

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

TUESDAY

- NOVEMBER, 14, 2017
- 23 SAFFAR 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 266
- VOLUME: 03
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	18.2	-0.7
JAMMU	25.6	11.0
LEH	12.5	-4.9
KARGIL	13.2	-3.4

SUNSET TUESDAY: 05:29 PM
SUNRISE WEDNESDAY: 07:04 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly clear sky... Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 15°C & 02°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 EMPHASISES ON PREVENTION OF DIABETES IN YOUTH

HARYANA CM TO MEET KEJRIWAL ON AIR POLLUTION ISSUE

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI ANNOUNCED HAJ POLICY OF THE YEAR 2018

CHRIS GAYLE FINDS NO TAKERS IN PAKISTAN SUPER LEAGUE, SALMAN BUTT MISSES OUT TOO

Govt seized of local industry's problems: Mehbooba

Appreciates local Inc for braving situations

Srinagar, Nov 13: Saying that the Government is fully seized of the present difficulties of local industrialists, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today said that all the stakeholders in this regard have to join together to move ahead.

Addressing a gathering of local industrialists here last evening, the Chief Minister said the State is proud of its business community which braved the hot and cold of last three decades or so and has been making efforts in employment generation and strengthening of local economy. She said not only the Government but the whole society stands with them as their issues are not the individual problems but those of the entire society.

Stressing the need on self-sustenance, Mehbooba Mufti asked the business fraternity to ponder over the issues which have not led to the growth of a so successful enterprise from the State. She said her Government would all do whatever is required to support the local entrepreneurs but added that the local industry should also come forward and remove the bottle-



necks coming in their way of growth and progress. "Don't let yourself suffer for no fault of yours. Already a bad message has been spread outside the State which my Government is trying to clear", she said.

Asking the unit holders to be hopeful of an enterprising future, the Chief Minister asked the Minister for Finance to work out modalities for instilling confidence and hope among the local

industrialists. Already, she said, many reformative steps, including Labour reforms, have been taken by her Government which have upped the State on the chart of Ease of Doing Business.

Enumerating the steps taken by her Government, Mehbooba Mufti said most of the commitments made to the business community of the State at the time of passing of GST Act have either been implemented or are being

implemented. She said Jammu & Kashmir is the only State which commits to incentives even after the enactment of GST while asking the Finance Minister to work out the slashing of tax slab on carpets under the GST regime. She also asked him to revisit the Artisan Credit Card loan scheme and explore the possibility of how the artisan community could

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

Two militants killed, cop injured Handwara: Police

'Identity of the two militants being ascertained'

Srinagar, Nov 13: Two militants were killed, while a policeman has been injured on Monday evening in a shoot-out in Handwara area in north

Kashmir's Kupwara district. DIG North Kashmir, VK Birdi told KNS that two militants were killed after they lobbed a grenade and fired

on a police naka party in Sulatanpora, Zacheldera in Handwara today evening.

Birdi said that a policeman ▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

'No decision on schedule for Panchayat polls yet': Govt

Ready for early polls: BJP

Srinagar, Nov 13: With the reports that government would kick-start the process to hold the much-delayed Panchayat elections from December 1, the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development Monday made it clear that no decision has been taken so far about holding of Panchayat polls.

"It has not been deliberated yet at the government level. Madam Mehbooba Mufti ji was in Srinagar and is coming back to Jammu. I can say that whenever decision regarding the holding of Panchayat polls will be made, media will be informed," Asiya Naqash told KNS over phone from Jammu.

Interestingly it is reported that Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has committed to the



Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh that her government would kick-start the process to hold the much-delayed panchayat elections from December 1.

▶ See **Govt**...Pg 02

Human Shield Case: SHRC DIRECTS GOVERNMENT TO CLEAR ITS STAND ON DEC 12

Srinagar, Nov 13: Days after Jammu and Kashmir government turned down the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) recommendation seeking Rs 10 lakh compensation for a civilian who was used as human shield by Army on April 9 in Central Kashmir's Budgam district, Chairman SHRC on Monday directed government to appear before it and justify its case.

State Human Rights Commission took serious note of the points made by government with regard to human shield case saying that it is a sensitive matter that needs to be looked into seriously.

SHRC has asked government to pay a compensation ▶ See **SHRC**...Pg 02

Separatist leaders free to carry out religious, peaceful activities: DGP

'Violence, stone pelting have come down this year'

Srinagar, Nov 13: Director General of Police Dr S. P Vaid said that the situation is better in Kashmir than last year as the level of violence and stone pelting has come down and separatists' leaders are free to carry out their religious and peaceful activities.

"There are no restrictions on our side in their religious activities. They can offer prayers whenever they want. We won't restrict peaceful

activities of the separatists. But when we have apprehension of violence, we put restriction for safety and security of people in the larger interest," Vaid said in an interview to The Kashmir Magazine, a monthly publication of KNS Media group.

The DGP said that the situation is better in Kashmir than last year as the level of violence and stone pelting has come down.



"Not a single incident of stone pelting happens in a day compared to many incidents last year. People are doing

their activities fearlessly; political workers are doing their activities in the field without fear. Business is going on; schools are functioning. But terrorism incidents do take place and our efforts are to neutralise or arrest those people who are affiliated with such activities. Many such people were arrested, cases were registered with effective investigation which has ▶ See **DGP**...Pg 02

PETITION SEEKING CBI PROBE INTO ALLEGATIONS LEVELLED AGAINST EX-DY. CM BY ADDL. PRO

HC directs Comm/Secys GAD/Home to file response and fixed December, 15 for final disposal

Jammu, Nov 13: Today Justice Tashi Rabstan of Jammu and Kashmir High Court (Jammu Wing) in the open court directed Senior AAG W.S. Nargal appearing for Commissioner/Secretary to Govt. of J&K Home Department and Commissioner/Secretary to Govt. of J&K General Administration Department (GAD) to file their response within three weeks and also directed Senior AAG to keep the original record pertaining to enquiry conducted by the then SSP Jammu Atul Goel (IPS) whereby he had closed the complaint lodged by the petitioner seeking constitution of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations leveled by Kewal Krishan Sharma on July, ▶ See **Petition**...Pg 02

We expect cut in GST on carpet industry: CEPC Chairman

'Carpet industry needs Govt intervention'

Srinagar, Nov 13: The carpet traders are expecting slashing down of Good and Services Tax (GST) as the GST council is ongoing in Guwahati in Assam.

The industry is presently taxed at 12 %, and the traders, who initially were seeking 5 % cut, are hopeful that the GST will be cut to 5 %.

"We have been demanding slashing down of GST from 12 % and in the Business conclave meeting held on Sunday, I reiterated the demand," Sheikh Ashiq Hussain, Chairman of Carpet Export and Promotion Council (CEPC) from J&K, told KNS.

He said that Finance Minister Dr Haseeb ▶ See **CEPC**...Pg 02



Drabu has promised in the Conclave that he will bat in GST Council for slashing down the tax to 5 %.

PDP-BJP GOVT STEEPED IN CORRUPTION, SCANDALS: NASIR

'JKPCC scandal goes to the topmost level'

Srinagar, Nov 13: National Conference on Monday lashed out at the Chief Minister and the PDP-BJP Government for lording over the worst phase of loot, plunder and corruption in the State and said recent revelations had hinted at the Chief Minister's personal involvement in multi-crore scams.

In a statement issued from NC Head Office to KNS, NC Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani said a group of four Ministers in the PDP-BJP Government were lobbying in favour of a particular firm and pressurizing the Cabinet Sub-Committee to award a 350 crores contract ▶ See **Nasir**...Pg 02

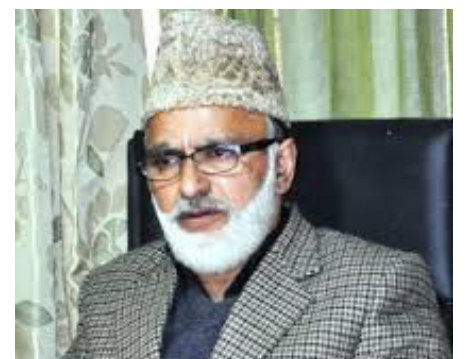
Geelani's double standards exposed: NC

'Silence on Pak PM's statement but outrage on Dr Farooq's remarks ironic'

Srinagar, Nov 13: National Conference on Monday said Ex-MLA Ali Shah Geelani's double standards stood exposed in his silence over Pakistan Prime Minister's statement as compared to his selective and uninformed outrage over National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah's remarks.

Talking to reporters at NC Head Office, 'Nawa-e-Subha' in Srinagar, National Conference General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar said Ex-MLA Ali Shah Geelani should introspect and stop leasing his voice out to a mainstream political party over a purely personal political agenda that was based on distortion and prejudice.

"Time bears testimony to the fact that National Conference is the only political in-



stitution that has consistently and bravely fought to safeguard the State's political identity and honour in all circumstances. ▶ See **NC**...Pg 02

PEN DOWN STRIKE OF ULB EMPLOYEES BEGIN TODAY

Protesters present memorandum to DC's, ADC's

Srinagar, Nov 13: The employees of Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir Monday have begun their pen down strike to protest against the government for failing to fulfill their demands.

The employees had threatened to go for a three day long strike to protest for their demands.

The ULB employees today staged protest at their respective district offices here, demanding government to fulfill their demands.

The protesters also presented memorandum to Deputy Commissioner's (DC) and Additional Deputy Commissioner's (ADC) at their respective districts.

Earlier, the employees threatened the government that ▶ See **Pen**...Pg 02

JRL resents Mehbooba's statement for insulting Kashmiris

Says love for chair has completely blinded her

Srinagar, Nov 13: Joint Resistance Leadership of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik expressed deep resentment and condemnation at the statement of Mehbooba Mufti for mocking at and insulting People of Kashmir and their supreme sacrifices by calling them agitators first and beggars later.

JRL in a statement issued to KNS said that the love for



chair has completely blinded her and her ilk of opportunists to see what havoc they have wrecked upon the people of

Kashmir since their alliance with the BJP. Each day a new hell is let loose on the people through the various agencies of occupation that she presides over, to break the will and determination of the people for demanding the just resolution of internationally recognised Kashmir dispute as per peoples will and aspirations.

JRL said it is the ▶ See **JRL**...Pg 02

JAMMU AND KASHMIR GOVERNMENT ORDERS TRANSFER OF TWO IAS, 11 KAS OFFICERS

Srinagar, Nov 13: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Monday ordered transfers and postings.

Rubeena Kounser, KAS, Additional Secretary to the Government, Horticulture Department, under orders of transfer as ADDC, Budgam, is posted as Mission Director, ICPS, J&K.

Manzoor Ahmad Sofi, KAS, Joint Director, J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development, is transferred and posted as Director, Urban Local Bodies, Kashmir, against an available vacancy.

Nasir Ahrnad Lone, KAS, Chief Executive OMcEr, - Tourism Development Authority, Verinag, is transferred and posted as hint Director, Education (Central Kashmir), against an available vacancy. ▶ See **Transfer**...Pg 02

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MEHBOOBA

be given a relief. In his address, Minister for Finance & Labour, Dr Haseeb A Drabu outlined the broad areas where the industry needs to work for sustaining itself on a long term basis. He detailed the incentives and subsidies being provided by the Government for encouraging private sector to perform in the State while admiring the role of local business community during last so many years despite heavy odds.

The Finance Minister asked the industry leaders to look for future opportunities and invent mechanisms for tapping the same. He expressed concern over declining interest in the traditional arts and crafts of the State among the younger generation, terming it a cultural and social problem rather than a routine industry issue.

Earlier, representatives of local industry Mushtaq Ahmad Chaya, Muhammad Ashraf Mir, Mushtaq Burza, Muhammad Yaseen Khan, Khalid Hakeem, Showkat Choudhary and Iqbal Trumboo put their views about fast pacing the growth of local industry in the State. They also thanked the Chief Minister for extending industry benefits to tourism sector and other allied sectors in the State terming the move as historic.

POLICE

was injured in the militant attack. "We have started investigation to ascertain the identity of the two militants," he told KNS.

GOVT

"Mehbooba told Home Minister that she would be undertaking the exercise of restoring the exercise in a quite earnest way and that there would be no further delay in holding of the panchayat elections. Chief Minister made this commitment during her meeting with the Home Minister on October 26, when she was asked specifically as to when the panchayat elections would be held in the state because that was harming the interest of the grassroots democracy and depriving the rural people of the development that they deserve," the report has said.

Meanwhile BJP State General Secretary Ashok Koul told KNS over phone from Jammu that their party has not so far received any communication about the holding of Panchayat elections from government. "We have not received any communication. But it seems that the government will hold Panchayat elections soon," Koul said and added that BJP is ready to go ahead for the polls.

Meanwhile one of the senior BJP leader said that party has asked the cadre to gear up for the Panchayat elections. "BJP was eyeing Panchayats in the valley after forming coalition government in the state. The Panchayat polls should be held as soon as possible in the state. The BJP will field its candidates in all three regions of the state and we are sure that people will vote for us," the leader said.

Meanwhile sources said that Election Department was waiting for the fresh nod from the government. The election department had started process during the Governor's rule with identification and rotation of reserved wards.

Sources told KNS that the Government of India has linked many grants to rural areas with elected Panchayats and it was mandatory for the Government to hold the elections to secure those grants. "If the new Panchayats were in place by this year then the state Government can claim the grants that run into several crores and could do lot of development in the rural areas," sources maintained.

During previous Panchayat elections held in 2011 after a gap of nearly 37 years, there were 4098 Sarpanch and 29,402 Panch constituencies. The division wise constituencies included 2145 (Sarpanch) in Kashmir (including Ladakh) and 1953 in Jammu while there were 15767 Panch segments in Kashmir (including Ladakh) and 13,635 in Jammu.

