

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

FRIDAY

- NOVEMBER, 10, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	20.0	1.9
JAMMU	27.5	12.5
LEH	14.0	-0.5
KARGIL	15.0	3.6

SUNSET FRIDAY: 05:32 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 07:01 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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DR JITENDRA SINGH MEETS SENIOR OFFICERS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR CADRE

PM MODI, SHEIKH HASINA AND MAMATA BANERJEE FLAG OFF KOLKATA-KHULNA

AFTER DEMONETISATION, ED PROBING OVER 3,700 MONEY LAUNDERING, FEMA CASES

APPELLATE TRIBUNAL DISMISSES PETITIONS OF SHARJEEL AND PCB

Chief Minister and Governor hold discussions



JAMMU, NOVEMBER 09: Ms Mehbooba Mufti, Chief Minister, held an hour long meeting today evening with Governor N.N. Vohra and discussed with him various important matters relating to the affairs of the State. Governor and Ms. Mufti discussed, among other matters, the internal security situation in the Valley, the functioning of various departments, particularly the Power Development Department, Social Welfare Department, Information Department, and the Sports and Youth Affairs Department and the extent

CM GREETES PEOPLE ON URS OF HAZRAT SHAH ASRAR UD DIN (RA)
Directs Kishtwar admin to ensure availability of essential supplies

Jammu, Nov 09: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti has felicitated people of the State on the annual urs of Hazrat Shah Asrar ud Din (RA) of Kishtwar. Recalling the contribution of Hazrat Shah

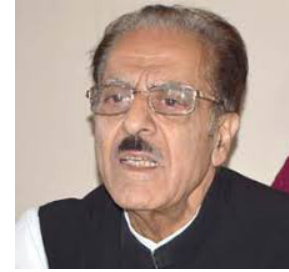
Several deputations meet Chief Minister, raise demands

PHD Chamber thanks Mehbooba for reviving incentives to Tourism, other trades; JAMMU, NOVEMBER 09: Several deputations today met the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today and apprised her of their problems. A deputation PHD Chamber of Commerce thanked the Chief Minister for reviving industrial incentives and Tourism incentives in the State. They requested Tourism promotion activities at various locations across the country. A deputation of J&K Sharnarhi Action Committee raised issues confronting the displaced persons and sought their redressal. Another deputation of migrants also sought redressal of issues of migrants living in camps, development of parks and other facilities at the migrant camps. A deputation from Neel Top, Ramban sought construction of a motorable road from Barsi (Top Neel) to Kastigrah. A deputation of border areas of Hiranagar raised various issues confronting the Border residents including

Interlocutor Sharma meets Soz, leaves for Jammu

Restore trust deficit New Delhi created in Kashmir: Soz

Srinagar, Nov 09: Interlocutor Dineshwar Sharma Thursday morning met senior Congress leader Saifuddin Soz, before leaving for his two-day visit to Jammu. The senior Congress leader Soz confirmed to KNS that he had a candid talk with Sharma and conveyed to him



that much has been talked and spoken about Kashmir. "Now it is a time to hold a meaningful dialogue," Soz said. The former Pradesh Congress Committee president said he told Sharma that there are several Working Group

Crime Branch books Mushtaq Peer for transferring Govt money to his personal account

Srinagar, Nov 9: Crime Branch Kashmir has registered another case against former tainted Board of Professional Entrance Examination (BOPEE) Chairman Mushtaq Peer for transferring huge amount of money from BOPEE bank account to his personal account, an official said on Thursday. Mushtaq Peer, a resident of Bismillah Colony Naseemabad Sadarbal Srinagar was in news in November 2013 when he was arrested for allegedly selling Common Entrance Test (CET) papers for Rs 65 lakhs to two brokers, Sajid Hussain and Farooq Ahmed, who in turn fetched Rs 5 crores from parents of several students. There were reports that

parents of some students sold their land to arrange the money. Interestingly, Mushtaq Peer was given extension by the then Omar Abdullah led government after his retirement and later also was re-employed as an 'Expert' in Services Selection Board. A Crime Branch official on Thursday said that they have registered a case vide FIR number 42/2017 under section 5 (2) of Prevention of corruption Act Svt.2006 and 409 RPC against Mushtaq Peer. "The FIR reveals that an amount of Rs. 2.73 crores was transferred from the official

SPO SHOT BY UNKNOWN GUNMEN IN ANANTNAG

Srinagar, Nov 09: Unidentified gunmen Thursday fired upon a special Police officer (SPO) attached with traffic police near the office of Deputy Commissioner Anantnag in south Kashmir. According to police, the cop has been identified as Ranveer Singh son of Sobedar Singh from Chattisingpora-Mattan area of the same district.

CS reviews implementation of PM's Development Package for Migrants

Emphasizes on effective implementation of Tribal Sub-Plan funds

Jammu, Nov 09: Chief Secretary, B B Vyas Thursday took a comprehensive review of implementation of PM's Development Package for Migrants and Displaced Persons (DPs) besides issues related to border areas including implementation of various welfare schemes and construction of bunkers for safety of border residents. Director General of Police, J&K, Principal Secretary, Home, Administrative Sec-



retaries of the Departments of Rural Development, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction (DMRR&R) and Social Welfare, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, DC, Jammu and other senior officers participated in the meeting.

Zulfkar reviews preparedness of FCS & CA for winters

Takes strong note of oil companies

Srinagar, Nov 09: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Information, Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today chaired a meeting to review the stock and supply position of essentials in Kashmir division and extra arrangements made by the department for winter season. The meeting was attended by Director FCS&CA Nisar Ahmad Wani, Senior Superintendent Traffic NHI Sanjay Bhagat, Assistant Directors



(ADs) FCS&CA and other concerned officers. The Minister took strong note of oil companies falling behind in maintaining the stocks. He warned them that the government would not tolerate any lapse in making available sufficient stock supply of essential commodities, especially petroleum products in Kashmir division for the winter months.

HIZB WORKER ARRESTED IN KULGAM

Kulgam, Nov 9: Jammu Kashmir Police Thursday said that Kulgam Police received credible information that some OGW's affiliated with banned outfit Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) have hatched a criminal conspiracy on the direction of self styled operational chief of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) Kashmir namely Riyaz Naikoo to kill Police/SF's personnel and snatch their weapons. These OGW's were roaming in the area from one place to another to seek a chance

GOVT ORDERS TRANSFER, POSTING OF KAS OFFICERS

Dr. Abdul Rashid gets addl. charge as Sec Info Dept
Srinagar, Nov 09: The government Thursday ordered transfers and postings in the civil administration. According to General Administration Department (GAD), Rohit Khajuria, KAS, Director, Command Area Development, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Deputy Commissioner, Kathua, against an available vacancy. Jatinder Singh, KAS, Director, Forensic Science Laboratory, J&K, is transferred and posted as Director, Command Area Development, Jammu, vice Rohit Khajuria. In another order, Vivek Sharma, KAS, Additional District Development Commissioner, Samba, is transferred and posted as Member, J&K Services Selection Board. Pardeep Singh, KAS, under orders of transfer as Chief

Governor visits Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine

Inspects major development works in Bhawan area

Jammu, Nov 09: Governor N. N. Vohra, Chairman Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board visited the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi along with the First Lady, Mrs. Usha Vohra and prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of the State. He undertook an extensive inspection of the implementation status of the construction of major infrastructure development works in the Bhawan area, particularly the material and the passenger ropeway projects. On his return journey he, along with Jitendra Kumar Singh, Chief Executive Officer; Dr. M. K. Kumar, Additional Chief Executive Officer;



M. M. Gupta, Chief Engineer of the Shrine Board and other concerned officers and engineers of the Shrine Board undertook a

17 books in Nursery curriculum: PRIVATE SCHOOL TAKES TO 'BOOK SELLING BUSINESS'

Srinagar, Nov 9: District administration Pulwama has issued a show cause notice to a leading private school for forcing students to purchase stationery items from the school itself, in complete violation of the court directions. The show cause notice to Dolphin International School was issued after a group of parents approached district administration alleging that school has not only been forcing them to purchase stationery items but it has added extra 10 books to the curriculum of Nursery Class students. The complaint reveals that the school has added 10 extra books to the curriculum of Nursery class students

PREGNANT WOMAN THRASHED BY GOVT EMPLOYEES' STAGES PROTEST

Srinagar, Nov 9: Approaching Chief Ministers Grievance Cell proved costly for a pregnant woman in North Kashmir's Baramulla district as disgruntled government employees allegedly beat her to pulp at Municipal Council office. Tasleema Siraj of Qazi Hamam Baramulla emerged

Face NIA with bravery, persistence and commitment: Geelani tells youth

Unfortunate we are divided, sub-divided in smaller groups: Yasin Malik

Srinagar, Nov 09: Hurriyat (G) Chairman Syed Ali Geelani Thursday asked the youth of Kashmir to face the fear instilled by NIA with bravery, persistence and commitment. Speaking at a seminar on Iqbal Day, Geelani as per the statement issued to KNS said referring to NIA, said that authorities are using this agency to create fear psychosis among youth and added



that they are being arrested on fabricated charges and asked youth to face NIA with

Rana accuses PDP-BJP of betraying LoC dwellers, PoK refugees

Expresses anguish over indifference of Govt

Nowshetra, Nov 09: National Conference Provincial President Devender Singh Rana on Thursday expressed anguish over the indifference of PDP-BJP government towards the plight of people residing along Line of Control and International Border, saying the promises of raising shelter sheds, constructing bunkers and providing five marla pots have proven hoax during the past nearly three years.



"The border dwellers are living under perpetual threat with farming coming to standstill, economic activity going

FAKE I-CARDS OF SECURITY AGENCIES, FAKE LICENSES RECOVERED FROM FRAUDESTER

Srinagar, Nov 9: Srinagar police has arrested a fraudster and recovered fake government documents including I-Cards of security agencies and fake licenses. Acting on a specific information, a police party of Police Station Nigen laid a surprise naka in its jurisdiction and arrested one person namely Ghulam Jeelani resident of Shaheedgunj. On his checking few fake driving licenses were recovered. The accused was arrested and investigation was set into motion. On questioning, the accused revealed that he is running a shop near civil secretariat. The shop was raided and various fake licenses, fake vehicle insurance, fake shop licenses, forged security forces I cards, mobile phones,

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CHIEF

to which results had been achieved to secure the targeted goals. Governor suggested to Chief Minister the enforcement of a stringent approach in regard to all departments which were not performing adequately. Governor also discussed with Ms. Mufti the significant advantage of there being no delay in commencing the process of conducting elections to the Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies. Governor reiterated his concern about ensuring prompt attention to public grievances, efficient delivery of public services and severe punishments to those involved in corrupt practices.

SEVERAL

pending compensation issues. They also sought improvement of road connectivity in the area.

The Chief Minister listened to the demands of the deputations and assured to look into them in a time bound manner.

CM

Asrar ud Din (RA) in the spiritual and social awakening of the people of the region, the Chief Minister said the society ought to emulate the teachings of moral values, communal harmony, brotherhood and welfare of masses in our present system, which were practiced by the late saint during his lifetime.

Mehbooba Mufti hoped that celebrating such occasions strengthens age old practices of harmony, brotherhood and amity in the State.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister has directed the Kishtwar district administration to ensure availability of essential supplies like electricity, drinking water, ration etc. to the residents of the area and devotees during the Urs days without any hassle.

SOZ

and interlocutor reports gathering dust, but the time has come that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should make this fresh process a meaningful one before losing any more time.

"Tell New Delhi that there is a great trust deficit between Union of India and Kashmir. So many reports have been submitted, but nothing happened. There should be a decisive talk preferably with Hurriyat and lose no time. It is New Delhi which created the trust deficit and New Delhi should restore that trust," he said.

Soz said he conveyed to Sharma that general amnesty be given to the boys who are in jails, even if they had picked up the gun, but have not been involved in any killing.

PEER

account of BOPEE to his personal account vide number SB-6179 maintained in Jammu Kashmir Bank Hazratbal Srinagar."

A preliminary enquiry was initiated in Police Station Crime Branch Kashmir. During the course of enquiry, it was revealed that while being posted as Chairman BOPEE from the year 2009 to 2012, Government money was transferred from the official account of BOPEE to the personal account of the accused Mushtaq Peer with the object that the same will be utilized for various official activities. The accused with a criminal intent put the said Government money to his own use by investing in smart saver accounts, raising cash certificates and clearing his debt.

Moreover, the accused also earned an interest on the said Government money to which he was not entitled to. The accused therefore by abusing his position as a public servant has dishonestly transferred the Government money to his personal account for his own use, thereby causing diversion and wrongful pecuniary gain to himself.

The acts of the accused prima facie discloses the commission of offences punishable U/S 5 (2) of Prevention of corruption Act Svt.2006 and 409 RPC.

SPO

The locals said the cop was shot on his abdomen near DC Office while he was on his routine duties. He was later shifted to the District Hospital where he is undergoing treatment.

CS

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner of the districts of Baramulla, Bandipora, Kupwara, Rajouri, Kathua and Samba participated via video conferencing. It was informed that with the completion of Aadhaar seeding of bank accounts and validation on PFMS of most of the Kashmiri and Jammu Migrants (Relief Holders), the Department of DMRR&R is now in a position to provide relief in the form of cash assistance through DBT from the month of October, 2017 onwards.

Chief Secretary received brief from Divisional Commissioner, Jammu in regard to completion of formalities under one-time settlement package for DPs including their authentication by designated authorities of Department of DMRR&R and Aadhaar and bank account linkages for onwards submission to the Union Government for release of payment through DBT under PM's relief package. Chief Secretary asked the concerned department to update the progress achieved within the next one week.

On construction of community and individual bunkers for safety of population living in border districts, affected by cross border shelling, it was informed that while the proposals in respect of Jammu division stand already submitted, proposals in respect of border districts of Kashmir division including Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara are being submitted by the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to the Home department today.

Issues concerning the welfare of Gujjars, Bakerwals and Pahari community were also discussed.

Chief Secretary emphasized on effective implementation of the Tribal Sub-Plan funds and Border Area Development Programme for the benefit of these communities.

