

TIME AND US

DAILY Srinagar, Kashmir

WEDNESDAY

- NOVEMBER, 15, 2017
- 23 SAFFAR 1439 AH
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- VOLUME: 03
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	11.0	2.9
JAMMU	23.6	14.4
LEH	10.9	-6.3
KARGIL	13.0	-5.2

SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 05:29 PM
SUNRISE THURSDAY: 07:05 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
 Mainly clear sky... Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 17°C & -2°C respectively.

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

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SAEED AJMAL, CONTROVERSIAL PAKISTAN SPINNER, TO RETIRE FROM ALL FORMS OF

Militant and soldier killed in South Kashmir encounter

Hideout busted in Laam forest of Tral

Kulgam, Nov 14: In a fierce gun battle between government forces and militants in Nowbug Kund area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district, a militant and a soldier were killed while a cop associated with Special Operation Group sustained injuries.

A police official said that Nowbug Kund area in Qazigund was cordoned off after receiving information about the presence of militants in the area. The militants fired upon search party when it approached towards a house triggering encounter.

The official said that militants managed to change their positions from time and time while government forces sealed all the exit routes.

During the fierce gun fight, a militant belonged to Lashkar-e-Toiba was killed. He added that a cop and a soldier sustained injuries. The soldier later on succumbed to their injuries.

Sources added that some of the militants managed to escape from the encounter.

A police official identified the slain militant as Muzamil Manzoor,



a resident of Bardoo Yaripora Kulgam

Reports from Laam forests of Tral town of South Kashmir's Pulwama district said that government forces busted a hideout and recovered some blankets from there.

A police official said that no exchange of fire was their between militants and the government forces. "It was a search operation during which a hideout was busted," he told CNS.

Authorities suspended rail

service in North and internet service in twin districts of Kulgam and Anantnag.

A Railway official said that rail service was suspended due to security reasons in North Kashmir where two local militants of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) were killed in an encounter with government forces on Monday evening.

However, trains continued to chug from Budgam-Srinagar to Anantnag and Qazigund to

▶ See **Militant**...Pg 02

Last militant of Palhalan laid to rest

Thousands participated in last rites of two Hizb militants

Baramulla, Nov 14: The last militant from Palhalan was laid to rest amid pro freedom slogans on Monday afternoon.

Thousands of mourners participated in the last rites of Ashiq Ahmed Bhat, a Hizb militant who was killed along with his associate Toib Majid of Brat Kalan Sopore in Zachildara area of Handwara town in North Kashmir's Kupwara district on Monday night.

Local sources said that the body of Ashiq was handed over by police to family on Monday midnight.

Thousands of people assembled

▶ See **Palhalan**...Pg 02

SC issued 4 weeks' notice to Government of India to file Status Report on PaK prisoners in Indian jails

New Delhi, Nov 14: Supreme Court of India Tuesday directed Union of India to file Status Report on the detention of Pakistani-Pak administered Kashmir and foreign prisoners detained in the Indian jails.

The Supreme Court of India issued this notice on a writ petition filed by Prof. Bhim Singh in person against the illegal, unconstitutional and improper detention/trials of foreign prisoners by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir for the past over 15 years who have been languishing in the Indian prisons including J&K, many of them have completed the respective sentences and many of them have been kept in detention by the J&K Government for years under the detention law in J&K called 'Public Safety Act' without trial.

The Supreme Court has been hearing writ petition which was filed by Prof. Bhim Singh in-person against the illegal detention of more than 1000 prisoners from Pakistan and its administered Kashmir. Nearly 700 of them were released by the intervention of the Supreme Court of India which had issued direction to the Union of India and Government of J&K to release all those prisoners from Pakistan, PaK or other countries who had exhausted their respective sentences or who have been detained in violation of Article 21 of the Constitution of India which commands that no person shall be deprived of his life or



liberty without procedure established by law.

The Supreme Court of India has been hearing Prof. Bhim Singh's petition and the petitions filed by J&K National Panthers Party or State Legal Aid Committee, J&K against the illegal detention of the Indian nationals or foreigners.

The Supreme Court of India by its order dated 03.05.2017 directed, "Union of India had filed Status Report which is in the form of additional affidavit dated 19th April, 2016. Let this report be updated and a latest report in this behalf be filed before the next date of hearing. State of Jammu and Kashmir may also file a report to the same effect."

Prof. Bhim Singh submitted before the Division Bench of the Supreme Court comprising of Justice A.K. Sikri and Justice Ashok Bhushan that State of J&K had filed reply which is incomplete as no details of the

▶ See **SC**...Pg 02

TWO ARRESTED FOR BRAID CHOPPING INCIDENT IN GANDERBAL

Ganderbal, Nov 14: Police on Tuesday said that they arrested two persons involved in braid chopping incident that occurred last month in Wakura area of Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal Syed Fayaz told reporters that a braid chopping incident was reported in Wakura area last month when a girl alleged that her braid was chopped off by two persons.

"We had registered an FIR vide number 14/2017 in this regard at police station Ganderbal and during investigation and identification parade two persons were nabbed. The accused confessed their crime," he said and added that identification parade was conducted in presence of District

▶ See **Braid**...Pg 02

Mehbooba stresses on enhanced allocation to Horticulture sector, raising more allied infrastructure

Jammu, Nov 14: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti has stressed on the need to enhance the allocation for Horticulture sector in view of its contribution to the State economy besides involvement of a large chunk of population with the trade.

Chairing a meeting to review the implementation of various schemes in Horticulture here today, the Chief Minister flagged interventions which are critical for the growth of the industry. She said raising more allied in-



frastructure, introduction of high yielding varieties, good connectivity to orchards to cut down the overhead costs, availability of cold chain and good marketing are the areas which need to be given thrust to take Horticulture industry to a level where it can optimally tap the fruit requirement

at the national level.

Minister for Horticulture, Syed Basharat Bukhari; Minister for Finance, Dr Haseeb A Drabu and Minister of State for Horticulture, Priya Sethi were present in the meeting.

Mehbooba Mufti underscored the need for introduction of high yielding varieties in view of their high yielding capacity by gradual phasing out of old orchards. For this, she advised the concerned Departments to adopt a joint mechanism with which

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

DGP VISITS DODA-KISHTWAR IN 2ND LEG OF HIS INITIATIVE TO REACH FAR OFF DISTRICTS Promises SPOs to review the genuine cases for absorption

Jammu, Nov 14: Drugs is bigger threat than terrorism, we are waging a war against it and we seek people's cooperation in eradicating it from the state. This was stated by Director General of Police, Dr S.P Vaid while interacting with the civil society at Kishtwar and Doda during his visit to the twin districts of Doda-Kishtwar-Ramban, Range.

During his visit to Kishtwar and Doda, DGP was accompanied by IGP Jammu S.D Singh Jamwal and was received by SSP Kishtwar Abrar Chowdhary and other Police officers of the District.

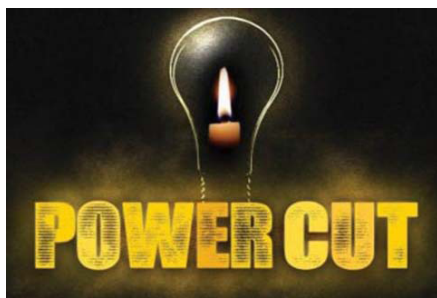
▶ See **DGP**...Pg 02

Ahead of 'Chillai Kalan', winter blues irk people

'PDD's curtailment schedule may be worse'

Srinagar, Nov 14: Ahead of the harsh winters, the winter blues have started haunting Kashmiris. From rural pockets to urban parts, people have started hitting the roads over the inadequate electric supply. In some areas the transformers are damaged and people have no clue when the concerned department repairs them.

As Weather Department predicts harsher upcoming winters, the much needed electric supply in winters is getting worse. And there is no good news from the Power Development Department (PDD). According to PDD officials, the curtailment schedule will continue to remain the same even in the harshest



phase of winters which is set to begin from December 21.

"There will be curtailment of 8 hours

▶ See **Kalan**...Pg 02

URS OF HAZRAT MAKHDOOM SAHIB (RA) OBSERVED

Srinagar, Nov 14: The 454th urs of Hazrat Sultanul Aarifeen Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom Sahib (RA) was observed with religious fervor and enthusiasm here on Thursday.

Braving bone chilling cold, thousands of devotees also observed the night long prayers in the shrine on the conclusion of the Urs.

Special prayers were also organized at different places in which hundreds of devotees participated.

However, the main congregation was held at the shrine of Hazrat Sheikh Makhdoom Sahib (RA) at Kohi-Maran hill here.

Hundreds of devotees including men, women, old and children thronged the shrine and observed the night long

▶ See **Urs**...Pg 02

Hurriyat leaders must get written invitation for dialogue: BJP leader

'Gol must assure that it will act upon recommendations of the representative'

Srinagar, Nov 14: Former External Affairs Minister and senior BJP leader Yashwant Sinha Tuesday said that the representative, Dineshwar Sharma, appointed by Government of India to hold dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir should send a written invitation to Hurriyat leaders to participate in the dialogue process rather than giving press statements on them.

Sinha said that appointment of Sharma is a positive development and he should give a timeframe of completing his dialogue process than making it indefinite.

"Dineshwar Sharma has expressed his



desire to talk to the Hurriyat, but that should be followed by Mr Sharma by sending a written invitation to Hurriyat leaders to meet

▶ See **BJP**...Pg 02

POLICE ARRESTS DUO FOR STEALING CELL PHONES AND ACCESSORIES

Ganderbal, Nov 14: Ganderbal police have solved a burglary case within shortest possible time and recovered mobiles and mobile accessories.

A written complaint reported by Imran Ashraf Reshi of Safapora in Police Station Safapora which stated that during the intervening night of September 1 and 2, some unknown persons had stolen cell phones and mobile phone accessories from his shop by breaking the wall on back side.

On receipt of complaint case FIR number 31/2017 under section 379 RPC was registered in Police Station Safapora and on the directions of SSP Ganderbal Fayaz

▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

Pro-India politicians responsible for all miseries Kashmiris are facing: Malik

'Our saints showed us the path of wisdom'

Srinagar, Nov 14: Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Mohammad Yasin Malik Tuesday said that our saints and spiritual leaders showed us the path of wisdom, tolerance, struggle and steadfastness.

Malik while addressing the gathering at Sultan ul Aarifeen Makhdoom Sahib Srinagar said, "We have forgotten the teachings of these spiritual leaders and because



of this ignorance we are today suffering in our daily lives".

In a statement issued to KNS, Malik visited the Dargah

of great religious and spiritual leader of Kashmir Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom Rahmatullah Alliaah to pay homage and expresses his gratitude towards the great saint who taught Kashmiris the way of living with dignity and pride.

In his speech, Malik said, "Hazrat Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom (RAH), led us on the religious and spiritual fronts. It was this great thinker

▶ See **Malik**...Pg 02

PDP-BJP ABANDONS MARWAH-WARWAN AREAS Kichloo seeks review of Bursar Project to avert peoples' dislocation

Kishtwar, Nov 14: Former minister and National Conference MLC Sajjad Ahmad Kichloo on Tuesday lambasted the sadistic approach of PDP-BJP government towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir in general and the remote areas in particular, saying governance deficit has manifested in plethora of problems.

"Marwah and Warwan areas stand testimony to apathy of the government that has lost moral standing in being at the helm of this unfortunate state", Kichloo said while concluding a fortnight long visit of the area.

The former minister referred to the anger of people

▶ See **PDP**...Pg 02

GOVT EARMARKS RS 10.23 CR FOR GHATTI-SUFFAIN LINK ROAD: LAL SINGH

'Lays foundation stone for Tehsil building at Mahanpur'

BASHOLI, NOVEMBER 14—Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment Choudhary Lal Singh said that Government has initiated endeavours to expand the road network to every nook and corner of the state, with special emphasis on rural and far off areas.

The Minister said this while addressing a large gathering after inspecting the ongoing construction works on 25 Km long Ghatti-Suffain road, here today.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister informed that Government has earmarked Rs 10.23 crore under PMGSY for construction of Ghatti-Suffain road, which on completion would benefit the

population of Ghatti-Suffain and adjoining areas. He asked the executing agency to gear up their men and machinery for timely completion of the road.

Chief Wildlife Warden Manoj Panth, Chief Conservator of Forests, Farooq Gillani, Managing Director SFC Suresh Gupta, Director Social Forestry, Ashwani Kumar Gupta, Director Soil Conservation, Javed Iqbal Punjoo, Director SFRI B M Sharma, Director FPF Asif Mehmood Sagar, Regional Director Wildlife Sinthil Kumar, Regional Director Pollution Control Board Choudhary Showkat Ahmed, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Basholi Sanjay Gupta, Assistant Commissioner Develop-



Earlier, the Minister laid foundation stone for Tehsil building at Mahanpur in Basholi, to be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 1.78 crore by JKPC. Choudhary Lal Singh, addressing the people at Mahanpur, said that Government has released Rs 44.54 lakh for start of the construction work of this building which would comprise of Court room, Retiring room, Mohre Maal, Meeting Room, Patwari room, Judicial section, Record Room, Income certificate section, State subject section and office room of Tehsildar. The Minister directed JKPC authorities to complete the project within one year. Later, Choudhary Lal Singh visited Madani Dammra, Mailini and Sabar and kick-started

ment Rajiv Khajuria besides other senior officers of R&B, JKPC, RDD and PDD accompanied the Minister.

construction work on five roads. Responding to demands of Madaani Dammra locals, the Minister directed the RDD to immediately install a hand pump in the area so that people do not face any inconvenience.

Choudhary Lal also planted Chinara, Fruit and Ornamental saplings along the road of Madaani-Dammara.

Meanwhile, the Minister attended a function on Children's day, the birth anniversary of first Prime Minister of India Jawahar Lal Nehru, organized in Government High School Sabar in which students of Government and Private Schools of Mahanpur presented colourful cultural bonanza.

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MILITANT

Banihal, a senior railway official said. All trains on this route ran as per schedule, he added. Mobile internet service was suspended in Kulgam and Anantnag.

PALHALAN

at the house of the slain militant who was taken in a procession and then laid to rest at Martyrs Graveyard Palhalan. Ashiq was the last militant from Palhalan, the area once known for militancy and stone-pelting incidents. He is survived by three brothers, two sisters and parents. According to police he joined militant ranks in April 2015 when he was a Class 10th student. "No FIR stands registered against him in any police station," said a police official to news agency CNS.

Meanwhile, clashes erupted between protesters and the government forces deployed in the area shortly after the culmination of last rites of the Hizb militant Ashiq Ahmed.

Witnesses said shortly after the culmination of last rites of the slain militant, large number of youth hit to roads and pelted stones on the deployed forces near Jammu Kashmir Bank.