It is to mention here that Jammu and Kashmir Governor NN Vohra had promulgated an ordinance, by virtue of which the panchayat polls in the state would be held later this year.

"Vohra had given his assent to the promulgation of the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017. Governor had repeatedly been emphasising on the crucial importance of holding the panchayat polls for the establishment of a three-tiered framework of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), had approved the promulgation of the ordinance, during the Darbar Move period, so that no time was lost in starting the preparations for the pending elections," the spokesperson had said.

SHRC

Rs one lakh to victim Farooq Ahmed Dar of Budgam, however, government refused to implement the recommendations on the ground that

"no allegation of human rights violation has been levelled by the applicant against the state or its any functionary."

The government also questioned the rights body's jurisdiction to adjudicate on the matter.

On Monday the representatives of the government and the victim himself along with Chairman International Forum for Justice Muhammad Ahsan Untoo appeared before the Commission. The Commission raised objections over the government stand and asked it to argue the case before the Commission on December 12 this year.

"It is a sensitive matter. Government should clear it's stand," Chairman SHRC Retired Justice Bilal Ahmed Nazki said.

The government was represented by Additional Advocate General MM Khan and Chief Prosecuting Officer Mumtaz Saleem.

Pertinently, Farooq Ahmad Dar was used as human shield by Army unit led by Major Gogoi on the day of voting for Srinagar parliamentary segment.

DGP

resulted in less violence in the last 10 months," he said. The GDP, however, said the infiltration attempts have doubled than last year.

"This year the infiltration attempts have doubled than last year. Infact more than 250 attempts occurred at the border but BSF and army foiled a lot of attempts. As per some reports, 75-80 militants have infiltrated including some foreign elements of JeM (Jaish-e-Muhammad). And these are the attempts from across to sent suicidal squads JeM to boost sagging morale of militants which is down due to the continuous efforts and success of security forces to eliminate militants," Vaid said.

He said that the local recruitment of youth as militants is decreasing because the main militant leaders of the organis-

tion who recruited these youth were neutralised.

The police chief said that counselling started by police for stone pelters and roping in their parents for support has been effective for curbing stone pelting.

"It has been quite effective. We have tied up with National Council for vocational training and imparting training to many youth, and many efforts are being made for counselling by trained people so that they take a right direction in their life. A lot of youth involved in stone pelting have been released and a lot counselled. 65 youth brought back from militancy to bring them in mainstream," he said.

He said that the police wants to make drug-free, gun-free and violence-free Kashmir. "Kashmir needs freedom from these three things, and for that I will request Pakistan to spare us from these three dangerous things because these things are imported like virus from Pakistan," he said.

The DGP said that he disagrees with the statements that give complete credit to NIA for improving the situation in the valley.

"I don't agree with those people who say that NIA raids and arrests have controlled stone pelting and violence in the Kashmir valley. NIA raids complemented improvement of the situation here. But NIA raids are not everything. JK police and security forces created conducive situation here and then NIA could carry out their raids. I don't think such raids would have been possible last year (in 2016)," he said.

PETITION

26, 2013 in a press conference against the then Deputy Chief Minister, J&K Tara Chand wherein Kewal Sharma had alleged that the then Deputy Chief Minister is involved in murder of three persons, corruption, immorality and rape of two Jammu based girls and besides this Kewal Sharma had also alleged apprehension of elimination at the hands of the then Deputy Chief Minister. The Court further directed the Registry to list this petition for final disposal on December, 15, 2017.

When this much publicized writ petition filed by Bharat Bhushan seeking CBI probe into the matter came up for hearing, Advocate Sheikh Shakeel Ahmed with Advocates Rahul Raina and Supriya Chouhan appearing for the petitioner drew the attention of the Court towards the last order dated September, 27, 2017 whereby the court had directed Senior AAG W.S. Nargal to comply the order dated July, 21, 2015 whereby Justice B.L. Bhat (since retired) had passed a detailed order issuing notices to Commissioner/Secretary to Govt. of J&K GAD, Commissioner/Secretary to Govt. of J&K Home Department, Director General of Police J&K, Senior Superintendent of Police Jammu and Atul Goel (IPS) Former Senior Superintendent of Police Jammu and the Court had specifically directed the Director General of Police J&K and the SSP Jammu to produce the record relating to the enquiry conducted by then SSP Jammu Atul Goel (IPS) into the complaint lodged by the petitioner seeking constitution of a SIT for probing the allegations leveled against the then Deputy CM, J&K.

At this stage Senior AAG W.S. Nargal appearing for the Home /GAD submitted that the original enquiry file is with him and he can pass on the record to the Court. Advocate S.S. Ahmed appearing for the petitioner submitted that the matter is lingering since July, 2015 and it is in the interest of both the sides that this issue of wide public importance be decided without any further delay. Advocate Ahmed further submitted that since the original record is before the Court the matter needs to be finally considered as no more pleadings are required to be filed in the matter.

During the course of arguments Advocate S.S. Ahmed further submitted that the then SSP Jammu Atul Goel (IPS) conducted the enquiry in a biased manner as the same was directed against the then Deputy Chief Minister and just on the sole statement of Kewal Sharma the enquiry was closed. Advocate Ahmed further submitted that despite leveling of serious allegations by the Additional PRO against Deputy Chief Minister no action was taken against him and Kewal Sharma continued to serve in the personal section of the Deputy Chief Minister and he openly operated the 'Transfer Industry' in the Education Department.

Advocate S.S. Ahmed further submitted that SSP Atul Goel (IPS) had provided undue security cover to Kewal Sharma on the verbal instructions of the then Deputy Chief Minister and the enquiry was a 'fixed match' and sought reopening of the entire case. On the other hand Senior AAG W.S. Nargal appearing for the State Government submitted that only DGP J&K, SSP Jammu and then SSP Jammu Atul Goel (IPS) have filed their reply whereas looking into the importance of the matter replies of GAD/Home Department are required to be filed and he be granted some more time to submit the response on their behalf. Senior AAG W.S. Nargal further submitted that he should also be allowed to retain the original enquiry file as he may require the same while drafting the reply on behalf of Commissioner/Secretaries Home/GAD.

After considering the submissions of both the sides, Justice Tashi Rabstan directed Senior AAG W.S. Nargal to file reply within three weeks on behalf of Home/GAD Secretaries and also directed him to keep the original record pertaining to enquiry conducted by the then SSP Jammu Atul Goel (IPS) ready for the next date. The Court further directed the Registry to list this petition for final disposal on December, 15, 2017.

CEPC

"We have more than 1500 retail outlets in India and the retail business has suffered as well after GST. Given the present situation of business, global position of carpet industry and the GST impact from the last four months, the industry is on decline and the carpet traders have pitched for certain revival packages," he said.

The former KCCI president said that the government has promised the package for carpet industry and hopefully the announcement will be made before the budget session.

"The government should intervene and bail out business in the state as it has suffered immensely from the last some years," Hussain told KNS.

"Besides we are demanding waiving off artisan credit card. The chief minister on Sunday asked the finance minister to look into the demand," he said.

"To my knowledge, it will be a historical decision and we are hopeful that government is working out on it," he added. Meanwhile, Drabu today said that GST Council will be generous to offer more flexibility for handicraft industry.

"It (handicrafts industry) is almost on the verge of closure.

Uttar Pradesh has seen large-scale closures and our industry is also facing pressure. No one will want to see a heritage item like this die. I am almost certain that the council will be generous and also offer more flexibility in handicrafts," Drabu told media in Guwahati after the GST Council meeting.

NASIR

for dredging to the firm on a single-bidder basis. "This is yet another instance when the topmost echelons of the State Government's leadership is personally involved in mega-scale, multi-crore scams and scandals and this cannot be happening without the active patronage and involvement of the Chief Minister's Office", the NC Provincial President said.

The NC Provincial President said there should be a thorough probe into this lobbying effort by the Ministers in favour of a particular firm and the possibility of kickbacks to them should be investigated and exposed before the public. "Have these Ministers received kickbacks to lobby in favour of this particular firm? The people of J&K have reeled under economic distress and a governance deficit from the very day the PDP-BJP Government took over and it is disappointing that the Government is solely focussed on corruption and filing the coffers of its Ministers and leadership", Nasir Aslam Wani added.

The NC Provincial President also demanded an objective and thorough probe into recent revelations of serious, huge irregularities and corruption in the JKPC and said the attachment of a single officer seemed to be an attempt at covering up the Chief Minister's and the concerned Cabinet Minister's personal involvement in these scams. "In the telephone conversation that has gone viral, the concerned officer has clearly hinted at the involvement of the Chief Minister and in light of this there should be a probe examining the role of the Chief Minister in the award of various multi-crore contracts in JKPC without any due tendering process in favour of the kith and kin of various Ministers and close business associates of the Chief Minister and her family", the NC Provincial President added.

The NC Provincial President lashed out at the Government for breaking all possible records of loot, plunder, nepotism and corruption. "This Government has compromised the transparency of our public institutions by selling hundreds of contracts to a select list of firms and contractors who are personally associated with Senior Ministers and have the direct patronage of the Chief Minister and her office", Nasir Aslam Wani further said.

NC

Even today it is National Conference alone which is standing between various intrigues against the State's special status and the rights of the people. This role will be noted in history and no amount of selective press statements and distortion of truth will change it", the NC General Secretary said while speaking to reporters at the NC Head Office.

Ridiculing the baseless and malicious allegations levelled against the party by PDP Leader Sartaj Madni, the NC General Secretary said it was PDP's chronic trait to divert public attention from its failures and scandals by issuing baseless statements against National Conference. "This PDP propaganda that National Conference talks about restoration of Autonomy only while in the opposition is a baseless and false argument that has no legs to stand on. Let me remind Sartaj Madni and PDP that when the Autonomy Report was finalized and the Autonomy Resolution tabled in the Assembly, and passed with two-thirds majority - it was National Conference which was in power", Ali Muhammad Sagar said.

"PDP was formed by various intelligence agencies as their proxy soon after the Autonomy Resolution was passed by the Assembly. It was these covert agencies who created the 'Self Rule' document and advocated it through PDP to divert attention from the Autonomy Resolution in an elaborate ruse. Let me remind PDP that in 1977 when Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah mounted pressure on New Delhi to restore the pre-1952 position as per the promises and assurances of the leadership of the country, it was Late PDP founder Mufti Muhammad Sayeed who withdrew support from his Government as the then Congress State President and vehemently opposed the restoration of the pre-1952 position. Who sabotaged the democratically elected Government in 1984 under a well thought out conspiracy to disempower the people of Kashmir? Who was instrumental in getting Jagmohan to J&K in 1990 to facilitate his mission of unearthing mayhem and genocides on the people? There is a limit to shamelessness but it seems like for PDP no such limit exists", the NC General Secretary further said.

Expressing amusement at Ex-MLA Ali Shah Geelani's statement against the remarks of NC President Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Sagar asked Geelani to explain to the people why he couldn't muster the courage to criticize and question similar remarks made by the Pakistan Prime Minister just two days before the NC President's remarks? "What politics of hypocrisy is this? Geelani Sahab couldn't say a single word about the Pak Prime Minister's remarks that an independent Kashmir is not a possibility but expressed selective outrage when Dr. Farooq Abdullah expressed his views on this issue keeping in view ground-realities", Sagar said.

PEN

they will go for strike on 13 and 14 November and protest in all Municipal Institutions of the Kashmir Division and on 15 Nov all the employees will assemble at Press Enclave for redressal of their pending demands.

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

Pampori had said that despite that their demands have not been addressed by the authorities till date.

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

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

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

JRL

integrity and tremendous resilience of the Kashmiri people that despite being no match for India in terms of population and resources it is giving such a stiff resistance to occupation ,to achieve its fundamental political rights as a nation . JRL said that such exemplary courage can only be exhibited by a morally and ethically conscientious people striving to uphold and achieve the fundamental human principle of freedom and right to choose and making tremendous sacrifices for it. But exploiters and opportunists cannot understand such things.

JRL said that since 1947 due to the constant compromises for purely vested interests and ambitions and allurements of chair ,these people who are friends of none -not even India whose interests they claim to represent in Kashmir, people of Kashmir are in the grip of occupation which they help consolidate . Had the interest of the Kashmiri nation, political economic or ethnic ever been dear to them they would have stood their ground for safeguarding it and not kept compromising on it one after the other for staying in power . The situation has come to such a pass today due to their repeated betrayals for the chair that even the basis on which their opportunistic patrons comprised the future of the nation and got some constitutional guarantees article like 370 and 35A is on the verge of getting scrapped for complete integration with India.

JRL said that as part of the ploy to break the resolve of the people and crush the movement a multipronged strategy of based on use of extreme force and coercion was adopted by GOI particularly after entering into a power alliance with the pdp. The same PDP whose patron when he was home minister of India imposed AFSPA in J&K. All segments of society were targeted. While people were killed with impunity ,pellet guns were brought to blind them and inflict physical and psychological scars. Thousands of people especially youth including children and elderly labelled as stone pelters incarcerated and tortured. Propaganda as a war weapon vigorously promoted against people while leadership persecuted and harassed through NIA and other agencies leading to the illegal detention of some in jails. CASO launched to persecute people in villages especially as a witch hunt against the youth.

On the other hand a false binary between tourism and terrorism was created to target those associated with trade and tourism in order to break the back of both these industries. Travel agents throughout India were threatened with consequences by RSS that no tourists should be sent to Kashmir , while GST laws that ended Kashmir's fiscal autonomy in total violation of article 370 implemented and the return of our power projects outrightly rejected.To further dent the local trading market and create a fear psychosis among the people shameless act of braid chopping was undertaken and given the name of "hysteria" . Jrl said instead of feeling ashamed that not even one culprit was brought to book for attacking the dignity of our women and traumatizing them, Mehbooba Mufti is justifying the act casually as something that happens elsewhere!