ZULFKAR

Zulfkar Ali asked the oil companies operating in the State to always dump stocks in advance, primarily petrol and LPG so that people do not face difficulty in case the National Highway gets closed due to bad weather. He instructed SSP Traffic to prioritize clearance of vehicles carrying petroleum products so that the sufficient stocks are maintained.

The Minister was informed that dumping of essentials for six months in snowbound areas of Guraz, Karnah, Keran, Machil, Budnambal, Jamgund, Kumkandhi, Leh, and Kargil has already been completed. It was further informed that

advance stocks for three months have also been made available in the areas like Doodhpathri, Walhoo, Pahalgam, Arupal, Anderwani, Boniyar .

Giving the break-up of advance stocks, the Minister was informed that for border belt of Kupwara 60003.71 quintals (qtls) of rice, 14536.99 qtls of atta, and 3233.08 qtls of sugar and for Gurez 62267.30 qtls rice, 20651.24 qtls atta, 4297.01 qtls sugar has already been supplied.

Similarly 62267.30 qtls rice, 20651.24 qtls atta, and 4297.01 qtls have been stocked for Leh district 59365.85 qtls rice , 36168 qtls of atta and 7001.96 qtls sugar has been supplied for Kargil district.

The Minister expressed satisfaction over the work done by the department so far. He said FCS&CA department is directly linked with the people and it becomes mandatory on its functionaries to take every possible step to ensure that consumers do not face any difficulty, especially during winter months.

The Minister also announced that the government has decided to increase the cap of rice from 35 kgs to 50 kgs per family under MMSFES for remote areas of Doda, Kishtawar, Ladakh , Bandipora and Kupwara.

The Minister clarified that Aadhar card is not mandatory for ration card distribution. He asserted that no one should be deprived of their allotted food grains for not having the Aadhar card.

He further informed that the Government has decided to start the operation of electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) machines on a pilot basis in three districts viz Srinagar, Budgam, and Ganderbal of Kashmir division from November 21.

Encouraging the departmental functionaries for good work, the Minister said Government has decided to reward the employees with an appreciation certificate who do a phenomenal work in GIS capturing of food stores and Fair Price Shops (FPSs) and in constituting of Vigilance Monitoring Committees (VMSs).

It was informed that the officers nominated for GIS capturing are AD Anantnag, AD Bandipora, AD Baramulla, AD Budgam, AD Ganderbal, AD Kargil, AD Kulgam, AD Kupwara, AD Pulwama, AD Shopian, and AD Srinagar, and those for constituting VMCs are AD Budgam, AD Bandipora, AD Baramulla, AD Kulgam, AG Shopian, AD Baramulla, AD Kupwara, AD Pulwama, and AD Kargil.

Referring to proposal of opening additional Fair Price Shops (FPSs), the Minister directed the concerned to make these functional immediately after completing the paperwork. He said while the newly opened FPSs will provide employment to many, they would greatly help consumers too as they would be able to easily get their allotted food grains from the nearby store.

HIZB

to attack on Police/SF's personnel. The self-styled commander has provided weapons to these OGW's for carrying out subversive activities in District Kulgam.

Acting on this information, Kulgam Police launched a manhunt and arrested one OGW namely Showkat Ahmad Lone resident of Charsoo affiliated with banned HM outfit. One pistol, pistol magazine and 04 pistol rounds were recovered from his possession.

A case FIR number 63/2017 under section 7/25 120-B, 307 RPC, 10, 13(2), 18, 20, 38, 39 ULAP Act stands registered in Police Station Devsar and investigation of the case is going on. More arrests are expected in coming days.

KAS

Executive Officer, Tourism Development Authority, Zanskar, is posted as Regional Transport Officer, Kathua (Hq: Lakhampur), vice Amarjeet Singh, KAS, who shall await further orders of posting in the General Administration Department.

In another order, Dr. Abdul Rashid, KAS, Labour Commissioner, J&K, shall hold the charge of the post of Secretary to the Government, Information Department, in addition to his own duties, till further orders.

GOVERNOR

complete inspection of the various facilities under construction for the convenience of the on-foot pilgrims who travel on the upcoming Tarakote Marg.

Travelling on the Tarakote Marg the Governor stopped at various places and gave directions regarding the work to be done for the completion of Bhojanalayas, View Points, Medical Units, Water Points, Toilet Blocks, power supply, sanitation and cleanliness, safety and security arrangements for the pilgrims, construction of shelter sheds and hill slope stabilisation work, installation of wire, mesh fencing, landscaping, greening of the entire area along the track, etc.

It is pertinent to mention that the Tarakote Marg is equipped with all requisite facilities for comfortable and pleasant on-foot movement of pilgrims on a track which has an easy gradient. There are 2 Bhojanalayas, 4 View Points, 15 water points and 7 toilet blocks in the Marg. The entire track is lit with 500 LED lights.

Governor directed the CEO to take forward action for the most expeditious completion of shelter sheds, immediately commence slope stabilisation work on the vulnerable locations and take all required advance action for operationalising Bhojanalayas, View Points, Medical Centres and completion of other essential logistics for the facilitation of the pilgrims.

CEO informed that: work on all the requisite logistics on the upcoming Tarakote Marg is continuing in full swing to complete it expeditiously, work on the foot bridge is also going on speedily besides completion of other works on the Link Road from Gulshan Langar to Tarakote Marg. He stated that the work has also been speeded up on the construction of integrated modular rain shelter sheds having special features to absorb the impact of any shooting stone; for ensuring the safety of pilgrims.

While inspecting the new Darshani Deodi on the Tarakote Marg, Governor asked for drawing up a comprehensive plan for optimum utilisation of all available space to facilitate the pilgrims. At Tarakote, he asked the concerned engineers for beautification of the periphery of the Bhojanalaya by taking up plantation of ornamental, flowering and other species of trees. He also directed the installation of a floating fountain in the Pond at Tarakote which has been developed and beautified by the Shrine Board as an added attraction for the pilgrims. He also viewed the landscaping and greening of the area along the Tarakote Marg which has been done by plant-

ing ornamental plants, herbs, flowering and avenue trees with a view to enhance the ambience of the track.

In the Bhawan area, the Governor inspected the site for reconstruction of the Durga Bhawan and asked CEO to immediately get prepared the drawings for construction of this building to provide free on-floor accommodation for pilgrims by maximising the utilisation of available space. He also emphasised the need for speedy finalisation of the Master Plan for the Bhawan area which is being formulated by the School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi.

While reviewing the work on the construction of Passenger Ropeway between Bhawan and Bhairon Temple and Material Ropeway between Siar Dabri and Bhawan, Governor directed CEO to ensure completion of both these high-utility projects, in all respects, within the fixed timeframe.

PRIVATE

taking the total number of books to 17 and has been charging Rs 4750 for these books.

Acting upon the complaint, a team of officials from the district headed by Assistant Commissioner Revenue visited the school to ascertain the facts. However, ironically, the school management instead of cooperating with the team accused it of harassment and the next day filed a complaint with the Chief Ministers Grievance Cell. Well placed sources said that the owner of the school has close connection with a political party.

Assistant Commissioner Revenue Pulwama, Nisar Ahmed confirmed to news agency CNS that parents have filed a complaint against Dolphin International School. He, however added that so far they have not received any communication from the school in response to the show cause notice issued by the district administration.

Earlier, a complaint of similar nature was filed by parents against Lycium Public School in the same district. However, after intervention from district administration, the school management not only reduced the number of books from 17 to 10 in curriculum but also returned an amount to the tune of Rs 20 lakhs to parents.

WOMAN

at Press Enclave Srinagar on Thursday demanding action under law against the four employees of Municipal Council Baramulla who according to her thrashed her mercilessly as a result she was admitted in District Hospital Baramulla.

"From past two years I have been wandering from pillar to post to get an Adhar Card. Despite completing all the formalities, I didn't get the card. Accordingly I filed a complaint before CM Grievance Cell vide order number 75626. On the directions of Additional District Development Commissioner Baramulla, the Adhar Incharge Mr Ishtiyah Ahmed called me to his office," she told news agency CNS.

"As I reached Municipal Council Baramulla, the four employees including two Operators Basharat Makno, Irshad Ahmed, Fayaz Ahmed, Muhammad Saleem first showered choicest invectives on me for approaching Chief Ministers Grievance Cell and they started pushing and hitting me. They continuously abused and slapped me," Tasleema said adding that she regained her conscious only at District Hospital Baramulla.

She said if approaching CM Grievance Cell is a crime then it is better for government to shut this Cell down. "I want justice and action those employees who acted as goons. I can identify them all," she said.

Meanwhile, a police official said that they have taken cognizance of the incident and assailants will face the music.

GEELANI

bravery, persistence and commitment. The seminar was organized by Tehreek-e-Hurriyat at its Hyderabad head office.

Others who participated in the day-long seminar included JKLF chief Mohammad Yasin Malik, senior Hurriyat leaders Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai, Haji Ghulam Nabi Sumji, other second rung Hurriyat leaders Mohammad Shafi Lone, Moulana Altaf Hussain Nadvi, Mohammad Salim Zargar, Syed Mohd Shafi, Hakim Ab Rashid, Molvi Bashir Ahmad Irfani, Mohd Yusuf Naqash, Feroz Ahmad Khan, Syed Altaf Andrabi and Advocate Davinder Singh Behal.

According to KNS correspondent, in his presidential address, Geelani while paying tributes to "great poet and thinker" said that Iqbal as poet and philosopher awakened the Ummah and while describing his love and attachment with Muslim said that Iqbal as caring, benevolent and compassionate philosopher made us to understand and distinguish between right and wrong.

Quoting Iqbal, Geelani said that those deviated from righteous path have propounded theories leading us to astray and unfortunately Muslim community as a whole is following these stale and man-made theories. According to KNS correspondent, in his presidential address, Geelani while paying tributes to "great poet and thinker" said that Iqbal as poet and philosopher awakened the Ummah and while describing his love and attachment with Muslim said that Iqbal as caring, benevolent and compassionate philosopher made us to understand and distinguish between right and wrong.

Quoting Iqbal, Geelani said that those deviated from righteous path have propounded theories leading us to astray and unfortunately Muslim community as a whole is following these stale and man-made theories.

Geelani while referring to atheists said that it is unfortunate that even in Muslim countries the ideology is being promoted and as such those following Islam feel insecure. Geelani while referring to situations in Jammu and Kashmir said that "New Delhi is involved in mass massacre and added that State of Jammu and Kashmir was never a part of India".

Commenting over the population percentage, Geelani said Muslim were 85 percent and all its borders were adjacent to Pakistan and India had no claims as per its specific identity and partition plan.

Geelani asked youth to follow holy Quran and make through study of Iqbal's literary work as his poetry infuses inspiration and teaches brotherhood and self-realization and added his ideas are panacea for all the ills and rallying point for the development of a sense of unity and oneness.

In his speech, Malik while paying tributes to Dr Iqbal said he was a Muslim philosophical thinker of modern times and through his literary work he inspired a universal thought among Muslim Ummah.

However, it is very unfortunate that we are divided on sectarian lines, added Malik.

He said that our religious authorities instead of spreading the message of oneness, unification, solidarity, promoted their respective school of thought and hence we are divided and sub-divided in smaller groups and lost our identity as Muslim.

Referring to the prevailing horrendous situation in state and extreme brutalities inflicted by Indian authorities, Malik said that authorities want to break our resolve but we will never surrender or budge to the pressure tactics.

Every household and family presented laudable sacrifices and are facing immense hardships and miseries, Malik added.

"We have decided to carry this freedom struggle despite all their bullying and state terrorism, added Malik and laid stress on unity within resistance camp and people, saying that we are committed to make this unity more practicable and strong," he said.

Sehrai in his address said that Dr Iqbal's teachings inspire freedom spirits and added that while reading his literary work they find that Iqbal opted for resistance and described his concept of man hood as dynamic and his poetry as poetry of inspiration, brotherhood and self-realization. He asked authorities in Pakistan to make country a real Islamic and welfare state.

RANA

addressing workers here this afternoon.

He said the insensitive dispensation has failed in feeling the pulse of the people who are anguished over forgetting the promises made by BJP stalwarts from top in the high command down in the state leadership during 2014 parliamentary and assembly elections and thereafter with regard to provision of five marla plots and reservation for their wards in professional courses and government jobs. The callousness of the government towards residents is a classic example of the duplicity and deception of the BJP, which has mastered in exploitation, he added.

Referring to denial of one time settlement of the PoK refugees of 1947, 1965 and 1971, the Provincial President said despite recommendation for allocation of Rs 9025 crores during the Omar Abdullah led government, envisaging Rs 25 lakhs to each family, the Centre has provided a meager Rs 2000 crore under Prime Minister's Package, which too is still undisbursed.

"We fail to understand the rationale behind reducing the recommended Rs 9025 crore to just Rs 2000 crore", he said and castigated the BJP for creating euphoria before the 2014 elections and ignoring all commitments after coming to power at the Centre and in Jammu and Kashmir. He described the maltreatment of the BJP with border dwellers as reprehensible.

Rana said that the PDP-BJP has not only failed on deliverance front but also in appreciating the political sensitivities of the people. He said the people of the three regions are suffering adversely with magnitude of their problems increasing with each passing day.

The Provincial President said that National Conference alone can steer out the state out of the morass it has been brought in by the PDP-BJP dispensation. He said his party firmly believes in assuaging the distinct urges and aspirations of all segments of the society.

Cautioning the people against duplicity of the BJP, Rana described its developmental slogan just a façade, saying it exists on the plank of exploitative and divisive politics.

"BJP has benefited from divisive and disruptive politics and its will be their only agenda during the elections", Rana said while addressing workers at Nowshehra this afternoon, adding that this mindset has deprived Jammu and Kashmir of the much needed development during the past nearly three years. "BJP has benefited from divisive and disruptive politics and its will be their only agenda during the elections", Rana said while addressing workers at Nowshehra this afternoon, adding that this mindset has deprived Jammu and Kashmir of the much needed development during the past nearly three years.

Rana said it doesn't matter for the BJP whether the state progresses or not; the only thing that matters is how the party will benefit by playing communal politics and indulging in mudslinging against different segments of society, as it did in 2014.

