

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

WEDNESDAY

- NOVEMBER, 01, 2017
- 11 SAFFAR 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 254
- VOLUME: 03
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	21.2	2.7
JAMMU	27.3	14.5
LEH	16.5	-5.2
KARGIL	15.0	-1.6

SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 05:41 PM
SUNRISE THURSDAY: 06:51 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 23°C & 03°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

HANJURA REVIEWS PROGRESS OF PHE SCHEMES IN CHRAR-E-SHARIEF

NATIONAL | 5

SUPREME COURT REFERS ALL AADHAAR CASES TO CONSTITUTION BENCH

BUSINESS | 7

APPLE COULD DROP QUALCOMM COMPONENTS IN NEXT YEAR'S IPHONES,

SPORTS | 8

KOHLI RECLAIMS TOP SPOT IN ODI RANKINGS

Mehbooba lays stress on opening up areas to minimise people's difficulties

Pitches for tunnel construction on Razdan Pass, opening of Gurez-Astoor road

GUREZ, OCTOBER 31: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today laid stress on opening up of areas and improving communication between people to minimise their difficulties and improve their economies.

Interacting with people here today during her public outreach programme, the Chief Minister stressed the need for construction of tunnel on Razdan Pass on the Bandipore-Gurez road to make the area accessible to rest of the Valley throughout the year. She also underscored the need for opening of Gurez-Astoor road on the LoC which she said would help a great deal in soaring up the local economies and minimising the difficulties of people living in these areas.

Mehbooba Mufti also underscored the need for improving road network for and within Gurez Valley to let people connect with each other. She also directed administration to expedite the process of extending mobile



connectivity to the area to remove the communication gap between people here and rest of the State.

Responding to the local demands, the Chief Minister said that she would send a consultancy group to Gurez to assess the development needs and

economic potential of the area. She said the staff in health and educational institutes would be strengthened and facilities improved. Also allied facilities like accommodation, recreation facilities etc would also be raised in Gurez to incentivize the stay of

staff, particularly during winters, she added.

Mehbooba Mufti said her Government has increased the compensation for affected families of Kishen Ganga project considerably and the

See **Mehbooba...** Pg 02

Sonia, Rahul should clarify stand on Kashmir separatists, Rohingyas: Amit Shah

New Delhi: BJP national president Amit Shah, who started his five-day tour to Himachal on Monday, slammed Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi and said that they should clarify the party's stand on separatists in Kashmir and the illegal migration of Rohingyas.

Addressing an election rally at Banikhet of Dalhousie assembly segment in Chamba district, the BJP chief said that Congress leaders are supporting those who are raising slogans of "Azadi" (independence) in Kashmir.

Asking the audience whether they support the people who raise freedom slogans in Kashmir, the BJP president said thousands of brave soldiers belonging to the hill state had made the supreme sacrifice "due to Kashmir problem".

Hitting out at former finance minister P Chindambram's statement on autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, Shah said it was Chindambram who wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, seeking him to allow Rohingyas refugees into Indian Territory. "Why should Rohingyas be allowed to enter India when the government is maintaining that they are a threat to national security," said Shah.

The BJP president said Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi should clear their stand on the issue.



Attacks Congress over corruption

Later, addressing a public meeting at Chawara village in Jawali assembly segment of Kangra district, Shah said, "The Himachal election is slated for November 9 and results will be declared on December 18 but, I already know the result." "People of Himachal want change," said Shah, adding that the change should not be in the government but rather in the system so that Himachal emerges as a model state.

Shah said Himachal has a lot of potential in tourism, agriculture and power, but no development has taken place as people alternated the government every five years.

See **Amit...** Pg 02

SMC in deep slumber: VENDORS BLOCK ROADS, SHOPKEEPERS DISPLAY MERCHANDISE ON FOOTPATHS

Srinagar, Oct 31: The Ward Officers of Srinagar Municipal Corporation have been giving an open field to shopkeepers across Srinagar, who occupy footpaths at will to the much discomfiture of commuters.

The shopkeepers in every nook and corner of city display most of their merchandise on front portion of the shops occupying the footpath. Neither police nor SMC officials take cognizance of such illegal practices.

The situation is really horrible at prime locations including Batamallo, Lal Chowk, Hari Singh High Street, Maharaja Bazar, Gonikhan and Kokar Bazaar, Qamarwari Chowk and other areas hindering the movement of

See **Vendors...** Pg 02

Rana demands high level central probe into utilization of funds in J&K

Rana, Kamal Arora walk out of DDB meeting

JAMMU OCTOBER 31: National Conference Provincial President and MLA Mr Devender Singh Rana on Tuesday sought probe by a Union Secretaries level central panel into the utilization of funds, especially under centrally sponsored schemes, in Jammu and Kashmir, saying perception is growing about massive corruption and mis-governance by the BJP partnered coalition government. "Instead of Sab Ka Saath,



Sab Ka Vikas, the BJP is indulging in Apna Saath, Apna Vikas amid widespread allegations of corruption and misgovernance", Mr Rana said in a hurriedly called press conference at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this afternoon, soon after walking out of the District Development Board

review meeting along with another NC MLA Dr Kamal Arora in protest against the muzzling of opposition voice by Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh.

Mr Rana made a fervent appeal to Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi and Home Minister Mr Rajnath Singh for intervention, as the people of Jammu were particularly feeling sense of alienation, deprivation and betrayal

See **Rana...** Pg 02

QUARRY HOLDERS DISRUPT TRAFFIC FOR HOURS

'Resolve our issue without any dealy'

Srinagar, Oct 31: Quarry holders Tuesday staged a massive protest and blocked vehicular movement for hours against government decision of not allowing them to resume their operations at Athwajan and Pantha Chowk quarries.

The protest was organized by United Quarry Association and Himalayan Quarry and Tipper Association, led by Mushtaq Ahmed and Muhammad Maqbool.

The protesters said that they should be allowed to work in their respective quarries at Athwajan and Panthachowk while ban imposed by the government should be revoked.

"Government had initiated a process to shift us to Zewan and Shaleguph but there people raise objections and don't allow us to work. We don't know what has been

See **Quarry...** Pg 02

New Delhi's dialogue initiative a 'futile exercise': JRL

'Those who talk to Sharma will undermine our internationally recognized struggle'

Srinagar, Oct 31: Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) comprising Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik Tuesday termed the appointment of Dineshwar Sharma as an interlocutor to Kashmir a futile exercise saying "any Kashmiri who will part of this futile exercise will only undermine our internationally acknowledged legitimate struggle."

The leaders Tuesday met at the residence of Geelani at Hyderpora. In a statement issued to KNS, the JRL said, "Any Kashmiri to be part of the New Delhi recent initiative futile exercise will only undermine our internationally acknowledged legitimate and just struggle



gle nourished by the "blood of our martyrs and great sacrifices and hardships rendered daily by the masses".

The leadership said the pro-freedom

See **JRL...** Pg 02

Cabinet Decision aftermath: CASUAL LABOURERS ACCUSE OFFICIALS OF APPOINTING RELATIVES ILLEGALLY

Baramulla, Oct 31: A couple of days after Government framed the policy for regularization of Casual Labourers in different government departments, some officials in Power Development Department at Sub-Division Pattan in North Kashmir have illegally appointed their relatives as daily wagers.

A group of Casual Labourers working in Power Development Department at Sub-Division Pattan assembled here in Press Enclave on Tuesday and alleged that a couple of officials want to deprive them from their jobs and has adjusted their relatives illegally.

See **Casual...** Pg 02

Congress capable enough to defeat Communal, Fascist forces: G.A. Mir

"Pays tribute to Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary"

Srinagar Oct 31, Congress paid floral tributes to Former Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi on her 33rd death anniversary at a function organised at PCC HQ, Srinagar, in which Senior Party Functionaries, Legislators and prominent workers participated and recalled the selfless services rendered by departed leader to Nation.

Congress also lauded the role of Indira Ji in Nation building, saying that the courage and the will power of Smt. Gandhi took the prestige of the Nation to the new heights in every respect, as a result, India is one of the Super Powers of the World and it will continue to get strengthened at international level due to the work done by Congress Leadership.



See **Mir...** Pg 02

MASSIVE FIRE BREAKS OUT IN HARIL VILLAGE OF LANGATE

Ten houses, 20,500 apple boxes completely damage

Srinagar, Oct 31: Massive fire broke out in Haril village of Langate constituency leaving ten houses, five cowsheds, six fruit sheds in which 20,500 packed apple boxes, completely gutted in the fire.

According to KNS correspondent Raja Akber, the fire broke out at around 10:30 in the morning and within no time spread across the whole War Mohalla. As per an estimate, the approximate damage of 20,500 apple boxes lost in the fire amounts to Rs 1.5 crores.

Locals, however, hailed the timely action of Fire services and other civil and police administration for dousing the flames before it could have made further devastation.

Five fire tenders were put into operation and

See **Fire...** Pg 02

Dr Drabu for making JK trade corridor to Central Asia

Addresses special session of India-UAE Partnership Summit on 'Investment Opportunities in J&K'

DUBAI (UAE), OCTOBER 31: JK's Finance Minister, Dr Haseeb Drabu today called for making Jammu & Kashmir a transit and trade corridor for arching out to Central Asia.

"Given its geographical location, Jammu and Kashmir could become a nucleus towards forging a new economic alliance in the region between the South and the Central Asia," Dr Drabu said



while speaking at the concluding session of the India-UAE

Partnership Summit (IUPS) here this afternoon.

Dr Drabu addressed the special session at the Summit on investment opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir titled "J&K: Investing in Peace, Prosperity and Development".

