

# TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

**SATURDAY**

- NOVEMBER, 25, 2017
- 06 RABI-AL-AWAL 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 276
- VOLUME: 03
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	12.8	-3.1
JAMMU	23.6	7.7
LEH	8.8	-13.2
KARGIL	6.8	-9.0

**SUNSET SATURDAY: 05:24 PM**  
**SUNRISE SUNDAY: 07:15 AM**

**LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR**  
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 14°C & -3°C respectively.

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

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CRISTIANO RONALDO WILL DELIVER WHEN NEEDED FOR REAL MADRID, SAYS XABI ALONSO

## Mehbooba asks for scientific mapping of Custodian assets

Directs constitution of CS led committee to settle outstanding rent issues with other Deptts.



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti has asked the Custodian Department to undertake mapping of its assets through scientific means including Geo tagging to protect these on a long-term basis. Chairing a review meeting of the Department here today, the Chief Minister regretted that the assets of the Department have got encroached in the past and directed that scientific methods be adopted to protect these for future. Minister for Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation, Abdul Rehman Veeri was also present in the meeting. Mehbooba Mufti advised the Department to priorities raising of social properties like Community Halls, Marriage Halls, public

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### CM'S PUBLIC OUTREACH FOLLOW UP: GOVT CANCELS ALL TEACHER ATTACHMENTS OF GUREZ, TULAIL AREAS

Cultural Academy orders revival of its Kathua Sub office

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24: As a follow up to the visit of Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti to Gurez on October 31, the Government has ordered cancellation of attachments and deployments of all teachers and masters posted in Gurez and working in other areas with immediate effect.

▶ See **CM's**...Pg 02

Son come back home:

## Father posts a chilling message for his militant son

Kulgam, Nov 24: A heart-felt message from the father of an alleged militant from South Kashmir have emerged on social networking site facebook, that can send chill down the spine of every parent. Sixteen year old Muham-

mad Farhan a resident of Wanigund Khudwani village of Kulgam district left his home in July this year to attend his physics coaching class in Anantnag and never returned his home. Family came to know after few days that Farhan has

joined militant ranks. The family saw a ray of hope after footballer Majid Khan from Anantnag and Naseer Ahmed from Chimar Kulgam returned to their families. His father has taken

▶ See **Father**...Pg 02

## Sharma reaches Jammu, discusses with CM how to reach out to stakeholders

Meets 12 delegations including sitting and ex-legislators

Srinagar, Nov 24: The government of India's "special representative" Dineshwar Sharma Friday afternoon reached Jammu his second visit to the state to continue his process of fresh dialogue between Srinagar and New Delhi.

Sharma, who visited Srinagar and Jammu earlier this month, is supposed to stay in J&K for four days. He will reach Srinagar on November 26.

Soon after landing at Jammu, Sharma called on Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and



discussed ways and means for reaching

▶ See **Sharma**...Pg 02

### COMMUTERS FUME AS AUTHORITIES BLIND KARAN NAGAR LINK ROADS OF SRINAGAR CITY

Srinagar, Nov 24: At a time when Srinagar city is grappling with traffic jams, authorities have blinded the internal roads passing through Karan Nagar and Balgarden. Number of barricades have been created by government in the middle of the roads while the irony is no department is ready to own the action.

SMC and R&B are passing bucks while sources said barricades have been created to appease few locals who are in the good books some top SMC officials.

"Commuters usually took to these link roads of Karan Nagar to avoid traffic jams, but due to these barricades no vehicle is now able to venture through these link roads," said a local Faizan Gul to Kashmir News Trust.

Balgarden Nursing Ghar locals said that it is residential colony and it should be made out of bounds for traffic.

▶ See **City**...Pg 02

Dr Drabu calls on RBI Governor

## Discusses issue of stressed business loans in JK

Mumbai, Nov 24: Minister for Finance, Dr Haseeb Drabu called on the RBI Governor, Dr Urjit Patel here today to discuss the issues of business, trade and industry loans in Jammu and Kashmir which have come under tremendous stress because of various reasons including 2014 floods and the civil strife of 2016. He also raised with the RBI Governor the issues regarding

J&K Bank.

During the hour-long meeting, Dr Drabu emphasized that it was not a credit-quality issue as in other parts of the country, but the non-cuisines environment that has resulted in the impairment of loans in J&K. "The state's trade, businesses and industry need a larger structured package to get back into profitable operations and mere



restructuring of loans won't help resolve the crisis at this

junction," Dr Drabu told the RBI Governor.

Asked how his meeting with RBI Governor went, Dr Drabu said the Governor was very understanding of the issues and the distress confronting the businesses and the industry in J&K. "RBI Governor promised to personally examine all the issues including that of the J&K

▶ See **Loans**...Pg 02

### PROTEST AGAINST BEACON FOR DEPRIVING LABOURERS OF WORK IN WINTERS

Srinagar, Nov 24: Scores of labourers protested against Beacon authorities outside their headquarters located in Rangreth area in the outskirts of Srinagar city on Thursday.

Casual Paid Labourers who work for Beacon round the year alleged that authorities have stopped providing them work with the onset of the winter.

They said during other seasons Beacon use them but this year in winters majority of them are being asked to leave the headquarters.

"If the budget is low then how come Beacon officers avail the services of outside state labourers. We are recognized work force but are being deprived of work," the protesters said adding the Beacon officers are using outside

▶ See **Protest**...Pg 02

## Day-long women convention at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan

### Farooq asks women to gear up for Panchayat elections

Jammu, Nov 24: National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Friday exhorted women to gear up for upcoming Panchayat elections in a big way, saying reservation of 33 per cent will enable their larger involvement in decision making in the democratic institutions at the grass roots level.

"Panchayats are key to political empowerment of women", Dr Abdullah said while addressing a day-long women convention at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this afternoon.

The convention was organized by the former MLA Bimla Luthra. Dr Farooq Abdullah favoured larger role



for women in shaping destiny of the society

▶ See **Farooq**...Pg 02

### RELEASE PENDING SALARY OF HDF EMPLOYEES: DAK

Srinagar, Nov 24: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) President Dr Suhail Naik showed strong resentment over failure of government in releasing salary to employees working on Hospital Development Fund (HDF).

Dr Naik expressed displeasure over the delay in releasing of their pending salaries. He further said that these employees are facing a tough times as nearly 10000 workers across J&K are without the salary from the past many months.

"It's shameful state of affairs and highly regrettable that our colleagues working on HDF have not received a penny from last many months and unfortunate part is that the state government is in deep slumber and are least bothered about the miseries faced by these employees"

▶ See **DAK**...Pg 02

## Cooperative deptt records Rs 48.48 cr turnover in Kashmir division, Rs 3.31 cr from PCs

Elections for Cooperative Societies going on smoothly, 73% process completed

Srinagar, Nov 24: The Cooperative Department has registered a turnover of Rs 48.48 crore through its various business units in Kashmir division during the current fiscal so far, while as it has recovered an amount of Rs 3.31 crore from various stakeholders during the period.

This was disclosed in a meeting chaired by Secretary, cooperative Department, Bashir Ahmad Bhat, to review the physical and financial achievements registered in the Co-operative Sector in Kashmir Division.

Registrar, Cooperative Societies Kashmir MM Rehman Gasi, Deputy Registrars and District Audit Officers of Kashmir Division attended the meeting.



Giving details of the financial achievement, the meeting was informed that Cooperative Super Bazar has registered turnover of Rs 9.71 crores through their sale outlets in Kashmir Division. It was given out in the meeting

▶ See **Records**...Pg 02

### JAMMU MUSLIM BODIES PROTEST AGAINST SARDANA'S BLASPHEMOUS REMARKS

Jammu, Nov 24: Anjuman-e-Imamia, Jammu in collaboration with All Ladakh Muslim Student Association, Anjuman-e-Haidery, members of Shaheed Muttahri Library and other Anjums Friday staged a protest in Jammu and strongly condemned Rohit Sardana's language used about Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) pious daughter Bibi Fatima Zehra (RA) Bibi Mariam (AS) and Hazrat Ayesha (RA).

While addressing reporters, President Anjuman-e-Imamia Syed Amanat Ali Shah said this is an attempt to get cheap publicity and an immediate ban should be imposed on his reporting so that he should not incite the religious sentiments of masses by using such derogatory

▶ See **Jammu**...Pg 02

## Announcement of "withdrawing FIR against Stone Pelters" a cosmetic effort: Mirwaiz

'All political prisoners should be immediately released from jails'

Srinagar, Nov 24: Hurriyat Conference (M) chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq while addressing the Friday congregation at the historic Jama Masjid said that while some kind of announcement regarding withdrawing of FIR against so-called "first time stone pelters" has been made, the step looks more as a looking good cosmetic attempt on the part of a ruling regime that



has come to symbolize extreme force and repression and a

reputation of being anti-people. Mirwaiz said simultaneous to this announcement a specially-abled auto driver Umar from Anantnag Islamabad was slapped with PSA and shifted to Kathua jail.

In a statement to KNS, Mirwaiz said thousands of Kashmiris are languishing in jails across J&K and in India for their political ideology

▶ See **Mirwaiz**...Pg 02

## MAN THRASHED BY BJP LEGISLATOR, HOSPITALIZED IN RAJOURI

SRINAGAR | NOV 24 (PTK): A man was hospitalized after alleged thrashing by a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Reports said that BJP MLA Ravinder Raina allegedly beat up two persons, one of them a handicapped man, working at an Aadhaar centre in Rajouri. Raina, however, denied assaulting anyone.

Khalid Hussain and Tariq Aziz alleged that Raina assaulted them inside the Aadhaar enrolment centre on the office premises of the BDO in Nowshera town in Rajouri. The two, according to the report, collect Aadhaar enrolment forms from people, record the biometric data

▶ See **Thrashed**...Pg 02

# PEOPLE MUST PLANT TREES TO HELP PROTECT ENVIRONMENT: LAL SINGH

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24: Minister for Forests, Environment and Ecology Choudhary Lal Singh today said that people must plant trees and contribute back to the environment for the benevolence of the State's ecological affairs, adding that mega environmental and plantation drives have been launched to achieve better results in shaping up the degraded environment.

The Minister was speaking to officers of Forest Department after reviewing the progress of summer and winter seasonal plants and its survival across the Jammu region at Forest Information Centre in Gandhi Nagar, here today.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Ravi Kesar, Chairman Pollution Control Board B Sidhartha, Chief Wildlife Warden Manoj Panth, Director, So-

cial Forestry, Ashwani Gupta, Chief Conservator Forests, Farooq Gillani, Managing Director SFC Suresh Gupta, Director FPF Asif Mohammad Sagar, Director SFRI B M Sharma, Director Soil Conservation Javed Iqbal Punjoo, Regional Director PCB Choudhary Showkat Ahmed, Regional Director Wildlife Sinthil Kumar besides Divisional Forest Officers (DFOs) of Jammu, Udhampur, Ramban, Poonch, Rajouri, Doda and Kathua districts attended the meeting.

Choudhary Lal Singh directed the officers to develop nurseries of the coldest areas of the region with ornamental, fruit like Amla, Pear, Guava, Bar, Grapes and Tropical apple saplings.

He asked them to plant Bhord tree on the edge areas of the revered ponds



of Jammu region and directed for complete fencing of the forest land for avoiding encroachments.

The Minister asked the senior functionaries of the Forest Department to pay frequent visits to the nurseries and also personally monitor the irrigation of planted plants along the roadside strips

from Lakhampur to Banihal.

Choudhary Lal Singh said that the Government is aiming to provide green cover to the schools, colleges and other educational institutes and in this regard the Department would be assessing the green and cleanliness of the educational institutes.

The Minister said that the Government is also aiming to popularize plantation with sustained drives in Ladakh and Kashmir regions of the State. He said that the winter season is best time for plantation of seasonal plants in both the regions and the Forest Department has taken it in a mission mode to cover

maximum area under plantation.

Lal Singh asked the concerned officers to intensify the plantation drive in the coldest areas of the State during the winter season while stressing on planting the saplings of ornamental and fruit plants that can sustain the local weather conditions.

He said thousands of plants of fruit and ornamental and other species are being planted in identified forest locations keeping in mind local weather conditions.

While seeking cooperation of the people, the Minister asked all stakeholders to be part of plantation drive so that ecology can be maintained properly. He said that Government is contemplating to update the forest policy with the aim to increase the forest wealth of the State.

## Continue from Front Page.....

### MEHBOOBA

utilities etc which can benefit a large section of society. She specifically directed construction of a Community Hall at Samba on priority. The demand for construction of a Community hall was made by people during a Public Outreach programme of the Chief Minister recently at Samba.

Reviewing at length the performance of the Department, the Chief Minister directed constitution of a committee of officers headed by Chief Secretary, B. B. Vyas to look into the claims and counter claims of rent on the land and other assets of the Department. She also directed the Department to come up with detailed project reports of the works it intends to undertake.

Chief Secretary, B. B. Vyas; Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Sandeep Nayak; Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rohit Kansal; Principal Secretary, Finance, Navin Choudhary; Secretary, Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation, Shahid Inayatullah; Custodian General, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat and other officers were also present in the meeting.

