

# TIME AND US

DAILY Srinagar, Kashmir

FRIDAY

- NOVEMBER, 24, 2017
- 05 RABI-AL-AWAL 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 275
- VOLUME: 03
- PAGES: 08

| WEATHER TEMPERATURE |                 |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| STATION             | MAX TEMPERATURE | MIN TEMPERATURE |
|                     | ACT             | ACT             |
| SRINAGAR            | 11.8            | -2.3            |
| JAMMU               | 24.6            | 7.9             |
| LEH                 | 7.9             | -13.5           |
| KARGIL              | 8.0             | -9.0            |

SUNSET FRIDAY: 05:24 PM  
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 07:12 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR  
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 12°C & -1°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

VEERI CONDUCTS EXTENSIVE TOUR OF KASHMIRI PANDITS TOWNSHIP, COLONIES IN

INTERSTATE | 5

'PAST IS PAST': DALAI LAMA SAYS TIBET WANTS TO STAY WITH CHINA, WANTS

BUSINESS | 7

GRAB APPOINTS VIKAS AGARWAL AS CTO, EYES ON SCALING GRABPAY

SPORTS | 8

CRICKET CALENDAR MAKES VIRAT KOHLI FUME; PREPARATION FOR SA NOT IDEAL, HE SAYS

## Dineshwar Sharma to visit south Kashmir on his second visit

'I would like to meet youth in other districts as well'

Srinagar, Nov 23: The Government of India's special representative for carrying out dialogue on Kashmir, Dineshwar Sharma, will visit south Kashmir during his second visit this month where he will be meeting youth groups.

Sharma will be arriving to Kashmir on 26 November before meeting people in Jammu on November 24.

"I have expressed my desire that I will visit south Kashmir to meet youth there," Sharma told KNS.

Sources said that this time he will visit Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's home town, Anantnag, and Pulwama in south Kashmir. "I would like to meet youth in other districts as well. State government will be making arrangements for my visit to districts," he told KNS.

His visit will follow the announcement of amnesty to first time stone-pelters booked in 2016 by the centre as well as the state govern-



ments this week.

South Kashmir has been quite volatile since 2016 due to unrest after killing of Hizbul Mujahideen young commander Burhan Wani and in 2017 due to increased number of militants and counter-insurgency operations.

This year, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti visited south Kashmir's volatile Pulwama

See **Dineshwar**...Pg 02

## UNION MINISTERS DISCUSS TRIPLE TALAQ LEGISLATION

NEW DELHI: A group of Union ministers today closed for an hour to discuss about a legislation to put an end to instantaneous 'triple talaq', a Muslim way of divorce, which is said to be still in practice despite the Supreme Court striking it down.

The Centre is planning to bring the legislation in the winter session of Parliament, which is likely to begin from December 15.

Chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, the meeting discussed various issues related to the proposed bill, which is expected to ensure that the instantaneous way of divorce will be a punishable offence, a Government official said.

See **Union**...Pg 02

## Healing touch: Mehbooba orders review of cases against youth for 2015-2017

'Hope the initiative creates positivity, conciliatory atmosphere for youth'

Jammu, Nov 23: In a decision of immense significance, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today ordered the review of cases against the youth for the period 2015-2017 (till date) by an already constituted committee and furnishing of its recommendations within 10 days.

The committee so tasked

with the review shall be the same as was constituted earlier by the Chief Minister to review cases against youth for 2008-2014 period, a Government order issued in this regard today said.

The review of cases against these youths was a major demand from various sections of the society in the State who

would be heaving a sigh of relief after this decision.

It may be recalled here that soon after assuming the office of Chief Minister in April, 2016, Mehbooba Mufti had set on a process of review of cases against youth from 2008 to 2014 which, unfortunately, got disrupted due to

See **Healing**...Pg 02

## Joint Secy MGNREGA calls on CM

Apprises Mehbooba of impressions of her visit



Jammu, Nov 23: Joint Secretary (MGNREGA), Union Ministry of Rural Development,

Aparajita Sarangi, who has been on a visit

See **CM**...Pg 02

## 1159 EVS WORKING IN FAR OFF AREAS GET PEANUTS, NO JOB SECURITY

Demand hike in salary, risk allowance and job security

Srinagar, Nov 23: The Educational Volunteers (Teachers) working in mobile schools in tough terrains of hilly areas of Kashmir are paid a meager stipend that too for only six months with no job security at all.

Around 1159 Educational Volunteers (Teachers) has been engaged by the government for taking care of these mobile schools and to provide quality education to the nomadic children who otherwise would remain illiterate.

Those studying in these schools are the children of the

See **Working**...Pg 02

## Govt taking significant measures to ensure peace in the state: Bhat

Demands completion of pending long projects in Bandipora

Bandipora, Nov 23: Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) General Secretary Nizam-ud-din Thursday said that the state government is taking significant measures to restore peace and ensure progress in the state.

Interacting with deputations and party workers during his two-day visit to Bandipora, Bhat according to the KNS correspondent said that the state will soon witness a conducive atmosphere for

harmonious growth and competitive political activity, besides a healthy discourse on social issues.

He said Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has succeeded in her efforts to engage New Delhi in positive, people-friendly activity and attitudes within the political dispensation and establishment have changed from apathy or arrogance to empathy and concern.

He said recent measures



like Amnesty to stone pelters, additional power, opening of communication channels for talks, cut in GST on Kashmir specific goods, hike in central

assistance are the outcome of her sustained efforts to change the negative discourse.

Bhat said the latest PDP - BJP decisions taken at coordination committee meeting of the two parties should leave no doubt that the coalition government is keen to promote dialogue on issues and reinforce the will for the accomplishment of agenda of alliance.

He said there is strong

See **Bhat**...Pg 02

## FAMILY MAKES AN APPEAL EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO MILITANT SON TO RETURN HOME

Srinagar, Nov 23: A family from South Kashmir's Pulwama district appealed their son who according to them has recently joined militant ranks to return back to his home.

Adil Bilal Bhat (21) of Malangpora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district according to his family members who arrived here in Press Enclave Srinagar said that Adil disappeared from his house on 7 October last month and after few days his photograph with an assault rifle appeared on social media, indicating he has joined militant outfit.

Haseena Akhtar, the mother of the alleged militant told CNS that she is a heart patient and needs the help of her son. "I earnestly appeal to my son to return back

See **Family**...Pg 02

## Tarigami dismayed over tardy implementation of central schemes

'Implementation of these schemes going on at snail's pace'

Srinagar, Nov 23: CPI (M) leader and MLA Kulgam Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami Thursday expressed dismay over the tardy implementation of centrally sponsored schemes in Jammu and Kashmir saying contrary to the claims of the Government these schemes are going on at snail's pace.

According to the statement issued here, Tarigami said that there are central schemes and programmes which are focused on wage employment, self-employment and poverty alleviation. "But the implementation of these schemes is going on at snail's pace. The inadequate response to the ground situation of



livelihood concerns, have made these schemes

See **Tarigami**...Pg 02

## JCPS REACTS TO KTMF'S REMARKS ON TUITION FEE

'Schools charge fee as per standard, parents have choice to send wards to any school'

Srinagar, Nov 23: Reacting sharply to the statement of the Kashmir Traders and Manufacturers Federation (KTMF), Joint Committee of Private Schools (JCPS) said private schools never fleece parents in the name of school fee and admissions but rather provide quality education in a better environment with world class infrastructure.

In a statement, Chairman JCPS Showkat Mohammad Chowdhary said private schools are investing heavily on the education of the school children by providing state of art infrastructure, competent teachers, extra-curricular activities to bring up the children's overall personality

See **JCPS**...Pg 02

## JRL challenges India: 'Lift ban on political activities if you have crushed resistance movement'

Srinagar, Nov 23: "Forcing silence of graveyard by military might and naming it as peace can only be termed as stupidity. A fascist government in power, inspired by Joseph Goebbels' malicious propaganda techniques is trying to paint the brutal pacification of Kashmir as peace and return of normalcy. If Indian rulers presume that oppression unleashed by their army and forces has trampled resistance in Kashmir, then they should find some courage to lift ban on political activities of the resistance camp," this was stated by the joint resistance leadership while responding to recent statements of Indian ministers



like Arun Jaitly and others. Terming the statement of Indian Finance

See **Ban**...Pg 02

## MHA ADVISES JK GOVT TO CONSIDER RELEASING FIRST TIME OFFENDERS

'Withdraw cases against them, hike compensation for cops, SPOs'

Srinagar, Nov 23: The Government of India's has announced releasing first time offenders involved in recent law and order situations and withdraw cases against them and has also given orders for increasing compensation for cops slain during counter-insurgency operations and allotting more power during winter to the state.

"The misguided youth in J&K who became first time offenders in the recent law and order situations because

See **MHA**...Pg 02

## Gol's intervention on release of prisoners shows Mehbooba's helplessness: Vakil

'Abdullahs distorting facts to hide NC's role in sabotaging solution of K-issue'

Srinagar, Nov 23: President Jammu Kashmir Bachao Tehreek and former Minister Abdul Gani Vakil Thursday said that Central Government directing State Government at the instance of Dineshwar Sharma the new point man of central government on Kashmir dialogue to release prisoners arrested during turmoil shows to what extent the power and authority of



the State government has been eroded. Addressing a day long

convention of District Srinagar Vakil as per the statement issued to KNS said during previous regimes District police SP's used to release first time and even two time stone pelters but now Home Minister Rajnath Singh has directed Mehbooba Government to release first time stone pelters on the advice of Dineshwar Sharma and this shows Dineshwar Sharma wields

more power and authority than elected Chief Minister of the State.

Hitting out at three time Former Chief Minister and National Conference President Farooq Abdullah for his party's role in sabotaging the resolution of Kashmir issue from time to time during last seventy years Vakil said Farooq Abdullah's advice to the

See **Vakil**...Pg 02

## BOPEE multi-crore scam: 11 ACCUSED STUDENTS WERE NEVER QUESTIONED: ALLEGE PARENTS

Srinagar, Nov 23: A day after a trial court deferred the verdict on multi-crore Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (BOPEE) scandal, the parents of affected students Thursday vehemently appealed court to take suo moto cognizance of the case and pass directions to re-examine it.

The parents alleged that the main culprits involved in the scam were never called for investigation while even after publishing a hue and cry notice against the kingpin of the scandal, he was neither traced nor arrested. "How

See **Parents**...Pg 02

# DC BUDGAM CONVENES PUBLIC DURBAR AT TOWN HALL BEERWA

**BUDGAM, NOVEMBER 23:** A public durbar was held today at Town Hall Beerwa to get the first-hand appraisal of public issues and grievances.

District Development Commissioner Budgam, Mohammad Harun Malik conducted the durbar and took stock of the problems of the people living in the area, during which officials of R&B, PDD, PMGSY, PHE, I&FC, and other concerned Departments, besides, members of civil society of the area also participated.

During the durbar, locals raised issues such as repair of roads, water supply, proper medicare, ration supply, construction of sports stadium, supply of timber and firewood, up gradation of schools, shortage of teachers at schools, power supply, veterinary facility for cattle, banking facilities in certain areas and other related issues.

The DDC informed them that the majority of their demands have already been approved during the CM's Public Durbar and work on



those is being undertaken on the war footing. The DDC assured them that their genuine demands would be looked into and fulfilled at the earliest and informed the locals about various welfare and development programmes of the Government for the area. Resolving various grievances

on the spot, the DDC informed the public that he has issued a circular whereby the electric poles, LT, HT wires and other works taken up by PDD have to be vetted by the village level committee and any unscheduled power cuts due to repair of faults has to be compensated once the power supply is restored.

The DDC urged them to utilize the services of Village Agriculture Extension Officers. He urged the citizens to be aware of their rights and demand them assertively.

He also assured them that their demand to set up latrine complex and undertake renovation/up gradation of the town hall and adjoining park will be looked into.

The RDD authorities were directed to undertake fresh works at the earliest and also to clear previous liabilities if any for which necessary allotment has already been made and even enhanced.

The DDC urged the revenue authorities to frequently undertake market checking to prevent illegal profiteering and black marketing.

## Continue from Front Page.....

### DINESHWAR

, Anantnag and Kulgam districts during her public outreach programmes and try to regain the PDP's lost ground.

The announcement of dialogue and this week's amnesty to first-time stone-pelters by BJP government in New Delhi, which was keeping a hard stance on Kashmir, came as a shot in the arm for PDP.

Mehbooba said that is encouraging that the interlocutor has started on a positive note.

"His (Dineshwar Sharma's) recommendations are being taken seriously by both the central and state government," she said on her official twitter account.

"This confidence building measure reaffirms the Central government's commitment towards changing the narrative in J&K and creating a reconciliatory atmosphere for sustained dialogue," she tweeted.

### HEALING

the continued violence and unrest for later part of the year.

The Chief Minister described today's decision as a ray of hope for these young boys and their families terming it as an opportunity for them to rebuild their lives. She hoped the decision would help in creating a positive and conciliatory atmosphere in the State where the youth would be able to build their lives in a much more constructive and positive way.

### CM

of the State, called on the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today.

During the meeting, the Joint Secretary apprised the Chief Minister of the impressions of her visit. She said she was happy to see that the assets created under MGNREGA in the State have been of the best quality in the country.