He said India and Central Asia have shared a geo-cultural affinity and a long tradition of historical contacts that

See **Drabu...** Pg 02

DAK SEEKS FREE SWINE FLU VACCINE FOR HIGH RISK GROUPS

Srinagar, Oct 31: With swine flu scare looming over Kashmir valley after three deaths, Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Tuesday has sought free vaccination against swine flu for high risk groups like young children, senior citizens, pregnant women and persons with medical conditions.

President DAK and flu expert Dr Nisar ul Hassan in a communiqué said free vaccination would increase vaccine uptake and protect these vulnerable individuals from contracting and dying from flu.

"While flu vaccination is recommended for all, it is especially important for high risk groups who are

See **DAK...** Pg 02

Continue from Front Page.....

MEHBOOBA

Government would pursue with Centre for the engagement of local youth with NHP on the said project. She said Gurez valley has immense potential for tourism and her Government would take steps for tapping this potential which would rejuvenate local economy.

The Chief Minister, on the occasion distributed cash relief among the fire sufferers of the area whose houses were gutted in fire incidents. She directed proper rehabilitation of these fire sufferers and directed the district administration to put them in rented accommodation for winter months for which the Government would pay. Also she asked the Deputy Commissioner, Bandipore to identify land in the town for the proper rehabilitation of these fire victims.

During her stay at Gurez a number of deputations from Tulail, Chakwali, Achoora, Abdullah, Kanzalwan etc met the Chief Minister and apprised her of their difficulties. The Chief Minister assured them to look into their difficulties on priority.

The deputations sought special recruitment drive for the area, augmentation of health facilities, market support to local produce, bus service from Dawar to Tulail, construction of helipad at Neru and Chakwali, upgradation of various schools, extension of scooty scheme for girls, sports infrastructure, introduction of new trades at the local ITI, setting up of handicraft centres, availability of solar lights and construction of several link roads.

The deputations thanked the Chief Minister for introducing air service to Gurez which they said has come as a great relief to people of the area. They demanded extension of more such facilities particularly in communication sector.

Minister for R&B, Naem Akhtar; Deputy Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurezi); former MLA, Faqir Muhammad Khan; officers of district administration and a large number of people were present on the occasion.

Earlier on her arrival at Dawar, Mehbooba Mufti was accorded a warm reception by people. People standing on both sides of the road greeted the Chief Minister with bunting and flags.

AMIT

“So this time, give a verdict that the Congress is eliminated forever and such a government is formed which steers Himachal in the right direction and makes it a number 1 state,” he said.

Hitting out at chief minister Virbhadra Singh, the BJP chief said, not just Virbhadra, his family and even servants are facing corruption charges.

Citing a CAG report, Shah said, the Virbhadra-led Himachal government raised loans worth ₹20,000 crore and a whole amount was embezzled by way of wasteful expenditure. “Mafia is ruling the roost in Himachal and Virbhadra wears all allegations against him as badges of honour,” Shah alleged.

Taking potshots at Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, Shah said he was seeking account from the BJP government in Gujarat. “I want to ask you Rahul Baba! Your family has been winning from Amethi for three generations but could not build a collectorate building or even a hospital there and you are seeking accounts from us,” said Shah. “Rahul does not know how many soldiers Himachal has given to the country, because such things are not written in Italian,” the BJP chief said.

“You have to give answer to those soldiers who sought One Rank, One Pension (OROP) from your grandmother, your father and then your mother,” Shah said. He said the Modi government gave OROP within a year of coming into power.

Alleging that the Congress only promoted corruption, Shah said scams worth ₹12 lakh thousand crore took place during the UPA regime. “In last three years, not a single scam has come to light,” he claimed.

He said the Modi government opened bank accounts of 30 crore people and gave gas connections to 2 crore poor women. “Our government has increased grants for Himachal from ₹44 crore to ₹1.15 under 14th finance commission,” said the BJP chief. He alleged that the funds given by the Centre were misused as the Congress government in Himachal did not want the money to reach public.

The BJP chief also promised that if the party formed the government in the state this time, interviews will be scrapped to make appointments transparent.

VENDORS

pedestrians and also causing frequent traffic jams. Amira Kadal Bridge has been completely occupied by vendors while a stretch of road at the extreme end of Gonikhan has become virtual property of some vendors. The situation is grimmer at Maharaja Bazar. Recently, Divisional Commissioner had placed two Ward Officer under suspension for not initiating any action against violators.

“These consciousnessless shopkeepers and vendors choke the movement of traffic, causing inconvenience to common people. SMC is blamed for all this mess. I myself witnessed today a police party removed some vendors near LD Hospital, but as soon as the party disappeared, the vendors re-occupied the footpath,” a local, Farooq Ahmed told news agency CNS.

Pertinently, from past couple of days, Srinagar city has been witnessing frequent traffic jams.

“It’s not only shopkeepers that have occupied footpaths, but armed forces have also blocked footpaths at different places. The footpath leading to Polo-View from Residency Road has been blocked by CRPF stationed at State Bank of India. It’s a complete mess here,” said a renowned trader.

At Regal Chowk, some of the top businessmen have also started displaying their goods on footpaths. The footpath is close to Kothibagh Police Station.

Qamarwari Chowk also witnesses gridlock for long time due to large number of vendors. The situation is same in Karan Nagar.

“SMC boosts of making Srinagar encroachment free only in statements but in reality the situation is totally different. The occupation of roads at Hari Singh High Street and Amira Kadal is a big slap on the Corporation and it amply shows the rotten system prevalent here.”

Government is not even honouring the court orders that had strictly directed it to stop vendors from occupying footpaths.

There are 35 Wards starting from Nagabal to Narbal and Khunmou to Sheikhpora but not a single Ward Officer cares to visit the markets. “I am from Mehjoor Nagar which is barely two kilometers away from Civil Secretariat. If you

visit there, you will find all the shopkeepers have occupied the road. Some shopkeepers have even erected iron rods on roads to display their merchandize,” said Nazir Ahmed.

When contacted, Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Reyaz Ahmed Wani said that they called representatives of vendors and shopkeepers associations and threatened them of legal action in case they continue to block roads and footpaths. “Things will change now. We will not allow anyone to resort to illegal means,” Wani said.

RANA

by the BJP ministers in the Mehbooba Mufti led coalition government.

In the wake of open resentment over the omissions and commissions of the BJP ministers, auditing of central funding has assumed significance, as the people have right to know where does the massive development funding pumped by the Centre go.

Mr Rana said the BJP leadership in the State and its ministers had turned so brazen and arrogant that they are showing tendencies of intolerance towards the opposition. Being naïve in administration and inefficient, the ministers have lost the confidence of people, who are accusing the present dispensation as most corrupt. He said the special central auditing will help in knowing whether the money is being spent on bonafide schemes or go to the coffers of those at the helm. “Ache Din tu ab Corruption Ke dinoo mein badal gaye hai”, he said, adding that the people are finding themselves in lurch.

The MLA Nagrota said that the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh has failed on deliverance front and his colleagues have failed the people of Jammu region. Giving the sequence of events taking place in the review meeting, Mr Rana wondered over open directions to engineers by the Deputy Chief Minister to have VIP road outside his residence at Canal Road macadamized to which he objected, citing the pitiable condition of roads across the city and in the entire Jammu region. He said Mr Singh showed scant concern for non-coverage of 50 percent roads in the Jammu district, notwithstanding the fact that just 15 days were left for having black topping in specified temperature.

“The Deputy Chief Minister strangely issued directions about the thickness of the bitumen to be laid to which I objected, questioning his wisdom in doing so”, Mr Rana said, adding that the road construction cannot be as per the whims and fancies of the Deputy Chief Minister as these had to be laid as per Indian Roads Congress Specifications Manual.

Mr Rana said that soon after the road sector was taken up, it was revealed that 253.90 km road length had been macadamized against the total target of 509.31 km in 2017-18. He said when a query was raised why the Deputy Chief Minister was concerned about a particular stretch of road leading to Circuit House (which is destination to his official residence also), Singh lost his cool and tried to “throttle my voice by accusing me of playing politics over the issue”. He said he took strong exception to it, saying that he was concerned about the overall development of the Jammu region and district in particular, being an elected member. He said Mr Singh showed his intolerance to healthy criticism and opposition. He said the BJP ministers had a definite agenda of not letting the meeting go in presence of the opposition members, apprehending some awkward questions and queries. He said the present dispensation has nothing to showcase except concealing their failures and allegations of omissions and commissions.

The Provincial President made a specific mention of ‘Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Ujwal Yojna’ and said it is a non starter. He said the pleas being advanced by the BJP is that they are not able to find suitable contractors.

“This argument by itself raises lot of questions”, he said, adding that the name of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya is being hugely exploited by the BJP.

Mr Rana also took the government head on over SMART city project, terming it a ‘huge scam’ the way the scheme has been conceived. He described Smart city as a “bigger scam” and said the way it has been conceived and planned, “I am telling you that the money will go waste and it will be a den of corruption”, he added.

On denial of Aadhar cards to Jammuites, Mr Rana questioned the tall claims of resumption of issuing Unique Identification Number, saying the rural areas and hinterland presents a grim scenario of little number of machines and some totally defunct.

Referring to the decisions arrived at the previous board meeting and the directions passed by the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, who is the chairperson, the Provincial President read out several issues pertaining to his constituency Nagrota, saying no forward movement has been registered during the past six months. He recalled the clear cut directions of the Chief Minister to his demand regarding unsafe buildings of various departments especially of Education Department to the Chief Engineer, PWD (R&B) to do an audit of the unsafe buildings of School Education Deptt, to avoid any mishap and said the government is now saying that the list is being sought from the Director School Education, notwithstanding the fact that the list of schools was provided in the meeting itself.

