

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

SATURDAY

● NOVEMBER, 18, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	10.7	2.9
JAMMU	21.2	11.2
LEH	12.1	-5.9
KARGIL	6.8	-5.2

SUNSET SATURDAY: 05:27 PM
SUNRISE SUNDAY: 07:08 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 12°C & 2°C respectively.

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

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DR. JITENDRA SINGH CALLS FOR TACKLING INSURGENCY ISSUE WITH CUSTOMIZED

INDIA ASSURES MEDICAL VISA TO ANOTHER PAKISTANI NATIONAL

KUWAIT'S JAZEERA AIRWAYS CONNECTS TO INDIA WITH DAILY FLIGHTS TO HYDERABAD

MUHAMMAD HAFEEZ TO SKIP BANGLADESH PREMIER LEAGUE AND WORK ON BOWLING

Majid Khan did not surrender; he came back on his own: Police

'No charges will be pressed on him'

Srinagar, Nov 17: Assuring the 20-year-old Anantnag youth, Majid Khan, who "came back" after reportedly joining militants for nine days, the security forces Friday said that no charges will be pressed against him and he will be facilitated to live a normal and dignified life.

Khan, who had joined LeT nine days ago, and is a famous footballer in Anantnag, returned back after passionate appeals from her mother become widespread on social media.

Addressing a joint press conference at Victor Force headquarters at Awantipora, GOC Victor Force, B S Raju and IGP Kashmir Munir Khan complimented Khan, his parents and friends for succeeding in his return home.

The IGP said that Majid Khan came back on his own and he had no weapon with him on his return.

"Neither has he surrendered nor



was he apprehended. He came back on his own and he went on his own to see how it tasted. And off course his parents and friends were instrumental in bringing him back," he said. Reiterating his surrender appeal

to the local militants, the IGP said that security forces stick to their policy and will welcome the local youth with open arms who have picked the gun. "All these things led nowhere and

their families suffer," he said.

The IGP said that rehabilitation is possible in effective manner. "They are part of the society and have a right to live a dignified life.

He said the message of the police will help and other youth may be motivated to surrender.

"Certainly, it will as we are committed to our word," he said, adding, "No weapon was recovered from him (Majid Khan)."

According to the KNS correspondent, he said that the militants who will surrender will not face any sort of harassment and they will be secured.

GOC Victor Force, B S Raju said that no charges will be pressed on him and he will be able to get back to normal life very soon.

"We compliment him and his parents, especially his mother, whose appeals and prayers yielded results.

See **Police**...Pg 02

'After mother's tearful video, Anantnag boy quits militancy'

'Mother's love prevailed', choice to surrender not an easy step: CM Mehbooba

Srinagar, Nov 17: A footballer from Anantnag town, Majid Khan, who joined the militant outfit Lashkar-e-Toiba a week ago, Friday, laid down his arms, after a tearful video appeal of his mother had gone viral on social media urging the 20-year-old to quit militancy and return home.

A tearful video appeal by Majid's mother Ashiya Begum had gone viral on social media and thousands had urged Khan to return home and look after his parents who needed

him the most.

"I am waiting for him. I want him to return... I want him to play football again," his mother wept in the video.

However, on Friday morning reports said that Majid Khan surrendered before the Army, but the Inspector General of Police Muneer Khan later said he had contacted his family expressing a wish to return home.

Reports said that Khan surrendered before

See **CM**...Pg 02

HOPE MAJID KHAN ISN'T HARASSED NOW: OMAR

Says his surrender a welcome development

Srinagar, Nov 17: Former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Friday said that he hoped Majid Khan could lead a normal life and "not be harassed".

"If that's true then it's a very good development. Hope he can go back to leading a normal life & not be harassed," Abdullah tweeted while reacting on reported surrender of footballer-turned-militant.

Earlier, the father of Majid Khan said that he got "new

See **Omar**...Pg 02

COP KILLED IN ZAKURA MILITANT ATTACK

Srinagar, Nov 17: A police officer was killed while a constable was wounded after militants suddenly attacked a police party near Zakura in the outskirts of Srinagar city.

Police sources said that a group of militants fired upon a police party that was on way to Zakura resulting in

See **Cop**...Pg 02

RDA Scam: COURT DIRECTS GOVERNMENT TO CONCLUDE ENQUIRY AGAINST DELINQUENT OFFICER

Jammu, Nov 17: A Division Bench of the State High Court comprising Justice Alok Aradhe and Justice Sanjeev Kumar Friday directed General Administration Department (GAD) to conclude the Regular Departmental Enquiry against delinquent IAS Officer Mohammad Javed Khan the then Chief Executive Officer, Rajouri Development Authority and presently Excise Commissioner, J&K preferably within four months from today. The Division Bench also remarked in the open court to Advocate Sheikh Shaheel Ahmed appearing for the petitioner to file a proper application seeking shifting of delinquent IAS Officer to some non-sensitive post owing to the pendency of the departmental enquiry.

See **Court**...Pg 02

Harmony needed to curb corruption in system and society: PDP

Seeks public support to weed out the menace

Jammu Nov 17: Stating that corruption undermines justice, mars values and merit, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) General Secretary Nizamuddin Bhat has sought public support through committed campaign to weed out the menace from society and the system.

Interacting with party workers, Bhat as per the statement issued to KNS said it is because of the corruption that social ethos built on moral-

ity and ethics is coming under stress and institutions established for public service do not yield desired results.

He said PDP should seek public support enabling Government to establish a judicious system and ensure harmonious growth and development commensurate to resources used and efforts put in.

Bhat said Jammu and Kashmir has tremendously suffered due to unending



menace of corruption and evil of disharmony despite Government's resolve to free the system and institutions from any corrupt practices and unjust handling.

He said that the deep rooted disease is now shaking the faith of upcoming generation in the public institutions which can wreak havoc to system and society, if not addressed in right earnest.

Bhat said that over the years Government strengthened various organs like Vigilance Organisation, Vigilance and Accountability Commissions, besides an empowered judiciary

See **PDP**...Pg 02

FOUR MONTHS ON AFTER CABINET APPROVAL

Govt yet to make Law Commission operational

Srinagar Nov 17: Around four months having passed since the cabinet approval, the government is yet to make the maiden Law Commission operational in the state.

On July 26, the state cabinet approved the constitution of the maiden Law Commission.

An official of the Law Department said that the department has finalised the list of probable candidates of its chairman and members.

"Now we have been waiting nod from the Chief Minister's office," the official said.

The official said that retired Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court Justice Mansoor Ahmad Mir is the front runner for the post of chairman Law

See **Four**...Pg 02

To boost tourism, Mehbooba seeks flights' operation to ASEAN region from Sgr airport

Also seeks Central assistance to local poultry industry, writes to Union Agri Minister

Jammu, Nov 17: To give fillip to the tourism industry in the State, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today urged the Centre to include Srinagar Airport among the airports in the country from where flights to ASEAN countries are to be operated.

In a letter to Union Civil Aviation Minister, Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati, the Chief Minister said the operation of flights to and from ASEAN region to Srinagar airport would give the desired push to the tourism industry in the State, which it has been craving for. "The operation of flights from and to cities



like Kaula-Lumpur, Jakarta, Bangkok, Singapore and other cities in the region would

See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

CHENAB VALLEY WITNESSES SEASON'S FIRST SNOWFALL

Srinagar-Leh, Bandipora-Gurez roads suspended for traffic

Doda, Nov 17: Upper reaches of Chenab Valley in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed season's first snowfall after a long dry spell.

In picturesque Baderwah Valley heavy snowfall was witnessed in Kailash mountain range, Asha Pati, Seoj Dhar, Chattar Gali leading to sudden drop in temperature forcing people to wear warm clothes to protect themselves.

There was slight drizzle at some places in Doda, Ramban, Kishtwar and Baderwah towns.

Reports said commuters faced tough time in driving on slippery roads while district administration pressed

See **Snowfall**...Pg 02

Budget 2018-19:

Principal Secy Finance begins department-wise pre-budget discussions

Jammu, Nov 17:

The Government has set into motion the process for preparation of the State Budget for 2018-19 which is likely to be presented in the Legislature in the first week of January 2018.

Principal Secretary Finance, Navin Kumar Choudhary started department-wise discussions on the budget proposals on November 8 and the entire exercise is likely to



be completed by the end of this month. As a part of this exercise the Principal Secretary Finance today held pre-budget discussions

See **Finance**...Pg 02

SOLDIER WOUNDED IN CROSS BORDER FIRING

Poonch, Nov 17: An army man was injured as the armies of India and Pakistan exchanged heavy fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday.

Reports said that the soldier was injured after Pakistan army fired at Indian positions at five places along the LoC. "They used mortars, automatics and small arms to target our positions in Digwar, Shahpur, Khari, Karmara and Malti areas," said an official.

The Indian Army retaliated "strongly and effectively", he added. Shelling and firing exchanges are still going on.

This is the second time in the last 48 hours that the armies of two countries exchanged fire.

Govt to start 'Kashmir Fresh' brand to attract foreign buyers

Hi-tech farmers training centre coming up in valley

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Principal Secretary Agricultural Production Department, Sandeep Kumar Nayak today informed that Government is intending to start 'Kashmir Fresh' - a brand under which all the vegetables and fruits will be categorised and sold in the both local as well as international market.

Speaking during a review meeting, Sandeep said that the 'Kashmir Fresh' brand will



ensure the quality to attract buyers from across the globe. The secretary informed the

meeting that without any adulteration all the products including fruits, vegetables,

honey and saffron packed under the brand will

See **Fresh**...Pg 02

AT DAK MEET, DOCTORS SEEK REINSTATEMENT OF PRESIDENT

Srinagar, Nov 17: Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) held a meeting of executive members on November 14 at sub-district hospital Kupwara in which reinstatement of DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan was sought.

The members urged government to reinstate DAK President immediately or else they are left with no option but to shut down hospitals across the valley.

Dr Nisar was suspended in May 2014 by previous government for exposing spurious drug scandal in Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, DAK President said "he was victimized for highlighting the illegal trade of spurious

See **DAK**...Pg 02

Govt working on development of religious places to tap pilgrim tourism potential: Priya Sethi

Mata Sukrala Devi Murti Sthapana Divas celebrated with religious favor

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 17: Government is determined to promote historically significant religious places of worship to tap every aspect of pilgrim tourism. This was stated by Minister of State for Education and Tourism, Priya Sethi on the occasion of Mata Sukrala Devi Murti Sthapana Divas at Sukrala Mata Mandir, Purani Mandi here today. Every year, the day was celebrated with religious favor by devotees of the Goddess.

MLA East Rajesh Gupta was also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that the government has initiated requisite measures for development of prominent religious places to improve facilities for the pilgrims.



"City of Temples Jammu has great potential in the field of tourism as edifices, monuments, religious and other scenic places, which reflect the culture and tradition", the Minister

maintained.

It has set a great example of religious harmony and development of religious places for the promotion of pilgrim tourism in the region is the

utmost priority of the government, she added.

Priya said that the idea of pilgrim tourism is to showcase to the world State's rich and diverse spiritual and religious heritage.

The Minister also paid obeisance at Sukrala Mata Mandir and participated in the Yagna along with other devotees. Langer was also served to mark the day of idol installation.

Later, the Minister placed idols of Shiv Parivaar and Ram Parivaar at Shiv Temple, Canal Road.

Prominent among others who were present on the occasion were Baldev Singh Baloria, Anil Masoom, Ajay Sethi, Anju Dogra, Arun Sethi, Ramesh Gupta, Rajesh Dogra, Sharda Devi, Savita, Neeru Anand and members of Mata Sukrala Seva Dal.

Div Com reviews winter stock position

Visits LPG bottling plant, FCI Godown

SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan today took stock of the availability of essential commodities and fuel in Kashmir division.

He visited the Bottling plant at Pampore wherein he directed the company representatives of different gas agencies to keep sufficient stock of the LPG cylinders. He was informed that the companies have more than 20 days of LPG stock available with them or in transit. The Div Com directed the IG Traffic and communicated with Deputy Commissioners of Udhampur and Ramban to ensure that all trucks carrying fuel and LPG are allowed to move on priority basis.

The Div Com also inspected the FCI Godown at Lethpora, where he was informed that the Godown is stocked with sufficient rice and wheat requirement in the division. The Div Com directed the officials to ensure

that people do not suffer from any shortage.

The Div Com also visited the Sub-District Hospital Pampore and took stock of the facilities available at the hospital. He also interacted with the patients to know the availability of doctors, medicines and other facilities. He directed the officials to ensure that every employee attends to the duties with punctuality.

The Div Com later visited the Shalateg to review the snow clearance preparedness. He reviewed the working of the winter control rooms and directed that the control rooms should be operational 24 X 7. The Div Com also visited the Government Higher Secondary School Jawaharnagar where he inspected the heating arrangements and other facilities made for students.

The Div Com was accompanied by Director Education, Director FCS&CA and other officials.

PCI CHAIRMAN INTERACTS WITH JK MEDIA STUDENTS AT SOOCHNA BHAWAN

Says Media's 'credibility crisis' it's biggest challenge

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17: The Press Council of India (PCI) chairman Justice CK Prasad today asked the media students from various institutions of Jammu and Kashmir to make 'credibility' a benchmark of their profession and information dissemination.