They added that government forces responded with tear-smoke shelling.

Reports said that a large number of people participated in the last rites of another Hizb slain militant Toib Majid at Bratkalan Sopore.

The mourners chanted pro-freedom slogans. The shops and other business establishments remained shut in Palhalan, Pattan and Bratkalan and adjacent areas.

SC

proceedings of the prisoners of the Pakistani/PaK has been given nor there is any procedure followed by the Union of India. He said that 15 Pakistanis including some PaK residents have been detained under Public Safety Act (Detention Law) in total violation of Article 21 of Constitution of India.

He submitted before the Supreme Court that most of them have been detained illegally/unconstitutionally and in violation of the Fundamental Rights guaranteed to the foreigners under Article 21 of Indian Constitution as they have been kept in detention, some of them for years, after they had completed their respective detention period.

Advocate Prof. Bhim Singh also made strong protest that there are 23 prisoners (from Pakistan/PaK) who have not been deported in spite of the orders of the Supreme Court of India. Similarly there are three detenues who have been recommended for deportation but are still in prison. There are some 15 prisoners who are undergoing sentences for years without any appeal in the superior courts. The Government also informed the Supreme Court that there were 43 prisoners of Pakistan and PaK who are facing trials and investigation.

Prof. Bhim Singh submitted before the Supreme Court to give final chance to the Government of J&K as well as to the Union of India to file their replies so that the matter may be heard by the Supreme Court of India.

Prof Bhim Singh also prayed the Supreme Court of India to give final opportunity to the Union of India to file its reply.

Prof Bhim Singh also said that there were some persons from Nigeria (Hardey Temmy Wesley) and Bangladesh (Naem Ahmed) whose names were recommended for deportation yet they are still in the Indian jails in defiance of the direction of the Supreme Court.

Prof Bhim Singh expressed regrets that the Government of J&K as well as Union of India have been intentionally and deliberately violating the rule of law that Constitution of India has guaranteed in its Chapter-III on Fundamental Rights and hoped that the respective states (within Union of India) as well as Union of India shall follow the rule of law and direct the Union of India and Govt. of J&K to deport all those foreign prisoners who have been completed more than two years in the Indian jails as under trial.

Prof Bhim Singh was assisted by a galaxy of lawyers including B.S. Billowria, Bheem Pratap Singh, S.K. Bhandopadhyay, Tripurari Rai and others.

BRAID

Magistrate. SSP Ganderbal said the accused hail from Khag area who had arrived in Wakura with the intention of breaking the house.

"They actually had gone to area for a burglary after taking advantage of Braid chopping as the people will move out of their homes and it will give them a safe passage to houses" SSP said adding that investigation has been set into motion and some more revelations may emerge.

MEHBOOBA

the farmers could be incentivized and persuaded to take up plantation of new varieties. The Chief Minister also underscored the need for con-

necting fruit orchards to main highways to cut down the overhead cost of inputs and produce. She asked for dovetailing schemes of MGNREGA, Horticulture, NABARD and other agencies for raising facilities of good roads touching orchards, better irrigation facilities and availability of quality material to farmers. She also laid emphasis on developing terminal facilities of cold storage and better carrying capacity to take the fruit to terminal mandies at the appropriate time.

Mehbooba Mufti also reviewed the progress on the High-Density Apple plantation, walnut industry and the village specific fruit schemes launched last year. She directed converging Apple Year campaign with tourism campaigns to make apple industry of the State another attraction for visitors.

The meeting was informed that Jammu & Kashmir produces around 18 lac metric tonnes of fruit which constitutes roughly 70% of national fruit production and it generates some seven crore mandays of work annually, highest by any sector of economy. However, the meeting was informed that, at present there are facilities like C A stores etc. for retaining some 90 thousand metric tonnes of fruit only in the State and the same need to be enhanced.

The meeting was also informed that Mango, Orange and Anardana villages have been set up in Kathua, Reasi and Ramban districts over a cost of Rs. 10.59 crore.

Chief Secretary, B B Vyas; Principal Secretary, Finance, Navin Choudhary; Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rohit Kansal; Vice Chairman, JKHPMC, Abdul Salam Reshi; Secretary, Horticulture, Manzoor Ahmad Lone; Director, Horticulture, Jammu/Kashmir besides other officers were also present in the meeting.

DGP

The DGP interacted with the meritorious students of the district Kishtwar besides chaired a Darbar of Jawans and officers at DPL. DGP also interacted with the civil society and assured assistance in solving problem of the people of hilly areas.

At Doda, the DGP Dr. Vaid was received by Basant Kumar Rath IPS DIG Doda-Kishtwar-Ramban Range, SSP Doda Mohammad Shabir, Commandant IR 5th Bn Mohammad Arif Rishu and other senior Police officers.

During the visit, Dr. Vaid inaugurated Model Police Station and DIG office cum residence.

The DGP chaired a police Darbar at DPL and also interacted with civil society.

While chairing darbar of Jawans the DGP heard police personnel patiently and assured them that their genuine problems would be looked into on priority.

He said that welfare of jawans has always been priority and added that more welfare schemes have been introduced to benefit the jawans and for their families in recent times. He said that a major scheme of housing for construction of 5000 quarters at Srinagar and Jammu has been approved and ground work for the same has begun.

Lauding the work of SPOs, the DGP said SPOs have done a commendable job in fight against terrorism in Doda-Kishtwar and have helped in eradication of terrorism. He promised to review the genuine cases of SPOs for absorption in department. He impressed upon the policemen to be firm with the erring but polite with the people who seek their help. He advised the policemen to take care of their health by taking balanced diet, yoga and other physical activities.

While highlighting the ill effects of drug abuse during his interaction with civil society at both the places, the DGP said that drugs is bigger threat than terrorism and added that Jammu and Kashmir police is waging a war against it and sought the cooperation of the people in eradicating it from the state. While referring to the misuse of social media by certain individuals, the DGP asked policemen to identify such individuals and prevent the misuse by counseling them. While commending the people for maintenance of communal harmony and brotherhood in these districts, the DGP appealed to the people to continue their support in the same way in future as well.

KALAN

in non-metered areas and 4 hours in metered areas," says PDD Chief Engineer.

According to the Chief Engineer they have the capacity of 1250 Mw and the demand is 1700Mw, so the demand exceeds the supply.

The officials in PDD told KNS the only solution to electricity crisis in the state especially in Kashmir valley is that people start using electricity judiciously.

"The prevailing curtailment schedule might get worse as soon the harsh winters set in, people would use more heating appliances that would in turn lead to more power crisis," said officials

The electric crisis is almost same everywhere in the Kashmir valley whether these are metered or non-metered areas. People have no idea when the electricity will come and go.

According to latest reports in various section of media, the protests over the unwarranted curtailments, are gaining momentum-with every passing day.

"We fail to understand where the electricity goes. Every now and then, we see ministers inaugurating this and that power project, where is the electricity. There is no improvement in the power supply. It was same what we used to get ten years ago," said Ghulam Nabi, a local.

"All the governments over the time have failed to address this issue. If this project and that power project have been started, who gets the electricity, surely not the people of J&K? The present PDP government which was advocating too much to bring back the power projects from NHPC is now mum over it," said Shabir Ahmed, a University student.

URS

prayers there. Devotees also participated in the special prayers here.

On the occasion, different religious scholars paid glowing tributes to the revered saint for his valuable religious and social services.

BJP

them at a certain time and place. Only giving press statements will not do," Sinha told KNS.

"Then he should see how the Hurriyat will respond. My own recommendation will be that if Hurriyat receives a written invitation then they should respond positively and talk to the representative," he said.

Hurriyat leaders have rejected the dialogue process that has been initiated by Sharma by visiting for five days to the state where he met major political leaders and dozens of delegations.

Sinha said that GoI must assure the people say from time to time that it will take the recommendations of the representative seriously and act upon them.

"There is a doubt," he said about the earlier interlocutions and their reports on Kashmir submitted to the centre. "Let's try and give one more opportunity to the interlocutor of this government. We should give the representative the time and hopefully something good comes out of it," he said.

He said that nobody in Government of India or Government of Jammu and Kashmir or political and civil society should try to wreck this initiative.

"It should be allowed through," he said.

"Also, the representative should tell people of Jammu and Kashmir that he will complete his job of talks to people and making his recommendations within a certain time limit and it should not be indefinite," he said, adding that giving time-frame will wade off the allegations that Hurriyat has levelled that "it is only buying time and nothing will come out".

Sinha had led a "concerned citizens" group to Kashmir last year after unrest supported and had pressed for "multi-dimensional dialogue" with Hurriyat and has asked the government to improve human rights situation.

Speaking about his impression while talking to Hurriyat leaders during his visits, Sinha said that Hurriyat had agreed to join dialogue which is without pre-conditions.

POLICE

Ahmad Lone, a special team was created under the supervision of DySP Ganderbal Dr. Rameez Raja, and headed by SHO Safapora Sub Inspector Mudasir Zaroo investigation was set into motion. During the course of investigation, one suspect namely Shabir Ahmad Dar of Saderkot Bala was rounded up and questioned.

During questioning, he confessed that he along with Hiral Ahmad Mir of Safapora committed the theft.

On the disclosure of both arrested persons 19 cell phones, 58 headphones, 20 mobile chargers and other mobile accessories were recovered from their houses in Safapora and Saderkot Bala. "Further questioning in this regard is going on and more recoveries and arrests are expected," said a police spokesperson.

MALIK

and spiritual leader who besides providing us the much needed religious and spiritual teachings also taught us the way of living with dignity and honor and resisting falsehood and tyranny."

While appealing for religious tolerance among the natives of Kashmir and Maslaki brotherhood among Muslims, JKLF chairman said that "promoting mutual brotherhood and unity is the only solution that can eradicate our miseries. Unity is the remedy by which we can achieve our cherished goal and defeat the nefarious designs of our enemies."

"We as a nation should restore and save our brotherhood and unity and defeat all those forces who want to divide us in the name of sects, religions, ethnicities or regions," he said.

Taking a dig on all pro-India political parties and politicians of Jammu Kashmir, JKLF chairman said as a matter of fact it is these pro-India politicians and their political parties which are responsible for all miseries Kashmiris are facing from the last 70 years.

He said that "pro-India politicians and their parties are used for promoting a politics of deception by their Indian

masters and after every six years we see a change in their theatrical role; one assuming power and another taking the charge of opposition."

JKLF chairman said that in opposition, they chant freedom and human rights but as soon they get power, they become active agents of illegal occupation and oppression and in both their avatars fulfill their selfish goals, class or sectional interests.

He said that "politicians wearing green robes and raising deceitful slogans betrayed common people in the name of Azadi and human rights but as soon they got power, they changed their colors and functioned as tools of oppression and agents of illegal occupation and today we are seeing them inflicting every kind of tyranny and oppression on us. The Abaya donning Chameleon stands exposed in the eyes of freedom loving Kashmiri masses."

He said that whole of south Kashmir and all other regions of Kashmir are suffering from the wrath of Indian occupational forces these days. "Killings, crackdowns, arrests, vandalizing properties, beating and torturing the Kashmiri masses and other oppressive tactics have become the order of the day. The woman politician who deceived people of south Kashmir and used to shed crocodile tears on our martyrs and cry for human rights is today leading this onslaught shamelessly," Malik added.

He said that "crackdowns like that of 90's are being repeated during which men, women, children and youth are beaten, tortured, arrested and humiliated, thousands have been jailed and thousands stand injured and humiliated and all this is being done to suppress the sacred mission of thousands of our young martyrs and the countless sacrifices of their families."

He said that the people of Jammu Kashmir are fighting a war for their dignity, identity and liberation. "Our struggle for freedom is based on truth and justice and we have been shown and taught this way of unflinching struggle by spiritual leaders like Makhdoom Sahib. As a true Muslim we all will have to stand by the side of truth, resist every kind of oppression and fight the illegal occupation of India till the achievement of the sacred goal."

PDP

against execution of 1200 MW Bursar Power Project, which will lead to displacement of 70 per cent population. He sought immediate intervention of the Chief Minister in saving the people of Marwah, who are not against the construction of the project but not at the cost of losing everything -- homes, land holdings and immovable properties. He said that there is immediate need to take proper review of Bursar Power Project without any further delay and also called for redesigning the DPR of the project. He said that government should take comprehensive look at the environmental aspects in view of series of projects after every 5-10 kilometres in the Chenab Valley. He said that the people are protesting since long over Bursar power project issue, but nobody was listening to them.

Kichloo expressed solidarity with the suffering people, who are braving the brunt of defunct utility services, dilapidated roads, scarcity of rations at the depots and minimum basic on health services front. He said the conditions prevailing in the remote areas are pitiable, which are feared to worsen further during the ensuing winter months. He said no contingency plan has been put in place to ensure availability of minimum basics to the disadvantaged population, who feel let down and left in the lurch.

Interacting with the people and referring to their deprivation, Kichloo expressed anguish over non availability of rations and reducing its quota fixed by the previous government led by Omar Abdullah. He said Marwah is reeling under ration scarcity, which is a matter of concern. He assailed the coalition dispensation for looking to other side with regard to essentials and saying except for hollow promises, it has failed in deliverance on ground zero.

He said development has taken a rear seat, as the government was engaged in other pursuits, which in no way can be termed as pro-people. The nepotism and favouritism has plagued the governance and the rights of genuine stakeholders are brazenly usurped. He said developmental inertia has created a crisis like situation in the entire area, forcing the people to take to streets.

Kichloo criticised the government for non fulfilment of promise with the Sukhnia fire tragedy victims, who continue to remain homeless for the past two years. He south deputiation of a high level team of officials to the area so that they could take the stock of problems faced the people. He also distributed Rs. 26000 each among the 120 families of the Sukhnia village. He also stressed the need for sending a team of doctors in the area to check the outbreak of Hepatitis B.

Prominent among those who accompanied the MLC during his two-week visit to the area included Ghulam Rasool Magrey, Ghulam Mohammad Malik both block presidents. Ghulam Ali, Bashir Ahmad Ramzan, Mohammad Murtaza, Nazir Ahmad all ex sarpanchs, Abdul Razak Yitoo, Mohammad Yousaf Wani, Gulzar Ahmed Wani, Farooq Ahmed Shan, Wali Mohammad Rather, Lakhmi Chand, Sandeep Kumar, Radha Krishan and others.

Augmentation of health, educational facilities in remote areas Govt's priority: Haji Anayat

Chairman conducts extensive tour of TSG block, takes first-hand appraisal of people's grievances

KARGIL, NOVEMBER 14: Chairman Legislative Council Haji Anayat Ali today said that augmentation of health, educational facilities and expansion of road network besides the provision of basic amenities at the doorsteps of people in remote and far off pockets of the state is among the top priorities of the Government and several concrete measures are being taken to accomplish this goal.