He wondered that no action has been initiated over his demand regarding frequent accidents on newly constructed Jammu-Udhampur National Highway, despite the Chief Minister asking the Chief Secretary J&K to take up the matter with National Highway Authority of India for providing effective critical care response equipments and systems on the NH to respond to any eventuality and also to review the functioning of the Toll Plaza. Similarly, the directions of the Chief Minister to the Deputy Commissioner and DFO Jammu to take necessary steps to rehabilitate the dislocated shop vendors of Nandani due to change of the alignment of the NH, the Board is just saying that a proposal has been sent to the Planning Department.

He referred to the several other issues raised by him and Dr Kamal Arora MLA in the previous meeting and said these have been taken casually notwithstanding the directions of the Chief Minister.

“I will go into the micro details of how they are functioning because they have all failed. BJP want officers to be cardholders of the party,” he said.

He also had a word of advice for the bureaucracy not to behave as members of the ruling BJP. “They are accountable to the people, who will never accept them to behave like BJP stooges”. He took jibe at the BJP over misgovernance and pushing the state to a crisis like situation, saying they can be

best ‘Pracharaks’ but not the administrators. He said the BJP has no calibre to run the government.

To a question over upcoming panchayat elections, he said “let them hold the twice deferred Anantnag parliamentary by-elections first and test the waters.” He said the National Conference remains always prepared to go to the court of people, who are real fountain head of power. He referred to the grand delegate session held in Srinagar two days back, saying this is an eye opener for all. He said the National Conference is deriving strength from the people and its visibility is discernible in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

“Wait for the upcoming assembly elections. The results will tell you. We will increase our footprints in the Jammu region and have a splendid victory in the Valley and Ladakh,” he said.

QUARRY

happening. The government has snatched our livelihood,” the protesting quarry holders told news agency CNS.

“We want government to implement the recommendations of the committee headed by ADC Srinagar wherein he has asked government to allow quarry holders to lift loose material through blasting,” said Mushtaq Ahmed.

They said before issuing ban order, the government didn’t take quarry holders into confidence given the fact they pay taxes in the form of Royalty towards Geology and Mining Department and in return get permission for extraction of stones for sale.

The protest disrupted traffic for hours at Pantha Chowk while a police team led by SDPO rushed to spot to pacify the protesters. “The SDPO talked to IGP Kashmir who assured us that matter will be brought into the notice of government. On Wednesday we will meet IGP Kashmir. We are hopeful government will resolve our issue,” they said.

JRL

leadership has always advocated and supported sincere and productive dialogue as a means of conflict resolution of Jammu and Kashmir, what it inherently entails from all participants to dialogue is the basic acknowledgment that there is a dispute that has to be resolved. But Govt of India continuously refuses to accept this basic premise and the reality on the ground.

Referring to PM Narendra Modi’s outright dismissal of former Home minister P Chidambaram’s suggestion of restoration of autonomy for J&K, the JRL said that if Govt of India even rejects the demand of its co political party for restoration of autonomy guaranteed by its own constitution, calling it a betrayal with soldiers and hence unacceptable, how will such a dispensation in New Delhi address or engage with the Kashmiri people’s political will and aspiration of self-determination for which people have been relentlessly struggling and sacrificing for the past 70 years.

The JRL said that this clearly indicates that the hyped upon appointment of Dineshwar Sharma by Govt of India as its interlocutor for J&K is nothing more than a tactic to buy time adopted under international pressures and regional compulsions and due to the abysmal failure of the state policy of military repression upon the people of Kashmir.

“Sharma’s recent comment that he will come to Kashmir to dissuade the youth from Islam and pursuing their legitimate political aspirations so that Kashmir does not become Syria is misleading. To compare the internationally recognized 70-year-old political and humanitarian issue of Kashmir to that of the sectarian war and power struggle in Syria is deception and propaganda as there is no correlation between the two situations,” reads the statement.

The JRL reiterated that use of “unlimited force on common people will not deter people or leadership to give up pursuing their legitimate demand for resolution of Kashmir issue as per our will and aspirations.

CASUAL

“We have been working in the department from past 14 years. The recent Cabinet decision raised some hopes but at the same time, few officials in our Sub-Division have adjusted their own men after the recent cabinet announcement,” they told news agency CNS and appealed authorities to get the records verified before proceeding ahead.

“When we raised hue and cry, the officials stopped our salaries. We appeal PDD authorities to look into the matter,” they said.

MIR

The function was presided over by J&K Pradesh Congress Committee President G.A. Mir, who highlighted the remarkable achievements of Former Prime Minister, saying that Indira ji laid down her life for the Nation, her sacrifices and selfless services will continue to lead all the countrymen at the path of peace, unity, harmony and development.

He said the Former Prime Minister was assassinated on this day before 33 years, which is a great loss to entire Nation can never be replaced by anything. Smt. Gandhi started her career from freedom struggle along with her family and contributed immensely to the freedom movement and overall development of the country.

He said the departed leader, who worked as a soldier safeguarded the country and people from internal and external enemies, while having never compromised on anything rather she dealt sternly with the enemies of peace and ensured safety and security of the Nation.

On this occasion, G.A. Mir lashed out the Prime Minister for encouraging communal forces for the sake of political mileage, but I want to tell the Prime Minister and his associates that they won’t succeed in converting Secular India of Indira Gandhi into communal India, as that Congress Party is capable enough to defeat the communal and fascist forces vitiating atmosphere to serve their vested interests.

Congress Party will continue to fight for the people and won’t compromise on its stated positing of maintaining secular fabric, unity and harmony in the Country, he added.

Referring to Sheikh Mohd Abdullah, G.A. Mir said as Shiekh Saheb will remain as the tallest leader of the State, Indira Ji will continue to be the only tallest leader of the country, the present Prime Minister Narinder Modi won’t even make it to the Status of Indira Ji even after 33 thousand years, Indira Ji will continue to rule the hearts of all country men for her courage, strength, honesty and her concern for the Nation, he added.

Addressing he meeting Former PCC President Peerzada Mohd Syed described Indira Ji as a strongly lady, who was capable enough to deal with the forces posing threat Nation.

She was a great leader, who ensured overall development of the people from grass roots level.

Speaking on occasion Senior Congress Leader Taj Mohi U Din paid glowing tributes to Former Prime Minister saying the leadership qualities, commitment and conviction of Madam Gandhi will continue to inspire the generations ahead, leading them at the path of unity, harmony and brotherhood.

Those who addressed the gathering included MLA Haji Ab. Rashid Dar, MLC Gulam Nabi Monga, MLA Usman Majeed, MLA Gulzar Ahmad Wani, Mohd Muzfar Parry, Mohd Anwar Bhat, Spokesperson Farooq Andrabi, General Secretaries Shoiab Nabi Lone, Surinder Singh Channi, Shameema Iqbal &, Amreen Badre, PYC President Pranav Shagotra, Vice Presiden Mahila Shameema Raina, G. N. Mir Lasjan, Ab. Qayoom Shah, Abdul Gani Khan, Zahid Hussain Jan, Imtiyaz Ahmad Parry, Haji Farooq Mir, Anaytuallh Rather, Sahil Farooq Mohd Sultan, Abdul Hamid, Farooq Ahmad Bhat, Nissar Ahmad Mundoo,

Those who were present on this occasion included Gulam Hassan Khan, Mohd Abdullah Nadaf, Mohd Iqbal Mir, Nissar Ahmad Khan, Imtiyaz Khan, Irfan Kukkar, Mohd Yousuf Bhat, Manzoor Ahmad Ganai, Shaheena Nadaf, Hamid Gurezi, Kadfin Chowdhary, Dr. Fayaz, Waseem Shala, Amir Rasool, Gulsher Khan, Shamema Khan, Shameema Mir, Ali Mohd Mantoo, G. M. Guree, Dr. Syed Ahmad, Shameema Sopori,

Earlier all Congress Leaders and workers present in the meeting observed two minutes silence as a mark of respect to Smt. Indira Gandhi.

FIRE

completely doused the fire at around 2:30 in the afternoon,” the locals told KNS.

MLA Langate Er Rasheed also reached the spot and released 2.5 lakhs from Joint Effort Trust for the fire victims

Rashid at the occasion told that he spoke to CM Mehbooba Mufti and Chief Secretary who assured him that ample compensation would be provided to the victims. “The Red Cross and the government also released Rs 10,000 per family as an immediate relief to the victims,” he said.

The houses and other property gutted in the fire belonged to Mohd Ashraf War, Ghulam Qadir War, Habibullah Wani, Khurshid Ahmed War, Ab Kabir Wani, Ghulam Mohd War, Ab Majeed War and Bashir Ahmed Wani.

DRABU

dates back to antiquity. “There is convergence of views on varied issues and interests between the Central Asian Republics and India, including promoting economic, scientific and cultural cooperation in the region,” Dr Drabu said adding that given its historic links with Central Asia, J&K can become a surface transport passage for reviving traditional economic linkages in the region.

Referring to foreign direct investment opportunities in J&K, Dr Drabu said there is huge potential for investment in tourism, energy, education, healthcare, Information Technology and agriculture sectors including setting up of a Dry Port, Cold Chain, Education Zone for foreign universities and Special Economic Zones for handicrafts and Sports Goods including Cricket bats.

Dr Drabu said it was heartening to note that one of the biggest business groups of UAE, Emaar Group and Dubai Ports have expressed their willingness to explore the possibility of investing in J&K.

The two-day India-UAE Partnership Summit (IUPS) was jointly organized by the Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, Consulate General of India, Dubai and UAE-based premium business body Business Leaders’ Forum (BLF) on 30/31 October.

Around 800 top businessmen, Ministers, officials, investors and academics from both India and UAE attended the summit with the objective of significantly enhancing investments from UAE to India. The summit focused on key areas of strategic partnership, investments-implementation and travel and tourism sector.