While interacting with the media students at Soochna Bhawan here, the PCI chief said "irresponsible" and "controlled" media don't contribute to the democratic set up of

the country.

He asked the students "if you ask me one of the important challenges faced by the media, my simple and straight forward answer will be it's credibility," he said. "If the media is credible, all the other challenges will fall in line," he added.

"If a journalist is irresponsible, people will judge, but if media is controlled, there is nothing to judge," he said. "Credibility must be your aspiring

journalists) benchmark and you should work for the credible source information dissemination," he said.

The PCI chief said the process has been initiated to create Media Council for the electronic media as there was a dire need to check the sensationalism by electronic media.

Replying the questions by the media students during the interaction, the PCI Chief said that "If journalists want to remain credible, they can and it will be



their choice," he said. "No one can corrupt you until you let them to do so," he

said.

The PCI Chief assured media students that they would do their best possible to involve aspiring journalists into the PCI's internship program and it would also rope in the national media organizations to involve aspiring journalists for their internship programmes.

The interaction session was also at-

tended by the Director, Department of Information and Public Relations, Muneer ul-Islam among other officials of the department.

The PCI Chief lauded the role of Department of Information and Public Relations, Jammu and Kashmir Government for taking efforts to organize media tour of various institutions from the State. He assured that the PCI would continue to reach out to the media industry in Jammu and Kashmir.

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POLICE

Majid Khan came back and security forces orchestrated his comeback safely.

"We got information yesterday that there is an opportunity from his family that this individual wants to come back. And we ensured he come back safely. This was a brave decision, keeping in view the status of his family and to pursue his academic career and in sports as well," Raju said.

"He had strayed on a beaten path and come back on his own having realised the folly of the path he had taken," he said.

"I appeal to all youth who have gone astray and who want to return and who have not committed any crime can follow the footsteps of Majid Khan and we will take full care of them and facilitate their return of those who have been coerced into taking criminal action, and within the purview of law necessary facilitation will be taken for them for mainstreaming them," he said.

He said that his mother made a powerful message which ensured his com back.

"We intend to take this as great example for other parents as well to make their appeals so that right sense prevails of their children and they come back," he said.

CM

1RR of army under 1 sector Khanabal last night around 10:30 pm. He was later handed over to Victor Force, based in Avantipora.

As soon the news about his surrender broke, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti tweeted: "A mother's love prevailed. Her impassioned appeal helped in getting Majid, an aspiring footballer back home. Every time a youngster resorts to violence, it is his family which suffers the most," tweeted Mehbooba.

In another tweet, Mehbooba said, "I understand the predicament of young boys who have strayed into militancy. Most realise the futility of senseless violence & want to return home and live normal lives with dignity."

Mehbooba said the choice to return homes for the young militants "is not easy one" because of the social stigma attached to "surrender."

"But the choice to renounce violence is not an easy one and they find themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea. The fear of social stigma clouds their judgement," she wrote in successive tweet.

OMAR

lease of life" after hearing that his son will return home. Khan, according to sources walked into an army camp in Anantnag after impassioned appeals from his parents to shun militancy.

COP

the injuries of two policemen including Sub-Inspector Imran Ahmed and constable Suhail Ahmed.

Imran Ahmed succumbed to his injuries while wounded constable is undergoing treatment.

Reports said that a militant has also been arrested during the melee.

The wreath laying ceremony for the slain cop was observed in Police Control Room Srinagar.

COURT

The Division Bench after considering the heated submissions from both the sides directed the counsel for petitioner Advocate Shiekh Shakeel Ahmed to file a proper application in the said PIL on the basis of the Judgment referred today.

The Division Bench also put a query to Senior AAG Seema

Khajooria Shekhar as to how much time GAD will take for finalization of the departmental enquiry against the delinquent IAS Officer and the senior AAG submitted that four months time will be sufficient for concluding the enquiry.

After considering the submissions of both the sides, the Division Bench directed General Administration Department (GAD) to conclude the Regular Departmental Enquiry against delinquent IAS Officer Mohammad Javed Khan the then Chief Executive Officer, Rajouri Development Authority and presently Excise Commissioner, J&K preferably within four months from today.

PDP

and Grievance Redressal cells with an avowed objective to ensure justice and fair play in public dealings. It has launched sustained campaign for building a workably honest system. Fortunately, all has not gone awry and the hope sustains. In addition to Government efforts the Honest people in every sphere in society are on their own engaged in tireless endeavors to orient for an honest and upright system.

However, public perception still continues to be of cynicism. This warrants an added effort on the part of Government in the direction of instilling faith and confidence among masses in General and youth, in particular so that they are made the real stake holders of a value based society and a just order.

Bhat said while it is humanely impossible to throw up an ideal system where there can be no errors or omissions, he said it is practicable that system functions without duress, fear or favour and that the institutions of public service maintain obvious standards of honesty and probity. He said society as a whole needs to rise to the occasion and contribute towards this pious goal.

He said that it is unfortunate that society, social organisations, political parties and dispensations are not in harmony and mostly pull in different directions even on issues of common interest, ironically lending space to negative trends and a loose system. Bhat said that it is in the interest of all that institutions are nor bereft of values and society is not allowed to be rendered shallow. Everyone has a role play. He said youth of the state is aware and educated who could be engaged in a right discourse for a competitive culture supported by a value-based system. He said educational and media institutions are and can play an effective role in an organized and purposeful activity and hoped that society lends support to save the society from plunging into disbelief and anarchy.

FOUR

Commission. "Justice Hakim Imtiaz, Muzaffar Jan and Hasnain Masoodi names have also been included in the list for the post of chairman," the official said.

An official of the Law Department said that the list has been framed and forwarded to the Law Minister. "It is the list of eligible candidates for these posts," he said.

The chief justice and judges of high court are eligible for the post of chairman. The members will be appointed by the government from amongst the district and sessions judge, an officer who has served as a special secretary to government having sufficient experience and knowledge of law, a person who is or has served as a professor in Department of Law in any University recognized by law in the state, a person who has served as a member of the state legislature and has sufficient knowledge and experience in Legal Matters.

The commission has to be consist of a full-time chairperson, two full-time members and two part time members while Secretary Law will be the ex-officio member of the Commission.

The mandate of the Law Commission will be to identify the laws which have become obsolete and redundant over a

period of time and need to be repealed, amended or updated.

The Law Commission also has to consider and convey to the state government its views on any subject relating to law and judicial administration that may be specifically referred to it by the government.

While various obsolete laws were repealed in 2010. The establishment of Law Commission will be for a period of three years.

MEHBOOBA

have a positive impact on the local tourism industry and bolster the State's economy", she said in her letter to the Union Minister.

It may be recalled here that several deputations from the Tourism industry had met the Chief Minister in last few months and requested for connectivity with ASEAN countries to tap the tourism market in the region.

In another communication to Union Agriculture Minister, Radha Mohan Singh, Mehbooba Mufti has sought continuation of Central assistance to the local poultry industry, extension of loan recovery period and waiving of interest in respect of unit holders to sustain their business which suffered heavily due to floods of 2014 besides the high cost of feed imported from neighbouring States.

A group of representatives of Poultry Dealers Association had met Mehbooba Mufti recently and requested her to take up their issues with the Central Government.

SNOWFALL

their men in service to clear roads from snow.

Meanwhile, due to heavy snowfall in Drass and Manimarg, the Srinagar-Leh road was suspended for traffic. Reports said that no vehicle was allowed to proceed towards Kargil and were stopped at Sonmarg after fresh snowfall.

"Gurez-Bandipora road was also suspended due to slippery conditions," said a police official to news agency CNS.

FINANCE

with around half a dozen departments including Information, Hospitality & Protocol, Estates, Labour & Employment, Tourism and Ladakh Affairs.

Director Budget Imtiyaz Ahmad and other officers of the Finance and concerned departments were present in these meetings. The Finance Department has also sought Action Taken Reports (ATRs) from the departments on the announcements made in the Budget for the current financial year.

"The Government has decided to present the Budget in the State Legislature in the first week of January 2018 and accordingly the Finance Department contemplates to accomplish the process of budget preparation by 2nd week of December 2017", the Principal Secretary Finance said.

Choudhary said this is for the second consecutive year that the government would be presenting the annual budget in January. The last budget was also presented in the same month by the Finance Minister Dr Haseeb Drabu.

Earlier, the state government used to present the annual budget in March every year. "Advancing the date of presenting the budget is aimed at streamlining public expenditure, ensuring effective management of resources and timely completion of the developmental projects," Choudhary said.

He said the Finance Department has also written to all the departments seeking Action Taken Report (ATR) on the previous Budget announcements so that the progress in translating the announcements into reality could be ascertained for passing necessary directions.

Pertinently, the Finance Department had released 100% of the budgetary allocation for the year 2017-18 to ensure that the developmental process is not hampered for want of resources.

FRESH

exclusively be from the Valley.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal Dr. Piyush Singla, Director Agriculture Kashmir Syed Altaf Aijaz Andrabi, Director Extension Education SKUAST-K Mushtaq Ahmad Teli. Besides, all Joint Directors, Chief Agriculture officers and district officers from districts of Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal were also present in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Sandeep stressed for concentrating on three sectors including vegetables, apiculture and exotic varieties. He asked Chief Agriculture Officers to hold meetings with agriculture extension assistants on the monthly basis so that ground situation is brought under notice.

Principal Secretary informed Chief Agriculture Officers to make a case study of Chief Ministers Programme so that the department maintains a record and the progress of the programme is monitored.

Under NABARD loan the Farmers Training and Educational Centre (FTEC) will have all the basic and modern requirements for facilitating the farmers during their training session. The new building will have Kashmiri architecture and can accommodate 30 farmers at a time.

Sandeep asked Chief Agriculture Officers to concentrate on chilly cakes (waerr) and shallots (Pran) which can be packed and exported to other parts of the country as the two have longer shelf life and can fetch good fortune to the farmers.

He urged agriculture officers to focus on honeycomb and its marketing. Sandeep said that all the leading hotels could be the best options to explore the marketing of the product.

District Development Commissioner (DDC) Ganderbal Dr. Piyush Singla described the importance of location for FTEC. He said the new FTEC would be a centre of attraction for the farmers from Ladakh as well. The centre will be located on Srinagar-Leh highway.

Director Agriculture assured the meeting that all possible support will be provided to the farmers in Rambirgarh and Pratapgarh areas of Qamarwari zone of Srinagar district for the high production of vegetable cultivation.

DAK

drugs in Kashmir to which many precious lives were lost." "In 2013, DAK unearthed a big spurious drug scam," he informed while addressing the members in the meeting.

In this connection, he said DAK filed a Public Interest Litigation in State High Court in which many people are facing prosecution.

DAK President said his endeavors in this regard should have been applauded, but instead false and frivolous cases were fabricated against him.

He said it is not only his responsibility but duty to stand against the crimes committed on the society.

He added it is his inherent right as a doctor and as a citizen to inform and sensitize the general masses of people about the insidious machination of the powers that be.

Dr Mir Mohd Iqbal Vice-President DAK termed continued suspension of DAK President as unjustified and illegal.

"His suspension has given untold sufferings to his family and patients who were under his treatment and follow up," he said

Dr Maqbool, senior executive member of DAK said Dr Nisar's suspension should be immediately revoked so that he resumes his duties that are direly needed for his patients.

DAK Spokesperson Dr Riyaz Ahmad Daga said drug mafia is trying every means to sabotage reinstatement of Dr Nisar. They are spreading canard and trying their best to create a wedge among doctors. "Each and every doctor is united under the banner of DAK and demand reinstatement of their president earnestly," he said

Qaumi Ekta Week will be observed from November 19-25, 2017

New Delhi, November 17: With a view to foster and reinforce the spirit of Communal Harmony, National Integration and pride in vibrant, composite culture and nationhood, the "Qaumi Ekta Week" (National Integration Week) will be observed all over the country, from the 19th to 25th November, 2017. The week long programmes to be observed during Qaumi Ekta Week will be as under:

November 19, 2017 will be observed as National Integration Day and programmes like meetings, symposia and seminars will be organized to emphasize the themes of secularism, anti-communalism and non-violence.

November 20, 2017 will be observed as Welfare of Minorities Day and Items of the 15 Point Programme are emphasized on this day.

In riot prone towns, special fraternal processions are taken out.

November 21, 2017 will be observed as Linguistic Harmony Day. Programmes like Special literary functions and Kavi Sammelans will be organized to enable people of each region to appreciate the linguistic heritage of other parts of India.

November 22, 2017 will be observed as Weaker Sections Day and meetings and rallies will be organized to highlight programmes under various Governments which help SCs/STs and weaker sections with particular emphasis on the distribution of surplus land to landless labourers.

November 23, 2017 will be observed as Cultural Unity Day and cultural functions will be organized to present the Indian tradition of

unity in diversity and for promoting cultural conservation and integration.

November 24, 2017 will be observed as Women's Day. On this day, the importance of Women in Indian Society and their role in development of nation-building are highlighted.

