

TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

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WEATHER TEMPERATURE

STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	13.0	1.1
JAMMU	23.3	11.2
LEH	12.1	-5.9
KARGIL	6.8	-5.2

SUNSET FRIDAY: 05:28 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 07:07 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR

Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 16°C & 1°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

CABINET APPROVES THE INCREASE IN THE CARPET AREA OF HOUSES ELIGIBLE FOR

INTERSTATE | 5

RAHUL'S POSER TO MEDIA: YOU QUESTION ME, WHY DON'T YOU QUESTION PM ON

BUSINESS | 7

INDIAN ECONOMY RECOVERING FROM 'TEMPORARY BLIP': JAITLEY

SPORTS | 8

SACHIN TENDULKAR EXITS INTERNATIONAL CRICKET ON THIS DAY, LEAVES FANS TEARY-EYED

Drug menace bigger challenge than militancy in Jammu and Kashmir: DGP

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir DGP S P Vaid said that drug menace was a "bigger challenge" than militancy in the state and that contrabands were being "pumped from across the border".

This year, the police have arrested 667 people in 542 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act for drug peddling and smuggling, an official data said.

"When I joined, I had announced an all out war against drugs and the people running it," the director general of police (DGP) told PTI.

The officer said that the police alone cannot fight the menace and there was a concern about narco-terrorism.

"There are a lot of drugs and narcotics being pumped into Jammu and Kashmir from across the border. It is very clear who is pumping drugs and narcotics into this state," he said.

"I am trying to convince everybody, including the police force, about the bad affects. It (drugs) has the potential to destroy the society. We have made huge seizures, but there is difficulty on the legal and de-addiction fronts," the DGP said.

"It may be recalled that 70 kg of heroin was recovered in Uri and 20 kg in Jammu. Roughly 100 kg recovered here came from across (the border)," he said, adding that everybody needs to make efforts to save the current and future

▶ See DGP...Pg 02

'Operation Kund on; 1 militant killed, 3 apprehended'

Two militants still hiding in the area: IGP Kashmir



Srinagar, Nov 16: Inspector General of Police (Kashmir range) Muneer Ahmad Khan Thursday said the operation in Kund and Waltengu Nar area of Kulgam district continues as two militants are still hiding in the area.

Khan, while addressing a press conference here, said they had specific information

about the presence of a group of six militants of LeT and Hizb in the area.

"We started the operation which still continues. We have apprehended three militants while one was killed on the very first day. Also we lost one army Jawan in the operation. We have information about two militants still hiding in the area. So the search operation is on," he said.

The IGP, flanked by officers of Army and CRPF, said that Pakistan was using social media to recruit militants in Kashmir. "Pakistan had started a social media campaign to lure youth to join militancy."

He identified the arrested militants as Atta Mohammad Malik, Shams ul Wiqar and Bilal Sheikh. He said that Atta was

▶ See IGP...Pg 02

Approach Kashmir issue with an open mind, interlocutor Sharma tells Centre

New Delhi: Briefing senior Union ministers and the national security adviser (NSA) of his Srinagar visit, the government's special representative to Jammu and Kashmir, Dineshwar Sharma, said the Centre "must continue having an open mind" while approaching the Valley issue.

The meeting was chaired by home minister Rajnath Singh and witnessed participation from defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman, NSA Ajit Doval and senior officials from the two ministries.

Home ministry sources said Sharma, a former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief, told the attendees that the central government should "strongly consider" talking to all Kashmir stakeholders to find a solution to the long-drawn crisis in the region.

Ministry officials added that Sharma told the Union ministers that while he received positive response from the locals during his visit, a lot of them also expressed grievances



pertaining to local governance and lack of infrastructural development.

Without naming any separatist group, a senior home ministry official told HT that Sharma expressed hope that all groups and parties in Jammu and Kashmir will eventually come to meet him when he goes there again.

Although more than 30 delegations held a dialogue with Sharma, the separatist leadership chose to not meet him when he visited Srinagar earlier this month. Kashmir's

▶ See Sharma...Pg 02

FROM TWO YEARS, FCS&CA FAILS TO DISPOSE OF ROTTEN FLOUR IN KUPWARA GODOWN

Have picked up sample go-down for testing: Dir FCS&CA

Srinagar, Nov 16: For the last two year Food Civil Supplies has failed to dispose off "rotten" flour lying in its godown in border area of Tangdar in Kupwara district, with the department finding its difficult to stock flour supplies for winter.

Officials of FCS&CA in Tangdar said that the flour the rotten flour is lying in the godown and they don't have space to stock more supplies for the winter.

"Nearly 1300 quintals from 2015 of rotten flour lie in the godown. The department has inspected the godown

▶ See FCS...Pg 02

Tanks should operate on western, northern fronts: Army Chief

New Delhi: Future armoured vehicles should have the capability to operate on both northern and western borders, Army Chief General Bipin Rawat said on Wednesday.

The Army Chief's remark came days after the Indian Army issued a Request For Information (RFI) for development and manufacturing of Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV) under the Strategic Partnership model.

Director General Mecha-



nised Forces Lt Gen A.B. Shivane, meanwhile, called the project a "game changer". Addressing a seminar

"Future Armoured Vehicles India 2017", General Rawat said the Indian Army was looking at modernising its

mechanised forces, adding that there can be no mistake in deciding what capabilities are required in these Future Ready Combat Vehicles.

"Whatever be the future armoured vehicle we are looking at, we must have the capability to operate on the western border and the northern border. Whatever equipment we are going to introduce must be capable of interoperability on both fronts."

The Army Chief said

▶ See Army...Pg 02

LAND MAFIA GRABS CUSTODIAN LAND

Revenue Deptt fails to submit records

Srinagar, Nov 16: Land mafia in connivance with Revenue officials have reportedly encroached Custodian land at Dargpora Anchara area of Soura locality in the outskirts of Srinagar city.

The locals alleged that the custodian land comprising 23 kanal 9 marlas was first occupied by land grabbers and later on it was sold to people who constructed residential houses on some parts of the land.

"We appeal anti-graft bodies including Crime Branch Kashmir and Vigilance Organization Kashmir to take suo motto cognizance of the issue and probe the shoddy dealings between land mafia and the Revenue officials," a group

▶ See Land...Pg 02

Kashmir belongs to India and will remain part of India: Ravi Shankar Prasad

NEW DELHI: The Union Minister for Law & Justice and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday reiterated that Kashmir belongs to India and will remain the part of India.

While briefing media persons after the cabinet meeting here, he was replying to a question regarding the statement made by the former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir and former Union Cabinet Minis-

ter Farooq Abdullah a few days back.

He said that Government is aware of Parliament resolution which states that Kashmir is an integral part of India. Mr Abdullah had said that Pakistan was "not weak and not wearing bangles to allow India to take that part of Jammu and Kashmir under its occupation".

While addressing a gathering in Uri

▶ See Ravi...Pg 02

No one can stop India if it tries to take PoK: MoS Home

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Hansraj Ahir today said no one could stop India if it wanted to wrest PoK from Pakistan, stressing that the territory was a part of India.

The minister of state for homesaid Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir was under Islamabad because of the "mistakes" of previous governments.

"Isay Pakistan-occupied Kashmir is a part of India and due to the mistakes of the previous governments it has been with Pakistan."

▶ See MoS...Pg 02

Omar Abdullah challenges maintenance proceedings: HC seeks Payal's reply

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court today sought the stand of Payal Abdullah, estranged wife of former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, on his plea challenging maintenance proceedings in a family court here.

Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal asked

Payal to file her response by November 24 on Omar's plea claiming that the petition moved by her and their two sons seeking maintenance from him was not maintainable.

During the hearing, Omar's lawyer argued

▶ See HC...Pg 02

36 and counting: MASRAT ALAM SHIFTED TO KOTBALWAL JAIL

Srinagar, Nov 16: A few days after Jammu Kashmir High Court quashed the detention of separatist leader Masrat Alam Bhat under Public Safety Act (PSA), police arrested him again and shifted him to Kotbalwal Jail late Wednesday while authorities slapped 36th Public Safety Act on him.

The fresh PSA was passed last evening by the Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, official reports said.

Sources said that Masrat Alam who had been lodged in Kupwara jail few days ago was again send back to Kotbalwal jail on Wednesday night.

A police official on condition of anonymity told news

▶ See Masrat...Pg 02

Amnesty International India castigates J&K Govt for refusing to pay compensation to human shield victim

New Delhi, Nov 16: The Jammu and Kashmir government's refusal to pay compensation to Farooq Ahmed Dar of Central Kashmir who was strapped to a jeep and paraded by army personnel is a "callous attempt" at evading its human rights obligations, Amnesty International India said today.

On 27 October, the Jammu and Kashmir Home Department rejected a recommendation from the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to give Farooq Dar INR 1,000,000 (about USD 15,300) as compensation for "humiliation, physical [and] psychological torture, stress, wrongful restraint and con-



finement".

The Home Department said it could not accept the recommendation because "there

▶ See Amnesty...Pg 02

PMSSS review

Govt taking proactive measures to maximize intake for next session: Altaf Bukhari



Jammu, Nov 16: Minister for Education Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today directed for taking proactive measures including sustained campaigning at school level, advance counselling of aspirants with regard to options

▶ See Altaf...Pg 02

WAKF BOARD FAILS TO SAFEGUARD MUSLIM SHRINES: HAKEEM YASEEN

Srinagar, Nov 16: Expressing grief and shock over the fire incident at Khanqah-e-Maula shrine in which the spire of revered shrine was completely gutted, Chairman People's Democratic Front and legislator from Khansahib constituency, Hakeem Yaseen Thursday castigated Muslim Wakf Board (MWB) for its utter failure to ensure safety of various Muslim shrines and properties in the Valley.

He said the fresh fire incident at Khankah-e-Maula has shattered the faith and confidence of people in MWB.

In a statement to news agency CNS, Hakeem Yaseen said that the unfortunate fire incident at historic Khanqah-Moula has once again proved inefficiency of the Muslim

▶ See Yaseen...Pg 02

JK TO CELEBRATE WORLD HERITAGE WEEK WITH FESTIVITY: PRIYA SETHI

Celebration aimed at raising awareness on State's rich heritage

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 16: Minister of State for Education and Tourism, Priya Sethi today called for celebrating World Heritage Week throughout the State with festivity to raise awareness on State's rich heritage besides encouraging its preservation and promotion.

The Minister stated this while chairing a meeting held to review preparations for World Heritage Week celebration to be held from 19th - 25th November.

Citing cultural Heritage as the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes inherited from past generations, the Minister asked the concerned authorities to organize special programmes showcasing heritage wealth of the state and also encourage people especially the young generation to be a part of the initiative to preserve the state's rich heritage for the posterity.

Priya directed for generating mass awareness for preservation and protection of State's ancient culture and environment during the week-long celebrations.

Highlighting the treasure of heritage possessed by the state, Priya said that these heritages and monuments are the ancient property of the state which we

must have to preserve and save to inherit the culture and tradition to the next generation.

She said that the State is known for its heritage sites all over the world and various programs related to the historical structures, tourist places and cultural and traditional heritages of the State will be initiated in order to celebrate the World Heritage Week.

To add the essence of festivity, Priya asked the concerned authorities to ensure the illumination of all heritage buildings in the State, including SPS Museum, Srinagar, Ranbir Library, Chamba Statue, Leh, Heritage Complex Dewana Mandir and Mubarak Mandi, Amar Singh College, Srinagar, GGM Science College, Jammu and all other heritage sites of great importance during the week.

She said special cleanliness drives, heritage walks and illumination of heritage sites should be organised by involving Tourism, Culture, Education, Urban Development and other concerned departments.

"World Heritage Week in the State will start on 19th November with the launch of cleanliness drive at Heritage



Complexes in Jammu and similar celebrations would also be held at Srinagar and Leh with their culmination on 25th November with Natural Heritage Walk programme," the Minister maintained. "A Valedictory function on 26th November shall be organised to felicitate the personalities and organizations contributed for the preservation

and restoration of state's heritage", she added.

Pertinently, on 20th Nov, Symposium and painting competition will be held along with photo exhibition followed by Food Ethnic Day on 22nd. On 22nd & 23rd, Ethnic Cultural Programme promoting the local folk dances & music will be organized and

Heritage Walk showing composite culture of the state will take place on 24th of November.

The Minister asked all the concerned departments along with the community groups, people from heritage organizations, museums, heritage centres and Cultural Services to come together to make the even a memorable Heritage

Week.

She also called upon the organisers to involve local MLAs, MLCs, public personalities, prominent members of civil society, leaders, educationists and other prominent public figures in the celebrations.

She appealed all sections of the society to participate in the event and experience the rich cultural heritage of the state.

Secretary School Education Department, Farooq Ahmed Shah, Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary Culture Dilshada Khan, Director Archives, Archeology and Museums Mohammad Shafi Zahid, Joint Director Tourism, Shokat Mahmood, Joint Director Information, Jammu, Manisha Sarin along with senior functionaries and representatives of JMC, Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Floriculture Department, Central University of Jammu, G.G.M Science College, Food Craft Institute, Police and other concerned departments attended the meeting.

Senior officers from the office of Divisional Commissioner Kashmir also took part in the meeting through video conferencing.

Continue from Front Page.....

DGP

generations from this menace. Of the 667 people arrested in 542 cases, 214 were arrested in 163 cases in the Kashmir region and 453 in 379 cases in the Jammu province, the data said.

