

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

THURSDAY

- NOVEMBER, 09, 2017
- 19 SAFFAR 1439 AH
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	20.2	2.7
JAMMU	26.4	14.2
LEH	15.0	-7.0
KARGIL	15.2	-2.5

SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 05:33 PM
SUNRISE THURSDAY: 07:00 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
 Mainly clear sky... Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 20°C & 3°C respectively.

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

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HPCL PROVIDES RS 35 LAKH MATERIAL TO 5 SCHOOLS UNDER CSR

DEMONETISATION A 'THOUGHTLESS ACT' OF MODI:RAHUL

INFOSYS INNOVATION HUB IN US TO HIRE 2,000 PEOPLE, MORE HUBS IN FUTURE:

PAKISTAN SECURE TOP SPOT IN TWENTY20 INTERNATIONALS AFTER INDIA BEAT NEW

I will try to meet Hurriyat: Sharma

'Hope peace returns to Valley'

Srinagar, Nov 08: Central government appointed interlocutor Dineshwar Sharma Wednesday said he would try his best to meet Hurriyat.

After meeting legislators M Y Tarigami, Haqem Yasin and former minister Ghulam Hassan Mir at Tarigami's residence, Sharma told media persons that his meeting with different delegations was very good. "I wish peace returns and political solution also comes," he said.

Sharma will be travelling to Jammu tomorrow where he will hold talks with Governor NN Vohra, the chief minister and various delegations. He was appointed the Centre's special representative on October 23 in a fresh bid for lasting peace.

Meanwhile, Sharma today concluded his three-day visit to Kashmir Valley and will be travelling to Jammu tomorrow for the next two days, as part of his 5-day State visit.

During the last three days here since his arrival on Monday, Sharma met around 65 delegations which comprised NGOs, Trade Associations, Widows Unions, and other lesser known organizations and parties. However, well known Trade



and Business Bodies stayed away from meeting him. The Hurriyat considered a key party, also denied to meet Sharma, who has been sent here by the GoI to renew the fresh dialogue process.

On the third-day here in the valley, Sharma met the leaders of Opposition mainstream parties which included former CM and vice president Omar Abdullah, Pradesh Congress Committee

PDP asks Sharma to address trust deficit to make dialogue process result oriented

Welcomes his maiden visit to Kashmir

Srinagar, Nov 08: Welcoming centre's representative on Dialogue on his maiden visit to Kashmir, Peoples Democratic Party Vice President Mohammad Sartaj Madni hoped that the exercise undertaken will culminate into meaningful and tangible outcome, despite difficulties.

Heading his party's delegation comprising senior party functionaries and legislators Madni told the interlocutor Dineshwar Sharma that PDP has always desired to hold talks with all stakeholders so that Jammu and Kashmir state is led to resolution of all issues in accordance with the wishes of the people. He referred to initiatives taken by then

See **PDP**...Pg 02

Sharma meets Omar, other political leaders on third day visit



Srinagar: The Centre's interlocutor for Kashmir Dineshwar Sharma called on former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah at his residence on Wednesday to discuss the situation in the state but autonomy was not a subject of discussion.

"We discussed the prevailing situation in the state and also steps that can be taken to make his visits to the state more meaningful," Abdullah told reporters after the meeting.

The NC leader whose party had adopted autonomy resolution a few days ago said "autonomy issue was not raised".

"I met in my personal capacity but when our party meets him we will discuss autonomy which is the stated position of National Conference," he added.

Omar was the most high-profile of the political leaders he met Wednesday on the third day of his five-day visit to the state.

Sharma also called on CPI (M) leader M Y Tarigami at his residence. Two independent MLAs - Hakim Mohammad Yaseen and Gh-

ulam Hassan Mir were also with Tarigami at the meeting.

After the meeting, the leaders told reporters that they reiterated their position that Kashmir was a "long pending complex issue which has generated untold sufferings and miseries for the people of the entire state in general and for the residents of Kashmir valley in particular".

"Unfortunately serious efforts have not been made to address this sensitive issue so far. Even now, when this new initiative has been taken by GOI, various contradictory voices which are emerging from different power centres are adding to the already existing confusion and disillusionment," Tarigami added.

After the meeting with Tarigami, Sharma told reporters that he was "trying to meet the Hurriyat" even though Hurriyat leaders had already said they were not interested in meeting him.

See **Meet**...Pg 02

Kashmir Dialogue WILL NOT SABOTAGE DIALOGUE PROCESS BUT ENCOURAGE IT: G H MIR

Srinagar, Nov 08: Former minister and DPN president Ghulam Hassan Mir today said that the role of the CPI (M) State Secretary MY Tarigami, PDF Chairman Haqem Yasin and himself will not be to sabotage the dialogue process being carried by the centre's representative, Dineshwar Sharma.

"We will encourage the dialogue process, not sabotage it," Mir told KNS here after

See **Mir**...Pg 02

Around 170 militants including top commanders killed in Kashmir this year: DGP Vaid

Srinagar: Around 170 militants have been gunned down by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir this year and these include a majority of the top commanders active in the Valley, the state's director general of police (DGP) SP Vaid said Wednesday.

The eliminated militants include Masood Azhar's nephew Talla Rashid, Jaish-e-Mohammad's Mehmood Bhai, Lashkar-e-Taiba's Abu Dujana and Waseem Shah as well as Burhan Wani's successor Sabzar Ahmad Bhat of



the Hizbul Mujahideen, he said.

"I think, roughly, 170 militants have been eliminated this year only (in Kashmir). This is a record going by the last ten years. Except

4 to 5 commanders, other top militants have been eliminated", Vaid told PTI in an interview here today.

Security forces, including the Army, CRPF and police have fiercely intensified operations to hunt top terrorists in Kashmir, he said.

"There is tremendous success as far as 'operation allout' is concerned. The credit goes to the officers and jawans who work in the field", the police chief said.

He said there was very good coordination between

See **DGP**...Pg 02

Masood Azhar a 'bad guy': US

WASHINGTON: Pakistan-based JeM chief Masood Azhar is a "bad guy" and should be declared a global terrorist, the US today said as China blocked a bid at the UN to list Pathankot terror attack mastermind as a designated terrorist.

Last week, China for the fourth time had blocked a proposal backed by the US, France and Britain to list Azhar as a global terrorist, citing a lack of consensus among the members of the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council.

The JeM, founded by



Azhar, has already been in the UN's list of banned terror outfits.

"We certainly think that he is a bad guy. We would like to have him on that list," State

Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert said at a press conference when asked about China's move.

"There are some

See **US**...Pg 02

ABSENCE OF NEET CENTRE IN KASHMIR JEOPARDIZES CAREER OF ASPIRANTS: DAK

Srinagar, Nov 8: With no National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) centre in Kashmir for postgraduate medical courses, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Thursday said the decision would jeopardize the career of thousands of aspiring doctors.

President DAK Dr Nisar ul Hassan in a communiqué said absence of examination centre for MD/MS/PG Diploma courses has left aspirant doctors in deep lurch.

"National Board of Examination is conducting an online common entrance test for various postgraduate courses on January 7," he said.

DAK President said for this test, 129 examination centres have been established across the country, but Kashmir has been once again left out.

"We are surprised with the decision," he said.

He said last year, we were assured that examination centre will be provided to us, but to our utter dismay Kashmir is yet again missing on centre list.

Dr Nisar said while for majority in Kashmir there is no centre, Jammu has been

See **DAK**...Pg 02

'DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS PROMPT FIRE DEPARTMENT TO ISSUE SAFETY ADVISORY'

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir fire department has announced a fire safety advisory as a way of reminding people to be cautious when using outdoor open flames and disposing of smoking materials.

"We are concerned that dry weather could spark fires if people aren't careful," Rajinder Kumar Hak, Director Fire & Emergency Services told KNS over phone.

The Director said that extremely dry conditions increase the risk for fires to ignite, while windy weather increases the chance and speed for any fire to spread. "We ask everyone to be vigilant. Agriculture produce is vulnerable to fire, so people especially in the rural areas must be caution in this regard," he said.

See **Dry**...Pg 02

There is no alternative to plebiscite: Er Rasheed to Interlocutor Says it hardly matters who rules the state

Srinagar, Nov 08: While meeting Dineshwar Sharma, the recently appointed interlocutor, AIP Supremo and MLA Langate Er Rasheed has appealed New Delhi to give up arrogance and unrealistic attitude and understand that there are no shortcuts to resolve Jammu & Kashmir dispute and the only respectable, dignified and universally accepted way is to give people of Jammu & Kashmir Right to Self Determination on both the sides of LOC. During the meeting, Er Rasheed as per the statement issued to KNS reiterated that confusion whatsoever lies in New Delhi not among Kashmiris and it is for New Delhi to decide whether it wants to resolve Kashmir



dispute once for all for the durable peace and prosperity in the entire subcontinent.

Er Rasheed made it clear to Sharma that without including all stakeholders including

See **Rasheed**...Pg 02

CONGRESS STAGES PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS IN SRINAGAR

Describes demonetization a tool to hid failure of BJP

Srinagar, Nov 08: The J&K Pradesh Congress Committee held a strong protest demonstrations on the one year completion of demonetization in the Country, in which Senior Party Functionaries, Legislators and Prominent Party activities participated and chanted slogans against the so called demonetization describing it as a move to hide the failure on the Part of BJP Govt at Centre.

As per the statement issued to KNS The protest march led by former PCC President Peerzada Mohd. Syed started from Congress Party Headquarters Srinagar and ended up at Press Colony, Srinagar

Prior to the Protest Demonstration, Peerzada Mohd Syed and other Senior Leaders addressed the Party

See **Congress**...Pg 02

Interlocutor Sharma has come to waste our time: Vakil

Asks Mehbooba to reopen corruption cases against sitting Ministers, MLAs

Srinagar, Nov 08: Terming the appointment of Interlocutor Dineshwar Sharma as a "waste of time", President J&K Bacho Tehreek and former minister Abdul Gani Vakil Wednesday said Hurriyat, Pakistan and India are the people who need to sit and solve Kashmir issue.

Vakil said the interlocutor Sharma is "wasting his own time and has come to waste of others in Kashmir". "A serious dialogue process



needs to be started. Such appointment of interlocutors who come and meet everyone here is wasting time," he said.

He also reiterated his commitment to fight against dynasty politics of the

See **Vakil**...Pg 02

FCS&CA to make Supply Chain Management operational from Dec 01: Zulfkar

Reviews progress of implementation of ePDS in JK

Jammu, Nov 08: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today asked the officers of the department to work with proactive approach for successful implementation of Electronic Public Distribution System (ePDS) in the state.

Speaking during the meeting convened to review the progress of implementation of ePDS in the state, the Minister said that to make the



system fully transparent, it is important that every aspect of ePDS should be completed as soon as possible so that

visible changes can be noticed on the ground.

The meeting was

See **Zulfkar**...Pg 02

ULB EMPLOYEES ANNOUNCE 2-DAY STRIKE FROM NOV 13

Our pending demands should be addressed: Pampori

Srinagar, Nov 08: The employees of Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir, have threatened the government that they will go for strike on 13 and 14 November and protest in all Municipal Institutions of the Kashmir Division and on 15 Nov all the employees will assemble at Press Enclave for redressal of their pending demands.

President (J&KEUF), Manzoor A. Pampori told KNS that the employees, especially the lower class employees, of the department have all along been striving to provide basic civic amenities and other related services to the inhabitants of the state with utmost efficiency and dedication.

Pampori said that despite that their demands have not

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SHARMA

delegation led by its President G A Mir. Other Congress leaders who were part of the delegation are Taj Mohiuddin, Peerzada Sayed, Haji Rashid Dar and Usman Majeed.

Sharma met a group of ruling PDP leaders led by Sartaj Madni, who is Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's maternal uncle, at Hari Niwas.

Earlier, Sharma met CPI (M) leader and MLA Kulgam M Y Tarigami, MLA Khan Sahab Hakeem Yasin, former minister Ghulam Hassan Mir at Tarigami's Gupkar residence.

Later in the afternoon, the legislator from north Kashmir's Langate, Er Rasheed met Sharma at Hari Niwas. Rashid, said, he told Sharma that there is no alternative to plebiscite and it hardly matters who rules the state.

"I made it clear to Sharma that without including Pakistan and militant leadership in the talks nothing can be achieved," Er Rashid added.

A delegation of Janta Dal United J&K delegation led by its State President G.M Shaheen met Sharma and discussing some major issues and problems faced by common people of Kashmir valley.

Sharma will be leaving for Jammu tomorrow for the last two days of his five-day maiden tour to J&K as the special representative of GoI to J&K. He is expected to meet Governor N N Vohra, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and various other delegations.

