

TIME AND US

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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	19.6	0.9
JAMMU	27.4	12.8
LEH	11.9	-4.6
KARGIL	14.8	-3.2

SUNSET FRIDAY: 05:31 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 07:02 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly clear sky... Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 20°C & 01°C respectively.

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

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ICC TOOTHLESS AGAINST INDIAN CRICKET BOARD, SAYS PAKISTAN LEGEND WASIM AKRAM

Kashmiri Pandit delegation meets Dineshwar Sharma in Jammu



JAMMU: Representatives of several Kashmiri Pandit organisations today met Dineshwar Sharma, the Centre's special representative for Kashmir, and sought the setting up of an institutional mechanism for the welfare of the displaced community.

Sharma, who was appointed the Centre's point person on Jammu and Kashmir last month, began the second leg of his visit to the State and reached Jammu last evening to hold consultations with various groups and political parties.

He called on Governor N N Vohra and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti last night and discussed ways to reach out to the stakeholders in the state, officials said.

"The displaced Kashmiri Pandits are the biggest stakeholders in their rehabilitation in Kashmir. Therefore, it is they who should have the maximum say in deciding modalities of return and the methodology," the KP representatives said in a joint memorandum submitted to Sharma.

The delegation was led by BJP legislator G L Raina and included leaders from All India Kashmiri Samaj, All India Kashmir Pandit Conference, Jammu and Kashmir National Front, Vichar Manch and Zeishtadevi Prabandik Committee.

"It is our demand that the Government put in place (a mechanism) which regularly engages the community in dialogue to work out the agreed principles on return," the memorandum said.

"One way of achieving it is to have a welfare board on the lines of Gujjar Board or Pahari Board with representatives

▶ See **Pandit**...Pg 02

No shortage of weapons in Army: Bipin Rawat

Varanasi, Nov 10: Indian Army chief General Bipin Rawat said on Friday that the armed force is not facing any shortage of arms and it can give a befitting reply to the country's enemies, contrary to claims of the top government auditor that its ammunition stock was in a critical level and will exhaust within 10 days.

"We have to keep modernising weapons and arms as the technology is upgrading and we are trying to bring in new and modernised ones in our army," General Rawat told reporters in Varanasi after attending the bicentenary celebration of 9 Gorkha Rifles at 39



Gorkha Training Centre. The Comptroller and Auditor General ▶ See **Bipin**...Pg 02

Pentagon asked to develop enduring defence ties with India

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon has been asked by US Congressional leaders to develop a "forward-looking" strategy to form an enduring defence relationship with India.

Congressional leaders reconciling the differences between the House and Senate versions of the National Defense Authorisation Act

(NDAA-2018) also asked the US and India to work closely in Afghanistan.

The new version of the NDAA-2018 require the Secretary of Defence to "develop a forward-looking strategy" that would build upon current objectives and goals, underlining a mutual desire to develop an enduring defence relationship with India.

According to it, the US and India "should work closely with Afghanistan" to promote stability in the region to include targeted infrastructure development and economic investment, means to address capability gaps in country, and improved humanitarian and disaster relief assistance.

The US Congress in its last ▶ See **Pentagon**...Pg 02

Bring Tulail under cellular coverage area, Mehbooba writes to Union Communications Minister

Also seeks I&B Minister's intervention to resolve problems of local artists, producers of DD Kashmir

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 10: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti has impressed upon the Union Communications Minister, Manoj Sinha to take measures for bringing Tulail village of Gurez valley into the cellular coverage area.

In her communication to the Union Minister, the Chief Minister stressed upon the locational disadvantage of the area which is

far away even from Gurez and generally remains cut off for most of the year.

Mehbooba Mufti has urged the Union Minister to direct BSNL and private cellular mobile companies to take measures on priority to bring Tulail village on mobile network of the country which would ease the residents

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

MILITANTS TARGET POLICE VEHICLE IN QAZIGUND

Security Guard fires in air after observing 'suspicious movement'

Srinagar, Nov 10: Suspected militants showed their presence once again in South Kashmir when they targeted a police vehicle in Qazigund area of Anantnag district.

A police official said that suspected militants fired upon a police vehicle in Bungam area of Qazigund, creating panic in the area.

The official said that there was report of any injuries ▶ See **Militants**...Pg 02

'GST ON 50 ITEMS OF MASS CONSUMPTION SLASHED TO 18%

New Delhi: The GST rate on 50 items of mass consumption, that were in the 28 per cent tax slab, has been slashed to 18, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who heads the Group of Ministers panel for tackling IT-related glitches, said on Friday. "All items of common consumption have been ▶ See **GST**...Pg 02

FOR DIPR THERE IS NO 'DIFFERENCE' BETWEEN A COLOUR AND BLACK AND WHITE NEWSPAPER

Srinagar, Nov 10: A reply under Right to Information Act sought by a newspaper owner has revealed that Department of Information and Public Relations doesn't differentiate between a colour and a black and white newspaper when it comes to the distribution of advertisements.

The Department of Information and Public Relations Jammu and Kashmir has mentioned that the government has paid Rs 31 crores to newspapers during 2016-2017, while the Kashmir based newspapers received Rs 17 crores in 2016-2017 including liabilities from 2013 and near about 1/3 has been paid from the same budget and from the same date to national newspapers. The same practice has been adopted in this financial year (2017-2018).

The information supplied by Department of Information and Public Relations reveals that the Department ▶ See **DIPR**...Pg 02

Govt for safe return of Kashmiri Pandits to Valley: Mattoo

Visits migrant camp in Jagti

Jammu, Nov 10, CNS: Advisor to Chief Minister, Professor Amitabh Mattoo today said the government is committed for ensuring honorable and safe return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley.

Prof. Mattoo said this while addressing a gathering of Kashmiri Pandits at Jagti.

Vice Chancellor Central University of Jammu, Professor Ashok Aima, Commissioner Secretary Revenue



Shafiq Ahmed Raina, Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner M.L Raina, Deputy Commissioner Relief K.K Sidha, Additional Secretary Chief Minister's Grievance

Cell Inam ul Haq Siddiqui, Executive Engineer Relief Organization and other senior officers accompanied the advisor during his visit. Speaking on the occasion,

Prof. Mattoo stressed that the culture that Kashmiri Pandits carry along is a part of the larger picture of the state's history and its preservation ▶ See **Mattoo**...Pg 02

CLASHES IN PULWAMA AND HAJIN AFTER FORCES LAUNCH CASO

Pulwama/Bandipora, Nov 10: Massive clashes broke out in different parts of Hajin town of North Kashmir's Bandipora district after government forces launched a cordon and search operation on Friday morning.

Reports said that 13 Rashtriya Rifles along with police and CRPF launched a search operation in different parts of Hajin town including Bangar Mohalla, Dangar Mohalla, Par Mohalla, Kochik Mohalla, Sheikh Mohalla and Hajin Ghat.

Reports said as the operation was launched people in large numbers took to roads and clashed with government forces. The Forces responded with tear-smoke shelling. ▶ See **Clashes**...Pg 02

Police to get bullet-proof jackets, vehicles

Jammu, Nov 10: The Jammu and Kashmir Police will get bullet-proof vehicles and jackets for most of its policemen serving in insurgency-hit areas, in view of the recent attacks in the Valley, a senior official said today.

As many as 26 cops have been killed in the attacks in the Kashmir Valley this year, according to official police data.

"Lots of things are being procured to modernise the police force after recent attacks on policemen by militants, and the Ministry of Home Affairs was kind enough to take swift action and sanctioned bullet-proof vehicles for almost all the police stations and senior officers," Director General of Police (DGP)



Jammu and Kashmir, S P Vaid told PTI. He said the bullet-proof jackets and ▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

MODI WORKING TO SOLVE PAK ISSUE: MOS HOME

They quote Instrument of Accession the way it suits them: Omar

Srinagar, Nov 10: Former chief Minister and National Conference Working President Omar Abdullah Union Friday while taking a dig at ruling BJP government, said the "Instrument of Accession that made J&K a part of the Union kept ALL powers with the state baring Currency/Communication/Defence/Foreign Affairs."

He was reacting to the statement of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Hansraj Ahir, who said Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PaK) is part of India as per agreement made by Maharaja Hari Singh but it has been under Pakistani occupation. ▶ See **MOS**...Pg 02

Zulfkar for expediting process of providing scholarships to ST students

Reviews functioning of Tribal Affairs Department



Jammu, Nov 10: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today directed the officers of Tribal Affairs Department

to adopt a comprehensive mechanism to expedite the process of providing scholarships to the ST students. ▶ See **Zulfkar**...Pg 02

Global Entrepreneurship Summit-2017 JKEDI HOLDS CONFERENCE ON CREATING ECOSYSTEM FOR STARTUPS

Pampore, Nov 10: The Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) in collaboration with NITI Aayog and The Global Education and Leadership Foundation (GELF) Friday hosted an international-level 'Conference on Creating an Ecosystem for Startups'- the first of its kind in the State.

The conference held here was part of the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES), India -2017 to be jointly hosted by the Government of India (GoI) and United States of America (USA) in Hyderabad from November 28-30.

Many similar conferences termed as 'Road to Global ▶ See **JKEDI**...Pg 02

Mirwaiz aghast over the miserable plight of Kashmiri prisoners

Srinagar, Nov 10: Addressing the Friday congregational gathering at the historic Jamia Masjid APHC chairman said that the information received from jails regarding the plight of detainees is deeply disturbing and a matter of serious concern for the leadership and the people of Kashmir. Mirwaiz said that the treatment meted out to Kashmiri detainees and under trials lodged particularly in Jammu central jail Kotbal-



wal, Kathua and Tihar jail right from the time they enter these jails is deliberately inhuman. He said that it is aimed not so much at physically torturing them but to break

their will and determination and affect them psychologically. Mirwaiz said that these detainees are not criminals but political prisoners who are being subject to detention for their political convictions and outlook and dealing with them inhumanly is not only a violation of the Geneva conventions of the rights and dignity of prisoners but even against basic human practices and ethics. ▶ See **Mirwaiz**...Pg 02

HC COMES TO RESCUE OF ASPIRANTS

Fire and Service Dept to start fresh process for recruitment of 900 posts with 2013 advertisement

Srinagar, Nov 10: The Fire and Services Department will start a fresh process for recruitment of around 900 posts, under three advertisement notices issued in 2013.

This is in view of the recent High Court judgement which quashed a home department order that terminated the recruitment process for various non-gazetted and class-IV posts in the Fire and Emergency Services Department last year.

Director Fire and Emergency Services, Rajinder Kumar Hak, said that fresh recruitment process will be started to fill up around 900 vacancies. "The advertisements will ▶ See **HC**...Pg 02

Continue from Front Page

PANDIT

from different districts of the state and a chairman to look into the issues that concern the community," it said.

After meeting Sharma, Raina told reporters that delegation members also raised the issue of encroachment of properties of temples, shrines and cremation grounds.

He criticised the poor implementation of the prime minister's employment package for youths from the community.

The KP leadership has demanded a commission of inquiry into the targeted killings of members from the community in the Valley and their subsequent exodus, he said. (AGENCIES)

BIPIN

(CAG) said there was a critical shortage of ammunition in the army in its report in July and that 55% ammunition used by the force would not last long to meet the minimum operational requirements.

It added that for the remaining 45%, the army has stock which could be put to use for a maximum of 10 days in case of an "intense war".

The general also said incidents of stone pelting have come down significantly in Jammu and Kashmir and security forces are making all efforts to maintain normalcy in the restive state.

"The army, Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and Jammu and Kashmir police are working together in the state. Solution to this can't be achieved overnight," General Rawat said.

"The government, intelligence agencies, state administration all are making efforts. Will be successful if things go in this direction, can say this with belief," he added.

General Rawat arrived in the temple town on Thursday afternoon and witnessed the Ganga aarti in the evening. He paid tribute to the martyrs by laying a wreath at the war memorial at 39 Gorkha Training Centre (GTC) where the bi-centenary celebration of Gorkha Rifles began on Thursday.