November 25, 2017 will be observed as Conservation Day and several meetings and functions will be organized to emphasise the growing need for awareness and action to conserve the environment.

The observation of the 'Qaumi Ekta Week' will help to highlight the inherent strength and resilience of our nation to withstand actual and potential threats to the eclectic and secular fabric of our country, and nurture a spirit of communal har-

mony in its widest sense. This occasion also provides an opportunity to reaffirm age old traditions and faith in the values of tolerance, co-existence and brotherhood in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society.

The National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH), an autonomous organisation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, organises Communal Harmony Campaign coinciding with the Qaumi Ekta Week and observes the Communal Harmony Flag Day on 25th November. The Foundation promotes Communal Harmony and strengthens National Integration. It also provides financial assistance for relief and rehabilitation of children rendered orphan or destitute in communal, caste, ethnic or terrorist violence.

PM reviews performance of key infrastructure sectors

New Delhi, November 17: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on Thursday reviewed progress of key infrastructure sectors including PMGSY, housing, coal and power. The review meeting, which lasted for about two and a half hours, was attended by top officials from PMO, NITI Aayog and infrastructure Ministries of the Government of India.

In course of the presentation made by CEONITI Aayog, it was noted that remarkable progress has been made in several areas. Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, 81 per cent of the targeted habitations numbering about 1.45 lakh have so far been connected. Officials said progress is being made towards connecting all the remaining unconnected habitations within a defined timeframe. The Prime Minister observed that resources available for this work should be used optimally throughout the year. He also

hoped that the advancement of the Union Budget date would lead to further improvement in performance. The Prime Minister was informed of the expeditious resolution of complaints received on the Meri Sadak App. He called for detailed analysis of the complaints, so that timely remedial measures are initiated wherever required.

Reviewing progress towards the roadmap to deliver 1 crore houses in the rural areas by 2019, the Prime Minister said that the positive impact of housing on the lives of the beneficiaries should be suitably examined, and the focus should be on improving their quality of life. Reviewing the coal sector, the Prime Minister called for renewed efforts towards underground mining and coal gasification, through infusion of latest technology inputs. The Prime Minister was also informed about progressing towards the targets for rural electrification and household electrification.

MNRE organises panel discussion on 'Innovative Financing and Market Evolution to achieve 175 GW Renewables by 2022' at CoP 23, Bonn, Germany

New Delhi, November 17: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India, in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), organised a panel discussion on 'Innovative Financing and Market Evolution to achieve 175 GW renewables by 2022' on 16th November 2017 at the India Pavilion at Conference of Parties (CoP) 23, Bonn, Germany.

Reaffirming India's resolution to go ahead with the set agenda with determination and clarity, Shri C.K. Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India, said that India has been pursuing its goals of setting up renewable energy capacities and changing its energy mix, and will continue to do so to

provide equitable sustainable development.

Speaking about the Government's interventions, Dr. P.C. Maithani, Adviser, MNRE said that policies are being drafted on a continuous basis to address challenges as the market evolves. Giving examples of how the question is no longer about availability of finances but that of cheap finances, Shri K.S. Popli, CMD, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) said that the markets have matured and one indicator of that is seen in how the bond markets have progressed.

Dr. Ajay Mathur, DG, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) stressed upon the need to push for higher research in storage technology which could compliment the

infirm renewable power. There is an imminent need to look at bringing down storage costs, he added.

India's renewable energy journey has come a long way since it set its ambitious target of 175 GW by 2022. Prices of solar and wind have dramatically reduced to 3-4 cents per Kwh as against 9-12 per unit in 2013, even as capacities have scaled up to 47.5 GW. Policymakers and industry are now confident of accelerating this growth trajectory to provide electricity, along with storage, at an estimated Rs 5 per unit before 2025.

Explaining the scope of the renewables market, Shri Rahul Munjal, MD, Hero Future Energy said that there has been an exponential expansion of the industry, with almost 10,000 firms operat-

ing in the ecosystem. This is a result of the market being conducive to business and investments. Echoing a similar thought and projecting high optimism, Shri Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, MD, CLP India said that renewables are becoming more an imperative for economies like India which have to reach power to large sections of the people. Shri Ratul Puri, Chairman, Hindustan Power Projects Pvt Ltd (HPPPL) highlighted the need to make power available at affordable rates and said that Indian industry is working towards achieving that goal.

The panel also included Mr Frank Determann, Principal Project Manager, KfW Development Bank; Shri Reji Pillai of India Smart Grid Forum, among others.

Dr. Jitendra Singh calls for tackling Insurgency issue with customized solutions

New Delhi, November 17: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh has said that CAPFs and State Police has come of age to tackle the menace of insurgency. He said that new and evolved Technology should be utilized to tackle the insurgency and terrorism effectively. Dr. Jitendra Singh said this while addressing the 6th International Conference on Homeland Security here today. The theme of the Conference is 'Integrated Approach to Security' with the Session titled 'Operational Challenges in Counter Insurgency and Solutions'.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'New India' can become a success if safe and secure India become

the mantra. He also exhorted the stakeholders to evolve a value based system with high morals, so the young generation is not diverted from the path of discipline, growth and development. He also praised the high competence and technological efforts and prowess of the Security Forces and Intelligence Agencies to address the security issues. He said Cyber Security needs to be revisited with sustained renewed vigor so that the country is not lagging in global technological advancement sphere.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the latest researches need to be synergized with the requirements to evolve an effective and efficient Counter Insurgency strategy. Dr. Jitendra Singh said that driven by the inspiration of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's clarion call and constant strive for excellence in security domain, he said the incidence



of insurgency has reduced enormously in J&K with the proactive and pre-emptive approach of the Government in addressing the menace of cross-border terrorism.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that every solution in the realm of insurgency issue should be customized based on region specific requirements of the state, terrain of the region and local populace. He emphasized the need for Research and Development (R&D) in this area and to develop the technological solutions with an

endeavor rooted in Indian conditions to address the region specific issues of insurgency. He underlined the importance of best practices and policies driven with the sole objective of police modernization and development of security forces with integrated expertise driven approach. He said that there is a quintessential need to be aware of the Human Rights while addressing the law and order and security issues. He said in the recent past, the J&K Special Operations Group has done a commendable job in nabbing the militants and their efforts are setting a new benchmark for the security apparatus. He said that the confidence of people in the borders have accentuated with the decisive action of the Government. He said that the core solution to the insurgency issues should be based on the pillars of clarity and conviction.

Moody's upgrade Sovereign Credit Rating of India to Baa2 from Baa3

New Delhi, November 17: Moody's Investors Service ("Moody's") has upgraded the Government of India's local and foreign currency issuer ratings to Baa2 from Baa3 and changed the outlook on the rating to stable from positive. India's rating has been upgraded after a period of 13 years. India's sovereign credit rating was last upgraded in January 2004 to Baa3 (from Baa1).

Government of India welcomes the upgrade and believes, as rightly noted by the Moody's that this is in recognition of major economic and institutional reforms undertaken by Government of India. These reforms include introduction of path breaking Goods and Services Tax (GST); putting in place a sound monetary policy framework; measures taken to address recapitalisation of public sector banks and a number of measures taken to bring formalisation and digitalisation (The JAM agenda) in the economy - demonetization, the Aadhaar system of biometric accounts and targeted delivery of benefits through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system.

Moody's have also rightly recognized the Government's commitment to macro stability which has led to low inflation, declining deficit and prudent external balance and Government's fiscal consolidation programme which has resulted in a reduction of fiscal deficits from 4.5% of GDP in 2013-14 to 3.5% in 2016-17 and its consequential sobering impact on general government debt. Government intends to stay the course on fiscal consolidation in the medium term.

We need to focus on Women's issues: Vice President

New Delhi, November 17: The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that we need to focus on women's issues in the country. He was receiving the first copy of the Book 'Journey of Women Law Reforms and The Law Commission of India - Some Insights', from the Author former Joint Secretary, Law Commission of India, Dr. Pavan Sharma, here today.

The Vice President said that the author has made an excellent analysis and more such studies can help focus nation's attention to important areas like matrimonial laws, property laws, laws relating to inheritance, succession, guardianship as well as NRI marriages and issues of sexual violence. He hoped that this book will inspire many more experts to focus on women's issues in the next few years.

Health Ministry introduces Daily Drug Regimen for treatment of Tuberculosis

New Delhi, November 17: The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has recently announced the launch of daily regimen for TB patients across the country under The Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP). The Health Ministry has been providing the thrice weekly regimen for the treatment of tuberculosis (TB), however it has now decided to change the treatment strategy for TB patients from thrice weekly to daily drug regimen using fixed dose combinations (FDC) for treatment. This change will bring transformation in the approach and the intensity to deal with this disease which accounts for about 4.2 lakh deaths every year.

The daily FDC anti-TB drugs will be made available to private pharmacy or at private practitioners to dispense to TB patients who seek care in private sector, depending upon the convenience of patient and practitioner free of cost. The Health Ministry will take

this forward with all major hospitals, IMA, IAP and other professional medical associations to expand the access to daily FDC to all TB patients.

The salient features of this treatment strategy are use of Ethambutol in continuation phase for all patients, drugs to be given daily (as against only 3 times weekly previously), fixed dose combination (FDC) tablets to be used which will reduce pill burden (as against separate 7 tablets previously), for children, child friendly formulations as dispersible tablets and use of Information Technology (IT) enabled treatment adherence support system.

Current WHO Global TB Report, 2017 has reported that incidence of TB has reduced from 28.2 lakh to 27 lakh and mortality by 60 thousand over the last one year, which is a testimony of anti TB drive by Government of India.

Chief Secretary reviews issues related to Gurez Valley

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 17: Chief Secretary, B B Vyas Friday chaired a meeting here to review the status of important issues relating to the Gurez Valley. Principal Secretary, Finance Department, Principal Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Commissioner/Secretary Public Works (R&B) Department and other senior officers attended the meeting.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora, Chief Engineer, PDD (M&RE) Kashmir and other senior officers attended the meeting via video conferencing. Stock and supply position of essential commodities, status of health care facilities, electricity supply to Gurez valley and adjacent areas besides progress on the road connectivity front was discussed in the meeting.

Chief Secretary directed the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to hold fortnightly meetings to review progress on all relevant aspects as far as Gurez Valley is concerned and submit periodical reports to the office of the Chief Secretary. To address road connectivity issues especially related to Bandipora-Dawar-Chackwali road, Pethakut-Kanzalwan and Kangan-Barnoi roads, Chief Secretary asked Commissioner/Secretary, PW(R&B) and Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to take up with the concerned executing agencies to expedite time bound upgradation of these roads. He directed submitting a status note in this regard.

On the electricity front, Chief Engineer, PDD (M&RE) Kashmir, informed that steps have already been initiated to connect Gurez Valley with Power Grid for which PDD is

in the process of tendering out the project.

Principal Secretary, Finance informed that as regards requirement of funds for operating DG sets to supply electricity to the Gurez Valley and adjacent areas is concerned, 100% funds have already been released for the purpose to PDD. He said besides releasing the Rs 4.75 Crore projected earlier by the Department, Rs 1.15 Crore were also released as additional funds by the Finance Department. Chief Engineer, PDD (M&RE) Kashmir informed that electricity is being supplied to Gurez Valley from DG sets for 6 hours a day instead of 5 hours as was the schedule earlier. To augment the health care facilities in Gurez Valley, Chief Secretary asked Principal Secretary, Health & Medical education Department to ensure that specialist doctors.

KVK Baramulla plays vital role in economic upliftment of farmers

Baramulla, November 17: Krishi Vigyan Kendra Baramulla, established at Kunzer Baramulla in 2015 has so far reached out to thousands of people of the district in agriculture field especially far off areas like Uri, Darang, Katiyanwali, Raifiabad, Braman, Chatussa, Dangi-wach and Lagama.



The aim of awareness and training programmes is to achieve the target of doubling the farmers' income by 2022. As a part of this campaign the KVK recently organised "Sankalp Se Siddhi" programme under the chairmanship of Union Minister of state for Agriculture and Farmers welfare Gajendra Singh Shekawat at Tangmarg Baramulla.

Pertinently the programme was launched by the Union Government on the 75th anniversary of the Quit India Movement with the aim to help the lower income groups and to double the farmers income by 2022. Sankalp Se Siddhi, which literally means "Determination to attainment" is an integrated scheme, supervised by Union Agricultural Ministry as a part of New India movement which will last for a period of 5 years from 2017-22 during which various social and economic issues will be covered.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister stressed upon the importance of development of new technologies to improve the productivity of crops for doubling farmers income. He said that the Union as well as state government is committed to doubling farmers' income by 2022. Gajendra said that organizing seminars, awareness camps, kisan melas and conferences should be regularly conducted. He stressed on the need for educating the farmers about the benefits of organic farming and updating them about the latest technological advancements in the farming sector. He said that organic farming requires less investment for cultivation but is much more profitable than conventionally grown crops. He further said that comprehensive agriculture policy is the priority of the government and concerted efforts are being made to realize the dream of doubling farmers income by 2022. The minister said that Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchay Yojana (PMKSY) has been implemented in the state under which the government targets to provide sufficient water for irrigation to every field.