PDP

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003 and how then Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Syed successfully changed the discourse in the state exhorting the interlocutor to take a holistic view of the situation to end the impasse.

The delegation included General Secretaries Nizamuddin Bhat and Qazi Afzal senior leader and legislator Mohammad Khurshid Aalam, Mir Fayaz MP, Raja Manzoor, Abdul Rahim Rather and Mohammad Abbas wani MLAs.

Madni reminded the interlocutor about the trust deficit which impedes any good initiative for peace and resolution. He desired that centre should do everything possible to gain the confidence of the people and stake-holders in order to sustain the process of dialogue till every stake holder is willingly engaged. He told the interlocutor that PDP took a brave step in forging alliance with BJP. But in the belief that like Vajpayee Prime Minister Narinder Modi will offer enough space for resolution of Kashmir imbroglio. Madni told him that dialogue process should be seen as a sincere and honest effort to address issues than a mere response to violence.

Interlocutor was told that public perception is of disbelief and cynicism in Kashmir. The onus is on Union Government to allay apprehensions and attract political, social and religious groups of all hues for a mutually agreed common ground. Madni made it clear that unaccomplished agenda of BJP-PDP alliance is projected as another example for insincerity and viewed that conducive atmosphere needed for sustainable dialogue. Fulfilling already made commitments was an imperative for this he added.

Madni told the interlocutor to reach out to sufferers and youth through compassion and with an open mind. He reminded him about the instability at huge expense of the people of the region and said once the process takes off, Pakistan's involvement will further facilitate the process to make it result oriented.

MEET

Later in the day Sharma met Congress state chief Ghulam Ahmed Mir.

Sharma, a former Intelligence Bureau director will be travel to Jammu on Thursday where he is slated to hold talks with Governor N N Vohra, chief minister Mehbooba Mufti and other delegates.

On Tuesday, Sharma told HT that his dialogue with cross section of people in the valley had been 'constructive'.

Sharma who arrived in Srinagar on Monday to start a multi-layered dialogue in the state, met around 32 delegations on Tuesday.

On Monday, most trade bodies boycotted their meetings with Sharma while major players like the National Conference and the Hurriyat said they had not received any invitation for talks.

MIR

meeting Sharma at the residence of CPI (M) State Secretary MY Tarigami. Sharma called on Tarigami, PDF Chairman Hakeem Yasin and Mir at the residence of Tarigami at Gupkar here Wednesday afternoon.

The three leaders addressed a press conference after meeting the Sharma and said that Government of India is not doing any favour to the people of the state but the whole country by announcing dialogue process.

Sharma has been camping in Kashmir from November 6 to meet different delegations and mainstream political parties for the dialogue process. He will leave for Jammu tomorrow where he will meet different people for two days. Hurriyat leaders and major trade bodies stayed away from meeting him.

DGP

the police, Army and other security agencies and claimed that "most of the top leadership of Hizbul and LeT had been neutralised" except a few odd ones.

He said recently a new phenomenon of suicide attacks by JeM was observed.

"The JeM has been instrumental in carrying out suicide attacks, which is a new trend, but the security forces and police have been facing this challenge. This was an attempt from across the border to bolster the sagging morale of terrorists", he added.

Asked about infiltration of militants from across the border, he said the "Army was doing a great job in controlling the border and checking infiltration. We had a lot of success on the borders. But since it is a difficult border, some people are managing to enter. But in the hinterland, they are getting neutralised".

He said that snowfall takes place around December and passes start closing so there is an effort from across the border to push as many terrorists before that.

"We will continue with our operations and very soon peace will return to Kashmir. Already much (has been done). I am hopeful that things will improve further", he added.

On police personnel joining militancy, he said two such cases had come to his notice.

"We are looking into the causes. There are various reasons. After all the police is also part of the same society and you can get influenced. You live in same society, same villages. It is not a serious challenge. We have taken steps to safeguard the police force from being targeted by the terrorists," he said.

US

committee discussions that are underway over whether to add him or the entity to the sanctions list. That list is confidential under the United Nations, so unfortunately, I am not going to be able to comment on the deliberations at the UN under that," Nauert said.

"I'd have to refer you to the Chinese Government to explain why they voted the way they did, but we certainly think that this guy is a bad guy," she said when asked about China's action.

"We consider the organisation to be a foreign terrorist organisation under the US law," Nauert said.

A veto-wielding permanent member of the Security Council, China has repeatedly blocked India's move to put a ban on the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief under the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the Council.

China had in August extended by three months its technical hold on the US, France and UK-backed proposal to list Azhar as a global terrorist by the UN after having blocked the move in February this year at the United Nations.

Notably, China was the only country opposing the designation of Azhar by the Security Council as a terrorist.

All other 14 of the 15 members of the UN Security Council were supporting the bid to place Azhar on the sanctions list that would subject him to an assets freeze and travel ban.

Azhar is accused of several terrorist attacks in India, including one on the Pathankot air force station in January 2016. (AGENCIES)

DAK

given two centres which clearly shows a regional bias.

He said most of the doctors who are appearing for the test are working in various hospitals and calling huge number of doctors outside Kashmir for the test would collapse the healthcare delivery system. This would disrupt the functioning of hospitals and affect patient care.

Dr Nisar said this would mean the doctors who were hoping to pursue postgraduate courses won't be able to write the test.

"That would not only jeopardize the career of candidates, but would mean depriving people of Kashmir the services of specialist doctors," he added.

He further said candidates are asked to go outside for the examination at a time when road and air connectivity is cut off due to harsh winter and valley remains disconnected from rest of the country.

Dr Nisar said when NEET was imposed, Kashmir was up in arms against the decision as it was against the special status of the state and would shatter the dreams of aspiring candidates.

"That time we were told it won't be against the interests of aspirants, but the claim has proved a hoax," he said.

DRY

Rajinder Kumar further said that the fire department is on job to provide information to the people about the risks associated with the dry weather. "We are explaining preventative actions that we recommend including the removing of dry grasses, overgrown bushes, dead branches of trees," he said.

He said that the fire department is prepared for any changes to the fire risk. "As weather conditions and the fire risk changes, the fire department will continue to update the status of the fire safety advisory," he maintained.

He said that Fire and emergency department had already issued advisory to Government Hospital of Kashmir to incorporate various fire fighting mechanism in their respective institutions. "Over the years we have seen increase in fire incidents in Kashmir during the winter season. We suggest people that they should be more careful while using the winter gadgets," he said.

Meanwhile sources told KNS that barring from few, the Government and Private hospitals, in the state have said to be no major fire fighting system in place, which in turn is endangering the lives of thousands of people.

Sources said that functioning with critical safety gaps including lack of functional Fire-fighting system, the threat of tragedy is looming large over the government hospitals as well as private hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.

They said that in these government and private hospitals, deficiencies in compartmentalization to prevent spread of smoke and fire from one section to another, lack of smoke management system and unreliable fire management systems have been noticed.

According to the officials in the fire department, in some hospitals using fire-safe doors was not according to the standards. "Apart from the locked gates, there were no water for fire-fighting measures, no emergency power supply and a dysfunctional public address system," the sources pointed out. It is to mention here that, the fire safety audit of the GP Panth Hospital Srinagar had pointed out that lives of children and newborns are at risk at the hospital as it lacks basic access points for fire engines besides falling short of other fire safety mechanisms. "The infrastructure- and space-constrained hospital can become a "fire hazard", as per the official communication by Fire and Emergency Services (FES) to the hospital authorities.

The letter dated 12-12-2015 by Director General Fire and Emergency Services, Kashmir points out at the encroachments in the GP Panth hospital premises "that are an impediment to the movement of the fire engines in case of a fire. "Unfortunately, the setbacks have been encroached by constructing medical shop and attendant sheds. This will disallow the movement of fire engine and will endanger the lives of innocent newborn buds (sic)."

Sources said that the urgent need is a Fire safety audit at all government hospitals in district, sub-divisional level and medical colleges. The fire safety measures at places particularly with electrical installations should be reviewed.

RASHEED

Pakistan and militant leadership in the talks nothing can be achieved.

He added that while even kids and eighty years old veterans are being booked under draconian laws, Kashmiris have

a right to know why they were subjected to forced labour for one and a half decade in various parts of the state including Bandipora, Langate, Kupwara and Uri at the hands of security forces and why do every time those wearing uniform go unpunished who have committed heinous crimes in Jammu & Kashmir.

He also said that humiliating Kashmiris, pressurizing them by using NIA and ED as tools to suppress their genuine voices and denying human rights to people of J&K will complicate the problem further.

Er Rasheed asked Sharma "If neither New Delhi wants to implement UN resolution nor is interested in tripartite talks, where does the solution lie. New Delhi must make it public what is the solution it has to offer to the other two parties, if it doesn't believe in UN resolutions. Seeking plebiscite doesn't necessarily mean that people of J&K want to be part of Pakistan. If New Delhi sincerely believes people of J&K to be its own people and has made huge investments from 1947 till date for the welfare and prosperity of people of the state, then it must not run away from plebiscite. By doing so resolution of Indian parliament claiming entire J&K to be India's integral part may also be fulfilled".

He asked Sharma "Kashmiris are most desperate to establish peace in J&K and want an end to bloodshed but nothing is in their hands. How can Kashmiris be held responsible for violence if seven Lac. Indian troops have not been able to check the alleged infiltration across LOC and if state agencies continue to use disproportionate force and curb peaceful political activities, there has to be an anger and sense of alienation on the ground. Let New Delhi understand that doing every damn and unpleasant thing in the name of curbing militancy and antinational elements and for the sake of so called national interest is totally unacceptable".

Er Rasheed also raised a strong objection to involve every Tom Dick and Harry by calling them as so called stake holders.

He said "Let New Delhi restrain from giving J&K dispute a communal color and recognize the fact that there is no alternative to address the sentiments and aspirations of people of J&K. one needs to realize that there are divergent viewpoints in every political dispute and ultimately it is the historic facts, promises and will and wishes of the majority of the population that has to prevail, as such Kashmiris should not be seen as enemies of India. Hence trying to dilute Kashmir issue by making everybody a stake holder and encouraging a regional, ethnic and communal divide is unacceptable. While majority community has always desired Kashmiri Pandits return to valley, it is a section of Kashmiri Pandits who are not interested in returning back as they are having many vested interested in being called migrants. Govt. of India must also facilitate the honorable return of hundreds of those families who were forced to migrate to Pakistan and Pak in Karnah, Karen, Gurez, Uri, Rajouri, Ponch and other districts. It is unfortunate that nobody speaks for them and whole India is worried about Kashmiri Pandits. The fate of Jail returns is much miserable and the so called rehabilitation policy of ex-militants has proved a disaster".

Er Rasheed also expressed deep displeasure over harassing the militant families and vandalizing the properties of their families and kits and kits.

He also demanded unconditional release of political prisoners including Masrat Alam, Aasia Indrabi, Qasim Faktoo and many others languished in various jails since long time.

Er Rasheed also made it clear to the interlocutor that people of the state are least bothered who rules the state and said that whether BJP or NC or even Huriyat rules the state it does not make a difference unless Kashmir issue is resolved.

He reiterated that people of J&K have not sacrificed for restoration of Autonomy and those talking Autonomy as a permanent solution are living in fool's paradise. He added if autonomy had been the solution then why it was snatched by New Delhi by gradually making constitutional erosions.

Er Rasheed also conveyed interlocutor that without getting a permanent resolution that must involve militant leadership, Pakistan, political leadership of J&K, and New Delhi no permanent peace can be even dreamed in the region, however to achieve that the main political parties in New Delhi especially BJP and congress have to find a common ground and restrain from using Kashmir issue as a vote bank card.

CONGRESS

Workers at Congress Office and urged them to defeat the anti-people designs of the BJP PDP ruling dispensation, saying that they can go to any extent to hide failure.

Addressing the Party Workers, Peerzada Mohd Syed lashed out at Centre Govt for punishing people under the garb of demonetization saying that BJP cannot escape the responsibility of losses caused due to demonetization in the Country.

He blamed Centre especially Prime Minister for creating confusion, the demonetization is a deliberate move to divert the attention of the people from the promises that were made by Narinder Modi to with the people before coming into power, Peerzada Said.

When BJP realized that they could not fulfill any of the promise, they started misleading people on every count, particularly on so called demonetization, he said.

Speaking on the occasion Taj Mohiuddin said that people in the entire country have been pushed to wall due to demonetization and the irony is that the BJP is celebrating it to hide it wrong policies and it's failures.