He offered prayers at Kashi Vishwanath Temple on Friday morning.

"I sought the blessings of Baba Vishwanath and prayed for the well-being of every soldier. I offered special prayers for the soldiers who are deployed in tough terrains," the general said.

He said it was a matter of great pride for him to attend the bi-centenary celebrations of Gorkha Rifles that was known for its bravery.

PENTAGON

NDAA-2017 had designated India as a 'Major Defence Partner'.

In its latest conference report, the Congressional leaders on Thursday said that the designation of 'Major Defence Partner' is unique to India, and institutionalises the progress made to facilitate defence trade and technology cooperation between the United States and India to a level commensurate with the closest allies and partners of America.

"The designation promotes joint exercises, defence strategy and policy coordination, military exchanges, and port calls in support of defence cooperation between the United States and India," it said.

Reconciled version of the NDAA-2018 now heads to the House and Senate floor for formal approval, before it is sent to the White House for US President Donald Trump to sign it into a law.

Among other things, it asked Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and the Defence Secretary Jim Mattis to develop a strategy for advancing defence cooperation between the United States and India. (AGENCIES)

MEHBOOBA

of the village from many inconveniences.

It may be recalled here that during her recent visit to Gurez in connection with her Public Outreach programme, a large number of people had met the Chief Minister and requested extension of mobile network to the area to ease many of their difficulties.

The Chief Minister had assured them to take up the matter with Central Government.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister in a separate communication to Union Information & Broadcasting Minister, Smriti Zubin Irani has sought her intervention into the problems being faced by local producers and content providers of DD Kashir due to stoppage to commissioning of programmes and putting stringent conditions in the fresh notification which detracts their prospective.

In her letter, the Chief Minister said DD Kashir was launched to provide a platform to local artists and programme producers to showcase their talent besides promoting local languages and cultures of the State.

Mehbooba Mufti has requested Smriti Irani to have the issue re-examined to ensure a level playing field for local artists and programme developers which would ensure their talent display at the DD Kashir, an objective with which the said channel was launched.

A deputation of television professional had met the Chief Minister recently during her public meet and raised her issues with her. Mehbooba Mufti had assured the deputation to take up the matter with Information & Broadcasting Minister.

MILITANTS

or casualties. He said the area has been cordoned off and a search operation was launched to nab the militants.

Meanwhile, a security guard posted at Police Lines Awantipora fired couple of shots in air after he allegedly observed some suspicious movement.

Sources said that a Sentry posted at Police Lines Awantipora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district resorted to aerial firing creating panic inside the Police Lines.

The incident occurred at 3:15 of Friday morning. A police official while confirming the incident told news agency CNS that the security guard had observed some suspicious movement outside police lines and subsequently he fired some warning shots in air.

"Government Forces searched the area, however, nothing suspicious was found," the police official added.

GST

reduced from 28 per cent to 18 per cent tax rate.

"Tax on goods of mass consumption like chewing gum, chocolates, shaving items, shampoo, skin creams, whose revenue implication is not much, has been reduced," Modi

told reporters here on the sidelines of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council meet.

He further added that the revenue implication of these will be approximately Rs 20,000 crore.

Modi said that it was important the system under GST regime stabilises as only four months were remaining for the close of the current financial year. (IANS)

DIPR

has not made any distinction between a colour and a black and white newspaper and has distributed advertisements to them on equal basis.

In one such case a weekly newspaper has received 430-510 cm advertisement for 4 issues while a daily colour newspaper received 700-1060cm in 25 issues.

In another bizarre instance, a newspaper that had stopped publication 3 months has received 50 cms of advertisements till October 5 and 440cms in September while a daily colour newspaper had not received a single advertisement till October 14 this year.

MATTOO

is priority for the current dispensation. He said that the government would involve their representatives in formulating various welfare measures. He further said the government would take all possible steps for the welfare of KP community and for betterment of conditions at their places. He further said that the government has taken numerous policy measures for Kashmiri Pandits including provisions for government jobs and creation, allotment of residential facilities for employees.

He said that with the various development initiatives taken by present government the state will soon enter an era of normalcy, peace and prosperity, which the people of the state have been yearning for.

"Late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed had the vision that migrants are part of Kashmiriyat and they should return with dignity, as Kashmiri Pandits are an inseparable part of the Kashmiri society, and the inclusive ethos, for which Kashmir has been known for ages, is incomplete without them", Prof Mattoo further maintained.

While praising the courage and dedication of the community in making every effort to preserve its cultural ethos, he expressed joy over the participation of youngsters and children in talent display events.

He took on spot appraisal of the facilities being provided to migrants at Jagti and directed the officers to ensure safe drinking water health facilities, sanitation and timely availability of ration for the migrant families. He informed that the working hours of medical health centres have been extended for the convenience of the people.

He assured the up-gradation of health facilities and other infrastructure at Jagti and said that he will take up the matter with the Health Minister at the earliest.

He informed the gathering that construction work of residential flats at Vessu, Sheikhpura is in full swing besides work at Baramulla, Kupwara and other transitional accommodations with basic facilities is also in progress.

Prof Mattoo assured the gathering that the government would consider their demand of constituting consultative committee comprising of representatives of Kashmiri Pandits to work with government for the betterment and welfare of the community.

He announced that a library and computer lab with internet facility would be established at Jagti by the Central University of Jammu for the overall development of the migrant youth.

Later, the advisor visited hospital at Jagti and took stock of health facilities available there.

CLASHES

The clashes continued for hours. Reports said that the operation was called off as no contact with militants was established.

Meanwhile, clashes erupt after Forces launch search operation in South Kashmir village

Pulwama: Clashes erupted in Lassipora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district after government forces cordoned off the area and started a search operation to flush out militants.

Reports said that government forces comprising 55 Rashtriya Rifles of Army, Special Operation Group of Jammu Kashmir Police and CRPF 182 Battalion cordoned off Tantray Pora area of Lassipora village after receiving inputs about the presence of militants there.

Witnesses said that a large number of people hit to roads and pelted stones on the government forces. The Forces tried to charge protesters with canes, but as the stone-pelting continued, they responded with tear-smoke shelling. Witnesses added that government forces fired some shots in air as the clashes intensified.

Despite clashes, the operation continued, however, government forces could not establish contact with militants.

POLICE

headgears (patkas) are also under procurement and police modernisation is taking place.

"Around 150 bullet-proof vehicles are being procured and bullet-proof jackets and headgears (patkas) are being given to most of the personnel in insurgency-hit areas," the DGP said.

He said there is a lot of support from the state and the central government.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Jammu and Kashmir, he had announced Rs 500 crores for the modernisation of the Jammu and Kashmir Police under the prime minister development programme and that is under procurement.

Most of the top militant commanders, including Masood Azhar's nephew, Jaish-e-Mohammad's Mehmood Bhai, Lashkar-e-Taiba's Abu Dujana and Waseem Shah, and Burhan Wani's successor Sabzar Ahmad Bhat of Hizbul Mujahideen, were among 170 militants killed in encounters with government forces in Jammu and Kashmir this year.

The DGP said that roughly 170 militants have been killed this year only (in Kashmir) and this is the record of last ten years.

"Except four to five commanders, most of the commanders have been eliminated," he said.

On cops joining militancy, he said that two police personnel joining militancy has come to his notice.

"We are looking into the causes, there are various reasons.

After all the police is also part of the same society and you can get influenced. You live in the same society, same villages. It is not a serious challenge," he added.

MOS

"Under leadership of PM Modi we have the power & will to solve this matter. PM is working in this direction & it will be resolved soon," Ahir said.

Omar in a series of tweets, said: "You can't pick the parts of the Instrument of Accession that suit the politics of the BJP while conveniently abrogating responsibility for the rest."

In another tweet, he said: I love how when it suits them they quote the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja. What about the part guaranteeing J&K's autonomy?"

ZULFKAR

The Minister was speaking during a meeting to review the funds received and utilized by the department during last two years under various centrally sponsored schemes including SCA to TSP, Article 275 (I), pre-matric and post-matric scholarships to ST students, Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana and Tribal Research Institute (TRI).

Commissioner Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department Kifayat Hussain Rizvi, Director, Tribal Affairs Department Mohd. Rafi, Special Secretary, Tribal Affairs M.S Choudhary, Secretary, Gujjar-Bhakerwal Advisory Board Mukhtar Ahmed, Director, Finance Tribal Affairs Department Dr. S.K Sen and other senior officers of the department were present in the meeting.

"The Education Department should be consulted to get the scholarship forms filled by the students along with their admission forms," he said, adding that, the department should identify 20 meritorious students to provide financial assistance for taking professional coaching at the coaching centres of their own choice.

The Minister directed for expediting the pace of construction work of ST hostels in Bandipora, Srinagar, Baramulla, Kupwara, Degree College Handwara, Rajouri, Shopian, Leh, Kargil, Poonch and Samba.

He further directed that TRI should start functioning from rented accommodation in Srinagar within a month and the requisite formalities for establishment of TRI be completed within a specified time frame. The Deputy Commissioners would be asked to submit DPRs for development of Cluster Model Villages under SCA to TSP in their respective districts, he maintained.

He instructed for constitution of Milk societies in tribal villages and establishment of Milk villages close to the habitations so that the people don't have to travel much to sell the milk.

Stressing on the need to do handholding of the tribal community, the Minister directed for creating awareness among them about the centrally sponsored welfare schemes for raising their living standards. A Committee should be formed headed by Commissioner Secretary for deciding the locations of Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Rajouri, Kargil and Poonch.

The Minister called for identification of land in consultation with JDA for construction of Tribal Development Complex. The construction of shelter sheds for nomadic population should be done after identifying proper routes where the tribals live, he added.

He further asked for taking immediate steps to impart job oriented training to tribal youth on modular employable skill including pharmacy and other sectors. A team of officers should visit the other states to know about the facilities being provided to the tribals and implement those measures in the state for the welfare of tribal community.

JKEDI

Entrepreneurship Summit India 2017' are currently being held across India and the conference at JKEDI was the first of its kind to be held in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The conference started with a special panel discussion on 'Role of Entrepreneurship Education' in which senior journalist Shujaat Bukhari, senior journalist, Masood Hussain, Muhammad Ashraf Mir, President Federation of Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK), and Muzaffar Majeed, Joint Secretary Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) participated as panelists.

In his address, Director JKEDI, Dr. M I Parry briefed the gathering about the role of entrepreneurship in a state like Jammu and Kashmir and ways and means to achieve better end results. He informed the participants about the role JKEDI has been playing to lessen the burden of unemployment in the State. Dr. Parry stressed on the need of creating an ecosystem for entrepreneurship development and said the conference regarding Global Entrepreneurship Summit in collaboration with the NITI Aayog shall go a long way in making that ecosystem rich.

Chief Executive Officer tGELF, Gauri Ishwaran also addressed the participants and affirmed her resolve to continue to work with JKEDI for entrepreneurship development in the state.

Mission Director Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog, Ramanan Ramanathan was the chief guest on the occasion while Tasaduq Mufti, Coordinator, Chief Minister's Grievance Cell was the Guest of Honour on the occasion. Secretary J&K State Sports Council, Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra also participated in the conference as a Special Guest.

In his plenary address, Ramanan said he was hopeful that an incubation centre under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) will be established in the state of Jammu and Kashmir to provide an inclusive environment for entrepreneurship and innovation.

Tasaduq Mufti stressed on exploring sustainable entrepreneurship opportunities in the State and promotion of creativity and innovation focused to fulfil the local demand.

Vice Chancellor Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Prof. Mushtaq A. Siddiqi was also present on the occasion and he spoke on the role of entrepreneurship education. More than 20 students from Delhi Public School (DPS) also participated in the day-long conference.

Global Entrepreneurship Summit is being organized to inspire the culture of Entrepreneurship and share the inspirational nature of prosperity throughout the United States, India and globally, the "Road to GES" series is aimed to partner, build and engage upon entrepreneur events from September through November and beyond.