Speaking on the occasion, State Vice President Th Kashmiria Singh took the PDP-BJP head on for making hollow promises and failing on deliverance front. He described the present dispensation as opportunistic and self-centric, saying its main objective is to remain glued to power by hook or crook.

The State Secretary of NCTh Rachpal Singh also addressed the workers and referred to the failure of the PDP-BJP government on all fronts, adding that the people were suffering on account of utility services, rations, medicare and educational infrastructure. He said the road network is in dilapidated condition as a result of which mobility of people has been adversely affected.

Th Kashmiria Singh said the state is suffering from developmental inertia and administrative paralysis under the present dispensation.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Anil Dhar, Ch Haroon, Vijay Lochan, Abdul Gani Teli, Kr Yashwardhan Singh, Rohit Bali, Vipan Paul, Bhushan Uppal, Moti Ram, Shamsheer Singh, Jatinder Singh, Joginder Kumar, Jalal Choudhary, Zaffar-ullah Bhat, Bharat Kumar and others.

Earlier, Devender Singh Rana and other leaders visited the residence of Moti Ram, District Vice President National Conference and conveyed condolences on behalf of the President Dr Farooq Abdullah and Working President Mr Omar Abdullah on the demise of his son, Sanjeev Kumar.

Rana and others expressed solidarity with the bereaved family and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

FAKE

computers and other incriminating material was recovered and seized from the spot.

On further questioning, it was revealed that he is running this racket of fake government documents from last 2/3 years. He used to provide fake driving license at a cost of Rs. 1500/- and used to similarly charge for other forged documents as well. Many fake Identity Cards of various security forces like CRPF, JKP, Army were also recovered from his possession.

A case FIR number 150/2017 under section 420, 467, 471 RPC was registered in Police Station Nigen and further investigation of the case is going on.

Dr Jitendra Singh meets senior officers of Jammu and Kashmir cadre

New Delhi, November 09: The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh met the senior officers of Jammu and Kashmir cadre, here today. The officers are posted in various Central ministries of the Union Government in the National Capital.

While interacting with the officers, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the Government led by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi accords high priority to the peripheral states and it has taken various initiatives for the development of these regions. He further said that this meeting is also an initiative of the Prime Minister and the purpose of this meeting is to provide a platform to the officers of the same state and give them an opportunity to share their views and experiences to expedite the various development projects in Jammu and Kashmir. He further said that this will help the officers in implementing the Central Government schemes in a much better manner for their state



as they have the ground experiences of working there for a long time. Similarly, this initiative will motivate the J&K Government officials to work for the development of state in a more pro-active manner, he added.

During the meeting, various issues were discussed such as Prime Minister's scholarship scheme for students, connectivity issues including physical, broadband & aviation connectivity, intra-state and inter-state connectivity, setting up of India Institute of Management (IIM) in Jammu, renovation & upgradation of stadiums,

among others. The connectivity will help in boosting trade and commerce related activities in the state and thus create employment for people. The officers emphasized that there is a need to make more use of information technology in officers' functioning in Jammu and Kashmir e.g. e-filing system in the offices. The officers also said that various initiatives of the Government have influenced the state in a great manner, demonetization being one of them.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that the officers from J&K should sit together

and discuss how best the Jammu & Kashmir Government can be benefited from their experience of working in the Central Government. The Minister emphasized upon the synergy between the officers posted in Delhi and the officers posted in Jammu & Kashmir. Both should supplement each other's efforts, he added. He further emphasized that more youth-centric initiatives are required in the state to channelize the energies of youth in a right direction. He stressed upon the job creation for them based on skill development training as per their requirement and specific region.

The Minister said that the youth of J&K are very progressive and their potential should be explored. The Minister expressed happiness over the fact that many students from J&K are making to the IITs. Every year some students make it to toppers' list of Civil Services Examination, he said. The Minister said that the construction of world's largest railway bridge is on full swing over river Chenab. The Minister also highlighted various other initiatives taken by the Central Government such as self-attestation of documents and others.

Asiea Naqash pays surprise visit to GMC

Reviews patient care services in premier hospital

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 09: Minister of State for Housing & Urban Development, Social Welfare, Health & Medical Education Asiea Naqash today paid a surprise visit to Government Medical College and Hospital (GMC) Bakshinagar and took stock of the healthcare services and availability of facilities for the patients.



During the visit, the Minister inspected the wards and units of the hospital and received detailed account about the availability of medicare facilities, infrastructure, manpower, supply and stock of medicines, diagnostic equipments and provisions for sanitation.

She enquired from the hospital management about general patient care being provided in the hospital.

While interacting with teams of doctors, the Minister exhorted upon them to give their best to the patients. She also received detailed information about the arrangements and the facilities available for treating dengue cases. She asked them to ensure proper sterilization of medical equipments.

Stressing on maintaining cleanliness, the Minister directed the hospital staff to pri-

oritize cleanliness in and around the hospital premises. She also inquired about the process of disposal of biomedical and other waste generated in the hospital.

The Minister called for further streamlining and updating the health services to cater to the increased rush of patients during winter season. She stressed upon strict adherence to the duty roster, punctuality and dress code.

Asiea also interacted with the patients and enquired about the facilities being provided to them. She urged the patients to avail benefits of various health schemes. She asked the concerned officers to spread mass awareness regarding health insurance and other welfare schemes launch by the government.

India is one of the oldest organic agricultural nations of the world: Shri Radha Mohan Singh

New Delhi, November 09: Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh said India is one of the oldest organic agricultural nations of the world and a large part of the country still practices traditional organic farming. Shri Singh said today at the inauguration of Organic World Congress 2017 at India Expo Centre in Greater Noida. The event, organized by International Federation of Organic Farming Movements (IFOAM) and OAFI, will see the participation of 1,400 representatives from 110 countries, and 2000 Indian delegates.

Shri Radha Mohan Singh said currently, 22.5 lakh hectares have been brought under organic farming and 3,60,400 farmers have been benefited by Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana. Now, the aim is to bring 50,000-hectare area

under organic farming in the northeast region. So far 45,863 hectares have been brought under organic farming, 2,406 Farmers Interest Group (FIG) have been created and 44,064 farmers have been linked to the scheme against the target of 2,500 FIG. Shri Singh said that in Uttar Pradesh, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana was launched in 2015-16 and so far 28,750 farmers have been benefited from 28750 acres of land. For the marketing of organic products, the government is allocating Rs.5 lakh per district for the setting up of sales outlet.

Union Agriculture Minister said some international scientists call such farming "default organic", however, it is important to understand that often farmers, who continue with these methods, are organic farmers by choice. Using their wisdom, they have

been treading this path for centuries. They are not happy with chemicals and pesticides and choose not to use them. Therefore, their farming practices cannot be called "default" in any way.

Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that the Government acknowledges that indiscriminate and excessive use of chemicals during last several decades has posed a question - how long can we continue to do farming like this? The environment and social and economic issues are linked to chemical fertilizer based farming and it needs our attention. Shri Singh said that Food Security is not an issue anymore in the country, but we still have the challenge of providing healthy and nutritious food to the growing population.

We have become dependent on chemical farming and

the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals have increased the production but at the same time excessive use of chemicals has led to the production of unhealthy crops. Shri Singh said that if we analyze the adverse effects of indiscriminate use of these chemicals on the environment, we realize a large part of chemical is absorbed by the soil, air, and plants. Spraying of chemicals pollutes far away plants. Also, these chemicals seep into the ground and pollute water sources.

Union Agriculture Minister said the use of chemicals has led to climate change and created ecological imbalance and it is affecting human beings too. For the sake of soil health, sustainable production, and healthy and nutritious food for people, organic farming has become a national and global requirement.

Aijaz Khan chairs PAC Sub-Committee meeting

Reviews pace of work on PMGSY road projects

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 09: A meeting of Sub-Committee of Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on PMGSY roads (constructed/under-construction) was held here today under the Chairmanship of MLA Aijaz Ahmed Khan to review the progress achieved by the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) Department in the execution of the projects taken up under different phases of the flagship scheme.



Reviewing the pace of progress on the ongoing PMGSY road projects, the Committee directed the concerned authorities to set deadline for each project and ensure completion within the stipulated time frame.

Legislators, Pawan Kumar Gupta and Ghulam Nabi Monga - the committee members gave valuable suggestions on improving the functioning

of the PMGSY department. They asked the department to put in extra efforts to ensure that the flagship scheme meet the objective of expanding road connectivity to every habitation of the state, especially in rural areas.

The Committee directed the concerned authorities to clear all the pending issues regarding land compensation, NoC by Forest department, land disputes to avoid unnecessary in the completion of the road projects.

The Committee also stressed upon the concerned authorities to enforce responsibility in the department and

make the officers accountable for timely completion of the road projects taken up in their jurisdiction.

The Committee sought present status report of all ongoing projects and asked for submission of the same to the Assembly Secretariat before the next meeting of the Committee.

Commissioner Secretary, PWD Sanjeev Verma, Chief Engineer, PMGSY Kashmir, Malik Basharat and Chief Engineer Jammu SP Manhas briefed the Committee about the pace of progress, physical and financial status of the road projects through a power point

presentation. The Committee also informed about the status of the road projects taken up under different phases of PMGSY scheme, habitations to be covered and the number of projects completed, besides projects held up due to delay in payment of land compensation.

The meeting was also attended by Development Commissioner, (W) Bimal Tickoo, Director Finance, PWD, GM Khan, Chief Engineer, R&B Jammu, Sudheer Shah, Chief Engineer, R&B Kashmir, A H Sheikh, Chief Engineer, MED, Kashmir, Vijay Raina.

Shri Kiren Rijiju inaugurates the 'India Disaster Response Summit'

New Delhi, November 09: The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju has said that India need to prepare itself for moving towards Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) from an approach of traditional Disaster Management. He emphasised that Disaster Mitigation Strategy should be areas of priority for addressing Disaster Risk Management. Shri Rijiju was inaugurating the 'India Disaster Response Summit', organised jointly by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Facebook, here today on how best to leverage social media platforms to 'prepare, respond and recover' for, during and after a disaster.

Calling it a great example of execution on the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's ten-point agenda on Disaster Management, which has clearly listed harnessing technological innovations to create a culture of disaster resilience in the country, Shri Rijiju said, the world is moving towards partnerships, where people

are proactively partnering with the Government in responding to disasters. This partnership is a benchmark and first of its kind - we are the first Government to partner with Facebook on disaster response, he added. Shri Rijiju also invited other technology companies to create tailored solutions for disaster-related challenges.

Shri Rijiju said that reaching out to the people and communities is the primary responsibility of all stakeholders and efforts should be made to make people aware, informed and to guide them during emergency situations. He urged community groups and stakeholders to find innovative ways to inform people on time in scenarios of Disaster Management. He said the efficacy of Disaster Management requires a well defined guideline and the role of media is vital when disaster strikes and even in executing rescue and relief operations. He exhorted the communities to come forward with new techniques of sharing information on real time basis for better

handling of situation at disaster scenario. Technology can be leveraged in providing a quick response and information to people at time of need, he added.

Shri Rijiju said collaboration with various stakeholders including NGO's and private players could provide the necessary base for response with a vision towards 'Capacity Building' to handle disaster risk situation for addressing emergency rescue situations. He said that Government will act as facilitator towards information and communication among various stakeholders by helping evolve new modes of communication for better contact between the 'Government and the People'.

Shri Rijiju said that social media affects everybody's life and common sources of communication through social media has played a vital role in day-to-day information communication, which needs to be leveraged in proper direction. Mentioning about earthquake resistant technologies adopted by

foreign countries, he said that efforts should be in the direction of better planning towards evolving technology in line with better communication tools for disaster response planning.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri R. K. Jain, Member, NDMA, said, the NDMA is proactively using social media for awareness generation. This collaboration is a milestone towards integrating social media with disaster response activities. He hoped this partnership will open new avenues for using mobile technology in disaster situations.

Later participating during a panel discussion on the need for effective data analysis and tools, Shri Kamal Kishore, Member, NDMA, said, social media can help shape a future where, on the one hand, vulnerable communities become increasingly self-reliant and on the other hand, Government agencies have more powerful tools to get real-time feedback and reach out to people whom they seek to serve. Introducing the Disaster Infor-

mation Volunteers (DIV) programme, wherein a network of trained volunteers would provide supplementary information on disasters in their local communities to assist Government relief efforts through the Facebook Workplace platform, Facebook Head (Policy Programmes) for South Asia, Shri Ritesh Mehta said we are aiming to empower communities by building products that connect people and create positive social impact. The programme will be piloted in two disaster prone states - Assam and Uttarakhand, he added. Facebook will now share its disaster maps, developed using aggregated, de-identified data, with NDMA. These maps can aid swift disaster response by providing real-time, actionable information.

Senior officials of MHA, NDMA, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), Central Government Departments, representatives of Facebook and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) attended the event.

Jammu Philatelic Festival cum Exhibition concludes with Release of Special Cover on Almond Trees

Jammu, November 09: Jammu Philatelic Festival cum Exhibition was organized by Sr. Supdt. Post Offices, Jammu Division at Kala Kendra, Jammu. About 50,000 stamps on 90 frames were on display in the Exhibition. His Excellency, The Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Shri N.N. Vohra inaugurated the exhibition on 08.11.2017. Today was the second and closing day of exhibition.

Shri Mohd Shafi Pandit, former Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Public Service Commission was the Chief Guest on the closing function. Shri Rajnish Kumar Jenaw, Controller of Communication Accounts was Guest of Honour. Sh. Nir-maljit Singh, Postmaster General, Jammu presided over the function. Welcome address was presented by Shri Gaurav Srivastava, Director Postal Services, J&K Circle. A Special Cover on Almond Trees Kashmir was also released by the Chief Guest on this occasion. A Philatelic Workshop, on the spot Quiz and Painting Competition, Nukkad Natak, Write a Post Card activities planned for the two day event were also held. During the morning session on first day about 150 students from different schools participated in different activities. The second day also saw public in general and children in particular to flock the exhibition. The Chief Guest felicitated the participating philatelists of the state whose collection was on the display during the two day Philatelic Festival cum exhibition. Around 30 philatelists.