Addressing the workers Former Minister & MLA Bandipora Usman blamed Prime Minister Narinder Modi for playing with the emotions of people in order to gain mileage, but I want tell the BJP especially Narinder Modi that he will no longer be able to be fool people, as they (People) have realized that that BJP has betrayed them for the sake of power.

Among other who participated in the meeting included Vice President Mohd Anwar Bhat, Spokesperson Feroq Andrabi, Amreen Badre, Surinder Singh Channi, Shoiab Nabi Lone, Shameem Iqbal, Shameema Raina, Irfan Naqib, Abid Kashmiri, Haji Feroq Mir, Abdul Gani Khan, Imtiyaz Parray, Zahid Hussain, Ab. Qayoom Shah, Sahil Feroq, Imtiyaz Ahmad Khan, Jawahira, Reyaz Ahmad Shiekh, Mohd Yousuf Bhat, Umer Jan and others.

VAKIL

mainstream political parties in the state.

Addressing a one day party convocation at Town Hall Kupwara, Vakil said some people of disintegrating tendencies are hell bent upon to create a wedge between the people of the three regions and people of different religions in the state

but his party will fight tooth and nail such disruptive forces and foil their nefarious designs.

Hitting out at both the central and state governments for applying discriminatory yardstick in crusade against corruption Vakil said if National Investigative Agency (NIA) and Enforcement Directorate are probing charges against separatist leaders and put them behind bars then why Mehbooba Government in Jammu & Kashmir is not reopening the corruption cases of both sitting and former MLAs, MLCs and ministers to show equal treatment to both mainstream and separatist leaders in crusade against corruption.

He alleged the even some incumbent ministers holding key portfolios and legislators are amassing wealth.

Reiterating that dynasty politics mainly propagated by mainstream political parties particularly National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is the mother of all ills, Vakil asked Feroq Abdullah that why he himself and his son Omar Abdullah were silent over autonomy when they were ministers in the central government and dared Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti that why she did not utter a single word over her party's demand for "Self Rule" when she was Member Parliament and currently as Chief Minister of the State.

ZULFKAR

attended by Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA Mehraj-ud-din Khan, Director FCS&CA Kashmir Nasir Khan Wani, Director FCS&CA Jammu R A Inqalabi, Deputy Secretary Arun Kotwal, Joint Director FCS&CA Jammu, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors of Jammu division and other senior officers of the department.

During the meeting, the Minister discussed district wise target reports and asked Directors Jammu/Kashmir to ensure that the variation in the target report is reduced to zero for both PHH and NPHH category immediately. He asked the officers to place right beneficiary in right category to avoid any disturbances during ration distribution.

While discussing the progress on trial run of Supply Chain Management in the state, the Minister said that on December 1, 2017, Supply Chain Management will be made operational in the state adding that all the related work needs to be completed before its formal launching.

Regarding Aadhar seeding, Zulfkar seeks district wise report and asked for achieving the given targets in 20 days. "All the generated Aadhar should be seeded immediately as it has been made mandatory for receiving ration March 31, 2018 onwards. Taking note of slow progress of Aadhar seeding especially in Kashmir division, the Minister fixed the targets for districts and asked the concerned to complete it within 15 days.

To strengthen the monitoring system in the department by geo-tagging of its assets through Geographical Integration System (GIS), the Minister sought the district wise details of capturing of GIS Information of Fair Price Shops. While discussing the progress made on this important aspect of monitoring system, Zulfkar asked for completing the same within 2 days.

Speaking about the installation of Point of Sales (PoS) machines on pilot basis in government food outlets, Fair Price Shops (FPS), the Minister said that PoS installation will be launched on November 12 from district Samba.

For entering the details of the Vigilance Monitoring Committee on the portal, the Minister directed the concerned to complete the task within 7 days. While lauding the efforts of Assistant Directors, who have shown good performance in capturing of GIS Information of Fair Price Shops and completing the task of Vigilance Monitoring Committee, the Minister asked the Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA to award appreciation letters to those deserving officers.

On the slow progress on distribution of ration cards to the beneficiaries especially in Jammu division, the Minister directed the concerned to distribute the same to the consumers immediately under all categories. The Minister was informed that in Kashmir division, the work on distribution of ration cards has almost been completed.

During the meeting, all the Assistant Directors were directed to forward daily report of Ration Cards being distributed in their respective districts to the appointed nodal officers. Zulfkar also asked the nodal officers to ensure the distribution in given time frame.

Regarding the establishment of Call Centre Cum Command and Control Room in the Directorates, it was informed to the Minister that both the directors have visited Hyderabad to check the existing system there and soon the work on the same would be initiated in the state.

In order to maintain the old records of the department especially of Trade & Store, the Minister asked for digitalization of records for future reference.

Speaking to the officers, the Minister stressed on strict adherence of instructions issued in the meetings and said the decisions taken in the review meetings should be implemented in letter and spirit. He also emphasized on need for making collective efforts in improving the functioning of the department.

ULB

been addressed by the authorities till date.

He said that the Government recently transferred the Director, Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir, to Srinagar Municipal Corporation without posting any substitute, rendering the department headless.

"Our service issues, matters are not being disposed off in the Directorate, leaving the employees high and dry," he said.

He said that the employees recently held a convention where it was made clear that the employees of the Department will wait till November 11, 2017 for disposal of their pending issues and posting of a Director.

He said that the Forum during the General Council meeting on November 7 decided that on 13 and 14 November, there will complete strike and protest in all Municipal Institutions of the Kashmir Division and on 15 Nov all the employees will assemble at Press Enclave and proceed for a march towards the Divisional Commissioner office, where a Memorandum of demands will be handed over by the President.

"In case the pending demands already submitted to the Government are not redressed, the Employee's Forum will have no other option left, but to halt the services in all Municipal Bodies of the Kashmir Division alongwith the Directorate and to proceed for peaceful protests, strike for redressal of their pending genuine issues from 13 November, with full support from EJAC (Q) headed by Abdul Qayoom Wani & Srinagar Municipal Corporation headed by Mohd Maqbool Malik," he said.

HPCL provides Rs 35 Lakh material to 5 schools under CSR

Zulfkar hails Petro Company; asks others to follow suit

RAJOURI, NOVEMBER 08: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs & Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today gave away furniture, computers and other material worth Rs 35 lakh to 5 Government Schools of Darhal provided by Hindustan Petroleum Private Limited under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The Minister also conducted extensive tour of his home constituency to reach out to the people and listen to the people's issues by holding series of public grievances redress camps.

The Minister was accompanied by a team of district and sectoral officers headed by deputy Commissioner, Dr Shahid Iqbal Chowdhary. Several problems and demands raised by the people were resolved by the Minister on the spot.

The material was provided to Government Higher Secondary School, Kandi, Government Higher Secondary School Kotranka, Government High School Mohra, Government Girls High

School Budhal and Government Higher Secondary School Dhangri. The aid included 659 desks, 23 Computers, 23 Smart Boards, 6 Water Coolers, 1 Water Filter, 12 Filing cabinet, 45 chairs, 15 Library racks & Smart Podium.

Hailing the HPCL for aiding schools of the remote area, the Minister said that is for the first time that a petroleum company launched such a big programme in Darhal under CSR.

Zulfkar Ali informed that the aid for improving infrastructure in Government Schools of Darhal has been provided after he took up the matter with Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan and the higher authorities of the petroleum company. He extended gratitude to Union Minister and HPCL for the generous support.

The Minister called upon other corporate houses to follow the suit adding that it is the responsibility of all public and private corporate sector houses to come forward and supplement the efforts of the government in serving the society.



He said that the assistance in the form of computers and other material will help these schools to improve education standard and ensure that the students do not suffer for the lack of modern teaching system. He added that

more schools of the district would be provided assistance in the same manner in near future.

On the occasion, the Minister also announced to provide IPads to the students of of Darhal constituency out of

his CDF who have secured 75% above marks in the Board exams.

Director FCS & CA Mohammad Azam Inqalabi, Senior Superintendent of Police Yougal Manhas, Secretary Gujjar & Bakerwal Advisory Board Mukhtar Ahmed, Deputy Director Tribal Affairs Suman Bala, Deputy General Manager Retail, HPCL Krishan Lal and district Officers of Rajouri accompanied the Minister.

Meanwhile, the Minister held series of public grievance redress camps in Rajouri and Kotranka areas and listened to the issues of people.

The local people highlighted issues related to power sector, PHE, roads, health and education. The Minister issued strict instructions to concerned departments for redressing all their issues on priority.

The locals also projected the problem of shortage of staff in Sub Centre Kandra, demanded power transformer for Dhandote, new Sub Centre at Khari Galli, water supply scheme for Gotu, upgrad-

ing of Schools in Larkoti, blacktopping of Larkoti road, construction of Draman Mental bridge, installation of 2 transformers at Draman, posting of adequate staff in Larkuti schools, installation of transformer at Jori Kewal, provision of power supply to Khawas, Bainambal, Gadyog, Kanthol from PDD Feeder Kha-was instead of Kotranka Feeder.

Responding to the demands, the Minister directed the concerned departments to meet their demands in shortest possible time.

During the tour, the Minister also laid foundation stone of various developmental projects in Dharal constituency. Zulfkar Ali said that government is committed to develop rural belts and it has completed many projects and more are underway to benefit the people. He said that it is for the first time that Darhal constituency has received more than Rs 850 crore funds in two years for various developmental projects. He added that more projects for the area are in pipeline.

Abdul Haq inspects IWMP works in Samba District

Says Water, Soil Conservation collective responsibility of the society

SAMBA, NOVEMBER 08: Minister for Rural Development Panchayati Raj, law and Justice Abdul Haq on Wednesday visited Samba district to inspect various works taken up under different schemes of the Rural development Department.

The minister was accompanied by Chief Executive Officer IWMP Farooq Ahmad Rather, Director RDD RK Bhatt, Programme Officer IWMP Dr Sunil Sharma, BDO Badi Brahmana and BDO Vijaypora.

While inspecting various ongoing projects, the minister directed the officials to complete the works well in time and maintain high standard of quality during the construction work. He said an asset created by the department should sustain for a longer duration and hence quality should be maintained. Minister said whatever



the work may be, the officers and field staff should work religiously and maintain high standards of work so that the future generations remember our contribution. He said it is the duty of this generation to conserve natural resources including water so that our next generation doesn't suffer owing to our wrong doings.

He said under IWMP the department has institutionalized the efforts to conserve water and soil resource and stated that it is duty of every

individual to conserve these resources for our own benefit and for the benefit of next generation.

At Block Bari Brahmana, the minister inspected the works on a pond being constructed under IWMP at an estimated cost of Rs 8.50 lakhs. The minister interacted with the officers and with the locals to get feedback regarding the quality of work.

Later the minister inspected the renovation work of Ponds at Bari Khad, Badori and Nawa Panchayats in

Bari Brahmana block. The renovation works of these Ponds are also being executed under IWMP.

Minister said the development of Ponds under IWMP has been successful in conservation of water and the water table around the ponds also increases.

At Salmeri Panchayat in Vijaypora Block, the minister also inspected construction work of a passenger shed being constructed under MGN-REGA and 14th FC at the cost of Rs 2.50 lakhs.

DC Srinagar reviews functioning of local admin at Pantha Chowk, Khanyar Tehsils

Calls for immediate, sustained maintenance of Hari Parbat Fort

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 08: Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah Wednesday visited Pantha Chowk and Khanyar Tehsil Offices to take stock of facilities being made available to the public of these areas.

During the DC's visit, concerned Revenue officials at the Tehsils were issued strict instructions for ensuring prompt public service delivery and public grievances redress. Instructions for setting up a waiting area for the general public and ensuring maintenance of sanitation at the Offices were also issued on the occasion.

The DC also instructed the concerned Revenue officer to identify land for construction of a new Tehsil office



at Pantha Chowk.

Dr. Shah later toured Khanyar Tehsil and inspected various locations, including the Hari Parbat Fort and the Badamwari garden.

Concerned officials were asked to ensure maintenance of the garden and to make sustained efforts to restore

its pristine glory. Several delegations met the DC and projected demands. The DC noted their concerns and assured to look into the issues.

Meanwhile, the DC conducted extensive tour around the Hari Parbat fort area and expressed displeasure over maintenance of its surround-

ings. He called for taking up maintenance and restoration works at the historic fort to retain its attraction and prevent damages to it.

Dr. Shah also said the Forest Department will be instructed to launch a massive plantation drive around the fort area for its beautification.

DDC Kupwara reviews winter preparedness, snow clearance plan

KUPWARA, NOVEMBER 08: District Development Commissioner Kupwara, Khalid Jahangir today convened a meeting of officers and engineers to review the action plan regarding winter preparedness, snow clearance and stock and supply position of food grains in the district.