MIRWAIZ

He said that the vengeful treatment to which they are

subject to during detention includes off and on solitary confinement, manhandling of leadership by dreaded criminals posing a grave threat to their lives, unavailability of medicines and medical care and substandard quality of food including only pulses provided to them. Mirwaiz said that even the visitors and relatives who come to see them in jail are also deliberately harassed and tormented by the authorities. All this is done in complete violation of the jail manual which lays emphasis on the honor and dignity of prisoners.

Mirwaiz termed the silence of international organizations towards the plight of Kashmiri prisoners as unfortunate and stated that there are dozens of prisoners who have already completed their term but continue to languish in prisons while many prisoners are under trials whose trials are repeatedly deferred. He said that even when the prisoners lodged under the notorious PSA complete their term, police and related agencies are ready with another dossier to prolong their detention mostly under fictitious charges.

Mirwaiz said repeatedly we are appealing Indian and international human rights organizations including Amnesty International, Asia watch ICRC to get a firsthand account of this pathetic situation of Kashmiri prisoners by on spot inspection of jails where Kashmiri prisoners are lodged to see for themselves what they are going through and take up the matter with the Indian Government. He said it is their moral and legal duty.

Mirwaiz said that Kashmiri political prisoners including Shabir Ahmed Shah, Adv. Shahidul Islam, Altaf Ahmed Fantoosh, Ayaz Akbar, Peer Saifullah, Mehrajuddin Kalwal, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Farooq Ahmed Dar, Muhammad Sidiq Ganai, Dr Muhammad Qasim, Asiya Andrabi, Zahoor Watali, Fehmeeda Sofi, Masrat Alam Bhat, Muhammad Shafi Khan, Atif Ahmed, Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar, Muhammad Yousuf Mir, Ghulam Jeelani, Farooq Ahmed Daga, Muhammad Sidiq Ganai, Muzaffar Ahmed, Aqib Ahmad and hundreds of other prisoners including children should be released forthwith. Mirwaiz said there is no justification for the authorities to lodge them behind the bars.

Meanwhile, on the demise of the mother of Hurriyat activist and Peoples Political Front president Abdul Majeed Wani, Mirwaiz expressed his heart-felt condolences. Mirwaiz led the funeral prayers of the deceased and termed her a pious and god-fearing woman. In his condolence message, Mirwaiz expressed sympathy and solidarity with the bereaved family and prayed for the deceased soul.

HC

remain same (2013) but the fresh recruitment process will be started as per the court directions," he told KNS.

He said that court has also issued an order that the Department could issue separate advertisements for any other new vacancies. "For 900 vacancies, the aspirants will remain same who had applied earlier. The advertisements will also remain same only the fresh process will be started. But for filling up of any more posts, a separate advertisement will be issued," he said.

A number of aggrieved candidates had challenged the government order (no. 381-Home of 2016) dated 5 July 2016, whereby the Home Department terminated the recruitment process despite the fact that almost three-fourths of the process had been completed.

The Fire and Emergency Services Department had issued three advertisement notices (no.01 of 2013) on 12.03.2013; (no.02 of 2013) on 12.03.2013 and (no.03 of 2013) on 26.06.2013 for filling up of one foreman post, Sub Officer (75 posts), Fireman/Fireman Driver (740 posts), Junior Electrician (04 posts), Painter (04 posts), Vulcanizer (2 posts), Plumber (02 posts), Cook (02 posts) and Barber (2 posts); various stenotypist and 41 posts of junior assistant (leading Fireman-M); and posts of Sweepers and Safaiwalas.

Thereafter, the Recruitment Board issued a notice notifying the schedule for conducting the first phase of interviews, which included physical tests and measurements in respect of the eligible candidates who had offered their candidature in response to the advertisement notices.

Subsequently, the Recruitment Board issued a notice for a written test which was published in a local daily. It notified the list of candidates who had qualified the first phase of the interviews comprising physical tests and measurements, etc.

The petitioners submitted that they passed the physical tests, duly appeared in the written examination and did well their satisfaction. On the basis of their performance in the written test they expected to be called for interview.

However, the home department order dashed their hopes by cancelling the entire recruitment process and ordering fresh advertisement for the posts.

The High Court has said, "...perusal of the impugned order reveals that the Government upon examination of various aspects of the recruitment proceedings had noticed the discrepancies on the basis of which it came to the conclusion that the selection process was not transparent and flawless and, therefore, it could not be carried forward..."

The court quashed the Home Department order to the extent that it seeks to terminate the advertisement notices and to the extent that it orders that the Director General, Fire & Emergency Services, J&K will issue fresh advertisement notices inviting applications for the non-gazetted and Class IV posts of various categories advertised by the Department in 2013.

SVC SEEKS REPORT FROM VO REGARDING CASES CLOSED AS NOT PROVED

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 10: Taking serious note of the media reports regarding closure of certain FIR cases which were under investigation with Vigilance organization, the State Vigilance Commission in its special sitting under the chairmanship of Chief Vigilance Commissioner has directed the Director, Vigilance Organisation to provide a list of all cases which have been investigated and closed as not proved during the year 2017 along with the Final Reports, legal brief and comments of Director Vigilance organization in each case.

The commission has further directed that the Final Report in such cases shall not be submitted to the Court of Law before getting advice from the Commission.

Exhibition of Islamic Calligraphy from Rampur Raza Library opens in Brunei Darussalam as part of Festival of India

New Delhi, November 10: An exhibition of photographs of valuable collection of Islamic Calligraphy from the Rampur Raza Library of Ministry of Culture, Government of India was inaugurated as the inaugural event of Festival of India in Brunei Darussalam yesterday. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Government of Brunei Darussalam, His Excellency Yang Berhormat Pehin Datu Lailaraja Major General Dato Paduka Seri Haji Awang Halbi bin Haji Mohd Yusof. The exhibition consist of 36 photographs of calligraphy

including of verses from the Holy Quran, and poetry in Persian and Arabic, selected from the over 3000 calligraphy pieces in the Rampur Raza Library collection. The Exhibition is being jointly hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the High Commission of India in Brunei Darussalam and will stay open to public till 25th November, 2017.

At the inaugural event, Smt. Nagma M Mallick, High Commissioner of India to Brunei Darussalam, described the Exhibition as a gesture

of solidarity and friendship of the Government of India to the Government and the people of Brunei Darussalam on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of His Majesty the Sultan. She described the calligraphy on display as another example of the syncretic culture that amalgamated the ancient Indian artistic traditions with Islamic culture over hundreds of years to produce a cultural flowering under the Mughal Empire. The Exhibition of Islamic and other Monuments of India held in Brunei in December 2016 had also showcased the architectural

aspects of the same syncretic culture. The art of calligraphy is still a living tradition in India, where over 60 Departments of Arabic and Persian Studies flourish in Indian universities. Prof. Syed Hassan Abbas, Director of the Rampur Raza Library, gave details of some of the treasures stored in the Library, including 17000 original manuscripts. He detailed the names and careers of some of the renowned calligraphers whose works form part of the Rampur collection. The High Commissioner gifted an example of calligraphy in marble to the Minister of Brunei.

Spread awareness about organ donation, President tells doctors, teachers and religious leaders

New Delhi, November 10: The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, graced the Dehdaniyan Ka Utsav organised by the Dadhichi Deh Dan Samiti, today (November 10, 2017) in New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that body/organ donation is true to the ethos of our ancient civilization. It is believed that Maharishi Dadhichi had donated his body so that the Gods could make a weapon from his bones and defeat the forces of evil. The thought that in our lifetime, or even after death, our body or body organs could be useful to or help treat another person

is both humanistic and inspiring.

The President said that an estimated 500,000 people die every year in our country due to unavailability of organs that can be transplanted. Of them, 200,000 suffer from liver diseases and 50,000 from cardiovascular diseases. In addition, approximately 150,000 people await kidney transplantation. The President appealed to doctors, educational institutions, teachers and religious leaders to spread awareness about body and organ donation. He said that due to poverty some people may be compelled to sell their body organs.

1.5 MW Small Hydro Power Plant in Biaras Drass, Kargil

New Delhi, November 10: The Biaras Small Hydro Power Project (SHP) of 1.5 MW capacity, in Biaras Drass, Kargil Jammu & Kashmir, was commissioned on 4th November 2017. The total cost of the project, fully funded by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, is Rs. 17 crores and this is the first project to be commissioned under the Prime Minister's Ladakh Renewable Energy Initiative (LREI).

The plant will power the Drass town in Kargil, which is one of the coldest places in India. Power from Biaras SHP would be sufficient to meet normal power requirement of about 1000 families, which would make them comfortable in the extreme winter season. The project has been developed by Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA) under Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

Second Meeting of EAC-PM focuses on Job Creation, Social Sector and Infrastructure

New Delhi, November 10: The Second Meeting of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister chaired by Dr. Bibek Debroy, Member NITI Aayog, today spelt out a clear road map for stepping up skill development, job creation, enhanced resource investment in the social sector - including for Health and Education and for boosting Infrastructure financing. It formulated far reaching recommendations to guide the evolving framework for the Fifteenth Finance Commission, including the incentivization of States for achieving Health, Education and Social Inclusion outcomes. The Council is also evolving the design of a new Economy Tracking Monitor, linking economic growth indicators with social indicators for last mile connectivity.

Improvements needed in National Accounts and innovative steps for unlocking the growth, exports and employment potential of growth drivers were also deliberated upon - including through transformation of India's Gold Market.

The meeting was attended by the EAC-PM Chairman Dr. Bibek Debroy and Members - renowned economists Dr. Surjit Bhalla, Dr. Rathin Roy, Dr. Ashima Goyal, Dr. Shamika Ravi and Member along with the Member Secretary and Principal Adviser NITI Aayog Mr. Ratan P. Watal. The deliberations of the Council took stock of the economic and social analysis done by the theme groups and evolving initiatives led by different Members. The Council identified key issues, strategies and recommended interventions in respect of these themes.

Lead presentations to the Council were made by experts on key themes - including Infrastructure Financing by the Chairman EAC-PM Dr. Bibek Debroy, who underlined the need for infrastructure financing to be accorded high priority, with new mechanisms for a risk coverage umbrella. Member NITI Aayog, Dr. Vinod K. Paul highlighted strategies for achieving Swastha Bharat by 2022. The Skill Development Strategies were presented by Dr. Secretary Skill Development, KP Krishnan who highlighted convergent initiatives to reach out to youth and women. Secretary MoSPI, Dr. TCA Anant outlined improvements needed in National Accounts, complemented by the presentation by the Member Secretary EAC-PM, Mr. Ratan P. Watal demystifying issues on the current account deficit and the gold market. He also shared recommendations on the evolving framework for the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

The unique feature of the new Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister is turning out to be its ability to link economic growth with social aspects, with greater last mile connectivity. Its value addition as an independent institutional mechanism for providing informed advice to the Prime Minister is increasingly being recognized, with focused time bound recommendations to move from policy to practice, benefiting from consultation with a wide spectrum of experts and stakeholders.

PM meets Indian Team that participated in FIFA U-17 World Cup

New Delhi, November 10: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today met the Indian Team that participated in the recently concluded FIFA U-17 World Cup.

During the interaction, the players talked about the experience and exposure that they gained during FIFA, both on and off the field.

The Prime Minister encouraged the players to not feel disappointed with the outcome of the tournament, but to treat it as a learning opportunity. He said competing with enthusiasm and spirit is the first step to success.

The Prime Minister said India can achieve a lot in football. He also mentioned that sports helps in developing personality, building confidence, and in overall development.

Shri J P Nadda reviews the situation arising out of air pollution in Delhi

New Delhi, November 10: Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Shri J P Nadda reviewed the situation arising due to the air pollution in Delhi, and the preparations in the hospitals to deal with the patient load, here today. Shri J P Nadda directed the officials and heads of all Central Government hospitals to keep a close watch on the situation. All hospitals have been directed to take all measures to deal with the patient load due to air pollution. They have been directed to keep nebulizers and

other related equipments in good condition and to be ready to meet with any exigency.