The other key speakers at the Summit included Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, Alphons Kannanthanam, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Tourism, Govt of India, Abdullah al Nuaimi, UAE Minister of State for Infrastructure Development, Navdeep Singh Suri, Ambassador of India to UAE, Dr Ahmed Al Banna, UAE Ambassador to India, Abdulla Al Saleh, Undersecretary UAE Ministry of Economy, Sami Ahmad Dhaen Al Qamzi, Director General of the Department of Economic Development, Dubai, Dr Azad Moopen, President Business Leaders Forum Dubai, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Chairman and managing director of Biocon Limited, Sultan bin Saeed al Mansouri, UAE Minister of Economy, Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Aisha Abdulla Miran, Assistant Secretary General, Strategy Management & Governance Sector, Executive Council of Dubai, Jamal Saif Al Jarwan, UAEIC Secretary General, Shaji ul Mulk, Partner & Head, Economics,

Regulatory & Policy Advisory, KPMG India, Payal Koul Mirakhor, Vice President, Invest India, Satpal Ji Maharaj, Minister of Tourism, Govt of Uttarakhand, Kamal Puri, Chairman, Skyline University, Sunil Sinha, Resident Director-Middle East & North, Saif Saeed Ghobash, Director General, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, Gerald Lawless, CEO Jumeirah Group, Dr Layla Al Marzouqi, Director of Health Regulation, Medical Tourism Project Dubai, Sandeep Jajodia, President ASSOCHAM and KT Rama Rao, Minister for IT, Govt of Telangana.

DAK

vulnerable for complications, hospitalization and death,” he said. DAK President said most of our population is unvaccinated and cost is the barrier. One flu vaccine costs Rs 900. High cost of vaccine keeps them out of reach for people.

He said unprotected individuals not only risk themselves, but they put the health of whole community at risk.

Dr Nisar cautioned swine flu virus has undergone a change and it is likely to infect more people.

“We can’t predict how it will behave and what will happen in coming days,” he added. He said this year’s vaccine has been updated to protect against the mutated swine flu strain. “Vaccination is the only defense to protect you and people around you from getting flu,” he said.

Dr Nisar said the benefits of flu vaccine go beyond warding off respiratory-related problems. He said flu vaccine reduces your risk for heart attack and stroke. Studies have shown that people who receive flu shots are 55% less likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke.

Hanjura reviews progress of PHE schemes in Charar-e-Sharief Constituency

Directed officers to achieve the targets within stipulated time

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 31: Minister for Agriculture Production, Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura today convened a meeting to review progress on various water supply schemes taken by Public Health Engineering (PHE) department in Charar-e-Sharief Constituency.

The meeting was attended by SE PHE irrigation Budgam, SE PHE Mechanical circle North/South Kashmir, Executive Engineer PHE Civil Division Chadoora, Executive Engineer PHE Mechanical rural division Srinagar, AEE PHE ground water, AEE PHE Mechanical division Sub Division Budgam, AEE PHE Civil Sub division Chadoora, AEE PHE Civil Sub division Charar-e-Sharief and JE mechanical ground water Budgam.

During the meeting, the Minister had a detailed review of various schemes being stated by PHE in Char-



Charar-e-Sharief Constituency.

During the meeting, the Minister was informed that work on Shah Mohalla Dangarpora, New Colony Nowpora, Hanjura to Tulvat and Zohama water supply schemes are nearer to its completion and the water supply schemes would be completed next year.

The Minister was also informed

that the completion of these water supply schemes would provide drinking water supply to more than 40 villages of the Charar-e-Sharief constituency.

The PHE officials also informed the Minister that water supply scheme phase 2nd of Charar-e-Sharief, water supply scheme Pakerpora, water supply scheme Sheikhpora- Putlab and

Hardalwan schemes would also be completed soon.

Threadbare discussion was held on these schemes and the Minister directed that a DPR of Production Well for Charar-e-Sharief Constituency should also be prepared.

The Minister directed the officers to achieve the targets within a stipulated time period and make full use of available resources so that drinking water is made available to the people.

The Minister asked the functionaries to put in their best to maintain a regular supply of water to everyone in the constituency.

Hanjura said that priority should be given to those schemes and projects which are held up and require less funding for completion so that people can avail their benefits and prompt public delivery system is maintained.

Altaf Bukhari directs installation of dewatering pump near Khidmat Press at Regal

'Area being business hub, city centre to be developed on modern lines'

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 31: The Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today announced that a Dewatering Pump Station will be installed near Khidmat Press in Regal Lane, here which was earlier proposed at Saddar Court.

The pump could not be installed at Saddar Court premises as the site has been declared as a heritage site.

Bukhari visited the Regal Lane today and took firsthand appraisal of the area where the pump would be installed. He was accompanied by District Development Commissioner, Srinagar, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, SMC Commissioner, Riyaz Wani and other concerned officials.

On the occasion, Bukhari directed the SMC to demarcate the land and start work for the installation of dewatering pump which will serve the areas from Sher-i-Kashmir Park to Amira Kadal. He said the dewatering pump



should be installed in such a way in keeping with the concerns of locals.

The Minister also visited Regal's adjoining areas and instructed the officials to install street lights and also promised the macadamization of the damaged roads. He said the area being the city centre and business hub is the focus of the Government and all possible facilities and amenities would be ensured in the area.

Haq Khan reviews progress of Rural Development works in Budgam

7.6 lakh person days generated under MGNREGA, 2619 works completed at cost of Rs 16.74 cr

BUDGAM, OCTOBER 31: Minister for Rural Development, Abdul Haq Khan today reviewed the progress of various developmental works taken up by the Rural Development Department in Budgam district.

The Minister took the block-wise review of developmental works being carried out under schemes including MGNREGA, NRLM, SBM, Rural Sanitation and IWMP.

At the outset, the Minister was informed that the department has achieved the target of 99 percent of development works during the ongoing 2017-18 financial year across the Budgam district.

During the meeting, it was revealed that the department has generated 763000 as person days work for the unemployed of the district so far under MGNREGA, while as the target was 600000 person days for the first quarter.

Under the physical target, it was also revealed that 4204 works have been taken up out of which target of 2619 works



has been completed during the current fiscal by the department. Officials also informed that out of the Rs 16.89 crore annual budget, the department has spent Rs 16.74 crore on the development works in the district so far.

Under PMAY scheme, 265 beneficiaries have been allotted Rs 1.32 crore in the first allotment for the construction of houses.

The Minister directed the concerned officials to accelerate works under the rural sanitation and 14th financial commission.

He said that Jammu and Kashmir was ahead of other states in the development work carried under various schemes

of the department. However, Minister stressed on the construction of Water Harvesting Tanks to raise the water level in hilly areas during dry spells from the next revised MGNREGA plan.

He directed the ACD Budgam to ensure that there are no shortfalls in the execution of the works and in case of delinquency the responsibility should be fixed and the erring concerned be taken to task. The Minister also urged DDC Budgam to facilitate and to ensure synergy between related departments.

The Minister urged the concerned to conduct fresh survey about the implementation of Open Defecation Free

(ODF) scheme in the district. He also urged the authorities to leverage social media to reach out to the public highlighting their performance and achievement.

While lauding the role of staff, over the construction of a bridge at an estimated cost of Rs 4 lakh in Nagam block, Minister announced special award for the Sajad Ahmad as Technical Assistant for his tremendous work on the project.

DDC Budgam, Mohamad Haroon Malik, SSP Budgam Tajindhar Singh, Director RDD Gazanfar Ali, ACD Budgam Fayaz Ahmad and other officers were also present on the occasion.

Haji Anayat stresses for early completion of Small Hydro Projects in Kargil

Reviews pace of progress on KREDA projects

KARGIL, OCTOBER 31: Chairman Legislative Council, Haji Anayat Ali today said that the Small Hydro Projects (SHPs) funded by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy GOI could play key role to cater to the power requirements in the district especially during the winter season when the demand for power supply goes up due to overload over the existing power arrangement.

The Chairman stated this while reviewing the pace of progress over the Small Hydro Projects being executed by Kargil Renewable Energy Development Agency (KREDA).

Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor Kargil and Chairman KREDA Kacho Ahmad Ali Khan, Vice Chairman KREDA and Deputy Commissioner Kargil Haji Gulzar Hussain, Project Director KREDA Kacho Ahmad Khan besides other concerned officers and engineers were also present in the meeting.

It was given out that work on 1.5 MW SHP Sangrah, 1.5 MW SHP Biaras, 1.5 MW SHP



Khandi, 1 MW SHP Chillung and other projects is in full swing while as two new projects have been identified at Umba and Barsoo Nallah under the Prime Minister's Development Programme (PMDDP). The concerned officers said that the projects at Mizat and Umba and other projects at Barsoo Nallah are in the DPR stage while as their prefeasibility report have been prepared and submitted to the concerned quarters.

The Chairman directed the KREDA authorities to assign surveying team to visit all the proposed projects during peak winter so that the lean discharge of the water sources could be fully and

precisely recorded.

Various issues and bottlenecks with regard to the execution of works at SHP Sangrah came up for discussion in the meeting. The Chairman while expressing dismay over the abnormal delay and non-performance of the engaged firm M/S IMP Powers Mumbai directed the Project Director KREDA to blacklist the company for failing to affect the completion of projects within the stipulated period of time.

He also exhorted upon the concerned officers to persuade the local people of Sangrah to extend their full support to KREDA for making land available for laying of 11 KV

T&D line a major component of the project from Sankoo to Sangrah so that SHP Sangrah could be tested and commissioned well in time. He also fixed the target of ending November as the cut-off date for testing of this project.