The meeting was informed that men and machinery have been kept ready to meet any eventuality during winter months. It was given out that a joint control room at district headquarter is being established and snow clearance machines have been kept in a position of readiness. The MED has been entrusted to clear 541 Kms with 11 available snow ploughs besides 39 Km town roads. The R&B is given the target to clear snow from 598.92 kms, asked to gear up their field agencies and establish a control room at MED headquarter at Bomhama for help the general public with contact number 7051598206(AEE MED).

It was given out that FCS and CA



department has completed 100% winter stocking in border areas, while requirements are being met out for 85 locations up to November 15th in snowbound areas. The health department has made available 78 ambulances for meeting any eventuality.

The District Development Commissioner directed the PHE, PDD authorities for creating a dependable mechanism to ensure services as per the schedule. The health department was directed to ensure proper sanitation measures in

and around the health institutions and adequate stock of medicines and maintenance of different kinds of medicines for the winter months. He sought close coordination among different departments for snow clearance operation and prompt response to meet out any emergency during approaching months.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner Pir Muzafer Hussain, Assistant Commissioner Revenue besides concerned officers of essential services were present in the meeting.

Div Com calls for streamlining Hajj, Umrah services



SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 08: With private Hajj and Umrah services experiencing a boom, the Divisional Commissioner Baseer Ahmad Khan today asked the private operators to adhere to guidelines, rules and regulations so that maximum benefit is provided to the prospective pilgrims and the general public.

The Divisional Commissioner was speaking at an interaction session with members of Jammu and Kashmir Association of Hajj and Umrah companies. DIG Central, Joint Director Information and other officials were also present on the occasion.

The Div Com said that the companies are doing a noble job and it puts extra responsibility on them to ensure better services. He called on the association to adopt fair trade practice together with greater transparency and accountability so that any element of fraud is prevented.

He said that government will look into the

demand for allocating space for Umrah pilgrims at the airport and possibility of starting a weekly international flight from Sheikh-ul-Alam International Airport.

President of the Association, Feroz Ahmad said that the private Hajj and Umrah services have emerged as a fastest growing sector in the state as during last year alone around 14000-15000 pilgrims went for Umrah. He said that the private operators also sent 2000 pilgrims on Hajj during the same period.

It was informed that at present 80 companies are associated with the trade with 61 being members of the association. He said that the sector has generated huge employment opportunities for the people.

DIG Central Ghulam Hassan Bhat said that police will help address all the genuine grievances of the private companies. He cautioned against misleading people with regard to lack of services.

DEO Bandipora issues training schedule

BANDIPORA, NOVEMBER 08: According to District Election Officer (DEO) Bandipora, the training for EROs, AEROS, Supervisors, DLMTs, ACLMTs and BLOs of the district would be held on 9th and 10th of November, 2017 from 10:30 to 04:00 PM.

As per the schedule, the training for 9-Gurez and 10-Bandipora will be held on 09-11-2017 at the meeting hall of DC office Bandipora, while as the training programme for 11-Sonawari will be conducted on 10-11-2017 at BDO office Sumbal.

All the concerned have been asked to ensure their participation in the training programme as per the schedule.

Governor inaugurates Jammu Philatelic Festival cum Exhibition

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 08: Governor N.N. Vohra inaugurated the Jammu Philatelic Festival cum Exhibition which has been organized by the Department of Posts, Government of India, at the Kala Kendra, here today.

Governor released a Special Cover of the India Post on Gharana Wetland which is situated in Jammu region and known for the large variety of migratory birds which visit this waterbody. He complimented Sh. Sanjay Sharan,

Chief Post Master General and his colleagues for organizing the Philatelic Festival cum Exhibition and for popularising the Gharana Wetland through its Special Cover.

Governor observed that the Department of Posts, which is one of the oldest institutions in the country, has rendered invaluable contribution towards development of the country. He urged Sh. Saran to involve students and general public to take up philately as a



hobby and collect postal materials including letters, post cards, stamps etc which would, in later years, comprise historical material which

reflects J&K's rulers, economy, political personalities etc.

Governor expressed concern that the number of migratory birds visiting the Gharana Wetland may not be increasing due to certain anthropogenic factors which are destroying its ecosystem. He urged the State Forest authorities to conduct conservation studies in respect of this wetland which has

the potential of becoming a major tourist attraction in the State.

Governor was presented "My Stamp" on Mata Vaishno Devi. "My Stamp" is the brand name for personalized sheets of Postage Stamps of India Post.

Governor presented prizes to the winners of the "Dhai Akhar" letter writing competition which had been organized by the Department of Posts. In the category of up to 18 years, the 1st prize was won by Ms. Kasak Katoch of Army

Public School, Kaluchak; 2nd prize was won by Ms. Sanya Mahajan of KC International School and 3rd prize was won by Mr. Kanhaiya Lal Sharma of Government Higher Secondary School Vijaypur, Samba. In the above 18 years category the winner was Mr. Hamid Ali Shah from the University of Jammu. Sh. Sanjay Saran, Chief Post Master General, in his introductory remarks briefed the gathering about the services being offered by the Department and

about the main attractions of this two day Philatelic Exhibition.

The Welcome Address was presented by Sh. Gaurav Srivastava, Director Postal Services, and Vote of Thanks was given by Sh. G.R. Parrey, Sr. Superintendent Post Offices, Jammu.

Sh. H.K. Verma, CGM, Telecom, Jammu Circle, Sh. Kuldeep Khoda, former CVC of J&K, teachers, school children and others were among those present on the occasion.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K

SETBACK TO SAFFRON PRODUCTION

Saffron production is a very old agricultural exercise of Kashmir valley. In the entire Kashmir Valley, there is a specific area in Pampore region, an alluvial land that is the only place where saffron is cultivated. The peculiarity of the soil on which saffron is grown is exclusive to the area and nowhere else in the valley the saffron is grown. In ancient times saffron was one of the prime commodities that were carried along the famous Silk Route to different parts of the world. At one time it was the mainstay of Kashmir economy.

Saffron production is an art and the farmers who have been carrying the profession of saffron cultivation from generation to generation are adepts in the art. It is a purple coloured flower that blooms in late autumn and is picked by hand and then treated in a way known to the farmers. We gave reports that this year the saffron production will fall by about 90 per cent which will be a big setback to the economy of the State and to the income of individual farmers. The reason given by the farmers is that the Government did not provide irrigation facilities at proper time which caused damage to the crop.

Actually in 2010 the Mission Saffron was launched by the State Government with the collaboration of the Union Government. A sum of rupees 400 crore was allotted to modernization and improvement of saffron cultivation in Kashmir. But as ill luck would have it, the scheme instead of proving a boon to the saffron cultivation became their bane. Never before have had these agriculturists faced such a disastrous year. The complaint of most of the farmers of the locality is that the Government under the Mission Saffron project had decided to dig 109 tube wells to provide water to the crop. Instead of 109 only 90 wells have been dug and most of these are dysfunctional. The authorities did not pay attention to the urgent need of providing water to the crops with the result that the flowering did not take place. Some of the farmers went to the extent of saying that the mad scheme of bringing in modern cultivation formula was disastrous and if they had stuck to the traditional ways of saffron cultivation they would not have to face the failure of the crop. They said that they were advised to use cow dung as manure but it proved disastrous.

The question is did the Government weigh the pros and cons of the scheme called Mission Saffron before implementing it actually on the ground? As said in the beginning saffron is a very delicate flower and even the slightest mistake or mishandling will spoil the crop. That is precisely what happened. In a mad rush for modernization and with the only one motive of producing more quantitatively, great damage has been done to the industry. Now, before everything else the Government should consider the ways and means how the traditional methods of cultivation can be revived and reserved so that this fabulous industry is not subjected to wanton destruction.

However, it is also important that the Government should order departmental enquiry into the reasons for the failure of the crop. If it was owing to draught and deficiency of water for irrigation, the reasons should be made public and corrective measures should be taken so that this does not happen again. It is also important to ensure that the environs and the air in the locality are free of pollution and also the chemicals if used as manure need to be tested in the laboratory. We have apprehensions that spurious chemicals might have been supplied to the farmers. Therefore a full enquiry should be conducted into this episode and the farmers who have suffered more than 60 per cent loss should be given financial support.

Veterinary University at Jammu

► Rajan Gandhi

With our PM Modi's aim to attain a considerable growth rate in agriculture sector, the importance of animal husbandry sector in generating wealth and employment has to be equally emphasized. India ranks 1st in respect of cattle and buffalo, 2nd in goats, 3rd in sheep and 7th in poultry population in the world. India has 57% of the world's buffalo population. The contribution of income generated through milk alone is higher than paddy, wheat and sugarcane. Therefore, this sector can be designated as the most potential of the few growth sectors of the agricultural economy of the country and the future of India's agricultural export trade rests heavily on livestock products. Maintenance of ISO 9002 standards in many of the organizations/institutions associated with import/export certification related to livestock products is a must. In India, 70% of the rural households own livestock and animal husbandry sector not only plays an important role in the national economy and in the socio-economic development of the country, it also contributes significantly in supplementing family incomes and generating gainful employment in the rural sectors, particularly among the landless, small and marginal farmers and women, besides providing cheap nutritional food to millions of people. Livestock provides raw material by products such as hides, skins, blood, bone, fat etc. The proportionate contribution of livestock sector to national GDP has substantially increased while the contribution of agriculture sector to GDP has recorded a fall, on an average; livestock contribute some 40 percent of agricultural GDP!!!

The first report of the National Knowledge Commission 2006 recognized the importance of veterinary education. With the existing Veterinary Colleges, veterinary doctors are not only insufficient to meet the demand of the state departments, educational/research establishments and private sector but also far short is the number of veterinarians available to cater to the need of vast livestock population as per the recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture. As the agricultural universities are mainly stressing crop agriculture and the veterinary and livestock husbandry were getting sidelined, the dreams of tapping livestock sector to realize full potential of white revolution and other allied revolutions are not getting on track. The budget of different agricultural universities meant for veterinary sector during six decades puts a dismal picture. Subsequently, various veterinary colleges, faculties, institutions and animal farms etc. in different agricultural universities in the country were disaffiliated from those universities and reorganized into independent veterinary universities. The first veterinary university was established in Tamil Nadu in 1989, after the disaffiliation of veterinary,



animal and fisheries science components from Tamil Nadu Agriculture University. Growth and development of the then Tamil Nadu Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Science University has been breathtaking and even its fisheries component bloomed into an independent Fisheries Science University which is also the first of its kind in India. Now most of the states have their own veterinary universities which are established by the same method as adopted while creating veterinary university in Tamil Nadu.

But the state of Jammu and Kashmir as usual has been delaying the process of creating separate veterinary university on one pretext or another which are far from facts. Official apathy, insensitivity towards animals and vested elements have made it sure that no veterinary university comes into existence in our state. Seriousness on this issue can be gauged from the fact that though VCI (Veterinary Council of India) came into existence in 1984 and all states except Jammu and Kashmir are part of it though our state went ahead with its own State Veterinary Council in the year 2000 which is yet to be passed by legislature with the cascading result of total chaos in admissions and some other outside state universities even not recognizing degrees of our students as such students facing hardships for PG courses outside state as well as problems in getting jobs due to non affiliation with VCI. Planning Commission of India Advisory Committee on Animal Husbandry and Dairying had already recommended the creation of state veterinary university in Jammu and Kashmir. According to PCI panel the setting up of the veterinary university would help to "channelize the various scattered efforts being made to promote the livestock production, marketing, economic returns while taking care of environment through need-based long term strategic activities." Besides this PCI Advisory Committee is also of the opinion that establishment of the university would be very helpful in advancing research and development in vet-

erinary field in context of deficit poultry, mutton, dairy products and value addition. The fact is that creation of veterinary university in Jammu has no financial implications for land or construction of buildings etc because the "The Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry", Veterinary College at Ranbir Singh Pura, Jammu, has sufficient land and buildings for this purpose. The demand of veterinary and animal science university is not for a particular region but for our state. The already existing veterinary and animal science teaching institutions and livestock farms at SKUAST Jammu can be disaffiliated from them and organized into one state veterinary university.

