to do business in India, which he said was "easier now" after his government repealed archaic laws and launched attractive fiscal incentives.

Describing India as "one of the fastest growing economies" in the world, Modi said it was an opportune time for global businesses to invest in the country.

"India has jumped 30 ranks this year in the World Bank's (Ease of) Doing Business rankings. India was ranked number one in the world in 2016 in greenfield investment."

"India is also rapidly progressing on the Global Innovation Index, Global Logistics Index and Glob-

al Competitiveness Index," Modi told the gathering of global businessmen at the inauguration of World Food India 2017 in New Delhi. Billed as the biggest conglomeration of global investors and business leaders of major food companies, the three-day event aims to transform the food economy and realise the government's vision of doubling farmers' income by establishing India as a preferred investment destination and sourcing hub for the global food processing industry. Private sector participation has been increasing in many segments of the value chain. However, more investment is required in contract farming, raw material sourcing and creating agri-linkages. This is a clear op-

portunity for global chains."

Modi said India offered single window clearance for investors and had launched attractive fiscal incentives.

"There are opportunities in post-harvest management, like primary processing and storage, preservation infra, cold chain and refrigerated transportation."

"There is also immense potential for food processing and value addition in areas such as organic and fortified foods." He said food processing was a way of life in India that had been practised for ages. "Simple, home-based techniques, such as fermentation, have resulted in the creation of our famous pickles, papads, chutneys and murabbas that excite

both the elite and the masses across the world."

Modi said farmers were central to India's efforts in food processing and as such the government launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana to create world-class food processing infrastructure. "This will leverage investment of \$5 billion, benefit two million farmers and create more than half a million jobs."

The food event will host over 2,000 participants and 200 companies from around 30 countries.

Apart from representatives of 28 states, it will also see participation of 18 ministerial and business delegations, nearly 50 global CEOs along with heads of all leading domestic food processing companies.

High sales by FMCG firms indicate growth in consumer demand

MUMBAI: A surprise increase in sales volumes of consumer packaged goods companies has boosted hopes of a recovery in consumption demand, indicating the possible end of the lingering effects of last year's demonetisation and the fallout of the move to a Goods and Services Tax regime in July.

Hindustan Unilever Ltd, India's largest consumer packaged goods maker, reported a 4% volume growth in the three months to September compared to flat growth in the previous quarter. Dabur India, reported a 7.2% volume growth in the September quarter for its domestic business as compared to a 4.4% decline the previous quarter. Marico saw volume growth of 8% in the September quarter compared to a 9% decline



the previous quarter.

While the revival has been led by growth in urban markets, even rural markets are showing the green shoots of a gradual recovery. Indeed, across the board from consumer packaged goods to consumer durables, the statements of companies reflect a slightly more optimistic outlook than before.

"Urban demand has been steady; rural has grown a shade faster than urban,"

said Vivek Gambhir, managing director and chief executive officer, Godrej Consumer Products Ltd, the maker of Cinthol soaps and Hit insecticides. Godrej reported a surprise 10% growth in volumes. In the last 12 months, the rural business suffered more despite a second straight year of good rains.

The cash crunch was far more acute for the rural consumer after the invalida-

tion of high value notes last November. Then in the run up to the implementation of GST, the cash dependent wholesale channel started to run down inventory impacting supplies to the interiors of the country. Close to 70-80% of rural market is serviced by the wholesale channel. Still, rural consumption is also gradually recovering. "Some sectors in consumption are doing well and some are not. Staples is a mixed bag and consumer durables is still picking up," said Ashutosh Datar, vice president at IIFL Institutional Equities.

"We are seeing clear signs of revival," said Anand Mour, a research analyst at ICICI Securities Ltd.

According to Mour, the normal monsoon, increased government spending and

increase in the minimum support prices of crops besides wholesale channel stabilisation will further aid in the pickup of demand in rural India in the coming quarters. Experts cite two reasons for the growth. One, firms had run down inventory in the run up to GST. So, restocking has played a role. Second, Diwali, which usually sees a spike in sales came almost 15 days early this year. They add that growth in the December quarter will be high anyway because of the low base of a year ago due to the invalidation of high value notes. It would be prudent to wait before calling a full-fledged recovery, according to Chandru Kalro, managing director, TTK Prestige, the maker of cookware and stoves.

Every team member wants to contribute in victory, says Sarfraz

ISLAMABAD: Insisting that the dressing room environment of the present national team is extremely good, Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed has said that every player has the hunger to win to make the country's name proud.

Sarfraz, who led Pakistan to a memorable victory in the coveted ICC Champions Trophy final against India at The Oval in June this year, said every individual was working hard to perform well and as a result a healthy competition was developing among them. "The dressing room environment of our team is extremely good; every player now wants to contribute his part in taking Pakistan to victory through his performance. Therefore, I think the future of this team is very bright," the 30-year-old Sarfraz said while talking to a private news channel.