State MoS Agriculture Sunil Kumaar

Sharma speaking on the occasion emphasized the need for better application of technology towards enhancing farm productivity. This can be achieved through coordinated efforts by all concerned and KVKs can play a significant role in this direction. There is a need to make farmers aware about availability of facilities and KVK should help them in identifying right technology for appropriate and timely application so that they are benefitted.

Member of Parliament Muzaffar Hussain Beig speaking on the occasion highlighted importance of agriculture towards improving living standards of farmers particularly through application of modern scientific techniques wherein KVK can play much greater role. "In a state where sources of revenue are meagre and need for creating employment avenues skyrocketing, agriculture and allied sectors can offer vast opportunities for ameliorating this need to some extent" said Beig.

MLA Gulmarg, Mohammad Abbas Wani while thanking Union MoS Agriculture for choosing Tangmarg as host for his maiden visit to J&K reiterated the significance of horticulture for ensuring sound economic health of the people of Tangmarg. He added that more needs to be done to help realize the aim of this campaign.

Later the Minister laid the foundation stone of the Administrative block of KVK at Mangloora area of Baramulla district.

Among other Ministers of State for Agriculture, Transport, Revenue, PWD, RDD and Panchayati Raj, Youth Services and Sports Sunil Kumar Sharma Member Parliament Muzaffar Hussain Beig, Vice chairman Kisan Advisory Board Daljit Singh Chib, MLA Gulmarg Mohammad Abbas Wani, District Development Commissioner Baramulla Dr Nasir Ahmad Naqash, Dr Manoj Kumar Senior Scientist KVK Baramulla, representatives of various departments besides a huge gathering of farmers were present on the occasion.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

THE LAST RESORT

There is usually little to be gained in delaying the inevitable by a day or two. After the Kerala High Court passed strictures against him for filing a petition against his own government, Transport Minister Thomas Chandy should have had the good sense to resign immediately. But, quite inexplicably, he dithered on the issue, embarrassing Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and creating divisions within the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF). Indeed, once Alappuzha District Collector TV. Anupama submitted a report on alleged encroachments by a company in which he holds a stake, Mr. Chandy should have stepped down as a matter of propriety. By moving the court challenging the Collector's report, prepared on the orders of the government, he virtually invited the judicial reprimand on himself. That he entertained the hope of tiding over the political crisis engulfing him even after the court's strictures betrays a strange mix of nose-in-the-air arrogance and head-in-the-sand ignorance. For the past few months, Mr. Chandy has been caught in the encroachments controversy. The Lake Palace Resort, part-owned by him, came under a cloud over issues related to reclamation of paddy land to create a vehicle park, diversion of the course of rivulets for construction activities, and laying of an approach road to the resort by filling paddy fields. That the Minister chose to stand by the resort, and not with the government, was the real shocker.

As for Mr. Vijayan, he should have sacked Mr. Chandy instead of leaving it to the Nationalist Congress Party to secure his resignation. That the Minister belonged to a smaller allied party and that the LDF is bound by a coalition dharma are justifications that do not wash in the face of a strong judicial stricture. Not surprisingly, the Communist Party of India saw things differently and boycotted a Cabinet meeting on the ground that Mr. Chandy was a participant. The party argued that Mr. Chandy could not be expected to discharge his responsibilities as a Minister after having challenged the government in a court of law. The CPI's strident stand can also be explained by the fact that one of its members, E. Chandrasekharan, holds the Revenue portfolio and was monitoring the action against the encroachments. The eventual exit of Mr. Chandy on Wednesday might pave the way for the return of his party colleague A.K. Saseendran to the Cabinet. Mr. Saseendran had to resign following a questionable sting operation in which he is heard allegedly seeking sexual favours from a woman. The LDF is not short of talent, but coalition dynamics require that Mr. Vijayan replace Mr. Chandy with the only other MLA from the NCP. Despite a comfortable majority, Mr. Vijayan might not want to risk upsetting the political equations within the LDF. The real test for him will be to ensure that governance does not suffer amid his deft political manoeuvres.

An itinerary in search of a strategy: on Trump's East Asia tour

► Varghese K. George

Parsing Donald Trump's statements and Twitter posts through his 12-day, five-nation tour of Asia — the longest for a U.S. President in 25 years — to decipher a new American strategy towards the region can be taxing unless the idea is to cherry-pick and substantiate pre-existing notions.

'TERRIFIC' CHINA

One can read resistance to China's expansive ambitions in euphemisms such as 'freedom of navigation' and condemnation of 'predatory' economic practices, used along with America's commitment to democracy, human rights, and free trade. When you read them alongside the U.S.-Philippines commitment to "share best practices" to prevent illegal drug use, which is a "problem afflicting both countries", and Mr. Trump's desire to be friends with the "short and fat" ruler of North Korea, the emerging picture could appear confusing, if not outlandish.

In his interactions with reporters as he travelled back, Mr. Trump gave an overview of the "terrific" tour and the new friendships that he has developed, how he enjoyed the unprecedented reception in Beijing, conversations with the "terrific" President Xi Jinping and the special honour he received at the Forbidden City. What topped the list of achievements for him were the business deals — he put the figure at \$300 billion and hoped that it would exceed \$1 trillion in the coming months, though the actual numbers remain unclear. He said security partnerships with these Asian partners have also been enhanced.

Ahead of his travel, the White House had said his speech at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) CEO summit in Vietnam would elucidate his vision for the Indo-Pacific region, a term that the Trump administration has started using in a clear acknowledgment of India's prominence. Administration officials had been emphatic that his speech would demonstrate the U.S.'s continuing commitment to the region. His speech did not live up to the build-up, and may have actually added to the nervousness among traditional U.S. partners. Recalling the U.S.'s historical ties to the region, Mr. Trump said it is time the terms of engagement between these countries and the U.S. changed. In his reckoning, the U.S. has been taken advantage of by all countries and global institutions, particularly the World Trade Organisation (WTO). But he would not blame other countries or their leaders for this situation; it was all the fault of the U.S. administrations that preceded him.

"Those days are over," he declared. He was there "to offer a renewed partnership with America," the basis of which would be "bilateral trade agreements with any Indo-Pacific nation that wants to be our partner and that will abide by the principles of fair and reciprocal trade... I call it the Indo-Pacific dream."



WHAT DOES HE MEAN?

The U.S. has trade deficits with all the five countries that Mr. Trump visited and he told four of them that the U.S. would not tolerate this — putting China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam in the same basket on this count. In the case of the Philippines, which has a small surplus with the U.S., the relationship is less about trade, he said, but more for "military purposes... it's called the most prime piece of real estate from a military standpoint."

What are the implications of Mr. Trump's statement that "those days are over?" First, America offers these countries technology, capital and access to its market. Second, America offers a security guarantee and a predictable world order based on multilateral trade and security pacts. China has also been a beneficiary of this system, and the rise of China has added additional buoyancy for neighbouring countries. The friction between China and its neighbours heightened as Beijing's ambitions grew after the 2008 financial crisis. Vietnam, Philippines, Japan, and South Korea started to gravitate more towards the U.S., which was itself alarmed by the assertiveness of China. The Obama administration announced the Pivot to Asia strategy in response. Kurt Campbell, an Obama official who is credited with drafting the policy, described it as "a multifaceted approach that will involve a strong security component, working with allies, working constructively with China, a commercial

dynamic that is about not shipping U.S. [jobs], but U.S. exports and services to Asia; a commitment to building institutions to multilateralism; bringing other partners into Asia, like Europe, working closely with Europe."

Like Mr. Trump, Barack Obama also wanted to open the Asian markets for American companies, but there was a broader blueprint at play. Mr. Trump has knocked it down to a one-point agenda: buy our goods and services. His statement that countries in the "region [should] be strong, independent, and prosperous, in control of their own destinies, and satellites to no one," is a call for ending multilateralism. More than a newfound respect for the autonomy of these countries, it reflects American disinterest.

Mr. Trump also told his Asian hosts that they were free to pursue their interests solo, as he would pursue his. He hinted that America is washing its hands of any leadership role, making it clear that it could cut a deal with China on its own, regardless of its potential impact on other countries. China is the biggest trading partner of South Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Speaking after Mr. Trump at APEC, Mr. Xi presented a case for multilateralism and open trade. China is also willing to offer technology, capital and market access, on its terms under the Belt and Road Initiative.

SECURITY CONCERNS

Now, what is America offering for the security of these Asian partners? Mr. Trump

asked them all to join hands with the U.S. in stopping North Korea's nuclear adventurism. But that apart, he told Japan, Vietnam and South Korea to buy "our weapons".

"We make the best," he told them and cited how Saudi Arabia was using them effectively. In one Twitter post during the tour, he also gave a carte blanche to the Saudi Arabian regime to chart regional politics.

Mr. Trump's "Indo-Pacific dream" may not appear to be much of a dream for most countries in the region. In 2006, Mr. Trump had said he was waiting for a housing market crash, and boasted about his ability to profit from a falling market. Conflicts in Asia, in the west and the east, could appear to be good opportunities for profit from the realtor's perspective.

We may be looking for a strategy that does not exist, perhaps. American economist Lawrence Summers, now a Harvard professor, and a key player in the American-led globalisation over the last three decades, described the challenge before America: "... (we) confuse a strategy with a wish list. Our strategy is that it is very important that they open their markets, that it is very important that they cooperate with us on this security issue... Well, that is a good wish list... And I do not think we as yet have a strategy for thinking about the management of the global economic system that is appropriately respectful of the scale and achievements of the Chinese economy."

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The Tripura model

► Madhura Swaminathan

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Tripura embarked on a unique path to peace, one that was not dependent solely on security measures but involved investment in human development and people's participation in the implementation of socio-political and economic policy as well. More than a decade later, the human development consequences of peace have been remarkable.

In 2005 and 2006, we spent some months in rural Tripura as part of work on the Tripura Human Development Report (the Government of Tripura and the United Nations Development Programme had commissioned the Foundation for Agrarian Studies to write the report). The threat of violence was ever present, and elaborate arrangements had to be made to ensure the safety of the members of our team, mainly students and youth. Although insurgency was on the decline by the time the Tripura Human Development Report 2007 was published, acts of insurgent violence still continued. Indeed, the idea that the people had to be free from threats to life and limb in order to achieve their full potential was an important part of the Report.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar has often said that economic and social

investments and people's involvement are essential components of the peace process in the State. The landmark repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, or AFSPA, in 2015 in the State was an outstanding symbol of the success of this policy.

We returned to Tripura in the summer of 2016 to resurvey three villages we had first surveyed in 2005. The principal change was a palpable atmosphere of peace and personal safety in the State, even in its most remote reserved-forest settlements. The progress achieved over the last 10 years in several indicators of human development — especially in education, health, and employment — is the State's peace dividend, and is worthy of public attention.

Let us examine some of these achievements.

Growing literacy
Literacy has been described as being "the basic personal skill that underlies the whole modernising sequence." Separatist militancy in Tripura was an obstacle to the spread of literacy and schooling. Progress in literacy has been particularly rapid in Tripura over two decades. According to the Census, the share of literate persons above the age of seven years rose from 73% to 87% between 2001 and 2011. We now have data from surveys conducted in 2005 and 2016 in Khakchang, a fully Scheduled Tribe vil-



lage in North district, Mainama, a village in Dhalai district whose population is 67% Scheduled Tribe, and Muhuripur, a village in South district.

A measure of progress in schooling of the population in these villages is the number of years of completed schooling among women in the age group 18 to 45 years. In Khakchang in 2005, more than 50% of women in the age group had not completed a year of schooling. By 2016, the median number of completed years of schooling among women in the age group was seven — outstanding progress for a decade. The corresponding figure for Mainama, also a Scheduled Tribe dominated village, was six years in 2005 and nine years in 2016.

Data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) indicate that the infant mortality rate (IMR) in Tripura almost

halved between 2005-6 and 2014-15, declining from 51 per thousand live births to 27 per thousand. According to data from the most recent Sample Registration Bulletin, IMR further declined to 20 per thousand in 2015.

Employment and labour force
Peace and security enable the expansion of employment and livelihoods.

The growth rate of per capita State Domestic Product (SDP) has been over 8% per annum in eight out of the last 10 years (2005-6 to 2014-15). In the last four years, when per capita Net Domestic Product of India was growing only at around 5% per annum, per capita SDP in Tripura grew at 9 to 10% a year.

For the last five to six years, Tripura has ranked first among the States of India with respect to the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Over this period, the average number of days of employment obtained per household in India ranged between 40 and 50 days. In Tripura, from 2011-12 to 2014-15, the corresponding figure was about 80 days a year. In 2015-16, the number rose to 94 days. The unilateral decision of the Government of India to reduce the allocation of resources for the rural employment guarantee scheme has hit the State Government hard. According to Gautam Das, editor of the Agartala-based daily, Desher Katha, the present allocation will be adequate only to create 42 days of employment per household in the current year.

An important feature of Tripura's economy over the last decade has been a rise in labour force participation and work force participation, particularly among women. This is in marked contrast to India as a whole, where data show a decline in female labour force participation and work force participation over time. National Sample Survey (NSS) data show that in rural India, female labour force participation fell from 49% in 2004-5 to 36% in 2011-12. In Tripura, however, over the same period, female labour force participation rose from 17% to 38% (urban areas showed a slightly lower rate of growth than rural areas).