### CM'S

In addition, the Government has also cancelled the attachments and deployments of teachers and Master of Tulail area, who have been working in Dawar and other plain areas of Gurez Valley.

Many deputations during the visit of the Chief Minister on October 31 had complained to her that a number of teachers and masters appointed for Gurez and Tulail areas have either been attached or deployed at places like Bandipora and other places which, they complained, had hampered the quality of education at schools in the area.

Meanwhile, the Academy of Art, Culture & Languages has also ordered the operationalization of its Sub Office at Kathua. The process of refurbishing its office space has also been started to start cultural activities in the district.

This follows a direction from the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti at Kathua during her public outreach programme recently during which several deputations had raised the demand of revival of the Sub Office of J&K Cultural Academy.

### FATHER

to facebook to convey a message to Farhan.

Ghulam Muhammad Wani, his father while addressing his militant son writes: "My dear son, since you left my body has started to betray me. I am screaming of the pain which you have given and still believe that you will come back home from the day you left home to your school."

"I can't explain how much I miss your smiling face, it had almost been six months, there is not a minute that goes by that I don't think about you. I hope you are OK. I hope you are well. I am your father and if I do not tell you this, no one else will. Don't bear grudge towards those who are not good to you. No one in this world is going to treat you well except your father and mother."

"I am sorry that I am going to die. I don't want to die but am not left with any choice. I am sorry. You will have a lot to learn but I will not be there to teach you, to scold you, to help you."

"About your mother, she loves you more than anybody else in this world. She didn't mind going through the pain of giving you birth because somebody told her that you will be there to lift her coffin on her death."

"Dear son, we request you to come back and start again and we will help you in every manner otherwise the path which you have chosen will not lead you to anywhere other than pain, stress and betrayal and may be the time will come that you come back and never see us again."

"Be you sister, your brother and every relative, all are missing you badly and are eagerly waiting to see you again."

The father has laid thrust on his concluding sentence by making a repletion of same alphabets saying, 'come back, we are missing you.

Talking to this reporter, Gowhara, the mother of the alleged militant said that she is engulfed by frustration and stress and has developed so many ailments from the day Farhan left her.

"Please convey my message to him and tell him, his mother is waiting for him."

### SHARMA

out to various stakeholders.

Later, he visited Jagti Township where he met several delegations of Kashmiri Pandits.

Sources told KNS, he will meet some 12 political and apolitical groups consisting of some politicians and sitting and former legislators. He will go Reasi tomorrow to interact with Talwara migrants.

It is said that Sharma will visit the south Kashmir, the ground zero of unrest. It will be interesting to see how Sharma engages the youths in south Kashmir, where the local

militancy is higher than other parts of the valley.

Sharma was appointed the government of India's interlocutor on October 23 to hold talks with all stakeholders in an effort to find lasting peace for Kashmir issue.

### CITY

When we asked an SMC official that these barricades would prove disastrous in case of any tragedy like fire incident, he first feigned ignorance and then said these barricades have been erected to stop illegal constructions. "Construction material can't be ferried now in tippers during night hours in these areas," he said.

Meanwhile, commuters have sought the intervention of SSP Traffic Srinagar city and has appealed him to remove these barricades at an earliest. "When traffic can ply throw narrow lanes of Mehjoor Nagar- Natipora, why it can't ply through interiors of Balgarden Karan Nagar, they asked.

### LOANS

Bank," he said and added that the Governor was comforted by the fact that the State Government has a majority stake in J&K bank and that gives some leeway to find a creative solution to its problems.

He said once the RBI examines the full contours of the NPAs and the restructured assets, it will work out a plan of action for J&K Bank in consultation with the State Government.

Dr Drabu also sought the intervention of the RBI Governor in improving the credit-deposit ratio of various banks in the State. He said enhanced lending in core sectors will help support the State Government's efforts to rebuild J&K's distressed economy.

The Finance Minister also discussed in detail the issue of starting innovative schemes for financing Self Help Groups (SHGs) so that the people at the grassroots level benefit from such initiatives.

The Finance Minister thanked the RBI Governor for his highly positive approach and understanding of the issues concerning J&K.

### PROTEST

labourers for their personal tasks.

The protesting labourers chanted slogans against Beacon authorities.

They said they are associated with Beacon from past 2 decades and it is for the first time they are being deprived of work in winters.

"Some of us are carpenters, painters, masons who work with Beacon throughout year, but now they want us out to pave way for outside labourers."

Chief Engineer Beacon couldn't be contacted while a lower rung official declined to comment on the issue.

### FAROOQ

and the state, saying panchayats and local bodies' institutions could be catalyst of change in this regard. The women continue to suffer from discrimination and conditions were required to be created for their growth as equal partners in the decision making. A beginning has to be made by women themselves for their empowerment and economic emancipation, he said and urged the opinion leaders among women to fan out in their areas and identity public spirited candidates for the elections.

Cautioning against machinations of divisive forces, Dr Farooq Abdullah called for maintaining strict vigil as elements inimical to communal amity and harmony would attempt to create mistrust by generating euphoria over religion being under threat and danger. "There has never been any threat to religions but elements with vested interest always generate fear psychosis to safeguard their own malicious interests", he added.

National Conference President expressed concern over communal posturing of vested interests and said this tendency is in conflict with the spirit of togetherness, accommodation and tranquillity. He said the society will progress only when the people at large maintain their time-tested heritage and isolate those creating wedge for petty political ends. "Time has come when forces inimical to peace and unity are completely isolated", he said and urged the party cadre to work for forging unity and amity between various segments of society.

Dwelling upon challenges confronted to the State, Dr Farooq Abdullah reiterated that nothing is going to change with the present status of Jammu and Kashmir. While this side of the state will continue to remain part of India, the POK will be under Pakistan.

The National Conference President invoked the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee saying that the sanctity of the Line of Control could not be trampled by crossing over during Kargil incursion. He also referred to return of the strategi-

cally crucial Haji Peer, conquered in 1965 and said National Conference had not advocated for this but Indian nation as such took this decision.

Dr Farooq Abdullah also referred to the plight of women in Jammu and Kashmir and said that the present coalition dispensation is depriving women of old age and widow pensions. The prices of essentials and LPG are increasing as a result of which poor were suffering hugely. He criticized the present government for its anti-poor policies and said that jobs have become out of reach for eligible and poor job-seekers. Nepotism and favouritism are ruling the roost, he added.

The National Conference President said that the previous PDP led government and the present dispensation have put development in backburner as a result of which problems of the people were accumulated. He said the government has not been able to optimally harness the resources, especially on hydel power front and the state is suffering as a consequence.

He also questioned the rationale being adopted in release of widow pensions and expressed concern over pendency of 25,000 applications for disposal with the present government.

National Conference General Secretary Ali Mohammed Sagar as also Provincial President Devender Singh Rana and Nasir Aslam Wani addressed the convention.

Speaking on the occasion, former MLA Bimla Luthra listed various problems confronted to women and accused the PDP-BJP government of delaying pensions to eligible women and shrinking the opportunities to progress and prosper.

Luthra recalled the initiatives taken during successive governments under National Conference and said these have been negated by the present dispensation.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included, Satwant Kour Dogra Provincial President Women Wing, Vijay Laxami Dutta Provincial Vice President, Deepender Kour, former legislator, Veena Oberia, Dilshad Malik Provincial Secretary, Anju Grover, Komal Manhas, Sarika Jamwal, Rani, Raj, Bharti, Jyoti, Radha and others.

### DAK

added Dr Naik.

"They have no other source of income as a result of which their families are suffering. Their children have been expelled from the schools due to the nonpayment of fees" Dr Suhail Naik further added.

"Today HDF employees are backbone of health sector and health institutions and we understand their hard work and hardships faced by them. I urge the higher authorities of the health department to immediately release all the pending salaries so that employees have a sigh of relief" said Dr Naik.

Meanwhile DAK president Dr Suhail Naik urged the state government to fulfill the promises of regularization of HDF employees which was also acknowledged by Hon'ble Finance Minister in the recent past. The state government must come with road map with a time frame about regularizing these employees working on HDF. They have been pleading their cases for regularization with the government for the last many years, but the authorities concerned continue to ignore their genuine demands," Dr Naik said

DAK appeals to the government to consider their cases for regularization on pattern of daily wagers and other adhoc appointees of the state.

### RECORDS

that the Super Bazars are emerging as main attraction of the people where they are getting all daily use products including essential commodities under one roof on cheaper rates.

The meeting was informed that the Department has generated turnover of Rs 19.15 crore through its various Cooperative Societies while as the Primary Cooperative Societies run by the Department has earned an amount of Rs 19.62 crores in Kashmir Division so far.

While reviewing the recovery of the loans advanced to Poultry Cooperative Societies (PCS) it was stated in the meeting that under National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) recovery of an amount of Rs 1.35 crore was made while under Integrated Cooperative Development Project (ICDP) an amount of Rs 1.96 crore was recovered by the departmental agencies till date.

It was given out in the meeting that the Cooperative Department is running 19 Medical shops in various hospitals in the Division which remains open round the clock and each and every kind of medicines are being kept available on these shops for the benefits of the people. The meeting was informed that the Medical Shops are providing 5-40 percent rebate on medicines and surgical items to the needy.

While reviewing the election process, it was informed in the meeting that 73 percent process for elections of the Cooperative Societies has been completed while as the election for remaining Cooperatives Societies are going on smoothly

and will be completed during the current month. The election of the Cooperative Societies is required to restore and maintain the democratic character of the Cooperative institutions, the meeting was told.

Secretary directed all the Deputy Registrars to monitor the process personally and asked that where ever there is any problem regarding the matter, same may be taken up with the Registrar Cooperative Societies so that re-notification will be issued accordingly

The meeting was informed that 90 percent audit of the Cooperative Societies have been completed so far.

The Secretary stressed upon the Deputy Registrars to ensure that infrastructure of the department including the land and buildings be protected in such a way that no scrupulous persons should encroach it. He directed them to ensure that all the available land is properly fenced and buildings are renovated. He asked them to prepare detailed project reporters (DPRs) and submit them the administrative department so that the necessary funds are arranged accordingly.

For strengthening of Cooperatives sector in the state, the Secretary directed the Deputy Registrar to prepare the business development plan for the Cooperative Marketing Societies and other Cooperative Societies for diversification of their business so that matter will be taken up with government for release of required funds.

### JUMMU

statements.

Secretary Anjuman-e-Imamia, Prof Shujat Ali Khan spoke on the occasion and said that Rohit Sardana earlier also tweeted such rubbish so as to just appease one community and hurting sentiments of others. "Such reporting only results in bringing communal tension and thereby we request such communal bigots should be banned from media who become the cause of insulting others religious sentiments."

"We request Government of India and Press council of India to ban and take strict action against him, failing which we will be forced to come on road to register our protest.

Chairman Jammu Muslim Front Shujah Zafar while condemning the senseless and irresponsible remarks of fanatic Sardana demanded strict action against him.

### MIRWAIZ

and beliefs and are being subject to ill-treatment as a state policy of inflicting punishment upon them for their dissenting political views.

"The draconian PSA law is invoked against them on flimsy and baseless grounds at the will and whim of the authorities as and when they desire in order to keep them continuously in lockups. They are lodged with criminals and even basic facilities as per the jail manual including medical facilities are denied to them."

Mirwaiz said if those in power are sincere and serious and there really is a change of heart and approach, then all political prisoners should be immediately released from jails and their freedom restored and all draconian laws such as AFSPA PSA etc withdrew forthwith.

Mirwaiz said that youth and teenagers hitting the streets is a reaction that emanates from the lingering Kashmir conflict and until the conflict is addressed and resolved in accordance with universal principles of justice and people's will, hacking at the symptoms and outcomes of the conflict will bear no fruit. It is the root cause that has to be hit at and dealt with in order to change the conditions in J&K so that people of Kashmir especially the youth can be saved and given the opportunity to explore their potential.

Mirwaiz said people and leadership of Kashmir are most eager to play their role in promoting an atmosphere of peace and prosperity and partake of its huge benefits. But such a possibility can only be realized when Govt of India decides to address the Kashmir dispute in its historical background and in keeping with the people's aspirations. It will have a transformative impact on the whole region and tremendous benefits for all.

### THRASHED

and upload them on the website of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) for the issuance of Aadhar cards.

Khalid, who has a problem in one leg, was stated to be grievously injured and sent to government district hospital at Rajouri. Tariq was discharged from a hospital in Nowshera after first aid. However, Raina ruled out the allegations of thrashing the duo at Aadhar Centre.

"An elderly woman Rakia Begum approached me and said that Aadhar Card team is taking hefty amount from them. He was accompanied by other officers of tehsil and sub division administration. I visited the camp to inquire the matter only," said the MLA. Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Shahid Iqbal said that he has asked the SDM Nowshera to submit a report on the incident after media reports.

## Sham Choudhary kick-starts blacktopping on Magowali-Seer Ballah-Canal head road in Suchetgarh Constituency

Says better road connectivity to promote economic activities in area

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24: Saying that better road communication plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of the people of an area, the Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Sham Lal Choudhary said that the Government has formulated a comprehensive plan to provide improved road connectivity to the people of the State especially living in rural and border areas.