The Chairman stated this while receiving first hand appraisal of the grievances and demands of the people during his extensive tour of TSG block.

During the visit people's deputations at Chechethang, Kanor, Tambis, Trespone, Gond Mangalpor, Saliskote and adjoining villages apprised the Chairman about their grievances and demands that included the laying of new pipeline in the area, repair, widening and blacktopping of roads, construction of bridge between Kanor and Trespone, up gradation of High School Tambis to Higher Secondary and Middle School Saliskote to the

status of High School, early completion of the construction works of the Primary Health Centre at Gond Mangalpor, establishment of ration store at Trespone and other related issues.

Responding to the public demands, the Chairman said that the present regime under the leadership of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is fully conscious of the difficulties faced by the people in these areas and all out measures are being taken to ensure welfare of the people. Haji Anayat Ali assured the delegations that all their genuine demands would be taken up on priority and steps for fulfilment of demands would be taken in phased manner. He instructed the concerned authorities to prepare DPRs for blacktopping of Zambakha Saltong road at Kanor, construction of various link roads, water supply schemes, irrigation canals, community halls besides other requisite infrastructure in the area.

The Chairman said that the Government is committed to take all

requisite measures so as to ensure that people of these areas are in a position to avail all possible facilities at par with the other areas. Haji Anayat Ali said that DPRs for construction of tunnel between Drass and Saliskote and establishment of separate transmission line from Chutuk Hydel Project for Tambis, Kanor and neighbouring villages are being approved soon paving way for start of work on these projects in near future that would go a long way in providing satisfactory road connectivity and adequate power supply to the area.

Meanwhile, the Chairman assured locals of providing funds out of his CDF for strengthening of women SHGs in the area, construction of community hall and reading room at Chechethang village besides the execution of other development works and provision of basic amenities.

Highlighting several welfare programmes and schemes to bring a healthy change in the living condition of poor and needy, the Chairman ex-

horted upon the officers to work with missionary zeal and enthusiasm besides making concerted efforts in ensuring the fact that benefits of State and centrally sponsored schemes reach to the targeted population without fail.

The Chairman while directing the officers for personally monitoring all the ongoing projects asked them to adopt proactive approach in execution and planning of the projects so that they can be completed in given time frame and benefiting the people of the area.

Meanwhile, the local people welcomed the Chairman and appreciated him for personally visiting the area to take first hand appraisal of their issues and grievances.

Executive Councillor for Rural Development Aga Syed Hassan Armaan Moosavi, Councillor Gond Mangalpor Sheikh Muhammad Hussain, former Executive Councillor Aga Syed Kazim Sabiri besides senior officers of the administration accompanied the Chairman.

World Diabetes Day observed at SKIMS Soura

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 14: On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, Department of Endocrinology, SKIMS in collaboration with department of Community Medicine and M P PCOS Society organized a day long programme on November 14th, 2017 at SKIMS auditorium with an aim to enhance awareness about diabetes among common masses. In addition participants from SKIMS Nursing College, Central university of Kashmir, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Kashmir and members of civil society attended the programme. Besides, diabetic patients, Staff from SKIMS, Estates department, Electric department, Photography section and research scholars from various departments attended the programme.

The theme of this year's diabetes day celebration was "WOMEN AND DIABETES: OUR RIGHT TO A HEALTHY FUTURE". A large number of women participants attended the day long programme that included a series of lectures delivered by eminent experts in the field besides a panel discussion, a quiz, a public interaction and addresses by distinguished guests. At this occasion inaugural issue of The Journal of Medical Missive published by Dr. Ab. Majid Siraj and edited by Dr. M. Ashraf Ganie and Dr. M. Ishaq Geer

was released apart from the inaugural issue of the 2nd JK Medical Science Congress/ M P PCOS Society Newsletter by the eminent Gastroenterologist of the Valley, Prof. M. Sultan Khuroo and Dr. Altaf R. Kirmani, Dean Medical Faculty, SKIMS Popular lectures on various issues concerning the theme of the day were delivered by Dr. M. Ashraf Ganie, Dr. Shariq R. Masoodi, Dr. Bashir A. Laway, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Sanai, Dr. Tariq Ahmad Qureshi, Dr. Muzafar Maqsood and Dr. Khalid Mohi ud din. About 250 participants were screened for Diabetes, Hypertension, obesity and PCOS. Panelist for the panel discussion included Prof. M S Khuroo, Dr. Reyaz Ah. Untoo, Dr. M. Ashraf Bhat, Dr. M. Maqbool Wani, Dr. Arshid Iqbal Wani, Dr. Fayaz Ahmad Nikka, Dr. Imtiyaz and Ms. Sakeena Akhter.

Various aspects of Diabetes including its causes, effects, management, control and prevention were discussed during various sessions that were very well received by the common masses and the programme was rated as highly beneficial up on feedback.

The participants were given certificates of participation and the awards were given for best questions during the public interaction. A quiz competition was also held and awards were distributed.

Mir Zahoor flags off Cooperative Week at Jammu

Govt contemplates to equip Cooperative assets with latest technological innovations

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 14: Minister of State for Forest, Environment, Animal, Sheep Husbandry, Cooperative and Fisheries, Mir Zahoor Ahmad underscored the need for reviving and revitalization of marketing societies and sale outlets of Cooperative department in the State.

The Minister was speaking at a function after flagging off 64th Cooperative Week being celebrated by the Cooperative Department in collaboration with J&K Cooperative Union Limited and Indian Farmer Fertilizer Corporation Limited at Cooperative Office Complex Jammu.

This year's theme of Cooperative Week is "empowering people through digitalization of Cooperatives" which is being observed from 14 to November 20, 2017.

The Minister said that the main objective of celebrating Cooperative Week is to increase public awareness and motivate more and more people to join cooperative sector at grass root level to take cooperative movement



forward. He stressed for revival of cooperative movement in the State and asked the concerned officers to work with utmost zeal and dedication so that the movement reach its destination in a true spirit.

The Minister said that cooperative sector has huge potential and asked the field and development agencies to make collective efforts to revive the movement. He added that hard work, honesty and sincerity are basic values which need to be adopted for smooth functioning of cooperative organizations. He called for organizing of awareness camps at Halqa levels in the State to educate general masses about the benefits being given by the business units of the Co-

operative. The Minister also asked for demarcation of all assets of Cooperative Department in the State. He asked them that there should be no encroachment on Cooperative assets and also instructed them to formulate proposals for setting up of new business units and submit the same to the concerned quarters for further appropriate action.

Secretary, Cooperative Bashir Ahmad Bhat in his speech urged upon the functionaries to evolve better work culture by putting in their sincere efforts to give fillip to this movement of the people. Earlier, Registrar Cooperative J&K Peerzada H U Shah highlighted the importance of celebration of the

Cooperative week, role of cooperative societies and the achievements registered by the Department. He said the Department is contemplating to modernize the Cooperative Schools with all high-tech facilities.

Later, Additional Registrar Cooperative Department presented vote of thanks on the occasion.

Among others, Vice Chairman, Kissan Board and President Cooperative Movement, Rajesh Sharma, Managing Director, JK FED, Deputy Registrar, besides Senior Officers from Cooperative, Agro, Housing Corporation, IFFCO, Tehsil Marketing Societies and Apex Bodies were present on the occasion.

'In a first, Fine Arts subject being introduced at HSS level' Intensive teacher training; School upgrading; Quality elementary education prioritized: Altaf Bukhari

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 14: The Government has decided to introduce Music and Fine arts subject at Higher Secondary level in addition to string of reforms to improve the school education at all levels, with special focus on improvement of elementary education, said Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari here today.

Chairing a high-level meeting to discuss education sector related issues of Kulgam constituency with the local MLA Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, the Minister said special focus has been laid on introduction of new range of subjects to make school education more vibrant and broad-based.

Initially the subject (Music and Fine Arts) would be introduced in one Higher Secondary school of each district to assess the response, the Minister informed.

Rolling out the reform plan, the Minister said the department has ranked improvement of elementary education as primary reform. "The biggest challenge is to ensure quality education at the primary level which will be addressed by taking and utilizing all available means. Intensifying teacher training



holds key to realize this objective for which District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) would be made hub of quality training by involving the best resource persons among the available lot" Syed Bukhari asserted. He asked the directors of each division to start the exercise in this regard and come out with best team of resources persons in each district to achieve this goal. "The fact that strengthening primary education only can help to take the school education to new heights should be the driving force in this regard, he asked the officers.

Responding to the issues raised by the Kulgam MLA, the Minister said government has already started the process to clear the decks for promotion and fill up the vacant posts

of HSS principals. He also informed that the state has taken up the issue of early construction of buildings for Kendriya Vidyalaya and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in different parts of state, and the matter has also been included in the agenda for his already scheduled meeting with MHRD Ministry. He said the government is going to sought relaxation in terms of land area for campus to facilitate construction of buildings of KVVs and JNVs.

He further informed that the pace of construction of pending school buildings under SSA and RMSA is being regularly reviewed and monitored at highest level to ensure timeline completion and quality of work. The Minister also informed that the government

has set in the process to verify the schools being projected for upgrading to next level to confirm whether these meet the norms and guidelines. He said once the exercise was completed the upgrading of the schools would be formally announced.

MLA, MY Tarigami also gave his valuable suggestions for raising the standard of education in the state and making it more broad-based and progressive. He also demanded introduction of Arabic, statistics subjects in Degree College, to which Minister assured to do needful.

Secretary School Education, Farooq Ahmad Shah, Directors of School Education Kashmir and Jammu and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

Zulfkar inaugurates Working Standard Laboratory Complex, reviews progress of tribal welfare schemes

Exhorts for strict enforcement of LMD laws, acts for consumers welfare

UDHAMPUR, NOVEMBER 14: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali inaugurated a Working Standard Laboratory at Supply Morh in Udhampur here today.

Constructed with a cost of Rs. 50 lakh by J&K Housing Board Department, the laboratory will ensure standardization in measurements to the trading community and people of Udhampur and adjoining areas.

Highlighting functions being performed by the Legal Metrology department, the Minister said that the department regulates as well as maintains uniformity and accuracy in all weight and measuring instruments used by the traders. He added that the government is working under a well-knit strategy to modernize and strengthen the department so that it could perform even better for larger interest of the consumers. The construction of working standard laboratories in various districts and Research labs in Jammu and Srinagar is one of the important steps in this direction, said the Minister.

The Minister directed DDC Udhampur for early completion of approach road to the newly constructed building and stressed for effective monitoring and strict enforcement of various laws and acts of the depart-



ment aimed at safeguarding the interests and rights of consumers. He further stated that the present dispensation is working earnestly towards creating a conducive and comfortable atmosphere for its employees so that they deliver the best to the public.

"In order to provide prompt Consumer Resource and Grievance Redressal service, the State Government is facilitating an online registration process whereby the consumer can easily register their complaints without any hassle," said Zulfkar and further motivated the consumers to come forward if they are not satisfied with the working of the department. Later, the Minister reviewed the progress achieved in implementation of various tribal welfare schemes at district level.

Zulfkar said that socio economic

development of under privileged sections of the society is the priority of the government and various schemes have been launched to cater to the needs of such people. He directed DDC to devise a comprehensive plan in convergence with other departments so that basic amenities can be provided at the earliest to the already identified tribal villages in the district. He also directed to handover the newly constructed hostel building for Gaddi & Sippy community students to the administration of Udhampur Degree College so that it would be made functional.

Referring to the need of separate Gujar and Bakarwal hostel for boys, the Minister directed the DDC to identify the land for construction of the same. He also directed the XEN PWD to complete the construction of

ST hostel building at Basantgarh so that it can be made operational at the earliest.

Necessary instructions were given to the officers of PWD, Education and Tribal affairs to ensure regular monitoring and judicious use of fund so that benefits could reach to the tribal community.

The Minister also interacted with the inmates of Gujjar & Bakerwal Hostel and enquired about the facilities being provided to them. He gave patient hearing to their grievances as well as demands and directed the concerned officers to ensure better dwelling of the wards during ensuing winter season.

Development Commissioner, Ravinder Kumar, Director FCS & CA, R A Inqalabi, Controller Legal Metrology, R K Katoch, District, SSP, Rayees Bhat, Director Tribal Affairs, Mohd. Rafi, Secretary G&B Advisory Board, Mukhtyar Ahmed Choudhary, Dy Controller Enforcement, Manoj Kumar, AD FCS & CA, Haroon Naik, Assistant Controller LMD Udhampur, Anita Sharma, Chief Planning Officer, Ashok Khajuria, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Subash Dogra, Executive Engineer PWD, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer besides other district officers and large number of people attended the programme.

Bali reviews progress on new medical colleges, ongoing health projects

Calls for speedy completion of projects, maintaining quality standards

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 14 - In order to review the status of establishment of new medical colleges at Kathua, Doda and Rajouri and on-going health projects across the State, Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat convened two separate meetings with the officers of concerned executing agencies here today.

Principal Secretary Health & Medical Education, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, Principal GMC, Jammu, Dr. Sunanda Raina, MD, JK Police Housing Corporation, Danish Rana, Chief Engineer, R&B, Sudheer Shaw, MD, JK Housing Board, Manmohan Singh, Director Finance, H&ME, Mohammad Rafiq, Joint Director Planning (H&ME), Madan Lal and other concerned officers from these organizations.

The Minister took detailed review of the activities related to the establishment of new medical colleges viz-a-viz released of funds, expenditure and physical status of work. He called upon the concerned officers to adopt proactive approach and remove all bottlenecks in the way of constructional activities. He directed for coordinated effort to remove any hurdle so that the projects are accomplished in a time bound manner. He issued specific directions for adhering to all norms with regard to the technical specifications, especially with regard to the utilization of judicious space strictly as per the requirements best suited for the patient care. He also called upon the concerned heads of the agencies to personally monitor the activities so that the targets



are achieved well in time. It was informed in the meeting that an amount of Rs. 51 crore has been released for each project to the concerned agency (s) and the tendering process has been started. The work on all three projects will start as soon as the tendering process completes.

While reviewing the progress of various on-going health projects in the State, the Minister was informed that as many as 20 big and medium projects under different schemes with a total estimated cost of Rs. 204.47 crore are in progress and at different stages of completion. An amount of Rs. 126.23 crore has been spent on these works till ending March 2017. These projects include some hospital buildings and nursing schools in various districts. The Minister directed the concerned agencies to prioritize things, speed up the pace of work and complete them in time line. He specifically directed for ensuring quality of work strictly as per the laid down norms and specifications. He also urged for timely submission of Utilization Certificates to the Government to ensure regular flow of remaining funds for each project.