She said she attended some Gram Sabhas and inspected some works in the rural areas and actually found how the works are prioritized and how these are executed.

Sarang informed the Chief Minister that MGNREGA is one of the top priority programmes of the Central Government for which the allocation has been raised from Rs 48000 crore to Rs 54000 crore this year and next year it is expected to be around Rs 55000 crore.

The Chief Minister impressed upon the Union Joint Secretary to ensure release of pending payments under MGNREGA to ensure that the works undertaken across the rural landscape of the State are carried uninterruptedly. She also asked for more fund flow to the State for developing rural infrastructure in line with the local environment and ecosystem.

Commissioner Secretary, Rural Development Department, Nirmal Sharma was also present on the occasion.

### UNION

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot, Minister for Minorities Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Attorney General K K Venugopal besides others attended the meeting.

No decision was taken in today's meeting and further deliberations will take place in coming days, the official said.

### WORKING

migratory population of Gujjars, Bakerwals and Shepherds, the government had envisaged a scheme in late 1970s called Mobile Schools, now known as Seasonal Schools.

These schools were closed down after the onset of armed struggle, but the PDP - Congress Government (2002-2008) again made the Mobile Seasonal schools operational in different hilly districts of J&K.

At present such schools are operational in Poonch, Rajouri, Doda, Budgam, Shopian, Kupwara, Baramulla, Kargil and few other districts of the State. Nearly 40,000 plus students are enrolled in these schools.

"The Government through the respective Zonal Educational Office takes services of local educated youth known as 'Educational Volunteers (EV)'. These volunteer teachers are provided a monthly stipend of Rs 4000. In addition to this each mobile school is provided with few tents," a group of teachers told KNS.

The volunteer teachers are deputed to various places where there is sufficient nomadic and migratory population and the children are enrolled on spot and the schools start their academic session from May onwards which continues till October, they said.

But these volunteer teachers who work in hilly areas and tough terrains face a multitude of problems.

"We are engaged for a period of six months only and from the last many years we have been demanding for their job security. We are being paid a monthly salary (stipend) of Rs 4000 and from 2004 till date there has been no revision in this stipend. The salaries of Government officials have been increased under 6th pay commission but we have been to-

tally ignored," said the aggrieved teachers.

The teachers demand job security and continuation of their empanelment for the whole academic year, in addition to it they want some risk allowance must be provided to them.

Even then Member Parliament G N Ratanpuri, who was a Member Consultative Committee of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), had assured the Mobile Seasonal teachers that this matter would be taken up by him with Ministries of HRD & Labour in New Delhi, but nothing happened later.

Director School Education DR G N Yattoo said it is a component of SSA and only they can take a call on it. "Also these schools work only for six months and then they move," he said.

Director SSA, A R War said these aren't sanctioned posts. "This is not a job. It is a volunteer service as the name itself denotes," he said.

Asked if there is any good news for them in the future, he said, "As of now there is nothing but let's hope for the best."

### BHAT

desire in both parties to empower the youth of the state and provide people opportunities to flourish. Bhat said Chief Minister's reach out to grass root is another big factor which is helping establish a positive discourse on government, it's agenda and functioning. He said more concrete steps are in offing to push the agenda of peace and development.

He demanded the proper surveillance of funds provided under various schemes for developmental use as there is need to ensure accountability and pre-empt political interference in development.

Bhat also demanded that the government should ensure completion of Grid Station at Putushai which is a long pending of the people of Bandipora to increase power scenario in the district.

He said that works on all pending projects like district hospital Bandipora and polytechnic college be resumed and funds for Wular and Tribal Sub-plan are also released so that Bandipora can keep pace with the development.

He also said that also demanded that the vacancies in various government departments under district sector be fulfilled so that unemployment is addressed in the district.

### FAMILY

and I also appeal to militant commanders to send Adil back," she said.

We lodged a missing report at police station Pulwama, but after few days his photograph with an assault rifle appeared on social media. We came to know Adil has joined militant outfit Hizbul Mujahadeen, Hasena Akhtar said.

Adil, the son of a police man has a younger brother and a sister.

According to his father Adil is religious minded and he has little hope that he will return back.

"Police has assured us that family will be informed if he gets trapped in any encounter, but we don't believe he will surrender that time," said Bilal Ahmed.

The wailing parents made an emotional appeal to his son to return back to family.

### TARIGAMI

ineffective. There should have been more allocations for proper implementation of these schemes. However, instead subsidies are being either withdrawn or reduced in central sponsored schemes. Due to less involvement of people in these schemes, the idea with which they were launched is marred," he said while addressing NRLM workers in Kulgam.

There is need to strengthen Self Help Groups (SHGs) under a pre-requisite for poverty reduction under National Rural Livelihood Mission. The existing SHGs need further strengthening and greater financial support while there is also urgent need to create more SHGs. Rising inflation has exposed the poor to extreme vulnerability and instead of helping them out, the Government is putting them under burden. The NRLM's mandate is to reach out to all the poor families, link them to sustainable livelihoods opportunities and nurture them till they come out of poverty and enjoy a decent quality of life.

'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana' scheme was launched by the Center in 2015 to provide continuous power supply to rural areas. It was claimed that the scheme will enable to initiate much awaited reforms in the rural electrification and strengthen the sub-transmission and distribution infrastructure in rural areas. But everybody knows what is the condition of power supply in the state, and especially in Kashmir Valley, in this chilly winter. The scheme is nowhere on ground and exists only on papers.

The CPI (M) leader also questioned Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti about the allegations of backdoor appointments in the Government departments. The statement of the CM regarding fast-track recruitment is alright, but there is a perception on ground that in several departments jobs are on sale and it has become a marketable commodity. There is no doubt that unemployment is one of the biggest crises in the state and creating more jobs and doing recruitment on

fast-track basis is the need of the hour. However, Government needs to make appointments and recruitment in transparent manner so that everybody gets fair opportunity.

### JCPS

so that she or she competes at state and national level.

He said there are over 3500 private schools in the Valley catering to over 7.5 lakh students and provide employment to over 80,000 teachers. These schools have different fee structures with the tuition free ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 2500 per month.

Chowdhary said the fee is charged as per the standard of the school and the quality of the education and infrastructure provided to the students.

"It is the choice of the parents to send the students to any of these schools depending upon their capacity. We don't force parents to get their wards admitted in our schools. They first get reviews, feedback and also checks themselves the infrastructure set up. Only then they chose the school of their liking. They are informed about the fee before they admit their wards," said Chowdhary.

He also said that even Government schools which have highly qualified teachers provide free education and books besides mid-day meals to the students.

"If parents don't want to spend money on their children, they can send them to government schools. Who has stopped them from choosing a particular school? Despite free education at government schools where teachers have highest salaries, their popularity is only decreasing day by day. Our result are far better than government schools," said Chowdhary.

The increasing number of parents sending their wards to the private schools speaks about quality of education they provide.

JCPS further said traders should take care of their business interest and not indulge into school education which they have no knowledge of how the schools run.

"Private schools owners know how to run the school and get best out of the students so that the students become ambassador not only of the school but the whole Valley when he shines outside the state. If we don't provide better education to our students and develop their overall personality, we can't think of better society or the state won't prosper in the absence of quality education system," said Chowdhary.

He said traders have been chosen for bettering the economic activities and urged them to let the private schools run the education system.

### BAN

Minister Arun Jaitley as absurd, joint leadership comprising Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mirwaiz Muhammad Umer Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik said that nullifying Kashmiri resistance by terming it as sponsored and paid has been an old ploy of Indians who always try to negate Kashmiri sacrifices and resistance by these ridiculous statements.

Leaders said that any rational person would find talk of normalcy and peace in occupied territory as laughable when Kashmir is witnessing an increasing build up of occupational forces, particularly in southern districts of Kashmir valley and when surveillance state pervades every nook and corner of Kashmir, the discourse of normalcy and peace can only be promoted by the colonial elites like Jaitley and his proxies in Kashmir.

The Joint Resistance Leadership in a statement said that by claiming that Indian army and forces have succeeded in suppressing Kashmiri resistance, Arun Jaitley is actually acknowledging the fact that India is keeping its illegal occupation on Jammu Kashmir through military and police might.

Leaders said that as a matter of fact, Indian army, forces and police have turned Jammu Kashmir into a hell and besides thousands, blinding and injuring thousands, jailing and torturing thousands, ransacking and vandalizing properties worth millions and also by putting a blanket ban on all political activities. Even ban has been imposed on mourning's and seminars and by these suppressive measures an artificial peace of graveyard is being implemented in Kashmir about which Mr. Jaitley and others are today boasting.

Leaders said that as Mr. Jaitley and his colleagues falsely presume to have defeated Kashmiri resistance by military oppression and NIA, ED terrorism, we challenge them to allow peaceful activities of resistance camp in Kashmir so that the reality of their false assumptions is established beyond doubt.

Resistance leaders said that to prove the fabrication of these kind of Indian claims, Resistance leadership have decided to start afresh series of political programs and in this connection a public program (Jalsa) will be held on 15th December 2017, at Lal Chowk Islamabad (Anantnagh). After this Jalsa, similar kind of public programs will also be held in north and central Kashmir especially in Srinagar also.

While reiterating the call for a total Kashmir Bandh on 27th November 2017, Joint leaders appealed people to observe

a complete shutdown against military and police oppression in southern districts of Kashmir valley and in solidarity with thousands of prisoners languishing in different jails.

Leaders said that suppressing a peoples struggle by oppressive measures is not possible and Indian leadership should also realize the fact that it can never suppress or defeat Kashmiri resistance by military means.

### MHA

of prevailing circumstances need a chance to rebuild their career and participate in job opportunities rather than being labelled as criminals for their entire life," says the MHA suggestions, a copy of whose lies with KNS.

"Considering this human aspect, MHA has advised the State Government of J&K to consider releasing first time offenders involved in recent Law and Order situations and withdraw cases against them," the order says.

Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel have been in the forefront of anti-terrorist activities along with the Central Armed Police Forces, it says.

"There has been a demand to make their Ex-gratia relief at par with CAPF. GoI has decided to step up its share of Ex-Gratia relief so that the Ex-Gratia relief to JKP personnel will now be enhanced and made at par with CAPF personnel."

"It will now be Rs 30 Lakhs in cases where death occurs in course of performing duties attributed to act of violence by terrorists, anti social elements etc. Rs 18 Lakhs will be given from the State Budget of J&K and additional Rs 12 Lakhs will be re-imbursed by MHA," the order says.

"Due to intermittent ceasefire violations and cross border firing, the people living in border areas have been suffering unexpected losses in terms of damaged houses, agriculture, livestock etc. affecting their livelihood. As a new initiative, MHA will re-imburse the expenditure incurred by the State Government for providing relief to people affected by cross border firing at rates that equal NDRF guidelines."

"Similarly, considering the active role being played by the Special Police Officers (SPOs) in combating terrorism their Ex-Gratia relief is being enhanced from Rs 2 Lakhs to Rs 5 Lakhs. This entire amount will be re-imbursed to the State Government by MHA."

"Considering the huge power shortage in the State of Jammu and Kashmir Power Ministry of Government of India will allocate additional power to the tune of 800 Mega Watts during this winter," it says.

### VAKIL

then Central Government to bombard Pakistan Administered Kashmir (POK) and Pakistan when he was Chief Minister is unforgettable remark for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He asked Farooq Abdullah to explain his position on enforcing all draconian laws including POTA and AFSPA. Saying that dynasty rule founded by national conference during last seventy years is worst than dictatorship, Vakil asked Farooq Abdullah to explain as to why he is not allowing anyone outside his family to hold the presidency of his party and emerge as Chief Ministerial Candidate for the future and same is the case of PDP who too have not allowed any other person to grow anymore and stop others from taking up the role of leaders.

He said the dynasty rule won't be allowed to grow anymore and stop others from taking up the role of leaders.

"Farooq Abdullah should not try to mislead and befool people just for power. He vowed to fight all divisive forces hell bent upon creating communal and regional divides in Jammu & Kashmir State," Vakil said.

Addressing the gathering General Secretary and Ex. MLC Syed Rafiq Shah JKBT stressed upon the workers to be ready for any sacrifice to end dynastic rule and corruption in the state. Besides others who addressed the gathering included Syed Gowhar Advocate Secretary JKBT, Maulvi Zahoor District President and Provincial Youth Secretary Rizwan Illahi.

### PARENTS

come is it possible that the main kingpin will evade his arrest for such a long time while the fact of the matter is that he is still in Valley," a group of parents told news agency CNS.

Pertinently, BOPEE scam rocked Kashmir Valley in 2013. Mushtaq Peer the then Chairman BOPEE was arrested for selling Common Entrance Test (CET) papers for Rs 65 lakhs to two brokers, Sajid Hussain and Farooq Ahmed, who in turn fetched Rs 5 crores from parents of several students. There were reports that parents of some students sold their land to arrange the money. From 2013, police is still not able to trace the main kingpin against whom on the directions of court they have issued a hue and cry notice in Jammu Kashmir based newspapers.

The trial court will pronounce its verdict on November 28 this month.

Parents of victim students hailed the role of previous Investigating Officers but alleged that they were transferred under a well planned conspiracy. "We are telling you with authority that at least 11 students who were involved in the scam were not called or questioned. Let the court ask police to re-examine the case, it will open a cane of worms."