The data said that as many as 12 alleged drug peddlers were arrested under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in Jammu and Kashmir this year as compared to 27 in 2016.

It said that as many as 822 people were arrested in 608 cases of drug peddling and narcotic smuggling in 2016, and this year 568.94 kg of marijuana was seized, five times more than the seizure made during this period last year in the Jammu region.

In 2015, 24.3 kg of cannabis was seized and 107 kg in 2016. In the case of poppy straw, this year 5,610 kg was seized against 3,268 kg in 2016 and 1,846 kg in 2015, it said.

There was a significant drop in the amount of brown sugar seized.

Last year, 13.1 kg of the contraband was seized against 1,306 kg this year. In 2015, the police had seized 4.4 kg of brown sugar, the data said.

Till August 2017, 39,315 kg of heroin was seized against 64,143 kg in 2016 and 14,953 kg in 2015 in the same period, it said.

The other seizures include opium and cannabis, and banned capsules and tablets, the data said.

IGP

arrested in injured state and is presently under treatment in a hospital.

IG CRPF at the occasion said there is a greater synergy between all the security forces to conduct anti-militancy operations.

Army Sector Commander Sachin Malik said they will continue the Operations till the militancy is here. He said Army will calibrate on application of force during the encounters and post encounter situations. SSP Kulgam Shridhar Patil was also present at the press briefing.

He said that around 17 youth have joined militancy in the last four months.

SHARMA

apex trade body, the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI), had also decided to not hold talks with the government-appointed interlocutor. Sharma is likely to visit the state another two times before the year ends.

Sharma said he can only talk when "something concrete comes out of the talks he was holding".

FCS

and stated that the flour is rotten and needs immediate disposal," the officials said.

"Since the rotten flour is infected by bacteria and worms have grown inside, it is infected the fresh flour that we stock here. We have informed the top officials time and again from the last two years, but they send inspection teams from Srinagar. The teams inspect it and leave without any positive action," they said.

"It has unnecessarily occupied the space of the godown and we find it difficult to stock fresh flour in absence of space, which also creates flour shortage in winter when the region is cut off due to snowfall. We have divided the godown with tin sheets but that cannot stop infection to the fresh flour," the officials said.

Sub District Magistrate, Karnah, Dr Owais Ahmad said that the administration has taken up the matter with the department concerned. "We are hopeful that it will be disposed off this season before winter," the SDM said.

Director FCS&CA Nisar Ahmad Wani told KNS that they have picked up the sample from the go-down and sent that to laboratory. "Once we get the report from competent authority that the stock is rotten, we will declare that rotten after following all the formalities and dispose that off," he said.

Wani said that they have stocked food grains in all the border and remote areas in the Kashmir valley.

"For Leh and Kargil, we have already stocked the essential commodities like Kerosene-oil, flour, petrol, diesel, rice upto May. The stock will last till May end," he said.

He said that in snowbound areas in plains, "we are stocking the food supplies and the entire socking will be com-

pleted till November 30".

"We have identified about 500 places in the plains where prior stocking is to be done to prevent deficiency during snowfall."

ARMY

that with development of canal systems on the western front, the desert areas have become greener and population close to the border has also grown, leaving lesser space for operating the tanks and also bringing in a requirement for building bridges.

"With the canal system developing, we will have to address the requirement of bridges in the manner in which these armoured fighting vehicles are going to negotiate with all this... Therefore, I will say the battlefield will become complex and the terrain will add to the complexities."

General Rawat also said that there is a need to reduce the weight of the machines and to ensure it can operate in a complex terrain as well as be integrated with other systems. "We will have to look at technology to reduce the weight of our war fighting machines. We will have to overcome terrain with manoeuvring space reducing... Even down south in desert, in that sector hardening of desert has started," he added.

General Rawat said India is looking at modernising its mechanised forces and the new weapon system cannot be seen as a tank alone.

"The future combat vehicle will really be a system of systems. We must decide what we want... what are the capabilities. It must have capability to operate by day and night. They must be integrated on systems within the machines available to us," he said.

"It is a very complex system we are looking at and we cannot make any mistakes."

The Indian Army last week issued an RFI for over 1,700 Future Ready Combat Vehicles to replace the ageing Soviet-era T-72 tanks.

At the event, Lt. Gen. Shivane called it a "big ticket item" and a "game changer".

"The Futuristic Infantry Combat vehicle (FICV) and Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV) programmes are going to be biggest game changers for the Indian defence industry ecosystem. Sometimes big ticket items take little more time but they do not fail. I am confident that very shortly you will hear the FICV going into the next level," he said.

He also rejected reports that the FRCV programme will "scuttle" the indigenous Arjun tank.

"Arjun-Mk1 as it matures and gets fully operationalised, we will consider Arjun-Mk2 provided it goes through integrated trials with all the upgrades," he said.

LAND

of people told news agency CNS.

Custodian Kashmir Bashir Ahmed Mir confirmed that they have already received a complaint two weeks ago in this regard. "Concerned Tehsildar was directed to submit a report with regard to revenue record. He was also directed to provide us the title of the land in question, but till date we haven't received any report," he said and added that Custodian Department will send another reminder to him.

Mir said that if concerned Tehsildar fails to submit report on the second reminder, action will follow under law.

He said that concerned Revenue Department was supposed to submit the records till November 11 but it didn't do that.

Meanwhile, concerned Tehsildar claimed that he has already directed the concerned Patwari to submit the report before the Custodian Department. "He might have submitted the records before the Custodian," Tehsildar Syed Qaumuddin said.

When contacted, Patwari Bashir Ahmed said that allegations about land grabbing are baseless. "It is all baseless and there is no truth in it," he said.

SHANKAR

area, the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister had added, "Till how long the innocent lives will be killed? For seventy years they have been trying to occupy PoK, but have failed and now they say that it's our region." (AGENCIES

MOS

If we try to get PoK back, no one can stop us because it is our right," he said on the sidelines of a function here.

The minister said India would make efforts to get the territory back from Pakistan.

The comments came a day after National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah said Pakistan would not allow India to take that part of Jammu and Kashmir which was under its occupation.

The former state chief minister had raked up a controversy last week when he said PoK belonged to Pakistan. (AGENCIES)

HC

before the high court that Payal has her own business and a house in the national capital and therefore she has to first establish that she cannot maintain herself to be entitled for the relief.

The lawyer also contended that their two sons were adults now and therefore, they too cannot seek maintenance.

In his plea, Omar has sought directions to the family court to first decide maintainability of Payal's plea before it decides the issue of interim maintenance.

He has also challenged the family court's September 9, 2016 order issuing summons to him in the maintenance case.

The next date of hearing before the family court is December 9, the lawyers told the high court which, thereafter, listed the matter for further arguments on November 29.

Earlier a trial court on August 30 last had dismissed Omar's plea seeking divorce from Payal Abdullah, saying that he had failed to prove irretrievable breakdown of the marriage.

His appeal in the high court against the trial court decision is still pending. (AGENCIES)

MASRAT

agency CSN that Bhat is still a threat to peace and the decision was taken in the interest of national security.

Police sources said that Bhat has been slapped with at least 36 PSA detentions and has over 29 FIRs against him, most of them having serious charges including "waging war against State."

Bhat who is the head of Jammu Kashmir Muslim League is the resident of Zaindar Mohal Srinagar.

A student of Tyndale Biscoe, Bhat came to lime light in 2010 when he spearheaded a long agitation against State. Police declared a reward for his arrest and finally he was apprehended from Lal Bazar area of Srinagar city in 2010. He has been languishing in jail from past 7 years except for a brief period when he was released shortly before late Muft Muhammad Sayed assumed the charge of the state.

Bhat's formal induction into separatist politics happened in 1990 when he joined hands with Muhstaq-ul-Islam, a leading separatist along with Shakeel Ahmed Bakshi of Islamic Students League. In 1990 Bhat joined the ranks of militant group Hizbullah founded by Mushtaq. But his romance with the gun lasted only two months as he was arrested. Three years after his release he co-founded Muslim League with Mushtaq.

Meanwhile, a Muslim League spokesperson condemned the re-arrest and slapping of PSA on Bhat. He said government has been sending us a clear message that Court orders doesn't matter to them and they do whatever they like to do. "We are not surprised as it is the practice of the government to choke the voice and crush the sentiments of people," the spokesperson said.

AMNESTY

were no accusation of human rights violations levelled against the state government" and that there was "no scheme or policy" under which the compensation could be paid, among other reasons.

"The Jammu and Kashmir government claims that it was not responsible for violating Farooq Dar's rights, but refusing to pay him compensation for torture is also a human rights violation," said Zahoor Wani, Senior Campaigner at Amnesty International India, in a statement.

"The fact that Farooq Dar was tied to an army jeep and paraded is not in dispute. Authorities have an obligation to provide him with adequate remedy, which includes compensation, and ensure that those suspected of responsibility are

prosecuted in civilian courts."

"The Jammu and Kashmir government must not look for excuses to shirk its obligations. The Union Ministry of Defence should also ensure that the Army cooperates with the civilian investigation. This case should not join the long list of allegations against security force personnel in Kashmir which have gone unpunished in the last 27 years," said Wani.

"This incident highlights the need for a strong law to combat torture and other ill-treatment. India needs to urgently ratify the UN Convention against Torture, as recommended recently by India's Law Commission."

ALTAf

of courses and choice of colleges to maximize admissions under Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS) for J&K students.

Chairing a high-level meeting to discuss and review the issues related to the ambitious scheme, the Minister asked the implementing agency All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Education Department to start the exercise well in advance and take the hunt for aspirants to remotest schools of the state.

The Minister expressed satisfaction over steep fall in complaints from student beneficiaries in the backdrop of intensive measures taken by AICTE and state government to isolate the unwanted elements in the admission process. He also hailed 80 percent lateral entry of diploma holders in engineering degree courses against the 20 percent of total seats as mandated under the scheme.

He further hailed the successful implementation of DBT disbursement of the scholarship adding this has greatly reduced the common complaints coming from the students.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Higher Education, Asgar Samoon, Secretary Education Farooq Ahmed Shah, Chairman AICTE, Director School Education, Jammu Ravindar Singh, Director School Education Kashmir, Officers of AICTE, Jammu, PMSS Nodal officers Kashmir and Jammu, besides other senior officers.

Last year AICTE has facilitated admission of 3800 J&K students in Engineering, Nursing and Arts in various colleges of the country.

Under the PMSSS, AICTE is mandated to facilitate admission of J&K students in Engineering, Medical, Arts Nursing and other courses.

Stressing on the need to maximize the intake in the next session, Education Minister called for encouraging admissions in humanities and languages as well. Studying in top colleges of Delhi and other cities would help to provide potential students an opportunity to strive for civil services exams.

Regarding low percentage in the filing of Medical seats under the scheme due to high merit in newly introduced National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), the Minister said that he would take up the matter with the Union Health Ministry to seek a solution to this problem.

The issue was also discussed in the meeting, and as per suggestions from AICTE officials, it was decided to seek 2 supernumerary seats in each medical college to accommodate atleast 100 students of the state.

The meeting flagged various issues which need to be addressed for further streamlining of the implementation of scheme and prevent students from facing any hurdles.

YASEEN

Wakf Board to fulfill its primary tasks and it has not learnt any lesson after the tragic blaze of Dastageer Saheb shrine in 2012.

Hakeem Yaseen while lambasting the MWB for its callousness to safeguard Muslim shrines, said that the Board has virtually become a money minting machine for paying salaries to the kith and kin of influential people engaged by it. While demanding early repairs of the damaged spire of revered Khankah-e-Maula in accordance to its heritage designing and Islamic architecture, Hakeem Yaseen demanded to put in place adequate security measures at each Muslim shrine and mosque in the state.

He has also called for a safety audit of all the shrines and mosques in the state to check any mishap in future. He said that if the Board fails to come up to the urges and expectations of the people, the people would be forced to come on roads.

PM greets media persons on National Press Day

New Delhi, November 16: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has greeted the media persons on National Press Day. "My greetings to all friends in the media on National Press Day. I appreciate the hard work of our media, especially the reporters and camerapersons, who tirelessly

work on the ground and bring forth various news that shapes national as well as global discourse.

The role of the media in giving voice to the voiceless is commendable. Over the last three years, the media has added great strength to 'Swachh Bharat Mission' and effectively fur-

thered the message of cleanliness.

In this day and age we are seeing the rise of social media and news being consumed through mobile phones. I am sure these advancements will further the reach of the media and make the media space even more democratic and participative.

A free press is the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy. We are fully committed to upholding freedom of press and expression in all forms. May our media space be used more and more to showcase the skills, strengths and creativity of 125 crore Indians", the Prime Minister said.

District Admn conducts surprise inspection of various govt schools

Directions passed to deduct one day salary of erring employees

KISHTWAR, NOVEMBER 16: District Administration today conducted surprise inspection of various government schools in Chingham area in the district.

During the inspection, Government High School Chingham was found locked besides a teacher was found absent without official leave.

Taking notice of the matter and taking into consideration the concept of "No Work

No Pay" District Administration passed orders to deduct one day salary of all erring employees who were found absent today during the surprise inspection. Meanwhile, SDM Chattro has been designated as enquiry officer who shall submit a report within three days.

District Development Commissioner also issued strict instructions to all sectoral officers to ensure punctuality in their respective departments.