Time and Us

CABINET OF CHAOS

Britain seems to have lost its way. As the contagion of chaos spreads across government and Brexit negotiations across the Channel, Prime Minister Theresa May's hold on power may be weakening. Over the weekend, The Sunday Times reported that 40 MPs, just eight short of the number required to force a vote on the Conservative party leadership, are ready to sign a letter of no confidence. Additionally, a letter from Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Environment Secretary Michael Gove to Ms. May, attempting to dictate Brexit strategy to her, was leaked to the press. The demands in the letter and the language used have created a stir, summing up the leadership crisis in the cabinet. Last week, International Development Secretary Priti Patel resigned over unofficial meetings in Israel, and days earlier, Ms. May's deputy, Damian Green, started facing an inquiry into allegations of inappropriate behaviour. On November 1, Defence Secretary Michael Fallon resigned over brewing sexual harassment accusations, and there have been calls for Mr. Johnson, enfant terrible of Ms. May's Cabinet, to resign over comments that may have exposed a British charity worker currently in an Iranian prison. Ms. May's defensiveness draws from her tenuous hold on her position — caused largely by her decision to call a snap election in June, and destroying her wafer-thin majority in Parliament. She lacks the authority to bring order to her Cabinet and focus on the mammoth task at hand: ensuring a minimally disruptive exit from the European Union.

Ms. May's conciliatory speech in Florence in September failed to be the turning point in the Brexit negotiations that she hoped it would be. Even if the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, adopted a softer position, France and Germany have since made it clear that Britain will have to come up with more money and details prior to any discussion on transition arrangements and trade deals. The EU minus Britain will begin internal consultations on transition arrangements and trade, London's priority subjects, only after "sufficient progress" is made in three other areas: citizen rights, the divorce bill and agreement on how to treat the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The European Council will meet mid-December to decide if sufficient progress has been made to start the next phase of talks. Last week, Mr. Barnier reiterated that Britain would need to up its financial offer by late November to stick to this timeline. This is a challenge given that the U.K.'s autumn budget will be presented on November 22. Consequently, trade and transition talks may get pushed into 2018, exacerbating an already precarious situation for businesses and banks. Mr. Barnier also revealed that the EU is drawing up plans for the eventuality of Britain crashing out of the EU. It is in London's interest to keep negotiations on track to avoid this, but it will need the May government to be more cohesive than it is at present.

TALL CLAIMS, LATENT FEARS

A PATTERN of tall claims from the pulpit in combination with organisational confusion on the ground seems to be the hallmark of campaigning in the 2017 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh. Even before the formal announcement of the elections, this was evident in the conduct of all the three major contestants—the ruling Samajwadi Party (S.P.), which recently aligned with the Congress; the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which was the principal opposition in the Assembly; and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which made an impressive showing in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. The singular absence of an overpowering election factor or issue adds to this unique political situation.

The leaders of the major parties had expressed confidence that this state of dissonance would be set right once the candidates were finalised and their organisational machinery was pressed into serious campaigning. However, the situation remains the same, and in some cases has been made worse, after the filing of nominations. Campaigns are under way for the elections scheduled for the first two phases of polling on February 11 and 15. The elections in the State will be held in seven phases concluding on March 8.

The S.P.'s manifestation of confidence and confusion has been striking. Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav presented a picture of supreme confidence in his first election rally, at Sultanpur on January 24, following the formal announcement of the party's alliance with the Congress. He claimed that the party on its own would win 250 of the 403 seats and that the combined tally of the S.P. and the Congress would cross 300. He also said that the alliance with the Congress was initiated only to ensure that secular votes did not get split and thus benefit the "communal" BJP and its associates. The alliance, however, was struck after much turbulence in the negotiations between the two parties. Even after the alliance was formalised, there were intermittent eruptions of rebellion within the two parties on different aspects of the political understanding.

The alliance had been anticipated for a good three months, but the discussions actually got rolling only in the third week of January after Akhilesh Yadav's faction was notified as the real S.P. by the Election Commission of India (ECI) and granted the party's cycle symbol. Until then, the S.P. was in a state of continuous tumult with Akhilesh Yadav and his father, Mulayam Singh Yadav, waging a battle for supremacy. Akhilesh had shown his strength even before the ECI order as the majority of the party's legislators and office-bearers across the State rallied round him. The formal presentation of this domination through affidavits and other legal documents led the ECI to give its verdict in the Chief Minister's favour.

The talks between the Congress and the S.P. were not smooth also because right from the beginning there was the impression that



the grand old party of India was bargaining beyond its real worth. They almost collapsed on January 21 when the Congress asserted that it would not accept anything fewer than 125 seats, whereas the S.P. was ready to give only 99. The Congress also wanted to fight all the 10 seats in its traditional strongholds of Amethi and Rae Bareilly, though the S.P. had won seven of them in the last Assembly elections. The S.P. apparently offered half of those 10 seats. Finally, negotiations at the highest levels late into that night led to a compromise that gave 105 seats to the Congress.

But the confusion did not end there, for the S.P. had already fielded its own candidates in 28 of the seats allotted to the Congress. Many of these candidates have refused to withdraw from the race. The Mulayam-Shivpal Yadav faction, which was squarely defeated in the inner-party tussle, are apparently backing these "dissidents". By all indications, the Amethi-Rae Bareilly seat-sharing imbroglio has not been resolved and could ultimately lead to what is euphemistically called "friendly fights" in political parlance. It is against this background that the S.P. is preparing to face the first two phases of polling in western Uttar Pradesh. It is a region where the party is traditionally not strong because of the numerical weakness of the Yadavs, an Other Backward Class (OBC) community, unlike in other regions of the State where the Muslim-Yadav combination provides a strong base.

The S.P. allied itself with the Congress to overcome this weakness in western Uttar Pradesh, political activists and observers feel. The alliance is expected to get a section of the upper castes, especially Brahmins, to vote for it. This, in turn, is expected to consolidate the Muslim vote because the minority community has a history of tactically shifting towards whichever political formation is capable of defeating the BJP. In the past, minority voters of western Uttar Pradesh preferred the BSP with its strong base among Dalits, especially the Jatav community among the Scheduled Castes. The S.P. hopes that this time the alliance with the Congress and Akhilesh Yadav's positive image will turn

the minority votes in its favour. Some voices from the ground also reflect this expectation. But there is also the apprehension that if the combine is not able to draw a significant segment of the minority votes in western Uttar Pradesh, it may trigger a chain reaction in the central, eastern and Bundelkhand regions, which go to polls in later phases.

It is too early to predict how these hopes and apprehensions will actually play out in reality. But there is little denying that the BSP is no longer the well-organised political outfit that it was in the first decade of the 2000s. The party has been steadily losing ground, especially to the BJP, since its defeat in the 2012 Assembly elections. The BJP, on the other hand, has worked steadily to build up a huge Hindutva-oriented vote base in the non-Yadav OBC and Most Backward Caste (MBC) communities and among the non-Jatav Dalit communities on the basis of an anti-minority, pan-Hindu social and political agenda. The gains made by the BJP on this plank were strikingly manifest in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. In fact, a segment of the Jatav voters, the core support base of the BSP, also drifted to the BJP in that election. This trend is evident in many of the western Uttar Pradesh constituencies going to polls in the first phases in February. Many Dalit voters in constituencies such as Thana Bhawan in Shamli district, and Shahbad and Sikandrabad in Bulundshahr district blamed the BSP leadership's growing distance from the people for this depletion of support.

A group of college students of Agra, belonging to different Dalit sub-castes, told Frontline that they had expected the BSP leadership to take up issues like the suicide of Rohith Vemula of Hyderabad and the flogging incident at Una in Gujarat to galvanise the Dalit population of Uttar Pradesh. "But nothing of that sort happened," one of them said. "This election would have been a sure-shot win for the BSP if the party leadership had taken up such issues. Now, leaders like Mayawati continue to talk rhetorically about easily winning a majority, but at the ground level the BSP cadre does not exude similar confidence."

The situation in the BJP, too, is one of

striking discordance between tall claims and creeping trepidation. Top leaders, starting from BJP national president Amit Shah, talk about winning 300-plus seats. Their primary argument is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political brand value has become stronger following the demonetisation exercise and that this should lead to a repeat of 2014, when the party won 71 Lok Sabha seats on its own and helped its ally Apna Dal win another two seats. Cumulatively, this victory in 73 seats translated into a lead in over 325 Assembly segments. The party leadership also calculates that the broad consolidation of non-Yadav OBC-MBC communities and non-Jatav Dalit communities holds good three years into the Modi regime. There is also the calculation that the Chief Minister's positive image will get neutralised by the constant complaints about the dominance of anti-social and criminal elements during the S.P. regime. However, party workers, and even district-level BJP leaders, do not buy into this optimistic projection. They point to the mixed social reactions to demonetisation and the widespread lampooning of the "Ache Din" (good days) slogan coined by Modi during the 2014 elections.

There are other problems. A large number of regional leaders across the State have started complaining about the arbitrary selection of candidates by a small, arrogant group led by Amit Shah. A senior leader based in Lucknow said: "The first list of 149 for the first and second phases of elections is a complete travesty of all the established norms and practices in the selection of candidates normally followed in the BJP. Remember, similar violations and haughtiness were observed in Bihar, too, and we all know what happened there." He added that a sizable number of regional and local leaders and BJP voters were upset with the way in which relatives of politicians were given the party ticket. Pankaj Singh, son of Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, and Mriganka Singh, daughter of the veteran BJP MP Hukum Singh, are among those who have thus benefited in western Uttar Pradesh. Vimlesh Paswan, brother of the BJP's Bangaon MP Kamlesh Paswan, and Salempur MP Ravindra Kushwaha's brother Jainath have got the party ticket in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Santosh Mishra, once a resolute Brahmin supporter of the party in western Uttar Pradesh, said: "While the BJP has promised to put an end to dynasty politics, it is doing exactly the opposite. Amit Shah is listening to wrong counsel of local leaders. We will ensure the BJP does not win from our seat this time."

Sections of the BJP also feel that some senior leaders of the Rashtriya Swamsewak Sangh (RSS) and the BJP have decided to take on the haughtiness of the "Big Two" by embarking on a sabotage mission. The RSS ideologue Manmohan Vaidya's comment that it is not caste-based reservation but opportunities that the oppressed communities need is seen as indicative of this mission.

Scam brake

By SUHRID SANKAR

ON January 3, four-time Lok Sabha Member Sudip Bandopadhyay of the Trinamool Congress was arrested for aiding the financial growth of the Rose Valley Group. According to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Rose Valley Group "had collected around Rs.17,000 crore illegally from general public after enticing them with false promise of paying higher rate of interest". A senior CBI officer said that the MP had been accused of "promoting the business of the Rose Valley Group of Companies and benefiting from the proceeds of the business both in cash and kind". Sudip Bandopadhyay is also known to be close to the Rose Valley Group chairman, Gautam Kundu, who was arrested in March 2015. The CBI has reportedly also found Sudip Bandopadhyay to have had links with the Saradha Group, whose multi-crore deposit collections scheme was one of the biggest financial disasters to hit West Bengal.

Three days before Sudip Bandopadhyay's arrest, another Trinamool MP, Tapas Paul, a major star of Bengali cinema, was arrested in connection with the Rose Valley scam. He was on the board of directors of the Rose Valley Group's films division for a period of eight months during 2009-2010. This was after he was elected from the Krishnanagar Lok Sabha seat in the 2009 elections.

Both the Trinamool MPs were charged under Sections 420 (cheating), 409 (criminal breach of trust by a public servant) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and under several provisions of the Prize Chits & Money Circulation Schemes (Banning) Act, 1978. They were taken to Bhubaneswar and produced in a court there since the FIR in the case was registered by the CBI in the Odisha capital.

If Tapas Paul's arrest came as an irritant to the Trinamool, Sudip Bandopadhyay's arrest has been the biggest setback faced by the party in connection with its association with ponzi scams. Sudip Bandopadhyay is not only one of the most respected party veterans and a trusted aide of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee but also the Leader of the Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party in the Lok Sabha. The Chief Minister's immediate reactions to the two arrests were telling. She responded to Tapas Paul's arrest with allegations of "political vendetta" and said: "I don't care if they arrest all my colleagues. Tell me Modi babu, when will you arrest us all, including myself?" But after the CBI put the cuffs on Sudip Bandopadhyay, she exclaimed with barely concealed perturbation: "I cannot believe they have arrested Sudip-da."

The Trinamool is indeed still smarting from the damage done to its reputation by the arrest of several top leaders in connection with the multi-crore



Saradha scam—Rajya Sabha members Kunal Ghosh and Srinjoy Bose in 2013 and Madan Mitra, then a senior Minister, in 2014. The recent arrests have shaken the party. The insecurity at the topmost level was reflected in Mamata Banerjee's words: "Some of the officers in E.D. [Enforcement Directorate] and the CBI have told me that the Modi government has given a list of whom to arrest. They have been told to arrest Abhishek [her nephew and Lok Sabha member who is being groomed to be her successor], Moloy Ghatak [State Minister for Labour, Law & Judiciary], Firhad Hakim [Minister of Urban Development], Sovan Chatterjee [Mayor of Kolkata, Minister for Housing, Environment, Fire & Emergency Services] and Suvendu Adhikari [Transport Minister]."

Ever since the Saradha scam broke in 2013, the Trinamool's image has re-

ceived one battering after another. The Narada sting operation was made public just before the Assembly elections in 2016. Top party leaders including MPs Saugata Roy, Suvendu Adhikari, Mukul Roy, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, Sultan Ahmed, Prasun Banerjee, Sovan Chatterjee and Deputy Mayor of Kolkata Iqbal Ahmed, and Ministers Firhad Hakim and Madan Mitra were seen accepting cash on camera.

The Trinamool, however, returned to power for its second consecutive term with a massive mandate, winning 211 out of the 294 Assembly seats, almost completely on the strength of Mamata Banerjee's popularity and appeal. But that did not clean up the image of her colleagues who were seen on camera pocketing lakhs of rupees or erase the memory of how the ruling party had endorsed the activities of the Saradha

Group, which pushed poor investors to the brink of ruin. The recent developments have revived the feeling of uncertainty that the Saradha arrests had produced in the party. "Once again, there is a feeling of tension over who will be arrested next," a Trinamool source told Frontline.

'Political vendetta'

The timing of the arrests, however, has given some credence to Mamata Banerjee's accusation of "political vendetta", at least among her supporters. The revival of the case by the central investigating agencies after a lull of more than one and a half years since Gautam Kundu's arrest, at a time when the Trinamool's protests against the demonetisation programme are the loudest in the country, has raised eyebrows in political and social circles. While the CBI claims that it was collecting evidence for the past two years, detractors of the Modi government feel that the investigating agency is being used by the Centre to strike at political opponents.