# Veeri conducts extensive tour of Kashmiri Pandits township, colonies in Jammu

Inspects ongoing developmental works

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 23 - Minister for Revenue, Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation & Reconstruction and Parliamentary Affairs, Abdul Rehman Veeri today conducted extensive tour of Kashmiri pandits camps in Jammu to inspect the ongoing developmental works and take stock of grievances and problems of Kashmiri pandits living in Jammu.

Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner M L Raina, Deputy Commissioner Relief K K Sidha, Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Rajeev Ranjan along with senior concerned officers and Minority President A K Sidha accompanied the Minister during his visit.

At Jagti in Nagrota, the Minister laid the foundation stone of Shopping Complex at Mini Township. While seeking details of the ongoing developmental works in the township, the Minister was informed about the status of the works and proposed projects for the benefit of the migrant families living in the township.

Veeri also visited the administrative block and inspected the ongoing repair and renovation works there. He was

informed that works have been almost completed and the building will be ready for use at the earliest.

To take the stock of health facilities being provided to the migrant families, the Minister visited the Government Hospital established in the township. He along with senior officers went around all the sections and enquired from the doctors about the health facilities, staff strength and equipment provided at the hospital.

Veeri directed the hospital staff to provide all necessary medical help to the families and to maintain cleanliness in the hospital. He also instructed for replacing the non-functional equipment.

At the hospital, the Minister was informed that the hospital is functional for 12 hours and soon it will be made functional for 24 hours for providing round the clock services to the people.

The Minister also interacted with the Kashmiri pandits who raised various issues pertaining to development of the township including maintenance of parks, roads, Aadhaar enrollment centre and others. The Minister asked the concerned



officers to take up the works and ensure that the people living in the township would not face any problem.

Veeri also visited another township, TRT Camp in Nagrota and inspected the ongoing works related to the face lifting of the township. The concerned officers informed the Minister about the

works and assured for their timely completion.

At TRT camp, the families also submitted a charted of demands to the Minister which includes effective implementation of PMDP package, issuance of RBA certificate, removal of encroachment on migrant land, enhancement of

relief, construction of new community hall, availability of medicines in the dispensary, development of parks, distribution of ration and kerosene oil, water supply and others. The Minister assured them that all genuine issues will be looked into.

Meanwhile, the Minister also visited Radio Sharda, a community radio station started by a Kashmiri pandit. He lauded the efforts of Ramesh Hangloo and entire team for bringing this community radio service worldwide.

In his next leg of visit, Veeri visited KP migrant townships in Muthi including Shankaracharya Apartments and TRT camp. He interacted with migrant families who raised various demands and seeks his for their redressal including gensets for mourning hall, repair of damaged roads, ration distribution, children park, special school for migrant children, construction of mini shopping complex, construction of playground, fresh water point etc.

Responding to the demands, Veeri asked Deputy Commissioner Migrants to prepare a proposal for construction

of playground and also to look into in other issues raised for timely redressal.

Later, the Minister visited migrant camp at Purkoo to inaugurate newly constructed Camp Commandant Office and a Shopping Complex. The shops at the complex were also allotted through draw of lots on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that government is taking all measures to make living conditions for the migrant families in the townships more pleasant and further all necessary steps will be taken to ensure development of these townships with every facility. We all want that Kashmiri migrants should return with honour to their homes in the valley but till then it is our duty to provide all basic amenities to them at all the townships.

He said that 450 more residential quarters to be constructed at Purkoo for Kashmiri migrant families adding that face lifting work of townships is underway and necessary instructions have been passed to the concerned officers to initiate the works required for overall development of these townships.

## Various measures underway for promotion of sports in JK: Lal Singh

Inaugurates 2nd phase of U-19 'Udaan Football Tournament-2017'

KATHUA, NOVEMBER 23 - Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment, Choudhary Lal Singh today inaugurated second phase of U-19 Udaan Football Tournament-2017 here at the sports stadium of Delhi Public School.

The tournament is being organized by Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Jammu, under its 'Samajik Chetna Abhiyaan' programme.

Earlier, in the first phase of the tournament matches were held at Tehsil levels wherein five teams emerged as winners.

The final phase would witness matches among five winner teams, DPS Rajbagh, Football Club Hiranagar, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Besholi, Pallan Paranal Club, Billawar and Army School, Janglote.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, Choudhary Lal Singh lauded efforts of SSB Jammu for making massive arrangements for the mega sports event.

Highlighting benefits of sports, he exhorted upon the youth to vigorously participate in co-curricular activities.

The Minister said that



football is a popular game in India adding that it is also played in rural areas. "There are grounds in every village and players are very enthusiastic to play football. We must pay attention to promote it further, so that potential players can find a place at the national level," he asserted.

Choudhary Lal Singh urged upon the youth to focus on their goals and put in dedicated efforts to compete and excel at national and international levels. He asked them to channelize their energies in positive direction and create a niche for themselves in the sports of their interest. He said that more

and more football and hockey tournaments should be organized to promote the spirit of nationalism and the sport activities in the state.

Commandant SSB Ajay Kumar informed the Minister that the winning team will be presented a cash award of Rs 50000, while second and third runner ups would get cash prize of Rs 30000 and Rs 20000, respectively.

He said that the winner team will also get a chance to play a friendly match at Mumbai and the team members would be invited as guests at Raising Day celebration of SSB on December 20 at New Delhi.

## DC reviews Srinagar Master Plan

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 23: District Development Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, Thursday convened a meeting to review the Srinagar Master Plan 2015-35. VC Srinagar Development Authority, Abdul Majid Raina, and Town Planner Srinagar City, Nazir Ahmad Magray, attended the meeting.

While briefing the DDC about the draft Master Plan, the Town Planner informed that the land use structure as envisaged in the Master Plan is based on land suitability analysis based on five differ-

ent parameters including that of contour, elevation, slope, floods and prime agricultural area & other wetlands.

The DDC was informed that the plan has been drafted with a prime consideration of a projected population of 31 lac by 2035, which has been arrived at in the light of previous population censuses and other factors relevant.

It was said that based on these parameters it has been projected that only 180 square kilometres can be developed out of the total 756 square kilometres as delineated in the

Master Plan of the City, which provides for housing, tourism and other requirements.

Giving further details, it was said the current draft Master Plan is highly comprehensive, with the identification of different density zones carried out purely in accordance with road hierarchy. It was said the involvement of the Geographic Information System technology ensures that there are no discrepancies.

Dr. Shah said the aim of convening this meeting was to emphasize the importance

of ensuring utmost objectivity in all the processes of drafting the Master Plan. He impressed upon the officers that the Master Plan must be sustainable involving aspects that both cater to the growing needs of the City and ensure maintenance of strong ecological balance.

The Town Planner said that, while the deadline for submission for public suggestions has passed, the Department is open to further consideration of suggestions from technical professionals in this regard. Seeking details of

projections for prevention of floods in future, the DDC was also briefed about the designing of flood spill channels in the City during the meeting.

Stressing the importance of objective designing of flood spill channels and flood management in the City, Dr. Shah said a day-long workshop discussing measuring for prevention of floods in the City will be organized soon.

The Master Plan 2015-35 involves land suitability and environmental sustainability for conceiving the city future planning strategy.

## Hanjura lays foundation of various road projects at Chrar-e-Sharief

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 23: Minister for Agriculture, Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura today laid foundation stone of various road upgradation projects in Chrar-e-Sharief Constituency.

The Agriculture Minister laid the foundation stone of upgradation of Chadoora Brenwar road up to Hajian. The upgradation project would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 15 crore. The project would be completed within three years and would be constructed by R&B Department.

Hanjura also laid the foundation stone of upgradation/strengthening of Brenwar Nago Jabard road with allied road links. The road upgrada-



tion project would be constructed at

Later, Hanjura also addressed a

an estimated cost of around Rs 3.5 crore.

The Minister also laid the foundation stone of construction of bridge over Nallah Doorhanga at Kherigund Chadoora. The bridge would be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 2.42 crores and is expected to be completed within three years.

public meeting at Nago, Chrar-i-sharief where he said that all the remaining main and link roads would be macadamized in Chrar-i-sharief constituency soon. He said that most of the roads in the constituency have been macadamized in the last two years. He said that vital inter-road connecting project from Yusmarg, Doodpathri and Gulmarg is in pipeline.

The Ministers said that the Government is committed to fulfilling all the promises made by him during elections. Hanjura sought the support of the local population for strengthening the efforts of the Government to resolve all the problems of people on priority.

## Self Help Group Women members of Udhampur get Sales Outlet; Abdul Haq inaugurates Showroom

Felicitates SHGs for registering Success in Livelihood Mission

UDHAMPUR, NOVEMBER 23: The members of thousands Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Udhampur district got a Community Sales Outlet on Thursday in the Main Market where in the members can showcase and keep their products on sale. The sales outlet will help the members to sell their products and earn their livelihood in the vicinity of their dwellings.

The Sales outlet was inaugurated and dedicated to the members by Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Law and Justice Abdul Haq Khan. While inaugurating the Sales outlet Minister said the space will allow the members of the SHGs to sell their products in the market in the vicinity of their dwellings. HE said earlier the members would restrict their sales in exhibitions and other festivals but with the availability of a showroom in the main market the members will be able to put their products on sale throughout the year.

In the Sales outlet the women have put vegetables, fruits, milk, homemade pickles, handicrafts and handloom products, dry fruits, Sweets poultry products etc on sale, which are produced by the women of SHGs themselves.

He said the formation of SHGs



have been a grand success in the state as it has positively helped in the economic development and upliftment of women folk. He said women engaged with the SHGs have been able to contribute in the family income and in many cases have been gone ahead of their male counterparts in the monthly income.

Later the Minister reviewed the functioning of State Rural Livelihood Mission in Udhampur District. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Ravinder Kumar, Additional Director SRLM (Jammu) Kapil Sharma, ACD Udhampur and

other senior officers of the district. Minister was informed that the department has covered 83 Gram Panchayat of the 3 blocks district covering 12499 households. Officials said the total capitalization involved in the district SHGs is Rs 4.74 Crore which include the revolving fund of RS 1.63 crore and 3.11 crore.

Minister was further informed that 2782 households are involved in Agriculture activities while 1350 households deal with livestock and dairy farming while 580 families deal with poultry. Officials said 1096

families are involved in other activities including Petty Shops, tent Houses.

The meeting was further informed that Umeed scheme has been encouraging all SHG women members to open an individual Bank Account and till date it has achieved 89.14 percent progress in the span of three years. It was stated that out of 7840 SHG members, 6989 members have their own individual accounts.

Later Minister also distributed certificates among Self Sustained Village Organizations and Self-Help Groups.

## Recruitment drive under National Career Project held at Pulwama

PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 23: Under National Career Project, one-day special Employment Fair-Cum-Recruitment Drive- was organized at District Employment and Counseling Center, Pulwama district, in which more than 25 corporate firms from various sectors including Finance, Tourism, Human Resource, Construction, Automation and Information Technology & IT Enabled Services will be scouting for fresh talent from the district. The Job Fair was inaugurated by MLA Pulwama Mohammad Khaleel Band along with District Development Commissioner, Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar. Later on, they inspected various stalls set up by the various departments and financial institutions. All the line departments and sponsoring agencies bankers participated in the Fair. The main motive of the camp was to aware the youth of various sponsorship schemes for budding entrepreneurs.

The major Corporate Companies which participated for on spot recruitment drive and interviews for educated unemployed youth of the district Pulwama include Apollo Med Skills, Surya wires, Multicare Services, Manpower, Future group, PNB Metlife, LIC, SBI Life, CHS, Rooman, MTC, Fidelis, Ques Corporation, etc.

During the drive around 600 Youth including 12th pass, Graduates, Postgraduates and three-year engineering diploma holders who were eligible to participate in the said recruitment drive were registered till 3:00 PM. It was given out that selected youth will

be trained outside the state for minimum three months, during which free accommodation, food, travelling charges and a stipend of Rs 2500 per month would be provided.

MLA Pulwama and District Development Commissioner Pulwama also visited venue and interacted with various candidates, especially girls, appearing for the interviews. Both laid special emphasis on placement of girls in the corporate world and expressed satisfaction over the conduct of drive and asked the organizers to hold such drives in the district in future as well.

Speaking on the occasion MLA Pulwama Mohammad Khaleel Band said that this Job Fair will benefit the students of District where they can have multiple job options to choose for their employment. He urged upon all the stakeholders and implementing agencies to provide information and counselling to youth of the district. He said that the educated youth should come forward and take benefits of the schemes and programmes. Speaking on the occasion, District Development Commissioner, Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar said that the main motive of the fair is to enhance employment opportunities for the youth of the district. He termed the employment fair as a platform for youth to get more and more exposure at the national level. DDC further said that National Career Project provides a host of career-related services such as dynamic job matching, career counselling, job notifications, vocational guidance, information on skill development courses.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

FOREVER YOUNG

Wimbledon's greatest illusion is the sense of timelessness it evokes. Over the past fortnight on its hallowed lawns, one of its finest champions managed to pull off a similar impression. At 35 years and 342 days, Roger Federer became the oldest man to win the singles title in the Open Era — a full 14 years after he first claimed the title as a scruffy, ponytailed upstart. Sunday's triumph continued a dominant, magical 2017 for the maestro, something no one saw coming. When he limped off Centre Court with a knee injury last year, beaten in the semi-finals by Milos Raonic, the future had looked bleak. But two far-sighted decisions have proven life-altering. Federer opted to take six months off to undergo surgery and regain his health. Then, after winning the Australian Open, he skipped Roland-Garros, a choice someone who lives for the Majors doesn't make lightly. He reasoned that his body needed to be spared the exertions of a grinding clay-court season so he could arrive in London ready for an uncompromising tilt at a record eighth title. Once he had survived the opening week, a tricky period during which the tournament isn't won but is often lost, the astuteness of his judgment became apparent.