Cabinet approves the increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy

New Delhi, November 16: The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for the Middle Income Group (MIG) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

To further enhance the scope, coverage and outreach of the Scheme, the Cabinet has approved the following:

i. increasing the carpet area in the MIG I category of CLSS from the existing 90 square metre to "up to 120 square metre" and increasing the carpet area in respect of MIG II category of CLSS from the existing 110 square metre to "up to 150 square

metre"; and ii. making the above change effective from 01.01.2017 i.e. the date the CLSS for MIG had become effective.

The CLSS for MIG is a pro-active step in meeting the challenges of urban housing shortage. It also is a pioneering step to enable the Middle Income Group to access the benefits of an interest subsidy scheme.

The CLSS for MIG covers two income segments in the MIG viz. Rs.6,00,001 to Rs.12,00,000 (MIG-I) and Rs.12,00,001 to Rs.18,00,000 (MIG-II) per annum. In the MIG-1, an interest subsidy of 4% has been provided for loan amounts up to Rs.9 lakh while in MIG-2, an

interest subsidy of 3% has been provided for loan amount of Rs.12 lakh. The interest subsidy will be calculated at 9% NPV over a maximum loan tenure of 20 years or the actual tenure, whichever is lesser. Housing loans above 9 lakh and 12 lakh will be at non-subsidized rates.

The CLSS for MIG is currently effective up to 31.03.2019.

Impact The limit of 120 sq m. and 150 sq m. is seen as a reasonable enhancement and would cater to the market generally scouted by the MIG belonging to the two income categories specified in the scheme.

The increase in carpet area will enable the MI

category of individuals to have a wider choice in Developers' projects.

The increased carpet area will also give a boost to the sale of ready built flats in the affordable housing segment.

Background: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is implementing the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme for Middle Income Group (CLSS for MIG) under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) since 1.01.2017 pursuant to Hon'ble Prime Minister's address to the Nation on 31.12.2016 announcing increased benefits for poor people availing housing loans, and a new interest subsidy scheme for housing loans for the Middle Income Group

Cabinet allows export of all varieties of pulses

New Delhi, November 16: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for removal of prohibition on export of all types of pulses to ensure that farmers have greater choice in marketing their produce and in getting better remuneration for their produce.

The CCEA also empowered the Committee chaired by Secretary, Department of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD) and comprising Secretaries of Department of Commerce (DoC), Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW), Department of Revenue (DoR), Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA) and Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) to review the export/import policy on pulses and

consider measures such as quantitative restrictions, prior registration and changes in import duties depending on domestic production and demand, domestic and international prices and international trade volumes.

Opening of export of all types of pulses will help the farmer to dispose off their products at remunerative prices and also encourage them to expand the area of sowing. Export of pulses would provide an alternative market for the surplus production of pulses. Allowing export of pulses will also help the country and its exporters to regain their markets.

It is expected that pulses production will be sustained in the country and our import dependence on pulses will come down substantially. This is also likely to provide high-

er levels of protein to the population and work towards nutritional security. The integration with global supply chain is also likely to help our farmers in adopting good agricultural practices and better productivity.

In 2016-17 production year, the Indian farmers have lived up to the challenge of reducing India's import dependence on pulses and have produced 23 million tons of pulses. The Government has taken a number of steps to sustain the high pulses production by our farmers. The Government has procured 20 lakh tons of pulses by ensuring minimum support price or market rates, whichever is higher, directly from the farmers and this has been the highest ever procurement of pulses.

Background: The production of pulses

in 2016-17 has been very encouraging and is the highest ever till date. Government has supported the farmers by providing attractive Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the pulses and public procurement of pulses to the tune of 20 lakh tonnes. The domestic production of pulses during 2016-17 was 22.95 million tonnes. The Chana Dal (Gram) production was 9.33 million tonnes as compared to 7.06 million tonnes in 2015-16 showing a growth of 32%. The production of other rabi pulses (includes Masoor Dal (Lentil) etc.) for 2016-17 was 3.02 million tonnes as compared to 2.47 million tonnes in 2015-16 showing a growth of 22%. For the year 2017-18, the Government has fixed a target of 22.90 million tonnes of pulses production.

Boost to infrastructure facilities for judiciary

New Delhi, November 16: Cabinet approves continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme to improve judiciary infrastructure

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary beyond 12th Five Year Plan i.e. from 01.04.2017 to 31.03.2020 to be implemented in a Mission Mode through National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms with an estimated outlay of Rs.3,320 crore.

The Cabinet also approved setting up of an on-line monitoring system with geo-tagging by the Department of Justice enabling data collection on progress, completion of court halls and residential units under construction, including for future projects as

well as better asset management and formulation of norms and specification of court halls and residential units to be constructed under Scheme for implementation throughout the country for future.

Benefits from the Scheme: The Scheme will increase the availability of suitable number of Court Halls and Residential Accommodations for Judges / Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts all over the country including at District, Sub-District, Taluka, Tehsil and Gram Panchayat and Village levels. This will help in improving the functioning and performance of the Judiciary across the country in reaching out to every citizen.

Financial assistance: The central assistance is provided to the State Governments / UT Administrations under the Centrally

Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary for construction of court halls and residential units for Judicial Officers / Judges of District and Subordinate Courts. The funds sharing pattern for Centre and State is 60:40 in respect of States other than North Eastern and Himalayan States. The funds sharing pattern is 90:10 in respect of North Eastern and Himalayan States; and 100% in respect of Union Territories. This will help for completion of on-going projects for construction of 3,000 court halls and 1,800 residential units for judicial officers of District and Subordinate Courts.

Monitoring of the Scheme An on-line monitoring system will be set up by the Department of Justice enabling data collection on progress, completion of court halls and residential units under construction as

well as better asset management.

Regular meetings of the Monitoring Committee may be organised in various States with State Chief Secretaries and PWD officials to enable speedy and good construction. It may also be monitored if the funds released by the Centre are released without delay onward to PWD by the State Governments.

Background: Central Government augments the resources of the States in this regard through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for development of infrastructure facilities for Judiciary which is being implemented since 1993-94. The central assistance is provided to the State Governments / UT Administrations under the Scheme for construction of court halls and residential units for Judicial Officers / Judges of District and Subordina

Cabinet approves the establishment of the National Anti-profiteering Authority under GST

New Delhi, November 16: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for the creation of the posts of Chairman and Technical Members of the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA) under GST, following up immediately on yesterday's sharp reduction in the GST rates of a large number of items of mass consumption. This paves the way for the immediate establishment of this apex body, which is mandated to ensure that the benefits of the reduction in GST rates on goods or services are passed on to the ultimate consumers by way of a reduction in prices.

The establishment of the NAA, to be headed by a senior officer of the level of Secretary to the Government of India with four Technical Members from the Centre and/or the States, is one more measure aimed at reassuring consumers that Government is fully committed to take all possible steps to ensure the benefits of implementation of GST in terms of lower prices of the goods and services reach them.

It may be recalled that effective from midnight of 14th November, 2017 the GST rate has been slashed from 28% to 18% on goods falling under 178 headings. There are now only 50 items which attract the GST rate of 28%. Likewise, a large number of items have witnessed a reduction in GST rates from 18% to 12% and so on and some goods have been completely exempt from GST.

The "anti-profiteering" measures enshrined in the GST law provide an institutional mechanism to ensure that the full benefits of input tax credits and reduced GST rates on supply

of goods or services flow to the consumers. This institutional framework comprises the NAA, a Standing Committee, Screening Committees in every State and the Directorate General of Safeguards in the Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC).

Affected consumers who feel the benefit of commensurate reduction in prices is not being passed on when they purchase any goods or services may apply for relief to the Screening Committee in the particular State. However, in case the incident of profiteering relates to an item of mass impact with 'All India' ramifications, the application may be directly made to the Standing Committee. After forming a prima facie view that there is an element of profiteering, the Standing Committee shall refer the matter for detailed investigation to the Director General of Safeguards, CBEC, which shall report its findings to the NAA.

In the event the NAA confirms there is a necessity to apply anti-profiteering measures, it has the authority to order the supplier / business concerned to reduce its prices or return the undue benefit availed by it along with interest to the recipient of the goods or services. If the undue benefit cannot be passed on to the recipient, it can be ordered to be deposited in the Consumer Welfare Fund. In extreme cases, the NAA can impose a penalty on the defaulting business entity and even order the cancellation of its registration under GST.

The constitution of the NAA shall bolster confidence of consumers as they reap the benefits of the recent reduction in GST rates, in particular, and of GST, in general.

DDC reviews implementation of BBBP

UDHAMPUR, NOVEMBER 16:- District Development Commissioner, Ravinder Kumar, chaired a meeting of officers and representatives of civil society to take stock of implementation of flag ship programme 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' (BBBP) here today

During the meeting, representatives of civil society shared their views regarding various perspectives which a girl child faces for her survival and existence. Further, they shared the valuable teachings in concern to their religion which are provided in their

culture for good will of girl child. They all together took pledge to celebrate the birth of girl child in their community, make people aware about ill effects of early marriage, female foeticide and encourage anti dowry marriages. While speaking on the

occasion, Ravinder Kumar appealed the people to ensure that their girl child gets equal opportunities of growth and development. He asked the officers to make sure that the scheme is implemented in the district in letter and spirit. Later, Nodal officer 'Beti

Bachao Beti Padhao Rachna Sharma briefed about BBBP. Among others, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Subash Chander Dogra, Chief Planning officer, Ashok Khajuria, Tehsildar Udhampur Javed Iqbal Rathar and representatives of civil society were present.

Bali launches blacktopping on upgraded Bantalab-Amb Gharota road

Re-affirms to develop Raipur-Domana as model constituency

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 16 - Giving gigantic relief to the people of Raipur-Domana, especially those travelling through Bantalab-Amb Gharota road to reach Akhnoor, Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat today launched blacktopping work on this important road.

The Bantalab-Amb Gharota road, which is an important alternate link to reach Akhnoor-Rajouri-Poonch via new Akhnoor bridge was taken up for widening under CRF at a total estimated cost of Rs. 34 crore in two phases in 2016, of which most of the spade work has been completed. The blacktopping was kick started at village Nardani which will cover various stretches that have been completed. Under first phase, the project involves an amount of Rs. 19 crore that connects area between Bantalab-Burn an about 15 km length.

The second phase of project which has also been sanctioned

under CRF involves an amount of Rs. 15 crore that connects areas from Burn to Thathi-Dumi upto new Akhnoor bridge. The work on this important stretch will also start very soon, said the Minister.

Addressing a largely attended public meeting at village Nardani near here, the Minister said that the BJP-PDP Government in Jammu and Kashmir has only one agenda that is equitable development of all regions of the State and to create better living conditions for the people without any discrimination. Making a scathing attack on the previous regimes, he said Congress and National Conference ruled the State most and kept all the regions backward, and only selective areas were given attention. He said the present Government has a well thought out plan to ensure sustainable development for all sections of the society and mov-

ing in right direction to achieve its agenda and election manifesto.

Reiterating his resolve to develop the Raipur-Domana as a model constituency, Bali said that major projects like construction of 100-bedded hospital at Kote-Bhalwal, Degree College, sanctioning of 4-laning of Jammu Akhnoor road, widening of Bantalab-Amb Gharota road, up-gradation of all link roads, power infrastructure and other basic facilities are the steps in this direction. He said a well-knit programme has been conceived to develop this constituency and works are apace and results will be visible on ground gradually. He said about 140-km road length, including link roads, by-lanes have been blacktopped since the formation of present government and work on several other important projects is in progress. He said all left out link roads will be up-



graded/blacktopped in a phased manner and people should keep faith in the government. The present government has done more works in a short span of time which the previous regimes could not do in seven long decades after independence, Bali asserted.

Lauding the visionary approach of Pradhan Mantri, Narindera Modi, the Minister said that all Union Ministries are extending helping hand to the Jammu and Kashmir and providing liberal funding to ensure fast-track development of this State which was ignored by the successive governments. He said the funds provided by the Congress Governments in Centre were drained and squandered on unnecessary in the name of development, with the result the State is still badly lacking in all fronts. The development was only on papers and hollow slogans were strength of these

regimes, Bali maintained.

He extended heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government, especially the Prime Minister and Home Minister for giving focused attention to Jammu and Kashmir and making serious efforts to address many outstanding issues which are important for fast pacing the development scenario. He referred to several milestones achieved by the present government under the dynamic leadership of Narendra Modi and Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, which included sanctioning of two AIIMS, IIM, IIT and many other prestigious projects which will transform the State's overall profile, said the Minister.

Sectoral Officers of various departments, prominent leaders, Sarpanchs and Panchs including, Sukhdev Singh Jamwal, Joginder Singh Chib, Madhu Sudhan, Ved Prakash were present on the occasion.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K

JUSTICE IN TUMULT

There is absolutely no doubt that the Chief Justice of India is the master of the roster. So, it is impossible to dispute the legal reasoning behind Chief Justice Dipak Misra's ruling that no one but he can decide the composition of Benches and allocation of judicial work in the Supreme Court. However, the circumstances in which he had to assert this authority have the potential to greatly diminish the court's lustre. The scenes witnessed in the court amidst troubling allegations of possible judicial corruption are worrisome for their capacity to undermine the high esteem that the judiciary enjoys. Chief Justice Misra chose to stick to the letter of the law, but there remain troublesome questions about potential conflict of interest in his decision to overrule Justice J. Chelameswar's extremely unusual order that delineated the composition of a Constitution Bench to hear a writ petition seeking a fair probe into the corruption allegations. It is a fact that in the Prasad Education Trust case, the petitions alleging that some individuals, including a retired Orissa High Court judge, were plotting to influence the Supreme Court, had been heard by a Bench headed by Chief Justice Misra. However, it would be perverse and irresponsible to attribute corrupt motives without compelling evidence. At the same time, by heading the Bench himself, the Chief Justice may have contributed to the perception that he will preside over a hearing in his own cause, rather than leaving it to another set of judges to reiterate the legal position on who has the sole say in deciding the roster.