In the review meeting, it was stated by the experts that the number of cases being reported with breathing troubles and respiratory diseases are varying each day. The recent increase in air pollution level in Delhi NCR and in the surrounding areas has become a cause of concern. According to health experts, higher air pollution level may result in increase in the burden of disease from stroke, heart disease,

lung cancer and both chronic and acute respiratory disease, including asthma. In the short run, higher air pollution level may result in increase in severity of symptoms of respiratory diseases, the experts opined.

Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has been monitoring the situation arising out of increase in air pollution level in Delhi NCR region and issued necessary instructions.

Additional Secretary on 9th November with the participation of Central Government Hospitals i.e. Safdarjung Hospital, RML Hospital, LHMC and associated Hospitals and AIIMS, New Delhi. Representatives of National Center for Disease Control and Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change also participated in this meeting. He reviewed the situation of impact on health arising due to increased air pollution level in Delhi NCR region and issued necessary instructions.

Two days training programme for BLOs held in Poonch

POONCH NOVEMBER 10: Ahead of the special drive to be held from 15th November to 30th November and on the initiative of Election Commission of India two days training programme conducted under the overall supervision of District Election Officer, Tariq Ahmad Zargar for imparting training to BLOs of all three Assembly Constituencies 85 Surnkote, 86 Mendhar and 87 Haveli.

Apart from BLOs and supervisors the training programme was attended by ADC Poonch, Dy. Election Officer, EROs/AEROs. The training was imparted by Srikanth Suse and Kanzal Hussain Shah special trainers on subject

Speaking on the occasion, Suse said that the role of BLOS in the process of purification of electoral roll is very significant. He urged the BLOs and supervisors to maintain close coordination for better results. On the occasion the experts apprised about ERO-NET, a software which has been developed by the Election Commission of India to achieve the objectives under Unified National Photo Electoral Roll so that slogan of Election Commission of India "no voter to be left behind.

Haq Khan launches e-FMS under MGNREGA

New measure to benefit 20 lakh workers in JK; would disburse wage payments in real time

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 10 - Taking a step ahead in bringing transparency in the functioning of Rural Development Department and disbursing the wages to the beneficiaries under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Law and Justice, Abdul Haq launched the Electronic Fund Management System (e-FMS), here today.

On the occasion, the Minister transferred online Rs 1.5 crore as payment to 10,000 beneficiaries under MGNREGA. Commissioner Secretary RDD Nirmal Sharma, Director RDD Jammu R K Bhat, Director Rural Sanitation Jammu Nisar, Additional Secretary to Government RDD Rakesh K Badyal senior officers of the department were present on the occasion. The Minister was apprised that the new system of e-FMS functions through digital signature and once the concerned officer will sign it electronically, it will go to the master account of the nodal bank from where the wages will be credited directly to the account of the worker immediately.

Terming the launch of e-FMS as a revolutionary step, the Minister



said that with this move, the beneficiaries now need not to move to the offices for payment and department will directly transfer wages to their already linked bank accounts. "This step will not only ease out the whole process of disbursing payment to the beneficiaries but also remove the hurdles and makes it paperless besides eliminating delays in wage payment", said the Minister adding that today we can say that the objective behind implementing MGNREGA is fulfilled as the beneficiaries will get their payment within 15 days benefitting about 20 lakh MGN-

REGA workers of the state. "Thousands of families in our state are dependent on MGNREGA to meet their daily needs and often delay in payments badly affects them, and now with e-FMS it would be ensured that they get their wage payments in real time", said Haq Khan. He added that the measure will usher in much needed transparency and funds will reach to the real beneficiaries on ground. "It is a digital era, everything should be available to the public in just one click and the RDD takes immense

pleasure to bring J&K on the path of digital India", said the Minister. Speaking to the officers, the Minister said that it is our responsibility that funds provided by the centre and state government under various welfare and other schemes directly go to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. He exhorted upon them to work for the betterment of the people associated with the department under various schemes and programmes. Expressing satisfaction over the performance of the department in creating durable assets and gen-

eration of MGNREGA mandates, the Minister said that we have successfully implemented MGNREGA in the state but now focus needs to be laid on rural sanitation which requires due attention and concerted efforts.

The Minister said that to achieve the targets under rural Swachh Bharat mission (SBM) and Rural Sanitation, everyone in the department needs to contribute in a proactive manner so that every scheme reaches the people. He said that the government is very much concerned for this and the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti are personally monitoring this campaign.

He hoped that soon, the whole state of J&K will become Open Defecation Free (ODF) with the continuing efforts of the department making our state one of the model state in this regard.

On the occasion, large numbers of MGNREGA beneficiaries present there were briefed about e-FMS, the new system of disbursing payments directly to their bank accounts. The beneficiaries also thanked the Minister and the department for introducing e-FMS for easy disbursement of wages to them.

Bali announces two vital bridges at Mishriwala, Simbliwala in Raipur-Domana constituency

Says Govt paying focused attention to upgrade infra facilities in rural areas

RAIPUR-DOMANA (JAMMU), NOVEMBER 10 - Fulfilling the long pending demand of people, Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat today announced two vital bridges in Raipur-Domana constituency to connect dozens of villages in the vicinity of Mishriwala-Bawa Talab, Simbliwala, Burn etc.

The new bridges will be constructed over Ranbir Canal at Mishriwala and Simbliwala to facilitate thickly populated localities across the Canal. The already existing small culverts in the area do not cater to the needs of the locals and need for dependable and upgraded bridges was badly felt by the locals for the past over many years.

Addressing a largely attended public meeting at village Simbliwala in Raipur-Domana constituency near here today, the Minister said that it is endeavor of the BJP-PDP Government to ensure

better infrastructural facilities in all parts of the State with special thrust to rural and far-flung areas, for which a comprehensive plan has been devised. He said road sector is key to the overall development and prosperity of people and Government has been paying focused attention towards this vital area after taking over the reign of the State.

Expressing happiness after announcing the bridges, the Minister said that the facilities will facilitate thousands of residents of over two-dozen villages located across the Canal. He issued on-the-spot instructions to the engineers of the concerned departments to immediately start the work and complete the projects in a shortest possible time. He said multifarious activities have been increased in the area and demand of bridges was quite genuine said the Minister.

While updating the status

of other important road projects in the constituency, the Minister said that the important alternate road connecting Jammu with Akhnoor-Poonch-Rajouri via Bantalab-Amb Gharota has already been sanctioned for widening under CRF programme at an estimated cost of Rs. 19 crore and work on this vital project is in full swing. He said the blacktopping of completed stretches will be commenced soon to provide immediate succor to the people who are facing difficulty due to constructional activities.

Similarly, the work on link road from Kote to Kala Kam-Burn Pata under NABARD is also in progress with the involvement of Rs. 4.91 crore. The link road from Purkhu Migrant Camp to Taku Chack has also been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.50 crore under NABARD. On completion of these projects there will be great relief to the people of this area which

otherwise remained neglected by the previous regimes, said the Minister.

Responding to the demand of the locals, the Minister also announced Rs. 5 lakh from his Constituency Development Funds for the up-gradation/beautification of pond at village Ratti Chappadi. He also assured to examine all other demands of the area on priority, which are related to the overall development of the people. He issued specific instructions to the functionaries of the PHE Department to monitor the regular supply of drinking water. He directed for formulating a foolproof plan to meet the drinking water needs of the Kandi belt besides directing to conceive a project to lift the water from Chenab River for the vulnerable areas.

The sectoral officers of various departments, Sarpanchs, Panchs and prominent leaders of the area were also present on the occasion.

BBBP awareness prog organized at HEM

RAJOURI, NOVEMBER 10: Under the supervision of District Development Commissioner, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary 'Beti Bachao Bat Padhao' awareness programme was organised here at today in the premises of Himalayan Education Mission. Member Legislative Council, Vibod Gupta was chief guest and Muslim Wani was guest of honour on the occasion. Mohd Azam Shah presided over the function.

Speaking on the occasion, MLC Vibod Gupta stressed on strict enforcement of PCPNDT Act, check over misuse of technology, arresting drop out of girls and other issues that create hurdles in the overall development and progress of girls.

The programme was organized under the supervision of Nodal Officer of the BBBP scheme, Dr. Abdul Khadir (District Social Welfare Officer) in collaboration with song and drama division of Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Various troupes took part in the programme including Nagani Cultural troupe, Sarswati Sammelan and Sangam Sangeet Kala Kendra. Concern was expressed over declining sex ratio in the district since Rajouri district figures in the list of 161 districts across the country having dismal sex ratio. A pledge was taken to provide equal opportunity to girls so that dream of gender neutral society gets achieved.

Pertinently, district administration has launched a targeted campaign across the district and awareness programmes are regularly being organized in educational institutions and at Panchayat level in addition to door-to-door campaigns by officials of Social Welfare and Health departments to sensitise the rural masses about impending affects of declining sex ratio. Other dignitaries present included Rashid Choudhary, PO ICDS, Farooq Muztar, founder patron HEM, Dr. Saleem Wani, CDPO Manjakote, Rajinder Gupta, Ashwani Kochar and girl students and staff members of HEM.

Time and Us

Editorial
SRINAGAR
&K

GIRL POWER

India may have won the final of the women's Asia Cup hockey tournament against China in a penalty shootout, but it was a fully deserving victory. Throughout their campaign in Japan, team members played out of their skin to register the win, which has secured them a spot in next year's World Cup emphatically on merit, not as wild-card entrants. The triumph came against formidable hurdles, and in the absence of any expectations. Indian women were never the favourites, going into the tournament ranked 12th in the world and fourth in Asia — behind World No. 8 China, Korea and Japan. Incidentally, India defeated defending champion Japan in the semi-finals. This happened despite a degree of pre-tournament disarray. The team lost its second coach in the space of a year, and Harendra Singh came to the assignment just a month before the Asia Cup, that too with no previous experience of having worked with a women's hockey team. The team had other issues to grapple with as well; the fitness and skill levels had slipped. The lack of expectations, sadly, was clear from the fact that there was no live telecast, not even online streaming. Such live updates as there were came via social media.

The hockey federations must heed this victory and use this occasion to considerably scale up support to the women's game. The insistence on appointing foreign coaches, despite the clear discomfort and disconnect among the women in matters of communication, has unnecessarily cost India too much time. The inadequate competitive exposure made available for the team was unfortunate. Unlike the men, women players start early; some in the senior team are as young as 16. Their careers often end early. That the women, most of them in their early 20s, still continue to go out and give their best is a testament to their dedication. Railways remains the biggest provider of employment — but goalkeeper Savita Punia, the star of the final, and a veteran of over 100 matches and perhaps Asia's best, is yet to get a job. Harendra Singh has his work cut out too. He has a reputation for being obsessed with results. He is a disciplinarian who has the ability to coax the best from his players, lead from the front and put in the hard yards. In fact, it is a reflection of the team's hard work, dedication, discipline and focus on the game that someone who is regarded as the most difficult Indian coach to work with is already in awe of his players. The road ahead is arduous, and 2018 will be crucial for the women and men, with the World Cup and the Commonwealth Games as well as an Olympic spot to be secured through the Asian Games. Captain Rani Rampal's girls have shown they can do it.

Changing mood

THE INFORMAL MECHANISM OF TEXTILE TRADE IN VARANASI OFTEN MEANS THAT TRADERS PAY GST ON GOODS THEY HAVE SOLD ON CREDIT. BY AKSHAY DESHMANE IN VARANASI

"Sarkar ne toh vyapaariyon ko munshi bana diya hai" (the government has turned traders into accountants), quips Jagdish Shah, sitting in his multi-storey office in Chowk, Varanasi's busiest market.

It is an early November evening, and the first anniversary of demonetisation is only a few days away. Shah, who is among a handful of Varanasi's big textile traders, speaks of the impact of the Union government's two major economic decisions of the past year — demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax (GST) — on the business community in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency. His comment, made partly in a tone of resignation, is a specific reference to the impact of GST on textile traders in Varanasi, which is a large group comprising, by some accounts, nearly half a million people involved directly and indirectly. He explains how textile traders, who were so far outside the purview of Central taxes and not very conversant with the requirements of keeping detailed formal accounts with the government because of the informal nature of their business, are now caught up in the elaborate web of filing GST returns.