Other aspect is that the Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir was a net exporter of live sheep/goat, desi poultry and desi ghee to neighboring state of Punjab at the time of independence, but now there is huge gap of demand and supply in live sheep/goat, milk, egg, feed and fodder. As per the 19th livestock census conducted in the year 2012 there is steady increase of livestock population in Jammu and Kashmir except in Ladakh region. The total livestock and poultry population of our state as in public domain is 1,74,74,551, total bovines being 3,591,865 (3,445,154-rural +146,711-urban). Our state is in the 5th position with regard to sheep population, 1st place in Yak population, 2nd place with regard to horses/ponies and mules, 6th place with regard to donkeys and 17th place with regard to poultry in the country. However, despite such resources the veterinary science sector is being compromised in our state by agriculture universities. Shortage of regular staff at veterinary college of SKUAST Jammu along with insufficient grants for research work, even emergency medicines have to be purchased from open market by owners of the animals. No blood analysis lab is functional with the result difficulty in proper diagnosis. This is despite the fact that not a single seat of B.V.Sc. & AH goes vacant in this college, yet not even a single paid seat goes vacant

but even this fee collected is diverted to agricultural university. Pet care is a major industry right now but the financial constraints have put this college into precarious position with senior faculty working hard and trying their best to motivate students and junior faculty members to remain focused despite all odds.

With a pool of more than 1200 unemployed veterinarians and 400 plus posts lying vacant in Animal and Sheep Husbandry Departments, moreover with a crumbling tourism industry due to unrest in valley it's high time State Government focus its attention to this highly productive growth sector immediately. With more than 50% livestock at Jammu region and being the gateway to the import of all livestock from neighboring states Veterinary University is the need of hour at Jammu and as such State Government should immediately initiate steps to grant the SKUAST Jammu's veterinary college university status. Government of India is already persuading the case with the state government to disaffiliate veterinary colleges from agricultural universities to upgrade them as university and the sooner it is granted the better it will be for the farmers, nomads and unemployed youth of our state. With the guns blazing at border and war like situation persisting for quite some time now, like human beings of state who are devoid of specialized medical assistance in the absence of AIIMS like institute, our livestock are also suffering due to absence of specialized animal hospital or research centre in the entire state and a Veterinary University at Jammu will be much required soothing balm for hapless animals and border residents. It's time to be part of this vast growth in rural sector without any further hiccups.

"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the ways its animals are treated." ? Mahatma Gandhi.

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100 years of Russian Revolution

► Ben Chacko

November 7, 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the world's first socialist state. In this centenary year of the Russian Revolution, books are being published, op-eds written, and programs broadcast about the dramatic events of 1917 and their impact on the 20th century. In the mainstream media, few look at whether the "Ten Days that Shook the World," when Lenin led the first successful socialist revolution, have helped shape the planet we live on today, or whether they retain the power to shake the world again in years to come.

The revolution is being presented as history-and socialist and communist ideas as done and dusted, dead and buried. How many of us have heard that socialism "doesn't work," that it was tried in Russia and it failed? Of course, the revolution is part of history and it did shape the 20th century. In his book, *The Age of Extremes*, the great Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm even defined his "short 20th century" as 1914-1991, a period almost coterminous with the existence of the Soviet state.

The great events of the century all took place in the context of the global struggle between socialism and capitalism. The rise of fascism was a ruling-class response to the threat of social revolution and the defeat of the Nazis would not

have been possible without the heroic sacrifices made by communists—many of them soldiers in the Red Army, which "tore the guts out of the Nazi war machine," to quote Winston Churchill—but also partisans and resistance fighters in every corner of occupied Europe.

The latter part of the century is held up in the text books as dominated by the "Cold War," supposedly between the democratic West and the wicked and sinister communists. A wider view, encompassing the titanic Third World battles against colonialism, paints a more complex picture. The contributions of communists were again key, as fighters in the front line of national liberation struggles in China, Vietnam, Cuba, South Africa, and many other countries. And the Soviet-led socialist camp was also a supporter of anti-colonial movements the world over, providing everything from diplomatic backing at the United Nations to cash and arms when needed.

To many Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans, the Soviet Union was a friend and ally against domination and exploitation by the so-called "free world."

Much of this history is hidden. Children in our schools are not taught about the millions of victims of British imperialism during the Bengal famine, the "Malayan emergency," or the suppression of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya.

To do so would undermine the myth of a benevolent, enlightened West playing the role of history's good guys, stand-



ing up to the nefarious Reds.

Communists, liberals charge to this day, were guilty of terrible atrocities in Russia, China, and elsewhere. And there is of course no point in seeking to defend the indefensible when Revolutionary Governments had innocent blood on their hands. But that is not the whole story of the later revolutions inspired by that of 1917, which also won tremendous achievements in lifting hundreds of millions out of poverty, spreading education and literacy to populations that were previously illiterate, and massively extending life expectancy through modern sanitation and free

healthcare.

That's not even mentioning the extraordinary cultural and scientific advances made in the Soviet Union, which sent the first human being into space. The impact of the revolution was felt way beyond the socialist countries, who helped found the United Nations and define human rights by pushing for recognition of a universal right to shelter and food, for example, against opposition from the capitalist West.

Britain's National Health Service (NHS), offering healthcare to all free at the point of use, owes much to the inspiration of free healthcare in the So-

viet Union, as does the welfare safety net put in place by the Labour government of 1945-51. Since the triumph of neoliberal ideologies in Britain and the United States in the 1980s, we have seen a mammoth effort to undermine and dismantle our social security system, one which continues in the privatization of the National Health Scheme of UK.

The social democratic compromise of the postwar period was always vulnerable; the interests of working people and the super-rich few who own the banks and the big businesses are simply not compatible. The collapse of socialism in eastern Europe removed the constant

leftward pressure that kept social democracy in western Europe alive. We have since seen a ruthless drive to marketize every service and exploit every natural, human, and social resource beyond remotely sustainable levels—capitalism, as Karl Marx once put it, weeping from every pore with blood and dirt.

If we don't like the poverty and war that are synonymous with modern capitalism, we might think again whether those who say the Russian Revolution "failed" are right. Certainly socialism came to an end in the Soviet Union and the eastern European countries in 1989-91, and there was a capitalist restoration. Yet, though the kings returned to Britain and France after their revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, the liberating ideas those upheavals unleashed were not defeated but have borne fruit around the world ever since.

The overwhelming rejection of a tired, corrupt, and out-of-touch establishment we are seeing now in Britain, across Europe, and in the United States, suggests that capitalism is not delivering and that it can again be challenged.

Revolutions don't proceed according to instruction manuals, and the events of that October night in Russia a hundred years ago are not going to be replicated in London or Washington. But the experiences of the world's first socialist country are of huge and continuing relevance. (IPA)

Demonetisation a 'thoughtless act' of Modi:Rahul



NEW DELHI: Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, on the note ban anniversary, termed demonetisation as a "tragedy" and a "thoughtless act" and alleged that due to it livelihood of millions of honest Indians were destroyed. He said his party stood with all those people who have suffered due to demonetisation, which was announced on November 8, 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Taking a poetic dig at the government, he tweeted in Hindi that even a single tear spelt danger for the government and one has not seen an ocean coming out of the eyes, tagging a picture of some poor people crying while standing in queues. "Demonetisation is a tragedy. We stand with millions of honest Indians, whose lives and livelihoods were destroyed by PM's thoughtless

act," he said on Twitter. "Ek aansu bhi hukumat ke liye khatra hai, tumne dekha nahin aankhon ka samundar hona [Even a single tear is a danger for the government, you have not seen eyes turning into an ocean]," he said in another tweet. To mark the anniversary of note ban, the Congress is observing a "black day" on Wednesday and will hold countrywide protests in the

form of processions, rallies and candle-light marches. The Congress, which described the note ban decision as the "biggest scam" and "the largest government-abetted money laundering scheme", has asked all its State units to organise protests, processions and marches to mark the day. It has also asked all its leaders to participate in such protests and strongly highlight the demerits of

the decision, which it said is a "colossal and completely avoidable failure." The Congress leaders will participate in protests with "Desh Bhugat Raha hai" and "India suffers" as the central theme for the day. Mr. Gandhi will lead a candlelight march in Surat's Chowk Bazar area as part of the Opposition parties' "Black Day" protest in Gujarat's Surat.

Gujarat election: BJP, Congress slug it out to woo Surat traders

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat's business hub of Surat has turned into a political battleground as top leaders jostle with each other to win over the city's traders, whose support can be decisive in the politically crucial Saurashtra region. First off the mark is Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Amit Shah who is meeting with booth-level party workers and then hosting a dinner for city traders on Tuesday night to discuss the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). On Wednesday - which is also the one-year anniversary of the government's shock recall of high-value banknotes - Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi will spend the day with diamond and textile manufacturers and traders to "understand the problems" caused by demonetisation and GST implementation, a senior party leader told Hindustan Times. In the evening, Gandhi will lead a candle-light vigil against demonetisation. In Delhi on the same day, Union

textile minister Smriti Irani will meet a delegation from the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce. The minister had called the traders for a meeting after Gandhi announced his plans to spend a day in Surat to know their "mann ki baat". The BJP is battling a buoyant Congress to retain control of Gujarat and has pulled out all stops to retain the support of several communities, especially businessmen and Patidars. Winning over businessmen in Surat - who mostly come from the Patidar community - is key for any party to dominate the Saurashtra region, which comprises 11 districts and sends 48 legislators to the 182-member state assembly. The Patidars in the city migrated from drought-prone Saurashtra but maintain strong ties to their ancestral villages by sending back money for agriculture. The Congress, which is looking to snatch power from the BJP after 22 years, has focused on brewing



discontent among the Patidar community, who comprise 12% of the state's six crore population, over a demand for quotas in jobs and education. The opposition party has also repeatedly attacked the prime minister over demonetisation and implementation glitches in GST - with Gandhi dubbing it 'Gabbar Singh Tax' at a recent rally. The Congress is also buoyed by Patidar leader Hardik Patel inching closer to the party ahead of polls scheduled for December 9 and 14.

But winning over the Surat traders might not be easy for the opposition party. The diamond and textile traders are from the Leuva sub-caste while Hardik is a leader of the Kadva sub-caste. The two communities have frosty relations. The Leuvas dominate businesses and are spread evenly among various districts of Saurashtra and Gujarat. The Kadvas are numerically less significant, poorer, mostly farmers and are confined to north Gujarat. The trade forums in the city also

appeared split over the high-profile visits. The SGCC had decided to meet all three leaders but both the Federation of Textile Associations and Surat Diamond Association said they were likely to give the meeting with Gandhi a miss. "A delegation has left for Delhi to meet minister Irani on November 8 before GST council November 9 and 10 meet. We would also meet Shah and Gandhi," said SM Shah, the president of SGCC. Manoj Agrawal, the president of the Federation of Textile Associations, said the body had decided to stay away from meeting Gandhi but that individual traders were free to meet the 47-year-old leader. The Surat Diamond Association (SDA) maintained a similar stand. "The association has been in talks with the government over issues related to the GST. The government so far has given a positive response. The association is not going to meet Gandhi. But traders are free to do so," said Shantibhai Dhanani, secretary of the association.

Kolkata nun rape case: Bangladeshi man gets imprisonment till death

KOLKATA: A Kolkata court today sentenced a Bangladeshi man to imprisonment till death for raping a septuagenarian nun during a dacoity at a convent in West Bengal's Ranaghat town two years back, an incident that shocked the conscience of the nation. Additional Sessions Judge Kumkum Sinha Nazrul Islam had yesterday convicted all the six accused - Nazrul Islam, Milan Kumar Sarkar, Ohidul Islam, Mohd Selim Sheikh, Khaleedar Rahman and Gopal Sarkar on different charges over the rape of the nun and dacoity at the Jesus and Mary Convent in Ranaghat town of Nadia district bordering Bangladesh on March 14, 2015. Though the prosecution had accused all the six men of gang rape, the charge was not established and only Nazrul was convicted of rape. The judge sentenced all six convicts, including Nazrul, to 10 years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for criminal conspiracy to commit dacoity at the convent. They were fined Rs 10,000 each, which if unpaid would entail another two-and-half years simple imprisonment for the conspiracy. The court also sentenced five of the six convicts, except Gopal Sarkar, to 10 years RI for committing dacoity at the convent and a fine of Rs 20,000 each, which if unpaid would entail another two-and-half-years simple imprisonment.