The Minister was addressing a well-attended gathering at village Magowali of Suchetgarh Constituency after kick-starting the work of blacktopping on Magowali-Seer Ballah- Canal head road today. The 3.5 kilometres stretch to be blacktopped at a cost of Rs. 50 lakh.

The Minister said that the improved road connectivity enhance accessibility, mobility and promote economic activities, saying that a plan has been framed to provide well-knit road connectivity in the area.



He said that almost roads links of the area have been blacktopped and rest of them to be taken up for blacktopping very soon.

Referring to blacktopping of Canal Head-KotliMaffi road, the Minister

informed that the work on the said road would be taken up soon as the concerned agency has already been directed for preparing the DPRs. He asked the concerned for taking up the construction work on small bridges

and lifting of garbage along the roads so that widening of roads could be taken up easily.

Reviewing the status of pace of blacktopping work on Magowali-Nanowali road, Sham Choudhary directed the concerned for accelerating the pace of work ensuring its timely completion with strictly adhering with the quality and specifications. He also visited Agrachak village and took stock of work on lanes and drains being constructed under BADP by Rural Development Department.

Expressing their gratitude to the Minister for developing Magowali village under Cluster Model village, the people of the village projected some demands which include construction of hall and community bathrooms.

The Minister assured that their genuine demands would be looked into and redressed on priority.

## Andrabi visits Peer Budhan Ali Shah Shrine, Offers Chaadar, Prays for Peace

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24:

Minister of State for Hajj & Auqaf, PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Power, Industries and Commerce, Syed Farooq Ahmad Andrabi on Friday paid obeisance at Zariat Sharief Peer Budhan Ali Shah at Satwari Jammu.

On the occasion, Minister offered a Chaadar (Shawl) at the shrine and attended special prayers which were led by Imam, Hafiz Mohammad Aazim Ali. The Minister prayed for prosperity, development and peace of the Jammu and Kashmir.

Administrator Auqaf Jammu, Wakeel Ahmad Bhat who accompanied the Minister during his tour, briefed the Minister about the achievements registered by the Auqaf Jammu. The Minister asked the concerned for better upkeep of Auqaf properties and assets. He also asked the concerned to ensure cleanliness in and around the premises of the



shrine. During the tour, the Minister met various devotees who came to shrine for offering prayers and enquired from them about the facilities being available at the shrine.

The devotees suggested and projected various issues including opening of ATM facilities at the premises of the shrine. The Minister heard them patiently and said that he will take up the matter of opening of ATM with the concerned quarter on priority.

## Zulfkar for effective e-PDS implementation

Directs for early distribution of ration cards

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24

- Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today reviewed the progress in implementation of electronic Public Distribution System (e-PDS) in the state and directed for taking immediate steps to remove lacunae, if any, in the functioning of the system.

He further called for identifying left over souls that can be included in the PHH category so that no one remains deprived of his right, besides ensuring that only genuine persons are included in the list after conducting proper verification.

While discussing the progress on the execution of Supply Chain Management in the state, the Minister directed the officers to start the work on implementing supply chain management on the portal by December 1, 2017.

It was informed in the meeting that total 6,98,380 ration cards have been distributed among the consumers in Jammu division while as 800 new fair price shops have started functioning in the Valley. The Minister di-



rected the concerned officers to distribute the remaining ration cards by December 5, 2017 and start the process of preparing ration cards for West Pak Refugees.

The Minister also sought information regarding Biometric attendance of the employees especially Stores and Assistant Directors' Office. The Minister called for preparing a module for handling PoS machines and provides training to the fair price shop owners regarding the same.

The Minister directed the concerned to ensure that the variation in the target reports shall be reduced to zero for

both PHH and NPHH category within next 10 days.

Reviewing the status of division wise target of ration cards for Aadhaar seeding, it was informed that total 63,644 beneficiaries have been seeded from Kashmir and 38,197 seeded from Jammu division in the assigned target w.e.f November 7, 2017 to November 23, 2017.

He further asked the officers of FCS&CA to ensure percent Aadhaar seeding of ration cards and their linkage with bank accounts to ensure transparency and accountability in the system.

To strengthen the monitor-

ing system in the department by geo-tagging of its assets through Geographical Information System, the meeting was informed that mapping of 6071 fair price shops have been completed against the target of 6553 and entries of details of the Vigilance Monitoring Committee on the portal is completed for 5219 FPSs out of 6553 till date.

Director, FCS&CA Kashmir, Joint Director, FCS&CA Jammu, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors of Jammu Division besides officers of National Informatics Centre and other departments were present in the meeting.

## Abdul Haq interacts with newly appointed BPMs under SRLM

Asks officials to work with dedication to implement Govt schemes

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 24:

Minister for Rural Development Panchayati Raj, Law and Justice Abdul Haq Khan on Friday interacted with the newly appointed Block Program Managers of JK State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM) and welcomed them in the department.

He was accompanied by Mission Director Bakshi Javid Humayun, Additional Mission Director Kapil Sharma and other senior officials of the department.

While interacting with the BPMs, minister hoped that the young blood will further improve the performance of



the department and will help in reaching out to the population in more professional way so that more people are benefited.

Minister stressed on the officials to reach out to the people and include more and more people in the scheme so that people especially women folk are benefited by provid-

ing them an opportunity to start their own income generating avenues.

Abdul Haq said he will regularly monitor the performance of the BPMs and the officials showing better performance will be rewarded. Minister further stated that promotions will only be made based on performance of the

officers.

He said transparency and accountability are the benchmarks of the present coalition government as there is no space for corrupt practices and persons in the present government. HE said positive change is visible on ground as a result of various historical initiatives taken by the government.

He said various innovative measures taken under the leadership of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti have brought a visible change in governance in the state and everyone has been made accountable in the system.

## No sale of fertilizers in Valley without use of PoS machines: Dir Agriculture

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 24: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Syed Altaf Aijaz Andrabi today convened a meeting of concerned officers here to regulate the supply and sale of different types of fertilizers across the valley.

During the meeting, Director Agriculture laid stressed on strengthening the direct benefit transfer system and to make the proceedings more transpar-

ent and farmer friendly.

The meeting was informed about the present status of supply and demand of different types of fertilizers across Kashmir division. Director Agriculture impressed upon the concerned to strictly follow the instructions of Department of Fertilizers Ministry of Chemicals and fertilizers Government of India for successful implementation of direct ben-

efit transfer in fertilizers. He directed all the Block, Panchayat Level Officers and officers of the enforcement agencies to make sure that all retail fertilizer dealers of Kashmir valley make use of Point of Sale (P.O.S) Machines for sale of fertilizers and no sale is made without P.O.S machines. He said that there are clear cut instructions from Ministry of Fertilizers Government of India.

## Div Com reviews progress of WB funded projects

Asks DDCs to issue necessary clearances by next month

SRINAGAR NOVEMBER 24: Divisional Commissioner Baseer Ahmad Khan today directed the Deputy Commissioners of Kashmir Division to issue all required certificates and NOCs for every World Bank funded projects by December 02, so that the work on them is expedited.

The Div Com was speaking at a meeting held to discuss the progress on these projects under various sectors. The meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officer Jhelum and Tawi Flood Recovery Project, DSEK, Chief Engineer R&B, DDC Srinagar and other officers. DDC's of Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Budgam, Baramulla and Bandipora partici-



pated via video conferencing.

The Divisional Commissioner was informed that under education sector 53 schools are being built under the programme. The Div Comm asked for the progress on every school from all DDC's and directed them to give the revenue details and non-incumbance certificate to concerned officials

of R&B by next week. He said that if there is any big issue with some school, the DSEK and respective DDC should immediately choose some other school for development.

The Div Comm also reviewed the progress on various more than a dozen roads and bridges being constructed or upgraded under the pro-

gramme in different districts. He was informed of some issues encountering road projects in Anantnag to which he directed the DDC to prepare a sectionalise report for the road length and wherever acquisition is required government will help. He directed every DDC to issue necessary clearance certificates by December 02.

The Div Com said that more than 200 WB funded projects are underway in Kashmir and these projects once completed will change greatly help in education, communication and providing of basic amenities. He called on the officials to expedite the process for completion of these projects so that people are benefited at the earliest.

## Kifayat Rizvi reviews functioning of Labour Department



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 24: Commissioner Secretary, Labour & Employment Department, Kifayat Hussain Rizvi convened a meeting to review the functioning of the Department here today.

Director Employment, Joint Director Employment, CEO Building and other Construction Workers Welfare Board, All Assistant Director Employment, All Assistant Labour Commissioners of Kashmir Division were present at the meeting.

During the review meeting, Commissioner Secretary was briefed about the activities of the Department and apprised about the implementation of various Labour laws in the State.

It was given out that the safety and the interests of laborers and working class be ensured. The concerned were directed that besides payment of wages, the pending cases pertaining to laborers should be disposed of immediately.

The Commissioner Secretary stressed upon the officers to maintain proper registrations and never refuse applications. They were also asked to maintain note sheets, adding that the good work will be appreciated while more

needs to be done in this sector.

He asked them to undertake immediate measures to educate the working class about various schemes, which are being implemented for their welfare.

Stressing on the need to create awareness among labourers about their rights, Rizvi said Department is committed to create an enlightened and disciplined workforce and bringing about desirable behavioural changes in the workforce in the organized and un-organized sectors.

He further stressed that every effort has to be made that labourer's registration under different schemes is hassle-free, and in this regard, directed officers to establish a worker-friendly mechanism in their offices which will eliminate delay and undue problems being faced by the beneficiaries.

Rizvi asked the attendees and other officers to ensure that employers take all safety measures for workers and labourers at the working places. Rizvi called upon officials to facilitate early disposal of long-pending cases so as to serve the cause of justice and bring relief to those affected by the delay in disposal of such cases.

## DC Srinagar takes stock of restoration work at Khanqah-e-Maula shrine

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 24: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Friday visited the Khanqah-i-Moula shrine of Hazrat Amir-e-Kabir Shah-e-Hamadan (RA) to take stock of restoration work taken up in the wake of November 15 fire incident there.

The DC was informed that the main restoration work at the shrine will be started on December 5, after the setting up of scaffolding - which is

currently underway - has been completed.

The installation of scaffolding for access to the top of the shrine has been envisaged in order to ensure there is no hindrance in prayers at the shrine as well as in consideration of safety concerns for devotees.

It was reiterated that the restoration work will be completed within 60 days. While reiterating the great

reverence of the Sufi saint and his shrine, Dr. Shah impressed upon the concerned officers to remember that it is a matter of pride to be involved in the restoration work of the shrine.

The DC called for time-bound completion of the work, instructing that there be no time-overstretch therein at all. Dr. Shah also called for closest coordination between JKPC and INTACH

to ensure there is maximum possible adherence to the original design of the part of shrine damaged in the fire.

He also stressed on ensuring total structural stability of the shrine and exhorted upon the concerned to take personal interests in its restoration.

Dr. Shah also called for ensuring high standards of ethics by workers involved in the restoration work at the

revered shrine.

On the occasion, the DC also visited the surrounding areas of the shrine to get a first-hand assessment of the proposed expansion of the shrine. He asked for details of status of acquisition process for the expansion.

Dr. Shah said the acquisition shall be taken up in earnest and that the affected will be rehabilitated appropriately.

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## POLITICS AND PADMAVATI

Given the violence and the threats, it is perhaps not surprising that the producers of Padmavati have decided to 'voluntarily' defer its release. But irrespective of how this changed timetable plays out, the conduct of politicians over the past few days has been cynical and deeply unmindful of the rule of law. In February 1989, days after Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran had issued a fatwa against him for his novel *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie published an open letter to Rajiv Gandhi, then Prime Minister. He reminded the Prime Minister that his book had already been banned in India in October 1988, under the Customs Act, and that while issuing the curbs on its import the Finance Ministry clarified that the "ban did not detract from the literary and artistic merit of Rushdie's work". "Thanks for the good review," wrote Rushdie, adding that it appeared "as if your Government has become unable or unwilling to resist pressure from more or less any extremist religious grouping". It is worth recalling that letter, as it provides a benchmark to map the race to the bottom in the current row over Padmavati. Today, as a number of Chief Ministers across north India rail against the film and threaten to disallow its screening without requisite cuts, there is no longer even that perfunctory clarification that their action has nothing to do with the artistic merit of the film. And it is no longer the case that the governments are unwilling to resist pressure from extremist groups such as the Karni Sena. Chief Ministers now are actually rallying opinion against the film to whip up caste and religious anxieties.

Yogi Adityanath of Uttar Pradesh has forged an absurd equivalence between "those giving death threats" and Sanjay Leela Bhansali, the film's director, for "hurting public sentiments". Vijay Rupani in Gujarat has taken a cue from Shivraj Singh Chouhan in Madhya Pradesh and called for a ban. This is in complete disregard of the Supreme Court judgment in *S. Rangarajan v. P. Jagjivan Ram* that the state cannot cite concerns about a "hostile audience" in curbing freedom of expression. V. Sundhara Raje of Rajasthan, in fact, has argued that the "censor board" must go beyond just certifying a film, and should be mindful of the possible results after its release. And Amarinder Singh in Punjab has said he opposes a ban but "cinematic licence" cannot extend to twisting "historical facts". The fact that these open appeals against cinematic expression are going mostly unchallenged across the political spectrum carries dark forebodings. The issue here is no longer Padmavati, its artistic merit or the factuality or otherwise of multiple retellings of the narrative. What is of real concern is the spectacle of state functionaries ignoring their constitutional responsibility in upholding free expression, and placing themselves alongside those out to intimidate, and release sectarian furies.