Shri Nitin Gadkari directs highways projects around Delhi NCR to take steps to reduce air pollution

New Delhi, November 09: The Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari has said that directions have been issued to Project Directors, Contractors and field level officials working on highways projects around Delhi NCR to take stringent steps to check pollution arising out of the construction work. The steps

to be taken in this regard include sprinkling water at all construction sites and camp, covering of dumper transporting construction material / waste including flyash, in the region, covering of exposed soil at the construction sites and adherence to air quality norms by all plants and machinery. Field officials have been directed to inspect the construction sites regularly to ensure that all the pollution control

measures are adhered to in a strict manner.

Shri Gadkari also said that thorough research needs to be done to find the cause of this pollution. He said this year the smog has descended despite the ban on crackers and restrain on burning of crops. The minister further said that the Road Transport & Highways Ministry will offer all possible help for such research.

2-days training for BLOs concludes at Reasi

REASI, NOVEMBER 09: The two days training programme organized for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) of district Reasi regarding special summary revision of photo electoral roll 2017-2018 concluded here today.

On the occasion, ACR Harbans Lal, SDM Katra, Neelam Khujaria, Deputy District Election Officer, Surjeet Singh, Tehsildars and other officers were also present.

BLOs were trained to undertake surveys of respective areas and collect the data on persons belonging to each age group. The BLOs were also asked to complete the electoral enrolment



work in a transparent manner so that no elector is left out.

The participants also raised several queries and issues pertaining to removal of entries of dead, permanently shifted electors, correction of errors in elector's names and addresses, contact details and obtaining information about polling stations.

The 2-days programme has been divided into sessions during which experts and resource persons delivered lectures on topics including electoral system in India, effective communication skill, emotional intelligence, self motivation, team building and other electoral enrolment matters through power point presentation.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K

TRIBUNALS SHOULD HELP LIGHTEN

A law commission report submitted this week says that the top five central tribunals in India have more than 3.50 lakh cases pending before them. The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal alone is scheduled to consider 91,000, the report says. Although the disposal by the tribunals in relation to the cases filed every year has been high at 94%, the pendency is worrisome. The Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appeal Tribunal, too, had 90,592 pending cases at the end of 2016. The role of the tribunals is spelt out clearly in the country's justice mechanism: to overcome delays in dispensation of justice by regular courts. By dealing with disputes related to the environment, the armed forces, tax and administrative issues, they are meant to take some of the load off India's overburdened courts. Clearly, that isn't happening at the necessary pace.

The judiciary-citizenry gap in India isn't new. The country has just 18 judges for every million people. The United States, by comparison has a judge-to-population ratio of 107 judges for every million people. There are six vacancies for judges in the Supreme Court. The number of vacancies for judges in the High Courts stands at 400. In the lower courts, the shortfall is 5,000 judges. A Law Commission report in 2009 observed that it would take 464 years to clear the arrears with the present strength of judges. Still, just adding more judges may not be the only answer. One of the solutions being mooted by the law panel to reduce the number of pending cases is to ensure that the orders of the central tribunals are not challenged in the Supreme Court directly. The Central Administrative Tribunal, for instance, should be the last word on matters related to service conditions, without any scope for appeal. Similarly, tax matters should get closure at the offices of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal itself rather than stretching for years together and leading to wasteful expenditure and eating into the precious time of the apex court.

Better court management will help. Although the Code of Civil Procedure recommends that the number of adjournments in one case be capped at three, it is routinely flouted. Since 'absent-counsel' is the reason for two-thirds of delayed cases, an answer could be for the registry to ensure cases involving the same lawyer are not listed too close together. Truant lawyers can be fined if they don't turn up for hearings. Another possible solution could come from the government itself. The central and state governments are the biggest litigants in the country. If the State could slash its own burden of litigation, it may help the overstretched judiciary streamline its operations.

Be-friending an old beggar woman, a coincidence

► G.A.DAR

An old beggar woman in her fifties, claiming to be from Rajori is often seen begging for last over a decade now at the Airport road gate. She has developed wrinkles on her face, due to hard labour and want in her youthful days, as such she appears haggard and older to her age but her stout bodily strength and resilience suggests that she has not passed her fiftieth year as yet, she is a Gujar woman. Continuous exposure to sun has tanned her skin, as such she looks elderly and this feature is affording her added advantage to her profession as every passenger rushing to airport for a long travel, when stopped by police at gate for longer while, thinks that offering alms to this elderly woman in want before entering the main Airport gate would at least save him from ordeal of checking and harassment at the hands of security staff inside, who claim that they must harass even some times misbehave with fashionable ladies and every sardar and respectable persons in the interest of his/her security. It is human nature to think that so refusing to shell out a coin to poor beggar outside proves costly sometimes when security personnel inside ask you to open your attaché for manual checking and disarray your clothes, leaving you bewildered, and next time the passenger remains extra alert to look for this elderly woman, so that she accepts the alms before they enter the main gate and save themselves from the so called misbehaviour of staff, when you offer yourself for molestation and luggage bags for dishevelment, if ever ordered to be opened for any minor reason, like you have kept a knife or laptop etc in your luggage.

Anyway, God's ways are strange and this is how the beggars at gate make a buck for days living. As good people think that giving a coin to a beggar will not allow an aeroplane to meet an accident in mid air. In her early career this beggar women often used to enter household in the near by vicinity for begging and as a matter of her routine she would visit out house too and had perfected in giving "bandi-dauva" blessings before and after receiving alms. To avoid severe cold and harsh winter she disappears from this area in November and goes to Rajouri and returns in March to restart her work here.

It was in March 2011, that though a coincidence she befriended me and ever since she tells all about her secrets to me, if I ever ask her. She was earlier reticent and never told about her day's earnings or where she came from etc, but that coincidence changed her mind set altogether. I do not know why but perhaps she could see some similarity after I was very harsh to her. Anyhow, on a Monday morning in March 2011, sun was brightly shining above at 9.30 AM and this time I had changed to my office dress and suddenly I saw this beggar woman entering smilingly from our main gate, I laced my shoes and by that time she was besides me and she as usual asked for alms. I searched my court pocket and found a small coin,

which I offered her.

She straight way refused to accept it, pleading for a Rs 100 note instead, she continued with her bandi dua which did not have much effect on me. I tried to ward her off but she again refused. Now she said you are a big officer, and your son, whom she probably knew is soon going to be bigger officer than you soon, so you have to give Rs 100 note for his good health and progress on his life and she almost blocked the way of smaller exit door in the gate, "I was shocked at her behaviour now, (as my son about whom she was talking was no more) so, keeping my calm, I asked her my son has already become a very big officer, you better go and ask for money from him, he will give you Rs 1000 note there.

Not understanding my intend she asked

ANYWAY, GOD'S WAYS ARE STRANGE AND THIS IS HOW THE BEGGARS AT GATE MAKE A BUCK FOR DAYS LIVING. AS GOOD PEOPLE THINK THAT GIVING A COIN TO A BEGGAR WILL NOT ALLOW AN AEROPLANE TO MEET AN ACCIDENT IN MID AIR. IN HER EARLY CAREER THIS BEGGAR WOMEN OFTEN USED TO ENTER HOUSEHOLD IN THE NEAR BY VICINITY FOR BEGGING AND AS A MATTER OF HER ROUTINE SHE WOULD VISIT OUT HOUSE TOO AND HAD PERFECTED IN GIVING "BANDI-DAUVA" BLESSINGS BEFORE AND AFTER RECEIVING ALMS. TO AVOID SEVERE COLD AND HARSH WINTER SHE DISAPPEARS FROM THIS AREA IN NOVEMBER AND GOES TO RAJOURI AND RETURNS IN MARCH TO RESTART HER WORK HERE.

"but where is your son now," I replied he is sleeping in so and so graveyard," she could now understand well what I meant, and she made way for me, but she started weeping bitterly as if her own son had died, I again asked her to take tenor, but she now said, I donot need all this money now, and added what shall I do with this money. I thought she is still insisting on Rs 100 so, rather unwillingly I offered her Rs 100 note, but she said she won't accept it this time, but some other time, and stepped out of door, I soon came out boarded my car, hurriedly, thinking about the incident and her reply "what will I do with this money." "Did she not need it has she enough money, or did she tell me that what shall I do with money now, All this confused me while I sank in my car seat till suddenly car stopped at my office I dis-boarded and entered vacantly my office.

A few days latter, I saw her at Airport road she wished me, I asked if she would take that Rs 100 now, she said no, no. Give me Rs 10 only. I gave her her tenor and left for office. But my curiosity to know about her personal life increased like a flame to a heap

of dry stack of grass. On a holiday I saw her going from one car window screen to another asking for alms, I watched her for a while, till she saw me and she gave a wry smile, I asked her where she had been during winter, she said to Rajouri. And added it is warm there and she spend her winter with family etc. she also told me that they had to sell her all sheep one by one after death of her husband to feed her family. Adverse circumstances forced her to begging, a decade ago, but for her I'll luck, her elder son she often tells is diabetic and is unable to earn a living. She has to feed him and his family too.

There are some who own next to nothing but by dint of their hard labour they are made fortune in city Srinagar but there are also some who owned a respectable living at least but when circumstances took a turn they resorted to begging in this city initially and

where he pays rent of Rs 18000 a month and lives comfortably now.

Beggars have a human heart, they sometimes give a coin to another beggar on way for good luck, they have their fixed points too, they fight for retaining their sovereign right over the point or 100 yard stretch on the road, they never allow another beggar to usurp the vintage point of their begging. Physically challenged, Non-state subject beggars have contractors, who leave them on road side for begging for the day and collect them in the evening, they give them food and daily allowance and rest of the money is snatched by the non state subject master/contractor, who takes them from city to city as weather changes or at approach of Idd, or Ramazan, their are estimated three lac beggars brought in from other states to j&k before holy month of Ramzan, in addition to

continue in the same profession till date, this is irony of fate, God never changes the condition of any person, till he himself wishes / strives, to do so. Here is an example to illustrate this.

Last year I saw her in a leading 'TABA' out side Airport, this shop is run by a Behari, who initially worked as a Panday Doonay-walla (a utensil wash boy) at a tea stall at Santa Nager some two and a half decade before for Rs ten a day but soon learnt the art of running a tea stall of his own and two decades before he took a shop here in the vicinity on rent and kept his family in an Annex of a nearby house free of, the owner in fact needed a chowkidar for his house while he and his Mrs were out on duty, so they preferred to keep his Hindu family as a type of chowkidar, this Behari tea seller is now one of the richest business man here as his sales on tea samosa, chilly, ice cream soda bottles, etc is over a lac of Rs in cash daily. This business man who came to this city as a pauper from Bihar and was engaged in a tea shop as Panday doonay walla, has now shifted to a respectable quarter in posh area

over a lac beggars who stay for summer, Kashmir has round the year all season resident beggar population of fifty thousand, some beg daily some on Fridays in front of mosques but all of them beg daily in holy month of Ramzan. When people of Kashmir are extremely generous to poor and needy, it is because of generosity of people of Kashmir that nobody has died due to starvation here, despite adverse conditions and over a three lac of children orphaned for last three years in this on going conflict. I salute to people of Kashmir who despite their own pressing needs keep the orphaned and destitute s needs in mind when they undertake a travel or celebrate a special occasion like Idd or observe a fast in holy month of RAMZAN.

Beggar Home in Srinagar, is in shambles, as are our government schools. The poor have no access to education as these schools are frequently closed by government, this is sorry state of affairs, schools and government colleges have 60 days of academic activities now annually, rest is all declared holidays or dang a-facade.

Faith in Islam is between a person and Allah; no mufti can set them apart

► Salman Khurshid

For a long time I believed fatwas were something I read as interesting, sometimes perplexing judgments pronounced about distant happenings. But last week I discovered how they can come knocking at my door. My good friend Acharya Pramod Krishan has a passion for building a 'Kalki Dham' for the last avatar of Lord Vishnu near Sambhal. For some inexplicable reason, the previous government, as indeed the present one of Yogi Adityanath, has refused to allow the garbh grah (sanctum sanctorum) to be established.

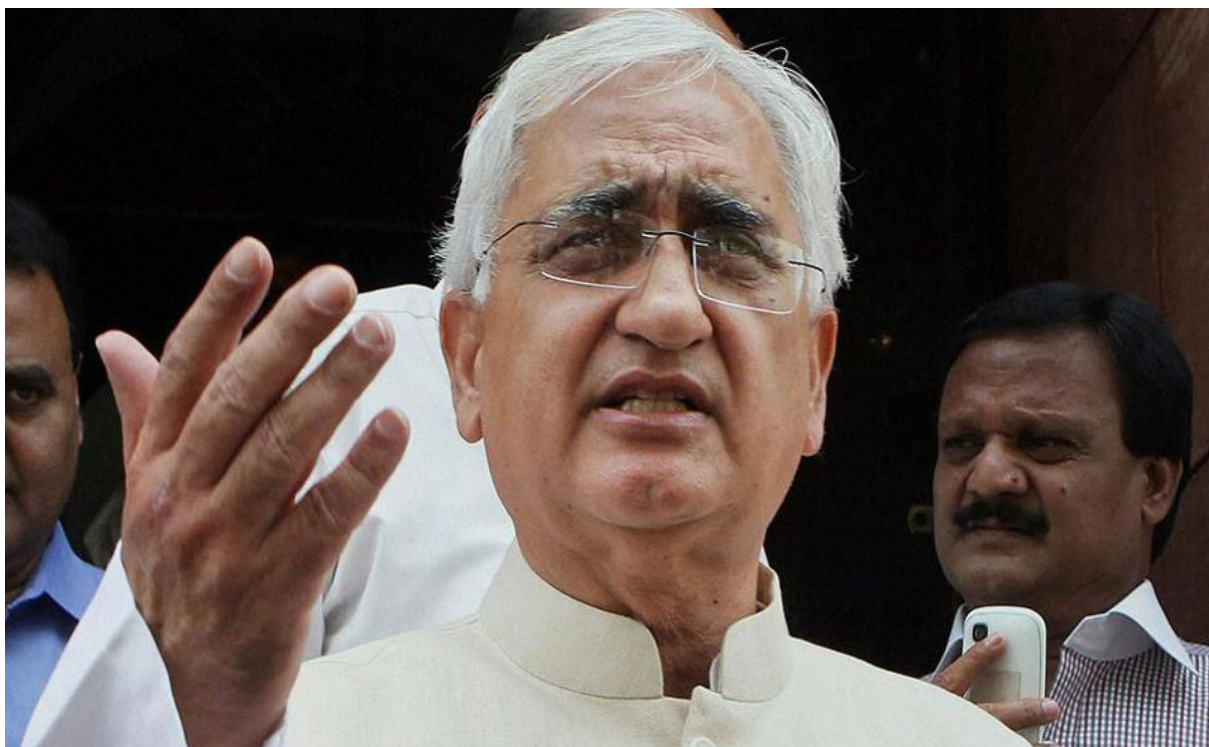
Clearly matters of aashta are relegated to impervious office files unless there is some political advantage. A mandir without votes is after all not of much use and it is worse if it gets built and the votes go to some other camp. A few weeks ago, when I appeared before the Allahabad High Court to challenge the district administration's decision prohibiting the construction of the temple on land belonging to Acharya Pramod, the Bench directed the respondents to give a speaking order within four weeks. Six weeks have gone by with no word from the administration.