Justice Chelameswar, the senior-most puisne judge, may have passed his order based on the petitioner's claim that there would be a conflict of interest were the Chief Justice to choose the Bench. But in doing so, he chose to ignore the principle that allocation of judicial work is the preserve of the Chief Justice. Both justices may have found themselves in a situation in which law and strict propriety do not converge. As for the lawyer-activists involved, it is one thing to flag corruption, another to foster the impression that they want to choose the judges who will hear them. The only way to end the current turmoil in the judicial and legal fraternity is to ensure that the Central Bureau of Investigation holds an impartial probe in the case registered by it. The involvement of serving judges may only be a remote possibility, but it is vital to find out whether the suspected middlemen had any access to them. An unfortunate fallout of the controversy is the perception of a rift among the country's top judges. To some, the charges may represent an attempt to undermine the judiciary. These perceptions should not result in the sidestepping of the real issue raised by the CBI's FIR: the grim possibility of the judiciary being susceptible to corruption. Tumult and turmoil should not overshadow this substantive issue.

A QUESTION OF PROBITY

▶ Arghya Sengupta

In November 10, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court led by the Chief Justice of India, in a case concerning corruption arising out of certain judicial proceedings, declared that the Chief Justice is the master of the roster with the sole prerogative to determine which Bench of judges gets to hear which cases. That the Chief Justice, as the head of the judiciary, determines the roster is a platitude that pales in public significance to the critical role of the Chief Justice as the embodiment of moral authority of the entire judicial system. This moral authority suffered a fatal blow when the Chief Justice chose to reassert his own administrative powers in the face of allegations concerning the possible lack of probity of senior public functionaries. The situation demanded statesmanship — unfortunately the Court engaged in whataboutery, raising the spectre of contempt of court, only to drop it finally.

The genesis of this episode lies in the filing of petitions by Prasad Education Trust before the Supreme Court and Allahabad High Court. The trust operated a medical college whose permission to run certain courses had been declined. Justices Dipak Misra, Amitava Roy, P.C. Pant, A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud heard the parties and passed several orders in the Supreme Court; Justices Narayan Shukla and Virendra Kumar-II passed an interim order in Allahabad High Court.

A simultaneous investigation by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) indicated a possible criminal conspiracy to ensure a favourable judicial order in this matter. According to its FIR, two persons managing the affairs of the trust, approached a retired judge of Allahabad and Odisha High Courts, Justice I.M. Qudusi, through Sudhir Giri of the Venkateshwara Medical College (part of Venkateshwara University, in whose case another judgment had been passed by Justice Dipak Misra in the Supreme Court). Qudusi recommended the filing of a petition before the Allahabad High Court, in which partial relief was granted.

Subsequently, when the matter again reached the Supreme Court, the FIR reveals that Qudusi and his associates assured the trust of getting the matter "settled" in the Supreme Court through "their contacts" and engaged Biswanath Agrawala, a resident of Bhubaneswar. Agrawala claimed "very close contact with senior relevant public functionaries" and demanded significant gratification for settling the case. Qudusi, Agrawala and four associates have now been arrested for offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Indian Penal Code.

Since the FIR indicated an attempt to fix a judicial proceeding, the Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court requesting that a Special Investigation Team under

a retired Chief Justice of India be set up. This request was made since it was apprehended that leaving the investigation to the CBI might mean allowing the government to influence judges who would be brought under investigation.

The merits of such a request are a distinct matter. However, propriety would plausibly demand that since the FIR pertained to a case where Justice Misra had been the presiding judge, as Chief Justice of India, he would not perform his default role of allocating Benches for determination of this case or exercise his prerogative of hearing the case himself. Doing so would imply that the Chief Justice would not be "like Caesar's wife", the puritanical standard of propriety the Court expects of public servants. The same principle would apply to any judge in the Supreme Court and Allahabad High Court who had earlier participated in the proceedings. Recusal would not be an admission of complicity; instead it would be an affirmation of the principle that justice not only be done but be seen to be done.

Unfortunately, by allocating the matter to a Division Bench, the Chief Justice gave this principle a go-by. It is moot whether the Bench entrusted by the Chief Justice would ensure justice or not — the critical point is that such a Bench chosen by the Chief Justice was congenitally defective. This impropriety set off a chain of improper actions — filing of a second petition in the same matter, hearing of the second petition by Justice J. Chelameswar, the second-most senior judge of the Supreme Court, and an order by his Bench that the matter should be heard by five senior-most judges of the Court.

To be certain, devoid of context, each of these actions is improper. But the impropriety in these actions is technical and not substantive. That it is the prerogative of the Chief Justice alone to list matters and constitute Benches is a convention based on long practice. However, when doing so would cast a shadow of doubt on the process of justice delivery itself, it is not only proper but also

necessary that this task is performed by another judge. The Court cannot stand on formality and sacrifice substantive justice for a vacuous conception of prerogative power.

This episode of plausible administrative impropriety was unfortunately compounded by the Chief Justice constituting a five-judge Bench, including himself, to hear the matter on the judicial side. A resounding reiteration of the Chief Justice's own powers to determine the roster, annulling the order of Justice Chelameswar and hearing supportive bystanders in the Court, were signs of a Court ignoring the need for justice to be seen to be done. Again, whether the right decision was reached or not is moot — a decision was reached in which the Chief Justice was unarguably judge in his own cause. That itself suffices to make this judgment bad in law.

To blame one individual or another, or attribute motives for this episode would be to miss the wood for the trees. Instead, there are two structural issues of consequence to anyone who cares about judicial integrity. First, the cardinal principle that the Chief Justice of India is the master of the roster must be re-examined. Although there can scarcely be any argument against it as a tenet of judicial discipline, it would be naive to consider it an absolute principle of justice delivery.

In the U.K., Lord Chancellors had, for long, used the prerogative of Bench selection to serve partisan ends. As scholar Diana Woodhouse writes, Lord Halsbury wanted the power of trade unions reduced and selected Benches accordingly; Lord Hailsham chose Benches to constrict his colleague Lord Atkin's ability to progressively interpret the law and Lord Loreburn's cherry-picking of judges to reach favourable conclusions is well-known. The history of such abuse of prerogative led the U.K. to statutorily establish two leadership positions in the new Supreme Court — that of the President and the Deputy President, together with a professional registry and a Chief Executive. The unchecked power of the Chief Justice of India

to constitute Benches must be similarly circumscribed. Doing so does not amount to mistrusting the Chief Justice, but rather being cognisant of changing demands of accountability.

Second, much has been said of the discipline demonstrated by Justice Chelameswar's Bench in listing a case and determining the Bench that hears it. Discipline lies at the heart of judicial functioning — its complex rules on filing, unwritten conventions of seniority, expected decorum in courtroom seating are all critical components to ensure institutional discipline. But a single-minded reiteration of such formal norms appear perverse when confronted with a case where the personal probity of individuals in the judiciary is in doubt. If only to conclusively dispel such doubt, an independent investigation was warranted. This might well have been the logical conclusion of the technically improper order passed by Justice Chelameswar's Bench listing the matter before the five senior-most judges.

For several senior members of the Bar to focus solely on this apparent impropriety while remaining blind to graver improprieties elsewhere and larger questions of probity is symptomatic of a legal fraternity that steadfastly refuses to practice the values it preaches to others. Closing ranks and taking refuge in hidebound norms of propriety is like playing the proverbial fiddle, while pretending that public confidence in the judiciary is a gift that will keep on giving.

Justice Kurian Joseph of the Supreme Court wrote in respect of judicial appointments that a 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' is required if the system is to regain public confidence. If the moral authority of the Chief Justice of India and the Supreme Court is to be restored, something similar is needed urgently. Otherwise the Supreme Court will soon be a far cry from the institution we all revere. Some might say, it already is.

Arghya Sengupta is Research Director, Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy. The views expressed are personal



Labelling versus outcomes: on Swachh Bharat Mission

▶ Nikhil Srivastav

On October 2, 2017, the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) completed its third year. Over Rs 60,000 crore has been spent on the programme, but despite its scope and importance, there is very little objective evidence about its performance.

So far the numbers that have been widely cited by the government are from its own administrative data and the Swachh Survekshan Gramin 2017, conducted by the Quality Council of India (QCI), a body set up jointly by the Government of India and industry. Both the sources, i.e. QCI's survey and the SBM website, portray a similar picture. At the time when the survey was conducted between May and June 2017, Swachh Survekshan claimed 62.45% India-wide latrine coverage, which was similar to the SBM's figure of 63.73%. Moreover, the QCI survey also claimed that 91.29% of those with access to a toilet use it.

If true, these numbers would mean better public health outcomes in India — a very desirable outcome. However, one can debate their accuracy. Researchers who study sanitation agree that the

questionnaire is structured to show the appearance of latrine use. In fact, research shows that surveys which pose a balanced question about open defecation or latrine use for each person in a household are able to document more open defecation than survey questions that group household members by demographic categories.

Off the mark

Inaccurate estimate of latrine use is not the only problem the SBM faces; a variety of implementation challenges exist as well. The pressure of an approaching deadline of making India open defecation free (ODF) is one.

During my recent visit to a few villages in Uttar Pradesh to study the programme, a village pradhan described the pressure of building latrines: "Last year I was given the target of building 27 latrines, which I have got constructed, and now the target for this year is to build 104. After these are constructed, my village will be declared open defecation free." He did not mention that being declared ODF would depend on anyone using the constructed latrines. Moreover, he said that the criterion would include decrepit and unused structures con-



structed under Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, the United Progressive Alliance government's latrine building programme. SBM counts these as functional latrines, as the baseline data in 2012 did. In fact, pictures of such defunct latrines can be seen on the SBM website categorised as

"uploaded", "approved" and "counted".

The pradhan's experience is in line with findings by sanitation researchers in independent studies. In a report called "Quality and Sustainability of Toilets" (WaterAid, 2017), the authors report that in the eight States where the study

was conducted, less than a quarter of households said that it was their own initiative to build the toilet. This is contrary to the government's claim that SBM is a people's movement.

In another study, "Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Immersive Research", conducted by Praxis, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), and WaterAid, researchers lived with families in each of the eight ODF villages selected. They aimed to explore behavioural change best practices in rural districts that have been declared ODF in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Although each of these villages had been declared ODF and the authorities verified them to be ODF, the 'Immersive' study found that of the eight verified ODF villages, only one was actually ODF, one was close to being ODF, and the rest had remarks such as "some OD observed", "OD areas identified", and "OD prevalent". The two "ODF verified villages" in Uttar Pradesh had 37% and 74%, respectively, of households without a toilet in their house. An "ODF verified" village in Rajasthan had a toilet coverage of just 16%.

False ODF claims were not the only disconcerting observations that the re-

searchers made. In all the villages, the study found coercive measures having been used to promote the SBM. The authors say: "Panchayats have been making threats, though seldom imposed, with a variety of sanctions and punishments, ranging from denial of all State welfare schemes (for instance withdrawal of ration cards) to imposing of fines... and arrest and prosecution under various sections of [the] Indian Penal Code."

Unfortunately, we do not have credible, representative country-wide estimates of latrine use in India. On one hand, government data and the Swachh Survekshan show the programme to be achieving what it is meant to achieve. But, independent, rapid studies by sanitation researchers and anecdotal stories present a less rosy picture. The programme seems to be running on a check marked approach, and between all this, widespread open defecation in India continues to kill babies, and stunts those who survive.

Nikhil Srivastav is a researcher at r.i.c.e., a research institute for compassionate economics

Narendra Modi by far the most popular figure in Indian politics: Pew Research

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains "by far" the most popular figure in Indian politics, the Pew Research Center, an American think tank, said Wednesday, releasing the main findings of its latest survey conducted among 2,464 respondents in India.

Modi at 88% is 30 points ahead of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi (58%), 31 points ahead of Congress president Sonia Gandhi (57%) and 49 points ahead of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal (39%), said the survey conducted between February 21 and March 10 this year.

Pew said the public's "positive assessment" of Modi is buoyed by "growing contentment" with the Indian economy: more than eight-

in-ten say economic conditions are "good", up 19 percentage points since immediately before the 2014 election. The share of adults who say the economy is "very good" (30%) has tripled in the past three years, it added. Overall, seven-in-ten Indians are now "satisfied" with the way things are going in the country. This positive assessment of India's direction has nearly doubled since 2014, Pew said. According to Pew, at least nine-in-ten Indians in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana and in the western states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh hold a favorable view of the prime minister. The same is true for more than eight-in-ten in the eastern states



of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal and the northern states of Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

"Since 2015, Modi's popularity is relatively unchanged in the north, has risen in the west and the south,

and is down slightly in the east," it said. Notably, the survey reflects a 21 percentage points drop in favourable view of America among Indians from 70% in 2015 to just 49% in 2017. Only 40% express confidence in President Donald

Trump to do the right thing regarding world affairs, down 34 points from their faith in his predecessor Barack Obama in 2015. Same is the case with China, whose favourability rating among Indians have dropped from 41% in 2015 to 26% in 2017. The survey was conducted before the Doklam crisis.