# The new bipolarity in Asia

The dichotomy in the rule-based global order is becoming increasingly evident with the passage of time. U.S. President Donald Trump, for instance, makes no secret of the fact that he believes in a world governed by self-interest, with little room for shared responsibility, or lofty ideas about the spread of democracy. In contrast, Chinese President Xi Jinping is taking the high road, disdaining the transactional approach favoured by the U.S. President. Instead, he is projecting himself as a firm believer in globalisation and free trade. Today, the former confronts major opposition to his policies within the U.S. The latter's grip on China is, if anything, stronger than before.

It is against this backdrop that there are signs of a new bipolarity taking shape in Asia. It appears freshly sculpted, given the steady rise and rise of China in Asia. It possibly seeks to replace similar attempts by the U.S. previously — such as the pivot to Asia — to counter China and its aggressive designs in the region. Implicitly, though not as yet explicitly, it seeks to create a coalition of all those willing to align with the U.S. against China's expanding ambitions and its inexorable march towards dominance in Asia.

An important shift in recent weeks, there has been some activity suggestive of action being taken to achieve this objective. For instance, a reluctant India is being gradually inveigled into a newly minted design of what many perceive as an anti-China coalition, though none of them are willing to project it as such. Talks held recently at the level of officials between the U.S., Japan, Australia and India (the Quadrilateral) are seen as an indication of this. It marks an important shift in India's attitude, and could be a prologue to what is in store. As China's expansionist attitudes intensify, more countries in East and Southeast Asia are expected to align with the Quadrilateral group of countries. Vietnam could be one such country, but quite a few other countries in the region could follow suit.

The recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meetings provided a further glimpse of attitudinal changes that are in the making. Mr. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi made use of this occasion to announce that the two countries were prepared to work together for the future of Asia — an euphemism for what many see as keeping a check on China's aggressive designs in the region. It is, perhaps, for the first time that India has indicated a resolve to align openly with the U.S. to tackle broader issues in the Indo-Pacific region. Its implications go much further than mere deepening of the strategic partnership between the two countries or enhancing their coop-



eration as major defence partners. The reference that "two of the world's great democracies should also have the world's greatest militaries" is capable of being interpreted in several ways, including that it is aimed at China. What it does signify, unambiguously, is a quantum leap in their special relationship, with both sides committed to deepening their engagement in several directions.

Mr. Modi demonstrated a willingness on this occasion to go still further, asserting that India will stand by ASEAN in its quest for a rules-based regional security architecture. This can again be interpreted as implicit criticism of China's attitude and stance with regard to disputes in the South China Sea.

Picking up the gauntlet

If China was the target of the U.S., India and other like-minded countries of Asia, the recent 19th Chinese Communist Party Congress signified that China is more than willing to accept the challenge. The Party Congress placed special emphasis on a strong military "capable of winning wars". The deliberations left little room for any adjustment or compromise to accommodate the concerns of other countries of Asia, or for that matter the U.S. If anything, the deliberations of the Party Congress have further emboldened China to pursue its preferred course of action.

Several aspects of the Party Congress deserve to be carefully considered in this context. The Congress reinforced Mr. Xi's status as the paramount leader, who in turn made no secret of China's ambitions to restore its global leadership and dominate the region.

In his long opening address, he described China as a great power at least 25 times. Every initiative pronounced was attuned to China's global ambitions.

The Party Congress, and Mr. Xi in particular, adopted a hard line on many of the issues that have been bones of contention with countries in the region and beyond. A major preoccupation of the Party Congress was to build global combat capabilities to safeguard China's overseas interests. It mentioned that the Chinese Military had been reorganised and that more changes were promised in the next five years aiming to make China's military "world class" in every way.

The message emanating from the Party Congress is loud and clear. China is in no mood to compromise, and any attempt to contain or check China would be effectively met. The reality also is that apart from its massive military build-up, China is positioned most advantageously as far as economic aspects are concerned. It is today the most important trading partner for over 90 countries. It is a major lender across the world. Its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has caught the imagination of the world, including that of Europe. While the economic benefits of the BRI are still in dispute, most countries of Asia and Europe, including many of India's neighbours, do not seem to have a problem with the BRI.

Too many imponderables

Sustaining bipolarity and having one set of Asian nations ranged against China is, however, not going to be easy in the prevail-

ing circumstances. There exist far too many imponderables at present. Latent concerns about Chinese expansionism have not prevented several Asian nations from endorsing and backing the BRI. Most Asian nations also show no inclination or desire to blame China for siding with Pakistan, which continues to shelter high-ranking global terrorists, including Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar. China, for its part, has embarked on a charm offensive to win the support of Asian nations through lavish aid offers and other financial inducements. Even Mr. Trump, during his recent visit to China, seemed to have softened his criticism of China, after China produced some attractive mega deals. All this only exposes the vulnerabilities of bipolarity in the extant situation today.

In Asia, India, Japan and, to an extent, Vietnam appear willing to endorse the U.S. initiative to build up opposition to China's designs. India has become increasingly vocal in this regard. It has lately taken up issues well beyond South Asia, such as North Korea and China's actions in the South China Sea. This was again manifest during the recent ASEAN deliberations. Currently, India is emerging as one of the countries in the region firmly committed to freedom of navigation and over-flight, and for unimpeded commerce based on the principles of international law, particularly the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. This puts it in direct confrontation with China, as also in opposing China's ambitions in the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific.

The Quadrilateral idea, which has since begun to take shape with India's implicit acceptance of the concept, is likely to further irritate China. China has consistently opposed the idea viewing it as an example of anti-China consolidation. For the present, China has been circumspect in its opposition to the move, limiting itself to questioning its rationale and whether it is directed at a third party with the potential to disturb regional peace and stability. This may not, however, last for much longer.

As the outlines of a new bipolarity in Asia become clearer, and with the formal setting up of the Quadrilateral, China is certain to regard all this as an attempt to encircle it. This will pave the way for a new round of turmoil. China is almost certain to take effective steps to break this so-called encirclement, and use both force and inducements to win more and more Asian countries to its side. The consequences of this could be quite significant for peace and stability in the Asian region.

**M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Advisor and a former Governor of West Bengal**

# Reaching out to neighbours

► Syed Munir Khasru

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is among the world's largest regional intergovernmental organisations. Since its inception, the countries in the region have become more integrated through enhanced intra-regional trade and connectivity. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), geographically proximate to ASEAN, started its journey in 1985 with similar aspirations but over time has failed to deliver. It has been unable to integrate the region through trade and connectivity and continues to be stuck in the quagmire of regional politics and rivalry and stagnates from historical distrust and old animosity.

Study in contrasts

In its first two decades, ASEAN focussed on a limited range of issues, but over time its mandate expanded and now includes climate change, disaster management, counterterrorism, drugs and human trafficking. ASEAN's greatest success has been its ability to deftly resolve disputes. In the early years, for instance, its unity was challenged by the Philippines-

Malaysia dispute over Sabah, but the founding members found a peaceful mechanism to mitigate opposing claims. In the case of SAARC, political squabbles, deep mistrust and military conflict between India and Pakistan have frustrated regional cooperation. The whole region is suffering from lost potential due to India-Pakistan hostility which hit a new low when India boycotted the 19th SAARC summit as a result of the Uri terrorist attack, with Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Bhutan following suit, eventually resulting in cancellation of the summit.

Trade in ASEAN has grown rapidly and it has focussed on promoting rapid economic growth and modernisation. It has created the Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA), which ensures liberalisation and protection of cross-border investments operations, together with best practices for the treatment of foreign investors and investments. On the other hand, trade amongst the SAARC members stands at 3.5% of their total volume of trade. Initiatives under the South Asian Free Trade Association have failed to make much headway. Subregional initiatives like the Bangladesh-



Bhutan-India-Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement also have stalled.

The Federation of ASEAN Travel Associations (FATA) has called on the ASEAN nations to waive entry requirements amongst

the member states. A feasibility study has been conducted on the development of a rail link from Singapore to Kunming in southern China to enhance seamless connectivity amongst the ASEAN nations

to boost intraregional trade and people-to-people connectivity. Projects aimed at promoting the region as a tourist destination have also been undertaken. On the other hand, the SAARC Visa Ex-

emption Scheme only allows certain categories of dignitaries to be exempt from visas, excluding ordinary citizens from accessing unimpeded travel in the region. It is difficult for Indians to enter Pakistan and vice versa. Even citizens of other SAARC countries who have visited either India or Pakistan before and now wish to travel to the other face hassles during visa issuance by either country. And SAARC infrastructural problems plague connectivity.

Sub-regional short-cuts

As the biggest country of SAARC, India is trying to exert leadership by forming subregional initiatives like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Another objective is to isolate Pakistan. Such attempts to forge sub-regional ties at the cost of jeopardising the regional vision for unity have not been witnessed in ASEAN. When ASEAN was criticised for taking in Myanmar in spite of its military rule, the grouping emphasised the importance of keeping open the channels of communication and engagement as a better means to influence the regime. Bilateral

bickering never got in the way of trade and travel.

On the political and economic continuum, ASEAN has behaved pragmatically and sensibly whereas South Asia has been bogged down by bilateral animosity and the bitter legacy of partition. ASEAN members have avoided showing outward hostility against each other and have tried to resolve differences through dialogue, engagement and cooperation. Politicians in SAARC have mostly catered to their domestic constituents without having any broad regional vision, so that it takes years to sign agreements and even more time to implement them. As a regional organisation, while ASEAN has grown from strength to strength. Unless there is a serious and concerted effort by the political leadership of SAARC, led primarily by India and Pakistan, to revitalise the regional body, it will continue to be what it always has been: a utopian idea existing only in summit documents.

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# Work on Bundelkhand Expressway to start from next year: Adityanath

JHANSI: The construction of the Bundelkhand Expressway will start from next year, said Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday. Addressing an election rally here, Adityanath said, "We will connect Bundelkhand with Expressway from Agra to Jhansi, Jhansi to Chitrakoot and Chitrakoot to Allahabad. The survey has been started. Once the survey report is ready, we will make a detailed project report and from next year, the work will be started." Last month, Adityanath had announced a six-lane Bundelkhand Expressway between Delhi and Jhansi and its linking to the Agra-Lucknow Expressway.



Adityanath also said that when he became the chief minister, then Prime Minister Narendra Modi had advised him to take special care of Bundelkhand. After becoming the chief minister, first I had come to Jhansi. The farmers don't have water for farming and

people don't have pure drinking water. Our government has come here with a solution to these problems," Adityanath said. He added that many projects were delayed in this region. "Around eight projects were left

incomplete because of Rs 120 crore. I immediately sanctioned the funds and directed the officials to complete within a time-bound period. We have to stop migration from Bundelkhand by providing jobs to the youth," the chief minister added.

Talking about the local body elections in the state, Adityanath said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wanted to take out local body areas out of hell-like conditions and blamed the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Congress for depriving the local body areas of basic amenities.

"The BSP and the SP for 15 years and the Congress for 10 years made the life of 4.5 crore people living in the state's local body areas like hell. But, the BJP is fighting these elections with an aim of service," Adityanath said.

He said the local body areas should have basic amenities, better roads, streetlights, sanitation, and door to door garbage collection facility. Uttar Pradesh's 652 urban local bodies are going for elections. The first phase was held on Wednesday. Polling for the second phase is on November 24 and third phase on November 29.

# Tibet does not want independence from China: Dalai Lama

KOLKATA: Tibet is not seeking independence from China, but only asking that country to ensure that it also benefits from development-related initiatives, said Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, here on Thursday.



Speaking at an event organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce - Indian Chamber of Commerce here, the Dalai Lama said, "We are not seeking independence... We want to stay with China.

We want more development. Tibet has a different culture and a different script... The Chinese people love their own country. We love our own country."

"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 (also) for billions of people," the Dalai Lama said.

India also came in for praise from the Tibetan spiritual leader.

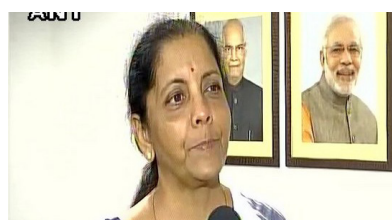
India he said is a country where the spirit of religious tolerance is alive and respected. But he also admitted that the country also has its share of problems because of political manipulation.

He also said that the average Indian is more lazy than the average Chinese.

"I think Indian people are lazy but that may be due to the climate. But India is more stable and can play a role in the world stage," he added. "India has a tradition of living together. (It is) a living example of different traditions being carried together," he said, adding, "I can proudly state the same about Tibetan culture."

"India is rich in traditional teachings. These, rather than just religion, can help bring people together. If modern India can combine new age education with lessons on inner values in a secular way, then the country can head in the right direction. Modern education is a bit too materialistic," he said.

# Rahul only asks questions, does not answer any: Sitharaman



AHMEDABAD: Union Minister Nirma Sitharaman on Friday slammed Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi saying that he was an expert in raising questions and not in answering any.