A labour force, by definition, includes those in work and seeking work. The

work participation rate (WPR) rose among men and women, rural and urban, over the seven year period. According to NSS data, the female work participation rate in rural Tripura rose from 12% in 2004-5 to 31% in 2011-12. In rural India, it fell from 49% to 35% over the same period. In Tripura, work participation rates rose among males, urban and rural, and among urban females as well.

An important factor in the dramatic rise in work participation rates, especially among women, has been the improvement in the security environment, which encouraged women to enter the labour force in much larger numbers than before. The rise in work and labour force participation rates, particularly among women, is both a positive achievement and a challenge. The challenge is to generate adequate employment opportunities to absorb the increasing number of women who will join the work force. Tripura's path of development is one that respects administrative autonomy for regions where people of the Scheduled Tribes are predominant in the population, and the principle of unity of its diverse people. An inclusive path of development, one that encompasses the poorest in the population and the most far-flung of forest-based human settlements, is a precious legacy. It would be great unwisdom to reverse or disrupt such a path.

India assures medical visa to another Pakistani national

NEW DELHI: India assured a medical visa to another Pakistani national who is seeking to donate a kidney to a fellow national undergoing treatment at a hospital in New Delhi. "Pls don't worry."

I am asking Indian High Commission to give visa for the second donor," external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj tweeted in response to a request from one Faiza Malik, who said her nephew Faraz Malik was undergoing treatment at Fortis Hospital.

Faiza Malik said doctors rejected the previous donor and a now a visa was required for new donor Abdul Razzaq. On Independence Day, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) had announced that India would provide medical visas to all bonafide Pakistani patients.

As ties between the two countries soured over various issues, the min-



istry had announced in May that only a letter of recommendation by then Pakistan Prime Minister's Foreign Affairs Advisor Sartaj Aziz would enable a Pakistani national to get a medical visa for India.

The action was termed "highly regrettable" by Islamabad, which said asking for such a letter violated diplomatic norms and such a requirement had not been prescribed for any other country.

However, a patient from Pakistan-administered Kashmir, seeking treatment in New Delhi for liver tumour, was given a visa on July 18.

Sushma Swaraj then said that he needed no recommendation from the Pakistani government for a medical visa because the territory "is an integral part of India".

Since August 15, however, Pakistani nationals seeking medical treatment have not been denied visas.

Allegations relating to Rafale deal shameful: Nirmala Sitharaman



NEW DELHI: Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Friday that allegations relating to the procurement deal for 36 Rafale fighter jet were "shameful" and that such bickering was a "disservice" to the armed forces. Her remarks came a day after the Congress accused the prime minister of changing the "entire deal" to benefit a businessman. "These allegations are shameful...The deal was finalised following a transparent procedure," Sitharaman told reporters.

The defence minister also called the bickering against the deal as "disservice" to the armed forces, asserting that urgent requirement of the Indian Air Force was the main reason for sealing it. The defence minister said the final agreement for 36 Rafale jets was signed in September, 2016, after five rounds of lengthy discussions between Indian and French sides and approval by the Cabinet Committee on Security. She said the UPA government had sat over the proposed procurement of jets for 10 years.

Gujarat polls: BJP releases list of 70 candidates

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday released a list of 70 candidates for the Gujarat Assembly elections.

"The Central Election Committee of the party held a meeting with party chief Amit Shah," a press release read. The names that were decided by the Committee included Vijay Rupani, Nitinbhai Patel, Jitu Vaghani, Vasantbhai Ahir, Shankarbai Chaudhary and more.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and others.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Congress Central Election Committee meeting to select candidates for Gujarat elections was postponed for today.

The elections in Gujarat will be held in two phases on December 9 and 14.

Woman journalist molested in Delhi, accused arrested

NEW DELHI: A 25-year-old journalist has been molested by a man at the ITO Metro Station in Central capital.

The CCTV footage, which caught the incident, showed the man molesting the woman entering the station after which she ran after the accused.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Metro) Pankaj Singh told ANI, "The incident happened on the night of November 13,

When a female reporter was molested. A case has been registered in this regard and the accused caught."

The DCP said that the accused,



who was present in the ITO Metro Station, works in a tea stall located outside the station.

"On the basis of the CCTV footage, we formed teams and searched all areas and finally, arrested the culprit," DCP Singh told ANI.

When asked if the accused was a serial offender, the DCP said: "There is no past criminal records against him."

He said a total of five teams were involved to arrest the accused and was finally caught in the next 48 hours of the incident.

"We had shown his (accused) photograph to more than 5000 people, and were able to identify

him," he added.

To beef up security in the area, DCP Singh added that they have requested the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to increase their strength in that area.

"Metro Police has also opened 23 booths to help in such cases. We have also created our teams to patrol on major lines," he added.

Delhi is said to be unsafe for women and is considered as the "rape capital" of India.

Earlier on November 2, a man was arrested and sent to judicial custody for molesting his four-year-old daughter in New Delhi's Amar Colony.

Irani corners Tharoor over his 'Maharajas' remarks



NEW DELHI: Union Minister Smriti Irani, on Friday took a jibe at Congress leader Shashi Tharoor for his comments on kings amidst the row over film 'Padmavati'.

She targeted Tharoor for his observation about ongoing protest by the descendants of Rajput rulers over Sanjay Leela Bhansali's movie 'Padmavati'.

Tharoor had reportedly said that the so-called 'maharajas', (kings) who have been after a filmmaker (Sanjay Leela Bhansali) by claiming that their honour is at stake, actually ran away when the British crushed their self-respect and honour. Commenting on Tharoor's observation, Irani tweeted: "Did all the Maharajs (kings) kneel in front of the British? What will Jyotiraditya Scindia, Diggi Raja (Digvijaya Singh) and Amarinder Singh say on Shashi Tharoor's comments?" The Congress party leaders, Scindia, Digvijaya Singh and Amarinder Singh hail from the royal families.

However, when the issue snowballed, Tharoor took to Twitter to clarify his comments.

"I am dismayed that some BJP supporters are claiming I attacked Rajput honour. I spoke about the Maharajahs who made their accommodations w/ (with) the British. I have never made a communal comment in my life."

He further added that Rajput valour is not questionable. "As for specific concerns of the Rajput community, people's sentiments must be respected in the interests of India's diversity & harmony. Rajput valour is part of our history & is not in question. BJP & its censors should take these concerns into account," Tharoor tweeted.

Sanjay Leela Bhansali's movie 'Padmavati' is in the eye of the storm over the portrayal of Rajput queen Padmavati. The period drama, starring Deepika Padukone, Ranveer Singh, and Shahid Kapoor has been facing protests from various groups, including Shree Rajput Karni Sena, for allegedly tampering with historical facts.

be released at any cost. She is not the president of this nation. She is trying to provoke us. I, the founder of Rajput Karni Sena, am saying that this film will not be released." He added he condemned Sanjay Leela Bhansali for even using Rani Padmavati's name. "If I ever meet him I will ask him to not use my mother's name, i.e. Rani Padmavati. I will not tolerate this," Kalvi said. He further



said it was not only the Karni Sena, but everyone in the society who was coming forward to speak against this film. "Now I will request Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take a stand and stop this film from being released. The Centre needs to decide what has to be done here," Kalvi added. Earlier on Thursday, a member of the Sena said if need be, an action would be taken against Padukone. Speaking to ANI, Mahipal Singh Makrana said, "The Rajput Karni Sena is fighting to protect the image of women being portrayed in the films. We never raise a hand on women but if need be, we will do to Deepika what Lakshman did to Shurpanakha for violating the rules and culture of India." Earlier, Kalvi said the Sena would gather in lakhs and call for a nationwide shutdown on December

ernance again and again, election after election. The BJP had governments in six states till 2014. We have 18 state governments now and by next month we will hopefully have 19," he said.

The Union Minister further said the upgrade would create a lot of confidence among the investors. "The investors will be sure that their money is safe.

They will get a reasonable return and it has a good market of billion plus people aspiring for better quality of life. We will see more money coming into the country.

The rupee will get stronger. I think we are entering into the golden era of growth and prosperity of this country," he said.

Earlier in the day, Moody upgraded India's sovereign rating to Baa2 from Baa3 and changed the

outlook to stable from positive, thus providing a much-needed impetus to the Modi government.

Reports suggest that the global rating company said the reforms undertaken by the government would lead to an enhanced business environment, fuelling the foreign and domestic investment, and subsequently the growth momentum. It also noted that the reforms implemented reduced the risk of a sharp increase in debt, even in potential downside scenarios.

However, Moody argued that measures such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), demonetisation, and others would need time to settle in, and the impact would be witnessed in due course of time. It also claimed that India's growth potential superseded that of many other sovereign nations.

PM Modi reviews performance of key infrastructure projects

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday reviewed progress of key infrastructure projects including Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), housing, coal and power. The review meeting, which lasted for about two and a half hours, was attended by top officials from PMO, NITI Aayog and infrastructure Ministries.

In course of the presentation made by the CEO of NITI Aayog, it was noted that remarkable progress has been made in several areas. "Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, 81 per cent of the targeted habitations numbering about 1.45 lakh have so far been connected," said the CEO.

The officials said that progress is being made towards connecting all the remaining unconnected habitations within a defined timeframe.

"The Prime Minister observed that resources available for this work should be used optimally throughout the year. He also hoped that the advancement of the Union Budget date would lead to further improvement in performance," said a press statement.

Prime Minister Modi was informed of the expeditious resolution of complaints received on the 'Meri Sadak App'. He called for detailed analysis of the complaints, so that timely remedial measures are initiated wherever required.

Reviewing progress towards the roadmap to deliver one crore houses in the rural areas by 2019.

"The positive impact of housing on the lives of the beneficiaries should be suitably examined, and the focus should be on improving their quality of life," said Prime Minister Modi.

Reviewing the coal sector, the Prime Minister called for renewed efforts towards underground mining and coal gasification, through infusion of latest technology inputs.

Prime Minister Modi was also informed about progressing towards the targets for rural electrification and household electrification.

Piyush Goyal credits PM Modi's 'good governance' for Moody's rating upgrade

NEW DELHI: Union Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said the upgrade in Moody's sovereign rating for India to Baa2 was the result of the good governance of the ruling party in the country, crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

Talking to ANI, Goyal said the measures like the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and demonetisation when put together have proven to be a leap towards good governance, and welfare of the people of India.

"This is only a confirmation that Prime Minister Modi and his government has consistently focussed on good governance. We have focussed to deliver to the people of India a better quality of life. We have continued to stay on the path of good physical consolidation, creating a macro-economic situation which



will strengthen India's growth for decades in the future," Goyal said. Goyal said the upgrade was due to the efforts of the ruling party that

India was being recognised by international agencies.

"The people of India have voted for Prime Minister Modi's good gov-

Deepika is not India's president to make orders: Lokendra Kalvi

PATNA: Rajput Karni Sena chief Lokendra Singh Kalvi on Friday lashed out at actress Deepika Padukone, saying she was not the president of India to roll out orders on the release of the movie 'Padmavati'.

Speaking to ANI, Kalvi said, "Who will tolerate the fact that Rani Padmavati is being shown as the lover of Allauddin Khilji? Deepika Padukone, in her statement, said that the film would

be released at any cost. She is not the president of this nation. She is trying to provoke us. I, the founder of Rajput Karni Sena, am saying that this film will not be released." He added he condemned Sanjay Leela Bhansali for even using Rani Padmavati's name. "If I ever meet him I will ask him to not use my mother's name, i.e. Rani Padmavati. I will not tolerate this," Kalvi said. He further



said it was not only the Karni Sena, but everyone in the society who was coming forward to speak against this film. "Now I will request Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take a stand and stop this film from being released. The Centre needs to decide what has to be done here," Kalvi added. Earlier on Thursday, a member of the Sena said if need be, an action would be taken against Padukone. Speaking to ANI, Mahipal Singh Makrana said, "The Rajput Karni Sena is fighting to protect the image of women being portrayed in the films. We never raise a hand on women but if need be, we will do to Deepika what Lakshman did to Shurpanakha for violating the rules and culture of India." Earlier, Kalvi said the Sena would gather in lakhs and call for a nationwide shutdown on December

1. "Our ancestors wrote history with blood, hence, we will not let anyone blacken it," the Sena chief added. The Sarv Brahmin Mahasabha members also protested against the film in Jaipur and filed signatures with blood to be sent to the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The protests have turned even more violent, as acts of vandalism in Rajasthan's Kota were reported on Tuesday.

NEW VACCINE THAT BOOSTS IMMUNITY SHOWS PROMISE IN FIGHT AGAINST BREAST CANCER

An experimental vaccine is safe and effectively stimulates the immune system leading to regression of early-stage breast cancer, show results of a clinical trial.

The researchers created the vaccine from immune cells called dendritic cells that are harvested from each individual patient to create a personalised vaccine. The immune cell vaccine targets the HER2 protein on breast cancer cells. The HER2 protein is over-expressed in 20-25 per cent of all breast cancer tumors and is associated with aggressive disease and poor prognosis.