According to Pew Survey, despite periodic outbreaks of religious violence, relatively few Indians see communal relations as a very big problem. "Similarly, despite Prime Minister Modi's decision last November to abolish high-value bank notes, less than half of the Indian population sees the lack of availability of cash to be a major problem," it said.

Mahatma murder: Supreme Court told Apte's identity mired in doubt

NEW DELHI: Narayan Dattatraya Apte was hanged for the murder of Mahatma Gandhi along with the main assassin, Nathuram Godse, on November 15, 1949. On Wednesday, 68 years after that event, a petition in the Supreme Court claims that the identity of Apte remains mired in doubt and seeks reopening of the investigation into Gandhi's assassination. The Justice J.L. Kapur Commission of Inquiry, set up in 1966 to unearth the entire conspiracy, had reported Apte to have been in the Indian Air Force.

However, Manohar Parrikar as Defence Minister on January 7, 2016, had informed Dr. Pankaj Phadnis, the petitioner in the apex court, that "no information related to Narayan Dattatraya Apte being an Air Force officer could be found anywhere."

Dr. Phadnis, a researcher and a trustee of Abhinav Bharat, Mumbai, who has raised questions about the investigation into Gandhi's murder suggesting whether it was one of the biggest cover-ups in history, has annexed the letter received from Parrikar, now Goa Chief Minister, in his petition.

The petitioner has contended that such information establishes the involvement of an alleged foreign hand in the assassination of the Father of the Nation on January 30, 1948.

Mr. Parrikar's letter states: "I have got the matter examined. I have been informed that the matter was referred to various agencies within the Air Force, MoD History Division as well as to AA at HCI, UK with the request to provide any information pertaining to Mr. Narayan Dattatraya Apte. All the agencies have confirmed that they have not found any records pertaining to Mr. Narayan Dattatraya Apte. History Division of MoD even liaised with National Archives, Central Secretariat Library and consulted private papers of Mahatma Gandhi's murder trial," it said.

The letter also said that the Gazette of India (Air Branch) for the year 1943-46 were also searched but no information related to him being an IAF officer "could be found anywhere."

While seeking reopening of the probe into the Gandhi assassination case, Dr. Phadnis on the basis of the Parrikar's letter, has submitted to the apex court that "there is therefore reasonable ground to believe that Apte was an operative of British Force 136, which can be established only after further investigation." The apex court has appointed senior advocate Amarendra Sharan as amicus curiae in the matter to examine the petition and documents provided by Dr. Phadnis, who has also questioned the 'three-bullet theory' in the murder of Gandhi.

He has raised the question as to whether there was a fourth bullet which was also fired by someone apart from Nathuram Godse.

While Godse and Apte were sentenced to death in the trial that was held at the Red Fort, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was given the benefit of doubt due to lack of evidence on February 10, 1949.

There were 12 persons named in the charge sheet. One of the accused had turned approver while five were sentenced to life. Three persons were declared as absconders in the case.

Godse and Apte were hanged at Ambala jail on November 15, 1949 after the High Court of East Punjab confirmed their death sentence on June 21, 1949. Inspired by Savarkar, Abinav Bharat, Mumbai, which was set up in 2001, claims to work for socially and economically weaker sections with a focus on bridging their digital divide.

Dr. Phadnis said this case was one which concerned the truth behind the real hand or culprits who performed the act of Gandhi's killing and also their hidden agenda of derailing the Gandhi-Jinnah People-to-People contact that the Mahatma had planned to embark upon.

This plan was derailed because of the assassination, the consequences of which are being felt even now, he has contended.

'I have heard shocking stories in Gujarat', says Sam Pitroda

NEW DELHI: A long-time associate of the Gandhi family, Sam Pitroda, had ushered in the telecom revolution in India working closely with the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, in the late 1980s. In his home State of Gujarat to help the Congress in the Assembly polls, Mr. Pitroda questions the BJP's development model for the State. Excerpts.

So you are here to play a critical role for the Congress in Gujarat?

I don't know about the critical role, but I am here to do what I have been asked to do and I feel it's my duty to do what needs to be done. At this point of time, Rahul [Gandhi, Congress vice-president] felt that we need to meet various social groups, listen to their voices, their issues. So we are having multiple meetings in cities such as Vadodara, Jamnagar, Rajkot, Surat. We just finished a meeting with women and it was shocking to hear their stories. The kind of harassment they go through, financial insecurity, income disparity. It's absolutely appalling to hear that the State does not spend money on women-centric schemes, [and] budget is cut on health and women and child development.

PM made money vanish from Gujarat, says Rahul. What are the main issues that you have heard during your interactions with people?

To be very frank, shocking stories I have heard. There is complete negligence of the informal sector; marginalised sections are hardly under focus of any scheme or initiative. If someone files [an] RTI [application] seeking some information, harassment starts immediately. We heard people complaining that lands given by the government some 30 to 40 years back are getting repossessed by the government for industrial development. These are the topics we want to incorporate in the manifesto.

So what's your take on the Gujarat model of development that the BJP showcases across the country?

You know it's one thing to looking at top down and talk about development from the top. What I emphasise is the bottom-up approach of development. The real difference for development is what you look from bottom up. That is the Gandhian way of development and that's what the Congress party's approach is and will be in Gujarat and elsewhere. This whole business of the Gujarat model of development is all bogus and does not make sense.

For Congress vice-president, it's jobs, GST and prayers. But then there are many economists, experts who have lauded the Gujarat model and its high growth rate, high investment rate.

High growth rate for whom? At the end of the day, there are two ways of growing. One way is you give two big industries, lot of support or five big industries, lot of support and you create five multi-billionaires and your numbers will look good. But have you really met the needs of the people? At the end of the day, GDP does not matter, people matter. Don't be fooled by GDP, GNP and wealth creation if larger sections of society don't benefit from it. Please explain to me what is the Gujarat model if it's not about making a few billionaires and a few dozen millionaires? Under the Gujarat model, a few people have become very rich, ultra rich while large numbers of people have become very poor. Is that the kind of development we want? I am saying Gujarat and India are at the crossroads. The world over, just 2,000 people control a huge amount of wealth and is that the model we want and is that the idea of capitalism you want here? Capitalism means everybody benefits from it. Do you want concentrated capitalism or distributive capitalism?

I find it disgusting when someone says nothing was done in 70 years in the country.

That's the Prime Minister who keeps saying that nothing was done in 70 years.

I don't care who says what. For a moment, your lies may sell and thrive and people may buy your lies peddled by PR experts. But don't insult those like us who worked for the country. Don't insult Dr. Kurien who made the country the largest milk producer in the world, don't insult space scientists who made satellites, don't insult IITs who produced experts working across the world.

Those who suffer from inferiority complex will say... the country started working only after I came.

But then why could your party not counter those lies I don't think we need to counter or rebut each and everything someone says.

Rahul's poser to media: You question me, why don't you question PM on Rafale, Amit Shah's son

NEW DELHI: Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Rafale fighter aircraft agreement and asked the media why it did not question him for allegedly changing the "entire deal" to benefit a businessman.

He also asked why no questions were posed to the prime minister on Amit Shah's son Jay, whose company the Congress has alleged has witnessed a quantum jump in turnover since the Modi government came to power.

"I answer all your questions, whatever you ask me. Why don't you question Prime Minister Modi on the Rafale deal, on Amit Shah's son. Why don't you question the prime minister who changed the entire Rafale deal to help a businessman?" he asked.

He was speaking to reporters after the meeting of the newly formed All India Unorganised Workers Congress (AIUWC). He expressed satisfaction over the formation of AIUWC and said he felt good interacting with them.

Earlier this week, the Congress accused the government of compromising



national interest and security while promoting "crony capitalism" and causing a loss to the public exchequer.

The BJP rubbished the allegation, claiming it was intended to "divert attention" as the party bigwigs faced the prospect of being questioned in the AgustaWestland VVIP chopper scandal.

The Congress' communications department head Randeep Surjewala alleged that the government neglected the

interests of public sector Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Dassault Aviation, the French manufacturer of Rafale aircraft, refused to transfer technology to it and instead entered into an agreement with Reliance Defence.

He also alleged that the aircraft was being purchased at much higher rates than what was decided after the completion of the tender process under the previous UPA government.

Even as Tamil Nadu battles the karuvelam, Rajasthan tries to work with it

JAIPUR: Even as Tamil Nadu wages a war on seemai karuvelam by attempting to banish the invasive tree species from the State, western Rajasthan has been trying to accept the reality that the mesquite is not going away anytime soon.

To this end, the Central Arid Zone Research Institute (CAZRI) in Jodhpur has been running a project to use powdered Prosopis juliflora pods as a substitute for wheat bran in cattle feed mix. "The false impression of Prosopis juliflora till now has been that it is a horribly invasive and useless species in most parts of the world.

This is perhaps due to the ignorance of its multiple uses," says a 2013 paper authored by CAZRI scientists which calls the karuvelam a "miracle species."

The life of the karuvelam in Jodhpur — where it is called

vilayati babul or baavlia — has been a tale of its fall from grace. After introducing the tree to the State by scattering its seeds from the air in 1913, the Maharaja of Jodhpur State declared karuvelam a Royal Plant in 1940. However, come 2006, the royal family itself had to uproot the tree from its backyard. "After trying several different methods without success, we employed Khandwalia miners to use time-tested ways of manually chiselling into the hard, volcanic rock. We knew we had to go down at least 45 cm below ground-level to kill the baavlia," says the website of the Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park, located next to the Mehrangarh Fort.

Those at CAZRI also want to check the karuvelam's spread. "By collecting the ripened pods for grinding, we are attempting to prevent the new trees from coming up," said B.K. Mathur, Head of the Livestock Production System and Range Management at the CAZRI. His project, which ran from 2009-14, tried to get residents of a village in Nagaur district and a tehsil in Barmer to collect and use karuvelam pods. "Animals find it difficult to chew and digest the pods, so using a grinder — even a traditional one made of stone suffices — was the solution," said Mr. Mathur.

Rafale deal neither overpriced nor controversial: IAF chief



ADAMPUR: Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa on Thursday said the Rafale deal is not overpriced.

Rafale deal is a pact between India and Dassault Aviation SA to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets from France.

The IAF chief's statement comes days after Congress party said that a "huge scam" was brewing in the Centre over the deal.

Addressing a press conference here, IAF chief said, I think we have negotiated a better deal in the Rafale contract than what we did in MMRCA (Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft). There is no controversy. What is

the controversy I don't understand? It is not overpriced."

He further said that the government has negotiated a very good deal.

The Congress has alleged that Modi government promoted the interest of Prime Minister's capitalist allies, by signing the Rafale aircraft agreement for purchase of 36 fighter aircrafts without following the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP).

Addressing a press conference of Tuesday, Congress party spokesman Randeep Surjewala said that the he aircraft were being bought at an "inflated price".

Bengal govt's free cow-for-poor scheme draws Opposition criticism

KOLKATA: The Bengal government announced a scheme to distribute cows for free to the rural poor, prompting criticism from rivals who called it an attempt to pander to "cow politics" and to lure voters ahead of next year's panchayat elections.

The Trinamool Congress government said this week that 2,000 milch cattle will be distributed by the end of the year to the poor in an effort to help them and the state's overall milk output.

The decision comes ahead of panchayat elections set for the middle of 2018. Bengal animal resource development (ARD) minister Swapan Debnath, however, rubbished opposition criticisms. Speaking to HT, he said the project would begin with the distribution of 2,000 heifers, or young cows.

"There are two conditions to be eligible to receive the heifer absolutely free of cost from state government. First, the family should be in below poverty line (BPL) category. Second, beneficiary family should not have any other source of income. The move has nothing to do with the panchayat polls next year. This is a move to encourage accelerated milk production involving the rural poor," he said. He said the project will begin from Birbhum district and slowly spread to other districts. When pointed out that 2,000 heifers will cater at most just around

350 villages, Debnath said, "distribution of 2,000 heifers will be the beginning and this will be an ongoing process."

On procurement, Debnath said two major heifer-breeding firms owned by the state government at Haringhata in Nadia district and Salboni in West Midnapore district will be the main source. "Apart from that there are some other small heifer-breeding firms in some other districts and we will procure from them also," he said.

He was unable to specify any budget. "It will be an ongoing project and will require funds as per necessity of the time. There will be no dearth of funds," he said. A state ARD official, on condition of anonymity, pointed out that the price of high-quality heifer ranges between Rs 15,000 and Rs 20,000. CPI(M) politburo and Lok Sabha member Md Salim told HT the scheme is a "double-play" to benefit families of Trinamool cadres as well as to fall in line with the "nasty cow politics that BJP is pursuing throughout the nation". Saffron parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party and its Sangh Parivar siblings like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad have often made a prominent issue over the protection of cows. Most vigilantes who attack, and at times even kill, people over beef consumption or cattle smuggling pledge allegiance to right-wing Hindu groups.

Stress Could Lead To Obesity In Women

According to research, stress is becoming a major reason for obesity in women.

Women, who have recently experienced one or more traumatic events or those who have undergone several negative events relatively in the past years, are at a higher risk of developing obesity, warns a new study. Such events may also enhance cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack, stroke, diabetes and cancer and contribute to spiralling healthcare costs.