For, the second week witnessed the range of a rested Federer's genius. Against Grigor Dimitrov, whose style he has influenced, he was opportunistic, secure in the knowledge that he had too much game for the Bulgarian. Federer saved his most exquisite tennis for the quarter-finals, where he neutralised Raonic's heavy artillery with cunning finesse. The match offered a measure of his progress since the defeat 12 months back: he looked stronger and sturdier than the haggard figure he had cut at the last Championships, playing with a joie de vivre reminiscent of his younger days. He did not hit the same heights against Tomas Berdych in the semi-finals; he had to draw instead from his reserves of resilience. In the final, he was the cold-blooded closer. Here was the iron fist in a velvet glove, as an injured Marin Čilić was permitted no sympathy. Through the two weeks, Federer's versatile serve held firm — he was broken just four times en route to a 19th Grand Slam triumph. His balletic movement stayed on point. The switch to a more powerful racket has clearly helped, as have a recast backhand and an increased willingness to force the pace. He often landed the first strike, an ability grass privileges. And when he didn't, he was able to make the precise adjustments in footwork and arm-flow that grass' sometimes quirky bounce forces on a player. His is a method that has aged well. Given that it isn't reliant on explosive athleticism or muscular ball-striking, both vulnerable to decay, there is cause to believe that Federer will continue to enchant for a while longer. It does not appear as though he is done winning Majors.

# Himalayan upgrade

► Rakesh Sood

**E**lections on November 26 and December 7 in Nepal mark a historic moment in its tumultuous transition from a 240-year-old monarchy to a multi-party democracy.

The first general election to be held under the 2015 Constitution, it is also the first time that federal Nepal will elect seven provincial assemblies. Parliament and the provincial assemblies will in turn elect a new president and vice president. Coming after the elections to the 753 local bodies (municipalities, sub-municipalities and village development committees) held earlier this year after a 20-year gap, these will complete the political process and go a long way in consolidating hard-won democratic gains.

Political transition towards multiparty democracy began with the Constitution of 1990, an outcome of the first Janandolan, which introduced constitutional limits on the powers of the monarchy. After a brief period of three years, the monarchy successfully reasserted itself largely due to the squabbling among political leaders and manipulations by the Palace, leading to frequent changes of government. The current Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, who took charge in June, is the 25th Prime Minister in the last 27 years.

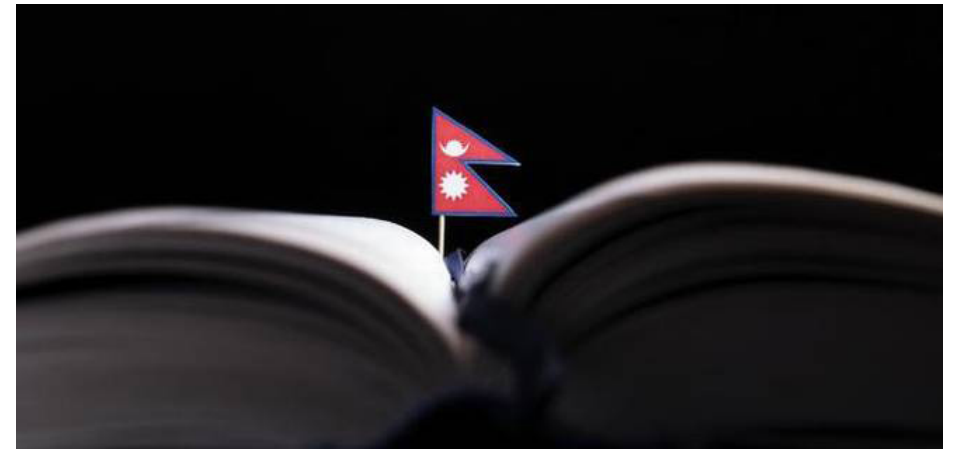
A Maoist insurgency erupted in the mid-1990s which lasted a decade and claimed nearly 15,000 casualties. Eventually, in 2005, the political parties and the Maoist leaders signed an accord which laid the foundations for a more formal agreement under which the Maoists came overground and joined mainstream politics. It was a difficult process, given the mistrust between the political parties and the Maoist leadership, with both sides resorting to frequent brinkmanship.

Following elections in May 2008, a 601-member Constituent Assembly (CA) came into being with a two-year mandate to draft a new Constitution for a 'federal republic'. The 240-year-old institution of the monarchy was abolished. Two new political forces emerged, the Maoists with 229 seats in the CA and the Madhesi parties with 80 seats. Differences within the CA led to a stalemate. After 2010, the CA extended its life four times till, finally, the Supreme Court intervened and the CA lapsed in May 2012 without having completed its mandate.

A major problem was that the Maoists had come to power too soon without having fully disarmed or demobilised. The first Maoist government, led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', quickly set about infiltrating other state institutions, particularly the Army. Eventually Mr. Prachanda's coalition cracked and he resigned in May 2009.

Political leaders were busy playing musical chairs instead of addressing Constitution drafting issues. In the process, the new political forces underwent a process of fragmentation. The Maoists split twice and the Madhesi parties also fragmented. Importantly, the process of rehabilitation of the demobilised Maoist militants was concluded, removing the threat of intimidation that had cast a shadow over the 2008 elections.

Elections for a new CA were finally held in November 2013, with significantly different results. The Maoists were down to 81 seats and



the Madhesi to 40; the older parties, the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist Leninist (UML), emerged stronger with 201 and 175 seats, respectively. These two formed a coalition under NC leader Sushil Koirala on the understanding that the prime ministership would pass to UML leader K.P.S. Oli once a new Constitution was concluded.

The devastating earthquake in 2015 which caused nearly 10,000 casualties and inflicted economic losses of over \$7 billion on an economy still recovering from a decade-long Maoist insurgency compelled the political parties to rush through the long-delayed Constitution. One reason was that the international community which had collectively pledged \$4.4 billion of reconstruction assistance made it clear that disbursements could only happen if local systems were in place so that the relief and rehabilitation funds were not siphoned off.

The hastily concluded Constitution enjoyed the support of the NC, UML and the Maoists but left the Madhesi and the Janjatis deeply unhappy. Mr. Oli was quick to claim the prime ministership in October 2015 but did little to pacify the protesters in the Terai. Nearly 50 lives were lost in the violence. Sympathetic to the Madhesi cause, India declared that unless peace was restored in the Terai, normal movement of goods across the border was not possible, leading to shortages of critical items such as petrol, diesel, liquefied petroleum gas and medical supplies. Instead of starting a dialogue with the Madhesi, Mr. Oli accused India of imposing an "economic blockade" and reverted to the age-old tactic of flirting with China to expand supply systems across the Tibetan plateau.

Eventually, his coalition collapsed and Mr. Prachanda pulled back his support in order to join with the NC in July last year. After a tenure lasting 10 months during which he conducted the first phase of the local body elections, he handed over power to NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba, who became the tenth Prime Minister in Nepal's nine years as a republic.

Keeping on track  
The new Constitution provides for a National Assembly of 160 directly elected members (first-past-the-post system) and an additional 110 through proportional representation (PR), making for a more manageable House compared to the earlier 601. Further, in order to gain a PR seat, a political party must have 3% of the national vote, which has forced smaller parties to consolidate.

Once certain that the elections were on track, Mr. Prachanda announced a tie-up with

the UML, creating a left alliance and extracting 63 out of 160 seats. If the Maoists — Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) — manage to win in 35, it will enable Mr. Prachanda to emerge as kingmaker, and he could well return to the NC, depending on the deal. The UML is hoping to ride the wave that propelled it to the top position in the local body elections earlier this year. The NC has managed alliances with the Rastriya Janata Party-Nepal (RJP-N) — a Madhesi grouping — as well as the two conservative factions of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), led by Kamal Thapa and Pashupati Rana. This is presented as the democratic front and if the NC manages 60 seats, it will have better prospects of cobbling together a coalition than the UML. Much will depend on how the Madhesi candidates fare in the Terai.

One of the important challenges for the new government will be to revive the constitutional amendment to address Madhesi grievances; Mr. Deuba had pushed it through in August but failed to muster the necessary two-thirds majority. Having realised that its overt support to the Madhesi cause in 2015 had hurt India-Nepal relations and was being exploited by the UML, India softened its position. For the last year, it has been urging the Madhesi leadership to work through the political process rather than through agitation or boycott of elections.

The anti-India sentiment generated in 2015 was exploited by Mr. Oli in wooing China, which is interested in expanding its presence as part of its Belt and Road Initiative. The first ever visit by a Chinese Defence Minister, General Chang Wanquan, to Nepal took place earlier this year, followed by a joint military exercise. Two major hydel projects, West Seti and Bardi Gandaki, were awarded to Chinese companies though the latter was cancelled subsequently. China is exploring a rail link to Nepal as well as opening a new road link at Rasuwagadhi while expanding the existing Araniko highway.

Once the new government takes charge in Kathmandu, it is likely that the new Prime Minister will visit India, perhaps in early 2018. A reciprocal visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, focussing on connectivity and project delivery, later in 2018 would help in reviving the positive sentiments generated by his first visit in 2014, and in keeping with the spirit of the 'neighbourhood first' policy.

**Rakesh Sood is a former Ambassador to Nepal and is currently Distinguished Fellow at Observer Research Foundation. E-mail: rakeshsood2001@yahoo.**

**THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE IN 2015 WHICH CAUSED NEARLY 10,000 CASUALTIES AND INFLECTED ECONOMIC LOSSES OF OVER \$7 BILLION ON AN ECONOMY STILL RECOVERING FROM A DECADE-LONG MAOIST INSURGENCY COMPELLED THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO RUSH THROUGH THE LONG-DELAYED CONSTITUTION. ONE REASON WAS THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WHICH HAD COLLECTIVELY PLEDGED \$4.4 BILLION OF RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE MADE IT CLEAR THAT DISBURSEMENTS COULD ONLY HAPPEN IF LOCAL SYSTEMS WERE IN PLACE SO THAT THE RELIEF AND REHABILITATION FUNDS WERE NOT BE SIPHONED OFF.**

# Rahul Gandhi's biggest challenge

► Smita Gupta

An era in the Congress will end in early December when Sonia Gandhi, its longest serving president, steps down to make way for Rahul Gandhi and the next generation. In 1998, she had taken up the position more out of a desire to preserve the family legacy in the Congress, rather than to wield power. She was the dowager queen who would keep the seat warm for her son. But in the end, she did much more than that: she grew into the job, led the party and its campaigns from the front and ensured the 10 uninterrupted years in power at the Centre — no mean achievement.

Highs and lows  
In 2004, Ms. Gandhi chose not to become Prime Minister, lest it give the Opposition a rallying point. Instead, she nominated Manmohan Singh as Prime Minister, earning herself a place in history. Even though her style was consensus-driven, she proved she had sharp political instincts. She also worked hard on her speeches, carefully chose her policy interventions, and today has the respect of the entire political class.

On the flip side, though the

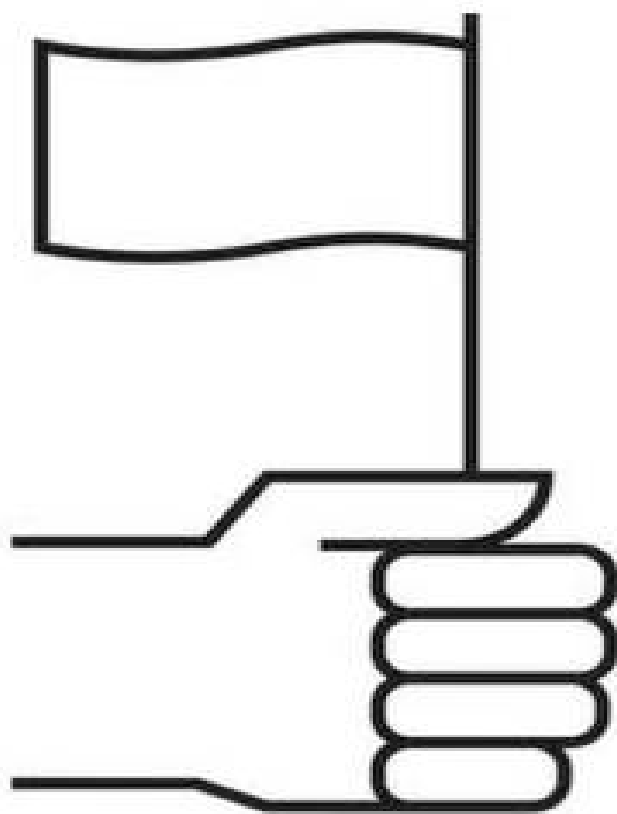
Congress remains intact — despite some noteworthy departures — it is at a historical low. The party has not just conceded political space but it has been hollowed out ideologically. It now rules in six States/Union Territory. This includes Himachal Pradesh that went to the polls earlier this month, with counting of votes on December 18. Worker morale continues to be low, and apart from the initiatives like the Professionals' Congress or the Adivasi Congress, and the appointment of some new functionaries, there has been no major organisational upgrade.