JRL said that people of Kashmir bore the brunt of all these extreme repressive measures with such bravery and resilience that GOI was compelled to relook at its policy on Kashmir. No segments of society succumbed to this tremendous pressure including our traders and business community despite the fact that they were severely affected by the policy of revenge and punishment to which the local quislings were willing partners or mute spectators

JRL expressed surprise and dismay that some traders and members of the business community played into the hands of the collaborators and gave them an opportunity to insult the supreme sacrifices offered by the nation. JRL asked all segments of society that as collective custodians of the sacrifices of the nation to be cautious and refrain from providing any opportunity to these collaborators to insult and mock us and to expect no help from them as has been proven time and again.

JRL said that people of Kashmir do not need the largess of GOI to survive as Mehbooba Mufti suggests and are no beggars. Once we are our own masters Our resources both human and natural are enough to make us prosper.

TRANSFER

Mushtaq Ahmad Rather, KAS, Administrative Officer in the office of Financial Commissioner, Revenue, under orders of transfer as Joint Registrar, Induscos, Handicrafts Department, is posted as Joint Director, J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration and Rural Development, vice Manzoor Ahmad Sofi.

Nastasha Kalsotra, KAS, Collector, Economic Reconstruction Agency, Jammu, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary in the J&K State Vigilance Commission.

Showkat Mehmood, KAS, Deputy Director, Tourism, Jammu, under orders of transfer as Additional Secretary in the J&K State Vigilance Commission, is posted as Joint Director, Tourism, Jammu, against an available vacancy.

Sushil Kumar Atri, KAS, Project Manager, Wage Employment (ACD), Samba, is transferred and posted as Deputy Director, Tourism, Jammu.

Kewal Kumar, Project Manager, IWMP, Doda, is transferred and posted as Deputy Secretary to the Government, Cooperative Department.

Aijaz Qaiser Malik, DPO, Samba, Is transferred and posted as Project Officer, Wage Employment (ACD), Samba, vice Sushil Kumar Atri. 1

Kishore Singh, DSWO, Doda, under orders of transfer as Deputy Secretary to the Government, Cooperative Department, is posted as Project Manager, IWMP, Doda, vice Kewal Kumar.

Nasrool Hilal Jeri, under orders of transfer as Assistant Commissioner in the Commercial Taxes Department, Kashmir, is posted as Project Offia?r, Wage Employment (ACD), Kulgam.

Shahid Anayatullah, IAS(JK:2000), Commissioner, Survey and Land Records J&K, is transferred and posted as Commissioner/ Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department, vice Mr. Shafiq Ahnred Raina.

Shafiq Ahmed Raina, IAS (JK:2002), Commissioner/ Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department, holding additional charge of the post Administrative Secretary, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, is transferred and posted as Commissioner/ Secretary to the Government, Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, on full time basis.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasises on prevention of diabetes in youth

New Delhi, November 13: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh has emphasized that the message in the years to come for the World, especially for India should be prevention of diabetes in youth. He said this on the eve of World Diabetes Day, while addressing a function organized here today. He emphasized that youth energy of the country should be channelized in healthy and constructive activities.

Dr. Jitendra Singh mentioned that 'India is the diabetes capital of the World' because of its incidence in terms of sheer numbers affected by diabetes. He explained that diabetes affects the youth in multiple ways in the form of their effective healthy life span and

economic ramification of their future health. He said that there should be a national cause of building nation of healthy youth, free of communicable and non-communicable diseases with optimal utilization of their potential.

The Minister exhorted the youth for becoming inspired by the clarion call of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and explained that Prime Minister's vision of 'New India' will be a reality with healthy youth resource utilization considering that 70 percent of the population is less than 40 years of age. He underlined the need for creating a mass awareness campaign for diabetes prevention and control with proper monitoring mechanism among people of the country. He said that the need of the hour is to elevate the diabetes awareness campaign as a mass movement. He further elaborated that

the quintessential requirement of forging partnership at stakeholders level to develop infrastructure to address the after-effects of diabetes with proper control and prevention mechanism.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said diabetes is also affecting neighboring countries like China, Srilanka and Bangladesh. He said a joint integrated approach should be essential for addressing diabetes, particularly for the youth. He urged diabetes affected youth to go for regular blood level testing for its control. He said that diabetes also has an economic ramification for the country as it affects the man-days of work and even, has a possible effect on lifespan of youth and apt utilization of energy of youth. Dr. Jitendra Singh said as a professional and activist in this sphere, he said that every 3

or 4 people of the country's population are affected by diabetes. He mentioned that on the eve of the World Diabetes Day, there should be a unified resolve to encourage healthy life style among youth by ensuring proper social, cultural, medical and physical activities. He exhorted the participation of all sections of society to address the root cause of diabetes, where the genesis of diabetes and factors for its cause emanate. He said that youth should be sensitized about the healthy eating habits and to avoid junk processed food.

On the occasion, Dr. Jitendra Singh launched a 'Mobile Van' with an objective of diabetes control and prevention. He also participated in an awareness walk in the diabetes awareness centre equipped with latest technological apparatus for detection, testing, prevention and control of diabetes.

Northeast to get India's first ever 'Air Dispensary': Dr Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, November 13: Northeast is all set to get India's first-ever "Air Dispensary" based in a helicopter and the Union Ministry of Development of Northeast (DONER) has already contributed Rs. 25 crore as part of the initial funding for this initiative.

Disclosing this here yesterday after a meeting with the representatives of Aviation Sector and helicopter service/Pawan Hans, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DONER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, for quite a few months, the DoNER Ministry had been exploring the idea of introducing a helicopter based Dispensary/OPD service in such far flung and remote areas, where no doctor or medical facility was available and the patient, in need, also did not have any access to any medical care. The proposal put forward by the Ministry of DoNER, he said, has been accepted and is in the final stages of process in the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The Union Ministry of Northeast/DoNER, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, is keenly pursuing

the proposal so that by the beginning of 2018, this could be the Union Government's gift to the people of Northeast.

Dr. Jitendra Singh disclosed that even today, nearly 1/3rd of India's population did not have access to proper hospital bed care, as a result of which, poor patients living in remote areas remained deprived of crucial medical care. The experiment being introduced in the Northeast, at the behest of the Ministry of Northeast/DoNER, can also be emulated in other hill states having difficult topography like Jammu & Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, he added. As per the envisaged plan, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, to begin with, helicopter will be based at two locations, namely Imphal in Manipur and Meghalaya in Shillong. Both of these cities have premier postgraduate medical institutes from where specialist doctors, along with the necessary equipment and paramedical staff, would be able to move into the helicopter and hold a dispensary/OPD in different locations across the eight States of North Eastern Region. On its way back, he said, the same helicopter can also transport a sick patient, requiring admission.

Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore releases the India Youth Development Index and Report 2017

New Delhi, November 13: Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge) Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore here today released the India Youth Development Index and Report 2017. The objective of constructing the India Youth Development Index (YDI) 2017 is to track the trends in Youth Development across the States. The Index enables recognizing the high and low performing states, identifies the weak domains and informs the policy makers the priority areas of intervention for youth development in the states.

The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, an Institute of National Importance has come out with Youth Development Index and Report

2017. This is a pioneering attempt made by the Institute in 2010 which it followed up with the India Youth Development Index in 2017.

Constructing Youth Development Index for the year 2017 was done using the latest definition of youth as used in National Youth Policy - 2014 (India) and World Youth Development Report of Commonwealth (15 - 29 years) as well as using the Commonwealth Indicators in order to facilitate Global comparison.

In the India Youth Development Index 2017, the first five dimensions are retained same as that of Global YDI. The indicators and weights have been modified based on the availability of data at sub-national level and the importance of the indicators in explaining Youth Development

with the aim of capturing the multidimensional properties that indicate progress in youth development at the sub-national level i.e., state level. Global YDI is different from YDI constructed for India in one unique way; YDI for India adds a new domain, social inclusion, to assess the inclusiveness of societal progress as structural inequalities persist in Indian society. This construction helps to identify the gaps that require intensification of policy intervention.

This report is of immense value to enable comparisons across geographical areas and categories, as human development index has done in comparing the development situation across regions, nations and localities. The index also measures the achievements

made besides serving as an advocacy tool for youth development and facilitates to identify priority areas for development of Policy and Interventions.

As an effective decision - support tool, the YDI-2017 will enable the policy makers track the national and the regional progress as well set-backs in youth development policies, planning, priority identification and implementation strategies. Besides providing insights to suggest alternatives and options, it also aids in judicious allocation of resources.

Director, RGNIYD Prof. (Dr) Madan Mohan Goel made a presentation before the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Col. Rathore. Secretary, Youth Affairs Dr. A. K. Dubey was also present on the occasion.

Shri J P Nadda inaugurates the 'Transport Ministers' Forum on Road Safety'

New Delhi, November 13: "All sectors including the health sector need to be fully engaged in responsibility, activity and advocacy for preventing accidents". This was stated by Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare at the 'Transport Ministers' Forum on Road Safety' organised by International Road Federation (IRF), here today. Shri Nadda further said that the political commitment and a will to achieve can bring about significant and rapid decline in road injuries and requires planning at all levels, capacity creation, involvement of all sectors and good data.

Transport Ministers from eight countries along with Shri Yudhvir Singh Malik, Secretary (RT&H), Ministry of Road Transport

& Highways, Mr. Jean Todt, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety and Mr. Kiran K. Kapila, Chairman, IRF, Geneva, were also present at the occasion.

While emphasizing on the need to have a National Trauma Care Policy for road accident victims, Shri Nadda said that the possibility of novel methods of quick relief through air-lifting such as Air Ambulances and providing relief in remote areas, well equipped Mobile Clinics etc., should be explored. The Health Minister further added that it is important to create an enhanced capacity and infuse the knowledge of road safety related actions in public bystanders, road side facilities such as dhabas and amongst

commercial truck drivers, who are most often the first on the accident sites and are first responders.

Speaking at the function, Shri Nadda informed the participants that the "capacity building for developing Trauma Care Facilities in Government Hospitals on National Highways", was approved for development of 85 new trauma care facilities. He further said that during 12th FYP, 85 Medical Colleges/ District Hospitals have been approved. Out of the 116 trauma care facilities funded during the 11th FYP, 100 are reported to be functional by the States.

"National Injury Surveillance, Trauma Registry and Capacity Building Centre have been established at Dr. RML Hospital, ATLS/

NELS training for doctors and BLS training for nurses is being organized at Dr. RML Hospital. The scheme is proposed to continue as 'National Programme for Trauma Care' under the umbrella scheme 'National Programme for Prevention & Management of Trauma & Burn Injuries' for establishing 30 new trauma care facilities, Shri Nadda added. The Health Minister further said that the proposal for continuation of the scheme with an outlay of Rs. 554.41 cr has been approved by EFC and is placed before the CCEA for approval.

Also present at the function were senior officers of the Ministry, delegates from other countries and representatives of development partners.

Altaf Bukhari conducts city tour

Reviews construction of Jehangir Chowk-Rambagh flyover, TRC Grade Separator, New Mahjoor Nagar Bridge

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 13: The Minister for Education Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today undertook an extensive tour of Srinagar city to review the progress of various ongoing development works being executed at various places.

The Minister was accompanied by Chief Executive Officer of Economic Reconstruction Agency (ERA), Dr Farooq Ahmad Lone, District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Director ERA, Kashmir, Satish Razdan, Chief Engineers of R&B and PHE and other concerned officials and contractors.

On his visit to TRC Grade Separator, the Minister was informed that the major portion of work stands executed and that the work on shuttering is going on. The executing agency assured the Minister that the work will be completed by June 2018. He directed the concerned to expedite the pace of work for its timely completion so that commuters are benefited.



Reviewing 105-metre New Mahjoor Bridge at Jawahar Nagar which is being constructed by J&K ERA, the Minister was informed that the bridge

is near its completion and shall be completed within two months. The Minister announced that the bridge will be inaugurated in January 2018

and will be opened for the traffic movement which will bring huge relief to the people residing in Mehjoor Nagar, Jawahar Nagar, Raj Bagh, Padshahi Bagh, Lasjan and other adjoining areas.

Bukhari was overall satisfied with the work being executed by ERA. On his visit to Rambagh, the Minister took the firsthand appraisal of the ongoing construction work on Jehangir Chowk-Rambagh flyover. The Minister directed the executing agency to expedite the speed of work and complete the work in a time bound manner.

Bukhari said that government under the leadership of Mehbooba Mufti is keen to develop the Srinagar city on the modern lines. He said once completed the flyover will decongest traffic in the city and ease the movement of commuters and a large chunk of the population will get relief from regular traffic jams in the surrounding areas.

DC Srinagar conducts surprise inspection of tuition centers

Instructs non-compliant centers for immediate convenience of all requisite facilities; seeks compliance report from CEO Srinagar within three days

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 13: on the instructions of Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Syed Abid Rashid Shah, today visited and conducted a surprise inspection of various tuition centers operating in the Srinagar City.

Dr. Shah, who was accompanied by Director School Education Kashmir, GN Itoo, and Chief Education Officer Srinagar, Farooq Dar, besides other district officers, took stock of basic facilities available to students at these centers as prescribed in the J&K Regulation of Private Tuition Centers Rules of 2010.

During the inspection, some 10 tuition centers were found lacking basic facilities for students. Several of these centers were also found violating the maximum prescribed roll limit of 40 students in a class room.

Dr. Shah spoke to students taking tuition at these centers and inquired about facilities available to them therein on the occasion. He noted their concerns and assured of rectifica-

tion of issues hampering smooth tuition at the centers at the earliest.

The DC said a helpline with a toll-free number will be set up for students to report their concerns regarding their tuitions to the district administration and assured that the students can expect prompt resolutions of problems.