"I have been asked to remain quiet [on the issue of demonetisation], but I have always raised my voice for the people. I cannot remain quiet, even if all my MLAs and MPs are arrested, even if me and my family members are arrested," Mamata Banerjee said. "He [Modi] is sawing off the very branch on which he is sitting," she said, borrowing an image from the legend of Kalidasa. "I have no objections if another veteran

BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader like Lal Krishna Advani, or Rajnath Singh, or Arun Jaitley takes over the reins of the government." She labelled the Centre a government of conspirators and rechristened the CBI as "Conspiracy Bureau of India".

Mamata Banerjee found support in the Congress, especially after sharing the dais with Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi on demonetisation. The Congress also accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of using the CBI, the E.D. and other agencies "to unleash vendetta against political opponents". The BJP, however, pointed out that the probe had been ordered by the Supreme Court during the time of the previous Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

Mamata Banerjee's defiant stance notwithstanding, the image of her party has once again taken a severe beating. This, according to the eminent social scientist and political observer Biswanath Chakraborty, may hamper her ambition to play a greater role in national politics. "The impact she had hoped to make at national-level politics with her opposition to the BJP's demonetisation programme has undoubtedly suffered a setback. Now, whether Mamata Banerjee will be able to keep up the momentum of her movement against the Modi government will depend on how the BJP fares in the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections," said Chakraborty.

SC order on judges bribery case likely today: Here's all you need to know

A bench of the Supreme Court is likely to pass an order on Tuesday on a petition that has sought a court-monitored investigation into a case in which judges were allegedly bribed.

The bribes, according to the investigation being carried out by the Central Bureau of Investigation, were meant to sway decisions in the favour of an Uttar Pradesh-based organisation that has been seeking reinstatement of licences for its medical colleges. Retired Orissa high court judge Ishrat Masroor Quddusi is one of the key accused. A look at the details of the case: The organisation at the centre of it is the Prasad Medical College in Lucknow/ The Union health ministry barred it from admitting students for its 2017-18

and 2018-19 academic year after inspections showed its infrastructure to be sub-par. The college filed a petition challenging the government's decision in Allahabad high court and the Supreme Court of India. In September, a bench of the Supreme Court headed by the Chief Justice of India denied the college relief for 2017-18 and asked the Medical Council of India to reassess the institute regarding admission of students for 2018-19.

Around the same time, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed a case against retired judge IM Quddusi and one Bhavana Pandey under the anti-corruption law. The two were accused of assuring college representatives of getting favourable orders from the top court. The agency's FIR was



also against high public functionaries. Two petitions are filed in SC - by the NGO Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms (CJAR) and another by advocate Kamini Jaiswal, asking for the CBI investigation to be handed over to a court-monitored Special Investigation Team.

The matter was heard by Justice Chelameswar, who referred the case to a bench of 5 senior-most judges of the court. The CJI was not made part of the bench, according to the court's order.

The same day, the Chief Justice hurriedly constituted a 5 judge bench to see if Justice Chelameswar could have passed the order. The bench then set aside Justice Chelameswar's order as null and void, saying the CJI is "the master

of the roster" - meaning, only he can assign cases. There was high drama in the court room during the hearing, with the Bar demanding contempt proceedings against advocate Prashant Bhushan.

In a heated argument, Bhushan assailed the CJI, saying the Chief Justice's name figures in the CBI FIR. The CJI then asked Bhushan to show his name but the advocate stormed out of the courtroom, accusing Misra of not giving him a chance to argue.

CJI formed a new three-member bench to hear one of the two PILs in the medical college case. The matter is heard by a bench of Justice RK Agarwal, Arun Mishra and AM Khanwilkar on November 13 and the orders were reserved for hearing on Tuesday.

PM Narendra Modi attends East Asia Summit

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday attended the 12th East Asia Summit, a premier forum of the Asean member states and eight other countries.

"Deepening partnership with common developmental objective and address global challenges," external affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

The participating leaders posed for a group photograph ahead of the summit. Leaders of the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) states - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and



Vietnam - and of Australia, China, South Korea and the US hold this annual summit.

The forum provides an opportunity for the leaders to exchange views and assess international issues of concern, including traditional and non-traditional security threats, primarily terrorism, maritime co-operation and security and non-proliferation. Modi arrived in Manila on Sunday on a three-day visit to the Philippines, the first prime ministerial visit to this country in 36 years since the visit of Indira Gandhi in 1981. Later on Tuesday, Modi will attend the 12th India-Asean Summit. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the India-Asean dialogue partnership.

JPC on land Bill to seek eighth extension

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Land Acquisition Bill, 2015, will seek the eighth extension in the upcoming Parliament session. The Bill that seeks to alter the 2013 Act brought in by the UPA regime was put on the back burner just months after the Narendra Modi government introduced it in the Lok Sabha in May 2015. "Today, we have taken a unanimous decision to seek an extension for the JPC. Out of 29 clauses, we have achieved unanimity on at least 27. More consultations are required for the remaining clauses," one of

the committee members told The Hindu on Monday. The JPC was set up in May 2015 to examine the Bill after it was opposed by many political parties, including allies of the ruling BJP. The Bill seeks to remove the consent clause for acquiring land for five purposes - industrial corridors, public-private projects, rural infrastructure, affordable housing and defence. Delay questioned. The members have been questioning the relevance of the committee. "The government hailed it as a big-ticket reform and then developed cold feet.

Secular word is 'biggest lie', says UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath said on Monday the word 'secular' was the 'biggest lie' told after India gained independence and the people responsible for using the word should apologise for it. Adityanath was speaking at a function organised by the Dainik Jagran group in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, and was responding to a question on communalism and secularism. He also said that any distortion "of history is akin to sedition. Speaking in Hindi, Adityanath said, "Mera maanna hai ki azadi ke baad Bharat mein sabse bada jhooth dharmnirpeksh shabd hai. Nagrikon ke saath, Bharat ke logon ke saath... un logon ko maafi maangni chahiye, jinhone is shabd ko janm diya aur jo yeh shabd istemaal karte hai... koi vyavastha dharmnirpeksh nahin ho sakti. Rajneetik vyavastha panthnirpeksh ho sakti hai," the Indian Express reported. ("I believe that after Independence, the biggest lie in India is the word secular... the people who gave birth to this word and who use it, should apologise. No system can be secular. Political systems can be neutral towards sects, but not secular.") The word 'secular' is included in the Preamble to India's constitution, which strives to make the country a "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic".

Congress leader Kapil Sibal had a reply for the monk-turned-politician, dubbing his statement the "biggest lie" instead. Adityanath took a dig at neighbouring Pakistan saying that the words "Pakistan" and "Paki" were considered derogatory in Europe. "Pakistan has become synonymous with a word of abuse," he said.

Earlier in the day, addressing a convention of BJP workers at the Balbir Singh Juneja Indoor Stadium, Adityanath accused the Congress of playing with the sentiments of the people and dividing them on the basis of caste, region and language for its vested interest.

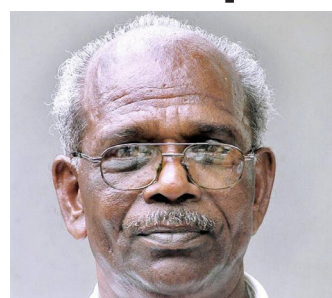
Statute Bench to examine plea against M.M. Mani

NEW DELHI: A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court will examine whether Kerala Electricity Minister M.M. Mani has an unlimited freedom of speech to make "abusive" remarks against women, government officials and others. A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Mishra has tagged a petition by Joseph Shine, alleging that Mr. Mani's "objectionable and abusive language" offends his constitutional duties as a Minister, besides violating all principles of morality and

decency, with an earlier plea filed against former Uttar Pradesh Minister Azam Khan.

To him, it was a conspiracy Mr. Khan had termed the gruesome Bulandshahr gangrape as a "political conspiracy" against the then Samajwadi Party which was in power in Uttar Pradesh.

One of the questions placed before the Constitution Bench is whether "the State, the protector of citizens and responsible for the law and order situation, should allow these comments as they have



the potentiality to create a distrust in the mind of the victim as regards the fair investigation and, in a way, the entire system?"

Another point the Constitution Bench would cover is whether such derogatory comments by persons in power "defeat the concept of constitutional compassion and also conception of constitutional sensitivity." Challenging the Kerala High Court's dismissal of his case, the petitioner, Joseph Shine, represented by advocates Kaleeswaram Raj and Suvidutt M.S., on Friday, argued that "free speech has constitutional limits as prescribed by Article 19(2) of the Constitution and Mr. Mani has

crossed all permissible limits in his speech, in uttering derogatory words against specific individuals, government officials and against the society, in general." They argued before the CJI Bench that Mr. Mani's various remarks showed "total disregard and contempt to the dignity of individuals." The advocates argued that the High Court did not consider that every statement made by a Minister is attributable to the government. The Kerala Chief Minister is also arraigned as a party in Mr. Shine's petition.

Omitted parts of Perarivalan's confession as it may have freed him from blame: former CBI officer to SC

NEW DELHI: Twenty-six years after the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, a former CBI officer who interrogated one of the convicts, the then 19-year-old A.G. Perarivalan, made a sworn statement before the Supreme Court that the CBI omitted the part of his confession where he said he had "absolutely no idea" of the purpose for which the two nine volt batteries he bought would be used for.

Perarivalan has been in solitary confinement for 23 years for his role in procuring the two batteries which the prosecution said was used in the belt bomb which killed Gandhi in 1991 at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu.

V. Thiagarajan, in an affidavit dated October 27, 2017, submitted that Perarivalan's statement that "he was totally in the dark as to the purpose for which the batteries were purchased was not recorded by me,

because it would have been an exculpatory statement and hence the whole purpose of recording the confessional statement would be lost." Perarivalan returns to prison

"Further I did not deem it fit to record this exculpatory statement because the investigation regarding the bomb was pending at the time of recording the confessional statement and even till date," Mr. Thiagarajan stated.

He said the CBI was not sure about the part played by Perarivalan, but his ignorance about the conspiracy was confirmed as the investigation into the assassination progressed. Mr. Thiagarajan refers to a wireless message of May 7, 1991 from mastermind Sivaraman to LTTE top operative Potu Amman in which the former said "our intention is not known to anybody except we three," meaning himself, Subha and Dhanu, the

suicide bomber.

He said a "mere act" of providing nine volt batteries would not make Perarivalan privy to the conspiracy to kill Gandhi. The wireless message makes it clear that Perarivalan was not taken into confidence.

Mr. Thiagarajan said the Supreme Court "was gracious and highly considerate" to spare the death penalty to Perarivalan in 2014. He said remission for Perarivalan from the rest of the sentence is "long overdue." Perarivalan's mother seeks extension of parole.

He said he had taken the "considered decision to come forward before the Supreme Court to put the facts pertaining to the confessional statement recorded by me in the proper perspective so as to facilitate this court to render justice." Perarivalan's counsel Gopal Sankaranarayanan submitted before

a Bench led by Justice Ranjan Gogoi that the LTTE's chief arms procurer of the time is in a Sri Lankan prison.

The counsel said probe agencies are still trying to question this man.

"The person who made the bomb is in a prison in Sri Lanka and they (agencies) have till date not questioned this man. The boy who bought two batteries has been languishing in solitary confinement for 26 years. And it is speculative if the batteries were even used in the bomb," Mr. Sankaranarayanan submitted.

The Bench gave the Centre two weeks to decide whether it agrees with the Tamil Nadu government's decision to grant Perarivalan remission.

Perarivalan was granted parole in August this year for the first time since his arrest in mid-1991.

Aam Aadmi Party divided over giving Rajya Sabha tickets to outsiders

NEW DELHI: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leadership is largely divided over national convenor Arvind Kejriwal's proposal to field prominent outsiders in the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls.

"We are yet to take a final call on the proposal," said senior leader Gopal Rai. Rai, the Delhi and Gujarat in-charge of AAP, said the party is still discussing the merits of such a move. While one set of leaders wants the earliest members of the

fledgling party to be "rewarded", the other backs the Delhi chief minister's view that politically non-aligned achievers and public figures should be sent to Parliament instead.

"The Rajya Sabha was not created for political people. One view within the party is to expand AAP and fill it with good people. The party's desire is national," Rai told reporters. The party's top decision-making body - the political affairs committee - has not even held a

meeting on the matter, he added. Another leader said AAP is looking for an economist, an eminent jurist and a known name in the field of social service to represent the party in the upper house. The proposal is likely to be discussed after the party's fifth foundation day celebrations on November 26.

The party had reportedly approached former Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan last week to represent AAP in the

Rajya Sabha.

However, Rajan's office responded that he was not inclined to leave academics for the purpose.

AAP, which holds a brutal majority in the 70-member Delhi Vidhan Sabha, is slated to win all three seats when elections are held in January. Rajya Sabha members are elected by legislators of the states they represent. The tenure of the three incumbent Rajya Sabha members from Delhi ends on January 28, 2018.

Prisoner alleges Ram Rahim being given extra time to meet family

ROHTAK: A prisoner who came out from Rohtak's Sunariya jail alleged the jail administration was favouring Dera Sacha Sauda head Gurmeh Ram Rahim by allowing him two hours meeting with his family members against the 20-minute meeting for other prisoners.