Researchers had previously shown that immune cells are less able to recognise and target can-

cer cells that express HER2 as breast cancer progresses into a more advanced and invasive stage.

This suggests that strategies that can restimulate the immune system to recognise and target HER2 early during cancer development may be effective treatment options.

In order to determine if the HER2-dendritic cell vaccine is safe and effective, the researchers Moffitt Cancer Centre in Florida, US, performed a clinical trial on 54 women who have HER2-expressing early-stage breast cancer.

The dendritic cell vaccines were prepared by isolating dendritic cells from each patient's blood and exposing them



to fragments of the HER2 protein.

Patients were injected with a dose of their personal dendritic cell vaccine once a week for six weeks into either a lymph node, the breast tumour, or into both sites.

In a study published in the journal *Clinical Cancer Research*, the researchers reported that the dendritic cell vaccines were well-tolerated and patients only experienced low-grade toxicities.

The most common adverse events were fatigue, injection site reactions, and chills. They also showed that the vaccine was able to stimulate an immune response in majority of the patients.

We are staring at a new danger: Nearly 76% of world population is 'overfat'

With nearly 76% of the world's population becoming 'overfat', it has become the new pandemic that has quietly overtaken the world, a study has shown. 'Overfat' has been defined as a condition of having sufficient excess body fat to impair health.

"This is a global concern because of its strong association with rising chronic disease and climbing healthcare costs, affecting people of all ages and incomes," said lead author Philip Maffetone, CEO of MAFF Fitness in Australia. In addition to those who are overweight and obese, others falling into the overfat category include normal-weight people, the researchers said. "The overfat category includes normal-weight people with increased risk factors for chronic disease, such as high abdominal fat and those with characteristics of a condition called normal-weight metabolic obesity," Maffetone added. "The overfat pandemic has not spared those who exercise or even compete in sports," he said.

While the obesity epidemic has grown considerably over the last three to four decades, the study casts light on the much higher numbers of people who may have unhealthy levels of body fat. It also indicates that 9-10% of the world population may be underfat. "While we think of the condition of underfat as being due to starvation, those worldwide numbers are dropping rapidly. However, an ageing population, an increase in chronic disease and a rising number of excessive exercisers or those with anorexia athletica, are adding to the number of non-starving underfat individuals," Maffetone explained.

This leaves as little as 14% of the world's population with normal body-fat percentage, showed the study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*.

From ultratherapy to cryolipolysis: Wellness trends to watch out for in 2017

Experts foresee several trends, including the return to basic foods and group exercising, this year. They also predict that the holistic approach to wellness will also gain popularity, and not only among wellness enthusiasts, but also the general public, as the understanding of the mind-body connect and awareness about mental health increases. Here is a list of trends that could make a mark in 2017.

Functional training

"Bored of the monotonous gym workout sessions? That's where functional workouts step in. They help burn calories, are well-suited for your daily activities, and can be altered as per your convenience," says Swapneel Hazare, fitness expert, ProSport Fitness Centre, Lower Parel and Andheri (W).

Hazare adds that group workout such as spinning (cycling classes in a group) will also gain popularity this year.

This year, people will want to eat home-cooked meals over healthy shop-bought or restaurant food, predict experts.

"Brown bread, wheat pasta and oats are passé. The latest preference for people includes wholewheat, bajra, jowar and nachni rotis. Rather than buying ready-made stuff, which is fresh, fast to cook and healthy, people will prefer to cook at home," says Sheela Tanna, dietician and fitness expert, Criticare Hospital, Juhu.

You got it wrong always: Study says sugar-free drinks do not help in weight loss

Been drinking up on sugar-free and diet drinks for years thinking it will help you lose weight? Change your habit now because results of a new study suggests there is no evidence these drinks help in weight loss as is generally believed. In fact, the research also suggests they may actually have "detrimental impacts" on health and environment.

Academics from Imperial College London and two Brazilian universities - University of Sao Paulo and Federal University of Pelotas - argue that sugar-free versions of soft drinks may be no better in preventing weight gain than their full sugar counterparts. "A common perception, which may be influenced by industry marketing, is that because 'diet' drinks have no sugar they must be healthier and aid weight loss when used as a substitute for full-sugar versions. However, we found no solid evidence to support this," said Professor Christopher Millett, senior investigator at Imperial College London's School of Public Health.



The findings, published in the journal *PLoS Medicine*, say the combined factors of what goes into artificially sweetened drinks, how they are consumed, and their environmental impact mean that "far from helping to solve the global obesity crisis (they are) a potential risk factor for highly prevalent chronic diseases."

According to the authors, while

some studies show no weight loss, others show a small loss, but those studies were not always well done and were often funded by the soft drinks industry. The study says that "given their negligible nutritional benefits and potential detrimental health impacts", the environmental impact of manufacturing artificially sweetened drinks should be taken into account.

It takes 150-300 litres of water to make one litre of drink and there is considerable solid waste and cumulative chemical pollution, it said. However, Alison Tedstone, chief nutritionist at Public Health England, said, "swapping to low or no sugar drinks goes some way" to managing calorie intake and weight. "It's especially important for young people as they consume three times the amount recommended, mostly from soft drinks. However, maintaining a healthy weight takes more than just swapping one product for another. Calories consumed should match calories used, so looking at the whole diet is very important," she said.

Global beverage companies have been investing in soft drinks, flavoured water, juices and ready-to-drink tea and coffee containing artificial sweeteners in response to the obesity crisis and the outcry over sugar. According to World Health Organisation, the sugar should not be more than 10% of people's energy intake, and preferably lower than 5%.

Work email overload: Can the new French labour law lead a fightback?

Beatrice, a busy 50-year-old manager at an airline in Paris, sounds like she would benefit from France's new "right to disconnect" law that guarantees all employees freedom from their work smartphone and email.

"It often happens that I'm interrupted by urgent problems in my free time, or need to reply to emails out of hours," she said. "No one forces me to do it, but I get work email on my telephone and other managers have the same thing," she added.

From January 1, French companies with more than 50 employees must work up a charter defining employees' right to switch off. No sanctions are foreseen for non-compliance but an employee

could sue for having their rights infringed.

The new labour law in a country famous for its tightly regulated workplace was prompted by the blurring of the boundary between work and private life by new technology and ways of working.

Requests from Beatrice's team of six intruded frequently into a recent holiday, meaning she couldn't switch off as she would have liked to. "I could have said 'I don't care', but then it puts other people in difficulty," she confided.

While generally aware of potential health problems for employees, the company is trying hard to cut costs, she says. The result is senior managers want the same outcome with fewer people.

Work addicts

Yet others believe that it is not simply over-demanding bosses who are to blame for them checking mail during dinner or before going to bed, illustrating the difficulty of regulating how people work in their own time.

Some confess that their own work ethic and ambition spurs them on, or simply a lack of willpower to ignore unopened mail.

Mathilde, a 26-year-old employee of a cultural agency in the Opera area of central Paris, says she over-checks her messages due to curiosity rather than pressure. "If there was an expectation (that I'd reply), then it would make me anxious," she said.

A hard-charging young bank-

er who works on mergers and acquisitions says his employer cuts access to work email for his team from 10:00pm to 6:00am every night to prevent over-work.

"It's a choice whether you check your phone or not. Telling me I have to switch off pisses me off," the 24-year-old admitted before striding off in his suit.

Collective action needed

Peter Fleming, an expert on the workplace at the University of London, says many employees suffer from the "hard-work culture" of their companies, but also an "obsessive attachment to their work identity."

"For many people, a job has moved from something we do and become something that we are,"

he said. "24/7 email really amplifies that trend."

Company-wide policies on disconnecting -- whether prompted by the law in France or by companies themselves elsewhere -- are therefore welcome and in some cases necessary.

Fleming says the ambitious MBA business students at his university would be instinctively opposed to disconnecting out-of-hours because they would be worried about being judged harshly.

"It has to be collective, not individual. If I know that all my co-workers aren't connected, then I might not be too," he said.

People working in the finance, technology, law or health professions are seen as particularly vul-

nerable to the risks of overload and burnout, but an increasing number of top companies are waking up to the risks.

Words into practice

It is no coincidence that telecom group Orange was asked to help draft France's "right to disconnect" legislation after a scandal over 35 suicides among its workforce in 2008-09.

The company, working with trade unions, drew up new guidance on disconnecting in September, three months before the law came into force, group human resources director Jerome Barre said.

Orange's 1,500,000 employees now benefit from a promise they will not be penalised for failing to check email out of the office. Ev-

eryone is discouraged from sending messages outside working hours.

Managers are being trained to understand that "if a boss sends an email in the middle of the weekend his employees will feel obliged to reply", Barre said.

At the same time, no one is prevented from catching up on work at home and the rules contain flexibility for people who work remotely or unusual hours.

"If in my personal way of working it's more comfortable for me to finish something at the weekend, we can't ban it," Barre explained.

"But I don't necessarily have to send the result of my work on Sunday night. It can wait until Monday morning."

CHOOSE YOUR HOUSE WISELY: LIVING NEAR HEAVY TRAFFIC MEANS HIGHER DEMENTIA RISK

Planning to buy a house or looking for one to rent? Read this before you finalise the deal. According to researchers in Canada, people who live near busy roads laden with heavy traffic face a higher risk of developing dementia than those living further away.

A study published in *The Lancet medical journal* found that people who lived within 50 metres (55 yards) of high-traffic roads had a 7% higher chance of developing dementia compared to those who lived more than 300 metres away

from busy roadways. "Air pollutants can get into the blood stream and lead to inflammation, which is linked with cardiovascular disease and possibly other conditions such as diabetes. This study suggests air pollutants that can get into the brain via the blood stream can lead to neurological problems," said Ray Copes, an environmental and occupational health expert at Public Health Ontario (PHO) who conducted the study with colleagues from Canada's Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences.

Dementia is caused by brain diseases, most commonly Alzheimer's disease, which result in the loss of brain cells and affect memory, thinking, behaviour, navigational and spatial abilities and the ability to perform everyday activities. The World Health Organisation estimates the number of people with dementia in 2015 at 47.5 million, and that total is rising rapidly as life expectancy increases and societies age. The incurable condition is a leading cause of disability and dependency, and is starting to over-

take heart disease as a cause of death in some developed countries.

Chen's team analysed records of more than 6.5 million Ontario residents aged 20 to 85 and found 243,611 cases of dementia between 2001 and 2012. Then they mapped residents' proximity to major roadways using postal codes. The increase in the risk of developing dementia went down to 4% if people lived 50 to 100 metres from major traffic, and to 2% if they lived within 101 to 200 metres. At more than 200 metres, the elevated risk faded away.

Constant headache making life difficult for you? This could be a big reason

Deficiency in the levels of Vitamin D may increase the risk of chronic headache in middle-aged and older men, according to a new study. The findings showed that individuals with the lowest vitamin D levels had over a two-fold risk of chronic headache in comparison to the those with the highest levels. Vitamin D deficiency has also been associated with chronic tension-type headache, perhaps by causing musculoskeletal

pain. Previous studies have found Vitamin D to play a role in various neurovascular diseases. The study adds to the accumulating body of evidence linking a low intake of vitamin D to an increased risk of chronic diseases, said researchers from the University of Eastern Finland.

For the study, the team analysed the serum vitamin D levels and occurrence of headache in approximately 2,600 men aged between 42 and 60 years. In 68% of these men, the serum vitamin D level was below 50 nanomoles per litre (nmol/L), which is generally considered the threshold for vitamin D deficiency. People with low exposure to UVB radiation -- a major source of vitamin D -- should make sure that they get sufficient vitamin D from food or from vitamin D supplements, the researchers suggested.

Arun Jaitley on Moody's rating: Those who doubt reforms should introspect after upgrade

NEW DELHI: Political leaders and government officials on Friday reacted to Moody's India upgrade, with Union finance minister Arun Jaitley saying it is "encouraging" to see international recognition.

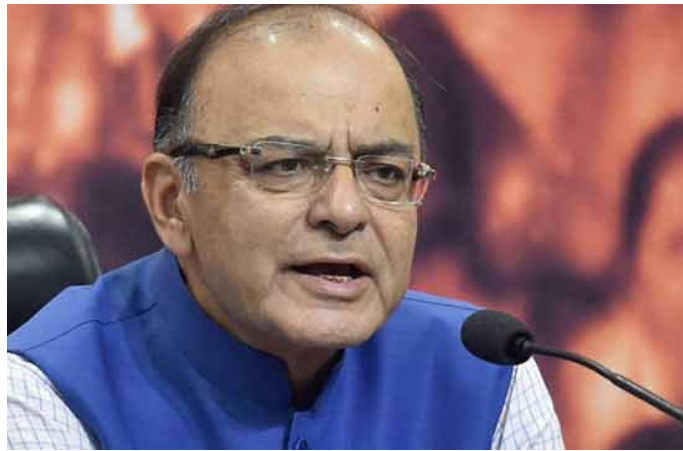
"We welcome this upgrade, we believe that it is a belated recognition of all the positive steps which have been taken in India in the last few years, which has contributed to strengthening of Indian economy," said Jaitley at a press conference on Friday.