Like a significant number of businesspersons across the country, Shah sees both demonetisation and GST as having adversely impacted trade and business sentiment. He describes the aftermath and still persisting consequences of demonetisation: "In the initial two-three months [after demonetisation], we were facing a lot of difficulties. But its lasting impact, to which GST added further push, has been seen in the decline in working capital and business activity in the market. This has caused a decline in turnovers and general incomes [of traders]." That is a significantly candid observation because Shah is also the president of the Banarsi Vastra Udyog Sangh, an influential association of textile traders who openly back Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Its former president, Ashok Dhawan, was Modi's election manager in 2014.

Post-demonetisation, however, the mood of this influential group and, indeed, the wider trading community of Varanasi, which also backs Modi, began changing steadily. By June this year, this community began expressing its grievances openly. In July, when GST was introduced, textile traders protested through a nationwide strike. "The strike was in support of our fellow traders in Surat, who were also protesting against the imposition of GST," said Rajan Behal, general secretary of the Banarsi Vastra Udyog Sangh. He added that a significant number of those protesting were the makers of the famed Banarsi sari, a measure of how serious the problem was.

These protests have also attracted support



of significant numbers within the community because the adverse economic impact of the slowdown in trade increases as one looks further down the hierarchy, as first-hand accounts from traders across the spectrum bear out.

According to Behal, only about 10 per cent of the city's textile traders are estimated to have annual turnovers of above Rs.5 crore. A relatively larger number, which includes weavers, register an annual turnover between Rs.1.5 crore and Rs.5 crore, while most others fall way short of the Rs.1 crore mark. For perspective, profits from the turnovers in this trade are estimated to be in the range of only 10-15 per cent. With the introduction of GST, profits have dipped.

While most of these numbers are back-of-the-envelope calculations, Behal said that the overwhelming majority of traders were adversely affected by GST notwithstanding some changes made by the Centre in the rates and the frequency of filing returns, after protests. "At present, about 60 per cent of business is affected by GST. This is an ancestral trade which still operates on credit, trust, informal bookkeeping and such traditional practices. The majority of the small traders are unlettered, so they are unaware

of the complex returns-filing processes. When you introduce a new tax on this trading community, it is obvious that the impact is going to be adverse. We have had to invest money in setting up infrastructure for GST. The government should provide soft loans at zero interest or a maximum of 4 per cent interest for this purpose," he said.

In mentioning small and micro traders, Behal is talking in particular about weavers. Chand Mohammad Aazam, a weaver and resident of Varanasi's Jaitpura locality, which is abuzz round the clock with the sound of powerlooms and handlooms in homes, agrees with him: "Nobody is able to understand what this [GST] is. They should have imposed GST on the cloth, not on the yarn because everyone in the entire chain of manufacturing cloth has become adversely affected now. There is less work in the market, and so money changing hands is also less," he said. He explained that in the textile trade, transactions were done over three to six months' credit, whereas GST filings had to be done each month, except by those with an annual turnover below Rs.1.5 crore. So traders and weavers find themselves in a situation where they have to pay taxes on goods which they have sold on credit and payments are not yet

realised. "I have paid Rs.3 lakh GST so far, but my payments are yet to be received," he rued.

This will subsequently put smaller and micro weavers out of business. Steadily, this appears to be already happening. According to Mukhtar Ahmed Mahato, a resident of Madanpura locality, in the past six months alone around 35,000 small and micro weavers had left Varanasi for other cities. He said small Muslim weavers had found some work in Gulpalli area of Bengaluru and Mithikhadi area of Surat city. Official numbers are hard to come by, but such anecdotal references abound in the city which has historically been known for its rich textile tradition.

Behal recalled how previous attempts at taxing the trade were successfully resisted. "There have been multiple attempts in the past in Uttar Pradesh to impose tax on our trade, but all governments in the State had to withdraw those decisions. In fact, even during Atalji's [Atal Bihari Vajpayee] time, they decided to impose tax on us, but when we met and explained to him why it should be withdrawn, Atalji's government took back the decision. But this government is just so stubborn that it doesn't want to withdraw Modi tax," lamented Behal.

Torn to shreds

By ILANGO VAN

THE TIRUPUR knitwear apparel industry in Tamil Nadu, one of the country's leading textile clusters, is still smarting under the impact of demonetisation.

The industry records an annual turnover of Rs.35,000 crore and accounts for 90 per cent of the country's knitted garment exports. Its estimated domestic annual turnover is Rs.12,000 crore, industry sources said.

"All looked rosy until the night demonetisation was announced. This midnight blow was hard," said a domestic apparel manufacturer. For a year now, the cash-dependent industry has been facing a liquidity crunch following demonetisation, which has forced many medium and small units to down their shutters and left a few lakh labourers in the lurch.

After a brief assessment of the various factors that impact the industry, it is not far-fetched to claim that the industry in Tirupur is facing an uncertain future. The industry reportedly employs about three lakh people in about 6,000 units in the manufacturing cluster of big and small units spread across Tirupur, Avinashi and Palladam.

Demonetisation has triggered a liquidity crunch in this labour-intensive industry. We need not wait for the financial year ending to analyse our performance. The prediction studies point to a disappointing performance by the

industry in the days to come," said an exporter.

Of the estimated three lakh workers, 30 to 40 per cent are migrant labourers from the north and north-eastern parts of the country. As the industry is not able to disburse wages, the usual practice being weekly payments, and routine daily incentives in cash, many have abandoned their jobs and gone back home. "Many units are suffering from a labour shortage since those who have gone to their native places for Deepavali holidays have not returned so far. Usually, they would return within a fortnight after the festival," said a trade union activist.

Besides, despite government directives, most workers are yet to open bank accounts. "They could not do so since the banks insist on both PAN [permanent account number] and Aadhaar cards, which many of them do not possess," said G. Sampath, general secretary of the Baniyan General Workers' Union, affiliated to the Centre of Indian Trade Unions. Labour unions affiliated to the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the CPI (Marxist) held various protests against demonetisation. Trade unions and exporters' associations have been urging the banks in Tirupur to open more automated teller machines to help in dispensing cash. "Banks are yet to fully comply with [the request]," said Sampath. Many manufacturers accept what the trade union leader said. They expected



the industry to bounce back in a month or so. "But it is not so. It has been tougher than what we imagined," said a domestic manufacturer. "Barring a few big units, most are either small or medium. The industry, with exhaustive processes in its manufacturing chain from sourcing yarn from farmers to fabrics (looms), dyeing, stitching, embroidering, cutting, and printing before completing the finished apparel product, is highly labour-intensive and cash-dependent. The labourers have to be paid their wages in cash to keep the industry running."

Industry insiders said that the export-oriented units had not faced a serious crisis since all accounting work related to the business was organised and cash transactions were streamlined through banks as per government guidelines. A mere 2 to 3 per cent of the total business

transactions would be in cash, they added. The wages have been disbursed through banks for some time now and other transactions such as purchase of raw materials are done through cheques and credit.

Thus, the units focussed on exports have survived, unaffected by the cash crunch. "But the domestic knitwear sector involving small and medium units, which carry out 'unaccounted operations' to circumvent regulations, has been hit badly as it is mainly a cash-and-carry business. The ban on 500- and 1,000-rupee notes turned into a bane for domestic production, triggering a fall of nearly 40 per cent," said a garment unit owner who caters to the domestic sector.

Ever since last Deepavali, the industry has been apprehensive of taking fresh orders, export or domestic. The industry

players are wary of the government, which they fear might resort to fresh policy announcements such as demonetisation and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Informed sources said it took a year or so for the industry to clear the inventories that piled up after the demonetisation move. The export rejects, most of which end up in the domestic market, have also found fewer takers. "And now we are grappling with the after-effects of GST. We are also confused about what the government will do in future," said T.R. Vijayakumar, general secretary of the Tirupur Exporters Association.

M.P. Muthurathnam, president of the Tirupur Exporters and Manufacturers Association, said that despite a year having passed after demonetisation, Tirupur was yet to recover from its adverse effects. "The hard fact today is that hundreds of units, small and medium, are closing down owing to the cascading effect of the note ban. The domestic sector is totally affected. As the cash flow remains restricted, nearly 90 per cent of the domestic market has also shrunk, leaving lakhs of labourers facing a bleak future."

He added: "The industry's manufacturing chain has many major components and labourers are its mainstay. Production for export orders is to be undertaken against credit from banks and other lending sources. The money is to be disbursed to the labourers on a weekly basis. But when we are not able to

distribute cash to them, they leave us. The industry would be busy during festival seasons such as Deepavali. But this year, a mere 30 per cent of production could be realised."

Raja M. Shanmugam, president of the Tirupur Exporters Association, in his letter in December to the Union Minister of Corporate Affairs and Finance, Arun Jaitley, underscored the industrialists' problems and appealed to him to relax the condition of insisting on both Aadhaar and PAN cards for opening bank accounts. He said that nearly three lakh accounts had to be opened for the employees, mostly migrant labourers, to disburse wages.

To mitigate the fallout of demonetisation and to meet the GST implications, the association, in a memorandum to the Ministry of Textiles in October this year, urged it to reduce the duty drawback rates from 7.7 per cent to 2 per cent and enhance the interest equalisation scheme for export credit to 5 per cent from 3 per cent in order to save the industry.

Also, the Southern India Mills' Association (SIMA), in a statement in November, drew attention to the stockpiling across the value chain of textile industry units owing to cash flow restrictions. It noted with concern that the cash shortage had led to a severe shortage of funds for regular operations of the textile industry. "The situation is no different today. The industry is yet to overcome it," said another exporter.

SC must take call on norms to ensure transparency in judge appointments: Law ministry

NEW DELHI: The "onus of moving ahead" on the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) – a set of guidelines for appointing judges – is on the Supreme Court and not the government, senior officials in the law ministry have said.

This is likely to be the government's position in its response to a notice issued by the apex court last week.

The ministry had already stated its position in a letter to the top court this July, a top government official told Hindustan Times. "A letter was sent to the secretary general (of the apex court) nearly seven weeks before Justice (JS) Khehar retired as the Chief Justice of India. The government made it clear that the new MoP must follow the guidelines laid down in the December 2015 judgment to reform

the process of appointing judges," the official said. "It is for the Supreme Court to respond."

The issue of judicial vacancies reared its head again on October 27, when an apex court division bench comprising Justice AK Goel and Justice UU Lalit issued a notice on the delay in finalising the MoP to the Centre.

The ministry's stance could further widen the rift between the executive and the judiciary, which have failed to reach a consensus on the issue.

On December 16, 2015, a five-judge constitution bench headed by Justice Khehar had delivered a detailed ruling asking the government to prepare a fresh MoP in consultation with then Chief Justice TS Thakur to ensure transparency in judicial appointments



to 24 high courts and the Supreme Court. The same bench had earlier, in October 2015, quashed the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act reinstating the over two-decade-old system of the Supreme Court collegium – a body of India's five top judges headed by the Chief Justice – for appointing judges.

The MoP has been stuck due to differences between the two sides since January 2016.

The collegium objected to certain clauses in the draft sent by the government.

The document has changed hands between the two sides a few times since then, but remains a draft due to lack of consensus.

Another senior functionary in the ministry confirmed that the Centre's position "has not changed

since July".

The Union government is of the view that the December 2015 judgement has empowered it to reform the appointment process, and bring in transparency.

Last month, the Supreme Court collegium resolved that it would start posting reasons for recommending or rejecting names for judicial appointments.

"The real process of reform should start with high court collegiums that recommend names for appointment to the Supreme Court collegium. The apex court has only 31 judges while the high courts have 1,079. It is eventually the high court judges who get elevated to the Supreme Court," the official said, when asked to explain the reasons behind the Centre's push for revamping the MoP.

Muslim clerics in Jharkhand oppose govt move on national anthem in madrasas

RANCHI: Several Muslim clerics in Jharkhand have opposed the BJP government's proposal to make singing of the national anthem mandatory in madrasas, terming it as violation of the basic principles of the Islamic learning centres.