The reason cited for refusing permission for a mandir is law and order. Yet

that does not seem to stand in the path of granting permission to hold the Kalki Mahotsava every year in October. Like every year over the past decade, this year too permission was granted and the three day celebration took place in great style. Acharya Pramod invited me to participate in the inaugural that was attended by Jagat Guru Shankaracharya Narendra Swaraswati Maharaj, Swamy Chakrapani, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha and Shivpal Singh Yadav, former PWD Minister of UP. We all made appropriately well meaning speeches and were then invited to join the aarti for Bhagwan Ram.

Acharya Pramod did politely ask me if I was fine with that. Not only did I say it was fine but indeed that I was delighted. We made sure that the aarti was filmed and put up on social media. I am told that the faithful present that evening were pleased by the multi-faith participation.

There was little and insipid response on social media, as indeed there is when something good happens. But then came a TV channel statement of one obscure Mufti Tariq Kashmiri from Deoband saying that a Muslim performing aarti would be excluded from Islam. Clearly some hungry reporter was looking for an easy meal and the so-called mufti offered



himself as one.

Then began a churning of social media: ghar wapsi, halala, na ghar ka n ghat ka, mulla ki daurh mandir tak, etc even more than obscure Muslim sense.

In all this, I see a clear intent to shun and discourage anything that brings Muslims and Hindus together. But what is more, there is a startling ignorance about issues such as what is aarti, the prohibition on idol worship, a fatwa and

the Deoband, leave aside India's unique national ethos.

For a Muslim, it is a basic tenet that there is but one God Allah and Hazrat Mohammed is His Prophet. Someone who believes that cannot be told by a

mufti or anyone else that he is not a Muslim. Participating in any ritual (for a variety of reasons) cannot be equated with worship unless it involves allegiance to another God. The aarti is but a manner of showing respect and honour.

A fatwa can be given by a high authority for interpreting Islam and is not necessarily binding on a person not seeking it. Of course it has weight when it comes from a place like Darul Uloom, Deoband; but then every mufti who lives in the city does not represent the Darul Iftah that is authorised to pronounce fatwas.

Last but not the least, faith in Islam is between a person and his Allah and no mufti can part them. India is a land of harmony and the respect we traditionally show to each other's faith is invaluable. It fortifies our respective faiths and does not undermine them. How feeble must a faith be if it withers by showing respect to another? Does anyone remember 'Lakum dinakum waliya din'? To you your religion, to me mine. Co-existence is as much a part of the idea of Islam as Allah.

Salman Khurshid is a senior advocate and former Cabinet Minister of the Ministry of External Affairs

Can't forgive Nitish for his 'lack of humanity' towards elders: Jaya Jaitly



NEW DELHI: Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was prime ministerial material but was disappointing in "terms of his democratic behaviour" as a team person, his one-time colleague in the Samata Party Jaya Jaitly has said.

The activist-turned-author also lashed out at the chief minister for his "lack of humanity" towards elders, particularly his mentor George Fernandes, who co-founded the Samata party along with Nitish Kumar in 1994. In 2003, the bulk of the party merged with the Janata Dal (United).

Jaitly, former president of the Samata Party, was speaking on Wednesday at the launch of her book "Life Among the Scorpions". She described Kumar as "disappointing" at best. "There was a time when I felt that he was prime ministerial material... he was trained and administratively keen.

"But from the time we worked together I kept seeing more and more of a person who was disappointing in terms of his democratic behaviour while working as a team," she said.

But what she really can't forgive the JD(U) chief for is his "lack of humanity" towards elders, Jaitly said.

In 2009, then NDA convenor Fernandes, described by Jaitly as a "politician par excellence", was denied a ticket by the JD(U) for the Lok Sabha elections in Bihar.

When Fernandes fought the election as an independent candidate from Muzaffarpur, he was expelled from the party. Jaitly also spoke out on the appointment of Jagmohan as governor of Jammu and Kashmir in 1990.

"I remember sitting with George saab in Hauz Khas when Farooq Abdullah phoned him and said 'not to send Jagmohan as the governor of the state otherwise he will quit'. George saab rang V P Singh in front of me and at that time he assured that they were not sending him as the governor," she said.

V P Singh was prime minister from December 1989 to November 1990.

But Fernandes, Jaitly said, was shocked to learn later that Jagmohan was appointed governor.

Congress leader Rajiv Gandhi told the prime minister to appoint Fernandes as special in-charge of Kashmir, she recalled.

"But the sad thing was that every time George saab would try to phone the governor at Raj Bhavan telling them that he was coming to Kashmir nobody would answer the phone," Jaitly said. She added during the freewheeling conversation that she was propelled into politics during the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and decided to fight the forces and the party behind the carnage. She couldn't bear it, she said.

"That's how I decided that I can't be just one of those drawing room people who will say that how terrible everything is in evening over a glass of whiskey."

In her book, Jaitly looks back at her journey as an Indian politician and recounts how the going got tougher with every success, perhaps because she was a woman.

"Life Among the Scorpions" includes the author's account of major events in Indian politics between 1970-2000, including her experience of dealing with the commission of inquiry and courts regarding Tehelka's sting 'Operation West End'.

PM Modi, Sheikh Hasina and Mamata Banerjee flag off Kolkata-Khulna train service

KOLKATA: A new passenger train service between Kolkata and Bangladesh's southwestern industrial city of Khulna was on Thursday flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina and the West Bengal chief minister.

The three leaders launched the train through video conference.

A fully air-conditioned weekly passenger train service 'Bandhan Express' will run every Thursday from both Kolkata and Khulna.

On the occasion, Modi said the ties of friendship between India and Bangladesh have further strengthened.

Modi said in Bengali, 'Aaj ei shubho ulokkhe dui desh bashider amar abhinandan janai. Aaj amader moitreyee, bandhon aro



sudriro holo' (I congratulate the people of the two countries on this auspicious occasion. Our ties of friendship got more strengthened today.)

They also inaugurated two bridges over the rivers Meghna and Titas in Bangladesh.

Hasina said, "Today is a great day for relations between the two countries with the inauguration of the train services and the two bridges. This train service is a dream come true for people on both sides of the border."

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee described the launch as a remarkable day for India and Bangladesh.

"The relations between the two countries will strengthen in the future," she said.

Immigration and customs facilities were also inaugurated at Kolkata station.

Unfair to look only at economic cost-benefit calculus of demonetisation: Bibek Debroy

NEW DELHI: NITI Aayog member Bibek Debroy admits that demonetisation was a temporary shock on growth but asserts that the economy has now climbed back. One year into the disruptive note ban, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's economic policy adviser says the worst is over and there are signs that things are improving now. He also says demonetisation should not be seen through a narrow cost-benefit calculus but as a move aimed at "institutional cleansing".

"Yes, there has been a dip, but followed by a climb back. If you look at the data, there has been a slowdown in the growth rate continuously. I have not seen any data, even remotely statistical, which suggests that demonetisation has led to a more than temporary shock in terms of growth or employment," Debroy, who heads the Economic Advisory Council revived recently by the Prime Minister, told IANS in an interview.

Debroy said demonetisation should not be looked at only from an economic perspective.

"If I evaluate it with a narrow economic cost-benefit calculus, I think that would be unfair, because the intention (behind the move) was not narrow economics," Debroy said. The decision was aimed at institutional cleansing. "How do I even quantify and measure it?"

"If I look at it only with that economic lens, I will evaluate the costs

and the benefits in a certain way. If I look at it with a political-economic kind of lens of cleansing up the system, I will evaluate it in a slightly different way." Debroy said that purely in terms of economics, one will not have to wait too long as some data, like that of direct tax collections, would come out soon which would reflect demonetisation and help understand its implications. There was "excessively high" prevalence of cash in the system till last year and cash-to-GDP ratio has now sharply declined by almost one-third post-demonetisation, he said.

Debroy said that before demonetisation, the cash-to-GDP ratio in India was almost 13 per cent. "That's excessive. It has now come down to a little over nine per cent," Debroy noted. "A lot of the cash in India was excessive and was not yielding returns to the person who held the cash, nor was it performing the role that money performs as a multiplier."

"I'm not comparing with developed countries but even if you compare with other countries in South Asia, India had too much cash," he said.

As per estimates, the cash-to-GDP ratio was 5.8% in Bangladesh, 3.5% in Sri Lanka and 9.3% in Pakistan in 2015, whereas in India it was 13%.

"That excessive cash has now vanished. The money has now come into the banking system. But that does not necessarily legitimise that money. You have to subject yourself to further

scrutiny," Debroy said. Debroy has come out with a compilation, "On the Trail of the Black", along with his colleague Kishore Arun Desai, with contributions from several writers tracing the prevalence of corruption and evaluating its impact on society and the economy. He admitted that every decision related to the demonetisation exercise might not have been perfect. "But we know that with the benefit of hindsight... and this kind of thing had never been attempted before," he said. He said the biggest challenge in implementing the demonetisation decision was to maintain the surprise element which was crucial. Kishore Arun Desai, who edited the book along with Debroy, said the war against corruption was a work in progress and November 8, 2016, should not be looked at in isolation.

"We're talking a lot about November 8, but there are a series of actions that the government has been taking ever since coming to power, starting with setting up an SIT on black money, followed by the Benami Transactions Act, an act for transparent auction of coal mines, the Income Declaration Scheme, the RERA Act and the Jan Dhan Yojana.

"We have been witnessing the overall intent of the government of cleaning up the economy across various sectors and demonetisation was just a trigger and one of the boldest steps," Desai told IANS.

Govt to incentivise online payments to push digital transactions

NEW DELHI: The government will push digital payments afresh as they appear to have lost momentum a year after the promotion of cashless transactions was announced as a key policy objective of demonetisation.

As improved supply has made cash the preferred mode of payment again, the government plans to incentivise apps such as BHIM and the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) — the interface for utility payments — and make digital payments easier, according to a ministry note.

The incentives could include cashbacks and reward points for BHIM users. As competition intensifies among private mobile-wallet operators, the government is looking to promote BHIM while ensuring compliance with a strict cybersecurity protocol. The note presented last week by the ministry of electronics and information technology to Parliament's standing committee on finance detailed a five-step road map to push e-transactions. "Digital payments to be made visibly cheaper than cash," the note said.

About 99% of remonetisation of the banking system was complete by August, according to RBI data. From their highest volume of 957.5 million seen in December last year, digital transactions stagnated in the past few months, data show. The transactions dipped to 861 million in July and rose to 883.4 million in August, only to decline again to 865.8 million in September. Interoperability between digital payment platforms will be introduced in six months, officials said. "There is a cash referral and merchant cashback scheme that UPI BHIM has adopted, we need to expand it, to make it more lucrative to use BHIM," a top official in the ministry said. The note also talked about increasing the adoption of the BBPS and printing of a Bharat Quick Response (QR) code to facilitate easier government bill payments. For example, an electricity bill should have the Bharat QR so that it can be easily paid by scanning the code, using the BBPS gateway. "The aim is to roll out BBPS at the earliest, so that an umbrella gateway is created for paying all government bills. This will stop cash leakage and pilferage," said a government official in the know of the matter.

The note said the merchant discount rate, the money that banks charge for card transactions, would be rationalised on debit cards. The government plans to cap the rate below the existing level of 0.5-1%, sources told HT. A lower rate would encourage even smaller retailers in rural India to shift to card transactions. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched a lottery for e-transactions to attract more people and merchants to cashless platforms. The government offers discounts on digital payments for rail tickets, insurance premia, toll-gate passage and refuelling at petrol pumps. We have reached 50 lakh transactions in a day through UPI BHIM from just 15 lakh two months back. The aim is 2,500 crore digital transactions by the end of 2017-18. That means 8 crore digital transactions per day," said Ajay Kumar, additional secretary in the ministry of electronics and IT. Thirty-eight banks are now associated with the BHIM app, the note said. "The aim is to link at least up to 60 banks by April 2017, even private wallets should be integrated with BHIM," said a source familiar with the government's digital road map. Paytm, the most popular mobile wallet in the country, has 100 million users a month while MobiKwik has 40 million.

LK Advani turns 90, greeted by PM Narendra Modi, other political leaders

NEW DELHI: BJP veteran LK Advani turned 90 on Wednesday and was greeted on his birthday by leaders across political spectrum, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying his efforts had richly contributed to building of the party.

Those who greeted the nonagenarian leader included former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former President Pranab Mukherjee, Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi, West Bengal chief minister Mamta Banerjee, Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia and Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu

Prasad. Advani, a former deputy prime minister, started his day by greeting 90 blind children at his residence and took breakfast with them. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Manmohan Singh, Union home minister Rajnath Singh and Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad were among those who personally visited Advani's residence to greet him. Rebel JD-U leader Sharad Yadav, former Samajwadi party leader Amar Singh, senior Congress leaders Kamal Nath, Karan Singh and Rajiv Shukla also visited Advani's residence and greeted the veteran leader.

"Visited residence of former Dy.

PM, Hon'ble Shri L.K. Advani and conveyed my best wishes on his Birthday. May God bless him and I wish him good health and a very meaningful long life," Venkaiah Naidu said in a series of tweets.

Mukherjee also extended his "warm birthday greetings."

"May you be blessed with good health and many more years in service to the nation," he tweeted.