Addressing the media here, Sitharaman further said that the Congress failed to form

an image of responsible Opposition. "He is only good at raising question but never answers any. The Opposition is equally responsible to answer all the questions as the Centre. I think they have not understood the meaning of democracy in true sense," she said. She further hits out at the Congress scion saying he only reads out script during his speech. "He was asked certain questions by BJP President Amit Shah and Chief Minister Vijay Rupani Ji few days ago about Gujarat but he has not answered so far. It seems like he only reads the script written by his scriptwriter and does not even listen to questions," she added.

# Padmavati row: Victim's brother demands probe

AHMEDABAD: The brother of the victim, who was found dead at Nahargarh Fort in Jaipur, on Friday demanded an investigation into his death and alleged it to be a case of murder.

Earlier in the day, Saini's brother's body was found hanging on the ramparts of Jaipur's Nahargarh Fort with a threat note engraved on the rocks in protest of the movie 'Padmavati'.

"My brother cannot commit suicide. It appears to be a murder. We will demand an investigation into the death. He has nothing to do with it (threat note written on rocks)," Ram Ratan Saini said. It was initially speculated to be



a suicide case, but when the police reached the spot they found a message written on the rocks stating - "We not burn effigies only, in protest of Padmavati". The Sanjay Leela Bhansali directed epic drama has been in the eye of the storm following protests from conservative groups over alleged tampering with historical facts. 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 on December 1, was deferred as the filmmakers were yet to procure a censor certificate.

# SC seeks Bimal Gurung's reply on Bengal govt's plea

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday asked former Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) president Bimal Gurung to reply on the appeal made by the West Bengal government against his protection from arrest within four days.

The court's direction has come after the Mamata Banerjee-led West Bengal government approached the top court against protection from arrest to Gurung. The apex court sought Gurung's re-



reply by Tuesday. Earlier on November 20, the gen-

eral committee of the GJM suspended Binay Tamang as the new party president. The absconding former GJM president has been out of public sight since June. Cases have been filed against him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with a grenade attack at the Kalimpong Police Station and a blast in Darjeeling's Chowk Bazaar area.

# Three arrested for attacking nurse in Kerala

MALAPPURAM: Three men were arrested on Friday for allegedly attacking a public health nurse in Kerala's Malappuram.

The nurse, Shyamala B, was roughed up and her arm was twisted by the accused during a vaccination drive at the GLP school in Edavoor.



The police said the attackers were local residents of rural Malappuram. The vaccination drive is being held across Kerala to vaccinate children upto the age of 15 years against Measles and Rubella. Some groups in Malappuram, traditionally, have been resistant to vaccinations.

# Sumitra Mahajan inaugurates centenary celebrations of Ladakh Buddhist saint Kushok Bakula

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan inaugurated the centenary celebrations of the 19th Kushok Bakula, Lobzang Thupten Chognor at Mavlankar Hall, Constitution Club in New Delhi on November 23. Suresh Soni, General Secretary of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), was the chief guest at the function. Acclaimed as a statesman and diplomat, and popularly known as the architect of modern Ladakh, Kushok Bakula was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1988. He has been recognised by the 13th Dalai Lama as a direct disciple of Gautam Buddha.



While paying tributes to Kushok Bakula as a great parliamentarian and for his contributions in all fields of life, Sumitra Mahajan reflected that good persons need to be introduced to the people.

Elaborating on the commitment of Kushok Bakula towards the nation, she remembered that when he visited Lhasa (Tibet) as representative of the Government of India, he reported back to then Prime Minister Jawahar

Nehru about the dangerous situation emerging vis-a-vis Chinese activities. His observations later turned out to be true. The Lok Sabha Speaker congratulated the organisers of the centenary celebrations for embarking on such a mission.

Speaking on the occasion, Suresh Soni said Kushok Bakula was a great personality, but few people know about him. "Great personalities should not be seen in the context of their place of birth. They belong to the entire nation and should be recognised as such. He was a Buddhist monk. Monks are peace-loving ascetics. But when Pakistan tried to invade the territory of Ladakh, he took it

upon himself to motivate the youth to repulse the invasion."

Kushok Bakula was a member of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, which also functioned as the first State Assembly under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah. However, he never shied away from raising his voice for the rights of the people of Ladakh, even at the cost of angering Sheikh Abdullah. Later, he went to become Member Parliament (MP) and retained his seat for 10 years.

Kushok Bakula was later appointed as Ambassador to Mongolia. He stayed in Mongolia for almost a decade. He became so involved with the people there that even today the people

of Mongolia remember him for his immense contributions.

Dr. Manmohan Singh called him the "Architect of modern Ladakh" when he named Leh airport as the Kushok Bakula Airport

The Kushok Bakula centenary celebrations are proposed to be organised across India for a year jointly by Jammu Kashmir Study Centre (JKSC) and Himalayan Sanskriti Sanrakshan Sabha. Shashank, a career diplomat of the Indian Foreign Service who retired as Foreign Secretary will preside over the organising committee of the centenary celebrations. JKSC is an independent think-tank dedicated to research and policy relevant studies on all aspects relating to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

It has been the endeavor of JKSC to bring to the fore the rich cultural diversity of all regions of Jammu and Kashmir state. JKSC director Ashutosh Bhatnagar said Kushok Bakula's contributions to the nation were so great that the people deserve to know about him.

# Will take back 'two leaves' symbol: Dinakaran

TIRUPPUR: Sidelined All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) leader TTV Dinakaran on Friday said he would take back the 'two leaves' symbol of the party which was allotted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to the faction of the party led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister E Palanisamy and his deputy, O Panneerselvam (EPS-OPS faction).



While addressing party workers here, Dinakaran said, "I will win in RK Nagar by-election and take back 'two leaves' symbol."

In an 83-page order, the election watchdog had ruled that the EPS-OPS faction would be entitled to use the name of the party and its reserved symbol, holding that it enjoyed majority in the party's legislative and organisational wings.

The other faction led by Dinakaran had also laid claim over the symbol after a power tussle ensued in the party following the death of Jayalalithaa.

Dinakaran is also facing court case in the two leaves symbol bribery case.

The Delhi Court on Thursday pulled up the police once again for not filing supplementary chargesheet Dinakaran in the two leaves bribery case, who was granted bail on

June 1 after being arrested on April 25. According to police, arrested middleman Suresh Chandrashekar had tried to bribe Election Commission officials to get nod for using two leaves election symbol for Sasi-kala's faction of the AIADMK.

Meanwhile, the EC on Friday fixed December 21 as the polling date for the RK Nagar by-elections. The seat of RK Nagar fell vacant following the death of former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa in December 2016, who represented it for two terms.

The election was earlier scheduled for April 12, but was cancelled following allegations that sums of money were distributed in a vote-for-cash scam.

# UP civic body polls: BJP wants EC to verify identities of women in burqas

LUCKNOW: The Bharatiya Janata Party wants the Election Commission to deploy women cops to verify the identities of voters in a burqa during the remaining rounds of the urban civic elections in Uttar Pradesh, triggering criticism that the party was targeting Muslims. The ruling party's representa-

tive approached the UP unit of the poll watchdog demanding special deployment of police-women who would lift the veils if the party's members raised suspicion. The burqa is worn by women as a tradition in Islam, and the Election Commission -- in a manual released in 2016 -- defines ways in which its staff

can verify them while "having due regard to privacy, dignity and decency". The report makes no mention of police staff to be a part of the process.

The request comes two days after state police were seen in a viral video making a Muslim woman take off her burqa during a rally by chief minister Yogi

Adityanath. While the BJP has said the request was aimed at checking fake voting, opposition parties see a communal motive.

"BJP is jittery of its prospects and we have sent a letter to the chief election officer about how they are violating the code of conduct. They only think

of divisive politics and issues," said Rajendra Chaudhary, national secretary of Samajwadi Party.

The Congress too targeted the BJP. "It's an unusual demand that we suspect has been made to make the party's voters happy. If the demand is accepted then it would mean that po-

lice would force women to remove their veil when the same could be easily done by women deployed by the election commission. This is sheer insult of women in general and minority women in particular," Congress leader Hilal Naqvi said.

The saffron party, however, has said that not all woman

would be checked. "Such verification could be required in cases where our cadres suspect foul play and that is why women cops would be required at polling booths," the BJP delegation told the commission. Uttar Pradesh is voting in three rounds to elect new representatives to urban local bodies.

# World's largest sex survey: 2,00,000 Danes to share their fantasies, desires and more

It's the world's largest sex survey: More than 2,00,000 respondents from Denmark giving a peek into their sexual habits, needs, fantasies, gender preferences and much more. The study, titled Project SEXUS, aims to establish a relationship between sexual happiness and healthy living. "We're launching this massive machinery with a great deal of enthusiasm but also a great deal of humility. We're asking the public to answer some very personal questions, which they may not normally speak to other

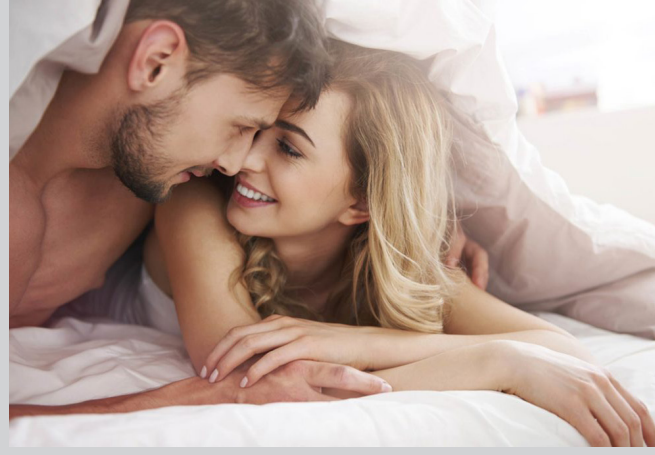
people about," project leader Morten Frisch, a doctor in the Department for Epidemiology Research at Statens Serum Institute, Denmark, was quoted as saying in Science Nordic.

"We're naturally excited because such an investigation has never been made in such detail before," he added.

The respondents will be asked a range of questions, including their gender preferences, frequency, likes and dislikes, fantasies and much more. The participants are aged from 15-89

years, and the questionnaire contains 150-190 questions.

However, there is more to the study than just sex. A lot of the questions deal with interaction with other people, how much they smoke and drink (or whether they don't), their family history, previous record of health problems and what they feel about their own bodies. The objective of the survey is to find out the various ways in which sex impacts our lives, and how it also influences our well being. The survey aims to find answers to questions like:



Does having more sex make us healthier? When both partners have an equal desire for sex, is that better for the relationship?

If we have an active sex life or a loving partner who we can share our feelings with is it easier for us to recover from illnesses? "We know a lot about how illness or an unhealthy lifestyle negatively influences our sex lives. But I'm most interested in looking more closely at the possible positive effects of a good sex life," said Professor Christian Graugaard, a lead-

scientist on Project SEXUS from the Sexology Research Centre at Aalborg University, while talking to Science Nordic.

Norwegian archivists have found hidden treasures in medieval accounting records, including a slightly different version of the saga of Olav the Holy.

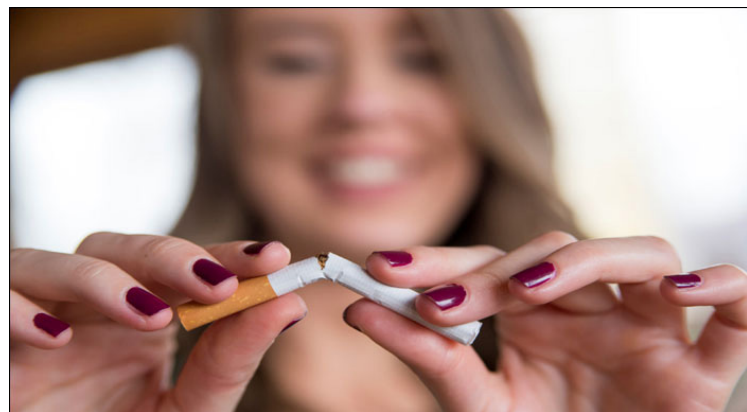
"For example, other scientists have suggested that men have a lower risk of prostate cancer when they ejaculate more frequently, but is there any truth to this? The study will be able to cast new light on issues such as this," he added.

## US tobacco firms to publish anti-smoking ads in dailies

Major American cigarette manufacturers will begin publishing anti-smoking ads in 50 dailies to correct the misleading statements they made over the years about the effects of smoking, a move that complies with a court order filed in 2006.

On Wednesday, the Department of Justice announced in a statement that the ads will fill the US media starting from November 30 and into the next year, reports Efe news.

On November 30, 50 of the major US newspapers, including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times and The Washington Post will begin to publish full-page ads that should "clarify" to the public what the true effects of tobacco are, according to the department. In addition, from the beginning of next week, TV channels



across the country will start running those ads for a year. The ads will include some of these phrases: "smoking kills, on average, 1,200 Americans every day", "smoking is highly addictive, nicotine is the addictive drug in to-

bacco" and "cigarette companies intentionally designed cigarettes with enough nicotine to create and sustain addiction". The legal case dates back to 1999, when former President Bill Clinton's administration (1993-2001)

accused tobacco companies of deceiving the public about the risks of smoking and promoting cigarettes with cartoon ads to attract teenagers.