Demonetisation aided anti-corruption drive: CBI chief

NEW DELHI: Demonetisation, announced last year by the government, "aided" the CBI in its anti-corruption drive, exposing officials and individuals hoarding illicit cash, according to CBI Director Alok Verma. After the note ban was announced, the agency managed to expose Rs 396 crore of alleged slush funds in 84 cases registered by it relating to illicit currency exchange that took place after the move, CBI spokesperson Abhishek Dayal said here today. Dayal said the CBI director had given top priority to the probe of demonetisation-related cases and directed the team probing them to complete investigation in a time-bound manner. He had also issued directions to ensure that all those guilty of malpractices were brought to book, he said. Demonetisation has significantly aided the CBI in its anti-corruption drive by taking action against the corrupt public servants and individuals hoarding the illegal cash, Dayal said quoting CBI Director Alok Verma. In the 84 cases, which include seven preliminary enquiries, the agency had so far arrested 21 public servants and 26 private persons out of 307 accused (including public servants and private persons) found involved, he said. The cases relate to fraudulent exchange of demonetised notes at commercial banks, co-operative banks, post offices, railways and insurance company, he said. "All branches of the CBI across the country were actively involved in checking corrupt practices being undertaken by unscrupulous persons in connivance with certain public servants and private persons to either illegally convert or deposit high denomination demonetised currency notes," he said. The CBI claimed it was ensured that every information related to such violation of laws should be entertained and examined and if required, cases should be registered. "Demonetised and new currency worth crores and large number of incriminating documents have been recovered so far.

India's stance wavering on Belt and Road initiative, says China

NEW DELHI: A day after Russia's envoy to India said Beijing and New Delhi should resolve their differences on the Belt and Road project, China said on Wednesday that New Delhi's stand on it appeared to be wavering. China again sought to allay India's fears, saying the project, whose key artery goes through that part of Kashmir held by Pakistan, would not change Beijing's "neutral" stand on the issue. "You and your colleagues asked this question before and it shows that India is quite wavering on this issue of the Belt and Road initiative," foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said. "I think you must be very clear since the Belt and Road initiative was proposed by President Xi Jinping progress has been made smoothly with strong outcomes." On Tuesday, Russian ambassador to India Nikolay Kudashev said there should be a dialogue between India and China over the issue. "We will favour China and India coming to some sort of understanding bilaterally for preferred routes, ways and means of communications, of connectivity," he said. Hua was reacting to question about the envoy's remarks. "We believe that the Belt and Road initiative will create more room for China's opening up and development. It also presents more opportunities for economic development. And it does not involve territorial disputes." China has an ambitious plan to connect Asia, Africa and

Europe through a maze of roads and waterways. Some analysts say there is more to it than just economics. India has opposed the Belt and Road, whose CPEC cuts through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir which New Delhi claims as its own. India in May skipped a mega conference organised by China solely because of the CPEC. Hua said China hopes "countries and parties with shared vision will work with us to allow practical cooperation to bring more benefits to our peoples". "CPEC does not involve territorial dispute" China said it was open to inclusive cooperation on its Belt and Road Initiative, reiterating that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which is a part of the project does not involve any territorial disputes as claimed by India. "We remain quite open and inclusive to cooperation involving the BRI," Hua said. "The BRI will bring benefits to more countries along the BRI. We also said many CPEC corridor is an economic cooperation not targeted any third party and does not involve territorial dispute."

Juvenile suspect in Gurugram schoolboy murder sent to 3 days CBI custody

NEW DELHI: The CBI on Wednesday said a senior student is believed to have murdered a seven-year-old student of Ryan International School in Gurugram on September 8 in a bid to postpone exams and a parent-teachers meeting scheduled for that day. The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) has awarded three-day custody of the child in conflict with law to the CBI. Over a month after the CBI took over the probe into the murder, it called for a press conference on November 8. The victim, a Class II student, was found murdered in the school's washroom. The police arrested school bus conductor Ashok Kumar and two senior officials of the school management. The murder triggered protests from parents and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar requested the Union government to order a CBI probe into the killing. A CBI official told reporters on Wednesday that a Class XI student of the school was apprehended on Tuesday night in connection with the case. He had carried a knife to the school on the fateful day. Not pre-planned: CBI The CBI said the murder did not appear



to be pre-planned. "It looks like the deceased child just was at the wrong place at the wrong time." The CBI ruled out the possibility of a sexual assault on the victim. "No sexual assault theory came out during our investigation," it said. The suspect is lodged in Kingsway Camp in New Delhi. Three days custody The JJB awarded three-day custody of the child in conflict with law to the CBI. The Board also directed that the suspect be treated as minor. The boy will be allowed to be questioned between 7 am and 6 pm in the presence of a JJB member. He will have to be produced before the Board in Gurugram on Saturday. The CBI said Kumar was still in judicial custody and he had not been given a clean chit yet. The father of the suspect has claimed that his son was innocent and he was wrongly framed in the case.

RJD legislator booked for assaulting policemen in Bihar's Bhojpur

ARA: A Rashtriya Janata Dal lawmaker has been booked for allegedly misbehaving with policemen and obstructing them from discharging their duty by "using force" in west Bihar's Bhojpur district, officials said on Wednesday. A police officer in Ara, the district headquarters of Bhojpur 55 km west of Patna, said a first information report was registered on Monday against Saroj Yadav - an MLA from Barhara constituency in the district - and his more than 20 supporters. "They have been accused of assaulting policemen and forcibly freeing some persons, who had earlier been detained for violating traffic rules," JP Singh, the station house officer (SHO) of town police station, said. Bhojpur superintendent of police Awakash Kumar confirmed registration of the FIR and said the police would investigate the matter. Yadav, however, refuted the allegations against him and said he has been implicated in the case. The FIR was lodged late Tuesday evening and not on Monday as claimed by the police, he claimed. "I had already filed a petition in a court anticipating that I would be implicated in the case on Tuesday morning," Yadav added. The district police association has demanded the withdrawal of the bodyguard



and house guard of the RJD legislator. This is not the first time that an RJD legislator is in the eye of the storm. RJD MLA from Karakat, Sanjay Kumar Singh Yadav, was booked for allegedly hurling caste slurs and assaulting a government school headmaster in Rohtas district in September this year. He was also accused of threatening 14 other teachers for their alleged failure to arrange two buses for RJD chief Lalu Prasad's anti-BJP rally in Patna on August 27. The party's legislator from Nawada, Raj Ballabh Yadav, is languishing in jail for allegedly abducting and raping a minor schoolgirl on February 6 last year. And, former minister and RJD legislator from Belaganj, Surendra Yadav, was in the news when he sustained burn injuries during a brawl at a confectionery shop in Gaya last December.

Dense fog leads to car pile-ups on Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida, six injured

NOIDA: Six people were injured when 13 vehicles were caught in a pile-up on the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida's Dankaur area due to low visibility on Wednesday morning, police said, as commuters in several parts of the national capital region were affected by this year's worst spell of air pollution. Dankaur's station house officer Farmood Ali Pundir said collisions took place on both sides of the expressway near the under construction eastern peripheral flyway where lanes have been closed and barricades have been laid. Five vehicles on their way to Agra and eight were going to Delhi collided on the expressway, said police. "There are reflectors near the eastern peripheral flyway, which is under construction. People could not see the barricades due to low visibility and ran over it. All the vehicles hit bumper to bumper," he added. Pundir said six people received minor injuries and were shifted to Kailash Hospital where they were discharged after first aid. None of the



persons received any critical injury. The vehicles involved in the collisions included a Toyota Innova, Mahindra Scorpio, Hyundai Xcent, Maruti Ertiga and others. "Seven cars are still on the spot due to severe dents, while six immediately moved from the spot. Men and machinery have been pressed to move them away," Pundir said. Gautam Budh Nagar superintendent of police

(rural) Suniti said they have taken cognizance of the matter. "We will ensure deployment of police personnel at the spot, besides more reflectors, will be installed to avoid such accidents in future," the officer said. Nine people were killed when a truck ploughed through a crowd that had gathered around an accident site at a bridge on the Bathinda-Rampur Phul road in Punjab early on

Wednesday. And seven people were injured on the NH-9 near Odhan village of Haryana's Sirsa district in a pile-up involving six vehicles. Several parts of north India, and in particular New Delhi, suffer from a dip in temperature during this time of the year that traps air pollution causing a number of medical emergencies due to breathing difficulty. The fog that hits the region also hits the road, rail and air travel as flights are diverted or cancelled and train schedules disrupted. Dense smog on the National Highway-9, which connects Haryana and its neighbouring Punjab with the national capital, affected the schedule of long-distance trains and state roadways buses on Wednesday. Trains from Punjab's Bathinda to Delhi via Sirsa and Hisar ran late by an hour and the Haryana Roadways cancelled early morning long-route buses to avoid accidents amid the smog. A senior railway official said the schedule of nearly 120 trains has been affected.

BRUSHING TEETH IS GREAT BUT DO NOT GET CARRIED AWAY, SAY EXPERTS

It's easy to forget to take care of your teeth unless they start giving you sleepless nights. Even little things like not spending too much time brushing and avoiding carbonated drinks can go a long way in ensuring dental care in winters, says an expert.

Sagrika Shukla, a visiting consultant at Clove Dental, says that teeth need extra care in winters just like the rest of the body. Here, she shares what you can do to maintain dental health.

*** Not more than 2-3 minutes**

It's good to brush your teeth properly but do not get carried away. ADA (American Dental Association) recommends brushing for not more than two-three minutes. Over brushing your teeth can cause sensitivity.

*** No to carbonated drinks**



We all are a little hungrier in winters, but choose hot beverages over acidic carbonated drinks which tend to erode teeth and lead to sensitivity.

*** Warm salt water to the rescue**

Sipping on cider? Or enjoying spicy treats? Canker sores can actually set in and ruin your fun. If you're already suffering, try swishing your mouth with warm salt water. It helps clean the sores and ensures faster healing.

*** Keep tab on sweet intake**

We are all at our glutenous best in winters. But do try to cut down on your sugar intake as a lot of sweet combined with poor water intake increases the chances of developing cavities, especially in winter.

Peruvian flavours, meals in a bowl: Kunal Vijayakar on food trends for 2017

In India, financial experts are trying to anticipate the impact of demonetisation in 2017. In the United States, political pundits are trying to predict what the most unpredictable President elect has up his sleeve. In Europe, no one can portend the impact that Italy's political turmoil might have on the EU or whether the extreme right will rule France in the next few months. Each stomping ground has its own entanglement and burden. And I have my own.

My predicament – what are the food trends going to be like, in the coming year? There have been prophecies and prognosis about what the food world can expect from 2017. Most have predicted the death of pasta. Ostensibly, in the last five years, pasta sales have dropped 8% in Australia, 13% in Europe and have been slayed by 25% in Italy, its home turf.

As pasta suffers agonal respiration, a new generation of chefs across the world are getting personal, immediate and intimate with their roots. They are exploring the culinary traditions from their ethnic background. Yes, the gastro-nomic soothsayers decree that ethnic cuisine will make a stronger impression. Nay, they have already started.

Take Peruvian food, for instance. Five years ago, the legendary chef Ferran Adrià foretold that Peru held the key to "the future of gastronomy", and then chef Alain Ducasse gave his raw, acidic nod to the 'Ceviche' – and Peruvian cuisine exploded in London, and in the rest of the modern civilisation.

Similarly, Jewish chefs in New York are bringing food from their mothers' tables to gourmet plates. These are menus that are steeped in tradition, featuring cured meats, smoked fish, and Matzah meals.

Mediterranean food was always high on the list of connoisseurs, but its first cousin, Middle Eastern food (beyond kebabs, hummus and zatar) is now a rage. Even Caribbean staples, like jerk chicken, Cubanos and vacafrita (crispy beef), lechon (roast pig) and papas rellenas (potato croquettes), are gracing the list of international favourites.

Here's another divination. Second guessers share a hunch that bowl meals, like the Korean bibimbap and Japanese ramen will overshadow food on a plate.

As food turns casual, where meals are eaten in front of the TV/in your bed/standing at a party, and diners play favourites with Asian food and Moroccan food plates have given way to bowls and coupés. Coupés, of course, are semi-bowl, semi-plate; a shallow bowl, or a deep plate, depending on how you are looking.

From Buddha bowls to smoothie bowls and quinoa bowls to congee bowls - they are all trending. And the art lies in how chefs populate these bowls. A bit of lean protein, alongside healthy vegetables, maybe an element of carbohydrate, all drizzled with dressing or sauce or a curry. It is healthy and well-balanced.

There's another monomania on the horizon, one that I haven't fully befriended as yet: plant butchery. Plant butchery is the art of engineering plant protein like soy, peas, chickpeas, etc. to mimic the fibrous, juicy texture and taste of flesh, like chicken, ham, meatballs, minced beef, steak – even seafood. In essence, making plants look and taste exactly like meat, will rage.

But these are all paths, styles, movement, and drifts. What about actual taste? They all say it will be the deadly combination of heat and baited.

Heat and sweet have always baited each other like sensual, passionate lovers. Coitus of two very opposite flavour profiles, ending into one culinary explosion. We, in India, have mixed heat and sweet forever. At its most basic, this combination comes across when we rub a guava with chilli powder or the sweet and spice of a Gujarati mango chunda. That's the flavour the world's waiting to experience in the next year. And honestly, so am I.