Modi conveyed his greetings in a series of tweets and also sent a personal letter to Advani wishing him on the day. "Birthday greetings to respected Advani Ji. I pray that he is blessed with good health and a long life," he said. Describing Advani as a political stalwart, Modi said: "He is a leader who has distinguished himself through hard work and dedication towards our nation. We BJP karyakartas are fortunate to always receive the guidance of Advani Ji. His efforts have contributed richly to the building of BJP."

Lalu Prasad took a veiled dig at Modi in his congratulatory tweet, saying Advani should not mind his disciple turning "hostile".

"Warm Birthday greetings to Advani Ji! Never mind if any disciple turns hostile. May God bless you more cheerful, healthy, long & successful life ahead!"

Union parliamentary affairs minister Ananth Kumar and BJP general secretary (organisation) Ramlal were also among those who visited Advani's residence at Prithviraj Road in central Delhi to wish him. "Wishing Sh Advani ji on his birthday. A great leader himself and a mentor to many of us. May God grant him a long and healthy life to guide the nation," Ananth Kumar tweeted and shared a photograph of him touching Advani's feet.

"Happy Birthday, Advani ji. Have a lovely day," Rahul Gandhi said in his tweet. Housing and urban development minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Advani had been a mentor and a guide.

Delhi air pollution: NHRC sends notices to Centre, Delhi, Punjab, Haryana

NEW DELHI: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sent notices to the Centre and the governments of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana in view of "life-threatening" pollution levels in Delhi-NCR.

The NHRC criticised authorities for not taking proper steps to tackle the "hazard", amounting to violation of right to life and health. The rights panel sought reports within two weeks from different Union ministries and the three governments on "effective steps" being taken and proposed to tackle the situation.

"The state cannot leave its citizens to die due to the toxic haze," it said in a statement.

Union environment minister Harsh Vardhan said air quality levels in the national capital will come back to normal within the "next few days", adding pollution

levels had dropped considerably over the last 24 hours.

"Whether the steps which have to be taken by the Delhi government, they should be doing it in complete, total sincerity and similarly the state governments of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan... They all have to step in to fulfil their part of the responsibility.

The national capital has been affected by severe air pollution and smog, forcing the Delhi government to close down schools in order to prevent students from being affected by the poor air quality and take several other emergency measures.

Vardhan, who is an MP from Delh, also said a series of measures had been undertaken by the central government as well as governments in the National Capital Region to curb pollution and that all the states were following a de-

tailed action plan.

For its part, NHRC notices were issued to the secretaries of the Union ministries of environment, health and highways and road transport along with the chief secretaries of the governments of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Punjab and Haryana. The commission said it had taken a serious view of the "life-threatening" pollution in the Delhi-NCR.

"It is apparent that the authorities concerned have not taken proper steps throughout the year to tackle this hazard, which is amounting to violation of the right to life and health of the residents in the region," the NHRC observed.

The panel said it expected the health secretary to give details about the preparedness of government hospitals and other agencies to attend to those affected by pol-



lution and steps taken to create awareness among the public.

It said there was an immediate need for effective action by agencies at the Centre and states.

Proper implementation of environmental laws was necessary, the statement said.

"There is a need for an effective study by experts and proper implementation of their recommendations, including short-term and long-term measures. There is also a need for preventive medical check-ups for the people," the panel said.

The NHRC also observed almost every newspaper and TV channel was running stories on the subject. The toxic smog in the city had become "an annual health hazard", particularly, at a time when the winters were about to start.

Several reasons were mentioned, including pollution caused by the vehicles, particularly trucks and heavy vehicles running on diesel, dust particles due to construction work going in and around the Delhi-NCR, burning of stubble by farmers in Punjab and Haryana, the "calm wind condition" and high humidity, which were beyond human control, it said.

Proposals of alternative roads to link the highways to avoid entry of the heavy vehicles inside the cities were being contemplated but "no effective steps" in this regard were taken yet, it said.

Pollutants touched calamitous

levels in New Delhi on Wednesday, as a thick grey smog hung low across the region, prompting the government to declare closure of schools till Sunday, halt construction activities and ban entry of trucks in the city.

In the NCR, Ghaziabad and Noida were the worst affected locations. As per reports, the air quality index (AQI) had slipped into alarming levels.

Some instruments had recorded the maximum AQI of 999 at some places, it added.

"It is further mentioned that the air quality in the world's most polluted capital city plunged to levels likened to smoking at least 50 cigarettes in a single day. One of the news websites reports that the situation is the worst, as it has touched the 1,000 mark on the air quality index, in certain parts of Delhi," the NHRC statement said.



GM mustard moves closer to approval

Genetically-modified (GM) mustard may have moved closer to being cleared for commercial cultivation in India after a key committee, tasked with assessing all the available evidence so far on the plant's suitability for Indian soil and risks posed to health and ecology, is learnt to have given a favourable assessment on the tests done so far on GM mustard. However there are multiple approvals still required for any likely clearance.

Multiple sources told The Hindu that a document — called a safety document — detailing the sub-committee's findings as well as the data it had perused in assessing DMH-11, the genetically modified (GM) mustard hybrid developed by researchers at the Delhi University, would be made available online for public comments next week.

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) is an Environment Ministry body whose clearance is mandatory for testing GM crops in farmer fields. For DMH-11 it had consulted with plant biologists, ecologists and environmentalists before tasking a sub-committee with compiling all evidence — and addressing key questions — on DMH-11. Earlier too in 2010, the GEAC had cleared Bt brinjal but its decision over-ruled by the then Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh.

"The GEAC has approved the subcommittee's report and is now with the Minister [Anil Madhav]," a key official told The Hindu, "GM mustard being a sensitive issue, it's on his desk...finger's crossed. We cannot put curbs on research."

Mr. Madhav, in a press statement, emphasised that "no final decision has been taken as yet on the issue" and that in a meeting held on August 11, 2016, it has "appraised" the "Safety" Document prepared by the Sub-Committee that would be put up on the website of GEAC inviting comments from the public. Moreover, a GEAC approval doesn't mean the States — who have the final say on agriculture seeds — are compelled to clear it their fields.

The imperative to make public bio-safety data around DMH-11 follows a reprimand by the Central Information Commissioner earlier this month to the government for not making bio-safety data around genetically-modified organisms and mustard public.

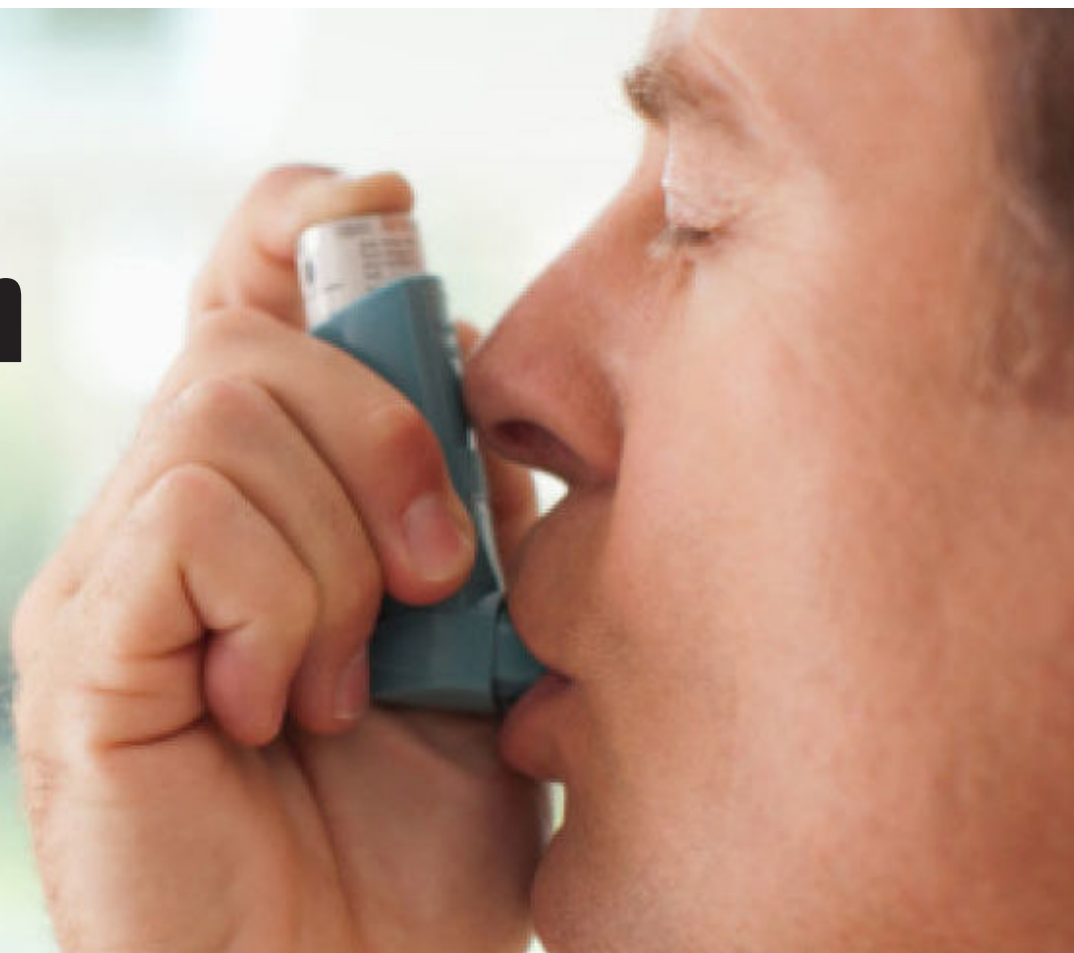
The mustard in question has been developed by a team of scientists at Delhi University led by former vice-chancellor Deepak Pental under a government-funded project. In essence, it uses a system of genes from soil bacterium that makes mustard — generally a self pollinating plant — better suited to hybridisation than current methods. A similar sequence of genes has been used in imported canola oil. This means local crop developers can more easily develop different varieties of hybrid mustard, like in say GM cotton, and confer traits like pest resistance and potentially improving yield.

Yield no better: Activists

Activists have however maintained that publicly-available data on DMH-11 shows that its yield is no better than existing varieties. Moreover the government has consistently stone-walled attempts, according to Kavitha Kuruganti of the Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, to obtain complete data on the tests done on DMH-11 in multiple States over the years.

Proponents of the technology said that India's dependence on edible oil imports made it necessary to harness GM-mustard. "Annually, India spends about \$12 billion on imported edible oil. The edible oil deficit will continue to widen with the increase in population and per capita income. To address this challenge, India needs to increase productivity of oilseed crops. DMH-11 is one of the promising technologies to improve mustard yield in India, which is almost stagnant since the last two decades," said a statement by the South Asia Biotechnology Centre.

Asthma Predisposition High Among Children With Food Allergies



Taking advantage of network data on over a million children, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) system was recently able to conduct a large, informative study on the most common chronic health afflictions that impact children.

From the wide swath of data, researchers assembled a closed-birth cohort of

nearly 30,000 children, observed continually for their first 5 years of life, and a larger cross-sectional cohort of over 300,000, all observed for at least a year. The study claims to be "one of the largest primary care cohorts ever assembled to describe epidemiologic characteristics of healthcare provider-diagnosed eczema, asthma,

allergic rhinitis, and food allergy."

Among the first cohort, 8% were seen to develop a food allergy, as opposed to 6.7% in the larger cross-sectional cohort. The most common allergies were peanut, milk, egg, shellfish, and soy, with peak diagnosis typically before 24 months (except in the case of shell-

fish, with highest diagnoses between 24 and 29 months of age). They observed in the cross-sectional that those allergies mostly remained the most prevalent through adolescence.

Philadelphia has some of the highest asthma rates in the country, at around 21% of children, and the numbers were significantly higher

amongst children with food allergies. Children with 1 diagnosed food allergy had a 26% chance of asthma, numbers which leapt to 40%, 49%, and 56% for those with 2, 3, or 4 allergies, respectively. Across the board, 35% of children with food allergies had asthma.

Rhinitis (commonly called "hay fever") was also

common amongst children with food allergies, also at about 35%. Incidence of childhood eczema, however, were down from previous studies. "Disease rates for these conditions seem to be changing, prompting a need for more information and surveillance," said David A. Hill, MD, PhD, and one of the study's authors.



LOW LEVELS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY WORSENS PSYCHOSIS

Living a sedentary lifestyle could increase your risk of developing psychosis leading to early death, a study has warned.

Physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of avoidable death and is as harmful as smoking, according to World Health Organisation (WHO). The researchers found that people with psychosis — a mental disorder characterised by a disconnection from reality — die up to 15 years before the general population, largely due to heart diseases.

Adults aged 18-64 must indulge in at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity throughout the week, including walking, cycling, household chores or sport, according to recommendations by WHO. The research also offers important insights into the barriers that prevent people with psychosis from engaging in regular physical activity. Mobility difficulties, pain, depression and

cognitive impairment explained low levels of physical activity in people with psychosis, the researchers said. "Understanding and overcoming these barriers could be an important strategy to help people with psychosis be more active, and potentially reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease," said Brendon Stubbs from King's College London.

For the study, the researchers analysed more than 2,00,000 people aged 18-64 from nearly 50 low-and-middle-income countries to examine whether people with psychosis are meeting the WHO's recommended levels of physical activity. These individuals were divided into three groups: people with psychosis, those with psychotic symptoms but no diagnosis and a control group (of people with no diagnosis of psychosis and no symptoms in the past 12 months). Overall, people with psychosis were 36 per cent more likely not to

meet the recommended physical activity levels compared to control ones.

When the researchers looked at men only, those with psychosis were over twice more likely not to meet the recommended levels compared to people in the control sample. "It is unclear why men with psychosis showed such low levels of physical activity, although perhaps the earlier onset of illness typically seen in males means that lifestyle habits may have been altered over time by aspects of the illness or its management, such as negative symptoms, sedating medications or hospital admissions," explained Fiona Gaughran, from King's College London.

The study, published in Schizophrenia Bulletin, will help interventions aimed at helping people with psychosis to be more active and ultimately improve their mental and physical condition.

Kidney racket: PAREL HOSPITAL UNDER SCANNER

After the kidney racket at LH Hiranandani Hospital, another hospital, Parel-based Global Hospital has come under the scanner of the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) for discrepancies in documentation.