The accusations were based on a special law called the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organisations Act (RICO), initially promulgated to combat organised crime groups like the mafia. As part of that process, in 2006, the District of Columbia Court ordered the companies Altria, its affiliate Philip Morris USA and R.J. Reynolds Tobacco to place advertisements in the US media to "correct" the misperception the public had for years about tobacco. The 2006 court order is set to be enforced from November 30, more than 10 years late, due to a large amount of counter-complaints filed by US tobacco companies.

## Stock up home with basic healthcare devices

There are certain healthcare devices that are important to keep within your reach at home. Always keep a thermometer, weighing scale and a blood pressure monitor, say experts.

Vineet Sikka, Advisor to concierge of medical services Credihealth and Sunil Gupta, Founder at ExportersIndia, have listed the important devices which are a must-have:

**Thermometer:** This device determines your body temperature and enables you to take necessary precautions if the temperature is higher than usual, because that usually indicates some kind of illness. Be it a digital or a mercury thermometer, make sure you keep one at home and check your body temperature before you step out to visit a doctor.

**Weighing scale:** Whether you are following a diet or not, having a weighing machine at home can help you develop an awareness of your weight gain or loss.

While weight gain can be linked to health problems like high blood pressure and diabetes, unexplained weight loss can be a sign of a serious health hazard. Therefore, buy a weighing machine to monitor your weight at regular intervals and stay healthy and fit.

**Air purifier:** These purifiers are used to remove contaminants from the air in the room. Commonly marketed as being beneficial to allergy sufferers and asthmatics, these devices help in reducing or eliminating second-hand tobacco smoke.

**Blood pressure monitor:** The best way to keep a check on your blood pressure levels without having to visit a doctor everyday is to buy a blood pressure measuring device. This is useful for all those who have been prescribed medication to lower their blood pressure.



Keep a record of these measurements and inform your doctor about the blood pressure changes observed over a period of time. The blood pressure monitoring device is convenient to use and will help you to understand whether the medication is effective or not.

**Orthopedic heat belt:** If you are looking for an easy and quick remedy from back pain/muscle pain/pain from a sprain or spasm, an orthopedic heat belt is the handiest solution.

The temperature of the electric belt can be adjusted as per your requirements. This can give you relief from pain within minutes. The heat belt is light and flexible and above all safe as it comes with thermostats.

**Blood glucose meter:** People with diabetes are required to actively and regularly monitor their glucose levels. The easiest way to keep a check on blood glucose levels is to buy a blood glucose meter that gives instant results.

The device makes it easier to handle test strips and does not require of you to visit the doctor every other day.

The glucose meter can come handy for successful diabetes management and let you know how well the medication regime is working.

## How Preeti Jhangiani lost post-pregnancy weight

Preeti Jhangiani is delighted after having won the best actress award for her performance in Taawdo The Sunlight, a film that centres around the caste system in Rajasthan, at the recently concluded Rajasthan International Film Festival. Jhangiani made her mark when she debuted in the Rajshri music album Yeh Hai Prem, and then went on to wow audiences in Yash Chopra's Mohabbatein.

Two kids later, she went up to a 36-inch-waist jeans size, from her earlier 24. But that's changed now, with her new diet and fitness regimen. "I was always at the right weight, except that my cheeks were well rounded," she laughs, as we settle down to chat at her Bandra residence over cups of adrak chai (with almond milk). "There was a time when I actually had to join the gymnasium to put on some weight. Then I had Jaiveer and Dev, (now 6 1/2 and 2, respectively), and put on colossal amounts of weight during both my pregnancies, gaining 24 kg. Add to that the ageing process and the hormonal shift," says the 37-year-old.

"One day, Parvin (her husband) and I watched this documentary on Netflix, called What the Health, that dwelt on the inside functioning of the meat industry. It changed my way of thinking." She turned vegan overnight and that was the turning point.

More significant than the weight loss, it is the inch loss and much improved stamina levels she speaks about. "Now I happily slip into size 26," she shares, realising that her body has changed. It has been a tough ride though.

"I used to ridicule vegetarians, loved my Sindhi kadi, tuk, mutton. From being an absolute foodie, I have brought in a stoic approach to food. To start with, I never plan what I will eat for my next meal. Instructing the cook beforehand about the menu is half the problem, I believe.

So if nothing is made, I rustle up a salad," she says. She loves avocado, and that fills her up, so she'll put it into the many-hued food.

"I started working out in earnest about eight months ago. For two months, I went completely vegan. It was challenging, undoubtedly, but I feel it resulted in bettering everything: from my dietary habits to my hair to my weight.

So almond and soya milk have replaced cow milk, I have given up roti, bread and rice, and banned sugar. Though on a cheat moment, I do indulge in a piece of dark chocolate," she confesses. At 58 kg now (she's 5'6"), she can afford to.

"Honestly, I have tried everything. From the three-day doodhi juice diet plan to only juices every day to black coffee on an empty stomach in the morning to burn fat," says Jhangiani. But she realised she had to get in her nutrients and the diet had to be sustainable, so she went back to eating some non-vegetarian food. A judicious mix was planned in conjunction with her dietician (see box). She eats only home-cooked food.

Busy with their company Swen Entertainment, Jhangiani and her husband are out at events often. "I eat before leaving the house and indulge judiciously in non-fried snacks when I am out," she says.

## Gastric acid drug lansoprazole may also treat tuberculosis

Are you in the habit of consuming lansoprazole, a cheap and easily available gastric acid suppressant to cure heartburn, gastritis conditions and ulcers? Take heart, as such drugs can also keep you away from developing bacterial infections, especially tuberculosis.

People who use lansoprazole to prevent conditions of acidity in the stomach are a third less likely to develop tuberculosis, a new study found.

The study, published in the journal PLOS Medicine, stated that lansoprazole and similar drugs omeprazole or pantoprazole could work against the

bacteria that causes tuberculosis, said to be one among the top ten infectious diseases that can even lead to death in severe cases. "It would be a major breakthrough to find a new drug with useful activity against Mycobacterium tuberculosis and a favourable side effect profile -- particularly a drug like lansoprazole, which costs pennies," said Tom Yates, researcher at the University College London. "Laboratory, animal and now epidemiological data are all consistent with lansoprazole acting against the bacteria that cause tuberculosis. While it is too early to say

whether lansoprazole can be used to treat tuberculosis, we think there is a strong case for further study." The researchers compared the people who take lansoprazole with those who consume omeprazole or pantoprazole just to check whether lansoprazole was more effective in killing Mycobacterium tuberculosis, while other drugs in the same class had no effect. The findings showed that among all the people using lansoprazole, there were 10 cases of tuberculosis per 100,000 person, compared to 15.3 cases among those using omeprazole or pantoprazole.

## IVF babies at greater heart disease risk, says study

A recent study has linked in vitro fertilization with an increased risk of congenital heart defects in newborns.

The analysis of published studies found a 45% increased risk of congenital heart defects in newborns when women become pregnant via in vitro fertilization

(IVF)/intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) than through spontaneous conception.

The analysis included 8 studies with 25,856 children obtained from IVF techniques and 287,995 children spontaneously conceived and a total of 2289 congenital heart defects.



Congenital heart defects were found in 1.30% and 0.68% in the

IVF/ICSI and spontaneous conception groups, respectively.

"We believe that IVF/ICSI pregnancies present an increased risk of CHDs as a consequence of early placental dysfunction; however this hypothesis should be demonstrated in future studies. We recom-

mend fetal echocardiography in all pregnancies from IVF/ICSI," said lead author Paolo Cavoretto, of the IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital, in Milan, Italy. The study appears in the journal Ultrasound in Obstetrics and Gynecology. Does the age of men matter for IVF

## The secret to being a smarter person? Interconnections within the brain

Have you ever wondered why some people are more smarter than the others? Your intelligence depends on how well the interconnected networks of your brain function. The difference in the intelligence of individuals go hand in hand with differences in the patterns of integration among functional modules of the brain, says a new finding. The brain is functionally organised into modules or multiple networks that are more strongly interconnected among themselves, while having weaker connections with other modules at the same time. The study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, noted that in some people, the prefrontal cortex region - located in the front part of the brain and responsible for cognitive qualities like thinking skills, analytical processing and decision making - is more evolved and works more efficiently than the rest of the brain. "The different topological embedding of these regions into the brain network could make it easier for smarter persons to differentiate between important and irrelevant information - which would be advantageous for many cognitive challenges," said Ulrike Basten, Professor at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany. The researchers studied the MRI brain scans of over 300 persons and found that in more intelligent persons certain brain regions are more strongly involved in the exchange of information between different sub-networks of the brain

## Human form of 'mad cow' disease may spread through touch

The lethal Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, the human form of the 'mad cow' disease, may spread through touch, say scientists. An abnormal protein linked to the fatal infection can be detected from the skin of patients. Scientists from National Institutes of Health and Case Western Reserve University in the US have detected abnormal prion protein in the skin of nearly two dozen people who died from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). The scientists also exposed a dozen healthy mice to skin extracts from two of the CJD patients, and all developed prion disease.

The study, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, raise questions about the possible transmissibility of prion diseases via medical procedures involving skin,

and whether skin samples might be used to detect prion disease.

Researchers from NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) stress that the prion-seeding potential found in skin tissue is significantly less than what they have found in studies using brain tissue.

CJD is an incurable and ultimately fatal transmissible, neurodegenerative disorder in the family of prion diseases.

Prion diseases originate when normally harmless prion protein molecules become abnormal and gather in clusters and filaments in the human body and brain.

The reasons for this process are not fully understood. The accumulation of these clusters has been associ-

ated with tissue damage that leaves sponge-like holes in the brain.

Human prion diseases include fatal insomnia; kuru; Gerstmann-Straussler-Scheinker syndrome; and variant, familial and sporadic CJD.

Sporadic CJD is the most common human prion disease, affecting about one in one million people annually worldwide.

Other prion diseases include scrapie in sheep; chronic wasting disease in deer, elk and moose; and bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease, in cattle.

Most people associate prion diseases with the brain, although scientists have found abnormal infectious prion protein in other organs,

Including the spleen, kidney, lungs and liver.

# S&P keeps India ratings unchanged, in contrast to Moody's

MUMBAI: Standard & Poor's stuck with its "BBB-minus" sovereign rating and "stable" outlook for India on Friday, a week after rival Moody's upgraded the country's rating.

The decision contrasts with Moody's Investors Service's decision on November 17 to upgrade India's credit rating to "Baa2" from "Baa3", one notch higher than S&P's current rating, citing progress on economic and institutional reforms.

"Stable outlook reflects our view that over the next 2 years growth will remain strong, India will maintain its sound external accounts position and fiscal deficits will remain broadly in line with our expectations," ANI quoted S&P Global Ratings as saying.

S&P had in October 2017 said India needed to improve its fiscal position for a rating upgrade. It kept India's sovereign rating unchanged at the lowest investment grade with a stable outlook. S&P, in January 2007, rated India at BBB, the lowest investment grade rating for bonds, and gave an outlook of 'stable'. It changed the outlook to negative in 2009 and raised it to stable in 2010. In 2012,



the outlook was again lowered to negative, which was raised to stable soon after the Narendra Modi government assumed office in 2014. Moody's last week said India was poised for fast growth because of wide-ranging economic and institutional reforms by the Modi government. Sovereign credit ratings are a barometer of a country's credit profile and regulatory climate. A favourable rating helps governments and companies raise capital in global financial markets. Also, institutional investors rely on ratings for an indication of a country's socio-political environment before making investment decisions. A report by Fitch Ratings is now awaited.

# Sensex, Nifty gain, bonds slip; all eyes on S&P rating

MUMBAI: Shares rose for a seventh straight session on Friday led by IT firms, while bonds dipped on market talk of a potential sovereign ratings upgrade by Standard & Poor's (S&P) later in the day.

Speculation about an S&P rating upgrade on India surfaced late on Thursday. This comes after a surprise upgrade by Moody's last week.

"There is a knee-jerk reaction in the market because of the S&P ex-

pectation," said Guarang Shah, head investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

"There could be a bump of 200-300 points, but the markets will consolidate again. However, these upgrades could see new foreign investments coming in."

Foreign investors have net bought \$2.33 billion worth of Indian shares in November so far.

The broader NSE Nifty was up

0.36% at 10,385.8 as of 0637 GMT, while the benchmark BSE Sensex was 0.27 percent higher at 33,679.92. The last time the NSE index rallied for seven straight sessions was between June 12 and June 23, 2015.

The benchmark 10-year bond yield was up 7.01% after rising to as high as 7.02% earlier in the day.

The Nifty IT index, up for a second session with Infosys Ltd leading the gains, was one of the top gainers among

sectoral indexes.

"IT stocks were the underperformers when the indexes rallied earlier this month, but better-than-expected quarterly numbers and the ability to scale up operations by launching high margin products will bring traction in this sector," Shah added.

Shares of Swaraj Engines Ltd soared as much as 16.9 percent after the company announced a proposal for share buyback.