State education minister Neera Yadav on Thursday announced the government will issue a notification mandating the singing of Jana Gana Mana in every school and madrasa. The notification is likely to be issued on November 15, Jharkhand's statehood day. BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh has already made it compulsory for singing the national anthem and flag hoisting in madrasas, a move criticised by Muslim groups as a forced show of patriotism and nationalism.

Jharkhand's Islamic scholars said madrasas follow their own routine for years, which include singing of Maksud Tarana (madarsa song) every



morning. "We do not have a problem with our students singing the national anthem on important days like August 15 and January 26, but making it mandatory to sing the national anthem every day is unfair and violated our basic principle..." said Maulana Azghar Misbahi, who runs the Jamia Faizanul Quran Madarsa in

Ranchi's Bariatu. He said that every madrasa had its own Maksud Tarana which is sung in praise of the founder and highlights the dignity and integrity of the institution.

Maulana Rizwan Ahmed Quazmi, who runs the Maulana Islamia Madarsa in Upper Bazar locality of Ranchi, said the mandate was an imposi-

tion on the madrasas and violated many rules. However, Shahid Akhter, former chairperson of the Jharkhand Minority Commission called the national anthem mandate a welcome move. "Singing the national anthem should be a matter of pride for us. This mandate is for the better future of the country, where nation would be the top most priority for everyone," said Akhter, who is also the national convener of Muslim Rashtriya Manch, the minority wing of the RSS.

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court mandated playing of the national anthem mandate at cinema halls, reigniting a debate in the country over nationalism especially after some people were assaulted for not standing up when it was played.

Last year, a teacher in a Kolkata madrasa was assaulted for teaching his students how to sing the national anthem.

JNU fines 4 students for preparing 'Biryani' near admin block

NEW DELHI: The Jawaharlal Nehru University authorities have slapped fines on four students for flouting rules of the institution by preparing 'Biryani' near the administration block.

According to a notice issued by Chief Proctor Kaushal Kumar, fines between Rs 6,000 and Rs 10,000 have been slapped on the four students who allegedly prepared 'Biryani' near the building in June.

"In a proctorial enquiry you have been found guilty of cooking food [Biryani] near the stairs in front of admin block and eating it thereafter along with other students," the order said on the students, adding the act was serious in nature and calls for strict disciplinary action.

Warning the students to not involve in such exercise in future, the order also set a deadline of 10 days for paying the fine, failing which more stringent action would be taken.

The Chief Proctor of the varsity was not available for comments.

To penalise the students, the order invoked a clause in JNU rules that deals

with any act that may be considered by the vice-chancellor or any other competent authority to be violation of discipline and conduct.

One of the students, former JNUSU general secretary Satarupa Chakraborty, who was slapped a fine of Rs 10,000, was also found guilty for holding a protest demonstration and slogan shouting in the VC's office on the same day before cooking 'Biryani'.

On June 27, the then students' union president Mohit Kumar Pandey and general secretary Mr. Chakraborty went to the VC's to put forth of students' issues and refused to leave till the VC hear them out.

Later that they allegedly prepared 'Biryani'.

"Does a university proctor office run to monitor who cooks and eats Biryani in a residential campus like the JNU where such activities are well-cherished practice, part of the culture and helped build up a community bonding among students coming from all across the country," Mr. Chakraborty said.

India, China to hold border talks by end of next month

NEW DELHI: India and China will hold the 20th round of border talks by December end, the first since the 73-day stand-off at Doklam.

"Starting next month, the bilateral exchanges will begin. The first one is of our foreign minister Wang Yi. He will attend the India-China-Russia foreign ministers meeting here. Then our State Counsellor, Yang Jiechi, will come to attend the 20th round of border talks. So these two very important visits by the two leaders will start a new chapter in our bilateral relations," Minister Counsellor in the Chinese Embassy Li Bijian said on the sidelines of a seminar organised by the Observer Research Foundation on Thursday.

Mr. Yang has been made a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China and will become a Chinese Vice-Premier in charge of foreign policy next year.

Modi, Xi meeting

Mr. Li said that when Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Xiamen after the Doklam incident in September, they reached a consensus to take forward bilateral rela-

tions and these visits were part of the initiative. The last round of boundary talks between the two Special Representatives, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Mr. Yang, were held in China in April last year.

The stand-off

The two armies got into the stand-off at Doklam on June 16 after Indian soldiers prevented the Chinese from building a road in the disputed territory near the India-Bhutan-China tri-junction, and after tough diplomatic negotiations, announced disengagement on August 28. In this backdrop, there are widespread apprehensions on the future course of the border talks.

Speaking on the just concluded 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress, Mr. Li said it was an opportunity for India. "In the next 30 years, the main task of the Chinese government is development. In the last five years of Mr. Xi's rule, 60 million people have been brought out of poverty. But we still have 40 million below poverty. India also has a similar task. We can share our experiences in development." A strong and developing China gave opportunities in trade, investment and consumption, he said.

French Ambassador optimistic that work on the Jaitapur nuclear plant will begin soon

MUMBAI: "You might not see a commissioned plant, but three foreign countries, including the U.K., have already begun work using it," he said, adding that the U.K.'s acceptance of EPR is in itself a testimony to its reliability.

The French Ambassador added that the reactor in U.K.'s Flamville will begin functioning by the end of 2018, while the project in China is likely to commence around the same time. According to Mr. Ziegler, the project will benefit both India and France equally. "It is the largest industrial project as well.

It is equally interesting for both the countries to work on this project," he said. Even as the proposed Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) is back on the negotiating table between the Indian and French governments, talks on liability and costs are yet to see a breakthrough in this 9,900 MW plant – the world's largest in terms of capacity.

Speaking to The Hindu, Alexandre Ziegler, the Ambassador of France to India, said that the political will shown by the present government is pushing the project forward at a remarkable speed. "One must understand that it [Jaitapur] is the largest nuclear project in the world, and the way government has moved, I am sure the work



will begin very soon," he said.

Mr. Ziegler refused to specify any deadlines for the commencement of work on the project.

The French Ambassador was speaking in the city after attending the 9th edition of India Nuclear Energy (INE), an exhibition for developing the nuclear energy sector in India, which has also seen participation from French companies.

The French firm EDF is to build six reactors, each with a capacity of

1,650 MW using European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) technology, at Jaitapur, about 400 km south of Mumbai, on the coastal of Ratnagiri district.

The project was earlier with another French company Areva, which ran into bankruptcy. Negotiations recommenced after EDF made a fresh proposal to Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) last year.

The Jaitapur project has seen intense opposition from locals, as well

as anti-nuclear activists, over issues related to safety, technology and techno-commercial agreements between the two countries.

"There are no major problems. Issues over liability need to be fixed; they are presently being discussed. Cost issues will always arise for any project, and for a gigantic project like this, they are bound to be discussed in detail. We are confident that the issues will be solved soon," Mr. Ziegler said. Replying to a question on the fear that EPR was not proven technology and not a single project under it has been commissioned till date, Mr. Ziegler said EPR is "the safest and most sufficient technology at present". You might not see a commissioned plant, but three foreign countries, including the U.K., have already begun work using it," he said, adding that the U.K.'s acceptance of EPR is in itself a testimony to its reliability.

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BJP MP rails against note ban at House panel meeting

NEW DELHI: Demonetisation has crippled the unorganised sector and is responsible for suicides and unemployment, BJP MP and beedi baron Shyama Charan Gupta said at a parliamentary panel meeting on Thursday.

Mr. Gupta's comments came during a meeting of the standing committee on finance, headed by Congress MP M. Veerappa Moily, which was discussing demonetisation. Importantly, it comes a day after Union Cabinet Ministers had fanned across the country extolling the virtues of demonetisation in tackling black money.

Economic Affairs Secretary Subash Chandra Garg, Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar, and Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes

Sushil Chandra were also present at the meeting.

Officials quizzed. According to sources, Mr. Gupta, MP from Allahabad, asked officials if they had compiled figures on suicides in the unorganised sector due to demonetisation. "He asked if they realise how bad the situation is in the unorganised sector where he claimed people are facing starvation. He also asked the Finance Ministry officials if they have maintained any statistics on suicides by workers in the unorganised sector," another committee member said. Mr. Gupta who heads a 250 crore beedi business, spoke at length detailing the crippling effect of demonetisation on businesses like his. First, he said the government had cut the cash flow resulting in reduction

in jobs. A year on, with 28% GST on beedis, the government has further squeezed the sector with major dip in demand. While Mr. Gupta refused to divulge details of his comments at the meeting, citing the confidentiality clause, he did not deny the questions he had raised. "I cannot reveal anything about the meeting without permission of chairman of the committee. I placed before the members my queries just like others," Mr. Gupta told The Hindu. "What is more interesting is that the other BJP members remained mum through the meeting and did not jump in support of the government. Rajya Sabha MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar was the only one to speak in favour of the exercise," another member told The Hindu.



POOR SLEEP MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT KIDNEY FUNCTION

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

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

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

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



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

median of five years.

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

More sexual partners doubles prostate cancer risk: Study

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Vaccine against HIV infection closer to reality'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The study appears in the journal Scientific Reports.

Sex linked to prostate cancer risk - study

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Novartis Acquires US Pharma Firm Selexys Pharmaceuticals

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

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

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

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

The prototype treatment has just completed the second phase of the



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

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

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

SMOKING E-CIGARETTES KILLS MOUTH CELLS

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

BEING CURIOUS MAKES YOU MORE CREATIVE: STUDY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

in more abstract ways."

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

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

GST Council cuts tax on 177 items such as detergents, cosmetics, chocolates to 18%

NEW DELHI: Dozens of items of mass consumption such as detergent, shampoo, chocolates and beauty products will become cheaper, as the panel on Goods and Services Tax (GST) decided on Friday that only so-called sin goods should be taxed the most under the new multi-rate system.

The GST Council recommended that the government prune by nearly three-quarters the number of items under the highest 28% slab, a move that should help ease the pressure the government faces over economic disruptions from the rollout of the new tax and last year's scrapping of high-value banknotes.

Making things cheaper will set government revenues back by Rs 20,000 crore, council member Sushil Modi told reporters.

"There was unanimity that in 28% category there should be only sin and demerit goods," Modi, deputy chief minister of Bihar, said, adding rates on 177 items were brought down to 18%.



For luxury and so-called sin or demerit goods, there is an extra levy on the top rate. Alcohol, real estate, electricity and petroleum are exempt and are taxed under earlier system. The GST subsumed a string of

state levies and taxes but has faced a bumpy ride since its July 1 launch, especially on account of complex monthly tax-filing processes that is said to have raised the cost of doing business for shopkeepers and small

businesses. The GST Council has already taken several measures to ease the compliance burden of small businesses. The next meeting of the council is expected to further liberalise the 'composition scheme,' a

simplified tax payment plan for small businesses, and lower tax rates.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with annual sales less than Rs 1.5 crore, which were earlier exempted from the central excise duty, have come under the GST regime on account of a lower Rs 20-lakh sales threshold for GST.

MSMEs are crucial to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plans to create a million jobs a month and many of whose promoters are traditional voters of his Bharatiya Janata Party, which is facing a resurgent opposition in elections in its bastion of Gujarat.

India has about 56 million small and medium-sized firms that account for some 110 million jobs in the country, official data show.

Responding to those concerns, the federal indirect tax body, the GST council, lowered the rates on 27 items and announced a slew of rate changes, such as quarterly filing of returns for businesses with sales of up to Rs 1.5 crore.

Centre to present Budget 2018 on February 1

NEW DELHI: Sticking to the practice started last year, finance minister Arun Jaitley will present on February 1, his fifth consecutive budget, a senior official said, putting to rest speculation that the date of presentation of the finance bill would be advanced. This budget will be the National Democratic Alliance's last full-fledged budget before the 2019 general elections. In 2016, the government advanced the budget presentation to the first day of February, departing from the practice of presenting it on the last working day of the month, to give more time to departments to spend the money allocated to them.