It is against this backdrop that the 47-year-old Mr. Gandhi is to take over the Congress. Over the last few months, he has begun to sound better on the stump, while campaigning in Himachal Pradesh and currently in Gujarat, giving his followers hope that he may emerge as the man who can take on Mr. Modi in 2019, even though that will have to be at the head of a Congress-led coalition. He is beginning to get a more favourable public reception, not merely because people are now beginning to look for an alternative but because his speeches appear to be better thought out, with a sprinkling of one-liners that have easy recall. This,

in turn, has been a confidence-booster for Mr. Gandhi and is beginning to get reflected in the social media, a space that the

Bharatiya Janata Party had been dextrously occupying. There is a fightback, so much so that BJP president Amit Shah warned the

youth of Gujarat in September "to beware of the Congress's social media propaganda against the party".



But beyond the optics Mr. Gandhi needs to get down to the task of not just strategising to win elections, but of seizing the initiative and anticipating the big issues, and this includes in Parliament where he has tended to take a back seat. He has yet to make a difference in parliamentary debates with substantive speeches on the economy, foreign affairs and other key policy issues. He can no longer afford to give the impression that he sees politics as a day job — politics today is 24x7 work.

Rebuilding the party  
Mr. Gandhi's biggest challenge will be rebuilding the party organisation and giving the Congress a new storyline with which to take on the might of the Modi machine. For this, he will have to connect with workers at the block-level, restore confidence in them, and be transparent in his selection of both party functionaries and candidates for elections. He has promised to make his new team a mix of the old and the new, but he needs to ensure that he takes members of the old guard he retains seriously. He has also shown an inclination to corporatise the Congress and surround himself with apolitical persons in a bid to break the old way of functioning. But he

needs to remember that the Congress is a political party.

Finally, he will need to reach out to other political parties, especially because he requires their help in 2019, as well as to BJP seniors for better functioning of Parliament. His friendship with the National Conference's Omar Abdullah is well known, and he recently had a much publicised lunch with the Rashtriya Janata Dal's Tejashwi Yadav; he is also in touch with the DMK's M.K. Stalin and Kanimozhi. But he is yet to emulate his mother's initiatives in being seen to go out of her comfort zone and approach potential allies.

After three and a half years of the Modi government, there are voices of discontent. The attacks by right-wing elements on Muslims, Dalits and rationalists, the downturn in the economy, exacerbated by demonetisation, the haphazard implementation of the goods and services tax and failure to create jobs, have resulted in a gradual change in the national mood. The time is politically opportune for Mr. Gandhi: he must take advantage of it.

**Smita Gupta is a Delhi-based journalist**

# PM Modi urges action against cyber space as 'playground for terrorism, radicalisation'

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged nations to take a strict action on preventing cyber space from transforming into "a playground for the dark forces of terrorism and radicalisation."

"We need to ensure that vulnerable sections of our society do not fall prey to the evil designs of cyber criminals. Alertness towards cyber-security concerns should become a way of life. Nations must also take a responsibility to ensure that the

digital space does not become a playground for the dark forces of terrorism and radicalisation," he said, while addressing the 5th Global Conference on 'Cyber Space' here.

Further, the Prime Minister said it was necessary for the global community to approach the issue of cyber-security with confidence, as much as with resolve.

"Cyber-space technologies must remain an enabler for our people," he added.

Earlier, Union Minister Ravi



Shankar Prasad opined that digital diplomacy must become integral to strategic diplomacy. The event, which is being organ-

ised for the first time in India, is themed 'Cyber for All: A Secure and Inclusive Cyberspace for Sustainable Development.'

Representatives from around 124 countries and 33 Ministerial delegates from 31 countries, including Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe, are set to attend the conference.

The conference has been organised to promote the importance of inclusiveness and human rights in global cyber policy.

## Karni Sena wants to appeal to PM Modi to ban 'Padmavati'

HYDERABAD: Shri Rajput Karni Sena chief Lokendra Singh Kalvi on Wednesday said he wanted to appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ban the controversial movie, 'Padmavati'.

Speaking to ANI, Kalvi said, "For the last 18 months, the Shri Rajput Karni Sena has been protesting against 'Padmavati'. We now want to appeal to the prime minister to ban the movie through the media."

Further maintaining his stand on banning the movie, Kalvi said, "If a new date of release is announced, we will be ready to protest once again."

Earlier on Wednesday, Kalvi announced even if the changes were made in the film, 'Padmavati', they would not allow its release.

Kalvi's declaration comes hours after the producers of Padmavati, reportedly, announced that they would take a call on its release only after the censor board's go-ahead. The film has been in the eye of the storm following protests from conservative groups over alleged tampering with historical facts, a contention which filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali has denied repeatedly. The film features Deepika Padukone in the title role as Rani Padmavati, alongside Shahid Kapoor as Maharawal Ratan Singh and Ranveer Singh as Sultan Alauddin Khilji.

The release of the film, which was earlier slated for December 1, was deferred as the filmmakers were yet to secure a censor certificate.

## Woman cop files plea to undergo sex change

MUMBAI: A woman constable from Maharashtra's Beed on Thursday filed a plea at the Bombay High Court, seeking permission to allow her to undergo sex reassignment surgery.

In her plea, Lalita Salve, the constable, had also sought the court's permission to continue to work with the police force after changing her sex.

Earlier, she had been denied permission by police officials to continue working after going through the operation. The matter is expected to be mentioned before the Chief Justice today. The cop, who has been serving in the police force since 2010, took the decision to change her gender after she felt connected more with the masculine gender due to what she describes as hormonal imbalances. Her lawyer claims that on diagnosis and medical consultation at the Sir JJ hospital in Mumbai, she was told that her hormonal imbalances were incurable and thus, she was advised to undergo plastic surgery or sexual reassignment. The lawyer appealed to the authorities to allow her to undergo the surgery saying his client's human rights were at stake. He says he was seeking necessary orders as per the Maharashtra Police Rules ensuring the cop right to equality and life.

## Latin America, Caribbean most 'violent region' in world for women

NEW DELHI: A report launched at the regional parliament (Parlatino) with over 120 legislators by the UN Development Programme (UNDP)-UN Women revealed that Latin America and the Caribbean were the most violent regions in the world for women.

"In Latin America and the Caribbean, the number of countries with national women protection policies has risen from 24 in 2013 (74 per cent) to 31 in 2016 (94 per cent), yet, the region is still the most violent in the world for women (WHO 2013), starting scenario of a new UN Development Programme (UNDP)-UN Women report launched today at the regional parliament (Parlatino) with over 120 legislators," a press release by the UNDP stated.

The rate of sexual violence against women outside of relationships is the highest in the world in these regions, while the second-highest for those who are or were a couple, the report stated.

The report added that even though the region has shown great progress in the "normative frameworks" that recognise violence against women as a social phenomenon, sustainable development and the protection of human rights, the problem still persists, with "high rates of violence against women remaining a dire challenge."

"The number of female homicides (femicides/feminicides) is on the rise, with two in every five resulting from domestic violence. Moreover, about 30 per cent of women have been victims of violence by their partner and 10.7 per cent have suffered sexual violence not related to an intimate partner, according to World Health Organisation figures," stated the report.

The UN report also noted that 24 of the 33 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have laws against domestic violence, but only nine of them have passed legislation that tackles a range of forms of other violence against women in public or private.

The report further calls for generating social pacts among governments, the private sector and civil society to engage all relevant factors.

The report is launched as part of the "Unite to end violence against women" campaign, which brings together several United Nations agencies.

## Patidar reservation is political gimmick: Vikas Singh

NEW DELHI: Former Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Vikas Singh on Thursday said Congress cannot befool people in the name of Patidar reservation, adding that it is a political gimmick.

Speaking to ANI, Vikas Singh said, "I think Election Commission (EC) must step in and say that Congress can't befool people to get votes by promising something constitution can't provide. It is a political gimmick."

Singh further asked the EC to order Congress to put out advertisements saying the statement to be wrong. "The EC should ask them (Cong) to put ads in papers saying we made a wrong statement," said Vikas Singh.

Earlier on Wednesday, Hardik Patel claimed that the Congress party has agreed to give reservation to the Patidar community, if the party comes to power in Gujarat.

Patel, while addressing a presser, said the Congress party will introduce a bill in the Gujarat Assembly for the reservation, if they win the forthcoming elections.

## 'Past is past': Dalai Lama says Tibet wants to stay with China, wants development



KOLKATA: Tibet does not seek independence from China but wants greater development, Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama said in Kolkata Thursday.

China and Tibet enjoyed a close relationship, though there were occasional "fights", he said at an interactive session organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

"The past is past. We will have to look into the future," he said, stressing that Tibetans wanted to stay with China.

"We are not seeking independence... We want to stay with China. We want more development," the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people said.

The Dalai Lama also said China must respect Tibetans' culture and heritage.

"Tibet has a different culture and a different script... The Chinese people love their own country. We love our own country," he

said. Holding that no Chinese "understand what had happened in the last few decades", he said the country had changed over the years. "With China joining the world, it has changed 40% to 50% of what it was earlier," he said.

The Dalai Lama referred to the ecological significance of the Tibetan Plateau and recalled that a Chinese ecologist had said its environmental impact was like that of the South Pole and the North Pole.

"The ecologist called it the Third Pole," the Buddhist leader said.

The Dalai Lama said, "From Yangtze to Sindhu rivers, major rivers ... come from Tibet. Billions of lives are involved. Taking care of the Tibetan Plateau is not only good for Tibet but for billions of people."

The Dalai Lama also pitched for respect and recognition of the 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai' spirit to take Sino-India relations forward.

"India and China should eventually find respect for 'Hindi-Chini bhai bhai'," he told the media when asked on China's objections to President Ram Nath Kovind's visit to Arunachal Pradesh.

He said "China needs India, India needs China" and "they have to live side by side."

"There is no other way except to live peacefully and help each other," he said.

## Mother of raped toddler blames school

NEW DELHI: The mother of a child, who was allegedly raped by a classmate, has accused the school management of negligence. "The school needs to be booked under the POCSO Act for negligence in letting something like this happen in the classroom."

This is due to the teacher's irresponsible behaviour," said she.

A four-old-boy has been accused of sexually abused his classmate with a pencil at a private school in Delhi's Dwarka area. The victim complained of pain on her private parts after coming home from school.

Her mother said the boy unbuttoned her daughter's pants, touched her bloomers and put his finger inside. The mother has alleged that when the assault took place, the teacher and the helper in the wash-room were absent.

## BJP MP trolled me, I'll sue him if he doesn't reply to legal notice: Prakash Raj

MUMBAI: Film actor Prakash Raj said on Thursday he has sent a legal notice to BJP leader Pratap Simha for "trolling" him, days after the Mysuru MP attacked the artiste over his remarks over journalist Gauri Lankesh's murder.

Raj had criticised Narendra Modi in October over what he said was the Prime Minister's "silence" on those "celebrating" Lankesh's killing. The 55-year-old editor and publisher of Kannada-language newspaper 'Gauri Lankesh Patrike' was shot dead outside her

home in Bengaluru in September.

"I have sent a legal notice to Mr Pratap Simha as a citizen of this country for the way he has trolled me, which has disturbed my personal life. I am asking him to answer legally and if he doesn't, I will be taking criminal action against him," news agency ANI quoted Raj as saying on Thursday. Simha is a former Karnataka journalist who now heads the BJP's Yuva Morcha in the state.

The News Minute reported that Raj's legal notice describes an Oc-

tober 2 tweet and Facebook post by Simha that talks about the actor's deceased son and his personal life. The post was uploaded a day after Raj spoke against PM Modi. Raj has commented about moral policing, violence "on the slightest doubt of cow slaughter", and alleged harassment of people for their religion. Media reports said in October that Raj had threatened to return his National Awards after Lankesh's murder. He later posted a clarification on Twitter: "I am not a fool to give

back my National Awards, which have been given to me for my body of work, and which I'm very proud of." Shortly after Raj's remarks were reported by the media, Simha defended PM Modi. "If he (Raj) continues to speak irresponsibly about Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we are going to teach him a lesson," Simha said. "When I questioned the prime minister, you (Simha) talk below the belt? They believe their leaders are doing a good job, so nobody should question them," Raj said in November.

On the first anniversary of demonetisation on November 8, Raj wrote a note demanding an apology from the government for the "disruptive impact" of its decision.

He attacked the government again on Thursday, saying it was not right for it to remain silent over the controversy around Padmavati's release. Asked about actor Kamal Haasan's tweets criticising the government on various issues, Raj said some ministers were blaming the actor without having any proof.

## Envoys of three nations present credentials to President Kovind

NEW DELHI: Envoys of Sweden, Nigeria and the United States presented their credentials to President Ram Nath Kovind at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan today.

The envoys who presented their credentials were Klas Molin, Ambassador of Sweden, Major General Chris Sunday Eze (Retired), High Commissioner of Nigeria and Kenneth Ian Juster, Ambassador of the United States.