He issued strict instructions to tuition centers found lacking basic facilities for students to ensure immediate convenience of all requisite facilities and directed the CEO Srinagar for submitting a compliance report in regard to these centers within the next three days. He warned of strict action as per law against the non-compliant centers.

Meanwhile, concerned Tehsildars and Zonal Education Officers have been instructed to inspect tuition centers within their respective jurisdictions and furnish status reports to the CEO, who shall submit a joint compliance report from all educational zones of the district to the DC.

Chief Justice inaugurates new District Court Complex at Pulwama

Calls for resolving disputes through 'Alternative Disputes Redressal Mechanism'

PULWAMA, NOVEMBER 13: Chief Justice Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed inaugurated Pulwama District Court Complex here today.

Administrative Judge for District Pulwama Justice Mir Yaqoob, and Law Secretary Abdul Majeed Bhat were accompanying the Chief Justice. DIG South SP Pani, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Ghulam Mohammad Dar, SSP Pulwama Mohammad Aslam, Principal District and Sessions Judge Pulwama SSP Traffic, Principal Secretary to Chief Justice, Joint Registrar (Judicial), senior Officers of the district administration, members of Bar Association Pulwama and a large galaxy of legal luminaries were also present on the occasion.

Inaugurating main building at District Court Pulwama, the Chief Justice (CJ) was informed that the building constructed at Rs 1231 lakh has the facilities of six courtrooms, computer room, E-Court, Lawyers chamber, 48 advocate chambers, library, record room. The CJ also inaugurated the Alternate Dispute Resolution Centre in the court complex.

During his visit, the Chief Justice emphasized on disposal of pending cases through Alternative Disputes Redressal mechanism where both the parties by resolving disputes amicably may have a win-win situation without wasting time and money.

It was given out that the complex had been constructed over a 36 kanals of land to accommodate

the Court of Principal District and Sessions Judge and all subordinate courts under one roof. The total cost of the project is Rs 25.15 core with a total plinth area of 59,047 sqft and is being executed by the J&K State Housing Board.

Congratulating the District and Principal Sessions Judge of the District Court, members of the Bar Association Pulwama the judicial fraternity and the people for taking ownership of this magnificent and aesthetically designed State of Art Court Complex with all the modern facilities, the Chief Justice expressed happiness on being associated with the inauguration. He observed that the majesty of the law is also associated with the premises from where it is exercised and hoped that the

creation of the beautiful asset will go a long way in the judges rendering prompt and transparent justice.

The Chief Justice observed that the judiciary in India has played an important role since independence in strengthening the democratic framework of the country and maintaining rule of law. He said the courts, in particular, have a unique position under the Constitution of India. They are not only guardians of people's rights and liberty, but also have the responsibility of ensuring that access to justice is not denied to any citizen on account of economic or other disability. Chief Justice further said that Judiciary, which is one of the three important pillars of democracy, and is the final interpreter of the Constitution and the law.

He said that it is important to augment the courts, not only with quality infrastructure but also with quality human resources in the form of judges and judicial officers at all levels which will be the first step towards achieving the objective of timely delivery of justice. He said that the present government and the judiciary are collectively addressing this issue through an on-going increase in the sanctioned strength of judges both at the level of the High Court as well as District Courts. These sanctioned posts need to be filled quickly so that requisite judicial manpower is available for timely disposal of cases.

Pointing towards the role of information and communication technology in the judicial system,

Chief Justice Durrez said that in this era of information technology, Judiciary cannot remain aloof from immense benefits which IT has to offer particularly for speeding up the disposal of cases. He said that it is imperative that we speed up adoption of information and communication technology in the judicial system. The process of computerization of district and subordinate courts is underway through the e-Courts Integrated Mission Mode Project of the Central Government.

Instructions were also issued for further improvement in e-courts project to make it more user-friendly where anyone can have access to case online through recently launched software applications such as easily downloadable

e-court mobile app and e-courts Services application.

Speaking on the occasion Justice Yaqoob Mir congratulated the entire judicial fraternity for the fulfilment of their long cherished demand of setting up of the modern court complex in the district with state of art facilities. He further said that lawyers play an extremely important role in enabling the public access justice. The legal profession is regarded a noble profession in every society where the rule of law prevails. On the occasion, Law Secretary Ab Majeed Bhat announced a package of Rs 1 lakh for Bar Library. He further said that Government has released one crore for the construction residential quarters and Bar Chambers for this financial year.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

HIT REFRESH: ON THE SLASHED GST RATES

The script was altered for the second time in two months but with far greater impact. Soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised far-reaching changes to simplify the goods and services tax regime, especially for small businesses and consumers, the GST Council delivered some relief measures on Friday. At its meeting in Guwahati, the Council lowered the tax rates on over 200 products, compared to 27 items in its previous meeting and about 100 tweaks since GST rates were finalised in May. Over 1,200 products and services had been placed in five tax brackets — 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%. That those rates no longer hold for about a quarter of those items, and the highest tax bracket is left with just 50 products, compared to more than 250 in July, is a tacit admission that the initial rates were worked out in a hurry with maximising revenue being the prime consideration. Similarly, the ambit of the Composition Scheme for small businesses has been expanded twice — from an initial turnover threshold of Rs 75 lakh per year to Rs 1 crore (in October), and now further to Rs 1.5 crore. This would require a change in the GST laws, so it may take some time to kick in. There should be no doubt that all the course corrections currently under way to ease the transition to GST are more than welcome — and the government will be hoping these 'people-friendly' changes will not only spur consumption but also boost compliance.

But the transmission of lower rates may take time as it could be two-three months before existing inventory in the market is replaced with freshly priced products. With returns for the first month of the tax yet to be filed by all registered taxpayers and less than three months to go till the presentation of the Union Budget, Finance Ministry mandarins face a unique challenge on revenue visibility. In the interest of the exchequer and the taxpayer, whatever other improvements the GST needs must be implemented at the earliest — whether they are stuck because of a lack of consensus (letting inter-State suppliers avail of the Composition Scheme), poor implementation (the GST Network) or simply the lack of bandwidth to think through. The Opposition has criticised the latest reboot of the GST as a Gujarat campaign effect. While that rang truer in October when rates for popular snacks in the State were lowered, many decisions remain curious. Cement is taxed at 28%, but granite and marble have been lowered to the 18% bracket. Instead of a tactfully designed One Nation, One Tax system, the GST should not degenerate into a tool to please constituencies. The Council must institute a transparent system with an explicit rationale for any rate changes in the future. Only then can business and retail find predictability in the GST, rather than be wistful for a time when indirect tax rates were reviewed once a year in the annual Budget instead of every month.

Why ABBA must go: on Aadhaar

► Reetika Khara

In a sickening way, October 2017 was like October 2002.

Fifteen years ago, in Rajasthan's Baran and Udaipur districts, there was a spate of starvation deaths. The government of the time made up fanciful stories to deny that the deaths had anything to do with hunger or government failure.

In October 2017, the death of an 11-year-old Dalit child, Santoshi Kumari, of Jharkhand, was widely reported. She had been pleading with her mother to give her rice as she slipped into unconsciousness and lost her life. The government insists that she had malaria but in video testimonies, her mother, Koyli Devi, says she had no fever. After Santoshi's death, more hunger deaths have been reported, of which at least one, Ruplal Marandi, is related to the government's Aadhaar experiment.

The starvation deaths in 2002 became the springboard for positive action on many fronts, which included the passing of judicial orders and even political action. Since then, there has been a perceptible improvement in programmes of social support including, but not limited to, the Public Distribution System (PDS). In Baran, it led to a recognition of the vulnerability of the Sahariyas — a tribal community in Baran — and a special PDS package consisting of free pulses and ghee being announced.

Similar action is required today. Instead, the government remains in denial. The Food Ministry in Delhi issued an order in late October that is silent on the crucial issue of reinstating wrongly cancelled ration cards and makes token concessions (with no guarantee of implementation).

Targets and the reality

For months, the Central government has been insisting on 100% Aadhaar "seeding" across schemes such as the PDS, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and pensions. Seeding refers to the practice of entering Aadhaar numbers for each household member on the ration card. It is a pre-requisite for the Aadhaar-based Biometric Authentication (ABBA) system, the practice of using an electronic point of sale (PoS) machine to authenticate each transaction. The government has made seeding and the ABBA mandatory in the PDS. As explained below, the distinction between seeding and the ABBA is important.

In their zeal to achieve 100% Aadhaar-seeding targets, some field functionaries just deleted the names of those who did not submit Aadhaar details. Others waited till the deadline and then struck off names. The government claims that all of these were "fake", detected due to Aadhaar, thus saving crores of rupees. Santoshi's family was one such example. According to the State Food Minister, their ration card was cancelled in



July because they failed to seed it with Aadhaar.

Exclusions are not savings

Some people blame the aggrieved for failing to seed Aadhaar. But many of them are unaware of the seeding requirement. When pensions in Jharkhand suddenly stopped for many pensioners, they had no idea why. No one had told them about Aadhaar. In some cases, the middlemen had seeded it wrongly. Others still had tried repeatedly and failed. Seeding is not as simple as it sounds.

Seeding is just one of the many barriers that the ABBA has created in the smooth functioning of the PDS. The ABBA requires that family members be enrolled for Aadhaar and correct seeding. At the time of purchase, the ABBA requires power supply, a functional PoS machine, mobile and Internet connectivity, State and Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR) servers to be 'up', and for fingerprint authentication to be successful.

Ruplal Marandi's family passed the first two hurdles, enrolment and seeding, but was tripped at the last stage by the ABBA. For no fault of his own, the Marandi family was excluded from the PDS. His daughter told journalists that he had died of hunger as the family could not collect rations because of a biometric mismatch at the PDS shop.

There is enough evidence to show that the ABBA does not work. The Finance Min-

istry's latest Economic Survey, based on micro-studies, reports high biometric failure rates.

In Rajasthan, government data for the past year show that around 70% of cardholders are able to use the system successfully. The rest have either been tripped up by one of the ABBA hurdles or, less likely, they did not attempt to buy PDS grain. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the ABBA's poster child States, it is used to disburse MGNREGA wages and pensions: biometric failure rates are between 8 and 14%. In some months, one in four pensioners returns empty-handed.

A case against ABBA

What most people don't realise is that the ABBA has no role in reducing corruption. If the ABBA helps reduce corruption, it might be worth fixing these failures. Quantity fraud is the practice of cheating on quantities sold. Neither seeding nor the ABBA can stop quantity fraud. In a survey in Jharkhand, dealers continue to swindle people by cutting up to a kg of their grain entitlement despite successful ABBA authentication. Identity fraud, for example in the form of duplicate ration cards, only requires Aadhaar-seeding; the ABBA is unnecessary. Two caveats on seeding: it can be foolproof against identity fraud only in a universal system. More seriously, it raises privacy issues.

Further, in Aadhaar's rulebook for ex-

ample, an elderly person asking a neighbour to fetch their grain would count as identity fraud. In fact, it is flexibility that is lost when the ABBA is made mandatory.

Thus, each month, people are being forced to cross five meaningless hurdles in the form of electricity, functional PoS, connectivity, servers and fingerprint authentication in order to have access to their ration. Failing any one hurdle even once causes anxiety in subsequent months. Think of the ATM running out of cash, post-demonetisation, just when it was your turn. The resultant anxiety defeats the very purpose of such forms of social support. Failure in consecutive months leads to people giving up entirely. They stop trying. States such as Rajasthan were planning to treat such households as dead or non-existent.

The ABBA must be withdrawn immediately from the PDS and pensions in favour of alternative technologies such as smart cards. This will allow us to keep the baby (offline PoS machines with smart cards) and throw out the bathwater (Internet dependence and biometric authentication).

If the government continues to insist on the ABBA, there is only one conclusion that can be drawn. That it is actively trying to sabotage the PDS, which, quite literally, is a lifeline for the poor.

Reetika Khara is Associate Professor (Economics) at the Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

CONTOURS OF A COUNTER-BRI

► Dinakar Peri

India finds itself at a crossroads of grand alliances unfolding in the Indian Ocean Region. While one axis is a maritime one across the Indo-Pacific, the other is land-based, extending from Afghanistan into Southeast Asia. Interestingly, both are intended to act as a check on China's growing clout.

On Sunday, foreign ministry officials from India, Australia, Japan and the U.S. held discussions on the sidelines of the East Asia summit in Manila in the Philippines and discussed peace and stability in the region in addition to addressing common challenges.

"The discussions focussed on cooperation based on their converging vision and values for promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in an increasingly inter-connected region that they share with each other and with other partners. They agreed that a free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region serves the long-term interests of all countries in the region and of the world at large," a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs said while reiterating that India's Act East Policy was the "cornerstone of its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region".

Four corners

Oflate, the U.S. has been more vocal in its desire to include Australia in the India-Japan-U.S. security cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, referred to as the "quad" — a quadrilateral alliance of "like-minded" countries. Taking it a step further, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono has called for the inclusion of France and Germany. Against this backdrop, the prospect of quadrilateral discussions in Manila have generated considerable global interest on the possible outcome which China hoped "would not target or damage" a "third party's interest." Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meetings during his visit there will be watched closely.

While the quad still remains an idea, and it has to be seen what shape it takes, the diplomatic discussions in the national capital over the last few weeks and the statements by world leaders in the run-up to some recent high-level visits to India show distinct contours of a counter-alliance to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also called One Belt, One Road, taking shape. The arc extends from Afghanistan on India's west all across the Northeast and into Myanmar and the Southeast Asian countries.

Various strands of this are already



under way. India has been trying to build connectivity under various initiatives in its own Northeast region, in its neighbouring countries, and further into ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Now the U.S. has begun investing in India's periphery, and Japan is attempting to align its own development initiatives to improve connectivity in the region with India's Act East policy. The broader attempt is to institutionalise this into a structured trilateral format, and possibly a quadrilateral one at a later stage.