The winter session of Parliament will be truncated and is expected to start around the second and final phase of the Gujarat assembly election, which is due to take place on 9 December, "but there is no question of bringing forward the budget and (it) will be presented on February 1," the government official cited above said on condition of anonymity.

The government last year also changed the expenditure classification to revenue and capital expenditure from the earlier classification of plan and non-plan expenditure. It merged the railway budget with the general budget. It is yet to decide on shifting the financial year to January-December from April-March.

The finance ministry has started the budget-making exercise for the fiscal year starting April 1 with the release of the budget circular in September containing the timelines for submission of information by various departments.

Ministries and departments were asked to submit tentative budget estimates for fiscal 2019 by 30 September. The government on Monday named revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia as the finance secretary, completing the team of bureaucrats that will prepare the next budget. Ajay Narayan has been named as the new expenditure secretary after finance and expenditure secretary Ashok Lavasa retired from his post on 31 October. Subhash Chandra Garg and Rajiv Kumar were appointed as the economic affairs secretary and financial services secretary in July and August, respectively while Neeraj Kumar Gupta continues to be the disinvestment secretary.

This will also be the first budget after the goods and services tax (GST) was implemented from 1 July. The centre now cannot on its own change the indirect tax structure except for customs duties as this would need approval of the GST Council.

This may substantially shift focus of the next budget to quality of expenditure of the government.

The government has not decided on framing a new Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, as recommended by the N.K. Singh committee. The committee has recommended the formation of a fiscal council and a glide path to lower the fiscal deficit and debt-to-GDP ratio to 2.5% and 38.7%, respectively, by the fiscal year 2022-23 from 3.5% and 49.4% in 2016-17. N.R. Bhanumurthy, professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, said that since the next budget will be a pre-election year budget, the focus will obviously be more on social sectors, small-scale firms and creating employment.

"The government's stand on the N.K. Singh committee report will also decide the fiscal space it has for pushing social sector expenditure," he added.

Jaitley has already said that he will stick to the glide path for fiscal deficit announced in the last budget, ruling out a breach of the self-imposed fiscal discipline target to boost economic growth. The government aims to contain the fiscal deficit at 3.2% of GDP in 2017-18 and 3% of GDP in 2018-19.

Flipkart to launch new smartphone Billion Capture+ at Rs 10,999

MUMBAI: Bengaluru India's largest online retailer Flipkart will launch a new smartphone under its Billion brand, which is the first major initiative by co-founder and executive chairman Sachin Bansal since he stepped aside as chief executive in January 2016. The new, so-called Made for India smartphone called Billion Capture+ will go on sale on Flipkart on November 15. The smartphone, based on the Android operating system, will be priced at Rs 10,999 for the 32GB model and at Rs 12,999 for the 64GB model. Billion category head Hrishikesh Thite said. The phone has been designed, engineered, manufactured and tested in India, he added. The phone's appeal with customers will be closely tracked. Flipkart, which is the leader in the crucial smartphone category, boasts of key partnerships with top phone brands such as Xiaomi, Samsung, Vivo and Oppo, all of whom have competing products with Billion. Overall smartphone sales account for more than 50% of all e-commerce in India. In an interview, Bansal said that Flipkart will launch more products across categories such as large appliances under the Billion brand over the coming months.

"This is a very significant event for us, given that a hi-tech product like a smartphone takes our brand to another level. What we have done better from our side is that we've tried to understand consumer needs better, we've tried to understand what are the features in a smartphone that they would like to see more of and what are the kind of features that they don't use much. And that's something that we've used to over-index on those features that they need more in a smartphone, and we've taken away those features that they don't value as much," said Bansal.

M&M gains on 1:1 bonus shares, good Q2 results

MUMBAI: The company reported 22% year on year (y-o-y) growth in its Group consolidated net profit at Rs 1,411 crore in September 2017 quarter (Q2FY18). Revenue grew 17% at Rs 12,573 crore on y-o-y basis.

"In Q2FY18, the domestic tractor industry grew 37% as compared to the Q2FY17. During the quarter, normal monsoons helped in boosting the rural sentiments and demand for tractors. Normal monsoons, and increase in MSP's of both Kharif and Rabi crops are likely to maintain the positive rural sentiment," M&M said in a press release. At 03:18 PM, the stock was trading 2.6% higher at Rs 1,397 on the BSE, as compared to 0.36% rise in the S&P BSE Sensex. The trading volumes on the counter more than doubled with a combined 3.03 million shares changed hands on the NSE and BSE. The stock trading close to its 52-week high of Rs 1,460 touched on June 12, 2017 in intra-day trade.

SBI Q2 results: Net profit up at Rs 1840 crore, standalone profit slips by 37.9%

MUMBAI: The country's largest lender SBI on Friday posted multi-fold jump in consolidated net profit at 1,840.43 crore for the second quarter ended on September 30, boosted by sale of its stake in SBI Life Insurance.

Its profit was just Rs 20.70 crore during the same quarter of the last financial year. On standalone basis, SBI's profit declined by 37.9% to Rs 1,581.55 crore, from Rs 2,538.32 crore on account of rise in bad loans. Total income on standalone basis increased to Rs 65,429.63 crore in July-September 2017 against Rs 50,742.9 crore in the same period a

year ago, State Bank India said in a filing to stock exchanges.

As of September 30, the bank's gross NPAs deteriorated to 9.83% of gross advances, compared with 7.14% year ago. Similarly, the net NPAs rose to 5.43% from 4.19%.

Provisioning for non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans by the bank more than doubled to Rs 16,715.20 crore during the quarter under review, as against Rs 7,669.66 crore in the same period of last financial year.

In absolute terms, its gross NPAs rose to Rs 1,86,114.60 crore, from Rs

1,05,782.96 crore at the second quarter of the previous fiscal. Net NPAs increased to Rs 97,896.29 crore as against Rs 60,013.45 crore.

Total income on consolidated basis rose to Rs 74,948.52 crore during the second quarter of the current fiscal, from Rs 72,918.4 crore in the same period of 2016-17.

SBI mopped up about Rs 8,400 crore by diluting its stake in SBI Life Insurance through initial public offer during the September quarter.

SBI shares were trading at Rs 329.50, up 5.02% on BSE.

Sensex drops 57 points in early trade on weak global cues

MUMBAI: The benchmark BSE Sensex dropped by 57 points to 33,194.35 in early trade on Friday after banking, telecom, auto, oil & gas, and pharma stocks declined following weak global cues. The 30-share index declined by 56.58 points or 0.17% to 33,194.35. The gauge had gained 32.12 points in Thursday's highly volatile session.

The NSE Nifty too was trading lower by 36.20 points or 0.35% to 10,272.75.

All the sectoral indices led by metal, auto and oil & gas were trading in the negative terrain, falling by up to 0.92%.

Brokers said sentiment dampened largely in tandem with a weak trend at other Asian markets following overnight weakness at Wall Street amid fears of delay in US corporate tax cut. Tata Motors fell the most by 2.11% among Sensex scrips even as it posted three-fold jump in consolidated profit for the September



quarter. Asian Paint and Reliance Industries also dropped by 1.78%, dragging the index into the negative zone.

Other major losers were Adani Ports, Axis Bank, TCS, Sun Pharma, Dr Reddy's, HDFC Ltd, Power Grid, M&M, Hero Moto Corp, Wipro and Infosys.

In other Asian markets, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index was down by 0.20%, while Japan's Nikkei shed 1.38% in early trade today. Shanghai Composite Index too was down 0.21%.

The US Dow Jones ended lower by 0.43% in Thursday's trade.

Panic-stricken' Modi govt has no option but to change GST rates, says Chidambaram

NEW DELHI: Congress leader P Chidambaram on Friday said a "shower of changes" is expected from the GST Council meeting in Guwahati and the "panic-stricken" Modi government has no option but to change the new tax rates.

The high-powered committee headed by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is meeting in the Assam city to discuss GST rates.

Chidambaram said the government will be forced to heed the advice of the opposition and experts due to the Gujarat assembly elections next month.

"Expect a shower of changes in GST rates from GST Council meeting today. Panic-stricken govt has no option but to concede demands for change. Thanks to Gujarat elections, government forced to heed advice of Opposition and experts on flaws in implementation of GST," he tweeted. Chidambaram said the letter from the finance ministers of Congress-ruled states to Jaitley will set the tone for discussions in the GST Council on Friday. "Congress FM's letter exposes the structural flaws in the design and implementation of GST. Government can no longer duck these issues," he said.

The Congress leader said the government had avoided debate and voting in Rajya Sabha on GST Bills but it cannot avoid a debate in the public domain or in the GST Council. "Congress FM's will force changes in GST Council meeting today. Agra, Surat, Tiruppur and other hub towns are watching," he said. The finance ministers of Congress ruled states last week demanded a major overhaul of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), alleging that the tax reform measure had turned out to be a "big disappointment" due to its "poor" implementation.

The finance ministers of the Congress-ruled Punjab and Karnataka, Manpreet Badal and Krishna Gowda, alleged that the country had "lost the opportunity" to bring tax reform and that there was "utter chaos and confusion", forcing many businesses to shut down. They also alleged that there was "poor implementation" with regard to GST's concept, design, tax rates, exemptions, compliance requirement and technological preparedness.

They said the party would demand reduction of tax rates for many items and raise other concerns of the business community in the Guwahati meeting of the GST Council.

Demonetisation changed saving habits of Indians, says finance ministry

NEW DELHI: Demonetisation has brought about a significant shift in saving habits among Indians, with many parking a higher share of their disposable income in bank deposits and market instruments, the government has said.

A finance ministry note submitted to a parliamentary panel said gross financial savings in terms of deposits, shares, debentures, insurance funds and pension funds increased by 48% in 2016-17, while assets parked in mutual funds grew by 45% between July 2016 and July 2017. "The demonetisation drive led to a significant change in saving habits and formalisation of the assets market. More funds came into the organised financial markets, whereas households would earlier park much of their savings in unproductive physical assets," the note stated.

This shift in savings pattern is significant because India has always fluctuated between high and low domestic savings. The country had already seen its share of equities and mutual funds double from 5.29%



to 11.04% in fiscal year 2016 — indicating more consistency in monetary deposits as far as productive financial assets were concerned.

"The gross financial saving in term of deposits, shares and debentures, insurance funds, and provident and pension funds increased from 9% to 13.3% of the GNDI (Gross

National Disposable Income) in 2016-17 — a hike of about 48%. The assets under management by mutual funds were Rs 13.8 lakh crore at the end of July 2017, which is a substantial increase of 45%," the note said. The high collection of insurance premium also indicates that the people rushed to pay them with old

currency notes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement. "The cumulative collections from November 2016 to January 2017 increased by 46% over the same period of the previous year. It stabilised at 18% from November 2016 to June 2017," the note said. The government also stated that demon-

etisation effectively eliminated Rs 6 lakh crore of potential black money from the economy, a claim rejected by the Opposition. Referring to the rate of growth of specified bank notes (of 500 and 1000 denominations), the government argued that they would have amounted to about Rs 18 lakh crore by now. "The estimated worth of high value notes, as of September 2017, was approximately Rs 12 lakh crore. Therefore, the amount of high value notes has been effectively (brought) down by Rs 6 lakh crore," said the note.

Several Opposition members questioned economic affairs secretary Subhash Garg and financial services secretary Anjali Chhibi Dugal on the merits of demonetisation on Thursday. They wanted to know the costs incurred through the demonetisation initiative, and why banks were not giving enough credit despite sitting on piles of money. A BJP member reportedly admitted that many beedi workers in his constituency were unemployed and starving due to demonetisation.

ICC toothless against Indian cricket board, says Pakistan legend Wasim Akram

MUMBAI: Former Pakistan cricket team skipper Wasim Akram on Friday hit out at the International Cricket Council's (ICC) inability to pursue the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to play a bilateral series with Pakistan.

Akram, popularly known as the Sultan of Swing, said it is very unfortunate that young cricketers from Pakistan and India are unable to play against each other.