The meeting was further informed that work on SHP Bearass has already been completed and the project is slated to be inaugurated in the first or second week of November this year. It was revealed that the Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy GOI is expected to commission the project. The concerned officers informed the Chairman that SHP Chillung is slated to be commissioned by August while as SHP Khandi by the end of November this year.

Meanwhile, the Chairman suggested the need to organize exposure tours to the technical staff of KREDA associated with the SHP sites to Himachal and Uttarakhand states so to have firsthand exposure of the planning, management and execution of such projects on ground.

Traditional Fish Markets to be developed under Smart City Proposal: Asiea Naqash

Minister distributes Bicycles to Fishermen, disburses Rs 25 lacs for new Fish Market at Hazratbal

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 31: Minister of State for Housing & Urban Development, Social Welfare, Asiea Naqash today said that the traditional Fish Markets would be developed in the Srinagar under Smart City Proposal.

The Minister said this during the distribution of Bicycles to the 50 Fishermen of Dal Lake under Blue Revolution Scheme at Nigeen Club. The function was organized by J&K Fisheries Department.

Addressing the gathering, Asiea said that Fish Markets are the part of our tradition and names of different places are given on the Fish culture like Gada Kocha, Gadihainzpora, Gadi Bazar etc. "Fishermen played an important role in our culture and government will develop traditional Fish Markets in the Srinagar under Smart City proposal so that tourists are attracted towards different varieties of fishes especially Trout and also know the life style of fishermen residing in Dal Lake & Anchar Lake," she said.



she said.

J&K Fisheries Department directed to identify the appropriate places in the city for the development of traditional fish markets under Smart City Proposal.

The Minister said that Government is committed to distribute every welfare scheme to the downtrodden people especially Fishermen. She said affordable houses were already provided to 119 Fishermen of Dal Lake.

For the rehabilitation of Fishermen, Minister disbursed Rs 25 lacs under SADP to the JKLAWDA to develop new Fish Market at Hazratbal with the expert guidance from J&K Fisheries Department.

Later, Asiea visited Trout Fish Farm Dachigam and took the stock of Rainbow & Brown Trout Fish rearing on Scientific Lines.

Minister was informed that during current year 5 lac seeds of Carp variety were dropped in the Dal Lake at different locations which will boost the fish production in the lake.

Minister directed Fisheries Department to provide each and every logistic support and welfare schemes to the fishermen so that their livelihood will be enhanced.

Director J&K Fisheries Department R. N. Pandita, Joint Director Kashmir Mohammad Amin Wani, Joint Director (Projects) Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Deputy Director M. M. Bazaz and other concerned officers accompanied the Minister.

'Run for Unity' held in various parts of Kashmir

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 31: To foster and reinforce dedication to preserve and strengthen unity, integrity and security of the nation, 'Run for Unity' events were held today in various parts of Kashmir.

The events were held to mark the 142nd birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and commemorating it as 'National Integration Day'.

At Pulwama, a function was held at DPL Pulwama from where a race was flagged off under 'Run for Unity' from DPL to Circular Road Tahab crossing by District Development Commissioner, Ghulam Mohammad Dar. The event was organized by J&K police Pulwama.

SSP Pulwama, Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, CO CRPF 182 Battalion, Army, CRPF and other district officers were also present. On the occasion, the DDC highlighted the role of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in upholding the Indian Unity. He said the leader worked on national integration and devoted his life to the nation.

He further said that on November 07 a cricket match between DC 11 vs SSP 11 will be organized at DPL Pulwama.

At Kulgam, District Development Commissioner, Talat Parvez Rohella flagged off a run on the 142nd Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. S.P Kulgam Dar Patel, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Principals of GDCs, Additional SP, CEO, CMO, and other district officers were present on the occasion.

The 'Run for Unity' event was organized by the J&K Police Kulgam in collaboration with district administration besides Information, Health & Education Departments.

The race which started from DPL Kulgam ended at DC office complex where a prize distribution ceremony was held.

Later on, a painting competition with national unity & integration as its core theme was also held in which 200 students of different schools of the district participated.

At Ganderbal, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Dr Piyush Singla today chaired a pledge taking ceremony to observe the 'National Unity Day' in the district here today.

ADDC Ganderbal, N.A Baba, C.P.O Ganderbal, ACD Ganderbal and all the District Officers were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the DDC said that there should be the spirit of unification among us to ensure unity, integrity and security of the nation.

Soon after the pledge taking ceremony a 'Run for Unity' was held in which all the district officers, students of various schools, and senior citizens participated. The Run started from Mini Secretariat Complex, DC Office Ganderbal and culminated at Town Hall Ganderbal.

At Baramulla, a function was held today to celebrate 'National Unity Day' with zeal and enthusiasm here at Showkat Ali Stadium, Baramulla in which District Development Commissioner, Dr Nasir Ahmad Naqash attended as the chief guest.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Mir Imtiaz Hussain, Additional Deputy Commissioner Farooq Ahmad Baba, CMO, CEO, Tehsildar Baramulla, Tehsildar HQ, Sports Officer Baramulla, Coordinator NYK various District and sectoral officers besides NYK volunteers, students and prominent citizens were present on the occasion.

On the occasion, the DDC administered oath declaring unity, security and integrity of the nation as the prime priority besides striving hard to spread the message of unity among the fellow countrymen.

He also highlighted the importance of the Day and said that the day remembers us the endeavours of freedom fighter Sardar Vallabhai Patel who contributed towards the unification of the nation. He urged people to work for the peace and progress of the society and hailed the organizers of the programme.

DDC Shopian reviews progress on JKPC works

SHOPIAN, OCTOBER 31: District Development Commissioner Shopian, Mohammad Aijaz Asad today chaired a meeting to review the progress on construction of Mini Secretariat Arhama and District Hospital Shopian being executed by J&K Projects Construction Corporation

(JKPC). The meeting, among others, was attended by Chief Planning Officer Shopian, Deputy General Manager JKPC, Chief Medical Officer Shopian, Executive Engineer R&B, Executive Engineer PHE, Assistant Commissioner Development and other concerned officers.

Earlier, the meeting was apprised by executing agencies about pace and progress of under construction 100-bedded District Hospital coming up at the cost of Rs 23.65 crore. It was given out that work on the hospital is in final stages of completion and remaining work on the same would be

expedited for its early completion. The meeting also held threadbare discussions on bottlenecks hindering the timely execution of JKPC projects and directions were given for expediting the works with better synergy.

The DDC directed the concerned authorities to en-

sure the completion of work on the district hospital on priority so that it becomes functional as early as possible.

With regard to the establishment of canteen in the Mini secretariat complex, it was decided that the canteen will be established on a public private partnership (PPP).

DAILY
Time and Us Editorial
 SRINAGAR J&K

LESSONS FROM KIRKUK

The conflict that broke out in the oil-rich city of Kirkuk between Iraqi government troops aided by Shia militias and the Peshmerga, the military wing of Iraqi Kurdistan, this month is a reminder of the divisions that run deep in the country. Both government troops and the Peshmerga are part of the coalition that is fighting the Islamic State in Iraq. They are also American allies. The U.S. provides air cover in the war against the IS and offers military advice to Iraqi troops, besides supplying weapons. Likewise, the Peshmerga has received arms from the U.S., Germany, the U.K. and other western countries. The U.S. also has a consulate in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan where hundreds of its diplomats and their families live. But neither the common American factor nor the shared interests in the war against terrorists has prevented the conflict in Kirkuk, that was captured by the Peshmerga from the IS in 2014. The alliance between the Kurds and Baghdad is tactical rather than strategic. In 2014, after the IS scored a series of military victories in Iraq, including in the cities of Fallujah, Ramadi, Kirkuk and Mosul, both Baghdad and Erbil were threatened by the prospect of IS advances. They set aside their historical differences and joined hands against a common enemy. But the IS is in retreat. Most of the cities it captured, including Mosul, Iraq's second largest, have been freed. This receding IS threat has exposed cracks in the alliance.

More immediately, the Kurdish political leadership's push for independence from Iraq has alarmed Baghdad. Masoud Barzani, President of Iraqi Kurdistan, wanted to mobilise the momentum created in the battle against the IS in favour of independence. Despite strong opposition from Baghdad and western capitals, Mr. Barzani went ahead with a referendum in late September, in which Kurds overwhelmingly voted for independence. Though the vote is not binding on the Kurdish regional government, it has undoubtedly strengthened Kurdish nationalist politics across borders. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi rushed troops to retake Kirkuk. Mr. Barzani's move was politically counter-productive as he is not in a position to achieve independence for Kurdistan. Taking responsibility for the mess, he has announced he will step down as President in November. This actually aggravates the crisis. The new Kurdish leader may lack his charisma or authority but will have to deal with stronger nationalist aspirations. Baghdad has sent a tough message to Erbil by sending troops to Kirkuk: if the Kurds go ahead with plans to secede, it would invite a strong military response. The cracks in the coalition would be good news for the IS. The only country that could constructively intervene in the conflict is the U.S., which enjoys good ties with Baghdad and Erbil. It should mediate between the two sides on the Kurdish national question. Unless that is addressed, the chances for another civil war in Iraq remain high.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO MEET ALL 169 SDG TARGETS. CHOOSE WISELY

► Bjorn Lomborg

This week, government representatives and policy experts from south and south-west Asia will gather in Kathmandu to discuss the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This is a set of targets that determines how much of national governments' and the international development community's budgets will be spent between now and 2030. Since the targets were passed in 2015, policy-makers are finding it difficult to deliver the extensive list of 169 different well-meaning ambitions at once.