"Many who had doubts about

India's reform process would now seriously introspect on their position," Jaitley added.

For the first time in nearly 14 years, the US-based Moody's on Friday upgraded India's sovereign rating to Baa2 with a stable outlook, from Baa3 earlier. BJP president Amit Shah and Goa chief minister Manohar Parrikar were among the leaders who hailed Modi's policies as the Prime Minister's Office posted the news from its Twitter handle.

"Acknowledging PM Narendra Modi's government for its wide-



-ranging economic and institutional reforms, Moody's upgrades India's government bond ratings to BAA2 from BAA3 -- first ever upgrade since the year 2004," tweeted Union minister Smriti Irani. "It's a welcome development but we also feel it was long overdue... it's a recognition of the actions that the government has undertaken like GST, bankruptcy. We also need to keep all these things in perspective," chief economic adviser Arvind Subramanian reacted. Economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said the

upgrade is definitely a big vindication of the structural and institutional reforms that India is doing.

"The fiscal deficit consolidation, debt control and all so everything which the government has done in the past couple of years have been recognised. They are projecting a little rise in the trajectory going forward, so they are conscious of the real dynamics of the debt situation. We, of course, remain committed to the fiscal path," Garg said. Many supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi view the upgrade as a recognition of the

government's economic reforms, such as the Goods and Services Tax and the bankruptcy code. On Wednesday, the Pew Research Center said Modi was "by far" the most popular figure in Indian politics, according to a survey conducted among 2,464 respondents. Finance secretary Hasmukh Adhia also said the path that the government has chosen for long-term reforms and fiscal consolidation is well recognised by investors already. "The rating agency too has now confirmed it formally, which is welcome," Adhia tweeted.

Kuwait's Jazeera Airways connects to India with daily flights to Hyderabad

NEW DELHI: Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low cost airline, operating regionally and internationally, inaugurated today its daily flights to Hyderabad. Upon arrival in India, Jazeera Airways held a joint press conference with GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd. (GHIAL), which operates Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad, bringing together media partners, travel agents from Kuwait and Hyderabad and other distinguished guests. Kochi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad will follow in early 2018 as the airline expands its network to serve its Indian sub-continent targeting nearly 1 million Indian nationals residing in Kuwait.

Flight J9 608 departed on November 16th at 18:40 pm from Kuwait International Airport and landed in Hyderabad at 01:35 am this morning. The return flight J9 608 will depart Hyderabad at 02.20 am and arrive in Kuwait at 05.10 am.

The new evening route has a weekly capacity of 4,000 seats and allows passengers to conveniently enjoy a full day at their destination. To mark the special occasion, all 165 passengers flying from Kuwait to Hyderabad received a gift box of traditional Kuwaiti sweets.

"This is a proud moment for us marking the expansion of our network into India. We are delighted to start with Hyderabad, a 400-year old city and a technology hub, bringing more



choice to Indian travelers, connecting them to Kuwait, Riyadh, Jeddah, Bahrain and Dubai. In addition, we offer for religious travelers connections to Taif in KSA, Najaf (Iraq), Mashad (Iran) and Amman for the Holy Land," said CEO of Jazeera Airways, Rohit Ramchandran.

"This new service will address surging travel demands with low cost fares at convenient frequencies for leisure, business or religious travel. India is a financial and tourist powerhouse and we are eager to capitalize on the enormous opportunities ahead," added Ramchandran.

"We welcome Jazeera Airways to Hyderabad and we are very happy to note that they have chosen Hyderabad Airport as their first Indian destina-

tion. We are confident that this will further boost the tourism potential between India and various tourist destinations in the Middle East including Kuwait, Iran, Jordan and Egypt among others. With the largest domestic network in the region, Hyderabad Airport is best placed to serve as the Gateway to South and Central India and the launch of this new service to Kuwait by Jazeera Airways is a testament to this fact," said CEO GHIAL, SGK Kishore.

Hyderabad Airport has witnessed 15.24 Million Passengers Per Annum in FY2016-17, registering a growth of approx. 22 percent in overall passenger traffic and 23% growth in air traffic movements over FY2015-16. With its extensive route network and

choice of airlines for its passengers, RGIA has firmly established itself as the 'Gateway of Choice' in South and Central Indian region. As a result, RGIA has recorded a 56 percent growth in domestic transfer passengers in FY17 and over FY16.

Now nine domestic carriers connect Hyderabad with 39 domestic destinations. The airport also connects 17 international destinations with 17 foreign and three Indian carriers.

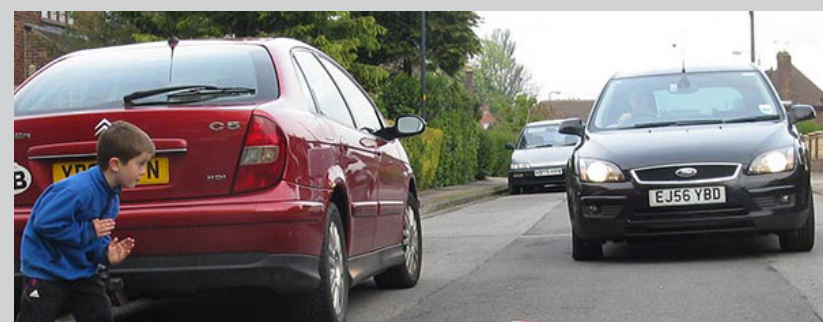
Flying to over 20 destinations across the Middle East, Europe and India, Jazeera Airways operates a reliable fleet of 8 Airbus A320 aircrafts currently. It provides a refined business lounge, on-board meals, high frequency of flights, a unique 'Park and Fly' with valet parking, a baggage allowance of 30kg-50kg per passenger, recently refurbished cabin interiors coupled with a bold new livery and stylish new crew uniforms.

In 2018, Jazeera Airways is expected to inaugurate its own dedicated terminal at Kuwait International Airport.

Jazeera Airways has been internationally renowned as the number one airline in the region and number two in the world for On-Time-Performance by the world's leading air travel intelligence company, OAG.

It is also the recipient of the 'Low Cost Airline of the Year' Award at the Aviation Business Awards in Dubai recognizing Jazeera Airways' best value flights and service in the region

Develop road safety culture among corporate employees, says FICCI-EY report



NEW DELHI: Indian companies need to promote and get serious about road safety culture among their employees, a recent report by FICCI-EY has said. 25 percent of 4.8 lakh road accidents happen during work-related commuting in India every year.

It is also important that companies develop a culture that fosters and inspires road safety among its employees. Investing in road safety programs for employees can benefit the corporate by improving employee safety, protecting their own assets, decreasing productivity losses and enhancing the company's perception in the eyes of its own employees.

"FICCI believes that involving India Inc. can further boost the efforts of the government. The United Nations has proclaimed 2011-20 as the Decade of Action on Road Safety, hence there is a need for collective action by the

Government, Industry and Civil Society". G K Pillai Chairman, FICCI Committee on Homeland Security said. Also, a government-corporate collaboration for road safety initiatives may result in a win-win situation.

The government can benefit from innovation, data, reach and financial resources of businesses while businesses can benefit from safer roads, better laws and vehicle standards for increased road safety of their employees. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) had said that the impact of road accidents on the Indian economy was three percent of its GDP in the year 2015.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic injuries are the seventh leading cause of death in India. India accounts for 10% of global road deaths.

SEBI to investigate possible leak of company earnings in WhatsApp group chats

MUMBAI: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) market regulator will investigate possible leaks of company earnings in social media chat rooms, its chief Ajay Tyagi said on Friday, following a Reuters report this week that revealed prescient messages being posted in private groups.

The Reuters investigation documented at least 12 cases of prescient messages about major Indian companies being posted in WhatsApp groups limited to traders.

"We will certainly investigate the issue. It is a work in progress," Tyagi, chairman of SEBI, India's market regulator, told Reuters, when asked what action the regulator was considering.

India beefed up insider trading rules in early 2015, expanding what constitutes "unpublished price-sensitive information" to include "any information" that is not "generally available" and that could have a market impact.

SEBI also set up a panel in August



headed by a former federal senior bureaucrat, TK Viswanathan, to suggest measures to improve market surveillance and help prevent possible insider trading and market manipulation.

Last year, SEBI proposed a ban on sharing trading tips and stock-specific recommendations through bulk messages, emails, blogs and social media such as WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook,

unless one is registered as an investment adviser. The regulator said the general public was lured by the tips and their investment decisions were influenced by messages that solicit investments and promise unrealistic returns.

It has also cranked up its investor awareness drive to prevent the public from falling to scams and to boost retail investment in financial markets.

Tata Sons elevates Bhaskar Bhat, Saurabh Agrawal to its board

MUMBAI: Tata Sons on Friday elevated its group CFO Saurabh Agrawal and group company Titan's managing director Bhaskar Bhat as directors on the board of the group. "We welcome Bhaskar and Saurabh to the board of directors," Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran said in a statement. "The board will benefit from the tremendous experience and knowledge of these professionals in multiple domains. I look forward to working with them," he added. Bhat has helped the group jewellery and watch brand Titan drive brand value and a market cap of USD 10 billion, while Agrawal brings deep capital market knowledge and valuable cross industry experience to the Tata group, the statement said.

The over USD105 billion Tata group operates in more than 100 countries across six continents.

Sixty-six percent of the equity share



capital of Tata Sons is held by philanthropic trusts, which support education, health, livelihood generation and art and culture. In 2016-17, Tata companies collectively employ over 695,000 people.

There are 29 publicly-listed Tata enterprises with a combined market capitalisation of about USD 130.13 billion (as of March 31 2017). These include Tata Consultancy Services,

Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Tata Power, Tata Chemicals, Tata Global Beverages, Tata Teleservices, Titan, Tata Communications and Indian Hotels.

India, Russia discuss ways to boost trade, investments

NEW DELHI: India and Russia have discussed ways to boost bilateral trade and investments to strengthen economic ties, the commerce ministry said on Friday.

Commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu met Russia's Minister for Economic Development Maxim Oreshkin in Moscow on Thursday and discussed the current level of trade between the countries and ways for its enhancement.

"They also discussed opportunities that the fast growing economy of India provides for doing business, particularly in the field of manufacturing," the ministry said in a statement. Prabhu is on a visit to Russia from November 15-17, to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting of the ministers of member states responsible for foreign economy and trade. This is the first ministerial conference on trade organised by the organisation after India became a full member in June. Prabhu also met the Member of Board (Minister) for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EaEC), Veronika Nikishina and discussed early start of negotiations of the proposed free trade agreement between India and the Eurasian Economic Commission. Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are EaEC members. A joint feasibility report on the proposed agreement was completed last year. It concluded that the proposed pact is feasible and mutually beneficial with substantial potential welfare gains and augmentation of trade in goods.

Moody's backs Modi's policies, lifts India's rating after 14 years

NEW DELHI: Moody's Investors Services upgraded India's sovereign rating for the first time in nearly 14 years on Friday, saying the country was poised for fast growth because of wide-ranging economic and institutional reforms by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. The US-based agency lifted ratings on India's sovereign bonds to Baa2 from its lowest investment grade of Baa3, and also changed the outlook for the country's rating to stable from positive. Sovereign credit ratings are a barometer of a country's

credit profile and regulatory climate. A favourable rating helps governments and companies raise capital in global financial markets. Also, institutional investors rely on ratings for an indication of a country's socio-political environment before making investment decisions. The rating upgrade seen as an endorsement of a range of bold economic decision made by Prime Minister Modi, including the rollout of a landmark Goods and Services Tax that forged India into a unified market. It comes just weeks after the World Bank moved India up

30 places in its annual ease of doing business rankings. The good news will help the ruling BJP-led government tackle the narrative around the economy, which is growing at its slowest in three years, as it heads into a series of elections over the coming months. All markets including stocks, bonds and rupee rallied on the upgrade. "We believe that it is a belated recognition of all the positive steps which have been taken in India in the last few years, which has contributed to strengthening of Indian economy," finance minister Arun Jaitley

told a press conference. "Many who had doubts about India's reform process would now seriously introspect on their position." Shortly after the announcement, Modi led a chorus of ministers and policymakers who tweeted their reaction to the upgrade. "Moody's believes that the @narendramodi government's reforms will improve business climate, enhance productivity, stimulate foreign and domestic investment, and ultimately foster strong and sustainable growth," Modi tweeted. Moody's downgraded China in May, followed by Stan-

dard and Poor's (S&P) which also cut the Asian giant's sovereign rating. But Moody's warned that India's rating could be downgraded if the management of government finances slipped. "The rating could also face downward pressure if the health of the banking system deteriorated significantly or external vulnerability increased sharply," it said. The other two key global rating agencies—Standard and Poor's and Fitch Ratings—have assigned India the lowest investment grade rating with stable outlook. "The decision to upgrade

the ratings is underpinned by Moody's expectation that continued progress on economic and institutional reforms will, over time, enhance India's high growth potential..." Moody's said about India, hoping to see a gradual decline in government debts over the medium term. "In the meantime, while India's high debt burden remains a constraint on the country's credit profile, Moody's believes that the reforms put in place have reduced the risk of a sharp increase in debt, even in potential downside scenarios."