While the donor and recipient fled the hospital as soon as the discrepancies were uncovered, hospital sources denied knowledge of the case.

DHS sources confirmed that discrepancies were found in one of the cases at Global Hospital, where two males, claiming to be father and son, approached the hospital for a kidney transplant. While the hospital authorisation committee approved the transplant, Directorate of Medical Education (DMER) officials rejected the documents suspecting foul play involving monetary transactions.

"As soon as they were called for questioning, Rishabh Dhangache, 21, and Suresh Dhangache, 51, fled with the forged papers. We will investigate the records and video footage," said a DHS official.

DHS will also question two people involved in another case, who presented themselves as sisters and underwent a kidney transplant at LH Hiranandani Hospital on April 27. Discrepancies were found in the papers of the two sisters, Rasulaben Kathiriyra (recipient) and Harshaben Kevadiya (donor) whose human leukocyte antigen (HLA) tests had matched 3/6. Medical experts said that HLA tests cannot be used as proof of a biological relationship. "We will ask the Powai Police to produce the parties for questioning. Their school-leaving certificates and other documents seem to be forged," said a DHS official.

The two addresses provided by the sisters were found to be false when the correspondent visited them. Neighbours said the donor's family used to stay there a year ago but shifted in mid-2015.

Tobacco products, liquor to carry warning against sale to children

All tobacco products, liquor bottles and outlets selling these products will soon have to carry a health warning that giving or selling intoxicants to a child is a punishable crime with up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and fine of up to a lakh according to rules under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. The rules are expected to be notified next week by the government and will have to be implemented by all states.

This provision could be opposed by tobacco manufacturers who are already resisting adhering to the norm of 85%

coverage by pictorial warnings on packets.

The rules also mandates that tobacco products or liquor cannot be sold within 200 metres of a childcare institution or juvenile justice board office. The rules drafted by the Maneka Gandhi-led ministry of women and child development with the assistance of an expert committee comprising a senior judge, advocates, juvenile justice board members and state government representatives.

The present Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Product (Prohibition of Advertisement & Regulation of Trade

and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act prohibits the sale of cigarettes or other tobacco products to people below 18 years and in areas within a 100-metre radius of educational institutions. The penalty for violation is a mealy fine of Rs 200 and up to three months in jail.

Under the JJ Act which came in to effect on January 1, 2016, the penalty provisions have been increased to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and Rs 1 lakh fine.

The JJ Act is an omnibus law that has introduced new offences including



sale and procurement of children for illegal adoption, corporal punishment in child care institutions, giving children intoxicating liquor or narcotic drug or psychotropic substance or tobacco products, use of child by militant or adult

groups, offences against disabled children and kidnapping and abduction of children. The rules provide for child friendly procedures for reporting, recording and trial.

It is proposed that every police station will have child friendly infrastructure, similarly special children's room will be designated in every court complex. The rules say, "All tobacco products and intoxicating liquor must display a message that giving or selling intoxicating liquor or tobacco products to a child is a punishable crime with up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of up to one lakh rupees."

adds, "Giving or selling of intoxicating liquor, narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances or tobacco products within 200 metres of a childcare institution or any other home registered or recognized under the Act, or the office of a committee or a board shall be deemed to be an offence under section 77 of the Act." Any shop selling liquor, tobacco products, must display a message at a prominent place on their shop that giving or selling intoxicating liquor or tobacco products to a child is a punishable crime with up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment and a fine of up to one lakh rupees.

After demonetisation, ED probing over 3,700 money laundering, FEMA cases

NEW DELHI: The ED is investigating over 3,700 cases of money laundering and hawala transactions, involving tainted assets worth Rs 9,935 crore, as part of its action against black money generated post demonetisation, an official report today said.

The central probe agency also carried out a "risk assessment" of these cases, registered post the note ban on November 8 last year, and found that a majority of (43 per cent) the financial crimes were carried out by perpetrating bank frauds and cheating financial institutions through a maze of shell firms. The other category of post-note ban financial crimes being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) include cases of corruption (31 per cent), drugs and narcotics trade (6.5 per cent), arms and explosives (4.5 per cent) and others (8.5 per cent).

"The head of this demon (black money) is the money of cor-

ruption and illegal wealth acquired through banking frauds.

"A general review of the cases post demonetisation show that businesses and professionals have collaborated with each other to use shell companies for converting illegal wealth into legitimate assets," the report said.

ED director Karnal Singh told PTI that the agency was "committed to work against the menace of black money and corruption and to bring professionalism in its working". The agency had registered and was probing a total of 3,758 cases (3,567 under forex laws and 191 under the anti-money laundering act), issued 777 show cause notices and attachment orders and has conducted 620 searches since November 8 last year to September. The total value of assets and forex violation amount involved in these cases stands at Rs 9,935 crore with the agency attaching assets worth Rs 5,335 crore under



the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and issuing notices under the FEMA involving an amount of Rs 4,600 crore, the report said. The ED, that functions under the Union Finance Ministry,

study also found that financial institutions like banks were the most "vulnerable" to money laundering crimes at 48 per cent followed by real estate at 35 per cent, precious metals like gold invest-

ments at 7 per cent and the rest 10 per cent in other sectors.

The agency, that enforces the PMLA and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in the country, also arrested 54 people

post demonetisation as part of these investigations.

The ED found that the "proceeds of crime were laundered mainly through financial institutions (like banks) using shell companies and real estate." Even in real estate sector the money for investments has been coming through financial institutions using a maze of shell companies. The shell companies, therefore, are the major modus operandi through which money is laundered," it said.

The agency, according to official sources, had a number of politicians and bureaucrats under its scanner as part of these investigations. The probe in these cases involve scrutiny of voluminous paper documents and electronic records. Some of the cases require involvement of multiple agencies and the results would show sooner than later, they added.

The agency has also chronicled the various methods used to laun-

der black funds like conversion of stash funds with the help of bank officials, hiring services of professionals like chartered Accountants, investment in gold, bullion and jewellery and advance remittances against imports.

The other most noted money laundering techniques used post demonetisation involved investment of tainted assets in foreign currency, real estate and benami assets, the report said.

The ED had conducted country-wide searches against shell firms early this year and sources said more action against their beneficiaries and operatives would take place in the coming days.

"Most of these firms have dummy directors. They sign balance sheets and other documents on the instructions of the operators (called entry operators). Many such firms are either registered at fictitious addresses or at one-room locations," the report added.

Limited space for further cut in lending rate: SBI chief

NEW DELHI: State Bank of India Chairman Rajnish Kumar on Thursday said that there is limited space for further easing of the lending rate.

It seems so, he said in reply to a question if the rate cut cycle is over for now. "If you look at the bond yields, they have gone up in the recent past. So, I think the headroom available for cutting down the interest rates, both deposit and lending (seems limited). Deposit rate unless you cut you cannot cut lending rate ... for time being we are in for much more stable interest rate," he said. Last week, the country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) reduced its lending rate for home and auto loans by 0.05 percentage point.

To a question, if recapitalisation



in public sector banks by government could lead to increase in interest rate, he said, "quite possible."

There may be 10-15 basis point spike following the issuance of re-

capitalisation bonds leading to an increase in yield, he said on the sidelines of an event organised by Business and Youth Starting Together here. Last month, the government un-

veiled Rs 2.11 lakh crore two-year roadmap for strengthening NPA-plagued public sector banks, which include recapitalisation bonds, budgetary support, and equity dilution.

The programme entails mobilisation of capital, with maximum allocation in the current year through budgetary provisions of Rs 18,139 crore, and recapitalisation bonds to the tune of Rs 1.35 lakh crore over the next two years.

The balance will be raised by banks from the market by diluting government equity. The government's equity dilution would help banks raise about Rs 58,000 crore. The government equity, as per the current policy, can come down to 52% in state-owned banks.

Markets open in green; Sensex at 33,376.62, Nifty at 10,358 points

MUMBAI: Taking a cue from global markets, the key Indian equity market indices on Thursday opened higher.

The Sensitive Index (Sensex) of the BSE, which had closed at 33,218.81 points on Wednesday, opened higher at 33,376.62 points. Minutes into trading, it was quoting at 33,418.41 points, up by 199.60 points, or 0.60 per cent.

At the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the broader 51-scrip Nifty, which had closed at 10,303.15 points, was quoting at 10,358.65 points, up by 55.50 points or 0.54 per cent.

Heavy selling pressure in metals, automobile and banking stocks, coupled with negative global cues and outflow of foreign funds, had suppressed the key Indian equity indices on Wednesday.

According to market observers, geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, along with selling pressure in index

heavyweights like Bharti Airtel, Tata Motors, State Bank of India (SBI) and Lupin, among others, aided in the losses suffered by the indices.

The Sensex was down by 151.95 points or 0.46 per cent at the Wednesday's closing. In the day's trade, the barometer 30-scrip sensitive index had touched a high of 33,484.70 points and a low of 33,157.68 points. The Nifty too, was down by 47 points or 0.45 per cent.

On Thursday, Asian indices were mostly showing a positive trend. Japan's Nikkei 225 was trading in green, up by 1.58 per cent, Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up by 0.88 per cent while South Korea's Kospi was up by 0.12 per cent.

China's Shanghai Composite index was quoting in green, up by 0.10 per cent.

Nasdaq closed in green, up by 0.31 per cent while FTSE 100 was also up by 0.22 per cent at the closing on Wednesday.

That hurts! Air India's 'Unbeatable Service' ad takes veiled dig at IndiGo incident

NEW DELHI: With IndiGo facing flak over the assault of a passenger by a staffer, rival Air India took an apparent dig at the country's leading private carrier on Wednesday, promising "Unbeatable Service". The national carrier released two advertisements on Twitter in its veiled jibe at IndiGo after a video showed one of its employees entering into a scuffle with a passenger.

In one of the ads, the Air India promised "Unbeatable Service" with the letters 'beat' highlighted in blue -- the theme colour of IndiGo. The second ad depicts the Air India's mascot 'Maharaja' in his trademark style with a tag line: "We raise our hands ONLY to say Namaste." The private airline, meanwhile, came in for criticism on Twitter for the last month's incident with some calling for its boycott.

"A no fly ban is a must on this airline till these guys are arrested with an attempt to murder #BoycottIndigo," tweeted Aditya Thackeray, the president of Shiv Sena's youth wing.

BJP leader Shah Nawaz Hussain posted on the microblogging site: "This kind of arrogant behaviour seems to have become the norm for @IndiGo6E. I hear of rude behaviour instances by In-



diGo on regular basis."

Former chief election commissioner SY Quraishi tweeted, "After seeing the brutal assault on a passenger, almost throttling him to death, should IndiGo not be boycotted - at least for a month?" Civil aviation minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju has sought an independent inquiry into the incident

from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

IndiGo has also written to the ministry apologising for the incident and admitting that it was at fault. However, it defended the employee seen in the video entering into a brawl and said "he was doing his work" and trying to ensure the safety of the passenger.

GST council likely to slash tax on 80% items in top slab: Sushil Modi

PATNA: Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who is also a member of the GST council, said on Wednesday tax rates on 80% items of top 28% slab are likely to be slashed at the council's meeting starting Thursday. "Tax rates on 80% of 227 items falling in top slab is likely to be reduced from 28% to 18% in the next GST council meeting."

The GST fitment committee has also recommended reducing tax rates from 18% to 12% on a number of goods," Sushil Modi said at a function at the Bihar Chamber of Commerce in Patna.

So far, tax rates have been slashed on more than 100 items," he added.

The GST Council will meet on November 9 and 10 in Assam's capital Guwahati. Sushil Modi, who also holds the finance portfolio, was interacting with representatives of associations formed by traders involved in businesses like food, textiles, consumer goods and real estate. Noting with concern that GST returns had dropped in September to 46.4% from 58% in the preceding month in Bihar, Sushil Modi said "directions have been issued to conduct

a survey and find out what are the problems that businessmen may be facing". Sushil Modi said like demonetisation, GST too aimed at "achieving a clean, transparent and honest economy" and claimed "the common people have no problems with the new tax regime per se."

Though there may be anxieties over procedural complexities," The new generation of traders is rapidly moving towards digitization. They want to change the way business is done and are not willing to continue with the kachcha bill system," the Bihar deputy CM said.

PayPal formally launches India operations

MUMBAI: American digital payments player PayPal, which has been operational here for the past one decade, today formally launched its domestic operations.

Under its services, PayPal India will offer global Indians a single account for their domestic and cross-border transactions.

The company also has plans to bring in its other global services like merchant credit and forex remittances.

PayPal India will offer buyer and seller protection along with six months claim window, free return shipping and its globally famous 'one-touch help' that skips login enabling a frictionless checkout to begin with, Rohan Mahadevan, SVP PayPal APAC, said in Mumbai. With this, domestic consumers can use PayPal to shop online at some of the country's most popular businesses and merchants offering PayPal will be able to process both local and global payments, getting access to PayPal's 218 million customers around the world through a single integration.

The Nasdaq-listed PayPal Holdings had \$10.8 billion revenue in 2016 from a volume of \$354 billion, Mahadevan said but did not say how much profit it had made in the year.

The company did not offer any India-specific detail like existing customer base, revenue share from here, and transaction volumes among others, investment details and even the number of people employed here, citing it being a private company here.

Globally PayPal is present in over 200 markets, and focuses on SMEs and freelancers to leverage the global opportunity. Without offering any specifics, Anupam Pahuja, country manager and managing director at PayPal India, said, they want to be a dominant player in the country's digital payments marketplace.

With the launch of domestic services, PayPal has set up a customer centre in the country with multi-lingual support capabilities and on ground sales team to drive customer engagement and education.

Plastic items, furniture may get cheaper as govt plans to cut GST rates on items in 28% slab

GUWAHATI: The GST Council may consider Friday reducing items in the 28% tax slab and slash rates for daily use items, plastic products and handmade furniture as it looks to provide relief to consumers.

Four months after the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was rolled out, the panel headed by Union finance minister Arun Jaitley will look at the most comprehensive overhaul of rates, easing returns filing and providing more relief to small and medium enterprises, official sources said.