The sustainable development agenda was the result of a well-meaning but painfully inclusive process that lacked economic inputs. But it saw government representatives, regional blocs, NGOs, agencies and advocacy groups all tussling over which development goals should be given the UN's stamp of approval.

As a result, the agenda attempts to be all things to all people. Many targets are so broad and idealistic that they are meaningless: Between now and 2030, the UN foresees the eradication of poverty, HIV/AIDS, malaria and malnutrition, along with the creation of "full and productive employment and decent work" for all adults.

We need to get real. We simply cannot reach all 169 targets in 13 years under realistic budgets. But which targets we choose to focus on matter to our shared future.

That is why we need to start talking about priorities. Right now, there is an absence of prioritisation. The agenda gives the same weight to the eradication of preventable infant deaths as it does to the promotion of "sustainable tourism".

It may seem harmless to include a development target highlighting the need for "green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons, and persons with disabilities". But at a time when 1.2 billion people live in abject poverty, 2.5 billion lack access to water and sanitation, and almost a billion people go to bed hungry, we need to ask if tree-filled parks for the elderly are the most urgent development priority.

The UN has never published any comprehensive study into its targets' value-for-money. They are certainly not all equal.

Economic analyses prepared by 82 top economists and 44 sector experts for the Copenhagen Consensus Center show that some targets are barely worthwhile, producing little more than a rupee in social benefits for each rupee spent. This research uses which identifies the amount of environmental, social and economic benefits that society gets from an investment.

An eminent panel including several Nobel laureate economists studied this research and found that, among the analysed targets, 19 would produce the greatest returns. Concentrating on these would achieve 20 to 40 rupees of social benefits



WHEN POLICY-MAKERS MEET IN KATHMANDU TO TALK ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES OF ACHIEVING AND MONITORING THE 169 TARGETS IN SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST ASIA, THEY NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT NOT ALL TARGETS ARE EQUALLY EFFECTIVE, AND THEY NEED TO PUSH FOR PRIORITISATION OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE ONES AT THE NEXT YEAR'S UN HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

for each rupee spent. In contrast, allocating funds evenly across all 169 targets reduces the benefits to less than 10 rupees per rupee.

In other words, being smart about spending – focusing first on the development targets where we can achieve the most – could do the same as doubling or quadrupling the aid budget.

At a global level, prioritising the most powerful targets would mean providing access to contraception to every woman, working much harder to prevent childhood malnutrition, and promoting free trade to reduce poverty.

At a national or sub-national level, priorities can be subtly different: While the broad agenda will be the same, what should be prioritised in Sri Lanka may not be the same as for India. Last year the Copenhagen Consensus Center zeroed in on the best

choices for Bangladesh and Haiti, in two projects that produced dozens of comprehensive, new research papers on the many different ways each country could make the biggest difference for its citizens.

India's silence on sustainable development goals is alarming.

Panels of eminent economists, including Nobel laureates, studied all of this research and identified the most powerful investments for Bangladesh and for Haiti. For example, the Bangladeshi government is now focusing on "e-government" solutions after the research highlighted the large benefits these could provide, and both nations are stepping up efforts to prevent childhood malnutrition. Well-nourished children stay in school longer, learn more and end up being much more productive members of society. Nutrition solutions are

cheap and very effective, and require more support.

When policy-makers meet in Kathmandu to talk about the difficulties of achieving and monitoring the 169 targets in South and South-West Asia, they need to acknowledge that not all targets are equally effective, and they need to push for prioritisation of the most effective ones at the next year's UN high-level political forum on sustainable development.

A sharper focus could generate hundreds of trillions of rupees extra worth of social, environmental, and economic benefits for the globe.

Bjorn Lomborg is president, Copenhagen Consensus Center and visiting professor, Copenhagen Business School.

Autonomy alone can exclude Pakistan from the Kashmir equation

► Vinod Sharma

The poll-time argy-bargy over the autonomy question in Jammu and Kashmir isn't a wee bit amusing. It's worrisome, in fact from the standpoint of the dialogue the Centre has announced with stakeholders in the troubled State.

Much of what's said about autonomy is politically expedient. Kashmir centric parties root for it to consolidate base in the Valley; national parties are circumspect because of the likely divisive backlash in mainland India. But autonomy—that'll give mainstream parties an alternative plank to propagate among people—is the only option that can eject Pakistan over time from the Kashmir equation.

Having said that, one must emphasize that autonomy -- the way it is understood by the NC and the PDP—too isn't an easy option. It's nevertheless the most doable despite challenge from freedom-seeking maximalists, or separatists who've never proved their popularity on the ground.



Another wheel within the wheel is the BJP's historical opposition to Article 370. Diametrically opposite to it are NC and PDP's demands for auto-

my and 'self-rule' predicated on original separation of powers (since diluted) under the special status the disputed Article conferred on Kashmir. Reverting

to status quo ante would mean Srinagar's writ will be final in areas other than those in the Centre's domain: Defense, External Affairs and Currency.

The latest BJP-Congress spat has to be understood in this context as also P Chidambaram's suggestion that autonomy could be the way out of the cul-de-sac: "My interactions in J&K led me to the conclusion that when they ask for azadi, most people, I am not saying all (but) an overwhelming majority, want autonomy."

One can accuse Chidambaram of flaunting retrospective wisdom on the issue he did not push as Home Minister. But it's unfair to interpret his comments as being supportive of Pakistan-backed azadi seekers.

The matter actually was placed in perspective by Omar Abdullah after his National Conference re-affirmed its autonomy resolution in Srinagar. "We don't have to get autonomy from Pakistan... We've to get it from the Indian Constitution in which it's already mentioned," he said.

A typical case it is of nuances getting lost in the din and bustle of elections. The Congress that distanced itself from Chidambaram's remarks and the BJP that twisted them for electoral advantage

in Himachal and Gujarat-- are being expedient on a serious national security issue. If not put to a stop, the unseemly faceoff can queer the pitch for the Centre's interlocutor, Dineshwar Sharma, even before he takes guard.

Closer to polling dates, the mercury could go further up, leaving in ashes the olive branch home minister Rajnath Singh held out with the assurance of not unsettling the status quo—including provisions of Article 35A. Rooted in a presidential order drawing strength from Article 370, the said article is under challenge (by private petitioners) in the Supreme Court for its definition of the state subject.

The J&K government of which the BJP is part has opposed the challenge to the provision. But the Centre hasn't revealed its hand, instead telling the court the matter required a bigger debate.

Yes, indeed! There's need for a debate that's bigger—and better informed.

(vinodsharma@hindustan-times.com)

Supreme Court refers all Aadhaar cases to Constitution bench

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court said on Monday a five-judge Constitution bench will hear a slew of petitions related to the validity of the Aadhaar identification number, including linking it to bank accounts and making it mandatory to avail social benefits.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said this after Attorney General K K Venugopal told the court that the government would be amenable to various Aadhaar cases pending before the court being decided by a Constitution bench, instead of the Supreme Court passing any interim orders.

Venugopal also told the court that falsehoods had been propagated against Aadhaar, including how linking it was a must for CBSE students to appear in Class 10 and 12 exams.

Last week, the bench had sought to know if action would be taken against people failing to link their



Aadhaar with their bank accounts and mobile phone numbers by the government's stipulated December 31 deadline. The government didn't assure the court that coercive measures wouldn't be taken.

But, on October 25, the Centre indicated that the deadline for linking Aadhaar with bank ac-

counts, mobile numbers and other schemes for those who don't have the number and are willing to go for it, may be extended till March 31.

Venugopal said on Monday the Centre had prepared an affidavit outlining the uses of Aadhaar and how the government is working

towards implementing the scheme without any glitches. "We will provide over 100 notifications to you to prove it," he said.

"There are eight interim orders that say the law is purely a voluntary scheme. If the government reiterates this (order) and makes a statement that there is no compulsion on the citizens we have no problems," said senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, appearing for those opposing Aadhaar.

A nine-judge bench recently held that privacy is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution. Petitioners challenging the validity of Aadhaar claim it violates privacy rights.

The government has argued that Aadhaar is necessary to plug leakages in its subsidy programmes and prevent corruption, and is pushing for its use in everything.

Reservation must for benefit of oppressed: Uma Bharti

BHOPAL: Union minister Uma Bharti on Tuesday said reservation was necessary and must continue in the country for the benefit of those who remained oppressed for ages. Bharti further said there was no discrimination in the country on the basis of religion but certainly it was there in the name of caste. "Reservation is necessary for the country as there are many people who remained oppressed for ages in the country because of caste," Bharti told reporters when asked to comment on the issue in context of Gujarat assembly polls.

"It is a constitutional provision and hence it should continue," she said. When asked that in some temples entry of certain people is banned on the basis of caste, she said "people should go to any temple without disclosing their caste."



On the issue of Congress general secretary Digvijaya Singh's ongoing Narmada Parikrama, Bharti said "Singh and his family is very religious. I don't want to make any political comment on it."

"If he invites me for the bhandara (feast) normally organised after the successful completion of yatra, I will certainly take part in it. He is like an elder brother to me and I wish best wishes to both him and his wife on the occasion."

Education loans will count in credit ratings, says govt.

NEW DELHI: The government has clarified that education loan defaults cannot be kept out of the ambit of credit rating bureaus such as the Credit Information Bureau of India (CIBIL). The government's response was in reply to a question posed by DMK MP Tiruchi Siva.

In a letter written to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in August, Mr. Siva said student loans amounted only to 6.9 per cent of the total non-performing assets (NPAs), compared to industrial sectors such as steel that accounted for 36.4 per cent. He pointed out that in 2012-13, the All India Survey on Higher Education observed that around 37 per cent of the total education loans were taken by the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. "Due to the growing NPAs of banks, they will become reluctant to provide education loans. The representation of education loans as NPAs affects the future of the students. This is a hindrance to the youth who want to set up their own businesses as they will not be able to take loans on account of non-repayment of education loan," Mr. Siva said in his letter.