Salman Khan, Katrina Kaif to perform in ISL 2017-18 opening ceremony



KOCHI: Bollywood superstars Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif will perform at the opening ceremony of the fourth edition of the Indian Super League (ISL) here on Friday.

Salman will perform to some of his most popular numbers. He will be making a blockbuster entry on a bicycle and accompanying him on stage will be Kaif. Apart from them, as many as 350 artists will also perform to add further flavour to the occasion.

The first match of the season is between last year's finalists Kerala Blasters FC and ATK.

The gates at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium will open for fans at 3:30 p.m. sharp as Kochi welcomes the football journey for the next four months.

Muhammad Hafeez to skip Bangladesh Premier League and work on bowling action

KARACHI: Pakistan off-spinner Muhammad Hafeez has decided to skip the Bangladesh Premier League and work on his faulty bowling action after the ICC suspended him from bowling with immediate effect.

"I have decided to not go to Bangladesh to play for the Comilla Victorians and instead I will remain in Lahore and work on my bowling action before taking a biomechanics test again at a ICC accredited laboratory," Hafeez said.

Hafeez was due to join the BPL franchise on November 18. The batsman-off break bowler had his bowling action reported for a third time by ICC match officials during last month's limited over series with Sri Lanka in the UAE.

He then appeared in a biomechanics test at a centre in England but the latest report which came out on Wednesday said he had failed the test and number of his deliveries were found illegal. The ICC made it clear in a press release that Hafeez could not bowl in international cricket until his action was cleared again. The former Pakistan captain, in fact, had only resumed bowling again last December after completing a 12-month ban and getting his action cleared in Brisbane.

The ICC had banned Hafeez for a year from bowling in July, 2015 and before that also in December, 2014. The 37-year old said he was disappointed but not disheartened with the outcome of his latest test and was confident he could overcome the problem. "I will focus on why my



action has been reported again and sort things out.

For me the coming tour to New Zealand and the Pakistan Super League are very important. There is lot of cricket coming up with the national team next year," he added.

Pakistan's top off-spinner, Saeed Ajmal whose flourishing career was also derailed in 2014 when his bowling action was reported by ICC match officials is appearing in the National T20 Championship in Rawalpindi but has confirmed he will

retire from all cricket after the event is over. Ajmal managed a comeback to the national team after the World Cup in 2015 with a remodelled bowling action but has not been as effective since then.

The Pakistan Cricket Board is contemplating inviting a biomechanics expert or a former test bowler to Lahore to work with Hafeez on his bowling action.

Hafeez will be tested out at the biomechanics laboratory set up by the PCB at the LUMS university campus in Lahore.

Sources say that Hafeez is well aware that at 37 if he is not allowed to bowl in international cricket than his career could come to a premature end with more competition for places in the Pakistan team.

India vs Sri Lanka: 'Virat Kohli proud captain, would never miss a match'

NEWDELHI: Given that Virat Kohli's India is always seeking to eschew bad habits and "embrace difficult conditions" in its bid to be a top side for a considerable period of time, a conversation on fielding made sense even though India hadn't taken the field at Eden Gardens. This, after all, is the most controllable aspect of cricket, unlike batting or bowling, said R Sridhar, the fielding coach after the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka here on Friday.

"And the formula is very simple, the more you practice, the better you get... Also, the fitter the player, the better the result on the field," he said. Now out of the India squad, Suresh Raina, for example, has to tick the fitness parameters even though he is a fabulous fielder, said Sridhar.

With a series in South Africa around the corner and a lot of cricket scheduled away from home, Sridhar said strength-



ening slip fielding is "one area that can contribute to the results we want to achieve in our away Tests."

That being the case, Sridhar said slip catching is more difficult in the sub-continent. "In places where there is good carry and bounce, you know where to stand. In the sub-continent that is a challenge often because of

two-paced wickets. Then, in England, the ball wobbles," he said.

Such situations good for team spirit Sridhar said situations such as this where a team spends more time in the dressing room than on the field and is in a spot of bother forges relationships. "It is days like these that brings the team together, espe-

cially when it is in an adverse position. I always feel such days are wonderful for the team," he said. And he is hopeful of a result. "If we can get another 270 overs (three days of play), this Test can definitely get a result... If conditions remain like this and you don't know where the next run is coming from, I am sure (Mohammed) Shami and sultan of swing Bhuvneshwar Kumar would love these conditions," he said.

On Kohli and rest Like Kohli, Sridhar said a player's workload is taken into consideration when the selectors and the team management decide whether he needs rest. "Having said that each member in this team is very proud to represent their country at given opportunity. Knowing Virat, he wears his pride on his sleeve. As long as his body allows, he would not miss a single second of a match," said Sridhar.

ISL 2017: First target to make play-offs - Chennaiyin FC coach John Gregory

CHENNAI: Chennaiyin FC coach John Gregory on Friday said the team had a good pre-season ahead of the fourth season of Indian Super League adding the first target will be to make the play-offs. (ISL 2017-18 COVERAGE)

"The pre-season has been very good. But it is all about what happens on Sunday. We always set targets that are reachable. The first target is a position in the play-offs," he said at a press meet here, referring to the team's first game against FC Goa on November 19 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. "I have got a fantastic group of players. It takes a few weeks to get a good understanding on the field.

We have been working hard and played a lot of matches. Results don't mean a great deal. I learnt a lot from the matches that we played in. All starts on Sunday. That is when it matters," he added.

He said the weather in Chennai, which has received rains in the past few weeks made it difficult to train and the team spent a week in Pune, where facilities were excellent. "When we got together some six weeks ago, November 19 seemed a long way ahead of us. We had suffered a little bit because of the weather here in Chennai. We spent over a week in Pune, because of the slightly better weather and training facilities. It has been a great pre-season for us," he said.

The Chennaiyin FC coach said the pre-season training had offered an opportunity for him to get to know the players and also tell them what the goal was.

"It was an opportunity for me and the players to get accustomed to one another. Generally it has been an enjoyable period. I wanted them to know exactly what we are trying to achieve this season. Obviously the real work starts from Sunday,"



he said. He also said the team had played a pre-season game against another ISL outfit FC Pune City a few days ago, which finished 2-2.

"We played against Pune City a few days ago. It was a pre-season game offered to us. I was a little nervous about playing against them ahead of the tournament. At the end of the day it was important to play. Obviously, we got the chance to use very good facilities.

We finished 2-2. We certainly got a lot out of it," Gregory said.

The former England player said he was happy with the group of players Chennaiyin had and there was a balance to it. "Domestic players always look up to the foreign players for guidance. We have a lot of young players in Chennaiyin as you know. There is a really good balance and training has been great. The camaraderie has been good," he added.

Dwelling on the poor show in last year's ISL, Gregory said it was a bad one but hoped for better times.

"I'm following a legend (Marco Materazzi) here. He is a tough act to follow and we hope to have a good season. It was a bad year last for our club. But we set such high standards in the first and second years. It was disappointing to finish 7th," he said.

Roger Federer calls chances of reclaiming top tennis ranking 'unrealistic'

LONDON: Roger Federer admits earning the year-end world number one ranking is no longer a realistic ambition despite his remarkable renaissance this year.

Federer is already certain to finish behind Rafael Nadal in the final rankings of 2017, but the world number two appears poised to push his old rival for top spot next year.

If Federer wins this week's ATP Finals -- he is through to the semi-finals -- he will finish the year just 140 points behind Nadal. Having won the Australian Open and a record eighth Wimbledon title this year, Federer could have been forgiven for targeting another spell at number one.

But the 36-year-old has already spent a record 302 weeks in his career in pole position and he doesn't believe the year-end crown is a target worth chasing hard because of the strain it would put on his body.

Federer has a carefully chosen schedule in which he doesn't play as many tournaments as his rivals in a bid to peak at the Grand Slams. It worked to perfection this year and he said: "Look, it's not a realistic goal in some ways, the world number one. It is interesting. It's the ultimate achievement in tennis in some ways, it always has been for me." But at this age, it just can't be because I think I'll make mistakes if I start chasing it. "I'm not sure how much the body allows me to chase goals like this. "Maybe if I start thinking about it too often and too much, I think I'm maybe also not playing the way I'm supposed to be playing.

"Maybe I tense up, maybe I'm nervous, maybe that's not good for my back. Who knows what it is."

Federer could overtake Nadal early in the 2018, although as the Australian Open champion, he will be defending 2,000 points in Melbourne in January, meaning he would need a strong showing in the year's first Grand Slam to put pressure on the Spaniard. The 19-time major winner's decision to skip the recent Paris Masters ended his number one bid this year, but he says he has no qualms about that decision. No regrets.

"Regrets? I don't have any. But maybe losing to Tommy Haas (in Stuttgart) and Evgeny Donskoy (in Dubai) ended up haunting me," he said. "I had match points in both matches. It's not like I didn't try. "So I'm just happy I'm playing a great season. I'm so happy that I was able to reach this level of play and still being able to play also at the end of the year. "I totally exceeded my expectations. I'm just happy that I'm injury-free and healthy right now and enjoying myself still. "With a seventh ATP Finals title in his sights as he prepares for Saturday's semi-finals, Federer is more focused on the present than any future goals, or the constant speculation about when he will retire.

Quizzed on whether he would still be playing at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, he admitted he didn't realise he would need to play at least two Davis Cup ties for Switzerland to be eligible for the Games.

Cristiano Ronaldo says Real Madrid are not afraid of Paris Saint-Germain

NEW YORK: Cristiano Ronaldo insisted he and reigning two-time Champions League winners Real Madrid are not afraid of French giants Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in Europe.

Following their shock defeat to Tottenham earlier this month, Real Madrid face the prospect of finishing second in Group H, which would pit the defending champions against a European powerhouse. PSG have already qualified for the knockout round with two matchdays remaining and loom as a potential opponent in the last 16, but four-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo is not scared. "I'm not afraid of Paris Saint-Germain," Ronaldo told L'Equipe.

"We're the defending champions, two years in a row, we have to respect that.

"We would prefer to finish first in the group, but the most important thing first of all is qualification. "It has been an unconvincing start to the season for Ronaldo and Madrid.

After claiming the LaLiga and Champions League double last season, Madrid find themselves third in Spain and eight points adrift of arch-rivals Barcelona.

Ronaldo has only scored once in LaLiga this term, while he has six goals in the Champions League with Madrid three points behind group leaders Tottenham.

Sourav Ganguly terms India skipper Virat Kohli's support for MS Dhoni 'remarkable'

KOLKATA: Sourav Ganguly, former Indian cricket team skipper, today hailed the way current captain Virat Kohli has come out in support of an under-fire MS Dhoni in the twilight of his career.

"He (Kohli) is a fantastic captain. I don't know what he does inside dressing room or what he does tactically, as I'm too far away (from the team). I don't know what he speaks in team meetings but the way he looks after his players is remarkable," Ganguly said during a book launch here. "I keep saying about MS Dhoni and what I see of Virat on MS is fantastic. A champion player (Dhoni) who's probably on his last leg of his career and Virat coming and saying that he's my man and I want him to play. You just change a player," he added.

A few former India cricketers, including VVS Laxman and Ajit Agarkar, recently raised questions about Dhoni's T20I future, creating quite a storm in the country's cricketing circles.

Kohli, however, has said his friendship with Dhoni has grown immensely over the years and it's a blessing to have him in the side.

Ganguly said: "He's top class cricketer, one of the best India have



produced for a long long time. He reaches out, he handles it well.

"I like Virat Kohli and when I see him on the field, I sit on my sofa and watch. I've said it many times he's a champion player. When I see him captaining India, he wants to win in all conditions. He's very passionate," Ganguly lavished praise

on the current Indian skipper.

Asked about his style of captaincy, Ganguly said: "Everyone has their own style. You have to allow an individual to blossom, allow to deliver." Ganguly said his best legacy was to create the self belief of winning away matches.

"It's difficult to identify one se-

ries. We were 0-1 down and won 2-1 against Australia was remarkable in 2001," said the 45-year-old former skipper. "But I keep saying you always be judged how you do outside India.

Of all our wins, Pakistan was good as well. It's the belief we had of winning what that's the legacy. After Dravid took over captaincy, we went

to England and won there in 2007, so it's the belief we can win away," he added.

One of the most memorable wins for India under Ganguly was the 2002 NatWest final at the Lord's where the former skipper and Virender Sehwag had a 106-run stand while India were chasing 326.

Recollecting the famous NatWest final win, Ganguly said captaincy was about holding back your emotions. "We had a terrific start and then Ronnie Irani came to bowl his slow medium bowlers. I told Sehwag 'don't leave at this stage,'" he said. "Ronnie pitched it up and Sehwag scored a boundary. I told him to rotate a strike, he scored two more and also swept another. I finally stopped going at him, he understood that I was not happy.

"Later he told me 'don't get angry all those balls were 'hittable'. Captaincy is not about being boss, also about holding back your tempers."

One of the most memorable image from that final was Ganguly taking off his shirt and and twirling it wildly at the Lord's Balcony.

"Before that we had lost three finals. A lot of that expression after the game was a sigh of relief. I just got carried away," he said.