## Under fire for cancer remark, BJP's Himanta Sarma drags Pidi into Twitter fight

NEW DELHI: Assam health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma posted a series of tweets on Thursday defending his position on karma as a possible reason behind cancer, a day after he was widely panned by journalists and political rivals who called his views unscientific. "You have to realise difference between sin and karma. Politics can come and go. But what is written on Bhagavadgita, is for me the final truth

(sic)," Sarma said, responding to journalist Pallavi Ghosh who asked him to apologise to people who suffered from cancer, including both their fathers. On Tuesday, Sarma told a group of newly appointed schoolteachers Sarma that "it is a sin to shirk responsibilities. No one can go unpunished in God's court if a member of his or her family does some injustice. Some people suffer from cancer, some die in

accidents. This is all because of sins." The excerpt was reported on Wednesday, and among its most prominent critics was Congress leader P Chidambaram. "Cancer is divine justice for sins" says Assam Minister Sharma (sic). That is what switching parties does to a person," the Congress leader tweeted, referring to Sarma's switch to the Bharatiya Janata Party from the Congress before the last state elections.

## The Mumbai Police on Thursday issued an E-challan to actor Varun Dhawan for violating traffic rules.

MUMBAI: The Mumbai Police issued the challan based on a picture published in a leading daily where the actor was seen leaning outside from his car window to click a selfie with a fan on an auto standing next to his car at the traffic light.

The police posted the same picture on their Twitter handle and warned Varun to take a severe action if the incident was repeated.

Varun\_dvn These adventures surely work on D silver screen but certainly not on the roads of Mumbai! U have risked ur life, ur admirer's &



few others. V expect better from a responsible Mumbai car & youth icon like U! An E-Challan is on d way 2 ur home. Next time, V will B harsher," the Mumbai Police tweeted. In return, the actor issued an apology message through his Twitter handle and assured to keep safety in mind and to not encourage this incident.

"My apologies?? Our cars weren't moving since we were at a traffic signal and I didn't want to hurt the sentiment of a fan but next time I'll keep safety in mind and won't encourage this," Varun tweeted.

## Newspapers in Tripura protest against killing of journalist

AGARTALA: Majority of newspapers in Tripura leave space for editorials blank to protest against killing of journalist Sudip Datta Bhowmik. This comes a day after Commandant of 2nd Tripura State Rifles Tapan Debbarma was arrested on Tuesday night in connection with Journalist Sudip's alleged murder case. However, shocked Tripura journalists on Wednesday expressed disappointment with national media for showing "lack of interests" in the killing of journalists in the northeast. Sujit Chakraborty, eminent journalist and ex-secretary of Agartala Press Club, said, "The killing of Sudip didn't get prominent coverage by the national media. Except some

small news items, they ignored the heinous crime. Had it happened in major cities, it would have got wider publicity by both national print and electronic media."

Sudip Datta Bhowmik was allegedly shot dead on Tuesday in Tripura's RK Nagar.

He was reportedly killed inside the battalion headquarters of Tripura State Rifles (TSR) in RK Nagar. "Sudip's was a cold-blooded murder. He was killed inside the Circle Officer's room," Bhowmik's brother told ANI.

Earlier, on September 20, a journalist, Santanu Bhowmik, was killed allegedly while he was covering a road blockade agitation of the IPPT.

# This winter, say no to dry skin. Follow this 7-step routine to ensure flawless skin

With winter comes dryness, dullness and roughness. So, it becomes all the more important to follow rituals like treating the skin with Vitamin C or peeling away flakiness with enzymes. Disha Meher, skin and nail expert at Lakmé Salon, and Pond's skin expert Rashmi Shetty, share tips on how to nourish, revive and refresh your skin this winter. Use a good cleansing oil: It

is the foundation for good skin-care, regardless of the season. In winter, when your skin is driest, you should replace your usual cleansing product with a non-comedogenic cleaning oil as it won't block pores. After cleansing, it leaves you with soft and smooth skin that isn't greasy. Peel away flakiness with enzymes: If the surface of your skin is dry, it's a sign you need to get

rid of old skin cells that prevent moisture from getting into your skin. Scrubbing is the best solution for this.

Night time care: You should invest in a night cream that does some heavy work while you sleep. Use a protective cream if you will be outdoors for long periods. AHA and Vitamin-C kick: If your skin feels tired and shows a fallout from the cold, treating it with



Vitamin C will give it back its lustre and remove signs of fatigue. In the winter, before the sun gets too strong, opt for a facial with alpha hydroxyl acid (AHA).

Moisturisation is crucial: While the temperature may vary from city to city, dry air is a common thread, which leaves the skin feeling parched. Use a thick cream enriched with ingredients such as soya protein, sunflower

oil, skin lipids and glycerin that gently moisturise rough and stretchy skin, and maintain the skin hydration balance. These nutrients act on dullness and leave the skin soft and supple.

Don't forget the sun: It's essential to use a moisturiser that already contains a good sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher. Creams with pro-vitamin B3 can also help reduce damage

or dark spots that are caused due to sun exposure.

Drink and hydrate: Drink lots of water. In summer, we feel thirsty and our body reminds us that we need water, but that is not the case with winter.

Hence, it is even more important to drink water constantly to avoid dehydration. Water helps flush out toxins and maintain an overall healthy metabolism.

## Fast food chains should avoid antibiotics in chicken

Director General of Health Services (DGHS) Jagdish Prasad has called for small and big fast food chains in India to stop using antibiotics in chicken and other food products.

Prasad also called for strong guidelines for the fast food chains in India so that the burning issue of health hazards by antimicrobial resistance (AMR) can be tackled.

"All big and small companies should take the initiative against using antibiotics. There is a need for deadline for small and big fast food chains.

In US, there is a restriction to big companies such as McDonalds against using antibiotics," said



Prasad, while interacting with reporters here on Tuesday.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the ability of a microbe to resist the

effects of medication previously used to treat them. The term includes the more specific "antibiotic resistance", which applies only to bacteria becoming

resistant to antibiotics.

As part of the government's initiative to tackle AMR, the Health Ministry on November 20 has called for suggestions and observations from all the stakeholders for the amendment to Food Safety and Standards Regulation, 2011.

This notification contains maximum permissible limits of various antibiotics in meat and meat products including chicken.

According to Food Safety Security Authority of India, maximum permissible limits of 37 antibiotics and 67 other veterinary drugs are prescribed for chicken.

## Beware! Mouthwash use may make you diabetic

People who use mouthwash regularly may have an increased risk of developing diabetes, researchers have warned.

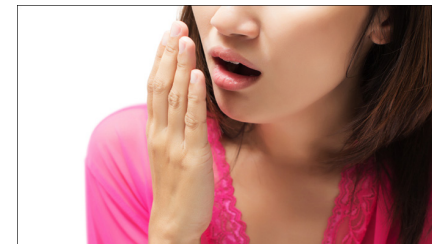
Researchers at the Harvard University in the US found that swilling with anti-bacterial fluid could be killing helpful microbes which live in the mouth and protect against obesity and diabetes.

They found that people who used mouthwash twice a day were around 55 per cent more likely to develop diabetes or dangerous blood sugar spikes, within three years.

"Most of these antibacterial ingredients in mouthwash are not selective," said Kaumudi Joshipura, professor at Harvard School of Public Health.

"In other words, they do not target specific oral bacteria - instead, these ingredients can act on a broad range of bacteria," Joshipura was quoted as saying by 'The Telegraph'.

The study, published in the journal *Nitric Oxide*, looked at 1,206 overweight people aged between 40 and 65 who were deemed



at risk of getting diabetes.

Over the study period around 17 per cent of people developed diabetes or pre-diabetes, but that rose to 20 per cent for those using mouthwash once a day, and 30 per cent for those who used it in the morning and evening.

According to Joshipura, helpful bacteria in the mouth can protect against diabetes and obesity, including microbes which help the body produce nitric oxide, which regulates insulin levels.

Nitric oxide is also important for regulating the metabolism, balancing energy and keeping blood sugar levels in check.

## HC notice to Centre on sale of skin creams containing steroids

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Central government on a PIL seeking direction to ensure that no topical medications which contain a "cocktail of harmful steroids" is sold without a valid prescription of a doctor. Saying the issue was "serious", the court asked the Health and Family Welfare Ministry and the Central Drug Standards and Control Organization (CDSCO) to file their response on the plea by January 23, the next date of hearing. The petition deals with the misuse of topical corticosteroids, a class of drugs used for treating a variety of skin diseases. The petition filed by Indian Association of Dermatologists, Venereologists and Leprologists (IADVL), a leading official body of dermatologists and skin specialists, sought a ban on manufacturing and sale of several skin creams containing steroids that are marketed for skin conditions like pigmentation,

itching, fairness and inflammation. The plea sought independent high level enquiry into how the CDSCO granted approval for the commercial manufacture, use and sale of hazardous as well as irrational and unscientific steroid combinations and also to order the prosecution of the officers concerned.

Advocate Tania Agarwal, appearing for petitioner, contended that the government has to curb the menace of abuse of certain drugs used in treatment of skin diseases that has been affecting the health of millions in India by enforcing the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

"The unchecked and unregulated manufacturing and sale of irrational, unscientific and hazardous corticosteroids either in form of a single molecule or in combination with other antifungals or antibacterials has caused serious adverse effects on the health of millions of Indians," said the plea. The petition stated that potent topical corticosteroids are being misused in the country to treat bacterial or fungal infections in combination with antibiotics or antifungals, to lighten the skin color in an effort to become fairer, to suppress any itchy, unsightly or painful rash on the skin regardless of its underlying cause.

"Some major adverse effects are growth retardation in infants and children, Cushing syndrome, suppression of hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis, acute adrenal insufficiency, severe hard to treat steroid modified fungal infection of the groin and other body areas, male genital dermatophytoses, topical steroid damaged face," it added.

## Eating disorders may cause severe health issues: Study

disorder among young adults, both men and women, may have long term side-effects on their psychological and physical health, a new finding has revealed.

The eating behaviour of a person gets upset if the person arbitrarily cuts down the meal while counting on calories and sugary foods. Such people follow an excessively strict diet and constantly weigh themselves constantly, irrespective of how they feel, in order to achieve a weight loss at all costs.

The study, published in the journal *European Eating Disorders Review*, stated that eating disorders could lead to higher body weight, larger waist circumference and lower psychological well being as well as a lower self-evaluation of general health in later life.

"Disordered eating is detrimental to the physical and mental health of young adults both in the short and long term," said Ulla Kärkkäinen, researcher at the University of Helsinki in Finland.

"Previous research has established that low psychological well being and a poor self-evaluation of health are predictors of higher susceptibility to physical illness and mortal-



ity. To mitigate these long-term negative effects, we must recognise disordered eating early and direct sufferers to treatment," Kärkkäinen added.

The researchers studied over more than 4,900 young men and women and questioned them on their eating behaviour, weight, health and psychological wellbeing.

The results showed the prevalence of a lower psychological well being among both women and men, as well as a lower self-evaluation of health among men when assessed ten years later. Previous studies have shown that eating disorders are more profound in females rather than males.

## The Iron Paradise: Dwayne Johnson's travelling gym has 18,000 kg equipment

You probably already know that it takes years of rock hard commitment and discipline to build a body like that of Dwayne Johnson. But what you wouldn't know is the extremes to which this hulk, the world's highest paid actor, goes to ensure he never misses out on his daily workout: He carries his gym, all

18,000 kilos of equipment, with him. The Rock even has a crew that sets up the Iron Paradise (that's what he calls his gym) in giant tents wherever he's shooting.

The Baywatch and Fate of the Furious star gave an inside tour of his portable gym from the sets of his upcoming movie *Skyscraper*, in

Vancouver recently. In the video, shared on his Instagram account, The Rock thanks his crew for setting up "40,000 pounds of twisted steel, sex appeal and heartache" of Iron Paradise at the shoot location.

He works out for two hours with heavy weights every morning at 5 am, and his army of assistants

ensure that he never misses out on his routine.

In an earlier revelation, in September this year, Johnson shocked his fans when he posted on his Instagram page that he doesn't take even loo breaks while working out. Other than *Skyscraper* (set to release in 2018), the star's upcoming film

includes *Rampage*. The first trailer of the film, released recently, shows him playing a primatologist caring for George, a silverback gorilla he's been taking care of since birth. A rogue genetic experiment mutates the ape into a raging creature and it is up to Johnson's character to save the world.

## How breastmilk helps combat food allergies in newborns

Breastmilk of nursing mothers who eat foods that commonly cause allergy, such as milk, eggs, peanut, tree nuts, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish during pregnancy can help protect newborns from developing food allergies, suggests a new research. The mouse study, led by the University of Michigan, showed that when a nursing or pregnant mother is exposed to a food protein, it combines with her antibodies, which are transferred to the offspring through breastfeeding.

The food protein-antibody complexes are then introduced to the offspring's developing immune system, triggering the production of protective T immune cells that suppress allergic reactions to the food.

These protective cells also persist after antibodies from the mother are gone, promoting long-term tolerance to the food.