If the student loans are clubbed with other NPAs, they will be brought under Credit Information Bureau of India. A defaulter gets low CIBIL ratings and cannot get any further loans.

"Most of the student loans are very nominal amounts, 5 lakh-10 lakh, more so if you compare it with the NPAs of our state-run banks running into thousands of crores, so the government should seriously deliberate on the issue," Mr. Siva said.

In a brief reply, Minister of State, Ministry of Finance, Shiv Pratap Shukla wrote on October 23, "The Reserve Bank of India has informed that education loans cannot be exempted from credit reporting system as it is mandatory for banks to report credit information to agencies like CIBIL to ensure credit discipline."

Tamil Nadu accounts for the maximum number of education loans in the country.

Shiv Sena says BJP 'principal enemy', seen substantial change in Rahul Gandhi

MUMBAI: Without mincing words, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Tuesday termed the BJP his party's "principal enemy" and said the Sena was part of the Maharashtra government "just for the sake of it". His remarks came on the eve of the Devendra Fadnis government's third anniversary.

Raut also praised Rahul Gandhi, saying there has been substantial change in him over the last three years. "The BJP owns the government. We are (in the government) just for the sake of it. Instead of hitting out at the Congress and NCP, the BJP targets the Sena. They (the



BJP) are thus our principal enemy," Raut told reporters in Nashik. On Gandhi, the Rajya Sabha MP

said, "A leader is one who is accepted by people. There is a substantial change in Rahul Gandhi

since 2014. People like to listen to him now." Raut said the Uddhav Thackeray-led party has begun preparations for the Lok Sabha and assembly polls of 2019 and it was ready to fight elections whether or not there is an alliance with the BJP.

To a question on the Sena's stand on encroachment by hawkers on Mumbai's streets, Raut said Bal Thackeray, the late Sena chief, was the first to raise the issue.

"Balasaheb was the first person to speak on this issue. Today, unless the chief minister provides police protection to corporation employees, the civic body cannot remove en-

croachments," he said.

Asked about former Congress leader Narayan Rane -- who started his career with the Shiv Sena before a bitter parting of ways -- joining the state cabinet, Raut said he had been hearing rumours of cabinet expansion for long, and he would comment on it only when it happens.

Earlier on Tuesday, chief minister Devendra Fadnis said a cabinet reshuffle will take place before the winter session of the state legislature, and Rane, who quit the Congress recently to form his own outfit, will be inducted into the cabinet.

Congress govt in HP is neck deep in corruption: Yogi Adityanath

DHARAMSHALA: Launching a scathing attack on the Virbhadra Singh-led government, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath said on Monday that "mafia" was an Italian word and "it fits the Congress regime in Himachal".

Yogi Adityanath, who was at Nagrota Bagwan assembly segment to address the rally in favour of BJP candidate Arun Mehra, who is pitted against four-time legislator and minister GS Bali.



The UP chief minister said that there had been a BJP government in Himachal, the state would have scaled new heights on the developmental front.

"The current Congress regime in Himachal was neck deep in corruption while the mining mafia, forest mafia and drug mafia are ruling the roosts," alleged Yogi.

He said the Congress government in Himachal has spoilt the young

generation by promoting the drug mafia. "Similarly at the national level, the corrupt UPA rule hollowed out the country with scams," the head priest of Gorkhnath Math said.

Yogi further said the current government at the Centre which is led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has built a reputation of India as a powerful country in just three years of rule.

"India has developed cordial diplomatic relations with most countries of the world under Modi rule," said Yogi.

Accusing the Congress regime of failing to utilise the central grants, Yogi said, PM Modi-led government launched various welfare schemes in three years but Himachal government did not implement them.

U.P. woman killed for resisting rape

Two cases of grave violence against women were reported from Meerut and Shamli districts of western Uttar Pradesh on Monday. In one incident, four people tried to rape a woman in Shamli and killed her when she resisted; in another incident, a 100-year-old woman died after she was allegedly raped by a drunk youth in Meerut. The incident of attempted rape and murder took place in Bhura village of Shamli district.

Station House Officer Dharamveer Singh said, "According to the complaint filed by the victim's brother, there was no one at home when four men barged in and tried to rape the woman. When she resisted they attacked her. She was seriously injured during the attack."

"In Jani village of Meerut, a 100-year-old woman died after being allegedly raped by a 24-year-old drunk youth on Sunday night."

The accused, Ankit Punia, alleged he was being framed by people in the village due to caste politics.

INDIA, ITALY TO STEP UP ANTI-TERROR MEASURES

NEW DELHI: Reviving bilateral ties, India and Italy on Monday agreed to coordinate efforts at the multilateral level to counter global terrorism.

Describing India as an "Asian superpower", visiting Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni said Italy was in favour of a EU-India free trade agreement. He inked six agreements with India, covering energy cooperation, diplomatic training and railways.

At a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Gentiloni said Italy was keen on deepening cooperation in the strategic sectors and focussed on cybersecurity and anti-terrorism as common areas of cooperation.

"India can play a big role in the global coalition against terrorism. Today, all countries can face the same terrorist threat from groups that may

be different, but have a common link in the use of religious extremism for common goals. A multireligious country like India is itself a contribution to fighting terror. The very existence of a democracy with these characteristics is strategic," Mr. Gentiloni said in a special address at the Observer Research Foundation. Marines issue

Sources indicated that during the bilateral talks at Hyderabad House, both sides expressed a desire to leave difficult issues such as the Italian marines case behind and initiate steps in the interest of the larger relationship. In this direction, Italy supported India's quest to bring Pakistan-based terror masterminds Masood Azhar, Dawood Ibrahim and others to justice.

"The leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation to take decisive and concerted actions against Al Qaeda, ISIS (Da'esh) and their affiliates and all

other UN-designated globally proscribed terrorists and terror entities..." a joint statement said.

Officials said the statement was proof of Italy's support to India's concerns on terrorism.

Mr. Modi said, "India and Italy are two large economies, and the respective strengths of our economies provide us ample opportunities to strengthen our commercial cooperation. There is a lot of potential for our bilateral trade of about \$8.8 billion to grow much further." Mr. Gentiloni said Italy was "in favour" of the India-EU free trade agreement, which he said had been held back because some of the countries had "held national interests above trade."

The statement is significant, as it was Italy itself that had held back on allowing India-EU negotiations on trade and investment until the return

of the two Marines accused of killing Kerala fishermen in 2012. Relations between India and Italy had only begun to thaw after their return in May 2016. However, Mr. Gentiloni didn't make any direct reference to the Marines issue in his speech or a pre-screened question and answer session organised by the ORF.

He said India's role in promoting stability against threats across Asia was also important to Europe.

"India has a role in promoting stability in this region where European interests are directly involved. Not only are we threatened by the North Korean nuclear question, but across Asia. We have an opportunity because we have the main Asian players with strong leadership. Asian superpowers that are known democracies have strong leadership and that is right for stability," he added.

CBI probe into death of BJP workers not needed: Kerala govt tells HC

KOCHI: The Kerala government on Monday told the high court there was no need for a CBI probe into the seven cases of alleged political killings of RSS-BJP activists that took place after the CPI(M)-led dispensation came to power last year. Responding to a petition filed by the Thalassery-based Gopalan Adiyodi Vakkeel Smaraka Trust seeking a CBI probe into the cases, the state government said the plea was politically motivated. It handed over a progress report of the investigation to a division bench of Chief Justice Nandan Prasad Singh and Justice Raja Vijayaraghavan.

The bench had on October 17 directed the state government to spell out its stand on the demand for a CBI probe.

The government on Monday claimed that the conviction rate was higher in cases probed by state police than those investigated by the CBI. The bench adjourned the hearing in the case to November 13.

The Trust had submitted that in all these cases active workers of a major outfit, part of the ruling front, have been named as accused.

It had also alleged that in some cases, party activists hailing from the constituency of the chief minister, who also holds the home ministry portfolio, were involved.

"In all these cases, facts and circumstances clearly indicate high-level political conspiracy in planned execution of the killings and efforts to save the real culprits," the petitioner had contended.

The Trust had alleged that the police did not properly investigate the conspiracy angle in these cases. The Kerala gov-

ernment on Monday told the high court there was no need for a CBI probe into the seven cases of alleged political killings of RSS-BJP activists that took place after the CPI(M)-led dispensation came to power last year.

Responding to a petition filed by the Thalassery-based Gopalan Adiyodi Vakkeel Smaraka Trust seeking a CBI probe into the cases, the state government said the plea was politically motivated.

It handed over a progress report of the investigation to a division bench of Chief Justice Nandan Prasad Singh and Justice Raja Vijayaraghavan.

The bench had on October 17 directed the state government to spell out its stand on the demand for a CBI probe.

The government on Monday claimed that the conviction rate was higher in cases probed by state police than those investigated by the CBI. The bench adjourned the hearing in the case to November 13.

The Trust had submitted that in all these cases active workers of a major outfit, part of the ruling front, have been named as accused.

It had also alleged that in some cases, party activists hailing from the constituency of the chief minister, who also holds the home ministry portfolio, were involved.

"In all these cases, facts and circumstances clearly indicate high-level political conspiracy in planned execution of the killings and efforts to save the real culprits," the petitioner had contended.

The Trust had alleged that the police did not properly investigate the conspiracy angle in these cases.

IPS officer on probation caught cheating in civil services exam, held in Chennai

CHENNAI: Saeer Karim, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer on probation, was allegedly caught cheating in a civil services test conducted at the Presidency Girls Higher Secondary School in Chennai on Monday.