Responding to a question, the gutsy wicketkeeper/batsman said he had very good understanding with head coach Mickey Arthur as well as chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq. "Arthur is working hard on the players and hopefully his hard work will pay off," the skipper, who now has 38 Tests, 80 ODIs and 35 T20 Internationals to his credit, said. Sarfraz, under whose captaincy Pakistan after losing the two-Test series to Sri Lanka 0-2 in the UAE recorded 5-0 ODI and 3-0 T20 clean sweeps against the same country last month, said Inzamam gave top priority to his (captain's) say and supported him all the way. Speaking about the January 2018 tour to New Zealand where Pakistan are scheduled to play five ODIs and three T20 Internationals, Sarfraz said, "Though conditions in New Zealand will be tough but we have planned in going there prior to the series to play practice matches in order to get accustomed to the conditions."

Commenting on him batting at number six spot, Sarfraz said there are many talented players in the national team and "therefore we should benefit from their game in the top order".

"[Experienced players] Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Hafeez and [fast-improving] youngster Babar Azam have been performing tremendously well in the top order," noted the skipper. Sarfraz praised Army, Police, Pakistan Cricket Board and all the other stakeholders whose efforts he said helped in reviving international cricket in Pakistan.

FIFA warns All India Football Federation against third-party interference

NEW DELHI: World football governing body FIFA has warned the All India Football Federation (AIFF) that they are 'obliged' to conduct their affairs without third party interference.

FIFA sent a letter to the AIFF on Friday asking for more details vis-à-vis the Delhi High Court decision to set aside the election of Praful Patel-led office-bearers of the AIFF, held on December 20, 2016.

The Delhi High Court had further observed on October 31 that fresh elections be held within five months as AIFF had violated the Sports Code. The court also nominated former Chief Election Commissioner SY Quraishi to take charge of the affairs of the country's football body for the time being.

"We can confirm that FIFA has today sent a letter to the AIFF requesting more information about Delhi's High Court decision as well



as the steps that AIFF intends to undertake in this matter," said a FIFA spokesperson.

"FIFA has also reminded the AIFF that in accordance with art.

14 par. 1 let. i) and art. 19 of the FIFA Statutes all member associations, including the AIFF, are obliged to manage their affairs independently and without undue

influence from third parties."

AIFF received a copy of the order and are expected to decide on their future course of action early next week in consultation with their law-

yers. If the AIFF does not set its house in order, India could face sanctions from FIFA like Pakistan, Kuwait and Guatemala, who were suspended for third party interference.

Patel first became acting president of the AIFF for a one-year term after former president Priya Ranjan Das Munshi suffered a cardiac arrest in 2008. However, in October 2009, he became the full-time president and was re-elected in December 2012.

Last year, he was again elected unanimously for a third term while Kushal Das was appointed as the general secretary. Then, Das had said that the elections were held as per the spirit of the Sports Code and the guidelines related to age and tenure had been complied with. India recently hosted the FIFA U-17 World Cup from October 6-28. England thrashed Spain 5-2 in final to win their maiden title.

Virat Kohli says MS Dhoni has the best cricketing brain he's ever seen

MUMBAI: Virat Kohli took charge of the Indian cricket team a little over a year ago in the shorter formats of the game. But despite the constant success the side has been enjoying under him, talks related to whether he has been an able successor to MS Dhoni has already been quashed.

At a recent talk show, Kohli further clarified that it has been his understanding with Dhoni that has helped the transition come through in a successful manner. Speaking to Gaurav Kapur in the show Breakfast with Champions, Virat Kohli said: "The transition went pretty well. No one felt there's a problem. Even on the field no one realized that there has been a transition. We still crack jokes and have a good laugh in between just like we did before. So, I feel really lucky that he's still around during my initial years

of captaincy and I'm still learning things from him." The skipper further added that Dhoni, also known as 'Captain Cool' for his ice-cool approach in tense situations during matches, isn't all that serious as he seems on field and has a laugh or two even during the matches. Praising the understanding with his senior pro, Kohli said: "MS and I have a great understanding. For example, if we're running between the wickets and he says two, I simply close my eyes and run. Because I'm so sure of his judgment, I know that I'll make it. I don't think I've come across a better cricketing brain just in terms of planning; knowing what's happening in the game and can be done... Sometimes I like to follow my own instinct as well but if I ask him something eight or nine times out of 10, he tells you things that always work.



So it's a blessing to have him." Kohli also stated that despite talks over possible rifts between the two after the change in captaincy, nothing ever affected their understanding in the middle. "Our friendship has grown over the years immensely," he

said. "There have been times when people tried to poke controversies in between but neither does he read any of those things and neither do I. Hence, when we go out together, people can see us getting well and there's nothing between us."

Mayank Agarwal slams triple ton, Karnataka on top vs Maharashtra in Ranji Trophy

PUNE: Mayank Agarwal starred for Karnataka and entered the record books as he smashed his maiden triple ton at the MCA stadium in Pune on Friday. Agarwal became the third batsman to smash a triple century in the 2017 Ranji Trophy. Prashant Chopra smashed 338 for Himachal Pradesh against Punjab while Hanuma Vihari registered a triple ton for Andhra Pradesh against Odisha. At the Maharashtra Cricket Association ground at Gahunje, the third day read the same story as Karnataka batsmen maintained the upper hand and declared their innings after putting a mammoth total of 628-5. In reply, Maharashtra batting line again surrendered against the strong side and at the end of the day, hosts were trailing by 248 runs. Rahul Tripathi, who rescued Maharashtra in the first innings, is at the crease with 33 runs while Rituraj Gaikwad is on 61.