The 23rd meeting of the Council, being held in Guwahati, will also deliberate on the suggestions made by Assam finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-headed GoM to cut tax rates for the composition scheme businesses to 1% and lower rates for non-AC restaurants. The Council, comprising state finance ministers,

is also set to review the GST returns filing cycle and make it taxpayer friendly. The Council may Friday rationalise rates in sectors where the total incidence of taxation has gone up because the goods were either exempt from excise or attracted lower VAT rates under the previous indirect tax regime. As the Council tries to accommodate industry concerns on tax rates, after estimating the impact on revenue, a rationalisation of items in the 28% tax bracket is expected. "Most daily items like shampoo could be lowered to 18%. Tax rate on items like furniture, electric switches and plastic pipes could be relooked at," an official said.

Besides, making the composition scheme more attractive is on the agenda and as per the Group of Ministers (GoM) recommendations, the Council may decide to allow busi-

nesses in inter-state trade to opt for the arrangement. The GoM had also suggested slashing tax rate to 1% for manufacturers and restaurants opting for the scheme from 2% and 5%. It was in favour of doing away with the tax rate distinction between AC and non-AC restaurants, those which are not covered under the composition scheme and tax them at a flat 12%.

Currently, non-AC restaurants are taxed at 18%. It also suggested that eating out at hotels that have room tariff of more than Rs 7,500 should attract a uniform 18% rate instead of any separate category for 5-star hotel, which currently falls under the 28% bracket. The GoM came up with a two-pronged approach for taxation under the composition scheme for traders. It suggested that traders who want to exclude sale proceeds of tax-free items from turnover can pay 1% GST.

However, for those who pay tax on total turnover, the tax rate has been proposed at 0.5%. While a regular taxpayer has to pay taxes on a monthly basis, a composition supplier is required to file only one return and pay taxes on a quarterly basis.

With a view to easing compliance burden of taxpayers, the Council is also going to review the requirement of filing three returns every month under the GST set-up. Businesses have to file returns in GSTR-1, GSTR-2 and GSTR-3 forms for every month. These forms detail outward supplies of taxable goods and/or services, inward supplies for claiming input tax credit and monthly returns. The review follows businesses complaining about problems in matching invoices while filing July returns. Businesses have also complained of trouble in invoice matching while filing GSTR-2.

Appellate tribunal dismisses petitions of Sharjeel and PCB

LAHORE: The Appellate Tribunal has dismissed petitions of both Sharjeel Khan and the Pakistan Cricket Board against the five-year ban imposed on the banned cricketer by PCB Anti-corruption Tribunal (ACU) in a spot-fixing case reported during the second edition of the Pakistan Super League this year.

On Wednesday, head of the tribunal retired Justice Fair Mohammad Khokhar read out his short decision in presence of both parties at the National Cricket Academy, while a detailed verdict decision will be given later.

On Sept 10, the ACU, headed by retired Justice Asghar Haider, suspended Sharjeel in the above-mentioned case. But Sharjeel's lawyer Shaigun Ijaz was not satisfied with the verdict handed out and submitted the petition in which pleaded for a reduced sentence.

On the other side the PCB also sub-



mitted a petition in which it pleaded for a more severe sentence since the board felt the tribunal had not punished Sharjeel enough after the cricketer was found guilty of breaching five different clauses of the Code of Conduct. However, Justice Faqir upheld the decision of Asghar's tribunal

and rejected the pleas of both parties after hearing their arguments.

Now the Appellate Tribunal will hear out the petition of Khalid Latif, another Pakistan cricketer who is also not satisfied with the ACU's decision to hand him a five-year suspension without any suspended period in the

same PSL case.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Irfan prepares to defend himself before the ACU after being summoned after being accused of equally involved in spot-fixing by fellow Pakistan player Shahzaib Hasan.

Dawn learnt that Shahzaib's lawyer had included Irfan as one of the witnesses and he wanted to cross-examine him with the claim he is equally involved in the spot-fixing in the 2017 PSL.

Irfan, who turned an approver, after initially admitting that a bookie met him in the UAE, but he failed to report the matter to the PCB.

However, Irfan claimed that he did not do any wrong except not reporting the incident.

He was given a one-year suspension from all forms of cricket with a six-month suspended period, besides being fined Rs1 million.

Virat Kohli, cricket's Richie Rich makes a killing on social media – Here's how

MUMBAI: Virat Kohli, currently the best batsman in the Indian cricket team, is widely followed on social media. His social media numbers are mind-boggling as his cricketing feats. Kohli has 36 million fans on Facebook, over 15 million followers on Instagram and 20 million Twitter followers.

With such a massive reach on social media, the Indian cricket team skipper is one of the most valuable brands among sports athletes. According to a recent Forbes report, India's captain earns about Rs 3.2 crore (USD 500,000) per promotional post on Instagram, that is the same amount as football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo. Kevin Hart earns more than the two with Rs 6.4 crore (USD 1 million) per post. It was two weeks ago that Kohli eclipsed Lionel Messi as the most valuable brands among sports personalities. Kohli is seventh in that list, with a brand value of USD 14.5



million. Roger Federer and Cristiano Ronaldo are ahead. He is also the only Indian sportsperson to make into the Top 100 of the world's highest paid athletes.

Kohli has been leading India's dominance in the past one year. Apart from being unbeaten at home across all three formats, the right-hander recently scored his 31st ODI century, overtaking Ricky Ponting. Kohli is only behind Sachin Tendulkar in the list of most centuries in ODIs.

How Mary Kom balanced life between Parliament and the boxing ring



NEW DELHI: It is barely a few hours since Mary Kom landed a very special victory in the Asian Boxing Championships in Ho Chi Minh City, but she is already in the airport waiting for her flight to Delhi. Didn't she stay back to celebrate the fifth Asian title, marking a grand comeback just when people felt at 34, Mary Kom was ready to move on? A unanimous decision against North Korea's Kim Hyang-mi showed the competitive fire is still burning bright. Mary Kom explained she had to fly out to Switzerland to participate in the International Olympic Committee meeting from November 11-13. She is the international boxing body's representative for the IOC athletes forum.

"The pollution is high in Delhi, right?" she enquired, even more concerned as her children are in Delhi. "I spoke to them. They are very happy and can't wait for me to get back," she told Hindustan Times over phone from the Tan Son Nhat International Airport on Wednesday.

Her latest triumph has not been just about fighting age and younger and tougher opponents. It has been about balancing life as mother of three young children, Rajya Sabha member and training, often in the morning and evening.

"Every medal is special, even this medal is special," Mary Kom said. "Being an MP, it was tough. When the session was going on, I would go for practice, rush home and take a quick shower and run to the parliament. It was very difficult." Did she manage a quick nap while the sessions were on? "No, not me," Mary Kom laughed. "I used to be in the parliament for an hour or two and then rush during lunch break and go for training in the evening."

The 34-year-old boxer was happy with her fitness, but said the victory was mainly due to her vast experience. "It has become a difficult tournament. Now Asian also is getting tougher and tougher."

"The 48 kg, in the last seven years all opponents were of equal height or shorter," Mary Kom explained. "But my opponents are taller now," she said. Even her North Korean rival in the final, Kim Hyang-mi was much taller, and of course, younger.

"But I have the experience of 17 years," she said cheerfully. "So, I was able to handle them easily."

The fifth Asian title will be very special for the national sporting icon. There had been rumbling within the national camp, especially from the top 51kg contender, Pinki Jhangra. And when Mary failed to qualify for the 2016 Rio Games, after losing early in a qualifying event, few expected her to fight back into the ring one last time.

At the camp in Delhi for the Vietnam meet, Mary Kom told Hindustan Times she wanted to box for two more years. On the task at hand, she explained moving down to the weight she was most comfortable with would make all the difference.

"My actual weight is 48kg. Earlier, I was fighting in a higher category (51).

It is very tough, to train and then to re-fill, increase weight, (it's) very difficult for me."

At the IG Stadium's boxing hall during the national camp, Mary Kom groaned in pain in the stretching session with the physio. But her focus will be on the gain. And the 2018 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games are the incentives ahead.

Yuvraj Singh training hard at NCA with eye on No 4 slot in Indian cricket team

NEW DELHI: With the Indian team struggling to find an option at No 4 in their batting line-up in One-day Internationals, it seems Yuvraj Singh is fancying his chances. The southpaw is working on his fitness at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bangalore and is preparing for the YoYo test, which evaluates an individual's aerobic endurance fitness.

It has been learnt that the selectors have kept a window open for him should he get back to fitness. He is there for a month and his training will end on November 28 after which he will take the YoYo test. The Sri Lanka ODIs begin on December 10, which he seems to be eyeing. As per earlier reports, Yuvraj had failed to make it to the India squad on account of failing the fitness test. The YoYo test seems to have become a necessity in Virat Kohli's side as the skipper is focused



on fielding an absolutely fit India side in limited-overs cricket.

The veteran India all-rounder last played in national jersey on

the tour of West Indies in June-July, making 39 in the third ODI in Antigua. India won that match. His last competitive cricket outing

was for Punjab in the October 14-17 tie against Vidarbha where he failed to get going, making just 20 & 42 as his side was thrashed by an in-

nings.

Yuvraj, who will turn 36 in December, may have smelt an opportunity after India struggled to find an option for the No. 4 slot.

Since the 2015 World Cup, India have used 11 batsmen in that slot (see box) and are yet to find a permanent solution. Manish Pandey has failed to get going and they tried Kedar Jadhav in Sri Lanka. But he too returned poor scores. They have tried Hardik Pandya but his credentials as a proper batsman are yet to be established.

Skipper Virat Kohli, however, doesn't want to put Ajinkya Rahane in that slot as he feels, he needs him as an option to open the innings. Incidentally, since the World Cup, Yuvraj has got the most number of runs in that position – 358 (see box). But 150 of those came in one innings against England earlier this year in Cuttack.

Cheteshwar Pujara feels Sri Lanka Tests ideal preparation for South Africa tour



NEW DELHI: Cheteshwar Pujara is expected to play a major role during next year's tour of South Africa and he is confident that the three-Test series Sri Lanka series will give him a "good opportunity" to prepare for the tough assignment ahead.

"Obviously, next year's South Africa series is something that is there at the back of my mind. The upcoming Sri Lanka series will be a good opportunity to prepare for the South Africa assignment. I am confident of doing well," Pujara told PTI during an interaction.

Asked if he had started preparing for the South Africa series, which starts with first Test in Cape Town on January 6, Pujara said: "The main preparation will certainly start closer to the series. But I believe once we assemble to play the Test series against Sri Lanka, there will be some serious discussions on the South African tour. There will be strategies and plans in place."

Asked if he is keen doing some

special preparations for the bouncy pitches of South Africa, Pujara replied: "Like every series, I will be doing my own homework. There are a few areas that I will like to work in the nets before the series. Those are very specific things but it will be unfair to reveal them as that's a part of the strategy."

Pujara had a fantastic outing against Sri Lanka few months back with scores of 153 and 133 in the first two Tests at Galle and Colombo.

Sri Lanka's bowling attack wasn't upto the mark during that series but the Saurashtra right-hander will not like to be complacent ahead of a new series. "I agree that during the last series, Sri Lanka's bowling attack may not been one of the best but Test runs never come easy. You have to fight for every run that you score in longer format."

"Also every series is a new series. Your intensity does not change according to the opposition you play. Sri

Lanka is also an international side and you have to give them the same respect like any other team," said the 29-year-old, who has scored 4107 runs in 51 Tests with 13 hundreds.

Recently, Pujara went through a lean patch in first-class cricket – nine successive innings in first-class cricket (which includes four County matches for Northamptonshire) without a half-century – but not for once was he worried as he felt good while batting. "I always knew that a big innings is just round the corner. When you know that you are batting well, you can feel it. It was about one good innings and it came against Jharkhand," added Pujara. The 204 against Jharkhand made him the Indian batsman with most number of double hundreds (12) in first-class cricket surpassing the legendary late Vijay Merchant (11). Late Vijay Hazare (11 double tons), Sunil Gavaskar and Rahul Dravid (10 each) are behind him now. "Actually, I didn't know about the record while I was batting. I only came to know about it once second day's play was over. I got a few text messages and came to know that it was a national record. It was a good feeling indeed knowing that there are some great players on that list."

Along with Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane, Pujara has been a pillar of the Test squad, giving the batting order much-needed solidity.

Ask him if he can copy Kohli's flamboyant style of batsmanship, Pujara said that it is not the best thing to do.

"Each and every batsman has his own distinct style of batsmanship. It's of no use trying to copy anyone else. Each and every player has his own strengths and builds his game accordingly," concluded Pujara.

Stuart Broad pinpoints David Warner as major threat for England in Ashes



LONDON: England paceman Stuart Broad has pinpointed David Warner as Australia's danger man in the Ashes series, while admitting a begrudging respect for his aggressive mentality.

The pugnacious opener fired up the tourists last month by comparing playing against England to "war" and said he planned to take "some sort of hatred" into the Tests, which start in Brisbane on November 23.

Broad said Warner, known for his fiery nature on the field, was a perennial danger.

"I think someone like Warner you've got to try bowl a lot of balls at him with the new ball, because it's your best chance of getting him out," he told the Sydney Morning Herald Thursday.

"(But) you have to have a plan B, and with someone like Warner you have to go to plan B quicker than a lot of other batters."

While captain Joe Root said before leaving England that Warner's comparison to war was "extreme", veteran Broad acknowledged teams needed characters like him to make them great. "He's someone that drives teams forward," Broad said of Warner. "He's one of those blokes who is not that enjoyable to play against, but if he's in your team you love him. You have characters like that in most successful sports teams, don't you? Someone who if he's in the field, will stay in the battle, looking someone in the eye all the time, keep his bowlers moving... someone who can take the game away from you quickly." He said these were the type of players he likes to face, "the sort of guys who spur you on". "You know that if you get it wrong to him he can hurt you, but it's also extremely exciting if you get him out." Broad also sees prolific Australia captain Steve Smith, the top batsman in the world, as another player who needs to be toppled early, admitting he was tough to bowl at. "He's got huge scoring areas from straight, so I think we have to look for his outside edge up until day three," he said. "And then if the pitches start going slightly up and down or crack like the Gabba can do... you can bring lbw in."