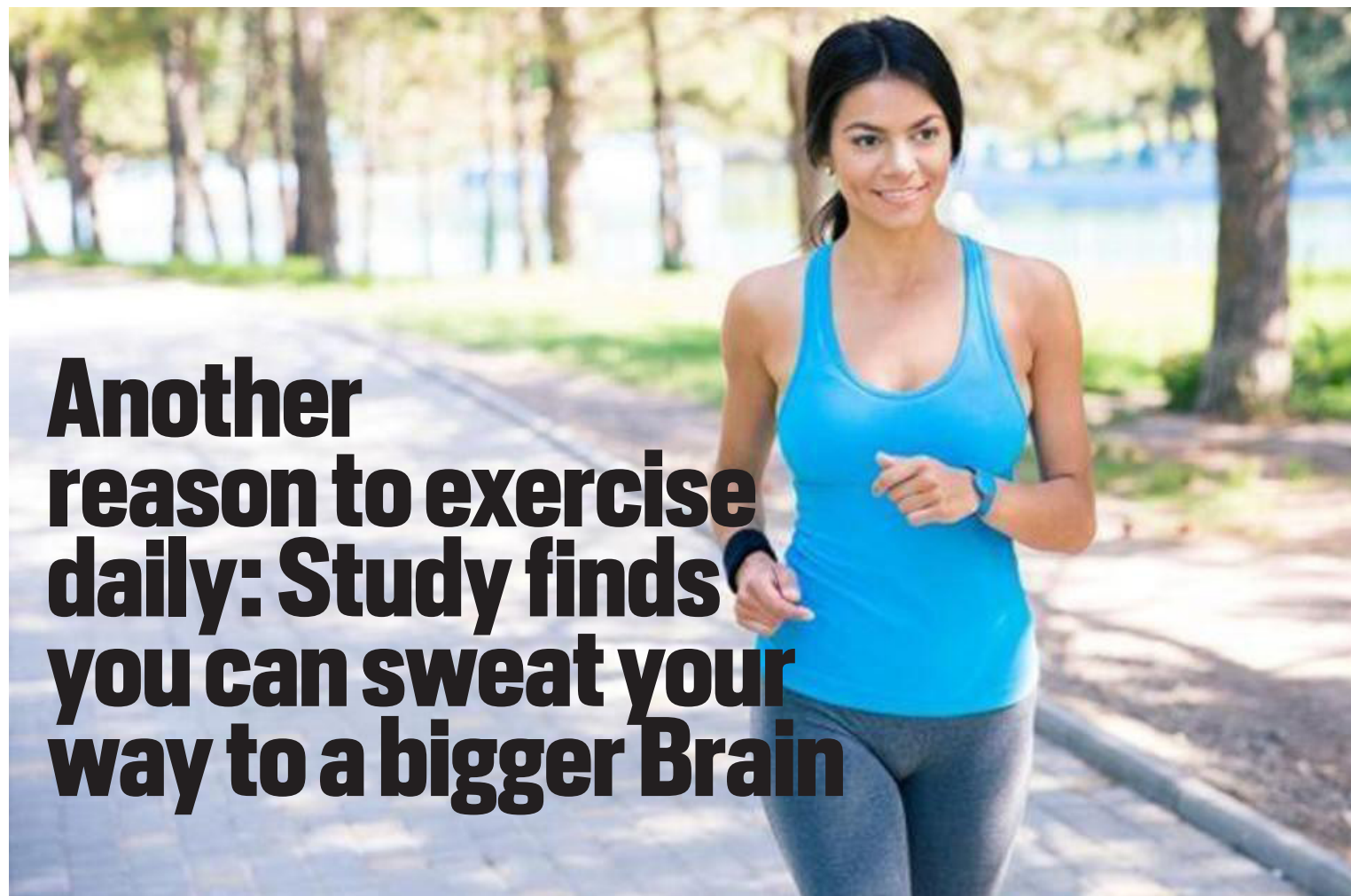
Rahul Jain, who came out on bail on Friday, said other prisoners were not even allowed 20 minutes to meet with their families on days when Ram Rahim appears



in court through video conferencing. He claimed that Ram Rahim stayed confined in barracks and does no work, against reports that he was growing vegetables in the jail at Rs 20 per day. He, however, said neither he nor any other inmate has ever seen Ram Rahim in jail and only heard about him from officials.

He said prisoners faced extreme difficulties when Ram Rahim was brought to Rohtak jail. "Things changed when a prisoner told about these difficulties to a judge during his hearing in local court. The judge then wrote to jail officials, after which things have started getting better," he said.

On Monday, the family members of Ram Rahim once again visited him at the jail. Jail authorities were not available for comment.



Another reason to exercise daily: Study finds you can sweat your way to a bigger Brain

Turns out, you don't have to turn to supplements to boost your brain power. If a recent study is to be believed, working up a sweat is enough. Researchers from Australia's National Institute of Complementary Medicine at Western Sydney University and the Division of Psychology and Mental Health at the University of Manchester in the UK examined the effects of aerobic exercise on a region of the brain called the hippocampus, which is critical for memory and other brain functions. Brain health decreases with age, with the average brain shrinking by approximately 5% per decade after

the age of 40. Studies in mice and rats have consistently shown that physical exercise increases the size of the hippocampus but until now evidence in humans has been inconsistent. The researchers systematically reviewed 14 clinical trials which examined the brain scans of 737 people before and after aerobic exercise programmes or in control conditions. The participants included a mix of healthy adults, people with mild cognitive impairment such as Alzheimer's and people with a clinical diagnosis of mental illness, including depression and schizophrenia. Ages ranged from 24 to 76 years with an

average age of 66. The researchers examined effects of aerobic exercise, including stationary cycling, walking and treadmill running. The length of the interventions ranged from three to 24 months with a range of 2-5 sessions per week. Overall, the results showed that, while exercise had no effect on total hippocampal volume, it did significantly increase the size of the left region of the hippocampus in humans. Lead author Joseph Firth said that the study provides some of the most definitive evidence to date on the benefits of exercise for brain health. He noted that during exercise, a

chemical called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is produced, which may help to prevent age-related decline by reducing the deterioration of the brain. Firth added that along with improving regular 'healthy' ageing, the results have implications for the prevention of ageing-related neurodegenerative disorders such as Alzheimer's and dementia - however further research is needed to establish this. Interestingly, physical exercise is one of the very few 'proven' methods for maintaining brain size and functioning into old age. The study is published in the journal NeuroImage.

World Diabetes Day: 8 fruits to should include in your diet if you have diabetes

Diabetes has come to become one of the most dreaded offshoots of modern and hectic lifestyles. In such cases, fruits play a major role and can go a long way in helping keep a diabetes patient's condition from worsening. Pomegranates contain the richest combination of antioxidants, protecting you from free-radicals and chronic diseases. They play an important role in lowering the levels of bad cholesterol and resistance, which the body has against insulin. Apple is a hypoglycaemic fruit which contains plenty of fibre that is an impeccable ingredient for a diabetic. It also contains the chemical Pectin, that has the capability of reducing blood sugar levels and the requirement of insulin in the body by almost 50%. Berries have the capability to break glucose into energy, which reduces the increased glucose levels by a considerable amount. Further, they increase the release of insulin. Thus, regulating glucose levels in the body. Guava is very rich in dietary fibre that helps ease constipation (a common diabetic complaint) and can lower the chance of developing type-2 diabetes. Guavas are



also high in vitamin A and vitamin C. Natural antioxidants in papaya make it a great choice for diabetics. As diabetics are prone to many ailments, like heart or nerve damage caused by irregular blood sugar levels, the diet having papaya can obstruct future cell damage for a better and longer life span. Jamun leaves are good for diabetics. They help convert starch into energy and keep the blood sugar levels in check. Jamun has a low glycemic index and reduces symptoms such as frequent urination and thirsting. The glycemic load of an orange is about 5, a low number that indicates a small rise in blood glucose. But avoid consuming orange juice. Amla is a good source of chromium which is good for the pancreas, where insulin is produced and therefore, helps to manage blood sugar levels.

SALE OF ANTI-DIABETIC medicines shoots up in India



Sales of anti-diabetic medicines, including insulin, is on the rise in India, along with the steadily increasing number of diabetics, says a study. The findings led by Anoop Misra, Chairman at Fortis C-DOC Hospital, showed that from Rs 151.2 crore in 2008, the sale of insulin (especially newer insulin) rose to Rs 842 crore in 2016. Sales of oral drug (especially newer ones) also went up from Rs 278.5 crores in 2013 to Rs 700 crore in 2016. The spike could be attributed to the rising number of patients, increased availability and aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies. On the other hand, the affordability and accessibility

of the anti-diabetic therapy to lower socio-economic strata remained inadequate, the study said. "Increasing sales of high cost medications as shown by our data are particularly worrisome since most Indians pay out of their pocket and nearly seven per cent experience catastrophic expenditure for diabetes," Misra said. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of adults suffering from diabetes has risen from 4.7 per cent of the global population in 1980 to 8.5 per cent in 2014. In 2015, the disease touted as lifestyle epidemic affected 415 million people worldwide while there were 69.1 million people with diabetes in

India -- the second highest in the world after China, which had 109 million people, according to the report "Diabetes Atlas" released by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF). "India has to take several stringent measures to ensure that there is a balancing mechanism in place, education of physicians, tighter regulations on price control and stricter norms for pharmaceutical companies around new drugs and marketing ethics," Misra added. The research was based on the data of sales trends from all top selling drugs (20 brands) for the past nine years (between December 2008 and December 2016), with emphasis on anti-diabetic drugs.

Chinese scientists identify genetic pathway in ageing



Chinese scientists have found the first genetic pathway underlying natural variation in ageing, which could provide insights for developing interventions to slowdown the process of growing old in humans, state media reported today. The scientists, studying a worm, found that the combination of a certain neuropeptide coding gene and its receptor gene controls the stress reaction of a "longevity gene", which regulates the rate of ageing, China Daily reported. The more active the coding gene and stronger the receptor gene, the more rapid ageing occurs, according to the team from the Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Neuroscience.

An article about their study, which took more than five years, was published yesterday in the journal Nature. Uncovering the genetic secrets of the ageing rate is significant, as the average age of the global population is rising fast. Ageing is also a major risk factor for diseases, such as cancers and diabetes, the researchers said. According to the UN, the number of people aged 60 or older hit 1 billion worldwide this year and will rise to 3.1 billion by 2100. China itself has over 250 million above 60 years as it is undergoing demographic change. "When people live longer, they begin to care more about healthy ageing, which means keeping healthy and youthful and having a better quality of life in their twilight years, like some lucky ones do," said Cai Shiqing, the team's lead researcher. One peer review of the article said the results will be of interest to the readers of Nature because of the general lack of information about how natural genetic variation regulates ageing, and the role of neuromodulatory signalling in the process.

Lab experiments were conducted on *Caenorhabditis elegans*, a transparent worm about 1 millimetre in length that lives in temperate soil environments. It is the basis of the animal model widely used for age-related research because of its clear genetic profile and short life span - an average of three weeks. The tiny free-living worms from different parts of the world show varied rates of decline in virility, eating and locomotion during ageing. Researchers said they have not yet found the worms' neuropeptide in the human body. "But we know that animal evolution is conservative, and if we carry on with further studies we're confident that we will probably find that the mechanism underlying the ageing rate of mammals is the same as for the worms," said Mu-Ming Poo, director of the institute and an academican of the science academy. "Healthy human life can be extended if there is a way to target these genes in the future," he said.

Mushrooms possess anti-ageing properties, say scientists

Mushrooms may contain unusually high amounts of two anti-oxidants that some scientists suggest could help fight ageing and age-related diseases. Mushrooms have high amounts of the ergothioneine and glutathione, both important antioxidants, said Robert Beelman, Professor Emeritus at Pennsylvania State University in the US. "What we found is that, without a doubt, mushrooms are highest dietary source of these two antioxidants taken together, and that some types are really packed with both of them," said Beelman. When the body uses food to produce energy, it also causes oxidative stress because some free radicals are produced, Beelman said. The study published in the journal Food Chemistry suggests that the amounts of ergothioneine and glutathione in mushrooms vary by species with the porcini species, a wild variety, containing

the highest amount of the two compounds among the 13 species tested. "We found that the porcini has the highest, by far, of any we tested," said Beelman. "This species is really popular in Italy where searching for it has become a national pastime." The more common mushroom types, like the white button, had less of the antioxidants, but had higher amounts than most other foods, Beelman said. Free radicals are oxygen atoms with unpaired electrons that cause damage to cells, proteins and even DNA as these highly reactive atoms travel through the body seeking to pair up with other electrons. "There's a theory -- the free radical theory of aging -- that's been around for a long time that says when we oxidize our food to produce energy there's a number of free radicals that are produced that are side products of that action and many of these are quite toxic.

Reduction in heart hormone may save you from heart failure

A reduction in the level of a common hormone called B-type natriuretic peptide or BNP produced in the heart can significantly lower the rates of heart failure and minimise the risk of mortality among heart patients, reveals a new study. Heart failure is a chronic condition in which the heart is unable to pump blood with normal efficiency. Patients with lower hormone levels had a 30 per cent less rate of readmission to the hospital compared to those without a reduction, along with a 54 per cent



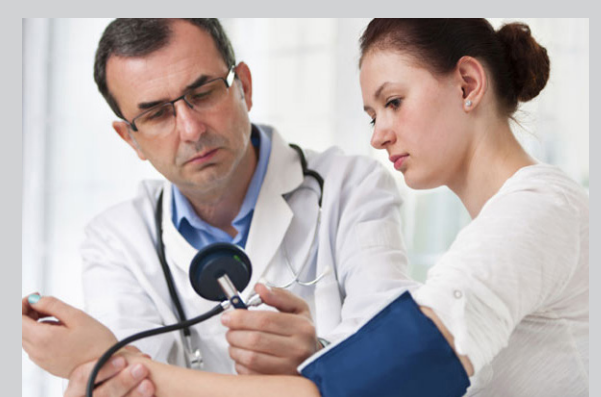
lower mortality rate, the researchers noted. "The relative changes in BNP may help physicians determine which patients could benefit from advanced medical therapies or screening for end-of-life care," said Jose Benussi, researcher at the Intermountain Medical Centre Heart Institute in Salt Lake City, Utah. The researchers analyzed 6,887 heart patients who were recently discharged from hospitals. All the patients had a 30-day readmission rate of 21.1 per cent and a 30-day mortality rate of 12.8 per

cent. But patients with reduced levels of BNP had a readmission rate of just 16.1 per cent and a mortality rate of 7.1 per cent after 30 days. Reduction in BNP among the heart failure patients was determined by calculating the relative difference in BNP levels between the newly admitted patients in hospital and the discharged ones. Some 19 per cent of the patients in the study had serial measurements, says the findings, presented at the Scientific Sessions of the American Heart Association 2017 in California.

Low-sodium diet may help you tackle hypertension

If you are suffering from hypertension, low sodium diet may recover faster, says a new study. A combination of reduced sodium intake along with a 'dash diet' or either of the two diets may lower blood pressure in adults with hypertension, a medical condition in which the blood pressure in the arteries is persistently elevated, suggests a new research. Dash diets emphasises on receiving a proper amount

of food and nutrients like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains along with low or fat-free dairy, fish, poultry, beans, seeds and nuts in order to lower the high blood pressure and control hypertension. The study, led by Stephen Juraschek, researcher at the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, US, followed 412 adults with systolic blood pressures put either on low sodium diet or dash diet for four weeks. The participants were divided into four categories of blood pressure: less than 130 mmHg, between 130 and 139 mmHg, between 140 and 159 mmHg, and 150 or higher mmHg. Researchers found that the participants who cut their sodium intake or followed the dash diet but did not reduce their sodium intake saw a lower systolic blood pressure. Also, participants who were on the combined diet plan had low blood pressure compared to participants



with high sodium intake eating their regular diet, as mentioned in the paper, presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2017, in California.