The findings support the recent allergy prevention guidelines, which reject prior advice urging mothers to avoid high



allergic foods during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. "This controlled study shows that mothers should feel free to eat a healthy and diverse diet throughout pregnancy

and while breastfeeding," said James R. Baker, Professor at the University of Michigan. "Eating a range of nutritious foods during pregnancy and breastfeed-

ing will not promote food allergies in developing babies, and may protect them from food allergy," Baker said. The study, published in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, showed that breast milk from mothers who consumed allergenic foods protected against food allergy, preventing anaphylaxis as well as production of immunoglobulin E and expansion of mast cells, both hallmarks of an allergic response.

Breast milk was found protective even when fed to unrelated offspring not exposed to food allergens in utero.

In other experiments, mothers who had never consumed allergenic foods were given food-specific antibodies from other mothers. This, too, protected their breastfed offspring. Human breast milk, fed to mice with humanised immune systems (tailored to respond to human antibodies), was also protective, suggesting that the mouse findings may translate to human infants.

## MIND diet may lower risk of Alzheimer's by 53%

Dementia is one of the most dangerous and distressing conditions anyone can face in their lives. It is a chronic or persistent disorder of the mental processes, caused by brain disease or injury, and marked by memory disorders, personality changes, and impaired reasoning. According to a previous report, almost 47 million people are living with dementia around the world with 4.1 million of them belonging to India and there are more than 9.9 million new cases of dementia each year worldwide, implying one new case every 3.2 seconds. People are twice as afraid of losing their cognitive skills as they are about losing physical abilities. For years it was believed that we can do little to prevent such condition. But, according to a recent research, changing your diet and for example, eating leafy greens, such as spinach, and drinking a glass of wine at night can cut the chances of getting Alzheimer's by up to half, according to *The Mirror*. A Mediterranean-style diet, called MIND, may lower your risk of developing cognitive impairment and reduce the risk of Alzheimer's by as much as 53 per cent. A MIND Diet is the first diet specifically geared toward promoting not just better health in general, but better brain health throughout life. Research supports its links to brain health, including reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

## Bharti family pledges Rs 7,000 cr to philanthropy

NEW DELHI: Telecom czar Sunil Mittal on Thursday said the Bharti family has pledged 10% of their wealth totalling Rs 7,000 crore to support activities of the group's philanthropic arm Bharti Foundation. The amount committed includes 3% of the family's stake in Bharti Airtel, Sunil Mittal, founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, said at a conference. The Bharti family will also set up Satya Bharti University to offer free education to underprivileged youth from economically weaker sections of the society.

The new-age university will focus on science and technology, especially areas like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and robotics, among others.

The university, that is expected to come up in north India, will commence its first academic session in 2021.

Most of the wealth pledged will be infused into the new university project, Mittal said adding that talks were on to finalise the land for the same.

Over a period of time the university will have 10,000 students, he added.

Mittal's philanthropic move comes just days after Infosys co-founder and tech titan Nandan Nilekani and his wife Rohini Nilekani joined 'The Giving Pledge', committing half their wealth to philanthropy.

# Ordinance to change insolvency and bankruptcy laws cleared, focuses on stressed assets

NEW DELHI: The Cabinet on Wednesday approved changes to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and sent it to the President for his approval.

Once approved, the ordinance will be placed before Parliament in the winter session.

Finance minister Arun Jaitley did not divulge details about the changes being made to the code, since the President's approval is awaited. "Some changes are proposed to the IBC, since this is being done by an ordinance and till it is approved, as a matter of propriety, we don't give the details," Jaitley told reporters during a press conference

after the Cabinet meeting.

Top sources in the government told HT that the amendment was likely to streamline the process of selecting buyers of stressed assets, and would prevent wilful defaulters and promoters with past records of fraud from buying stressed companies cheap. However, the amendment should not be seen as a blanket ban on promoters of companies who have been on banks' non-performing account (NPA) lists, government official said. "There might be promoters who have gone through the corporate resolution process and have managed to get balance sheets in shape; they will not be kept out,"

said one of the government officials mentioned above. The IBC, which became operational in December last year, provides time-bound and monitored resolution to companies' insolvency proceedings. The National Company Law Tribunal is currently monitoring over 300 cases under the IBC. The Code, however, does not specify about the kind of buyers who can bid for stressed assets of firms undergoing bankruptcy proceedings, though guidelines for due diligence while choosing a buyer were recently issued by the government. This has triggered concern that promoters could reacquire their companies at a discount

once lenders decide to forego a part of the money owed to them.

"So there is a need to amend the law to ensure that only deserving candidates are allowed to bid for stressed assets under the corporate resolution process," said a second official. The amendment comes at a time when several firms are looking to acquire stressed assets. There has also been speculation that in some cases, promoters of firms undergoing insolvency are trying to re-acquire them. "It will be a setback to the credible IBC process if the existing promoter is allowed to reacquire the asset with a haircut," Sajjan Jindal, chairman and MD of

the JSW Group, said in a tweet on Tuesday. Jindal's company has expressed interest in picking up stressed assets in the steel sector.

"The code is just a year old. So there is scope for improvement, and we will realise it as we go ahead..." said the government official quoted above. Indians banks are saddled with toxic assets worth 10 lakh crore. The first batch of 12 large defaulters were referred to their creditors by the Reserve Bank of India in June 2017 under the IBC for bankruptcy proceedings at the National Company Law Tribunal. These defaulters account for 25% of banks' total NPAs.

## Jet Airways plans to stop first class in its Boeing 777 planes

MUMBAI: Jet Airways plans to do away with first class seats in its Boeing 777 planes that are operated for long-haul flights as it works on cost-cutting measures, a senior airline official said. The carrier, earlier this week, told investors about its plans for strategic growth where the key focus would be on cost minimisation.

According to the official, Jet Airways is looking at doing away with first class seats in B777 planes to increase the number of seats in them as part of larger cost reduction efforts.

Currently, the full-service carrier — in which Gulf carrier Etihad has a 24% stake — has 10 B777 aircraft. These planes have eight first, 30 business and 308 economy class seats.

In a presentation to investors on November 20, the airline said it would increase the number of seats in B777 planes, to around 400 seats from 2019 onwards, from 346 seats.



Asked about how the airline is going to implement the proposed increase in the number of seats in its B777 aircraft, a Jet Airways spokesperson said the initiative is one among several measures being evaluated by the carrier. "The airline plans to increase seats

in its B777s from 346 to nearly 400, as part of its continued endeavour to reduce costs and realise higher revenue in the foreseeable future," he told PTI in an e-mailed statement.

Without divulging specific details, including the estimated cost for refurbishing these planes, he said the

airline will share additional details at an appropriate time.

As per the presentation, the carrier will look to reducing maintenance expenses from January 2019 as well as bringing down cost of sales and distribution and also focus on enhancing ancillary revenue by around Rs 250 crore.

Jet Airways has a fleet of over 110 aircraft, comprising B777-300 ERs, A330-200/300, next generation B737s and ATR 72-500/600s.

It has 21 code share and 107 interline partners and about 15% of the carrier's passenger feed comes from partners.

Code sharing allows an airline to book its passenger on partner airlines and provide seamless transport to destinations.

An interline pact allows a carrier to issue and accept tickets for flights that are operated by the partner airline.

## Grab appoints Vikas Agarwal as CTO, eyes on scaling GrabPay

Vikas Agrawal has been appointed as the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for GrabPay, a mobile payments platform, Grab said in an official statement on Thursday.

The move is in line with efforts to expand and scale GrabPay across Southeast Asia and to fulfil the goal of becoming the region's number one payments platform.

"Vikas has steered some of the world's largest e-payments platforms through rapid growth, including during the critical time of 2016's demonetization of higher value banknotes in India. We believe Southeast Asia has the same potential for e-payments in the next 12 months," said Theo Vassilakis, Group CTO, Grab.

The newly appointed CTO brings in about two decades of experience from senior engineering roles at startups in the U.S and India, incl. Paytm, Fashionara, Tavant and CyberCash.

Speaking on his appointment, Vikas



Agarwal said, "I have seen in India how going cashless can open up the digital economy to millions of merchants and help them access new customers while making the cost of living more affordable for consumers."

It is a privilege to now join the GrabPay leadership team and have a unique opportunity to profoundly change the lives of Southeast Asia's more than 600 million people through financial inclusion, Vikas Agrawal added.

## Backed by BillDesk, Coinome launches as a cryptocurrency exchange in India

NEW DELHI: Propelled by the vision of mainstreaming crypto-currencies, the 'Coinome' platform has been launched in India. Headquartered in Mumbai, Coinome is from Hatio Innovations Pvt. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of BillDesk.

Coinome operates a crypto-currency exchange and is the first crypto platform in India to allow users to be on-boarded simply and quickly via Instant e-KYC. The platform provides a seamless on-boarding experience and the e-KYC process means that users can start transacting in crypto-currencies almost immediately on registering. The exchange platform supports instant deposits using payment gateway and instant withdrawals, thereby allowing transactions even on weekends or business holidays. As an open order book Crypto-currency exchange, Coinome facilitates transparency and best price discovery amongst the buyers and sellers.

BillDesk is India's largest payment solu-

tions platform handling over USD 50 billion consumer digital payments annually. BillDesk has been the leader in driving electronic payments and digital commerce in India over the last 17 years. Its expertise in secure online payments, along with its market leadership position will support Coinome in promoting crypto-currencies as viable avenues for investments, transactions and building digital assets. "At Coinome, we are excited to bring crypto-currencies to the masses. India, with a limited number of exchanges supporting multiple crypto-currencies, offers immense opportunities. We would fundamentally like to provide Indian users with a secure and convenient means for buying or selling Bitcoins, and other crypto-currencies. In the next one year, our target is to support up to 20 popular crypto-currencies and promoting the same within Indian masses as commercially viable alternatives for building their digital assets," said.

## Google announces 130K scholarships in partnership with Pluralsight and Udacity

NEW DELHI: Tech giant Google in association with Pluralsight and Udacity, on Thursday, announced a new scholarship program to help 130 thousand developers and students across India with an objective to create a pool of highly skilled tech workforce. In this joint effort, Google is sponsoring 100 thousand scholarships on the Pluralsight technology learning platform and 30 thousand scholarships on Udacity to help developers gain access to advanced learning curriculum and further their employability in emerging technologies like mobile and web development, machine learning, AR/VR, AI, and cloud platforms. "Since we announced our skilling initiative in India, 210,000 students have completed Google developed courses on Udacity, with 117,000 students completing the course this year. To build on this momentum,



this scholarship program, will make it easy for students and developers to gain the skills they need to be successful in the changing technology landscape," said developer products group and skilling lead for India, Google, William Florance.

"Pluralsight already supports learners in more than 150 countries

and with this partnership we hope to gain tailwind in our effort to skill India," he added. Google is offering 30 thousand scholarships with Udacity and among them 1000 developers will also be selected to receive full Nanodegree scholarships. Interested candidates will also get access to Pluralsight IQ, where they can measure their skills in the latest technologies within five minutes.

This new scholarship program is in continuation of Google's plans to train two million developers in India, to help spur innovation and support the growth of India's start-up ecosystem. "India's tech workforce is going through a phase of transition,

where a new ecosystem of technology skills are being learnt in order to add value in a fast-changing, digitally-powered world. Pluralsight has been an enabler of this transition in India and across the world. We are thrilled to partner with Google to help developers across India understand their skill level using Pluralsight IQ and advance their skill sets," said country head and general manager, Pluralsight, Arun Rajamani.

"With this scholarship program, students can master web and mobile development skills with the experts from Udacity and Google. The top 1000 students earn an additional 6-month scholarship to our mobile and web developer Nanodegree programs, which includes mentorship, community support, and expert project reviews," said MD, Udacity India, Ishan Gupta.

# President consents, bankruptcy code changes to make it difficult for promoters to re-acquire their firms

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday approved the ordinance for amending the bankruptcy code, which will make it difficult for insolvent promoters to reacquire stressed companies.

This came a day after the Cabinet referred the ordinance to the President for his assent. Top sources in the government said that the ordinance makes it difficult for promoters trying to reacquire their stressed companies, by putting stringent guidelines for an applicant to qualify.

While wilful defaulters and un-discharged insolvent are disqualified, loan defaulters with NPAs for more than a year are also not eligible. Any antecedent of corporate fraud or contravention of the companies act will also disqualify a bidder for a stressed asset. While government officials said that the amendment should not

be seen as a blanket ban on promoters of companies who have been on banks' non-performing account (NPA) list, insolvency experts disagreed.

"There are legal challenges to the amendments. It bans bona fide defaulters. There could also be foreign investors, so how do we decide their qualification for acquiring stressed assets," said insolvency expert Sumant Batra.

The IBC became operational in December last year and provides a time-bound, monitored resolution to insolvency of a company. Over 300 cases are already being monitored by the National Company Law Tribunal under this Code.

IBC does not specify the buyers that can bid for stressed assets of companies that are undergoing bankruptcy proceedings, though guidelines for due diligence while choosing a buyer were recently



issued by the government. This has triggered concern that promoters could reacquire their companies at a discount once the lenders

decide to sacrifice a part of the money they are owed.

"So there is the need to amend the law to ensure only deserving

candidates are allowed to bid for stressed assets under the corporate resolution process," said a second official.

The code was strengthened on November 8 to streamline the due diligence process while choosing a buyer of stressed assets.