The study, presented in the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2017 in California, stated that the women who have gone through four or more negative life events had a 36 per cent higher risk of obesity, in comparison to women who reported no such events.

"Little is known about how negative and traumatic life events affect obesity in women. We know that stress affects behaviour, including whether people under- or overeat, as well as neuro-hormonal activity by in part increasing cortisol production, which is related to weight gain," said Michelle A.

Albert, Professor at the University of California in San Francisco. "This is important work because women are living longer and are more at risk for chronic illnesses, such as cardiovascular disease." The researchers studied the relationship between major life events and obesity in a group of 21,904 middle-aged and older women. They measured the impacts of two types of stress: traumatic



events, which could occur anytime in a woman's life and include such things as death of a child or being a victim of a serious physical attack, as well as negative life events that had occurred in the previous five years of a woman's life, like wanting employment but being unemployed for longer than three months or being burglarised.

The results found that the higher the number of negative life events, the higher the risk. The disclaimer: This content including advice provides generic information only. It is in no way a substitute for qualified medical opinion. Always consult a specialist or your own doctor for more information. NDTV does not claim responsibility for this information.

Burden of disease shifts to non-communicable ailments

The 'India State Level Disease Burden' report, prepared as part of the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) Study 2016, and published in Lancet, has found that every State in India has a higher burden from non-communicable diseases and injuries than from infectious diseases.

The study used multiple data sources to map State-level disease burden from 333 disease conditions and injuries, and 83 risk factors for each State from 1990 to 2016. It was released by Vice-President M.

Venkaiah Naidu here on Tuesday. "The contribution of non-communicable diseases to health loss — fuelled by unhealthy diets, high blood pressure, and blood sugar — has doubled in India over the past two decades. Air pollution and tobacco smoking continue to be major contributors to health loss.

"However, the extent of these risk factors varies considerably across the States of India," said Dr. K. Srinath Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), one of the partners of the India State-level Disease Burden Initiative (ISDBI). Specific plans needed "Many Indian States are bigger than most countries in the world.

It is necessary to plan health interventions based on the specific disease burden situation of each State, many of which are no less than na-

tions within a nation, if the existing major health inequalities between the States have to be reduced.

This requires availability of the best possible disease burden and risk factors estimates for each state based on all available data using a standardized framework," said Dr. Lalit Dandona, Director of the ISDBI and Distinguished Professor at PHFI and lead author of the study. "These estimates are now provided in three complementary outputs released today: the report, the technical paper, and the open-access visualisation tool.

Discussion with policy makers suggests that these findings will be useful for planning of State health budgets, prioritisation of interventions relevant to each State, informing the government's Health Assurance Mission, monitoring of health-related Sustainable Development Goals targets in each State, assessing impact of large-scale interventions based on time trends of disease burden, and forecasting population health under various scenarios in each State," Dr. Dandona said.

"We believe that the knowledge base developing out of the ongoing work of the State-level Disease Burden Initiative can serve as a significant public good, providing increasingly more nuanced and crucial inputs for improving health of all Indians," he said.

No pouches to dispose sanitary napkins: NGT serves notice

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday slapped notice on the Maharashtra government and private companies, saying sanitary napkins and diapers manufacturers are violating laws by not providing pouches or wrappers for disposing them.

The complaint has been filed by Purva P. Bora, a female student of Shankarrao Chavan Law College, through her lawyer Asim Sarode.

She contended that no manufacturer provides pouches which is "ultra-vires the provisions of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016", adding that napkins and diapers of a majority of brands are non-biodegradable because of plastic polymers used in their manufacture.

Taking serious cognisance of the plea, the NGT Bench here, comprising Justice U.D. Salvi and Na-



gin Nanda, served notice to the state government and various municipal bodies, pollution control authorities, top manufacturers like Johnson & Johnson, Unichem India Pvt Ltd, Kimberly-Clark Lever Ltd, and Procter & Gamble India, ordering their presence at the next hearing on December 19.

Complainant Bora said sanitary

waste is a part of definition under Sec 3(4) of SWM Rules, 2016, but found that there is a huge discrepancy between the law and practice as no manufacturers provide wrapper for their safe disposal, mandated under law.

She said that for modern women, periods are unimaginable without disposable sanitary napkins

and in a lifetime, a woman can use between 8,000-15,000 disposable pads, tampons or liners.

Accordingly, around 40,000-crore sanitary waste in the form of used napkins create huge garbage in India annually and many a time the non-compostable pads enter the sewerage systems, landfills, fields and water bodies causing huge environmental and public health risks.

Similarly, an infant would use around 1,500-2000 disposable diapers till it reaches the age of two, which would require 20 trees to be cut and 1,180 litres of crude oil to manufacture.

In India, only 12 percent of the 355 million women in menstruating age can afford to use disposable sanitary napkins. However, these 42.6 million (12 percent of 355 million) will throw away more than

21.30 billion sanitary napkins into a landfill in their lifetime.

In her plea, Bora demanded that the state and central governments, pollution control board authorities, public health and urban departments, municipal bodies and others be directed to ask all manufacturers and brand owners of sanitary napkins and diapers to provide pouches or wrappers for their safe disposal, and launch awareness drives.

Sarode said the state government should seek financial assistance from the manufacturers to install "Sanitary Napkins Destroying Vending Machines" since they contain bodily fluids, life-threatening pathogens, which severely compromise the health and lives of millions of sanitary workers besides flouting their fundamental Right to Life.

Can sex trigger heart attack in men

Sex is considered a natural urge among all animals but can it trigger a heart attack among humans, especially men? A new study by researchers at Heart Rhythm Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles report that it's true. The study led by Indian-origin researcher Dr Sumeet Chugh has revealed that men with a history of cardiovascular disease are more likely to have sudden cardiac arrest during or soon after sex. The news is most welcome for patients with heart problems who aren't sure if sex could be dangerous, Chugh told CBS news. "Previously we would say the risk is probably low, but we don't know how low," Chugh noted. "Now we have data and we can say to them the risk is very low." The findings showed that although the incidence of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) is very rare, survival rates in such cases remain low. The report mentions that survival rates after an arrest are much higher where chest compressions and CPR are started while waiting for an ambulance. And while all the sex-triggered deaths had a partner present, CPR was only started in a third (32 per cent) of cases.

Lungs of donors over 60 years safe for transplantation, says study

A new study suggests that using lungs from donors who are over 60 years of age is a viable option and can significantly address the scarcity of lungs for transplantation.

"The availability of suitable donor lungs for transplantation continues to be a major obstacle to increasing the number of lung transplants performed annually," said William Whited from the University of Louisville in Kentucky. The findings, published in the journal The Annals of Thoracic Surgery, showed that younger patients who received older donor lungs experienced much better outcomes when a double versus a single transplantation was performed.

Further, younger patients who received a single lung transplant using organs from older versus younger donors, there was a lower five-year survival (15 per cent versus 50 per cent).

However, with a double lung transplant,



there was no significant difference in five-year survival (53 per cent versus 59 per cent).

For the study, the team examined 14,222 lung transplants patients, between January 2005 and June 2014.

Among this group of younger patients who received older donor lungs, there was no significant difference in five-year survival when compared to patients who received lungs from younger donors.

"This study demonstrated that reasonable outcomes are possible with the use of advanced age donors," Whited said.

Air pollution poses bigger risk of heart attack for those with A, B, or AB blood type

While various studies have associated air pollution with heart problems, a study has said that a person's blood type may determine whether they have a risk of a heart attack due to pollution or not.

According to the study, people who have A, B, or AB blood types are at an elevated risk of having a heart attack during periods of significant air pollution, compared to those with the O blood type.

The ABO gene — which is present in people who have A, B, and AB blood types — is the only gene that is being validated in large international studies to predict heart attacks among people with coronary disease, researchers said.

Previous studies have also shown links between small-particulate PM2.5 pollution and heart attacks, admission to the hospital with unstable chest pain, heart failure, and atrial fibrillation.

"We wondered, if someone has a specific variation in this ABO gene, are they more or less likely to experience a heart attack in times of higher pollution?" said Benjamin Horne, from Intermountain Medical Center Heart Institute in the US.

"The primary mutation we studied differentiates between O blood types and non-O, which includes positive and negative A, B, and AB blood types. The one that has been found in genetic studies to be lower risk is O. The other three were higher risk," said Horne, lead investigator of the study.

Dozens of genes have been shown in large international studies to predict the onset of coronary artery disease in people who are free of the disease. However, the vast majority of people would not have a heart attack unless they already have coronary artery disease. Nor is a heart attack a certainty even with heart disease,



researchers said.

You have to have other characteristics for coronary disease to progress to a heart attack. The association between heart attacks and pollution in patients with non-O blood is not something to panic over, but it is something to be aware of," Horne said. Researchers had already identified a level of pollution at which the increased risk occurred for people with non-O blood types, and that threshold is 25 microgrammes of

pollution per cubic metre.

"Two years ago we published findings that showed once you go above that, each additional 10 microgrammes of pollution per cubic metre of air provided substantially higher risks," he said. "At levels higher than 25 microgrammes per cubic meter of pollution, the increase in risk is linear, while below that level there is little if any difference in risk," said Horne.

Researchers found that people with type O blood also have higher risk of heart attack or unstable chest pain in times of high air pollution.

However, their level of risk is much smaller, at 10 percent instead of the non-O blood type's 25 percent per 10 additional microgrammes per cubic meter, Horne said.

At the 65 microgrammes per cubic meter pollution level, a person with type O blood faces risk that is 40 percent higher than if the air was not polluted.

Bullying, violence at workplace may increase risk of type 2 diabetes: Study

Have you been a victim of bullying or violence at your workplace? Chances are it may increase your risk of type 2 diabetes, a study has suggested.

According to the study, the circumstances may potentially trigger metabolic changes and comfort eating behaviours.

Previous analyses have noted that issues, such as job insecurity and long working hours, with the consequent psychological impacts, are associated with a moderately higher risk of diabe-

tes. Numerous studies have also associated bullying and violence with reduced self-esteem and inability to cope.

"Being bullied is regarded as a severe social stressor that may activate the stress response and lead to a range of downstream biological processes that may contribute towards the risk of diabetes," according to researchers from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

They suggest that changes caused by stress hormones may

be one possible causal pathway.

Metabolic changes and obesity may be a mechanism for the increased risk, as the stress response may be linked to the endocrine regulation of appetite, and because workplace bullying or violence, and the resulting negative emotional experience, might induce comfort eating behaviours. Researchers looked at the prospective relationships between workplace bullying or violence and diabetes risk.

The study, published in the

journal Diabetologia, included 19,280 men and 26,625 women who were employed, aged 40 to 65 years, and did not have diabetes at the beginning of the study.

Younger participants were excluded to minimise the possible inclusion of persons with other conditions, such as type 1 diabetes. Nine percent of the participants reported exposure to workplace bullying. During a mean follow-up of 11.7 years, 1,223 incident cases of type 2 diabetes were identified.

After adjustment, being bullied at work was associated with a 46 percent higher risk of type 2 diabetes (61 percent for men and 36 percent for women).

Adjustment for alcohol consumption and mental health difficulties did not affect this association. Adjustment for BMI removed one-third of the risk increase.

Some 12 percent of participants had experienced violence or threats of violence in the preceding 12 months. During a mean

follow up of 11.4 years, 930 participants were found to have type 2 diabetes.

After adjusting for confounders, workplace violence was associated with a 26 percent higher risk of diabetes, for both men and women. Again, adjustment for alcohol consumption and mental health problems did not affect this result.

While both bullying and violence represent negative interpersonal relationships, they appear to constitute different con-

cepts and are distinct social stressors.

Bullying is psychological aggression, including behaviours such as unfair criticisms, isolation and humiliating work tasks. It is most often perpetrated by people from inside, such as colleagues.

Violence, on the other hand, is more likely to involve physical acts such as pushing or kicking, or the threat of these, and is generally perpetrated by people from outside, such as clients, patients etc.

Indian economy recovering from 'temporary blip': Jaitley

MUMBAI: India's economic slowdown has bottomed out and now it should start moving upwards after recovering from the "temporary blip" seen during the recent structural changes, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Thursday.

Addressing investors at the Morgan Stanley annual conference here on 'India: Structural Reforms and Growth Path Ahead', Jaitley talked about the "massive" economic reforms undertaken by India.

He acknowledged that there was a "temporary blip" as a result of structural changes that were initiated by the government.

"I think the bottoming out of the economy is complete and now it should start moving upwards. The global economy is also moving up," said Jaitley. As part of the summit, Jaitley met the senior management of Morgan Stanley and addressed a gathering of senior fund managers and key financial institutional investors.

"How do I see the economy moving? Our basic parameters are quite stable. And we grew between 7-8 per cent over the last three years," he said.



"Therefore, we need over the next, at least, a decade, if not more, significantly higher growth rates in order to go ahead with expansion plan of the Indian economy," Jaitley said.

The finance minister also assured investors of a strong banking sector in India. "The combination of the IT scheme and now the large-scale recapitalisation we have announced should be put into motion expeditiously," he said. The combination of these two steps are likely to improve the capacity of the banks, and even

lend their surplus, particularly to the small and medium-scale industries which need those funds in abundance because they are the ones that are the big job creators and keep the Indian economy going, he elaborated.

He also clarified the often overstated labour issues, saying these were no longer there as the negative environment of disruption of industrial activity is long over.