Collaborating with India

Last month, ahead of his visit to In-

dia, while delivering a speech at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson expressed the need to collaborate with India to ensure peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific so that it "does not become a region of disorder, conflict, and predatory economics."

Elaborating on the predatory economics, Mr. Tillerson said there are a "number of fledgling democracies for infrastructure investment" and stressed on the need to have alternative means of developing them. He referred to China's investment model, saying, "the financing mechanisms it brings to many

of these countries [results] in saddling them with enormous levels of debt."

Mr. Tillerson further said, "We think it's important that we begin to develop some means of countering that with alternative financing measures, financing structures" and added that they began a "quiet conversation" during the East Asia ministerial summit in August to create "alternative financing mechanisms" in a multilateral way.

In September, the U.S. signed a \$500 million agreement with Nepal to build infrastructure for the latter's electricity and transportation needs and to promote "more trade linkages with partners in the region like India." Earlier, U.S. Secretary of Defence James Mattis had endorsed India's sovereignty concerns surrounding the BRI.

Speaking at a think tank in New Delhi last month, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar endorsed the U.S. investment in Nepal. Stating that India cannot be in denial of other players coming into the region, he said: "I think an intelligent nation harnesses the changes and sees what works for you. To the extent we have countries whose broad goals are aligned with us." India and Japan are also cooperating on a project for LNG (liquefied natural gas) supplies to Sri Lanka in addition to aligning their con-

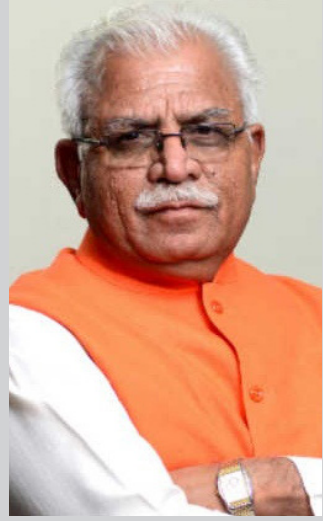
nectivity projects in Africa under the proposed 'Asia Africa Growth Corridor'.

The broad mechanism is akin to China's own build-up of the BRI initiative. China spent over a decade building capacities independently in its areas of interest — for instance, it built a series of dual-use facilities across the Indian Ocean surrounding India which is popularly referred to as its 'string of pearls' strategy. All such efforts have now been consolidated under its grandiose idea of BRI, bringing legitimacy to them and succeeding in getting the global community on board with offers of lucrative investments and long-term returns.

Time for caution

While cooperative mechanisms are crucial to maintain stability in the Indian Ocean Region, it would be prudent on India's part to do a cost-benefit analysis of building such grand alliances in such uncertain times, especially on the role of the U.S. with President Donald Trump at the helm. One of the agreements reached between Mr. Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping was China's Silk Road Fund, under the People's Bank of China, to promote the Belt and Road international trade initiative. This shows the dichotomy in American policy, and India should exercise caution before jumping on to the bandwagon.

Haryana CM to meet Kejriwal on air pollution issue



CHANDIGARH: Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar may meet Delhi state chief, Arvind Kejriwal on Monday to discuss the issue of pollution that has beset the northern part of India.

Responding in the affirmative to a written request by Kejriwal, the Haryana Chief Minister wrote back on Friday, saying that he would be in the national capital from afternoon of November 13 till forenoon of November 14, and in Chandigarh thereafter. Further, he asked Kejriwal to "call [him] to fine tune a mutually convenient date, time, and venue for the meeting."

In response to Delhi Chief Minister's allegation that the main reason for air pollution in the national capital is the stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana, Khattar said that a collective action was needed, and further commented that Kejriwal's letter betrayed his "inability to rise above short term electoral interests."

"Your assertion 'the Governments have failed to provide them economically viable solution' gives away your subconscious awareness of your government's inaction in this regard," he added.

Khattar further questioned Kejriwal over the steps taken against stubble burning by farmers in Delhi, and conveyed the Union Agriculture Minister's information that Haryana has allocated Rs 39 Crore towards crop residue management, out of Rs 45 crore funds.

"Punjab has not spent even a paise out of its allocation of Rs 97.58 crore," he added.

On November 8, Kejriwal had sent a letter to chief ministers of neighbouring Punjab and Haryana states, urging them to work jointly to resolve the air pollution issue.

Thereafter, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking compensation for farmers for crop residue.

Singh also refuted any possibility of a meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, saying the issue of pollution crisis was a much bigger issue involving all states contributing to pollution.

Nirbhaya case: SC to hear convict's review petition today



NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court will today hear the review petition filed by one of the convicts, Mukesh, in the Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.

Earlier, the apex court had upheld the Delhi High Court order which had sentenced Mukesh and other three convicts to the gallows. The review petition was moved through Advocate M.L.Sharma by Mukesh, who is one of the four convicts sentenced to death. In May, a Supreme Court bench, headed by Justice Dipak Misra and consisting of Justices R. Banumathi and Ashok Bhushan, had upheld the High Court's order of death sentence to the four convicts - Akshay, Pawan, Vinay Sharma and Mukesh. On December 16, 2012, six people gangraped a 23-year-old physiotherapy intern in a moving bus.

The woman succumbed to her injuries in a Singapore hospital on December 29, 2012.

One of the accused, Ram Singh hanged himself in the prison, while another person, who was a juvenile at the time of the crime, was convicted in August last year and will serve the maximum sentence of three years in a reform home.

PM CONDOLES ANDHRA BOAT TRAGEDY

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid condolence to families who lost their loved ones in the Andhra Pradesh boat capsizing incident. The Prime Minister's Office posted on the micro-blogging incident: "Capsizing of a boat in the Krishna River is anguishing. My thoughts are with the families of those who lost their lives in this tragedy. Andhra Pradesh Government and @NDRFHQ have been working on rescue operations: PM @narendramodi" Meanwhile, the district collector confirmed to ANI that 17 bodies were recovered and that an effort to trace the remaining missing persons was underway.

"At least 17 bodies have been recovered so far. We are trying to trace the remaining missing persons. The government has appointed a senior committee to inquire. The police has also registered a case against four to five persons out of which one has been arrested," Krishna District Collector B. Lakshmi Kantam told ANI.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Deputy Commandant, Santosh Kumar, said, "A rescue operation has been continuing since yesterday with four of our teams, while divers



are also making efforts to trace the missing people."

The injured were brought to Andhra hospital in Vijayawada earlier in the day. The state government yesterday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh to the families of the deceased.

As many as 41 people, including the boat driver, were in the boat at the time of the incident.

32 of the victims belonging to the Ongole town were on a picnic tour.

The boat that capsized at Krishna River in Ibrahimpatnam mandal, Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, was reportedly a private one.

The boat turned turtle when it was about to reach the shore. The bodies were handed over to the victims' families after postmortem.

A survivor in the incident had alleged that the boat operator was trying to let in more passengers, which made the boat overloaded.

Outcome will be clearer in Gujarat polls: Cong on Chitrakoot win

NEW DELHI: In the wake of Congress candidate Nilanshu Chaturvedi winning the Chitrakoot by-polls by a huge margin, party leaders on Monday said people's faith in the Congress had grown consistently and that the outcome would be clearer in the upcoming Gujarat elections.

"The faith people have in the Congress has grown consistently and immensely and the outcome will be clearer in upcoming Gujarat elections as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will lose there as well," party leader P.L. Punia told ANI.

Another Congress leader Shakeel Ahmad



took a jibe at Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and said, "I believe that Shivraj Singh Chouhan, out of nervousness, said that his state was more developed than the US, in the context of roads, because he knew he was going to lose Chitrakoot by-polls."

Chaturvedi defeated BJP candidate Shankar Dayal Tripathi by over 14,000 votes yesterday. The by-elections were necessitated following the death of Congress MLA Prem Singh (65) after prolonged illness on May 29 this year. Singh was a three-time MLA from Chitrakoot, from where he had won in 1998, 2003 and 2013.

Need for a strong law to protect journalists: Rajdeep Sardesai

CHANDIGARH: Calling for a strong law to protect journalists and demanding that criminal defamation law be struck off, renowned journalist and one of India's best-known TV faces, Rajdeep Sardesai, said strong institutions in the media were the only bulwark for the media to really play a role it was meant to — asking tough questions — in society.

Sardesai, who was at Chandigarh Press Club as part of their series of special lectures, said, "It has become the new normal to brand a journalist nationalist or anti-nationalist. We have to realise that doing a story against someone does not mean we are their enemy."

He added that journalists needed to be held accountable, of course, but not by gagging them as Rajasthan attempted to do recently.

"People see through attempts to favour or disfavour a particular ideology. On TV channels, the logic is: You are guilty till you prove yourself innocent? The same logic has now started applying in public's dealings with the media as well," he added. He added, "Increasingly, in times where sense is to be replaced by sensationalism, news is being replaced by noise; the audience becomes sceptical of the media." Fake News is word of the year. On a question on social media, he said, "The word of the year, according to the Collins dictionary, is Fake News. So, verification and due diligence will remain key. Only journalists can do that. To control social media, the need is to get bigger

organisations like Facebook, Twitter to have systems in place to regulate content."

"Journalists have to be the trendsetters," he said.

Saying that journalists were losing the capacity to ask questions and illustrating this, he said, "Pollution was always a problem in Delhi. Yet, it is only now we learn that the Delhi government added no bus to its fleet in two years. Why?"

He attributed this to the reduced distance between politicians and journalists, where netas (leaders) have bhakts. He said a reporter who was not a bhakt was increasingly being denied access.

He said increasing polarisation, where dialogue was being ignored was a challenge to the country and to the democracy. "We are not performers, but observers"

"The clash of ideologies is turning into a personal battle," he replied, to a question. "Journalists are not performers, they are observers and have to do their duty," he added.

Ending on an optimistic note, he added the solution lays in the society that has to value good journalism and pay for it as well.

In the future, you could have a WhatsApp channel for Chandigarh, based on subscription, he added.

"Journalism remains a good place to be. We are flag-bearers of truth," he concluded, adding that digital was the future, but its business model needed to be made more sustainable.

Will act against D-company, UAE tells India

NEW DELHI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has told New Delhi that it will not allow any underworld activity on its territory that threatens India and will act to enforce the law on the basis of actionable intelligence from India, in a move to prevent Pakistan-based mafia don Dawood Ibrahim and his associates from operating with impunity from the UAE, specifically Dubai, a top official said, asking not to be identified.

The cooperation between intelligence agencies of the two countries comes ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second visit to the UAE in the first quarter of 2018 to increase

bilateral business relations between the two countries.

According to Indian intelligence officials, there is nothing wrong with Ibrahim, as some reports have claimed, and he is frequently moved by Pakistani intelligence to keep him safe; the officials add that D-company, as Ibrahim's unit is known, is still a force to reckon with in Mumbai, where extortion is its main line of work, and that it is involved in the real estate business in the UAE through proxies.

Indian diplomatic sources are tight-lipped about the enhanced security co-operation with UAE, and the attempt to crack down on

the D-company, but agree that the bilateral relationship between the two countries has undergone a sea change (for the better) after PM Modi's visit to Abu Dhabi in 2015 and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan's visit to India this year as chief guest during the Republic Day.

"There is no secret memorandum of understanding between the two countries but a robust security relationship between security agencies of both sides. The information exchange varies from who among the Indian diaspora in West Asia joined the so-called Islamic State to the activities

of Indian underworld/terror fugitives based in Pakistan," said a senior diplomat on condition of anonymity.

India and the UAE are also closely cooperating to counter religious radicalisation and violent extremism with the Hedayah Centre in Abu Dhabi at the forefront of this activity.

It is working with Indian Muslim scholars apart from national security officials.

The two countries are also establishing a joint cyber-security centre in India with the aim of leveraging technology in the fight against terrorism, radical extremism, and underworld activities in the region.

A tale of three cities: How pollution fight unites Delhi, Beijing and Zabol

NEW DELHI: Several meteorological factors combine with man-made emissions to aggravate Delhi's pollution problem every winter, a phenomenon that experts say is common to some of the world's most polluted cities, Beijing in China and Zabol in Iran.

Delhi's air quality index (AQI), which measures the concentration of poisonous particulate matter in the air, hit the "severe" level on November 7 and has stayed in this dangerous zone since then. The AQI hit a peak of 486 on November 9, and even breached the maximum reading of 500 at some monitoring stations. Anything above 100 is considered unhealthy.

Though the levels of deadly particulate matter dropped on Friday, they started shooting up again from Saturday afternoon. The thick haze of smoke that has enveloped the national capital has been attributed primarily to burning of crop residue in Punjab and Haryana and vehicular pollution in a city of 17 million people. Experts say that dust from West Asian countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq, has also contributed.

"The pollutants were transported to Delhi and other parts of northwest India by strong-velocity high-altitude winds coming from west Asia. These, along with pollutants from stubble burning regions of Punjab and Haryana, pushed up the pollution levels in Delhi," said Gufran Beig, project director of the System of Air Quality And Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), a government agency linked with the ministry of earth sciences.

But, beyond the man-made, Delhi's pollution is also the result of a quirk of nature — something that the residents of Beijing and Zabol know a thing or two about. Every year, ahead of the onset of winter, Delhi's air quality worsens because cooler surface air traps pollutants closer to the ground. In the absence of ground winds, these pollutants from construction activities fail to disperse into the atmosphere, a phenomenon known as inversion. When high altitude winds bring in clouds of smoke from burning stubble farms in Punjab and Haryana, the entire city is trapped in a bubble of noxious air. "While emissions from



various sources had already pushed up the national capital's pollution level to the 'very poor' category since October, unfavourable meteorological conditions aggravated the situation," A Sudhakar, member secretary of the Central Pollution Control Board, said. "This has resulted in a drastic rise in pollution levels as the city has become like a chamber with almost no outlets." This is a problem that the residents of Zabol, an eastern Iranian city, face every year. During summer, dust storms rage,

bringing in pollutants from neighbouring Afghanistan and Pakistan. The city can experience up to 80 dust storms in a year that bring in loads of dust from neighbouring countries. The only way to fight back is to distribute anti-pollution masks to all its residents.