Credibility, financial strength, experience and track record are some of the factors that will be considered by the committee of creditors in disposing of a stressed asset that is up for sale.

But concerns remain. As several suitors have lined up for picking up stressed assets in the steel sector, promoters fearing eviction from their own companies are also reportedly gearing up to reacquire their companies.

"It will be a setback to the credible IBC process if the existing promoter re-acquired the asset with a haircut without Right to Recompense to Banks. The government must closely monitor the proceedings of NCLT," said Sajjan Jindal, chairman and managing

director of the JSW Group. Jindal's company has expressed interest in picking up stressed steel assets.

This amendment is part of an effort spearheaded by the ministry of corporate affairs and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India to strengthen the IBC. "The code is just a year old. So there is scope for improvement, and we will realise it as we go ahead..." said the third official. Indians banks are saddled with toxic assets worth a mammoth Rs 10 trillion, choking their lending ability.

The first batch of 12 large defaulters were referred to their creditors by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in June 2017 under the IBC for bankruptcy proceedings at the National Company Law Tribunal. These 12 defaulters account for 25% of the total NPAs of banks.

## The Ashes: Absent Ben Stokes wishes England cricket team good luck



LONDON: Ben Stokes has wished his England teammates well for the first Ashes Test on the opening day of the series with Australia in Brisbane.

Ben Stokes is the notable omission from England's lineup for the match at the Gabba on Thursday after he remained at home despite being named in the initial touring party.

The all-rounder did not travel with Joe Root's side after being suspended by the England and Wales Cricket Board until the conclusion of a police investigation following Stokes' arrest on suspicion of causing actual bodily harm in Bristol in September. Stokes' participation has been the hot topic of conversation in the build-up to the opening match, but it remains unclear whether he will fly to Australia later in the series. For now he remains in England, and the 26-year-old took to social media to post his good luck wishes, while stating he will be watching all the action from home. "With the Ashes starting very soon I just wanted to get a message out to all the boys in Australia," Ben Stokes said in a Twitter video. "I wish them all the best for the first Test match and all the coaches and backroom staff as well. I know how much preparation has gone into making sure everyone is right and ready to go, and by the looks of it everyone is. Just wanted to wish all the fans who have made the long travels all the best as well. I hope we can give you a good result in the first Test match."

"I'll be sat at home watching, following the lads and hoping they do really well."

# Cricket calendar makes Virat Kohli fume; Preparation for SA not ideal, he says

NAGPUR: Skipper Virat Kohli has expressed his unhappiness over the cramped schedule of the India team which leaves them no time to acclimatise before the tough tour of South Africa. The BCCI, in a bid to accommodate the Sri Lanka series, has left little time for the Indian cricket team to prepare for the long South Africa series.

While emphasising on the need to assess (the schedule) in future, Kohli admitted it is the reason the India team management specially requested for seamer-friendly wickets for the Sri Lanka series as it was the only option to prepare for South Africa. "Yes (we requested for the pace-friendly wickets), because unfortunately we get only two days before we fly to South Africa after

this series gets over. So we have no choice but be in a game situation and think of what's coming ahead of us. "Had we got a month off ideally, we would have done a proper preparation in a camp sort of scenario. But we have to sort of make do with what we have," said Kohli ahead of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Nagpur on Thursday.

The Sri Lanka series ends on December 24 and India play their first Test against South Africa on January 5.

"As usual cramped for time, which I think we needed to assess in future as well because we very easily assess the team when go abroad but we don't look at how many days we have got to prepare before we go to a particular place to play."



"Everyone starts judging players when results come after Test matches. It should be a fair game where we get to prepare the way we want to and then we are entitled to be criticised."

"So we thought this is an ample opportunity for us to challenge ourselves, put us in a situation. As I said, we want to embrace being in difficult conditions."

I am not saying that everyone will go out and perform immediately but if we can feel comfortable about it after one or two or three innings, someone will come good.

"And once you come good, you build on that confidence. It's the same for the bowlers. Yes, we are looking at this as an opportunity," the India skipper stated.

## Ashes 2017: James Vince revels in silencing doubters vs Australia in Brisbane

BRISBANE: England cricket team batsman James Vince was left to rue missing out on a maiden Test century but revelled in silencing the doubters on day one of the Ashes series at the Gabba. Vince was a surprise inclusion in the squad to face Australia cricket team, having been dropped last year after failing to make a half-century in his first seven Tests. The 26-year-old showed what he is capable of in Brisbane on Thursday, making an assured 83 before he was run out by Nathan Lyon going for a quick single as England closed on 196-4. James Vince was dropped by Tim Paine after edging Lyon behind on 68 and was left with mixed feelings, having come so close to reaching three figures. "Not getting a ton is disappointing. No matter what score you get you always want more. It would have

been nice to be there at the end of the day, but stuff like that happens in cricket." Vince said. I'm sure lying in bed I'll have a few thoughts about missing out, but if you'd offered me 80-odd I'd have taken it. Vince and Mark Stoneman (53) put on 125 for the second wicket after Alastair Cook fell in the third over of the day. The duo were more than likely two of the England players that former Australia opener Matthew Hayden said he had no knowledge of prior to the series, so the number three was pleased to introduce himself with an impressive knock.

Vince said: "Hayden's comments give you an incentive to make a statement. It's nice to spend some time in the middle and get some confidence. If he didn't know who we were, he probably does now."



"I didn't take too much notice of the pre-match comments. I've had stuff after I got called up. I guess it gives you more inspiration to prove people wrong."

"Next time I probably won't take that run. It was a good bit of fielding. He [Lyon] bowled pretty well and deserved something from the day."

## Haryana sports department takes aim at India shooter Anisa Sayyed

NEW DELHI: Anisa Sayyed, Commonwealth Games shooting champion from Haryana, has alleged harassment by senior officials of the state sports department where she is employed. The pistol shooter, who has taken part in more than 40 international competitions, has alleged the department hasn't paid her salary for the past two years, which is having a serious impact on her shooting career. She is now contemplating quitting her job. "The job was supposed to help Anisa financially. If that is not happening, she doesn't see any logic in continuing in the department," her husband Mubarak Husain said.

She has now been charge-sheeted for being absent from work without permission. A copy of that letter is with Hindustan Times.

Anisa, competing in the 25m sports pistol event, won two gold medals in the 2010 New Delhi Commonwealth Games, a bronze in the 2014 Incheon Asiad and silver in that year's Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

Anisa said she was appointed assistant director in Haryana's sports department in June, 2015 on sports quota and posted in Faridabad. But within four months she was transferred to Sonapat. She has alleged it was a deliberate attempt to sabotage her sporting career. Faridabad is close to the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Ranges, which would have helped her train without any hitch. Anisa refused to join the Sonapat office, and wrote to Director Sports: "Since there is no shooting range for small bore in Sonapat, my pet event is 25m sports pistol, it will be



difficult to travel from Sonapat to Delhi's shooting ranges for training on a regular basis. The department should reconsider the move."

### NO PAY

The department's response was to stop her salary. "It has been two-and-a-half years (since I joined) the sports department, but I got salary for only two/three months," she said in a statement.

Things went from bad to worse.

The Faridabad district sports officer refused to sanction her leave when she went for competitions while the head office in Panchkula didn't respond to her communication.

"The situation was tense and just added to distractions," said her husband. A departmental inquiry has now been initiated against her. Retired IAS officer, VP Batra, has been appointed inquiry officer.

The initial hearing was slated to be held on October 31, but Anisa expressed her inability to attend as she was unwell. The new date has been fixed for November 27.

Despite repeated efforts, Director Sports, Jagdeep Singh, didn't respond to calls and text message. Haryana sports minister Arun Vij wasn't available for comments.

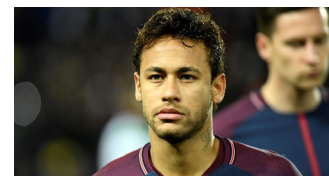
## Neymar storms away from Real Madrid transfer questions

LONDON: Neymar swore at journalists and stormed away from an interview after being questioned about reports linking him with a sensational move from Paris Saint-Germain to Real Madrid.

The Brazil star became the world's most expensive footballer when PSG paid Madrid's Clasico rivals Barcelona €222million for his services.

And Neymar has been quick to begin repaying that, having a hand in 21 goals in his first 14 games for the French giants, who sit top of Ligue 1 and their Champions League group after a blistering start to the season.

Neymar's PSG career has not been all plain sailing to date, with rumours of rifts



between him and striking partner Edinson Cavani, as well as coach Unai Emery.

All parties have been swift to play down such talk, but it has not stopped suggestions emerging that Madrid could make a stunning swoop for the star striker. However, when Neymar was asked about the reports after his two-goal show in PSG's 7-1 destruction of Celtic on Wednesday, he was less than impressed.

"For's sake," he is widely quoted as saying. "Have you got nothing else to talk about?"

The thrashing of Celtic at the Parc des Princes maintained PSG's three-point lead over Bayern Munich in Group B. They need a point at the Allianz Arena on matchday six to guarantee top spot.

## Indian golfer SSP Chawrasia aims to win abroad after Hong Kong Open lead

HONG KONG: Long pigeon-holed as a player who could only win on home soil, India's SSP Chawrasia believes he has finally found the form to take on the world's best on foreign fairways.

Chawrasia posted the leading opening round score in the Hong Kong Open Thursday, scoring an impressive 65 in blustery conditions to head a field including some of golf's most in-form players such as Justin Rose, Sergio Garcia and Tommy Fleetwood.

It is all a long way from the Royal Calcutta Golf Club, Asia's oldest course, where his father worked as greenskeeper and Chawrasia first learnt the sport as a caddy before picking up the clubs in his own right.

"My father was working there in Kolkata and he said 'You can't play golf, it's too expensive,'" said Chawrasia, now 39.

"But I said 'No, I have to play!' Now he's been retired 20 years but he's very happy - and I'm making money!"

Chawrasia has enjoyed an impressive run of form at home of late, making history -- and EUR275,000 (\$325,000) -- in March by retaining his title at the Hero Indian Open with a seven-stroke win in New Delhi. That feat made Chawrasia the first Indian to successfully defend a European Tour title, and the first player to win their first four events on the tour all in their home country.

But Chawrasia added a potentially

more significant victory at the Philippines' Manila Masters last year, his first professional win abroad, and has his sights set on further victories on foreign soil. "I won already last year in Manila ... I'm trying. Still I'm not playing any Majors so that's my target hopefully."

I'm playing Singapore, first event [in the] Asian Tour next year, and there are top four spots going to the British Open."

"Every week I'm playing better, but I don't think about 'He's world number one' ... I respect but I'm not looking."

"When I'm playing, I'm just focusing on my game. If I'm looking at someone's world ranking or someone's scoring, I'm losing my confidence."

The highlight of Chawrasia's opening round was a remarkable recovery pitching wedge out of the rough and over tall trees approaching the par-five third hole, which he landed three feet from the pin.

"That shot was really great because I hit the tee shot a little bit left of the rough, and got a lay-up from there, and third shot was like 115 yards short into the wind ... my shot of the day today," he said. "It's good. I'm five under today and very happy ... but it's the first round, so not much pressure!"

"I'm playing the last couple of weeks good. I have a good confidence. Hopefully the next three days I'm playing well."

## Virat Kohli to groom Vijay Shankar as back-up all-rounder for Indian cricket team

new delhi: India plan to groom rookie Vijay Shankar as a back-up pace bowling all-rounder with an eye on future overseas tours, skipper Virat Kohli said on the eve of the second test against Sri Lanka beginning in Nagpur on Friday.

The hosts rested all-rounder Hardik Pandya for the ongoing three-Test series against their neighbours which remains tied after the drawn series opener in Kolkata. With paceman Bhuvneshwar Kumar released from the side over personal reasons, the team added 26-year-old Shankar into the squad for the remaining two tests.



"Obviously, Hardik is in our scheme of things as the first all-rounder but we need to find more people who have that kind of ability, who we can groom and make a back-up for the all-round-

er's spot which is very crucial when we travel abroad," Kohli told reporters. "That's the whole mindset behind bringing him and keeping him in the setup, making him familiar

with what's going on here, making him understand what he needs to work on and we can look at his game as well. "A middle-order batsman who can bowl medium pace, Shankar could make his international debut on Friday with Kohli sounding impressed with the youngster who has played 32 first class matches.

"He's a pretty balanced cricketer, pretty composed," the India captain said. "He's a great fielder, handy with the ball -- will give you 10 spells over the day -- and is very solid with the bat. It's a big moment for him and he has earned it."

## Arjun Tendulkar does dad Sachin Tendulkar proud with 5-wicket haul for Mumbai

MUMBAI: Arjun Tendulkar, son of cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, today returned a five-wicket-haul for Mumbai Under-19 in a Cooch Behar Trophy match against Madhya Pradesh.

Arjun, a promising left arm seamer, ended with figures of 5-95 in 26 overs in the second innings of the match played at the MCA's Bandra-Kurla Complex here. In the first innings, Arjun had figures of 1-42. The match was drawn and Mumbai took the first innings lead to grab three points.



Madhya Pradesh U-19 after put into bat scored 361 in their first innings, Mumbai replied strongly by putting on board 506 all out to take the lead.

In the second innings, Madhya Pradesh declared for 411/8 and Mumbai were 47/1 in their second innings when the match was declared drawn.