The 51-year-old lashed out at the ICC for failing to initiate an India-Pakistan series which he felt should be separated from politics. "I don't think ICC has the power to pursue BCCI, but again I have always said people-to-people contact is necessary. Politics and sport should be separate," Akram was quoted as saying by Geo TV.

The legendary left-arm pacer further said that an India-Pakistan clash is more exciting



to watch than the high-octane Ashes series between traditional rivals England and Australia.

"A Pakistan-India match is more fun to watch than the Ashes. Twenty million people watch the Ashes while a Pakistan-India match is watched by a billion people," emphasised Akram, who took 502 wickets from 356 ODIs. The BCCI, in 2014, had agreed to play six bilateral series with Pakistan from 2015 to 2023, four of which were to be

hosted by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). However, with political tensions across the border, the BCCI has refused to play any of the agreed series yet, neither in Pakistan nor at any neutral venue.

The arch-rivals, however, met in ICC tournaments with the Champions Trophy final in June being the latest when Sarfraz Ahmed-led Green Brigade thrashed Virat Kohli's side by 180 runs in London.

Rafael Nadal confident of being fully fit at ATP Finals in London

LONDON: World number one Rafa Nadal is confident he will be "100 percent fit" at the ATP Finals event in London as he continues to recover from a knee injury.

The Spaniard pulled out of the Paris Masters before his quarter-final match against American John Isner after experiencing discomfort in his right knee during his third-round win over Pablo Cuevas.



"Hopefully the knee is good," Nadal told Sky Sports. "I've done everything I've needed to do in order to get ready for London... Let's see if I am able to be 100 percent to compete."

"If nothing happens, then I will play. I visited my doctors after the Paris Masters - it was a tough day for me having to pull out of Paris."

"I know I'm confident because I'm having a great season with one event to go. I am here to try my best."

Reigning French and U.S. Open winner Nadal begins the quest for his first ATP Finals title against Belgian David Goffin on Monday and will also compete with Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov and Austrian Dominic Thiem in his group.

Here's how ICC had fun with the increased character limit on Twitter

MUMBAI: Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan cricket team has arrived in Kolkata and will be playing their first tour match of the India tour, starting Saturday against the Indian Board President's XI at the Jadavpur University Campus in Kolkata.

The first Test of the three-match series will be played at the Eden Gardens starting November 16, while the other two will be at Nagpur (November 24-28) and New Delhi (December 2-6). India and Sri Lanka, who had played a three-match Test, five-match ODI and a one-off T20I series in the island nation earlier this year, will also be playing three ODIs and T20Is in December. The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday joined many of the Twitter users who



are having fun with the increased character limit while composing tweets on the social networking platform, in a way whose context only the game's fans would understand.

ICC decided to type out full names of Sri Lankan cricketers - as many as four of them in a single tweet to join the bandwagon of Twitter users who have been coming up with hi-

larious versions to keep the fraternity entertained.

Arguably, with the former limit of a mere 140 characters it would have been difficult to assemble so many names in one tweet, but with the limit taken up to 280 characters, ICC did not miss out on having some fun.

For those uninitiated, former Fiji cricketer IL Bula is the one with longest ever name to have played cricket. His full name is: Ilikena Lasarusa Talebulamaineiilikenamainavaleiveivakabulaimainakulalakebalau. ICC listed down full names of former pacer Chaminda Vaas, umpire Kumar Dharmasena, wicketkeeper-batsman Niroshan Dickwella and spin wizard Rangana Herath, and even added a little bit of comment at the top.

BCCI says no need to follow World Anti-doping Agency regulations

MUMBAI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Friday said it cannot be subjected to the jurisdiction of the National Anti-doping Agency (NADA), stating that it is an "autonomous body affiliated to the International Cricket Council".

The Indian cricket board released separate letters written to NADA and the Department of Sports, asserting that it follows the ICC Code, which is based on the World Anti-doping Agency (WADA) Code.

Despite the pressure built up by NADA and the Indian Sports Ministry asking the agency to collect samples from cricketers during BCCI-recognised tournaments, the Indian cricket Board has asserted that it follows the necessary guidelines and none of its officials is supposed to coordinate with NADA on this. BCCI conveyed NADA that it "already has a robust dope testing

mechanism which is employed for both during competitions and out-of-competitions", and the "testing of samples collected by International Doping Tests and Management (IDTM) is already being done at a WADA accredited laboratory under the aegis of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports."

The Indian Board added that it is "affiliated with the International Cricket Council, which governs the game globally" and being a full member it is also a "signatory to the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) code since 2006 and the ICC Code, which is based on the WADA Code".

"BCCI not under NADA jurisdiction" The board clearly stated that it cannot be pushed under the NADA jurisdiction by saying that it is not a National Sports Federation (NSF).

"At the very outset it is necessary

to clarify that the BCCI is not a National Sports Federation but an autonomous sports organisation affiliated to the ICC, which governs the game globally."

The BCCI said that it has 'adopted and implemented' the ICC Code - which is based on the WADA Code - since 2011 as a full member of the cricket governing body.

"For analysis and testing of samples, BCCI adheres to the WADA International Standard for Laboratories and the WADA International Standard for Testing and Investigations," the letter said. "BCCI has adopted the WADA list of prohibited substances and prohibited methods, as amended by WADA from time to time, as more particularly set out in Article 4.1 to 4.3 of the BCCI code," it added.

"BCCI has engaged the services of the same expert sample collection

agency that is also engaged by the ICC to provide collection sample services viz. International Doping Tests & Management," it said.

"BCCI not a National Sports Federation" The WADA has reportedly warned its Indian arm that it may lose affiliation if it fails to get the Indian cricketers under this jurisdiction, but the BCCI has stated it is not possible. "BCCI is not a National Sports Federation. Accordingly, NADA does not have jurisdiction to conduct dope testing on Indian cricketers in any domestic competition or international events organised by or under the aegis of BCCI," the Indian cricket body said while acknowledging that NADA is responsible for the implementation of anti-doping measures and all NSFs in India. "There is no requirement for any BCCI official to coordinate with NADA for dope testing of In-

dian cricketers either during competitions or out-of-competitions", the board has asserted.

"Highest number of testing reported by BCCI"

The Indian cricket board also claimed that starting from 2013, it has recorded the highest number of sample testing among all cricket boards adding that it is the only sports body in India which has 'created a 24x7 anti-doping helpline'.

The Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) had a few days ago stated that it was satisfied with the current anti-doping system in place in Indian cricket. It has also been reported that the Indian cricketers are not comfortable signing the 'whereabouts clause' - which requires them to disclose their location to the International Sports Federation (IF) or in India's case, NADA.

Sri Lanka prepare to break India hoodoo with warm-up vs Board President's XI

KOLKATA: Chasing an elusive dream of winning their first cricket Test in India, Sri Lanka will begin their gruelling tour with a two-day tour fixture against a depleted Board President's XI in Kolkata. Sri Lanka who will play their first Test in India since 2009-10 have a forgettable record in the country as they are yet to win from 16 appearances and have suffered 10 defeats in their head-to-head record spanning 1982-2017. It's an improbable task for skipper Dinesh Chandimal who will play his maiden Test in India and would bank upon the experience of Angelo Mathews and Rangana Herath the only two members who were part of their side which suffered 0-2 defeat seven years back.

Having suffered a 0-9 humiliation at home across three formats, the Islanders are here in India in a gap of two months but with a confidence-boosting surprise 2-0 Test series win over Pakistan in UAE last month.

The Lankans will play three Tests and as many ODIs and T20Is in the long series concluding in Mumbai on December 24. Chandimal and Co. will hope to start well against a third-string Board's side led by Sanju Samson. The match is scheduled at the Jadavpur University second campus ground, the deck of which primarily supports seam bowling. Giving importance to the Ranji Trophy, the Board has opted for a third-string outfit primarily comprising of players from -- Hyderabad, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab who are not featuring in the ongoing fifth round of the domestic tournament. In such a scenario, it will hardly give the Islanders a perfect build up. For Sri Lanka the spotlight will be on former captain and ace all-rounder Mathews who will make a return after missing the entire series against Pakistan. Having recovered from a calf muscle injury, Mathews was in full flow in their first practice here as he will look to get into rhythm ahead of the first Test at Eden Gardens from November 16-20. Having bagged 16 wickets against Pakistan, senior-most spinner Rangana Herath will eye a rich haul here as he will lead the spin department with left-arm chinaman Lakshan Sandakan, who bagged a five-wicket haul against India in Pallekele in their third and final Test in August.

Fresh from his 93 and 196 against Pakistan, left-handed opener Dimuth Karunaratne will look to continue from where he left in Abu Dhabi as they will also be hoping for support from skipper Chandimal and Niroshan Dickwella. Chandimal also has a century against Pakistan while Dickwella was their third leading run-getter in Abu Dhabi with two half-centuries. The Board President's XI squad has in-form Punjab youngster Anmolpreet Singh, who scored a career-best 267 in the last round Ranji Trophy match against Chhattisgarh. He was drafted in after Naman Ojha, who was originally named captain, was ruled out due to an injury. Punjab opener Jivanjot Singh, who led their side against Himachal Pradesh in absence of Harbhajan Singh and Yuvraj Singh, too finds a place in the team.

There's also Punjab batsman Abhishek Gupta, who scored a double century in his first-class debut in the season opener against Himachal Pradesh.

Zaira Wasim of 'Dangal' fame says Mary Kom is her favourite sportsperson



BANGALORE: Zaira Wasim of 'Dangal' fame today said Mary Kom is her favourite sportswoman and would like to play her on silver screen.

"I am in love with Mary Kom ever since I have been involved with the Rotary Club. She is my favourite," she said replying to questions by reporters at the announcement of the 11th edition of 'Bengaluru Midnight Marathon 2017' here. Zaira Wasim, who is the Youth Ambassador for the marathon scheduled from December 16 to 17, also unveiled the theme for this year "Run to BENEFIT".

Asked if she would prefer to play Kom's role on silver screen, she said "If it is happening (Mary Kom 3) I would love to do it." The actress also said Virat Kohli is his favourite cricketer. "I am in awe of Virat Kohli, and who is not?" he said. Replying to a query, Zaira said: "I don't plan my future. I believe in destiny. I have realised in last three years, that whatever you plan, it does not materialise because destiny has its own plans," she said.

However, studies remain her main priority for now.

Ashes 2017-18: Craig McDermott unconvinced by Glenn Maxwell's Test credentials

SYDNEY: Craig McDermott does not think Glenn Maxwell is the man to solve Australian cricket team's number six quandary in the Ashes and says Mitchell Marsh cannot return soon enough. Maxwell is battling to retain his place in the side just a couple of weeks before Australia start their bid to regain the little urn at the Gabba.

The 29-year-old returned to form with two half-centuries in Victoria's drawn Sheffield Shield match against South Australia after failing twice against Queensland, but former Australia quick McDermott is not convinced Maxwell is suited to Test cricket.

He told Omnisport: "Number six is going to be a difficult one."

"I'm not sure whether Maxwell is the man for the job. Whilst he is a very talented batsman, he's not really fired in Test cricket when he's had a chance and sometimes you just don't know what you're going to get with him."

"I don't know if Test cricket is his game really."

Marsh is not expected to be able to bowl until late next month or early January after undergoing shoulder reconstruction, but McDermott said he would be the ideal candidate for the all-rounder spot.



"I think they are going to go with the three pacemen and a spinner, so there is what you've got and if you've got a batsman who can bowl a bit, that helps out." The ex-Australia bowling coach added.

"That was probably a Mitchell Marsh, but whether they head down that track, I'm not sure."

"We are not really looking for a number six who can bowl spin, we are probably looking for Marcus Stoinis, who can bowl some medium pace, or sharpish deliveries, soak up some overs and hopefully take wickets as well."

"I'm a pretty big fan of Mitchell Marsh, he is the ideal guy you would want at number six. He's an excellent batsman and can bowl with good pace and get bounce. That is obviously handy at the Gabba."

"I definitely wouldn't pick another guy to bowl spin, as we have Nathan Lyon to do that and if you need somebody to mix it up and give him a rest, the captain can bowl."