Beijing also suffers from similar problems. What crop-burning is to Delhi, the so-called "industrial rust belt" is to Beijing. There are thousands of factories around the Chinese capital and in its six neighbouring provinces and regions

Tianjin, Hebei, Henan, Shanxi, Shandong and Inner Mongolia. Wind patterns or air mass movements are an important reason (for pollution accumulation). The current Delhi pollution is happening because of transfer of pollution from crop burning areas. Beijing pollution is from industrial rust belt areas," said Lauri Myllyvirta, a Beijing-based energy analyst with environmental advocacy group Greenpeace. In 2016, the World Health Organisation named Zabol the world's most polluted city based

on the level of PM_{2.5} — the ultra-fine particles which sticks deep inside the lungs and takes the heaviest toll on human health. While Delhi ranked 11th, Beijing ranked 57th on the list.

While crop burning and weak winds make Delhi's air bad in the colder months, the city's topography contributes to particulate aerosols in summers that are marked by strong winds.

In summer, dust is also brought in to Delhi by storms from the north-west. These winds, western disturbances as they are called, pick up dust in large amounts from the desert-like north-western India and even west Asian and sub-Saharan countries. To counter pollution, China and India have various measures in place. China has introduced a four-tier colour-coded system for air pollution, with red being the most serious, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

Delhi has woken up late but now has its Graded Response Action Plan — an emergency measure based on various categories of pollution, which is being implemented for the first time.

In China, the number of heavy

pollution days (when the AQI is higher than 100) has dropped from 58 days in 2013 to 39 days in 2016. In Delhi, proper implementation will be needed to reverse the trend.

But the only long-term solution, experts say, is to cut down on burning fossil fuels. In China, for example, progress on air pollution control stalled in the region after a stimulus push started by the government in early 2016, leading to a temporary increase in output and prices of steel, cement and other products from highly polluting industries.

The plan now is to gradually curb polluting industries to begin with. It's also said to be considering curbing the use of vehicles that use fossil fuels to amplify the fight against weather conditions by controlling man-made sources. "Delhi has a variety of soil. The soil has degraded in several areas because of construction and development. They become loose, and get blown by wind easily. This adds to air pollution," said CR Babu who heads the Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems at University of Delhi.

Do you suffer from Urinary Tract Infection Beware, it may affect your fertility

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) is a common issue among women which is caused due to the unwanted growth of bacteria (generally E. Coli) in the urine. When the bacteria move up to the urinary tract, it may result in serious infection which is characterised by symptoms such as fever, nausea, chills, discomfort and burning sensation while passing urine. Earlier research also indicated certain habits that make you prone to UTIs.

In case, you are experiencing symptoms of UTI, consult your doctor immediately and take antibiotics to control the infection. Do not ignore the signs as ignorance can lead to health complications. Quite often, other infections such as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) may be the actual cause of con-

ception issues which may get confused with UTIs as their symptoms are similar.

The issue of urinary tract infections affects both men and women, but women are more vulnerable to UTIs as the female urinary tract is smaller as compared to men. Therefore, women have to take extra care to prevent UTIs. Urinary tract infection affects organs such as the kidney, liver, uterus and bladder that perform the function of waste removal while regulating the body temperature. If the infection persists or recurs frequently, especially affecting the upper tract (kidney, uterus, fallopian tubes), it might affect your ability to conceive.

This condition is also called as pelvic inflammatory disease which can damage the fallopian



tubes severely. Chronic kidney disease can affect other parts of the body and may affect your health and ovulation process

which may affect chances of conception.

UTI in males can also lead to infertility. Infections of genito-

urinary tract may account for male infertility. The bacteria spreads across the prostate gland and other reproductive structures

which may result in decreased sperm count and motility.

The infection can affect sites such as the testis, epididymis and male sex glands. Sometimes, other health conditions such as diabetes may result in UTIs and may lead to infertility. However, this issue can be treated with medication. Dr Priti Gupta, consultant fertility and IVF, First Step IVF Clinic, New Delhi, suggests simple precautions that can help you prevent UTI:

Fluids are your best friend: Drink lots of water and take fluids that flush out toxins. Water dilutes the urine and makes it less acidic and lighter in colour. This way, the person will not experience abdominal pain or irritation while urinating.

Maintain hygiene: Avoid using public washrooms as the

infection spreads frequently in common utilities. You should wipe from front to back to prevent bacteria around the anus from entering the vagina or urethra.

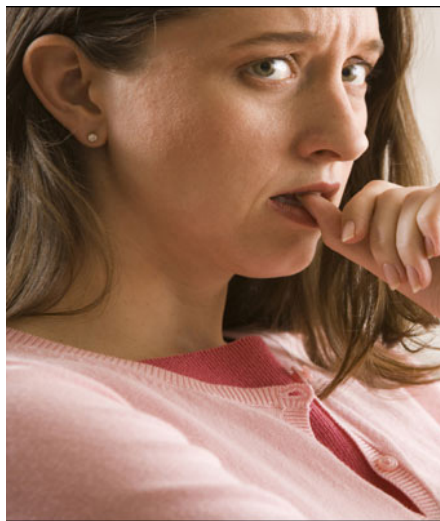
Frequent urination: Do not hold urine. Use washrooms whenever you feel the urge to go. This will not only release toxins but also eliminate heaviness of the bladder and give you relief from abdominal pain.

Comfortable underwear: Do not wear tight underwear as the bacteria dwells in moist and warm environment. Change your undergarments regularly and maintain personal hygiene.

Avoid using strong soaps, antiseptic creams, feminine hygiene sprays and powders.

Increase the intake of Vitamin C and zinc to reduce bacterial growth in urine.

New way to tackle stress is here



If you are under stress and want to get rid of it, try the new blue light therapy.

Blue lighting accelerates the relaxation process after acute psychosocial stress in comparison with the conventional white lighting, new research says.

Psychosocial stress or the 'said stress' is a kind of short-term stress (acute stress) that

occurs during social or interpersonal relationships, for example while arguing with a friend or when someone pressures you to finish a certain task as soon as possible.

Psychosocial stress produces physiological responses or the physical response to a stimulus that can be measured by means of bio-signals, mentioned in the research led by Francisco Pelayo, professor at the University of Granada, Spain. The researchers asked the volunteers to be under high stress for the study and then evaluated them over a relaxation session within a multisensory stimulation room. The participants were divided into two groups, the first group lied down under blue light and the second group lied down under white light. Diverse bio-signals, such as heart rate and brain activity, were measured throughout the whole session by means of an electrocardiogram and an electroencephalogram respectively. The research, published in the journal Plos One, stated that any form of stress was very common and negatively affected people's health and quality of life. The results found that participants who lied down under blue light relaxed more quickly than those who were under white light.

Treatment to cut brain injury in newborns identified



A team of researchers has identified a treatment to reduce brain injury in newborns who have suffered hypoxia-ischemia, a serious complication in which restricted blood flow deprives the brain of oxygen. Consequences of brain injury resulting from oxygen deprivation affect the entire lifespan and range from mild (learning disabilities) to severe (inability to breathe, walk, talk or see).

This complication can occur during or before birth due to maternal/placental problems, such as placental abruption or cord prolapse, or due to fetal/newborn issues, such as asphyxia due to labor difficulties, infection, fetal-maternal bleeding or twin-to-twin transfusion. The study by research clinicians at Children's National Health System evaluated newborn experimental models exposed to hypoxia-ischemia. The experimental models were given standard cooling therapy (therapeutic hypothermia) alone and in combination with a selective Src kinase inhibitor, PP2, that blocks a regulatory enzyme of apoptosis (cell death), which intensifies as a result of hypoxia-ischemia.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved a Src kinase inhibitor as an oncology treatment. This study is the first to test the benefits of blocking this enzyme in reducing the neurological

damage caused by brain hypoxia-ischemia.

"In hypoxia-ischemia, CaM kinase is over-activated, but hypothermia has been shown to decrease this enzyme's activation. We theorized that a Src kinase inhibitor, in addition to hypothermia, would further attenuate the activation of CaM kinase IV and that the result might be less brain damage," explained lead author Panagiotis Kratimenos.

"From this study, we were pleased that this seems to be the case." The authors concluded that hypothermia alone attenuated the over-activation of CaM kinase IV and improved neuropathology after hypoxia.

However, the combination of hypothermia with Src kinase inhibition following hypoxia further attenuated the increased activation of CaM kinase IV, compared with hypothermia alone in the newborn experimental model brain.

Corneal donor tissue can be stored for 11 days, says study

Corneal donor tissue can be safely stored for 11 days without negatively impacting the success of a transplant, a clinical trial has shown.

Currently, donor corneas, the eye's clear outer covering are generally not used for surgery if they have been preserved for longer than seven days.

Expanding the window in which donor tissues can be considered suitable "by even just a few days" should help safeguard quality donor tissue and access to vision-saving transplan-

tation procedures, the researchers said. "The current practice of surgeons to use corneas preserved for no longer than seven days is not evidence-based.

"Rather that practice is based on opinion, which hopefully will change with this new evidence," said lead investigator Jonathan Lass, from the Case Western Reserve University.

For the study, appearing in the journal JAMA Ophthalmology, the team looked at three-year graft success rates among a total of 1,090 indi-

viduals (1,330 eyes) who underwent cornea transplant via Descemet's stripping automated endothelial keratoplasty by 70 surgeons at 40 surgical sites. Overall, the three-year success rates were the same for corneas preserved for eight-to-14 days compared with up to seven days (92.1 per cent versus 95.3 per cent).

In a separate analysis, the team analysed the extent of endothelial cell loss (ECL) - the loss of cells in the corneal endothelium that continued

to occur as a normal part of ageing in the grafted donor cornea three years after it had been transplanted.

They non-invasively measured ECL in the 945 eyes with successful grafts and found that corneas preserved up to seven days had a 37 per cent loss of cells versus a 40 per cent loss in corneas preserved for eight-to-14 days.

Taken together, the separate analyses looked at graft success rates and ECL support that used corneas stored up to 11 days, the researchers said.

Suffering from depression? Regular exercise may help you cope: Study

Previously conducted numerous studies have shown solid evidence of how regular exercise in any form can contribute towards treating a plethora of health issues.

Adding to the list, a new study has suggested that more physical activities and workouts may help to uplift the mood and improve your mental health problems.

The study by Michigan State University found that exercises can quickly elevate a depressed mood, and the patients should create a comprehensive exercise plan and work regularly to achieve the specific goal.

"Physical activity has been shown to be effective in alleviating mild to moderate depression and anxiety," Carol Janney, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University in the US, said. "Current physical activity guidelines advise at least 30 minutes of exercise in five days a week to promote mental and physical health," Janney added.

The researchers studied over 295 mental health

patients and asked if the patients wanted their therapists to help them become more physically active.

The results showed over 80 per cent of the patients believed that the exercises recommended by the researchers helped them in improving their moods and anxiety in less time. The study, published in the journal General Hospital Psychiatry, noted the statements of more than half of the participants who claimed that their depressed mood limited their ability to exercise. "Offering physical activity programs inside the mental health clinics may be one of many patient-centered approaches that can improve the mental and physical health of patients," Janney said.

Mental health experts such as psychiatrists and therapists may not have the necessary training to pre-



scribe physical activity as part of their mental health practice, but by teaming up with the certified personal trainers or other exercise programmes may help in prescribing more physical activity in the clinic setting, the researchers added.

Excess alcohol intake may lead to insomnia in adolescents

As per a new study, excess alcohol use among early adolescents may lead to insomnia.

"These findings indicate that insomnia may be a unique risk marker for alcohol use among young adolescents," said Naomi Marmorstein, professor at Rutgers University-Camden in the US.

The researcher examined the associations between alcohol use and sleep-related issues on seventh and eighth-grade students.

When sleep problems were found to be associated with frequency of alcohol use, the researcher examined whether symptoms of mental health problems or levels of parental monitoring accounted for these associations.

The study, published in the Journal Addictive Behaviours, examined the development of mental health problems and resilience among at-risk youth.

The participants of the study completed questionnaires that asked how long it took for them to fall asleep, what times they usually went to bed on a weekday and on the weekend or vacation night, how often they experienced sleep disturbances and whether they ever fell asleep in class or had trouble staying awake after school.

They were also asked the frequency of any alcohol use in the previous four months.

The researcher determined that symptoms of mental health problems and parental monitoring did not account for the link between insomnia and alcohol use.

Overall, there were associations between alcohol and both insomnia and daytime sleepiness.

"Parents, educators and therapists should consider insomnia to be a risk marker for alcohol use and alcohol use a risk marker for insomnia, among early adolescents," said Marmorstein.

Uber finalises sale of stakes to Japan-based SoftBank

NEW YORK: App-based cab aggregator Uber has closed a deal with Japanese multinational telecommunications corporate SoftBank, commissioning the sale of a significant portion of its stakes to the latter, in a bid to implement modifications in management and go public in two years.

As part of the deal, a consortium of investors led by SoftBank is slated to buy at least 14 per cent of Uber through a combination of new and existing stock. SoftBank also plans to buy about USD 1 billion of fresh stock at Uber's current valuation of about USD 68.5 billion.

During the purchase, a price will be set for the existing Uber shares. If investors are reluctant to sell and SoftBank cannot hit its threshold of 14 per cent ownership of Uber, they are permitted to withdraw the deal.