Suffering from mental illness? Adopt a pet

If you suffer from any mental illness, pets can provide them with unconditional support as well as help manage stigma, a research suggests. The study found that the consistent presence and close physical proximity of their pets can provide an immediate source of calm and therapeutic benefit for people with mental health conditions.

"The people we spoke to through the course of this study felt their pet played a range of positive roles such as helping them to manage stigma associated with their mental health by providing acceptance without judgement," said lead author Helen Brooks from University of Manchester in Britain.

For 60% of study participants, pets played a central role in the social networks of people managing a long-term mental health problem. "Pets were also considered particularly useful during times of crisis. Pets provided a unique form of validation through unconditional support, which they were often not receiving from other family or social relationships," Brooks added.

According to the participants, one reason for this was that their pet helped by distracting them from symptoms and upsetting experiences such as hearing voices or suicidal thoughts. Participants from the study were quoted as saying: "I felt in a sense that my cat was familiar, in that he understood or was an extension of my thoughts."

However, despite the identified benefits of pet ownership, pets were neither considered nor incorporated into the individual care plans for people with mental conditions, the researchers said, suggesting that pets should be considered a main source of support in the management of long-term mental health problems.

For the research, published in the journal BMC Psychiatry, the team interviewed 54 participants, aged 18 and above, who were under the care of community-based mental health services and had been diagnosed with a severe mental illness.

EFFECTIVE WEIGHT LOSS ROUTINE: OPT FOR LOW-CARB DIET, NOT LOW-FAT FOODS

Eating food low in carbohydrates is safe for up to six months and can also help reduce more weight than following a low-fat diet, claims a new study.

Researchers have found depending on the low-carb diets (LCDs), including Atkins, South Beach and Paleo, participants lost between one to almost four more kilograms than those who followed a low fat diet.

"The best conclusion to draw is that adhering to a short-term low-carb diet appears to be safe and may be associated with weight reduction," said lead researcher Heather Fields, from Mayo Clinic in Arizona.

"However, that weight loss is small and of questionable clinical significance in comparison to low-fat diets," said Fields.

"We encourage patient to eat real food and avoid highly processed foods, especially processed meats, such as bacon, sausage, deli meats, hot dogs, and ham when following any particular diet," Fields added.

Analysing research from January 2005 to April this year, Fields reviewed articles that addressed potential adverse effects and overall safety of LCDs.

Diets that heavily restrict carbohydrates often lead to greater consumption of meats -- some of which have been implicated in worsened all-cause mortality and increased cancer risk.



While available studies did not consistently address the source or quality of proteins and fats consumed in LCDs, they did show short-term efficacy in weight loss without negative effects on blood pressure, glucose, and cholesterol, compared with other diets. However, Fields said the findings come with a caveat.

"Physicians must keep in mind that the literature is surprisingly limited, considering the popularity of these diets and the claims of health benefits in the public press," said Fields.

"Our review found no safety issues identified in the current literature, but patients considering LCDs should be advised there is very little data on long-term safety and efficacy," Fields added.

She also notes that limitations in the previous research she reviewed made it difficult to draw broad conclusions. For example, studies did not address the type of weight lost, whether muscle, water, or fat; and studies primarily relied on dietary recall, which is highly susceptible to error.

Her review found even the definition of LCD to be highly variable. While all were based on carbohydrate restriction, diets allowed carbs to account for anywhere between 4 per cent and 46 per cent of daily calories - which convolutes the evidence.

The study was published in The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association.

ALCOHOL USE IN TEENAGE GIRLS: OBSESSION WITH SELF IMAGE ONE OF THE REASONS

High school girls who harbour negative self-image -- those who try to lose, maintain or gain weight when there is no medical need to do so -- are more likely to try alcohol and drink heavily, says a study.

"Negative self-image can lead to negative behaviours. Body image and behavioural misperception occurs when actions are taken based on a perceived weight status or body image," said senior study author Margie Skeer, Assistant Professor at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, in Massachusetts, US.

"We found significant relationships between this misperception and reporting ever having had alcohol, as well as reporting episodic heavy drinking among high school girls," Skeer said.

In the study, published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, the researchers sought to identify whether having a body image behavioural misperception (BIBM) is associated with an increased odds of ever having had alcohol, current alcohol use or episodic heavy drinking (five or more alcoholic beverages within a

couple hours).

The researchers analyzed data from the 2013 National Youth Risk Behaviour Surveillance System, a national, school-based survey conducted by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The study analysed responses from 6,579 female students between ages 14 to 18 and above.

Among high school girls with a body image behavioural misperception, the odds of ever having had alcohol was 1.21 times greater than among girls who did not have such a misperception, the findings showed.



A year into demonetisation, big data taxman's new weapon in fight against black money

NEW DELHI: The promoters of a Jaipur-based financial broking firm didn't see it coming.

Income tax officers searched their house and a private vault last week, leading to the recovery of Rs 3.5 crore in cash and documents showing previously untaxed income of Rs 15 crore.

Neither did the promoter of a Gurgaon-based auto-component company. In the first week of October, tax officials unearthed Rs 8 crore in cash from the promoter's home and 40 kg of gold and several diamonds from a private vault.

Both events had one thing in common—the mining of data on deposits, cash withdrawals and transaction details.

Next came months of surveillance of the suspects. In one case, a tax official worked at a suspect's house as an odd-jobs man.

Leveraging data generated after demonetisation has served

the department well, said an official at the tax department who asked not to be identified.

"We have been able to cut down the number of cases chosen for scrutiny drastically. Only less than 0.5% of tax returns filed in assessment year 2016-17 (relating to income of financial year 2015-16) have been chosen for scrutiny, compared to about 1% of returns in the previous years," the official said.

After the high-value currency ban aimed at striking at the root of unaccounted wealth, the Income Tax department stepped up its data mining exercise under what is called 'Operation Clean Money' in January.

The effort is to profile those who deposited high amounts of cash after demonetisation and match them against their tax record and lifestyle.

"Many partners in firms and directors on the boards of com-



panies use luxury cars but disclose far less income than an ordinary government or private sector employee," said the tax official quoted above.

"In such cases, everything

from the car, the house, services of servants and the chauffeur will be in the name of the company, which may well be sinking and therefore not be paying corporate tax. The partner or the director,

at the same time, prospers." Experts agree the cash clampdown changed tax administration in India. "This almost silent revolution has largely gone unnoticed but those tax payers who

have experienced dealing with tax departments in the 'pre-digital' age have been pleasantly surprised by this transformation brought about by embrace of technology," said Sudhir Kapadia of audit firm EY India.

Data mining is now increasingly done with help from private experts under an initiative called 'Project Insight', part of efforts of the government to weed corruption and unaccounted for wealth. But not everyone is impressed. Opposition leaders, and even veteran BJP members such as former finance minister Yashwant Sinha, have said the tax investigations after demonetisation instilled fear in the minds of people. It's a charge dismissed by tax officials, who said data mining helps identify precise cases for investigation.

The roll out of the Goods and Services Tax from 1 July is also expected to bring more of the

cash-driven informal economy into the formal economy, resulting in higher personal income tax filings.

According to Archit Gupta, chief executive of ClearTax, a taxpayer service firm, the real effects of GST on direct taxes will surface when income tax returns for financial year 2017-18 are submitted.

"We believe the government has displayed commitment in bringing out reforms to the benefit of taxpayers as well in reviewing them wherever they were challenging," said Gupta.

Others warn that reformist measures tend to be intrusive in the beginning.

"Both demonetisation and Goods and Service Tax will certainly have positive impact on the economy in the long run as leakages will be tracked and traced," said Abhishek A Rastogi, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

RBI's ex-governor Raghuram Rajan gets AAP offer for Rajya Sabha seat

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party has approached former Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan and offered him a Rajya Sabha seat and might not nominate its own leaders to the Upper House.

An AAP leader, who did not wish to be identified, said the party will not field any of its leaders for the three Rajya Sabha seats from Delhi that will fall vacant early next year. With its brute majority of 66 in the Delhi legislative assembly, a victory looks certain. Apart from Rajan, the party is also looking for an eminent jurist and a known person from the field of social service for the other two seats, the leader said.

"We have approached him, but he is yet to revert to us," the leader added. Rajan was not given an extension by the Narendra Modi government and returned to academics. In the past, he has aired his reservations about the note ban. The move to not field any party leader to the Rajya Sabha is also seen as an attempt to put an end to the intra-party rivalry. Kumar Vishwas, who has aired his



discontent against the leadership is known to be one of the strong contenders.

However, given his present equation with Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal the chances of party sending to the Upper House him were slim.

"By not sending anyone from the party to the Rajya Sabha will not lead to a heartburn," the leader added.

Delhi sends three members to Rajya Sabha. Currently, the city is being represented by Janardan Dwivedi, Parvez Hashmi, Karan Singh, whose terms end in January next year.

Infosys innovation hub in US to hire 2,000 people, more hubs in future: Nilekani

BENGALURU: Software major Infosys is opening an innovation hub in Indiana and would hire 2,000 people for it, with plans to set up many more such hubs in the US, Infosys non-executive chairman Nandan Nilekani said on Tuesday.

"We are working closely with the Indiana government and hiring people locally both from universities as well as experienced people," he said.

Nilekani said Infosys was using its infrastructure in capacity building for future. "This is just a part of many innovation hubs that Infosys will be opening in the US. We are talking to many of the states," he said.

Nilekani saw a huge potential in the business relationship between US and India in the wake of new start-ups emerging in the country.

He was addressing a two-day trade meet Unlocking US-India Trade Potential, organised by the US Consulate General in Chennai in association with Atlantic Council South Asia Center. Nilekani said the challenge before companies like Infosys was to get people to be up-to-date on current technology, current development and



how they learn the latest.

Nilekani, the first chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India that implemented the Aadhaar project, said Microsoft has integrated its Skype video interaction facility with Aadhaar to verify the identity of callers from India.

He said many companies are using Systems Applications and Products (SAP), which they combine with their products to create better solutions.

"To give you a few examples, Microsoft has Skype, which is a video thing. And Skype has been integrat-

ed by Microsoft into the Aadhaar system." "So if somebody wants to interview somebody and you want to make sure that the candidate is a genuine person, then you can do an Aadhaar authentication on Skype to verify that he is the real candidate."

"So this is an example of how a US company has combined their SAP for Window and Skype with Aadhaar SAP," he said.

Elaborating further, he said the digital infrastructure India has created is very sophisticated, giving every Indian resident a digital iden-

tity. He added that India has reached an era where every individual would have a bank account.

"When everybody has a bank account, a mobile phone and everybody has a digital identity, then that allows you to do all kinds of things in delivering services to a billion people in a very effortless way on their phones."

"They can receive and send money from their phones. They can sign contracts on their phones," said Nilekani. Steps for unlocking the US-India trade potential would be explored by American, Indian and international businesses with trade experts at the meet. Around 100 conference attendees will explore the economic partnership between the US and India, factors that pose impediments to growth and potential solutions at the conference.

The trade conference would address themes, including ease of doing business, expanding defence cooperation and energy cooperation, said the US Consulate General in Chennai.

The conference would enable conversation and collaboration among stakeholders, thought leaders and policymakers, the consulate said.

Cash is back: A year after demonetisation was announced, digital transactions drop



NEW DELHI: Soon after demonetisation was announced in November last year, it was projected as part of a broader push towards a cashless economy. Several ministers and government officials claimed that this would nudge Indians to rely on non-cash or digital transactions. (LIVE UPDATES)

In the weeks and months following demonetisation, digital payments (including mobile wallets and mobile banking, credit/debit card transactions, and UPI) saw a sharp spike even as ATM withdrawals declined.

But much of this seems to have driven purely because of cash shortage. As demonetisation picked up pace this year, digital payments fell even as ATM withdrawals rose.

The ratio of digital payments to narrow money (which include the most liquid bank deposits available on demand, apart from currency) has fallen back to

pre-demonetisation levels. Comparative ratios of ATM withdrawals have almost reached pre-demonetisation levels. Ad data show, there is very little evidence to suggest any behavioural change because of demonetisation.

The spike in digital payments and the decline in ATM withdrawals were both caused by artificial constraints, and do not seem to have had a lasting impact on Indian citizens.

Other kinds of electronic payments, such as NEFT/IMPS did not register much change in the post-demonetisation period either.

What about infrastructure for digital payments? The year-on-year growth in the number of point-of-sale (PoS) terminals (till August 2017) shows a sharp increase compared to the previous years as does the number of credit cards in the country.