He said the labour laws are being fortified by taking the unions into consultation, and there has not been

any significant labour resistance in recent times, whether it is disinvestment or privatisation, he said.

"We haven't encountered trade union resistance as that is concerned," he pointed out, adding that there are already various kinds of reforms.

Responding to questions from investors, he said among the privatisation of public sector units (PSUs), Air India is in a very advanced stage while some of the PSUs will be kept as they are.

The state enterprises in the oil and some in the power sectors will be kept as PSUs.

"But there are many which will be privatised," he added, pointing to a list prepared by the NITI Aayog.

"In any case, we are going with the divestment programme very actively," said the minister.

He also gave the investors an update on the ongoing business reforms, and called for investments for changing the landscape of India with an accelerated pace.

Jaitley, who is on a two-day visit to Singapore, held meetings with Singapore ministers and investors.

Government wants new MRP on 200 goods amid GST change



Union consumer affairs minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Wednesday said new Maximum Retail Price (MRP) will have to be printed on around 200 consumer products in the backdrop of a change in the taxation structure by the GST Council on November 10.

The manufacturers will have to fix new stickers of reduced MRP along with the old MRP to pass on the benefits of reduction in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) to consumers, Paswan said, adding that failing to do so will attract action.

"Those goods on which GST has been lowered will have to be sold at new MRP.

Benefit has to be passed on to customers. Notification has been issued in this regard," Paswan told reporters.

"We have written to the Legal Metrology Department to take action in case of non-compliance. Also, consumers can lodge complaint through National Consumer Helpline."

The changed tax structure has been in force from Wednesday.

The ministry had made a similar move after roll out of GST on July 1 this year, with the deadline for dual MRP till September 30, which was later extended to December 31.

Sensex rises; Reliance up on drop in oil prices

MUMBAI: Shares rose on Thursday, buoyed by gains in refiners such as Reliance Industries Ltd as oil prices dropped overnight after crude oil and gasoline stockpiles rose unexpectedly in the United States.

Inventories climbed 1.9 million barrels last week as crude oil production and refining output rose, the Energy Information Administration said. Analysts expected for a decrease of 2.2 million barrels, according to a Reuters poll.

On Thursday, oil markets were stable as rising U.S. stocks were countered by expectations that OPEC will extend an ongoing production cut during a meeting at the end of this month.

NSE Nifty was up 0.45 percent at 10,163.15 as of 0505 GMT, while the BSE Sensex rose 0.52 percent to 32,931.44. Both the indexes were on track to snap three sessions of losses. "This is more of a corrective rally after three days of losses," said Arun Kejriwal, Founder at Kejriwal Research.

Oil refiners gained as lower crude oil prices cut input costs. The Nifty energy index gained as much as 1.3 percent, with Reliance Industries Ltd rising 1.7 percent and Indian Oil Corp Ltd advancing 1.2 percent.

Financials also gained. The Nifty bank index rose 0.5 percent, led by Housing Development Finance Corp Ltd and ICICI Bank Ltd. HDFC rose 0.3 percent, while ICICI was 0.8 percent higher.

Shares of Suzlon Energy Ltd declined as much as 6.2 percent, their lowest in more than a year. The renewable power producer suspended operations and declared a lock-out at a plant in the southern Indian state of Karnataka due to a workers' dispute.

Exporters can manually file GST refund claims: CBEC

NEW DELHI: The government has allowed exporters to manually file before tax officers claims for GST refunds as it looks to fast-track clearance of dues to ease liquidity stress faced by them.

Now exporters of services who paid IGST and those making zero-rated supplies to SEZ units as well as those merchant exporters who want to claim refunds for input credit can approach their jurisdictional commissioner with their refund form.

"Due to the non-availability of the refund module on the common portal, it has been decided by the competent authority... that the applications/documents/forms pertaining to refund claims on account of zero-rated supplies shall be filed and processed manually till further orders," the CBEC said in a circular.

The CBEC had last month started refunds for exporters of goods who have paid Integrated GST (IGST) and have claimed refund based on shipping bill by filling up Table 6A. Now businesses making zero-rated supplies or those who have paid IGST on exports or want to claim input credit will have to fill Form RFD-01A and print and approach Chief Commissioner of Central Tax and the Commissioner of State Tax for refund claim.

The provisional refund would be sanctioned by the tax officer within 7 days.

EY India Tax Partner Abhishek Jain said till now the refund filing procedure was there only for IGST paid by exporters. "Since online system was not there for exports of services and supplies to SEZ and those exporters claiming credit for input credit, the manual system has been launched. Starting of the refund process is a good thing, but it remains to be seen in how many days the exporters actually get the refund credited in their bank accounts," Jain added.

"Cash flows for exporters have been impacted due to lack of refunds of input taxes.

The circular on manual filing would need to be followed through with speedy processing of refund claims and disbursement of refunds to address the cash flow issue faced by exporters," Deloitte Haskins and Sells LLP Senior Director Saloni Roy said.

Airbus flies high, lands biggest-ever contract for 430 A320s

PARIS: Airbus announced its biggest-ever order on Wednesday, signing a deal to supply 430 of its medium-range A320 family of aircraft to US investment firm Indigo Partners, at a list price of \$49.5 billion (42 billion euros).

"An order for 430 aircraft is remarkable," said Airbus chief operating officer, John Leahy.

"But it's particularly gratifying to all of us at Airbus when it comes from a group of airline professionals who know our products as well as the folks at Indigo Partners do."

The announcement sent Airbus's share price soaring, rising by more than 3.0 percent to 86.09 euros in a generally softer market. It gave up some of its gains, showing a gain of 1.7% in afternoon trading in Paris.

Airbus's Fabrice Bergier told AFP at the Dubai Air Show, where the announcement was made, that the contract was a "new sign of confidence" in the European planemaker's jets. "It's an overwhelming success for Airbus and its A320 aircraft,"



he said. The order is for 273 A320neos and 157 A321neos, the revamped and more fuel efficient version of Airbus's most popular single aisle passenger jet, the A320.

Indigo Partners' founder and chief Bill Franks said the deal "underscores our optimistic view of the growth potential of our family of low-cost airlines." Frontier Airlines of the US, JetSMART of Chile, Volaris of Mexico, and Wizz Air of Hungary.

The final amount of the contract was not revealed, since it is customary for aircraft manufacturers to

grant rebates on the list price, depending on the volume of the order. But the contract will more than double Airbus's current order book for this year, which had stood at 288 planes at the end of October. It will also place Airbus, with a total 718 orders this year, ahead of its arch-rival Boeing which has 605 orders.

It will bring the total number of orders for the A320 to more than 13,700 since the aircraft went into service in 1988, making it one of the best-selling planes in aviation history. Airbus's total order book should

now increase to more than 7,000, giving it enough work for around nine years at the current rate of production.

More fuel-efficient

The A320neo and A321neo jets feature new generation engines that use 15 percent less fuel compared to their peers.

The total number of orders for A320neos since the aircraft was launched in 2010 now stands at more than 5,500. By comparison, rival Boeing has received more than 4,000 orders for the different versions of its equivalent aircraft, the 737 MAX. The deal marks a major coup for Airbus COO Leahy, who is expected to leave the group soon at the end of a career in which he oversaw the sale of nearly 15,000 planes.

Separately, Airbus said Dublin-based CDB Aviation leasing company had firming up an order for 90 A320neo family aircraft with a list price of \$5.1 billion. A preliminary order of 45 planes had been placed in 2014 and a subsequent one in

June. So far at the Dubai Air Show, Airbus has been very much overshadowed by Boeing.

The European plane maker had been hoping to announce the signing of another major contract for more than 30 of its flagship long-haul jet, the A380, to Emirates Airlines.

But the deal has not been announced so far and negotiations are ongoing, even if it could nevertheless still be announced in the coming weeks or months. By contrast, on Sunday, Emirates Airlines agreed to purchase 40 Boeing 787-10 Dreamliners for \$15.1 billion at list price, its chief Sheikh Ahmed bin Saad al-Maktoum said. Emirates is already the world's largest client for Boeing's 777, with 165 jets and another 164 on firm order. Not long after Airbus unveiled its contract, Boeing announced an order from Gulf Airline flydubai for 225 medium-haul 737 MAX aircraft with a list price of \$27 billion, hailing it as the "largest-ever single-aisle jet order" from a Middle East carrier.

Cabinet clears setting up of panel to ensure consumers get benefits of GST rate cut

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved setting up of a National Anti-profiteering Authority under the GST, as it seeks to ensure that consumers get the benefit of reduced prices under the new indirect tax regime.

Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said currently there are only 50 items which attract the highest tax of 28% under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime and rates on many items have been cut to 5% as well.

"The National Anti-profiteering Authority is an assurance to consumers of India. If any consumer feels that the benefit of tax rate cut is not being passed on, then he can complaint to the authority," Prasad told reporters after the Cabinet meeting. This reflects government's full commitment to take all possible steps to ensure benefits of implementation of GST to the common man, the minister said. The approval by the Cabinet paves the way for immediate establishment of the apex body, which is mandated to ensure that the benefits of GST rate reduction is passed on to consumers. The GST Council, chaired

by Union Finance Minister and comprising state counterparts, had last week decided to slash tax rates of over 200 items in the GST regime as well as lowered tax rates on AC and non-AC restaurants to 5 per cent. The Council had earlier approved setting up of a five-member National Anti-profiteering Authority to enable consumers to file complaint in case price reduction is not passed on. A five-member committee, headed by cabinet secretary PK Sinha, comprising revenue secretary Hasmukh Adhia, CBEC chairman Vanaja Sarna and chief secretaries from two states, has been entrusted to finalise the chairman and members of the authority.

The authority will have a sunset date of two years from the date on which the chairman assumes charge. The chairman and the four members of the authority have to be less than 62 years.

As per the structure of the anti-profiteering mechanism in the GST regime, complaints of local nature will be first sent to the state-level 'screening committee', while those of national level will be marked for the 'Standing

Committee'. If the complaints have merit, the respective committees would refer the cases for further investigation to the Directorate General of Safeguards (DGS). The DG Safeguards would generally take about three months to complete the investigation and send the report to the anti-profiteering authority. If the authority finds that a company has not passed on GST benefits, it will either direct the entity to pass on the benefits to consumers or if the beneficiary cannot be identified will ask the company to transfer the amount to the 'consumer welfare fund' within a specified timeline.

The authority will have the power to cancel registration of any entity or business if it fails to pass on to consumers the benefit of lower taxes under the GST regime, but it would probably be the last step against any violator. According to the anti-profiteering rules, the authority will suggest return of the undue profit earned from not passing on the reduction in incidence of tax to consumers along with an 18 per cent interest, as also impose penalty.

Ambanis top Forbes list of Asia's richest families, pip Lees

NEW DELHI: India's Mukesh Ambani family is the richest in Asia as its net worth rose USD 19 billion to USD 44.8 billion, topping the Lees of the Samsung empire, to claim the numero uno position, Forbes said.

Despite dropping to the second spot, Korea's Lee family still saw its wealth soar by USD 11.2 billion to USD 40.8 billion this year as shares of Samsung Electronics moved up 75 per cent over the past year.

According to Asia's 50 Richest Families compiled by Forbes, Hong Kong's Kwok family, Asia's richest real estate

household that controls Sun Hung Kai Properties, ranked third this year with a net worth of USD 40.4 billion. Thailand's Charavanont family of the Charoen Pokphand Group took the fourth spot on the list, with a net worth of USD 36.6 billion. The Ambanis are the only Indian family on the top 10 richest families list in Asia.

"No family highlights this surge better than the Ambanis of India, this year's biggest gainer in dollar and percentage terms," Forbes said.

It noted that shares in Mukesh Ambani's conglomerate Reliance Industries soared on the back of improved refining margins and the demand produced by its telecom arm, Reliance Jio, which notched up 140 million subscribers since it was launched in 2016.

On the list of Asia's Richest Families 2017, compiled by Forbes, India enjoys the biggest presence in the ranking for the third time with as many as 18 families.

Mysterious chatter: Prescient messages about Indian companies float on WhatsApp

MUMBAI: Three days before Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd announced quarterly results this summer, a message circulated on a private WhatsApp group saying the Indian drugmaker would not post good numbers. Dr Reddy's was going to report a loss, according to the message on the "Market Chatter" group, which was posted on July 24 from a mobile phone number that Reuters traced back to Nishant Vass, an auto analyst at ICICI Securities, a leading Indian brokerage. The WhatsApp group had 45 members, mostly traders.

The loss would have been a surprise to many analysts, as consensus forecasts compiled by Thomson Reuters at the time showed expectations of a profit of Rs 300 crore. The message proved prescient: On 27 July, Dr Reddy's reported a loss of Rs 58.7 crore (\$9.05 million)—a result its chief executive said was "below expectations", sending shares down as much as 4.4%.

The post that circulated in the WhatsApp group three days earlier had predicted a loss of more than Rs 50 crore. The loss would have been a surprise to many analysts, as consensus forecasts compiled by Thomson Reuters at the time showed expectations of a profit of Rs 300 crore. A person who identified himself as Vass returned a call from Reuters using the telephone number from which the Dr Reddy's numbers had been posted on the WhatsApp group. He denied writing or sharing posts in the group, adding later in a separate WhatsApp message from the same number that it was "totally baseless" that he had done so.