Comprehensive estimates, trends of disease burden, risk factor in India released

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India generated the first state-level disease burden and risk factors estimates to improve health programmes and planning for every state in India.

Under-5 mortality rate is improving in every state but this rate has a 4-fold difference between states, indicating major health inequalities. Every state of India now has a higher burden from non-communicable diseases and injuries than from infectious diseases, the extent of which varies widely between the states. EAG states face the major challenge of controlling the increasing non-communicable diseases as well as the persistent infectious diseases. The per person burden from many of the leading infectious and non-communicable diseases varies 5-10 times between different states.

Malnutrition continues to be the single largest risk for health loss in India, which is higher among females and is particularly severe in EAG states and Assam. Even in states at similar development levels there are major differences in the burden

from specific leading diseases, indicating the need to use state-specific estimates for health planning. The India State-level Disease Burden Initiative, a joint initiative between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India along with experts and stakeholders associated with over 100 Indian institutions, released the first comprehensive set of state-level disease burden, risk factors estimates and trends for each state in India to inform health planning to reduce health inequalities amongst states in India. These estimates are based on analysis of all identifiable epidemiological data from India over quarter of a century.

In his address, Vice President of India M. Venkiah Naidu stated "A systematic compilation of the burden of all diseases and the risk factors behind them is needed for each state of India to plan health and other services that address the specific situation



of each state. This report by the India State-level Disease Burden Initiative provides these comprehensive estimates for each state from 1990 to 2016 for the first time in India, and offers insights into the health inequalities between the states of India.

"The findings show that the overall disease burden per person in some states of India is almost twice as much as in some other states, and the burden rate due to the leading diseases ranges five to ten times between the states. The specific disease burden trends for each state in this report provide a reference for planning interventions that are needed to address the major disease problems in each state. Such evidence-based health planning in each state would result in overall health improvements in India and reduce

the health inequalities between the states," he added. India has been going through a major epidemiological transition over the past 25 years.

The burden of premature death and health loss due to non-infectious conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, chronic obstructive lung disease and road traffic has increased massively, and the burden due to lower respiratory infections, tuberculosis, diarrhoea and neonatal disorders still remains unacceptably high.

The extent of the burden due to these major conditions is expected to vary significantly across the various population groups and the states of India. National-level estimates do not provide enough detail for targeted action. Hence reliable sub-national es-

timation of disease burden in India is crucial for an informed health system response to improve population health. The report provides the first comprehensive set of findings for the distribution of diseases and risk factors across every state of India from 1990 to 2016, utilising all available data and in close engagement with many leading health scientists of India. Through an elaborate process all available data sources to estimate disease burden in every state and union territory of India were identified and accessed. These included censuses, vital registration, Sample Registration System, large-scale national household surveys, other population-level surveys and cohort studies, disease surveillance data, disease programme-level data, administra-

tive records of health services, disease registries, and a wide range of other studies conducted across India. Data were included in the analysis if they met quality and inclusion criteria. The burden from 333 disease conditions and injuries and 84 risk factors were computed for each state of India as part of the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016. In order to understand the specific disease trends among states at different levels of epidemiological transition, the states were divided into groups based on the ratio of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) from infectious and associated diseases to DALYs from non-communicable diseases and injuries combined. Variations of diseases and risk factors were analysed between the state groups and between individual states that are relevant to inform a more specific health system response in each state. Addressing the audience Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda said, "The National Health Policy 2017 has recommended disease burden tracking to monitor health improvements across the country.

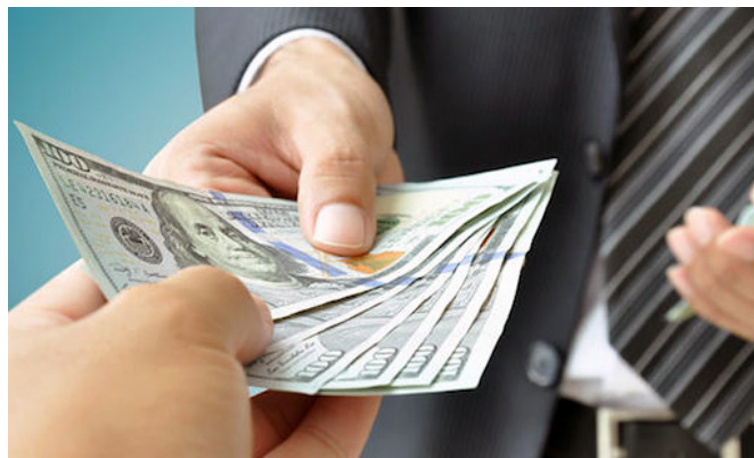
The data and results in this report of the India State-level Disease Burden Initiative can serve as a useful guide to fine-tuning health planning in each state of the country. The results show that the burden due to non-communicable disease and injuries has overtaken the burden due to infectious and maternal-child diseases in every state of India, though this happened in some states about three decades ago and in other states more recently." Although variations in diseases and risk factors have been anticipated between the states of India, this is the first time that a comprehensive compilation of all estimates using a single standardised framework has been done for every state in India.

The visual graphics of the findings in an online open-access interactive visualisation tool bring to life in an easily understandable manner the disease burden and risk factors trends over time across each Indian state, as well as contrasts between states.

This will be particularly useful for policy makers to plan action and policies to improve health outcomes in every state.

INDIA ACCELERATOR INVESTS USD 150K IN SIX STARTUPS

NEW DELHI: Gurgaon-based India Accelerator on Tuesday announced their list of final six startups they will be investing in, spread across sectors like FinTech (Kuants), a Ukrainian startup working on AI-backed Sign language-to-speech converter (EValk), Lifestyle products Rental platform (Voko), AI backed gift-recommendation platform (Wish-a-Mitr), Inter-city cab platform (Cab-Bazar) and an e-commerce platform (Square1), to the tune of around USD 20-25K each. The start-up ecosystem is well versed with the concept of Demo Day - the culmination of the grueling accelerator programs, where start-up founders have two minutes to make the pitch of their lives and dazzle the investors. The investment was a part of its 'Angel day' by invitation only event, which was an exclusive opportunity for a selected group of investors and angels to be part of a private view-



ing of their most recent curated and selected list of start-ups, before they kick off their journey at the accelerator. The idea was to bring the investors up ahead in the investment cycle of startups, which increases the returns for investors significantly. The short-

listed startups were across the spectrum of sector and at different stages in the value chain, which helped cater to the interest areas of the diverse group of investors. "While there are many players in the industry who provide funding as the primary of-

fering, we would like to create a more meaningful difference. Post the seed funding, IA would step into handhold these selected startups through the three-month intensive mentorship-driven program, and channelise the seed investment to get the bang for the buck for the investor," said Mona Singh, the Chief Acceleration Officer of IA. Spanning over two days, the Angel Day was held at the premises of India Accelerator, providing opportunities for networking and meaningful conversations.

Of the 150 applications received from across the globe, the final 15 shortlisted startups participated in the event to showcase their technology and product. There was a 10-minute slot provided to each startup to make their elevator pitch, to which a series of long, serious meetings with relevant investors were setup, who wanted to dig into the details.

Uber India policy head Shweta Rajpal Kohli quits

NEW DELHI: Uber India's Head of Public Policy Shweta Rajpal Kohli has resigned from the company, a little over a year after joining the US-based firm.

Kohli had joined Uber India in September last year and was responsible for the company's relations with policymakers, regulators, government officials, industry bodies and others. Confirming the development, an Uber spokesperson said: "Shweta has been a great advocate for Uber and the development of ridesharing in India. She has contributed immensely to building our reputation in India, and we wish her every success in future."

The company has not named a replacement for Kohli yet and is scouting for candidates for the role.

A former journalist, Kohli has been associated with firms like NDTV, Bennett Coleman and Co Ltd, Business Standard, Hindustan Times and The Indian Express.

"I'm extremely proud of the team we've built to push forward progressive ridesharing reform measures in one of the fastest

growing regions for the company. I'm sure Uber will continue to grow from strength to strength in India and South Asia," Kohli said in an e-mailed statement.

She, however, did not disclose her next destination.

India is the second-largest country of operations for Uber after the US.

It has seen a strong growth in its operations here with the number of completed trips on its platform growing to 41.3 million in July this year, from 19.2 million in July 2016, a jump of 115 per cent.

It is fighting an intense battle for leadership in the Indian market with SoftBank-backed Ola. Interestingly, it has started talks with SoftBank for a potential investment that reports suggest could be worth as much as USD 10 billion.

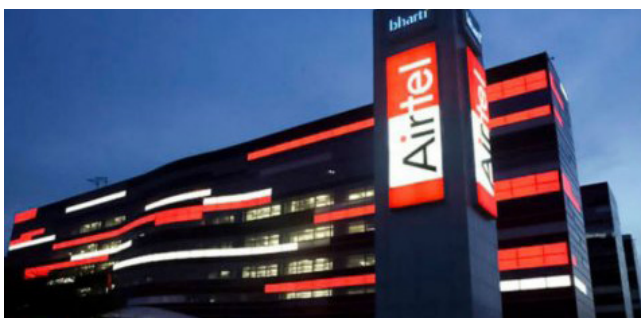
However, the world's most funded startup has also had its share of troubles in the Indian market. The company was temporarily banned in Delhi after one of the drivers on its platform allegedly raped a woman passenger in 2014.

Bharti Airtel sells \$508 million stake in tower arm Bharti Infratel

MUMBAI: Mobile carrier Bharti Airtel Ltd said on Tuesday it sold part of its holdings in mobile masts arm Bharti Infratel Ltd for 33.25 billion rupees in a bid to reduce debt.

Bharti Airtel's unit Nettle Infrastructure Investments Ltd sold 83 million shares in Bharti Infratel at 400.6 rupees each in stock market transactions, a discount of 3.6 percent to Monday's closing price.

Global investors, fund managers and long-only investors bought the shares, Bharti Air-



tel said, adding that the deal was upsized by more than 25 percent. Following the stake sale, Bharti Airtel and its units own 53.5 percent of Bharti Infratel. J.P. Morgan, UBS and Goldman Sachs handled the share sale.

India's wholesale price inflation touches six month high, rises to 3.59% in October

MUMBAI: Inflation at the wholesale level rose to 6-month high of 3.59 per cent in October as the prices of food articles, led by onions and vegetables, rose sharply. Inflation, based on the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), was 2.60 per cent in September. In October last year, it was 1.27 per cent. Last month's inflation was the highest since April, when it was 3.85 per cent. The government data released today showed that inflation in food articles more than doubled to 4.30 per cent in October.

For vegetables, it soared to 36.61

per cent last month as against 15.48 per cent in September.

In case of onions, inflation skyrocketed to 127.04 per cent, while for the eggs, meat and fish segment the rate of price rise was 5.76 per cent.

Inflation in manufactured products saw a slight dip to 2.62 per cent, as against 2.72 per cent in September.

In the fuel and power segment, inflation rose to 10.52 per cent, as against 9.01 per cent in September.

Fuel inflation has remained high for the past three months as petrol and diesel prices continued to rule

high tracking global crude oil rates. Power tariffs shot through the roof on lower domestic production.

Pulses continued to witness deflation at 31.05 per cent.

Likewise, in potato deflation was at 44.29 per cent and wheat at 1.99 per cent.

The final print of August WPI inflation remained unchanged at 3.24 per cent. As per the Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released yesterday, retail inflation for October rose to a 7-month high of 3.58 per cent on costlier food items, es-

pecially vegetables.

Besides, industrial production for September expanded at 3.8 per cent, on poor showing by the manufacturing sector coupled with decline in consumer durables output.

Last month, the Reserve Bank kept benchmark interest rate unchanged on fears of rising inflation while lowering growth forecast to 6.7 per cent for the current fiscal.

RBI also raised its inflation forecast to the 4.2-4.6 per cent range for the rest of the current fiscal as against 4-4.5 per cent previously.

Xiaomi shares top slot with Samsung in India in Q3, 2017: IDC

MUMBAI: For Xiaomi, Redmi Note 4 continues to be the best-selling smartphone in India as the company shipped approximately four million units in this quarter. Buoyed by strong sales in the run-up to Diwali, Chinese smartphone player Xiaomi has for the first time become the top smartphone company in India.

The company, however, shares the top slot with market leader Samsung in the Indian smartphone market. Xiaomi had a market share of 23.5%, having shipped 9.2 million smartphones during the third quarter of this year.

Xiaomi also became the fastest growing smartphone brand in India, with a growth rate of nearly 300% (year-on-year) in the third quarter this year, said the International Data Corporation's (IDC) latest

Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker, Q3 2017 on Tuesday.

Samsung registered 39% sequential growth (QoQ) and 23 per cent year-on-year (YOY). Galaxy J2, Galaxy J7 Nxt, and Galaxy J7 Max were the key models that contributed to almost 60 percent of Samsung's volume.

For Xiaomi, Redmi Note 4 continues to be the best-selling smartphone in India as the company shipped approximately four million units in this quarter.

"In the coming few quarters, both Samsung and Xiaomi would need to further strengthen their channel play and significantly differentiate their products on technology and quality to sustain and fight for leadership in this hyper-competitive smartphone market," Upasana

Joshi, Senior Analyst, IDC India, said in a statement.

Xiaomi's sales through its website continued its growth and helped boost the share of overall online channel from 32 per cent to 37 per cent compared to a year ago.

"Within three years of our entry into the Indian market, we have been able to achieve a never-seen-before feat of market dominance. As far as we are aware, we are the first brand across all sectors to have become a market leader within such a short span of time," said Manu Jain, Vice President, Xiaomi and Managing Director, Xiaomi India.

The smartphone shipments in India reached a record high of 39 million units in the third quarter this year, with a substantial growth of 40% from the previous

quarter and a healthy 21% growth from the same period last year.

"Online channel in India sees a seasonal spike peaking in Q3 on the back of multiple round of online sales following upto festival months in India," added Jaipal Singh, Senior Analyst, IDC India.

Lenovo (including Motorola) made it back to the third position after two quarters as its shipments increased 83 per cent from the previous quarter.

Vivo slipped to fourth position as its shipments declined after a record breaking second quarter, although registered a healthy 153% annual growth.

OPPO had the biggest sell-in quarter so far in India as vendor shipments increased by 40% sequentially and 81% from same period last year.

Uber Comes of Age With Announced SoftBank Tie-Up

MUMBAI: Uber's tie-up with Japanese tech giant SoftBank suggests the ridesharing giant is set to come of age in the business world, but it still faces a long road ahead. The deal is giving the world's most valuable startup an additional \$1 billion in capital and could allow SoftBank to acquire as much as 14 percent of Uber over time. While Uber has become a global phenomenon operating in more than 600 cities and dozens of countries, it is trying to move past a series of scandals and missteps that have included executive misconduct, a toxic work atmosphere and potentially unethical competitive practices. One step toward the future was the hiring of chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi earlier this year, which left founder Travis Kalanick in the background. But Uber needs to clean up its governance and other practices if it intends to meet its goal of a 2019 stock market debut that will open up the privately held firm to greater scrutiny. The SoftBank investment suggests Uber is becoming far more mature, however momentum is against the company at the moment.