"We've entered into an agreement with a consortium led by SoftBank and Dragonair on a potential investment. We believe this agreement is a strong vote of confidence in Uber's long-term potential. Upon closing, it will help fuel our investments in technology and our continued expansion at home and abroad, while strengthening our corporate governance," said Matt Kallman, an Uber spokesman, as quoted by the New York Times. SoftBank, who owns a portion of Ola, India's app-based transport provider, plans to purchase the Uber shares along with other investors. Reports suggest that the Japanese conglomerate will gain two Uber board seats as part of the investment. The agreement comes in the wake of a board meeting, in which directors voted to move forward with an investment from SoftBank. As part of the deal, Uber's board agreed to major governance changes, including curbing the powers vested in former CEO Travis Kalanick, on account of his position on the company's board. For the unversed, Travis was allegedly forced to step down from his position following severe backlash from the company's shareholders. The company had reportedly faced a string of revolts from the shareholders, few of which demanded Kalanick's resignation.

In August, putting an end to months of retrospection over finding a successor to Kalanick, Uber chose former Expedia CEO Dara Khosrowshahi to take charge as its new chief. While the Board was reportedly in favour of Hewlett Packard Enterprise Chief Meg Whitman taking over, they finally decided on Khosrowshahi for the position of CEO.

However, in a move to retain the powers that come with his position, Kalanick, in September, named two new members to the company's Board of Directors, thus paving the way for them to gain voting rights in the million-dollar firm.

Kalanick announced the appointment of Ursula Burns, former CEO and Chairwoman of Xerox, and John Thain, who has served as CEO of CIT Group, Merrill Lynch and the New York Stock Exchange.

GoWork goes live in Gurugram; aims at well equipped working space

GURUGRAM: World's largest co-collaborative co-working ecosystem GoWork recently opened two campuses in Gurugram. With an investment of Rs. 800 crore, these two campuses are expected to house about 12000 people. GoWork is a holistic operational destination that provides a business with an opportunity to save at least 10-15 percent of the expenditure to be incurred on real estate and technological expenses. Equipped with an array of latest amenities required to run any business, GoWork's campuses go the extra mile by incorporating unique elements such as meditation and frustration zones, gym, spa, gaming arcade etc. to cater to the needs of every stakeholder ranging from entrepreneurs, SMEs, and corporates. "The start-up environment is on an overdrive in India currently and we at GoWork believe this is the right time to introduce the world's biggest co-working space here. Keeping in mind the need of entrepreneurs, we have built our space with the best technological support, offered in the industry today," said Chief Evangelist at GoWork, Sudeep Singh. "Our prime focus is to support business profitability for our clients and while we have a focus segment catering to start-ups, entrepreneurs and majorly SMEs, our spaces are adaptive to the needs of businesses operating at any scale and across domains. From IT to travel or education to retail, organizations from every field will find GoWork's spaces to be fully equipped to meet their full spectrum of needs," added Singh.

With this inauguration, the Indian start-up ecosystem has just received a shot-in-the-arm. Further, the company also plans to equip its campuses with creches that will encourage women entrepreneurs and employees to participate more enthusiastically in the work environment. GoWork already boasts of a strong clientele with iconic brands such as Cox & Kings, Lifelong, Impactify, Flying Fur, WIP and Fixxoo on a list which is rapidly expanding.

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced Haj Policy of the Year 2018

MUMBAI: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced the process of Haj 2018 here in the press conference today. While making the announcement of Haj 2018 at Haj House, Naqvi said that this time, the Central Government has announced Haj process one month before in comparison to the last year. This will provide enough opportunities for all the concerned agencies to make preparations well in advance so that world class facilities to the Haj pilgrims are ensured. Haj 2018 related process started today. People can apply for Haj from 15th November. Naqvi said that Haj 2018 will be performed according to the new Haj Policy. The high-level committee, constituted to frame the new policy, has already submitted its report and Minority Affairs Ministry has been looking into its recommendations. The new Haj policy aims to make Haj pilgrimage more comfortable, smooth and transparent. Pilgrims' safety and their facilities are our priority. Naqvi also launched a new Haj Mobile App, based on modern facilities and technology. This app will make Haj application process easier and comfortable. Applying for Haj, enquiry and information, news and updates and e-payment are main features of Haj Committee of India Mobile App. Application for Haj can be made directly from the app. Registration fees can also be made through this app.

Naqvi said that the Central Government has been working to make the entire Haj process online so that people can get an opportunity for



the pilgrimage with complete transparency and comfort.

Chairman of Haj Committee of India Mehboob Ali Kaisar said, "The online application should be done in huge numbers, this will benefit Pilgrims on one hand and on the other hand Haj Committee staff will also get a chance to work very smoothly. The Central Haj Committee will request all State Haj Committee to promote the online application. Haj Committee of India will request the Saudi Arabian government to make Indian immigration online for Haj, so that after landing on Saudi Arabian airport, Indian hajis do not have to wait too long and face problems. The chairman further said that online immigration has also been reviewed by the Haj Review Committee. The Central Government has also been pressurized that they will talk to

the Saudi Arabian Government in this matter. Dr. Maqsood Ahmed Khan, CEO of Central Haj Committee said that before this time, Indian hajis were kept in the darkness, but this time Haj Committee gave complete information about the Haj expenditure in the Haj application. Hajis who use embarkation points of small towns did not know that there is a huge reduction in air fares if they use the embarkation points of big cities. Keeping these things in mind, the Haj Committee has adopted a transparent system.

Shri Naqvi said that the new Haj policy includes maintaining the reservation for people above 70 years age wish to go for Haj and allowing women over 45 years of age in a group of four or more for Haj without a male relative or "Mahram". Shri Naqvi said that the report on new Haj policy is under consideration

of Minority Affairs Ministry and positive discussion is going on, on keeping the number of embarkation points as it is at 21 at present.

For the first time, for Haj 2018, details of total expenditure to be incurred by the pilgrims is given in the Haj application form. This is a step towards transparency. Haj application form for 2018 also contains the embarkation points-wise detailed air fare comparison which will be beneficial for the pilgrims as for the first time they will get option for embarkation points of their own choice. For example, Haj airfare per pilgrim from Sri Nagar is Rs 1,09,692 while from Delhi it is Rs 73,697. So the pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir can opt for Delhi embarkation point. Similarly, the Haj airfare from Guwahati is Rs 1,15,646 per pilgrim while it is Rs 83,027 from Kolkata. So, the pilgrims from states of As-

sam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh & Sikkim can opt for Kolkata. Pilgrims from Gaya, where the airfare is Rs 1,13,680 can also opt for Kolkata. This will ensure that the pilgrims don't face problems even after abolition of Haj subsidy.

Shri Naqvi said that Haj 2017 was very successful and smooth as the Central Government had completed all the necessary preparations well before time in cooperation and coordination with concerned agencies. A total of 1,24,940 Haj pilgrims performed Haj 2017 by 454 flights between 24th July to 28th August through Haj Committee of India. About 45,000 pilgrims went through private tour operators. India's Haj quota for 2017 had been increased significantly by Saudi Arabia Government to 1,70,025.

Haj pilgrims from India went to Saudi Arabia from 21 embarkation points- Delhi, Mumbai, Goa, Guwahati, Lucknow, Mangalore, Varanasi, Srinagar, Kolkata, Gaya, Ranchi, Bhopal, Bangalore, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Aurangabad, Chennai, Cochin, Jaipur, Indore, Hyderabad.

From Ahmedabad, a total of 11073 Haj pilgrims went to Haj this year. Besides Ahmedabad, Haj pilgrims went through Aurangabad (2764); Bangalore (4734); Bhopal (1758); Chennai (3440); Cochin (11805); Delhi (16627); Gaya (6484); Goa (656); Guwahati (4472); Hyderabad (6347); Indore (1794); Jaipur (4767); Kolkata (10263); Lucknow (12314); Mangalore (768); Mumbai (6297); Nagpur (2181); Ranchi (3133); Srinagar (8103) and Varanasi (5072). (ANI-BusinessWire/India)

MSME, digitisation discussed at 'PSB Manthan': DFS Secretary



GURUGRAM: Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary, Rajiv Kumar, on Sunday said that MSME and digitisation were important factors discussed at 'PSB Manthan'.

Talking to the media after the plenary session of the event at the State Bank Academy, Kumar said: "MSME and digitisation were extremely important factors discussed at the meeting today."

He also said that recapitalization does not come on its own and is preceded and followed by a whole set of reforms.

"The reforms include various things. It includes strengthening the board, as well as HR issues, they also include the kind of business each bank needs to do and the kind of core competencies they have."

"The reforms also include the need for

the board to take a position to further give us a clear plan. We want to reach MSME very fast," concluded Kumar.

Earlier, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had hailed recent reforms like digitisation and added that banks need to support MSMEs for a healthier economy.

"There is more funding that is coming into the banking system for it to be in good health. The banking system forms the core of the economy and is virtually indispensable. Banks must try and support the MSMEs primarily, as this is what counts for job creation and is need of finances. Compared to financial institutions everywhere else in the world, we have done well and will continue in that direction. We need to try and realise the growth rate that we are capable of achieving," Jaitley said.

Foreign tourist arrivals up by 18.1 pct this October

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Tourism on Monday reported an 18.1 percent increase in the number of foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) in October this year, as compared to the corresponding period last year. According to Nationality-wise, Port-wise data received from the Bureau of Immigration (BOI), the Ministry noted that the number of FTAs in October, 2017 was 8.76 lakh, while that of October 2016 was 7.42 lakh,

thus establishing a growth rate of 18.1 percent year-on-year. FTAs during the period January-October 2017 were 79.96 lakh, reporting a growth of 15.8 percent over the same period of the previous year. The percentage share of FTAs in India during October 2017 saw tourists from Bangladesh emerge on top (21.66 percent), followed by USA (11.57 percent), UK (10.23 percent), Sri Lanka (3.79 percent), Canada (3.36 percent) and Germany.

On the other hand, FTAs from China, Nepal and Rep. of Korea were the least as per data, with FTA figures of 1.93, 1.66 and 1.48 percent respectively.

In terms of ports, Delhi Airport saw the maximum FTAs, registering figures of 32.56 percent, followed by Mumbai Airport (14.02 percent), Haridaspur Land Check Post (1.29 percent), Chennai Airport (6.10 percent), Bengaluru Airport (5.39 percent) and Kolkata Airport (4.55 percent). Amritsar and Trivandrum airport reported lowest figures of 1.53 and 1.20 percent respectively.

Looking at available figures on FTAs arriving on e-tourist visa, during the month of



October 2017, a total of 1.76 lakh foreign tourists arrived on e-tourist visa as compared to 1.05 lakh during the month of October 2016, thus registering a growth of 67.3 percent YoY.

In the time period from January-October 2017, a total of 12.43 lakh foreign tourists arrived on e-tourist visa as compared to 7.81 lakh during the corresponding period last year, registering a growth of 59.2 percent.

Maximum tourists that arrived on e-tourist visa in October 2017 were from the UK (18.2 percent), followed by the USA (9.7 percent), France (6.3 percent), Germany (6.0 percent) and Australia (4.3 percent). On the other hand, lowest figures in this regard were reported from Italy (2.2 percent), Netherlands (1.9 percent) and Malaysia (1.6 percent).

In terms of usage of ports, New Delhi Airport emerged on top with 53 percent, followed by Mumbai Airport (16.6 percent), Bengaluru Airport (5.5 percent), Chennai Airport (5.3 percent) and Dabolim (Goa) Airport (4.5 percent). Lowest figures in this regard came from Gaya Airport (0.6 percent), Calicut Airport (0.4 percent) and Trichy Airport (0.4 percent).

Indian Rummy challenge tournament in Goa being organised by adda52rummy.com for prize pool 25 lakhs

BANGALORE: Indian rummy challenge is the biggest offline rummy tournament being organised by adda52rummy.com in exotic Goa. Scheduled between 23rd October and 19th November 2017, the tournament promises a grand prize of 25 lakhs. This tournament is a part of the World Gaming Festival and will take place in the Deltin Royale Cruise on Goan waters. While the grand prize is pegged at Rs. 25,00,000, the first prize offered is at Rs. 10,00,000. The IRC Main Event will be a multi-table tournament where a maximum of 50 players will compete for the prize pool meant to

be dispersed amongst players who will reach the 4th level. Simply stated, the site seems to have arranged a mega monetary milestone for players at every turn in the tournament. Considering the devoted rummy players at the card game site, and in lieu of rewarding these VIPs, adda52rummy.com has planned this offline tournament as a refreshing and winning card game experience. Several satellite tournaments are arranged in the run-up to the main event and the site is giving away 45 tickets through the satellite tournaments. There are 4 quarter final rummy tournaments which

serve as entry points to the main event. Each quarter final fetches 5 tickets to the Indian Rummy Challenge for winning players. The final satellite scheduled on 26 November offers a good chunk of tickets, 25 in all for the main event. These quarter finals are being held under the IRC Leaderboard Promotion Series and the entry is with a buy-in amount of Rs. 25. For those online rummy players who don't appreciate long drawn suspense, there is the option of Direct Entry through Leader Board with minimum Loyalty Points of 40,000. For those who want to cut it shorter, a Deposit of Rs. 50,000

secures direct entry to the main tournament on 4th December 2017 at Deltin Royale Goa. Online rummy is adda52rummy's forte and the site seems to bring the very same spirit to this offline tournament. A rummy tournament or any card game tournament that matters are perceived as a test of skill rewarded by a fair sum of money. Registration, participation fee are all regular affair to get the grand prize pool. What is exciting here is how multiple players compete to beat others with their cutting edge rummy skills. All players, experienced and novices alike join in the grind to savor the adren-

aline rush in the fight for the prize pool. Adda52rummy.com is one of the few sites which understands this as a rummy enthusiast's need. The site's commitment to serious online rummy is evidenced by the scores of rummy enthusiasts who join the tournaments here and also vouch for the site. "December is a very festive time for card games too! I would want to see some action on the online rummy card game scenario and adda52rummy.com satisfies me each year. I am a regular player on the tournaments and am pretty much gratified by the gaming which happens as well as prize pools.