However, compared to other large

economies, India continues to be a laggard in terms of digital infrastructure. Data from Bank of International Settlements (BIS) showed that as of 2015, the density of PoS terminals and ATMs is significantly lower in India. The picture remains largely the same even after demonetisation. Despite a near doubling of PoS terminals after demonetisation, India is still ranked last among major economies in terms of the number of PoS terminals per million people.

One reason for the shortage of digital infrastructure is overall poverty. Per capita incomes of all the other countries shown in the chart are higher than that of India, and the data shows a strong correlation between cashless infrastructure and per-capita incomes.

But that does not mean that technological or policy changes are doomed to fail. The use of mobile payments in Kenya is a case in point, showing how technological change and the right policy moves can lead to a faster adoption of cashless payments, and boost financial inclusion efforts. The density of ATMs also seems to play a role in driving cashless payments -- when ATMs are easy to reach; the tendency to withdraw large volumes of cash tends to be lower, research shows. It's noteworthy that growth in the number of ATMs over the past year has been muted in India, and this perhaps has slowed the transition to a cashless economy.

Economies that have reduced the use of cash have all adopted one of these methods: reliance on economic growth, or a boost to digital infrastructure (along with technological innovations).

No country has demonetised 86% of its currency in circulation to boost digital payments as India did last year.

INDIA, CANADA CLOSER TO FINALISING FOREIGN INVESTMENT PACT

MUMBAI: India and Canada are "almost there" in terms of finalising a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement or FIPPA, according to the Canadian minister of international trade.

In an interview ahead of his visit to India as one of three Canadian cabinet ministers leading a trade mission, François-Philippe Champagne said he was "cautiously optimistic" India and Canada "can finalise" FIPPA within the next few months, "probably in 2018".

Champagne was last in India in March this year soon after being appointed by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to take charge of the international trade portfolio. That period witnessed an upswing in ties between the two nations but a motion in the Ontario Assembly terming the 1984 anti-Sikh riots as "genocide" and an uptick in support for the Khalistan movement in the country, proved to be setbacks. In that context, Champagne said, "Trade is an enabler for better understanding between nations."

Acknowledging that downturn, Champagne stressed on the need for the two countries to stay focused on strengthening the relationship. "I've always been of the view the best way to address an issue is to be at the table, to engage with each other. You can be frank as well as to issues that work and issues that you like to see improving."

The Canadian trade mission, the largest in 10 years, is part of the effort to rejuvenate that engagement after a summer of discontent.



Champagne said this visit could serve as "the big catalyst to strengthen our relationship in a number of sectors." Other than Champagne, the mission will feature minister of innovation, sci-

ence and economic development Navdeep Bains and minister of transport Marc Garneau. "This is very significant, we are going to be about 165 people, there are already 85 businesses which have confirmed, we're going to be visiting four cities and obviously attending the Tech Summit (in New Delhi)," Champagne said. While Indian officials have felt that Canada has been far too involved in attending to trade links with China and the renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA to spare enough attention for India, Champagne dismissed that view.

"I would say almost quite the contrary. Most nations would say, 'minister, you spend all your time on India.' There is a clear signal from the Canadian side to our Indian friends that we are very serious about that (relationship). I have remained engaged and on top. This is on my to-do list and among my top priorities for Canada," the minister said.

even stronger two-way investment. This has been my main message to (finance) minister (Arun) Jaitley.

"We know there's enormous interest in India on the infrastructure side, there's enormous interest on the Canadian side with respect to pension funds, that would like to invest in high-quality long-term assets in India. But I think one of the barriers we are finding is that we do need the FIPPA in place so that investors have stability and predictability in their relationship with India. This is mutually beneficial, this has been my message since I first started."

Another long-delayed accord, the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, could take longer. Champagne said candidly that while this was "also in the making", it was "kind of a longer term discussion."

Champagne said that the high-powered forthcoming five-day visit spanning four cities, which commences on Monday, was the Trudeau government's way of "sending a very strong signal to our Indian colleagues of our interest, of our enthusiasm to strengthen our relationship, and friendship between our two nations."

Pakistan secure top spot in Twenty20 Internationals after India beat New Zealand

NEW DELHI: Pakistan have secured the top spot in Twenty20 Internationals following India's 2-1 series win over New Zealand in the recently-concluded Twenty20 Internationals on Tuesday.

In the latest list of rankings released by the International Cricket Council, Pakistan are on top with 124

points. New Zealand, who led the rankings before the start of the India series with 125 points, slipped to 120 points and are second along with West Indies. India remain in fifth spot with 119 points

Virat Kohli's Indian cricket team secured their first-ever series win over New Zealand in Twenty20 In-

ternationals by beating Kane Williamson's side by six runs in a rain-curtailed match in Thiruvananthapuram. India had broken their Twenty20 jinx against the Kiwis by winning the first match in New Delhi. Following India's win in New Delhi, New Zealand slipped from the top spot. Colin Munro's ton helped New

Zealand secure a 40-run victory in Rajkot and level the series.

Sarfraz Ahmed's Pakistan cricket team have been on a roll in Twenty20 Internationals in the last one year, winning 12 out of 14 Twenty20 International matches. They defeated England by nine wickets in 2016 while they clean swept the two-time

World T20 champions West Indies 3-0 in the UAE. They followed it up by beating West Indies 3-1 in the Caribbean. More joy followed as international cricket returned to Pakistan after two years with a Twenty20 International series against the ICC World XI. Pakistan won that series 2-1 and they topped it off with a 3-0

sweep of Sri Lanka. New Zealand will play two Twenty20 Internationals against west Indies in December while India will play three Twenty20 Internationals against Sri Lanka. Pakistan, on the other hand, are expected to host the West Indies in Pakistan for three Twenty20 Internationals.



Glenn Maxwell rues missed chances ahead of Ashes 2017-18

SDYNEY: Australia batsman Glenn Maxwell feels that he threw away an opportunity to push his case for the Ashes 2017-18.

Uncertainty still surrounds the number six spot in Australia's line-up ahead of the first Test against England in Brisbane beginning November 23. Maxwell, who has played seven Tests, made scores of 60 and 64 for Victoria against South Australia in the Sheffield Shield. But the all-rounder lamented his failure to make the most of those half-centuries, describing it as a missed opportunity. "It's a question on a lot of people's lips at the moment. There's a lot of speculation about the number six position and what's going to happen for the first Ashes Test," Maxwell told SEN on Wednesday.

"But I probably threw away two good chances to make hundreds and push my case forward. I probably also threw away an opportunity to win us the game as well.

"I'm probably disappointed that I couldn't do more for Victoria this last game."

Maxwell's performances may yet be enough to earn him a place for Australia at the Gabba as several batsmen around the country push for the spot. The 29-year-old said he had heard little from selectors, but knew what he needed to do. "There hasn't been much correspondence," Maxwell said. "They've said everything they need to say about what they want to see from people for these three Shield games and they want to see big runs from all the batters across the country." "We saw Callum Ferguson do that in the second innings for South Australia, he batted beautifully and made a really big hundred and I think that's probably what they're looking for from most of the batters around the country." "Hopefully after this next Shield game they have a better idea of where they're going to go and hopefully my name is up there."

Here's what Pakistan pacer Mohammad Irfan had to say about Virat Kohli's praise

MUMBAI: Since the partition of 1947, the India-Pakistan rivalry has been one of the fiercest rivalries in world cricket. But despite all the volatility on the border, cricketers of the two nations have managed to maintain healthy friendships with one another off the field.

Indian cricket team skipper Virat Kohli seems to be a flag bearer in this regard in recent times. After previously having lavished praise on Pakistan pace bowler Mohammad Amir on chat show with Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan, he recently paid tribute to Shoaib Akhtar.

"I have never faced Shoaib Akhtar. But I have seen him in a game in Dambula against Pakistan. I got out. I



couldn't face him. He looked lethal. When I saw that, I realised what it

quoted Kohli as saying on the show Breakfast With Champions.

Shoaib Akhtar didn't shy away from responding to Kohli's kind words. Kohli, who led India to yet another series win over New Zealand on Tuesday, also praised Pakistan's Mohammad Irfan, voicing his appreciation of the bowler on the web-series hosted by Gaurav Kapoor.

Irfan also responded with a tweet, wishing the batsmen the best and expressing his desire to go up against him on the field. Having defeated New Zealand 2-1 in the three-match T-20 series, India will now prepare for a three-Test series against familiar foes Sri Lanka. The first Test begins in Kolkata on November 16.

Mumbai eyeing 'maximum points' in 500th Ranji Trophy match: Aditya Tare

MUMBAI: Mumbai captain Aditya Tare has expressed confidence in his full-strength side, bolstered by the presence of Ajinkya Rahane and Shreyas Iyer, to celebrate their 500th appearance in Ranji Trophy with a win with 'maximum points'.

With their Group C match against Baroda in the ongoing Ranji Trophy 2017-18 starting Thursday, the dominant Mumbai team will be the first in the Indian domestic circuit to have played as many as 500 matches in the country's premier domestic tournament. "It is a special game for us. It is a great feeling to be playing the 500th Ranji Trophy game, for a terrific state... it is going to be a great game for us," said Tare on Wednesday morning, on the sidelines of his team's preparations at the Wankhede Stadium. "We feel we are quite fortunate to be the squad that will be playing the 500th game, there has been a huge contribution right from the inception of Mumbai cricket, and fortunately it is us who are playing the 500th game. Congratulations to everyone who has been a part of the Mumbai team," he added.

After an ordinary start — one win (against Odisha) and two drawn games in Ranji Trophy so far — Mumbai need



outright wins to climb up the Group C points table in they trail Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, placed at third spot.

"There is going to be a great vibe to the game, but we are going to treat it as just another game of cricket which is important for us. We want to win it; we will play with positive intensity and intent and hopefully try and get maximum points out of this game as well," Tare said.

"We are playing at the Wankhede (Stadium) after a long time, it is great coming back to the home ground and

home dressing room and with good strength in the squad as well," said the Mumbai captain, after their batting order kingpin Shreyas Iyer joined the ranks post national duties.

Tare said it is important for Mumbai to get their act together. "Every game from now on is important and we know that we have two teams ahead of us in the points table and we have to do the catching up. This game is important with that regards, we are chasing teams above us. Hopefully we can get maximum points."

The Mumbai captain has also

warned his team of the new faces in Baroda side, post the exit of Irfan Pathan and Yusuf Pathan.

"Baroda has always been a good team; a lot of good cricketers have come out of it. At the moment they look a young team but they are always dangerous. A few unknown players (are there) and you do not know what their strengths and weaknesses are. It is always difficult to play unknown faces. Baroda is a good team but with new faces; it will be a big challenge for us to take on the youngsters," Tare said.

Olympic champion gets four-year drugs ban

NAIROBI: Kenya's Olympic marathon champion Jemima Sumgong has been suspended for four years for doping, Athletics Kenya said Tuesday.

"Sumgong will serve the four-year ban as from April 3 when she was provisionally suspended," Athletics Kenya said in a statement. The 32-year-old tested positive for the banned blood booster EPO in an out-of-competition test by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) in her native Kenya.

Erythropoietin is a natural hormone that stimulates red cell production.

For a runner, injecting an artificially produced version increases oxygen absorption which allows them to run harder and faster without tiring.

Sumgong, who also tested positive for a banned substance in 2012, starred at the London Marathon in 2016, defying the odds to win despite suffering a bruising fall. Steeled by her success in London, she then became the first Kenyan woman to win Olympic marathon gold, defeating Ethiopia's world champion Mare Dibaba in Rio to confirm her status as the world's top marathon runner of 2016.

Due to her suspension she was unable to defend the title in London this year.

Earlier this year, Sumgong was one of

a number of top Kenyan athletes who welcomed a new initiative to eradicate doping, which has tarnished their image, agreeing to be monitored by doctors appointed by the IAAF and Athletics Kenya.

"It will be easy for us now to communicate with these doctors before we take any medicine when the need arises," said Sumgong. The move came after an investigation by German television channel ARD and Britain's Sunday Times newspaper last July alleging that doping was rife at the elite training centre in Iten. Kenyan athletics boss chief Jackson Tuwei warned that any athlete who failed to comply would not be selected to represent the country in international competitions. "Forty-nine athletes have been found to have violated the WADA [World Anti-Doping Agency] code in the past five years but were cautioned according to the laws of the land and WADA code," he said earlier this year. Sumgong's former training partner, the 2014 Chicago and Boston Marathon champion Rita Jeptoo, is serving a four-year ban after also testing positive for EPO. In 2012 Sumgong tested positive for steroid Prednisolone following the Boston marathon. She only served half of a two year ban after a successful appeal blamed the failed control on treatment for a hip injury.