Earlier, Mayank added 85 runs to his overnight score of 219 to achieve the feat, while Karun Nair, who was at 56, added another century to his tally with 116. Mayank's innings of 304 was dotted

with 28 boundaries and four sixes. Immediately, after he reached the magic figure, Karnataka decided to call the hosts for second time, declaring the innings at 628.

England's Craig Overton ready to seize Ashes chance

LONDON: Uncapped all-rounder Craig Overton holds no fears of stepping into Ben Stokes' shoes for the heat of an Ashes battle in the first Test of the series at the Gabba. Overton could make his first full international appearance when England face Australia in Brisbane this month, with Stokes absent following his arrest on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm. The 23-year-old said he will be ready for the call if he is given the nod to make his bow on such a huge stage. "It's a big tour for me so I'll take the opportunities that come and it'll be a good experience," Overton said.

"There's a good chance I'm going to be playing so it's making sure I'm going to be ready if selected for that first Test. You can't be too fearful of it. You've got to enjoy it and make sure you make the most of it. Playing Test cricket for England doesn't last forever so you've got



to make sure you enjoy it as much as possible. "My game's progressed really nicely the last couple of years at Somerset so hopefully it feels like the right time and I can take my chance if it comes." Overton was banned for two matches in 2015 after committing three on-field offences in the space of a year, including

being accused of making a racist remark to Pakistan-born all-rounder Ashar Zaidi. Although Overton said he did not recall making a racist comment, he looks back on that time as a turning point in his career. "That's not how you behave on a cricket field," Overton stated. "You can't act like that. It was not just that incident. The whole summer there were a few instances. I've calmed down the last couple of years and I think what happened has made me realise you can't go on acting like that. I don't want to lose the edge. It's just finding the right balance and not going too far. That incident matured me a little bit which I'm really happy with and I've moved on from that. It was massively a turning point."

See how Ashish Nehra got cake smeared all over his face during farewell party

MUMBAI: Ashish Nehra retired from all formats of the game on Wednesday, thus ending a glittering career spanning over 18 years in international cricket. It was an emotional moment for the 38-year-old, who hung up his boots in front of his home crowd. The fate of the match had already been written by then and thus although the usual pressure of winning a match wasn't there, Nehra later admitted that it was an unusual experience nonetheless.

The Ferozeshah Kotla ground was also the very venue where Nehra had earned his Ranji debut back in 1997. The crowd did give a fitting farewell to their beloved 'Nehraji'.

After the match, skipper Virat Kohli, who also hails from Delhi, lauded the tenacity and resilience of Nehra. "To have played 19 years is very hard for a fast bowler. I know how professional he's been and how hard he's worked.

"He deserved this kind of a farewell



with the crowd cheering him. He can now spend time with his family, he's got a beautiful family. We'll stay in touch but we'll miss him and I wish him all the best," Kohli had said. The farewell party was thus bound to be

quite a spectacular moment as well with former veterans of the game joining in the celebration in the dressing room. Former India opener Virender Sehwag, who hails from Delhi as well, was seen in a couple of pictures up-

loaded on Twitter and a walk down memory might have been extremely nostalgic. A video was recently uploaded on Twitter by a user who goes by the name @dhonekohli where the cricketers can be seen celebrating the farewell.

Nehra is seen giving a piece of cake to Kohli, who in turn returns the favour. Nehra's face can be seen smeared with cake all over as well. Nehra is best remembered by fans for his iconic haul of 6/23 against England in the 2003 World Cup where he ran through the opposition to hand India the crucial victory.

Although he could not pick up any wickets, Nehra was a content man after his final game. "I last played Test cricket when I was 24 or 25, but at the end, to have played for 18 years and to be here standing in blue clothing and to have played my final match, I could not have asked for anything more," he said at the post-match conference.

Mary Kom enters semis of Asian Boxing Championships

HOCHI MINH CITY: The celebrated M C Mary Kom was today assured of her sixth medal at the Asian women's Boxing Championships after she advanced to the semifinals of the continental showpiece event here. Mary Kom defeated Chinese Taipei's Meng-Chieh Pin in a split verdict in the quarterfinals to make the last four stage of the light flyweight (48kg) category.

The 34-year-old, who has won four gold, a silver in her five previous appearances at the event, will face Japan's Tsubasa Komura in the semifinals. In a rather cautiously-fought bout, neither the Indian, nor her opponent was willing to launch too many attacks.

The punches were few and far between at least in the opening three minutes. However, the two boxers upped the intensity in the second round.

The Taipei boxer, also the taller of the



two pugilists, was the first to move away from the waiting game and began using her left straights and right hooks rather effectively. However, Mary Kom too raised her game against the nimble-footed Pin, who displayed impressive defensive tactics. The Manipuri went all out in the last round and more than made up for a patchy display in the opening round to get the judges' nod.