## EPFO mullsto use NPCI platform for beneficiary payment

NEW DELHI: The Employee Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has proposed to move towards the centralized payment system using National Payments Corporation of India platform for payment to the beneficiaries." Present decentralized system of EPFO for making payment to its beneficiaries involves higher cost of transactions, delays in recredits in case of failed transaction and does not provide for Aadhaar enabled payments," Ministry of Labour and Employment said in a statement.

The benefit of the proposed system is that the funds will be transferred on the same day to the beneficiaries through NPCI

platform. The office may reconcile the transaction status on T+0 basis and thus help in early recredit in the accounts of beneficiaries in the case of failed transactions, the official statement said.

"The availability of the facility of Aadhaar enabled transfer of funds and the transaction cost by way of bank charges will also come down," it added.

The meeting of the Central Board of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) was held in New Delhi on Thursday under the chairmanship of Union Minister of Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar approved the proposal.

## Edelweiss Financial Services raises Rs. 1,527.75 cr towardsexpansion

NEW DELHI: Edelweiss Financial Services Limited (EFSL) raised Rs 1,527.75 crore through the Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP) route, which opened on November 15 and closed on November 20. The funds raised through the QIP would be utilised by EFSL for various purposes, including but not limited to, augment its long term resources, to fund growth and expansion, maintain capital adequacy, consolidation of its subsidiaries and general corporate purposes as per EFSL's growth and business related plans from time to time. EFSL allotted 54,562,488 equity shares of face value of Rs. 1 each (Equity Shares) to eligible qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) at Rs. 280.00 per Equity Share, a discount of 1.80 percent or Rs. 5.14, to the QIP floor price of Rs. 285.14 per Equity Share, in accordance with the pricing formula provided under Regulation 85(i) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2009. "Our fund raise has been received by marquee investors like CDPQ, Fidelity, Goldman Sachs, Nomura, HDFC Mutual Fund, Kotak and Birla MFs. We see this as an endorsement of our business model that uses both capital and talent vectors in growing surely and steadily. Investors in Edelweiss gain exposure to a diversified breadth of businesses serving both retail and corporate customers that ranges from retail and corporate credit, wealth management, asset management, capital markets to insurance," said Ramesh Shah, Chairman, Managing Director and CEO of EFSL. The QIP saw subscription from foreign as well as domestic QIBs. In particular, Caisse de Depot et Placement du Quebec (CDPQ), the second-largest pension fund in Canada used the opportunity to get a stake in EFSL. It may be recalled that, CDPQ signed an agreement with EFSL to invest Rs. 5,000 crore in stressed assets and specialised corporate credit in India, over the next four years. CDPQ also acquired a 20 percent equity stake in Edelweiss Asset Reconstruction Co, India's largest ARC. Other marquee investors in the QIP included HDFC Mutual Fund, Kotak Mutual Fund and Birla Mutual Fund as well as existing shareholders like Goldman Sachs, Nomura, Fidelity, Steadview, GSAM, Halbis, GMO, DE Shaw and Amansa William Blair. Since 2012, Edelweiss Financial Services has grown at a CAGR of 37 percent. During this same period, the balance sheet has grown at a CAGR of 26 percent, which highlights the non-linear profitability potential of our unique business model. The retail credit book has grown at a CAGR of 45 percent consisting principally of small ticket home loans and SME loans.

# Road to Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2017 celebrates women entrepreneurship

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Road to Entrepreneurship Summit was inaugurated by Prafulla Samal, Minister, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Women and Child Development, Government of Odisha. Making his inaugural address he stated, "The Government of Odisha is ready to provide proactive support to startups in the state. We are keen to support the women entrepreneurs in the state in every possible way. The state government is trying to bring all women, irrespective of their socio-economic class, caste, creed and religion, in Odisha, into the fold of Self Help Group (SHG) mechanism by 2018. We have even signed an MoU with Facebook to assist our women in digital marketing of their quality products not only in state but also worldwide." Badri Narayan Patra, Minister, School and Mass Education, Science and Technology delivered his Special Address - "S&T ministry is committed to creating a conducive environment for startups with the creation of workshops, seminars and incubation cells." Giving

a welcome address at the inaugural session, Nirankar Saxena, Assistant Secretary General and Head Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation - FICCI said, "FICCI has been working with the governments, developmental agencies and academia to provide incubation, acceleration, scale up, mentoring and networking support for more than a decade. We strongly feel the need to replicate these successful programs in the state of Odisha to nurture and create unicorns of Odisha."

"The initiatives of the Government to support startups are yielding encouraging results. For instance, more than 2 dozen startups from Odisha will be joining the main GES Summit at Hyderabad. MSME department has 24 incubation centres out of which 5 are being supported by MSME Department," added L. N. Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, MSME Department, Government of Odisha. Odisha Television Network Director Jagi Mangat Panda, the leading woman entrepreneur of the state, said, "The most important part of women empowerment is to

create an entrepreneurial culture which can only happen if issues concerning women are addressed at the grassroots level. There are gender biases and stereotypes that are so deeply entrenched in our society that a simple passage of a law will not be able to take care of it, rather some extraordinary efforts have to be taken."

With the focus on women entrepreneurship and gender equality, FICCI partnered with NITI Aayog to organise five interactive entrepreneurial events as a part of "Road to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) Series". These events brought together industry leaders, start-ups, serial entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, angel investors as well as enablers of the innovation ecosystem such as government, international agencies and industry associations not only from India but across the globe.

The stakeholders deliberated on several aspects related to start-ups such as finance, investment, mentoring and human capital. These events showcased success stories, social

impact and also the gaps to be filled to ensure that women entrepreneurs are successful in fulfilling their dreams and ambitions.

Touching on various important subjects, the summit sessions included topics like "empowering women entrepreneurs-empower, engage and elevate" and "challenges, success and opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Tier II cities". A special session was focused on pitches from start-ups to give impetus to women entrepreneurs. The winner received two gold tickets and one silver ticket to the main GES event in Hyderabad between November 28 and 30. During the pitching, two startups from Odisha got a commitment of investment from the investors. In partnership with the Government of the United States of America, NITI Aayog is hosting the eighth annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) in India from November 28-30, 2017. The Summit will be addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The US delegation will be led by Ivanka Trump, Advisor to President Donald

Trump.

Since the inception of GES in 2010, it has travelled across the world from Washington D.C. to Istanbul, Dubai, Marrakech, Nairobi, Kuala Lumpur, Silicon Valley, and now finally Hyderabad.

This year is the first time GES will be hosted in South Asia, and the event will highlight India's enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship - including actions by the government to increase the ease of doing business, eliminating unnecessary regulations and supporting start-ups. At GES 2017, over 1500 attendees, including entrepreneurs, investors, educators, government officials, and business representatives will represent the full measure of entrepreneurial talent from diverse backgrounds across our nation and the world. Through networking, mentoring and workshops, the GES seeks to empower entrepreneurs to pitch their ideas, build partnerships, secure funding, and create innovative products and services that will transform societies for better tomorrow.

## ASSOCHAM writes to Jaitley, RBI Governor over private equity investment matter

NEW DELHI: In a bid to resolve the vexed issue of 'assured return' on private equity investment, industry body ASSOCHAM wrote to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, urging a meeting between his officials and the global private equity funds so that investments worth several thousand crores of rupees stuck in litigation can be freed.

"Pre-agreed price rights and fixed ROE (Return on Equity) clauses have become an integral part of most private equity (PE) deals all over the world. Similarly, India witnessed an increasing trend where companies entered into such covenants and committed fixed ROE conversions either directly or indirectly. However these agreements have run into regulatory hurdles," the letter noted.

"This has led to a precarious situation of uncertainty over the exit of the PE investors from the deals and has affected the overall the market sentiments which has directly affected the fund raising ability of the Indian firms," it said in identical letters written to the Finance Minister and Reserve Bank of India Governor Dr Urjit Patel.

It argued that while the government wants to earnestly address the issue of assured return for the PE investors for the future, it is equally important to address this issue with regard to earlier investments struck up at various stages of litigation (like Arbitration, Courts).

In last two years, investments worth more than Rs. 3,200 crore have landed in courts. Therefore, to send right signals to attract the FDI into the country, ASSOCHAM has suggested that the Ministry of Finance and RBI can invite the affected PE investors and discuss with them about the acceptable assured return as one time solution to resolve the pending issues which will help PE investors besides making India a much more attractive destination for FDI.

## Bajaj Finserv offers lowest interest rate of 8.30pct on home loans

PUNE: Bajaj Finserv, through its lending arm, Bajaj Finance Ltd., announced the lowest ever interest rates on home loans and home loan balance transfer in its limited period offer.

Home buyers can now avail a loan at 8.30 percent for a loan value above Rs. 30 lakh. Currently, it is one of the lowest interest rates offered by any financial institution in the country.

Bajaj Finserv is also offering

the highest top-up value of Rs. 50 lakh for applicants opting for balance transfer at a minimal interest rate. The top-up amount can be used for different purpose like new home decor and improvement, wedding or holiday expenses, or second home investment through a very simple process. This unique proposition of home loan balance transfer with a top-up from Bajaj Finserv could ensure lower interest rates and sav-

ings on EMI's.

The offer is open to all customers applying for new loans and ones seeking home loan balance transfer from November 23 to 29, 2017. Home loans from Bajaj Finserv come bundled with other added advantages like instant approval, three EMI holiday, speedy disbursal and much more. Customers availing a home loan from Bajaj Finserv can avail a three EMI holiday which allows the

customer to start repaying the loan three months post the disbursal. In this period customers can divert the funds towards setting up their home and plan their finances better. Applying for home loan with Bajaj Finserv is an easy and convenient process wherein the customer can check their eligibility online and calculate their EMI through the home loan EMI calculator with the flexibility of choosing their tenor.

On fulfillment of the eligibility criteria, the loan is approved within five minutes and a representative gets in touch with the customer immediately. Applicants can apply for a home loan with minimum and basic documents like identity proof, address proof, income details and bank statement. Bajaj Finserv offers a door step service for collecting the customer's documents as per time convenient to customer.

## 4 reasons why businesses still love cheque books

MUMBAI: India is undergoing a massive digital push and a mere rumour of government withdrawing chequebooks created enough furore. And, why? Because businesses still love their chequebooks for transferring money. Sure, India is moving - slowly - towards cashless economy, but cheques continue to hold significance.

According to RBI data, in August, there were cheque transactions worth Rs 6,224.34 billion, nearly three times more than debit card transactions and close to 10 times more than mobile wallet transactions, despite digital transactions spiking in the post-Demonetisation era. Here's why businesses still love chequebooks in the age of going digital:

Chargeless: Whether it is digital transactions or other forms of the traditional financial instrument, there is a charge involved. Writing a cheque costs nothing.

Traditional: Cheques have been an integral part of India's payment landscape. Over the years businesses have developed a sense of trust and comfort with writing cheques. Moreover, options like securing payments due in future are available with post-dated cheques.

Secure:

Digital transactions do not come without the threat of cyber risks. Cheques are safer, it is handed over someone and that someone gets the money in his account. It is natural for businesses to choose safer way especially when a large amount is involved.

## 7th Pay Commission: No minimum pay hike for central government employees

NEW DELHI: Central government employees vying for increase in their minimum salaries may be left disappointed if reports of Ministry of Finance sources saying the government has no plans to increase their minimum basic pay are true. According to reports circulating in the media, anonymous sources from the ministry have said there are slim chances of the government revising the minimum basic pay of the Central government employees. The government staff unions have been demanding that their minimum pay is hiked to Rs 26,000 from Rs 18,000 that was defined on recommendations from 7th Central Pay Commission.

Reports quoting Finance Ministry sources stated that the government has no plans to make any changes to the minimum basic pay for central government employees with reference to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) letter to Staff Side, National Council (JCM) dated October 30, 2017.



The letter stated that the minimum wage decided by the 7th Pay Commission does not qualify as an anomaly as per the parameters set by the National Anomaly Committee (NAC). The NAC had laid down three conditions for an item to be considered an anomaly arising on account of recommendations from the 7th Pay Commission. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had earlier suggested that a hike in minimum basic pay for central government employees was in offing.

With NAC setting aside the matter as of now, the Cabinet is unlikely to take a decision on changing the minimum basic pay for central government em-

ployees either. Several employee unions had staged a three-day dharna earlier this month to protest against the delay in minimum wage hike.

The 7th Pay Commission had decided on a fitment factor of 2.57 which resulted in the minimum basic pay increasing from Rs 7,000 to Rs 18,000 with effect from January 01, 2016. The representatives of central government employees, on the other hand, have been demanding the fitment factor to be bumped up to 3.7 so that the minimum wages are raised to Rs 26,000. Expressing dissatisfaction over the methodology to calculate the minimum wages, the Staff Side had even asked for the pay matrix to be altered.

Meanwhile, there still is a chance for an increase in minimum pension of retired central government employees. The same NAC letter also asks the government employees representatives to take up the matter with Director of Pension as the matter falls under his purview.

## Cristiano Ronaldo will deliver when needed for Real Madrid, says Xabi Alonso

MADRID: Xabi Alonso believes Cristiano Ronaldo will deliver when Real Madrid need him and the former midfielder feels the LaLiga title race is not yet over.

Ronaldo has managed just one league goal in eight matches this season, with Madrid slipping 10 points behind rivals and leaders Barcelona.