Reuters has documented at least 12 cases of prescient messages about major Indian companies, including Dr Reddy's, being posted in private WhatsApp groups.

Two of the messages appeared in the transcripts of six groups reviewed by Reuters, including the "Market Chatter" group where the Dr Reddy's numbers appeared. The others were shared on condition of anonymity by two other members of other WhatsApp groups.

The posts with prescient numbers in the WhatsApp groups were circulated hours or days before official company statements.

The messages shared could involve lucky guesses or astute forecasts based on publicly available information, and not all metrics shared among the 12 cases were exactly the same as reported.

Sachin Tendulkar exits international cricket on this day, leaves fans teary-eyed

MUMBAI: November 16, 2013 is considered the day when an era ended in world cricket.

It was the day when an icon stepped away from the world stage. Sachin Tendulkar, India's greatest cricket icon, walked onto the pitch at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai for the last time as an international cricketer on this day four years ago.

The Master Blaster's incredible record breaking journey had begun exactly 24 years before his final Test appearance against West Indies on November 16, 2013. Although, he could not manage a century, he smashed 74 in his final innings as India went on to defeat West Indies by an innings and win the series 2-0. Tendulkar had stepped down from the ODI setup in December 2012 after the Asia Cup match against Pakistan. Following his retirement from ODIs and Twenty20s, Tendulkar brought down the curtain on his illustrious career at his beloved home stadium in Mumbai. The master blaster received the guard of honour from his teammates as he walked up to the dressing room for the final time. He returned shortly to say his goodbye to the sport, with an emotional speech that left every soul in the Wankhede teary eyed and



the nation in everlasting sadness.

"I had a message to the team — I said we are all so proud to be representing the nation. I hope to continue to serve the nation with dignity. I have full faith that you will serve the country in the right spirit. Sachin, Sachin" will reverberate in my years till I stop breathing," Tendulkar said. His retirement on November 16, 2013 brought down a career which was defined by the sheer volume of the numbers and achievements that he had accumulated in his era. Since his debut as a 16-year-old

against Pakistan at the National Stadium in Karachi in 1989, Tendulkar has gone on to establish himself as one of the finest batsmen that the gentleman's game has produced, occupying the top spot in both Test and ODI run charts. Tendulkar is the only international player to score 100 international centuries. His numbers most surely highlight his contribution to Indian cricket. In his 200 Test match appearances he scored 15921 runs, averaging at 53.78. He has scored 51 Test hundreds out of which six were double centuries. His highest score

was 248 not out against Bangladesh in 2004. His ODI statistics too showcase his prolific batting skills. In the 463 ODIs, he became the leading run-getter with 18426 runs at an average of 44.83. At the age of 36, Tendulkar recorded his highest ODI score of 200 not out against South Africa, also becoming the first batsman to score a double hundred in an ODI. In 2012, he also became the first player to get to a 100 international centuries.

Four years on, Tendulkar's legacy continues to warm the hearts of Indian cricket fans.

Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez suspended from bowling by ICC due to illegal action

LAHORE: Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez has been suspended from bowling in international cricket for a third time by the ICC after his action was deemed to be illegal.

The veteran all-rounder - renowned for his ability to restrict batsmen in limited-overs matches - was reported for a suspect action following the Pakistan cricket team's third ODI against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi last month. After his action was independently assessed at Loughborough University in England, Hafeez has now been suspended from bowling once again.

An International Cricket Council (ICC) statement read: "The assessment revealed the majority of his deliveries exceeded the 15 degrees level of tolerance permitted under the regulations." Hafeez suffered the same fate in December 2014, before being cleared to resume bowling the following April when his action was found to be legal.

He was then suspended for a second time in June 2015, with his remodelled action subsequently cleared last November.

The 37-year-old can once again apply for a re-assessment after modifying his action.

BCCI to hold SGM on December 1, five-year Future Tours Programme to be decided

NEW DELHI: Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will hold its Special General Meeting (SGM) here on December 1 to discuss a three-point agenda including the all-important Future Tours Programme (FTP) of the Indian team spanning 2019-2023. It is expected that the Indian cricket team will be touring New Zealand in early 2019 and it will be interesting to see if a series with Pakistan is slotted in that five-year period. On instructions of Committee of Ad-

ministrators (COA), acting President CK Khanna has summoned the SGM to also discuss revocation of Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA) and compensation claim of former IPL franchise Kochi Tuskers Kerala.

"We checked the availability of all the office-bearers of the affiliated units and decided on December 1. Accordingly, I have instructed the acting secretary to issue a notice," Khanna told PTI today. The SGM will be the forum where Kochi Tuskers' compensation claim of Rs 850 crore will be discussed.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) governing council few days ago discussed the issue threadbare and were of the opinion that it would be impossible to wriggle out of the mess without paying the penalty. Kochi franchise was terminated by the BCCI for breach of contract but an arbitration panel led by former CJI RC Lahoti ruled in favour of the franchise as it ruled the termination to be illegal.

Virat Kohli joins hands with cab aggregator in campaign to curb Delhi pollution

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli has come together with a popular cab aggregator in their campaign to reduce both traffic congestion and air pollution in the capital city of New Delhi.

The Indian cricket team captain had posted a video to both his Instagram and Twitter accounts in which he called on people to 'share their rides' whenever possible by using either public transport or an Ola share.

"Hi guys! We all know what the situation of pollution is like in Delhi, I wanted to bring your attention towards it because a lot of people are debating as to what's causing it. But what are we

actually doing about it?" Kohli said.

Virat Kohli went on to add that combating pollution was something that needed to be done by all the citizens of the capital together as it was their responsibility to clean up the place they live in. "I would urge people to share their rides whenever they can. I would urge them to use a bus, a metro, or use Ola Share if you can. This action if we do it once a week, it will make a massive difference. Kyunki har chhote action se bhi farak padta hain. (Because every small action also makes a difference) If you agree, like this post, share it and show your support," Kohli concluded.

Delhi has been suffering with poor air quality over the past few years and the situation ended up getting even worse this year, with levels of particulate matter being at PM2.5 at 206.8 micrograms/m3, leaving the capital in the red zone as far as poor air quality is concerned.

Popular cab aggregator Ola had launched their #FarakhPadhtaHai campaign on June 5 this year, which is observed the world over as World Environment Day.

The main aim of the year-long campaign was to spread awareness on pollution and congestion whilst also encouraging shared mobility.

Dale Steyn makes quiet return to cricket after year-long absence

KIMBERLEY: Dale Steyn, South African fast bowler, wasn't looking for anything spectacular in his comeback to professional cricket, and he duly delivered three largely uneventful overs in a domestic Twenty20 match on Wednesday. More than a year after suffering a stress fracture in his right shoulder in a Test in Australia, Steyn, 34, took one for 25 to help his Titans franchise defeat the Knights by 38 runs at the Diamond Oval. Bowling



the second over of the innings, with his team defending 199, Steyn started with a no-ball, then conceded three

four off successive balls in a first over which cost 17 runs. But a two-over spell in mid-innings brought him the wicket of Test squad batsman Theunis de Bruyn while conceding only eight runs, including a wide. He also contributed a catch in the covers and left the field with a smile on his face. Steyn needs to prove his fitness before South Africa's next Test engagement, a day-night encounter against Zimbabwe in Port Elizabeth from December 26 to 29.

Sri Lanka must forget intimidation factor against India: Russel Arnold

KOLKATA: Former Sri Lankan middle-order batsman Russel Arnold said that the current touring squad must overcome the demons of the past to win its maiden Test in India. Terming it a massive challenge, the cricketer-turned-commentator said: "Initially the challenge for them is to forget history. India have been a very difficult place to travel even for better Sri Lankan teams. The initial challenge is to forget how intimidating India have been in the recent past and perform to the best of ability," the former left-hander said.

"You got to be realistic. India are in a very good space at the moment. A lot of other teams envy India and the depth they have."

There is a big divide between the two teams, but Arnold strongly hoped they would challenge India after their success in Pakistan.

Having suffered a 0-9 humiliation against India at home across the three formats, Sri Lanka bounced back to defeat Pakistan 2-0 in a Test series. "Sri Lankan are here to try and play, they are doing better now. You have to believe, try and perform to your potential."

For India, this series is seen as a preparation to their gruelling South Africa tour early next year when they travel for two months to play three Tests, six ODIs and three T20s. "It's the right way forward."

India have depth, they should look at ways to better their game and the real challenge is going to come on the road," the 44-year-old said. India skipper Virat Kohli yesterday said the 'overdose' of India-Sri Lanka cricket needs to be analysed as the islanders are touring for a return series in space of three months.

"It's true... Constant cricket can become boring and does take the little buzz away."

It's about ensuring different oppositions to keep it alive," the former Lankan finisher added. Justifying omission of Kusal Mendis, he said: "Of late, has been struggling with form in all formats. It was like giving him a break to work on issues, and it's a good way forward investing in him. SL have given him break to refresh himself."

After his 110 against India in the Colombo Test, Mendis has been struggling and went through 13 innings without a half-century and was dropped from the ODI side after the second game in Abu Dhabi.

Ashes 2017-18: Ryan Harris backs Mitchell Starc as next England tormentor

MELBOURNE: The spirit of Mitchell Johnson could return to haunt England's batsmen during the Ashes in the form of another left-arm pacesman, Mitchell Starc, according to former Australia fast bowler Ryan Harris.

A rampaging Johnson took 37 wickets at an astonishing average of 13.97 to fire Australia to a 5-0 whitewash in the 2013-14 series Down Under, leaving mental scars on a number of the tourists' batters.

Australia spearhead Starc had a similar volatile mix of pace, swing and bounce to be a Johnson-style wrecking ball in the series that starts in Brisbane next week, said Harris. The 27-year-old has also been in ominous form, capturing 17 wickets for New South Wales in his two Sheffield Shield warm-up matches. "He's definitely got it in him. I've just spent some time with him. He's bowling fast," Harris told Reuters in an interview from Brisbane. "He probably had a little



bit of an issue over the last few months with not swinging the ball as much as he'd like. But giving him that red ball, he's probably as consistent as I've seen him for a while as well." He's got the pace of Johnson, he moves it both ways, exactly like Johnson does, and doesn't even know he's doing it. "He's also got that brutal yorker that can pull out when he wants. So, I'd love to see that happen again, someone rip through the English again and

put a bit of fear in the back of their minds." Along with Peter Siddle, Harris was on hand to witness Johnson at his destructive best as a member of the pace trio in Michael Clarke's Australia that captured all 20 English wickets in each of the five tests. Johnson set the tone early in the opener at the Gabba, taking nine wickets in a short-pitched blitz that set up a 381-run battering against the shell-shocked touring party. The mustachioed

Queenslander remained a problem throughout the series for England's batsmen, who tried in vain to adjust but ultimately had few answers. "Once Mitch got on a roll it was very hard for them to stop him," said Harris, now a high performance coach at the National Cricket Centre in Brisbane.

"I reckon it put a little bit of fear in their minds and fair enough. It was bloody fast bowling. Fast bowling at it's best. That was genuine pace and they had no way of combating it. Even talking to their old bowling coach (David Saker) who was there at the time, they just didn't know how to stop the rot." Harris was the second highest wicket taker of the series with 22 victims, while Siddle grabbed 16 in vital support roles. It was a triumph built on excellent camaraderie between the three quicks, said Harris, a quality he was confident Starc would share with his fellow test pacemen and New South Wales team mates

Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood.

"I remember Michael Clarke sitting the three of us down and telling us what he wanted of us, that he wanted us to be close to each other and talking to each other all the time about good and bad things, and how he wanted us to be a team within a team," added Harris. "For us, it wasn't necessarily about taking wickets, it was about bowling dots (non-scoring deliveries) and putting pressure on at the other end," he said. Earlier this week, Cummins, the youngest of the trio at 24, declared himself keen to repeat Johnson's feats in the upcoming series, but Harris cautioned the bowlers to focus on helping each other. "To be successful you've got to be prepared to bowl and not necessarily take the glory but just help your mate out down the other end," he added.

"If they bowl in those partnerships, they'll get the rewards. It is an exciting attack."

Manchester United's Paul Pogba, Zlatan Ibrahimovic return to training this week

MUMBAI: Manchester United fans could be in for an unlikely treat as Paul Pogba and Zlatan Ibrahimovic's edge closer to making a full-comeback with a visit from Newcastle United on the cards this weekend.

With the duo having resumed full training with the rest of the first team, it will provide United a major boost as they look to get their domestic campaign back on track, having fallen eight points behind leaders Manchester City in the Premier League.

Jose Mourinho's side has suffered a major setback when



Paul Pogba limped off in United's 3-0 victory over Basel in the Champions League in September.

He had formed a great understanding with Nemanja Matic and Henrikh Mkhitaryan in midfield, which was pivotal to United's superb start to the season. Sidelined by a hamstring injury, the Frenchman has already missed 12 games for the Red Devils.

Another factor that has contributed to United's below par showing is the goal drought that their most expensive summer signing Romelu Lukaku.

Lukaku is now without a goal in seven games and Ibrahimovic's availability may provide Mourinho with an alternative for the same.

Ibrahimovic suffered a cruciate knee ligament in United's Europa League fixture against Anderlecht in April 2017. Coincidentally, Marcos Rojo was also stretched off in the same game and is hoping to make his return in December.

Ibrahimovic was initially released by the club this summer following his injury but eventually signed a new contract and may now add some impetus to their title charge against arch rivals Manchester City.