Equifax India appoints K M Nanaiah as Country Head

MUMBAI: Global information solutions company, Equifax Inc. on Monday announced appointment of KM Nanaiah as its Country Head.

Equifax India, which leverages high velocity analytics, business intelligence solutions, and industry leading data, is on an upward trajectory and unveiling a variety of new solutions.

"Nanaiah will provide leadership and oversight for both the bureau (ECIS) and analytics businesses (EA) in India," said Equifax MD, Emerging Markets and chairman of the board Equifax India, Shahid Charania.

Nanaiah comes to Equifax from Renoir Management, a global consulting firm with in-depth knowledge of the B2B and B2C market ecosystem after spending two decades in sales and general management roles in global business environments.

Prior to Renoir, Nanaiah served as MD, Pitney Bowes, India where he set up and led the country business unit for over ten years.

Chris Gayle finds no takers in Pakistan Super League, Salman Butt misses out too

MUMBAI: Chris Gayle, one of the most explosive T20 cricketers ever, has not found a place in any of the franchisees at the 2018 Pakistan Super League (PSL). A total of 501 cricketers — 308 overseas and 193 domestic — were included in the draft on Sunday, but the tall West Indies batsman found no takers.

Gayle, who is the only cricketer to score 10,000 runs in T20 cricket, was not picked up by the PSL franchisees due to his poor form and partial availability, according to Wisden India. Gayle has not been the same force that he was, especially in the Indian Premier League (IPL), having endured a tough run in the tournament's previous edition.

Apart from the fiery Caribbean batsman, former Pakistan captain Salman Butt and Mohammad Asif — who served bans following the 2010 spot-fixing scandal — were also not picked up.



Interestingly, Butt has been in a rich form in Pakistan's domestic competitions and is vying for a place in the national side.

The chances of Butt's return to international cricket were strengthened after Pakistan chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq confirmed that they have

considering bringing him back into the team.

As far as Gayle is concerned, he was not picked up with one franchise owner highlighting his poor form, and the fact that he will not be avail-

able for the whole tournament.

With the West Indies failing to earn a direct qualification for the ICC World Cup 2019, they will have to go through the qualification process. These matches will be played around the same time when PSL 2018 will be held.

An owner said, "We were told that Gayle is partially available so that was one of the reasons, but even if he was available we would not have picked him because he is no more the Gayle force he once was."

Gayle has played in first two editions of the PSL and has been ordinary with the bat, scoring 103 in five outings in the first season and 160 runs in nine matches in the next.

However, Gayle scored 200 runs in nine matches for his IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB). He was available 'partially' for the PSL event but the franchise owners were not interested.

Ravichandran Ashwin, Hardik Pandya trolled in The Big Bang Theory, fans stunned

MUMBAI: Indian cricketers Ravichandran Ashwin, Hardik Pandya and Bhuvneshwar Kumar were surprise mentions in one of the recent episodes of the American sitcom 'The Big Bang Theory', which tells about the lives of four scientists with one of them being an Indian, named Rajesh Koothrappali.

In its 11th season, the show has been a huge hit among the Indians. However, in one episode, cricket fans were given a pleasant surprise when Ashwin, Pandya and Bhuvneshwar were briefly mentioned in one of its recent episodes. The character named 'Howard Wolowitz', played by Simon Helberg is seen sitting with Rajesh — played by the Indian-origin actor Kunal Nayyar — in a bar where a cricket match is being played. Wolowitz asks Rajesh, "I don't get how you can enjoy cricket, it makes no sense!".

To which Rajesh replies, "That's Ravi-



chandran Ashwin, he is amazing. He makes Hardik Pandya look like Bhuvneshwar Kumar." Wolowitz is certainly baffled with the use of syllables — for which the cricketers were assumedly mentioned in the show — and replies, "Wooah, wooah, wooah! Save syllables for the rest of us." Indian cricket fans who watch the show were not too impressed with the efforts, as they took to Twitter to express their thoughts.

AB de Villiers, Albie Morkel blitz lights up Ram Slam Twenty20 match



NEW DELHI: AB de Villiers displayed his class with a magnificent 19-ball unbeaten 50 and he was ably assisted by Albie Morkel as the duo helped their team Multiply Titans to a magnificent eight-wicket win courtesy Duckworth-Lewis method over Highveld Lions in the Ram Slam Twenty20 encounter at Centurion Park on Sunday.

In a rain-curtailed match at Supersport Park, the match was reduced to 15-overs a side and the Lions chose to bat but made qa terrible start, with Albie Morkel striking with two wickets in his first over. The right-arm pacer struck again in his second over as he finished with figures of 3/12 from three overs. It took an attacking 42-ball 67 from Reeza Hendricks to boost the Lions to 127/6 after the end of 15 overs. In response, the Titans lost Henry Davids cheaply but Quinton de Kock got off to a flying start with a 24-ball 39. However, de Kock's departure brought together Morkel and AB de Villiers and the pair proceeded to put on an exhibition of power hitting.

Morkel got going with two sixes off Dwaine Proetorius and Willem Mulder. However, in one over bowled by left-arm orthodox bowler Bjorn Fortuin, Morkel slammed two further sixes while de Villiers smashed his second six as the bowler leaked 21 runs in his only over. De Villiers ended the match in grand style by scooping Rabada over fine leg for a six and getting to his landmark with his fifth six.

This was de Villiers' 38th Twenty20 fifty and his exploits helped the Titans, the defending champions in the Ram Slam Twenty20 tournament, get five points.

South Africa's next international assignment is a four-day Pink Ball Test against Zimbabwe before they prepare for a major tour by India in January 2018.

Moeen Ali ready to play final tour game for England ahead of Ashes 2017-18

TOWNSVILLE: Moeen Ali says he has overcome his side strain and is ready to play his first Australian tour match in Townsville this week.

The Worcestershire all-rounder missed England's opening two games in Perth and Adelaide but is available for the final Ashes 2017-18 warm-up game against a Cricket Australia XI starting on Wednesday. "I am good," he told reporters on Monday. "It's just a slight strain on my side from throwing. It was a bit frustrating but also not a bad thing, you get a lot more work done."

"I feel like I am ready to play and I can't wait to spend time in the field. We have got four days of cricket ahead."

"I can get a bit of game time in my system and then be ready to play, hopefully, at the Gabba."

The four-dayer in north Queensland is the England cricket team's last game before the Ashes series-opener in Brisbane starting



on November 23.

"It's about being ready for that first ball when it's delivered in Brisbane," he said.

Moeen, on his first Ashes tour

Down Under, says he is ready for the intensity of the series.

"I've heard a lot about Brisbane," he said. "It's something you have to block out. You have to focus on

your game and the situation that the team is in. I'm prepared the best I can. When you're out there you rely on your instincts. I know it will be tough, but I've always

backed my ability."

England head into their third tour match on the back of a comprehensive 192-run win over a CA XI in a day-night encounter at Adelaide Oval, the venue for the second Test which gets underway on December 2.

Moeen, usually England's number eight in Test cricket, is likely to move up the order in the absence of star all-rounder Ben Stokes, who remains at home after being arrested on suspicion of actual bodily harm. Stokes is awaiting the outcome of a police investigation into his involvement in a fight outside a Bristol nightclub in September. "With the Stokes situation I've probably got to go up the order by one, but my aim as a cricketer is to get up the order as high as I can, maybe push into a role at five or six," said Moeen.

"Obviously that's a bit further ahead. Firstly I have to do the job at number seven."

Peter Siddle says Glenn Maxwell should be first-choice no. six in Ashes 2017-18

SYDNEY: Peter Siddle, veteran Australia fast bowler, backed Glenn Maxwell for the number six spot against England, believing the enigmatic batsman deserves first crack in the Ashes series.

Maxwell, 29, played in the drawn Test series with Bangladesh in August and September but the entertaining Victorian is no certainty to retain his spot in the line-up for the opening Ashes showdown in Brisbane starting November 23. A host of names are vying for the role in Steve Smith's side, with Hilton Cartwright — who was due in at six in the second Test against Bangladesh as Maxwell was elevated to five — also being considered along with Daniel Hughes. It is one of the final pieces of Australia's Ashes selection puzzle and Siddle said Maxwell should have the chance to add to his seven Tests and 339 runs. "It's been a tough one. I've spoken about it a lot," Siddle — who is still dreaming of an Aussie

recall having not feature at international level since November last year — told Omnisport.

"I was lucky enough to play a lot with Shane Watson. We had the benefit of him being a good batter and a handy bowler too. We always had that all-round option."

"As a bowler, it does give you a bit of confidence knowing you have that back-up of an all-rounder."

"Whether it's a medium pacer or a spinner. It's the hard one. I know there's a lot for just a batter. "If there's a batter there that can bowl a bit, I think my team-mate Glenn Maxwell is a good example. I know he hasn't bowled a lot in the times he's played Test cricket but he does give that option that he can hold up an end for a period of time. Get through a few overs before a new ball or a lunch break."

"As a team-mate, I think he's the man that's been in the side before and at least get first crack at it."

wicketkeeping position is another that has sparked great debate as Matthew Wade and Peter Nevill battle it out for the gloves.

Wade stood behind the stumps against Bangladesh, however, his position is undecided, though Siddle endorsed his former Victorian team-mate for Ashes selection. Siddle said: "I've played a lot with Wade and Nevill. I'll probably be a little bit biased that I've played more with Wade and he's one of my good mates."

"Just the way he goes about cricket. How aggressive he is and how much of a team man he is. Everything that he brings to the table, I think he trumps Nevill there."

"Batting and keeping, I think they're both very similar. Wade is just a player that I've loved playing with for Victoria and Australia. He reminds a lot of the way Brad Haddin went about his cricket. Those characteristics give him the edge at the moment."

Harbhajan Singh ridicules Sri Lanka cricket team, deletes tweet later

MUMBAI: Indian cricketer Harbhajan Singh has reportedly deleted a tweet from his official account, the one in which he ridiculed Sri Lanka over their recent performances — from defeat to Zimbabwe at home to struggles against India in the previous series.

Sri Lanka have arrived in India for a four tour comprising three Tests, three ODIs and three Twenty 20 Internationals starting November 16. But for a team that lost each of their contests to the Virat Kohli-led team in their own backyard, Sri Lanka face a mountainous challenge on this tour. The reports of taking help of 'witchcraft' to win a Test series against Pakistan in the UAE 2-0 but losing each of the limited-overs matches also showed Sri Lanka in poor light. With India being absolutely dominant, the Dinesh Chandimal-led side could face some tough weeks ahead. They arrive in India on the back of 12 consecutive ODI defeats, their second-worst streak in history. Their last two series have resulted in back-to-back 5-0 whitewashes.

Perhaps what makes the matters even worse, Sri Lanka decided to drop their batting prodigy Kusal Mendis for this tour of India — their first since 2009-10.

Harbhajan highlighted Sri Lanka's recent results in one of his tweets, but it was removed by the cricketer from his account later on.

This is not the first time that Harbhajan has ridiculed Sri Lanka in the recent months. During the series against Australia which India had won 4-1, the offspinner had criticised the Australians in a discussion with India Today where he said, "The kind of cricket Australia is playing, it appears as if Sri Lankans are playing in yellow clothing. And whatever I know of Virat (Kohli) and his team they will be looking for nothing less than 5-0."

The first Test of the India-Sri Lanka series begins November 16, at the iconic Eden Gardens in Kolkata. The second Test will be played at Nagpur from November 24, whereas the final Test will be held at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in New Delhi starting December 2.



Josh Hazlewood is a bloody genius with line and length: Mitchell Starc

BRISBANE: Mitchell Starc says pace partner Josh Hazlewood's unerring line and length will allow his fellow bowlers to let rip at England's batsmen in the Ashes Test series.

Starc and Hazlewood form a potent new-ball attack for Australia in the series, which gets underway in Brisbane on November 23.

Backing them up is another New South Wales tearaway, Pat Cummins, who has been singled out by Australian leg-spin great Shane Warne as the Ashes destroyer with his searing pace. Hazlewood will be fresh and rested for the series, having played just one Sheffield Shield game since coming back from a side strain

injury. Test spearhead Starc may have captured two hat-tricks for NSW in a recent Shield win over Western Australia, but he claims Hazlewood will prove to be Australia's spark.

Starc said Hazlewood's nagging line and length would tie up one end and allow him and Cummins to attack from the other. "He's a bloody genius with line and length, it allows Pat and I to be aggressive and that's how I bowl," Starc told reporters in Brisbane on Monday. "We can unleash from the other end, bowl as quick as we can and attack. He (Hazlewood) takes his wickets with line and length and Pat and I come in and try and blast teams out, try and attack the



stumps and really intimidate. We complement each other really well."

Starc, Cummins, Hazlewood and fourth paceman Jackson Bird are training together this week in Brisbane instead of playing Shield games

for their state sides. Starc has taken 17 wickets at 12.70 in this season's Sheffield Shield, but said he had yet to reach peak form ahead of the first Test. "I think I was just used at the right times and cleaned up the tail

against WA," he said. "Josh was the one who blasted out the top order and Patty bowled really well in the middle." Starc played down talk that he had to dominate, just as fellow left-arm quick Mitchell Johnson did to secure victory for Australia in the last Ashes series Down Under in 2013. "I think we have an attack that is gelling well," Starc said. "It doesn't have to be one guy who stands up. If someone has a Mitchell Johnson-type series, fantastic. But if we win the Ashes it doesn't matter who gets all the wickets. Hopefully we can stay together as a (bowling) group and do something special over the next few years."