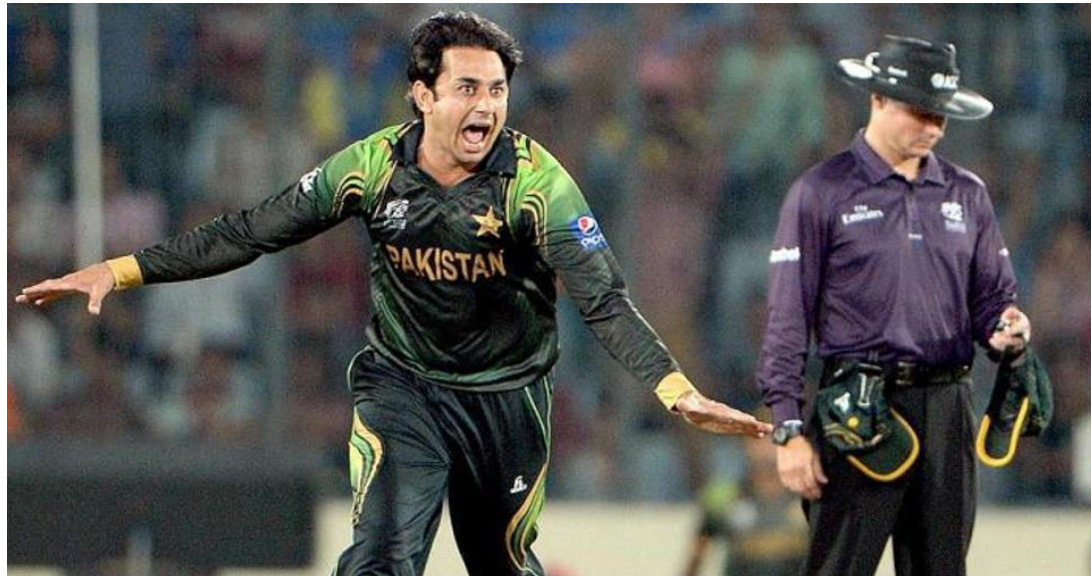
Saeed Ajmal, controversial Pakistan spinner, to retire from all forms of cricket

KARACHI: Pakistan spinner Saeed Ajmal announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Monday, two years after losing his wicket-taking bite with a remodelled bowling action that was twice deemed illegal. During a successful but controversial career, Ajmal was once celebrated as the world's number one bowler in one day internationals (ODIs) and T20 cricket, and was almost as successful in Tests. He famously captured 24 wickets in three Tests against England in 2012.

But his time in the limelight was cut short after a temporary ban for chucking saw him return to the sport in 2015 without the same form.

He took just one wicket in two ODIs and a Twenty20 in Bangladesh, his first matches after being cleared to bowl, and was never selected for the national team again.

"Satisfying career" "I am quitting all forms of cricket after the current National Twen-



ty20 tournament," Ajmal told AFP from Rawalpindi on the phone.

"It was a highly satisfying career in which I achieved whatever goals I set for myself and helped the team

win matches." Ajmal took 178 wickets in 35 Tests, the last of which was at Galle in Sri Lanka in 2014, where his bowling action was reported for a second time. It was first reported

during an ODI series against Australia in the UAE in 2009.

He finished with 184 wickets in 113 ODIs, and 85 in 64 Twenty20 internationals.

'Frustrating times' But in spite of his early successes, Ajmal said the last two years of his career had been frustrating. "Ban over action left me frustrated and hurt," he said. "More hurtful was that current player Stuart Broad questioned that and his comments hurt me no end. But I have forgiven everyone."

England fast bowler Broad questioned the legality of Ajmal's action when the Pakistani spinner was featuring in an English county championship a month before the umpires' report in Sri Lanka.

Ajmal took a swipe at the process of calling bowlers out for illegal action. "It seems that the process was meant for me and (Mohammad) Hafeez, all other bowlers with questionable actions are still playing," he said. Hafeez's action was reported for a second time last month. Ajmal said he will concentrate on coaching in the future.

Sri Lanka cricket team unlikely to break Test duck in India



KOLKATA: Sri Lanka have never won a Test in India and with Virat Kohli's men on a run of near-flawless home form the visitors are unlikely to break their duck in a three-match series starting in Kolkata on Thursday.

In a bumper home season, which started in September 2016, India won 10 of 13 test matches, with their solitary defeat coming against Steve Smith's Australia.

Even on home ground Sri Lanka have struggled against India, losing 9-0 across all three formats in July and August.

Under Kohli, the world's top-ranked test side have won eight consecutive series dating back to 2015, and Sri Lanka look incapable of stopping them from winning a ninth to tie England and Australia for the record for most consecutive test series wins. After being hammered at home by India, Sri Lanka then won a two-Test series against Pakistan 2-0 in the United Arab Emirates but subsequently lost all eight limited-overs matches against the same opponents.

Their test record in India inspires little confidence as they have failed to record a single victory in 17 matches, the last of which was played eight years ago.

Former captain Angelo Mathews and spin spearhead Rangana Herath were the only two current squad members who played a part in that 2009 series and Sri Lanka will lean on them heavily once again.

Sri Lanka coach Nic Pothas hopes the players have learned from the recent home series whitewash but wants them to focus on their own strengths instead of the Indian threat. "The mistake you can make here is come and be infatuated with the Indian side and concentrate too much on them," Pothas said on the team's arrival in India.

"We know they are a good side. We only played them a month ago. We have to concentrate on our strengths and jobs, and if we can execute them well it will be a challenging series. "The series against India was a huge learner for us. I also mentioned that if we didn't learn from a very good team then that would have been the biggest error."

While Sri Lanka's bowling attack must find a way to stop the likes of Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara from scoring heavily, their batsmen will have to contend with India's dual spin threat of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

Most sides have found off-spinner Ashwin and left-arm Jadeja too hot to handle but Sri Lanka might be in for an even rougher ride with the pair likely keen to prove a point after being overlooked by selectors for India's limited-overs sides. While good news is in short supply for Sri Lanka they will at least be thankful for not having to face 24-year-old all-rounder Hardik Pandya, who is being rested having played non-stop from the Champions Trophy in June. Pandya made his test debut in the series in Sri Lanka and made a big impact, hitting a maiden fifty and hundred while taking four wickets with his medium pace bowling.

Many have touted the series against Sri Lanka as a chance to prepare for a tough tour to South Africa at the end of the year but India wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha said the hosts were focused on only one team.

"It's not like the Sri Lanka series is to prepare for South Africa," Saha told reporters. "It's a standalone series."

Pat Cummins hopes to replicate Mitchell Johnson devastation in Ashes



BRISBANE: Pat Cummins is uncertain whether his body can handle the demands of five Ashes Tests but the young paceman hopes to emulate Mitchell Johnson and become an Australian wrecking ball against England's batting lineup.

Cummins had to wait six years between his first and second Tests due to a rash of injuries and has only played two tests in succession twice, in India in March and on the recent tour to Bangladesh.

Johnson also had to come back from a string of serious injuries to regain his place in the Australian team before devastating England with 37 wickets during the 5-0 whitewash in 2013/14. The left-arm's experience gives 24-year-old Cummins hope that he can also make a big impact in the series starting in Brisbane next week.

"We saw what Mitchell Johnson did last Ashes series here -- it would be a role I would love to play," Cummins told reporters in Brisbane on Tuesday. "Having those five or six years (on sidelines) ... I think it will mean a bit more when I go out there. It probably gave me a little bit of confidence and a little bit of patience (seeing Johnson's comeback). I feel like I'm in the best position I can be, but we'll have to wait and see - there's no guarantees," added Cummins of his hopes of playing a full series.

Cummins burst onto the world stage with a seven-wicket haul against South Africa in Johannesburg in 2011 as an 18-year-old prodigy but only managed to play his second test against India in Ranchi in March this year. There was a succession of lower back stress injuries in-between and he has been eased back slowly into the longer format. Capable of bowling at express pace, he will vie with leading seamer Mitchell Starc to be the chief aggressor against England, with the slower Josh Hazlewood complementing the pair with line and length.

With his five Tests all played on away pitches, Cummins is relishing the prospect of battling 'the old enemy' in front of home fans.

"As a fast bowler, it's (about) getting in their face and being relentless in everything we do," he said. "I just can't wait to get out there. As a kid growing up, you watch a lot of test cricket on TV. To be in that position where I might play in one, I'm pumped."

Cannavaro attacks 'mummies who control Italian football' after World Cup debacle

LONDON: Paolo Cannavaro attacked the 'mummies who control Italian football' as the Sassuolo defender also hit out at foreign Serie A players after Italy sensationally failed to qualify for the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Italy stuttered to a goalless draw against Sweden in Milan on Monday as the four-time world champions lost 1-0 on aggregate in a fiercely contested play-off tie.

It ended Italy's run of 14 consecutive World Cup appearances, dating back to 1958, and increased pressure on embattled head coach Gian Piero Ventura - who strongly hinted at resigning post-match at San Siro.

Cannavaro - the brother of World Cup-winning defender Fabio - took aim at the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and the foreigners playing in the country's top flight via social media.

"Guys, we didn't lose the World Cup today [Monday]. We lost it 15 years ago when thanks to incredible cashing in by those in the football world, Italy



brought in flops from every area of the world to unfairly steal places from our lads..." Cannavaro wrote on Instagram. We gave them glory and fame thanks to our Italian coaches, who remain the best in the world. I only hope that now we've hit rock bottom there can finally be a reformation of OUR FOOTBALL!

"Goodbye to the mummies who control Italian football and space for the youth off the field as well! Get out of our damn way, thank you..."

"Honour to the great Gigi Buffon who lost the possibility of being the only player to take part in six World Cups, and despite the fact he didn't manage it, still went in front of the cameras!! Hopefully your tears were the last to be spilled for our football!!!!

"Let us support the young Italy that will come!!!! Let us return to being the Italy that the entire world envied! Unfortunately, this had to happen for us to wake up!

Ricky Ponting says Peter Nevill 'obvious' choice to replace Matthew Wade in Ashes

MUMBAI: Ricky Ponting has backed Peter Nevill as the 'obvious' choice to replace Matthew Wade as Australia's wicketkeeper for the Ashes 2017-18 starting November 23 in Brisbane. The hosts are set to announce their squad for the first two Tests on Friday.

Wade was drafted into the Australian cricket team in a dramatic revamp post their defeats to South Africa at home last year, but the Victorian has had a torrid time with the bat, leaving selectors with no other choice but to contemplate change. Ponting told cricket.com.au, "I reckon I've heard every wicketkeeper in Australia's name mentioned in the last couple of weeks.



If they do make a change, I would feel a bit for Wade, (given) the games that he's played have been in the subcontinent leading up to (the domestic summer in) Australia. It's a hard place to bat for anyone

over there. But they made it clear at the start of this Sheffield Shield season that these spots were up for grabs, and so far not many guys have put their hand up and said 'I'm the man you've got to pick'. Nevill is the obvious one to go back to," he added. Ponting praised Nevill's work, throwing his support behind the wicketkeeper-batsman who was dropped for not chipping with big scores and also being 'quiet' behind the wickets.

"He makes very few mistakes with the gloves, a good consistent character, a good guy to have around your side, works his backside off with the bat, he's very hard to get out and when he bats for New South

Wales he makes big scores. So for me he's the obvious one." Cameron Bancroft's name is also doing rounds with the right-hander vying for a place with Matthew Renshaw, with the opening batsman going through a lean patch.

Ponting has backed Bancroft's inclusion too. "I've heard Bancroft's name mentioned the last few weeks, he has a chance to be the No 6 batter or the No 7 batsman/wicketkeeper. Alex Carey's name has been thrown around as well (but) I'm not sure he's quite ready for it yet just looking at how his batting numbers stack up in First-Class cricket," he said. "Can't force aggression"

With Nevill emerging as a 'fa-

vourite' to replace Wade, Ponting also said that it is not wise to force someone into a different 'on-field persona'. "If it's not natural for someone, you don't want to force it on them," Ponting said.

"Nevill's not going to do it; Wade will do it. I'm sure Warner will be able to pick up a bit of the slack if the wicketkeeper goes quiet. It's more about attitude, it's needing to stand up when it's your turn. That's what Ashes cricket is all about. When it's your turn to go out and bat, you've got to stand up, puff your chest out and know that it's you and no-one else. Don't leave it to anybody else. It's no different with the wicketkeeper," he concluded.

Sri Lanka series opportunity for Ravindra Jadeja to reclaim top spot in rankings

DUBAI: Ravindra Jadeja will have an opportunity to reclaim the top bowling and all-rounder spot in the ICC rankings when India take on Sri Lanka in the three-match Test series starting in Kolkata on Thursday. The 28-year-old,

Who has played 32 Tests to date in which he has taken 155 wickets and scored 1136 runs, currently sits second in both the categories.

In the bowlers table, he is 12 points behind England's James Anderson, while in the all-rounders' list, he is eight points behind Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh.

If Jadeja puts up a strong show with both bat and ball, then he will regain the top slots he last held following his side's

second Test against Sri Lanka in August. While that was the first time he had surged to number one in the all-rounders' list, he was the top-ranked bowler until Anderson leapfrogged him on September 9 following the Lord's Test against the Windies.

Apart from Jadeja, India's sixth-ranked Virat Kohli will also be eyeing a return to the top-five among batsmen as he presently trails Australia's David Warner by just one point. Other India batsmen inside the top-10 include Lokesh Rahul (eighth) and vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane (ninth), while batsmen outside the top-20 are Shikhar Dhawan (30th), Murali Vijay (36th) and wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha (47th). The other India bowlers to feature



prominently in the rankings are Ravichandran Ashwin (fourth), Mohammed Shami (19th), Umesh Yadav (27th), Ishant Sharma (29th) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (37th).

Sri Lanka have two batsmen in Dimuth Karunaratne (17th) and captain Dinesh Chandimal (20th) inside the top-20, while batsmen aiming for upward movements are Angelo Mathews (24th), Niroshan Dickwell (40th), Dilruwan Perera (78th) and Lahiru Thirimanne (113th).

Left-arm spinner Rangana Herath is Sri Lanka's highest-ranked bowler in fifth place. He is followed by Dilruwan Perera (25th), Suranga Lakmal (36th), Lakshan Sandakan (69th), Angelo Mathews (81st) and Lahiru Gamage (108th).