Former Madrid and Spain midfielder Alonso backed the Portugal international despite his below-par campaign so far, saying Ronaldo would step up when required.

"I have no doubt that in the crucial moments of the season, Ronaldo will be there," Alonso said.

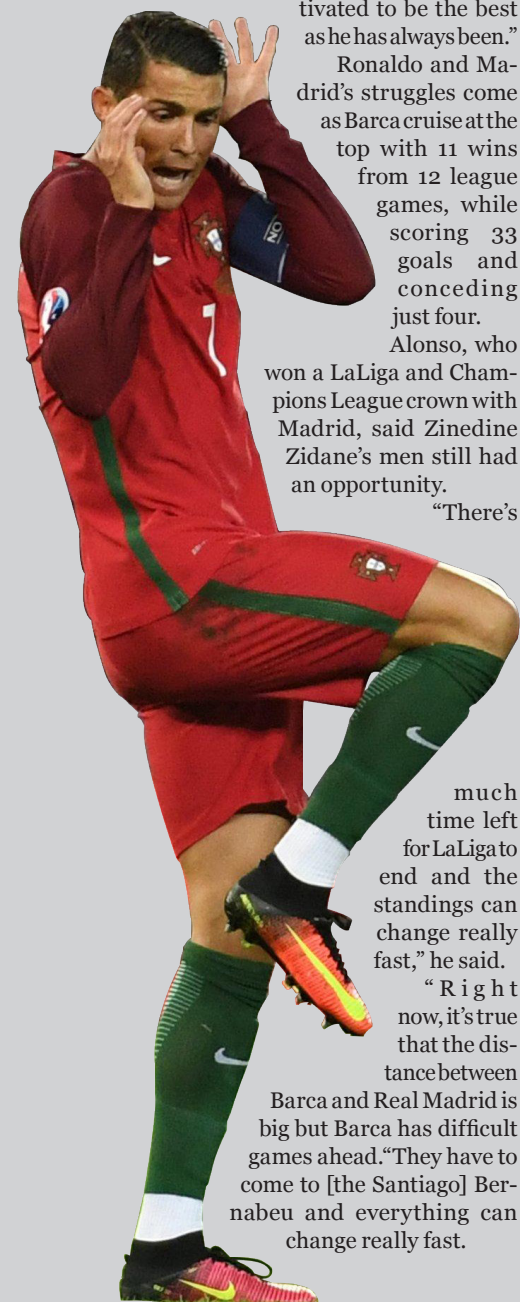
"He was amazing at the end of last season and when the team needed him he was decisive.

"He's as competitive and as motivated to be the best as he has always been."

Ronaldo and Madrid's struggles come as Barca cruise at the top with 11 wins from 12 league games, while scoring 33 goals and conceding just four.

Alonso, who won a LaLiga and Champions League crown with Madrid, said Zinedine Zidane's men still had an opportunity.

"There's



much time left for LaLiga to end and the standings can change really fast," he said.

"Right now, it's true that the distance between

Barca and Real Madrid is big but Barca has difficult games ahead." They have to come to [the Santiago] Bernabeu and everything can change really fast.

# Kohli sees back-up all-rounder in Shankar

NAGPUR: 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-rounder'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."

## Glenn Maxwell puts pressure on Marsh and selectors with blazing century

BRISBANE: Overlooked Australian batsman Glenn Maxwell reminded national selectors of what he is capable of with a timely Sheffield Shield century as the Ashes Test took place in Brisbane.

While Australia and England went head-to-head at the Gabba on Friday, Maxwell posted his seventh first-class hundred for Victoria against New South Wales.

Glenn Maxwell was axed by Australia for the blockbuster Ashes opener, dumped in favour of recalled veteran Shaun Marsh at number six in the batting order.

The 29-year-old was brought into the squad as cover for star opener David Warner — nursing a neck injury heading into day one of the opening Test on Thursday.



Maxwell eventually rejoined his Victoria team-mates and made an immediate impact, scoring 100 off just 113 deliveries at North Sydney Oval, to put pressure on selectors and Marsh. Meanwhile, paceman Jackson Bird — who missed out on Ashes selection as Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins headlined Australia's bowling attack — claimed five wickets for Tasmania.

## Anurag Thakur takes dig at RM Lodha reforms after Nagaland capitulation

NEW DELHI: Citing astonishing capitulation of Nagaland in a women's Under-19 match, former BCCI President Anurag Thakur today pointed out that not all the Lodha Committee reforms were appropriate. In a BCCI's U-19 women's One-Day Super League match, Nagaland were shot out for an incredible score of just two against Kerala with as many nine batters getting out for duck.

The Supreme Court-appointed Lodha Committee had recommended one state one vote for BCCI which resulted in 41-time Ranji champions Mumbai losing its voting rights while all North Eastern states got voting rights.

Thakur suggested that instead of voting rights these states need infrastructure and game development.

"Giving full voting rights to each state w/out structured development of cricket-

ing standards will harm the game. Cricket in northeast needs nurturing not humiliation like this. #LodhaReforms @BCCI," Thakur, who also lost BCCI Presidency due to reforms, tweeted.

Indian cricket's one-time power centre Mumbai lost its permanent voting status as per the new BCCI constitution finalised by the Committee of Administrators (CoA).

All the North Eastern states including Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim were been granted full membership and voting rights. Mumbai are now associate member of BCCI. The Mumbai CA representatives can attend General Body meetings but can't vote. Baroda and Saurashtra - the two teams from its mother state Gujarat are also now associate members and will take turns to "rotate annually" to vote.

## India vs Sri Lanka: Spinners went from support to strike role, says Ravindra Jadeja

NAGPUR: Spinners normally hate the opening day of a Test. They know there will be little purchase from the pitch for them. The day is reserved for the batsmen to dominate, and among bowlers, it's a day for the pace bowlers. (Day 1 highlights | Scorecard) Conditions at the Vidarbha Cricket Association stadium were no different. In fact, they were good for batting because even the seamers were not getting movement to trouble the batsmen. But it seems conditions don't matter when you pitch R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja against the Islanders. In their last series against Sri Lanka, they had a combined tally of 30 wickets, wreaking havoc in their opponents' backyard. Maintaining their stranglehold on the Lankan batsmen, the

two overcame the docile conditions to combine and run through the innings, sharing seven wickets. Jadeja said the initial plan was to support the pacers. "Ashwin and I were trying to bowl in the good areas, trying to restrict them and not to give easy boundaries. We were just doing a supporting role as the fast bowlers were doing well in first session," he told the media.

The left-arm spinner who claimed three big wickets — Angelo Mathews, Niroshan Dickwella and Dilruwan Perera — said he was happy to just get the opportunity to bowl after hardly having any role in the Eden Gardens Test. "Yeah obviously, finally I was very happy how I was bowling today. I was bowling well as there was no help from the



wicket." Explaining how effective spin partner Ashwin was bowling from around the wicket, claiming all his wickets from that angle,

Jadeja said: "If there is nothing in the wicket for spinners, then it's good to try something different. Over the wicket or around the wicket, just

try and create chances."

In the subcontinent conditions, the two have enjoyed a good partnership. But come the next series in South Africa, the two might be competing for a lone spinner's slot, as there is limited role for spinners on the greener and bouncier tracks.

"It depends on the team's balance, what the team wants. At times on overseas tours, we assess if there are more lefties or right-handers in the opposition and accordingly the team's composition is set," Jadeja said. "When I get a chance to play in SA, I will try to do well. When I got a chance last time, I played the second Test after Ash played the first. That's why I said team combination will depend on the composition of the opposition."

# BARCA, CHELSEA ADVANCE AS UNITED LOSE

LONDON: Barcelona and Chelsea progressed to the Champions League last 16 on Wednesday, but Jose Mourinho's Manchester United must wait to seal their spot after a last-gasp 1-0 defeat in Basel.

Barca needed only a point to reach the knockout stage and the Spanish superpower got exactly that against Juventus. A 0-0 draw at last year's runners-up was enough to ensure top spot in Group 'D'.

Chelsea advanced with a game to spare after beating 10-man Qarabag 4-0, securing manager Antonio Conte's 50th victory in all competitions with the Blues.

A goalless draw at FC Basel would have been enough for United to top Group 'A', but the Premier League club slipped to their first group stage loss, going down to a goal conceded just a minute from time.

Already through, Paris St Germain conceded the first goal of their European campaign in the first minute before unleashing their unstoppable firepower to thrash Celtic 7-1 in Paris. Juve will have to wait until the final round to try and qualify for the knockout stages. The Italian side remained second in Group 'D' but are only a point above Sporting Lisbon, which beat Olympiakos 3-1. The Italian side which reached the final in two of the last three seasons next visit Olympiakos, while Sporting travel to Barca.

Five-time European champions Barca, who rested Lionel Messi until the 56th minute, went closest to breaking the deadlock when Ivan



Rakitic hit the post with a free kick. In Portugal, Bas Dost scored a goal in each half for Sporting Lisbon. Bruno Cesar added the third while Vadis Odjidja scored the consolation goal for Olympiakos.

Willian scored a goal in each half and won a pair of penalties as Chelsea thrashed Qarabag in Baku to guarantee a top-two finish in Group 'C'. Eden Hazard made it 1-0 from the penalty spot in the 21st minute, calmly sending the goalkeeper the wrong way. Home team captain Rashad F. Sadygov had received a straight red card for tugging back Willian just inside the area as the Chelsea forward ran onto Hazard's pass. Hazard then fed Willian with

a back-heel pass to make it 2-0 in the 37th. Qarabag, the first club from Azerbaijan to reach the group stage of the Champions League, had no better luck in the second half. Cesc Fabregas scored from the penalty spot in the 73rd minute and Willian added his second goal, a drive from 20 meters, five minutes from time. We did everything well. We should have scored more. It is easy to play with these good players," Hazard said. Atletico Madrid, runners-up twice in the past four years, retained an outside chance of pipping AS Roma to a place in the knockout stages as Antoine Griezmann snapped an eight-match goal drought in a 2-0 win in Spain.

The French striker broke the deadlock with a spectacular acrobatic effort on 69 minutes, before compatriot Kevin Gameiro added a late second to seal a first win of the campaign for Atletico.

However, they must beat Chelsea at Stamford Bridge in their final game and hope Roma drop points at home to Qarabag to avoid parachuting into the Europa League.

United were deservedly beaten by a spirited Basel, leaving all the qualification places open with one game remaining.

United, who hit the woodwork twice in the first half through Marouane Fellaini and Marcos Rojo, looked on course to secure the point

required to punch their ticket to the last 16 in Switzerland before Michael Lang popped up with an 89th-minute winner. "It's like a dream. Right now I can't believe we won against such a strong team," Swiss international Lang told RTS. "We always thought we could win this match and in the end it was a victory like I had never seen before."

Mourinho blamed United's inability to convert their first-half dominance into goals after watching his side lose their perfect record in the group. "We lost because in the first half we should be 5-0 up but we could not score one goal after being so dominant," Mourinho said.

Still, United leads the standings with 12 points, three clear of both Basel and CSKA Moscow, who earlier won 2-0 at home to last-placed Benfica. In the final round on December 5, Basel play at Benfica, and United host CSKA. Russia goalkeeper Igor Akinfeev recorded a first clean sheet in the group stage since 2006 — ending a staggering run of 43 matches conceding a goal — as CSKA condemned Benfica to a fifth straight loss in Group 'A'.

Georgi Schennikov's cool finish steered CSKA into a 13th-minute lead in Moscow before the hosts grabbed a second through an own goal from Brazilian defender Jardel.

PSG dismantled Celtic as the French giants registered their biggest win in the competition, despite falling behind when Moussa Dembele scored inside the first minute at the Parc des Princes.

## Sourav Ganguly was desperate to become Indian cricket team coach

KOLKATA: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly today said that he was "desperate" to become the national coach but ended up being an administrator.

"You should do what you can and not thinking about the outcome. You never know where life goes, you never know where life will take you. I went to Australia in 1999, I wasn't even the vice-captain. Sachin (Tendulkar) was the captain and in three months I became the captain of India," he said. "When I got into administration, I was desperate to be the coach of the national side. (Jagmohan) Dalmiya called me and said 'why you don't you try for six months'. He passed away and none was around, so I became the CAB president. People take 20 years to become president. You have to live for the day," Ganguly said while speaking at the India Today Conclave East 2017. He also spoke about his controversial face-off with coach Greg Chappell and why he called it quits.

One of the most successful Indian captains Ganguly was dropped in January 2006 but made a comeback against South Africa in the Johannesburg Test in December and went on to score an unbeaten 51.

In the home series against Pakistan in 2007, Ganguly notched up a century and a double hundred before retiring against Australia in the Nagpur Test in November 2008. "As I announced retirement in 2008, Sachin came at lunch and asked me 'why did you take such a decision?' I said because I don't want to play any more. He then said 'this is the best time to see you play in such flow. Last three years had been your best'."

"I retired because at some point you've had enough. The reason is not because you have had enough of playing the sport but because you've had enough of getting selected all the time. I remember those days and think individual sports is a lot better when you are not dependent on team."

Ganguly said the biggest problem in a team sport is the fact that one gets selected by others, so even if one works well, he/she may not get a place in the side.