The accused, who has been arrested, faces dismissal from the force because he was still



under probation when the incident occurred.

An assistant superintendent of police posted at Tirunelveli, Karim wanted to rise up in the ranks and join the Indian Administrative Service. The alleged fraud was detect-

ed while he was appearing for the main civil services examinations.

Sources said the accused was using a Bluetooth device to procure answers from his wife during a general studies test when he was caught by a Union Public Service Commission squad. He has been booked for cheating under the Indian Penal Code as well as relevant sections of the IT Act-2003.

Karim successfully cleared the civil services examination in 2014. He was undergoing training at Nanguneri subdivision of Tirunelveli. Chennai police have also sought the cooperation of their Hyderabad counterparts to arrest Karim's wife. His arrest was confirmed by Chennai police commissioner AK Viswanathan.

WANT TO CONQUER FEAR? ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN COME TO YOUR HELP



Using a combination of artificial intelligence (AI) and brain scanning technology, a team of researchers has developed a novel method that can help remove specific fears from the brain.

The new technique that could read and identify a fear memory can pave way of treat-

ing patients with conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and phobias, the study said.

Neuroscientists, from the University of Tokyo, developed 'Decoded Neurofeedback' -- which used brain scanning to monitor activity in the brain, and identify complex patterns of

activity that resembled a specific fear memory.

In the study, the team included 17 healthy volunteers in whom a fear memory was created by administering a brief electric shock when they saw a certain computer image.

Using brain scanner, the researchers monitored the volun-

teers' mental activity and were able to spot signs of that specific fear memory. Using AI algorithms, they also developed a fast and accurate method of reading the fear.

The findings showed that the volunteers' brains showed brain patterns of that specific fear memory, even when they were

resting and not consciously aware of the fear.

Because the researchers could decode these brain patterns quickly, they gave the participants a reward of small amount of money, so that the fear memories would become associated with rewards. However, the volunteers were told

that the reward depended on their brain activity, although they didn't know how.

At the end of the reward therapy that continued for three days, the team showed the volunteers the pictures previously associated with the shocks.

"We could not identify enhanced activity in the amygdala

-- the brain's fear centre. This meant that we were able to reduce the fear memory without the volunteers ever consciously experiencing the fear memory in the process," said lead author Ai Koizumi from the University of Tokyo. The study was published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour.

THE STEALTH SUPERBUG, DECODED

A team of scientists in Bengaluru is behind the genome sequencing of *Candida auris*, a fungus that has caused disease outbreaks in five continents this year.

On November 4, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a leading public health institute in Atlanta, U.S., reported 13 cases of infection by the deadly fungus *Candida auris* in several parts of the country. Apart from the U.S., outbreaks have been reported this year in eight countries across four continents -- India, Pakistan, South Korea, Kuwait, South Africa, Colombia, Venezuela and United Kingdom.

A paper by scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru has shown that many cases of *Candida auris* have been misdiagnosed in the country. In 2015, a team led by Utpal Tatu, professor of biochemistry, IISc, completed the genotype sequencing of *Candida auris*, widely considered an emerging superbug fungus as it does not respond to conventional antifungal drugs. The genome data were submitted to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, U.S. and is now considered as the reference genome across the globe.

India, an epicentre

Candidiasis is a fungal infection caused by *Candida* species, often seen in patients whose immune system is compromised, such as AIDS patients or in case of transplants, malignancies and the use of catheters. Most of the infections are hospital-acquired, especially in ICU settings.

The first case reported was in Japan in an external ear canal infection in a patient in 2009. Since then, most cases have been invasive in nature and India has one of the highest number of infections caused by this superbug, says PhD student Sharanya Chatterjee, a member of the IISc team who studied isolates of *Candida* from a private hospital in Bengaluru. She found that in many cases, the fungus had been misidentified with another *Candida* species, *Candida haemulonii*.

Dr. Tatu's team was among the first to report the high rate of misdiagnosis of *Candida auris*. "Current diagnostic procedures to detect fungal infections cannot detect *Candida auris*, which is resistant to common antifungal treatment. In several patients, by the time we had made the correct diagnosis, it was too late," says Ms. Chatterjee.

The team of scientists has developed a diagnostic tool to detect *Candida auris* using polymerase chain reactions. "The rise of more virulent forms is connected to the indiscriminate use of antibiotics," says Dr. Tatu, adding, "The strain found in the United States was resistant to even the third class of antifungal treatment."

Highly resistant fungus

One reason for the high resistance to existing drugs is that this species has a higher number of drug efflux pumps compared to other species, says Ms. Chatterjee. Drug efflux pumps are proteins that prevent other drugs from crossing the cell membrane. The IISc team's research was published in the September 2015 issue of BMC Genomics.

Sudarshan Ballal, director, Manipal Hospitals, which provided the isolates for the study, says the research highlighted the need for clinical-academic collaboration. "We have been able to dissect a fungus found commonly in hospitals and study it at the genome level. Some fungi look alike at macroscopic level, but their genotype could be very different, sort of like twins," he says, adding, "If you know it is *Candida auris* from day one, you could start off with treatment which it is sensitive to." Dr. Ballal agrees with Dr. Tatu about indiscriminate use of antibiotics as a possible cause: "Killing all kinds of bacteria gives space for fungi to grow."

NEW STUDY FINDS NO CONNECT BETWEEN PREGNANCY FLU AND AUTISM RISK

Researchers in the US said on Monday they have found no link between influenza in pregnant women and the risk of her child developing autism after birth.

Some earlier research has pointed to maternal infections as a possible cause of the neuro-developmental disorder, though other studies have not found any such link.

The findings in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Pediatrics involved more than 196,000 children born in California from 2000 to 2010.

More than 3,100 children in the group had autism, which is believed to have genetic and environmental triggers but its causes remain poorly understood.



ly understood.

The study, led by Ousseny Zerbo of Kaiser Permanente North-

ern California, found no association between a higher risk of autism and influenza infection while

pregnant.

Nor did it find any link between autism and vaccination against the flu during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy.

"There was a suggestion of increased risk of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with maternal vaccination in the first trimester," said the study, which went on to explain that this finding "was not statistically significant" after researchers adjusted for other risk factors.

The researchers said that at this time no "changes in vaccine policy or practice", are recommended but "additional studies are warranted".

BRAIN CIRCUITS THAT CONTROL SPEECH PRODUCTION RESPONSIBLE FOR STUTTERING

US researchers have identified neuro-metabolic alterations across the brain that linked stuttering to changes in brain circuits that control speech production and circuits that support attention and emotion.

Stuttering is a speech disorder in which the flow of speech is disrupted by involuntary repetitions and prolongations of sounds and syllables. The study found that affected brain regions included major nodes of the speech-production network -- associated with the regulation of motor activity, the default-mode network -- involved in the regulation of attention -- and the emotional-memory network -- responsible for regulating emotion.

Attention-regulating portions of the brain are related to control circuits that are important in governing behaviour, the researchers said. "People with changes here are more likely to stutter and have more severe stuttering. And emotions like anxiety and stress also tend to make stuttering worse, likely because this network interacts with language and attention control circuits," said lead author Bradley S. Peterson, Director at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA) in the US.



For the study, the scientists performed proton shift imaging of the brain in 47 children and 47 adults, both with and without stuttering. The results confirmed that disturbances in neuronal or mem-

brane metabolism contribute to the development of stuttering. The study was published online in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Don't smoke in front of your child. Exposure stops brain development

Children exposed to tobacco smoke in early childhood adopt anti-social behaviour, engage in proactive and reactive aggression, and face conduct problems at school, even drop out at age 12, a research has showed.

Exposure to tobacco smoke is toxic to the developing brain at a time when it is most vulnerable to environment input, the researchers said.

"Young children have little control over their exposure to household tobacco smoke, which is considered toxic to the brain at a time when its development is exponential," said lead author and Professor Linda Pagani from the University of Montreal in Quebec, Canada.

Parents who smoke near their children often inadvertently expose them to second- and third-hand smoke. Abnormal brain development can result from chronic or transient exposure to toxic chemicals and gases in second-hand tobacco smoke. These compounds eventually solidify and create third-hand smoke.

In the study, the researchers found compelling evidence that suggests other dangers to developing brain systems that govern behavioural decisions, social and emotional life as well as cognitive functioning. Anti-social behaviour is characterised by proactive intent to harm others, lack of prosocial feelings, and violate social norms.

Such behaviours include aggression, criminal offences, theft, refusal to comply with authority, destruction of property and is also associated with academic problems in later childhood. "These long-term associations should encourage policy-makers and public health professionals to raise awareness among parents about the developmental risks of second-hand smoke exposure," Pagani said.

For the study, published in the journal Indoor Air, the team examined 1,035 boys and girls born in 1997 and 1998. Their parents reported whether anyone smoked at home when their children were aged 1.5 to 7.5 years. At age 12, their children self-reported their anti-social behaviour and academic characteristics.

AROUND THE WORLD IN HEALTH

A Northwestern University research team in the U.S. has developed a first-of-its-kind soft, flexible micro-fluidic device that easily adheres to the skin and measures the wearer's sweat to show how his or her body is responding to exercise. A little larger than a rupee coin and about the same thickness, the simple, low-cost device analyses key biomarkers to help a person decide quickly if any adjustments, such as drinking more water or replenishing electrolytes, need to be made or if something is medically awry. Designed for a one-time use of a few hours, the device, placed directly on the skin of the forearm or back, even detects the presence of a biomarker for cystic fibrosis. In the future, it may be more broadly used for diagnosing a wider range of diseases.



Bacterium's smarter than chemists
Scientists at Caltech, U.S. have "bred"

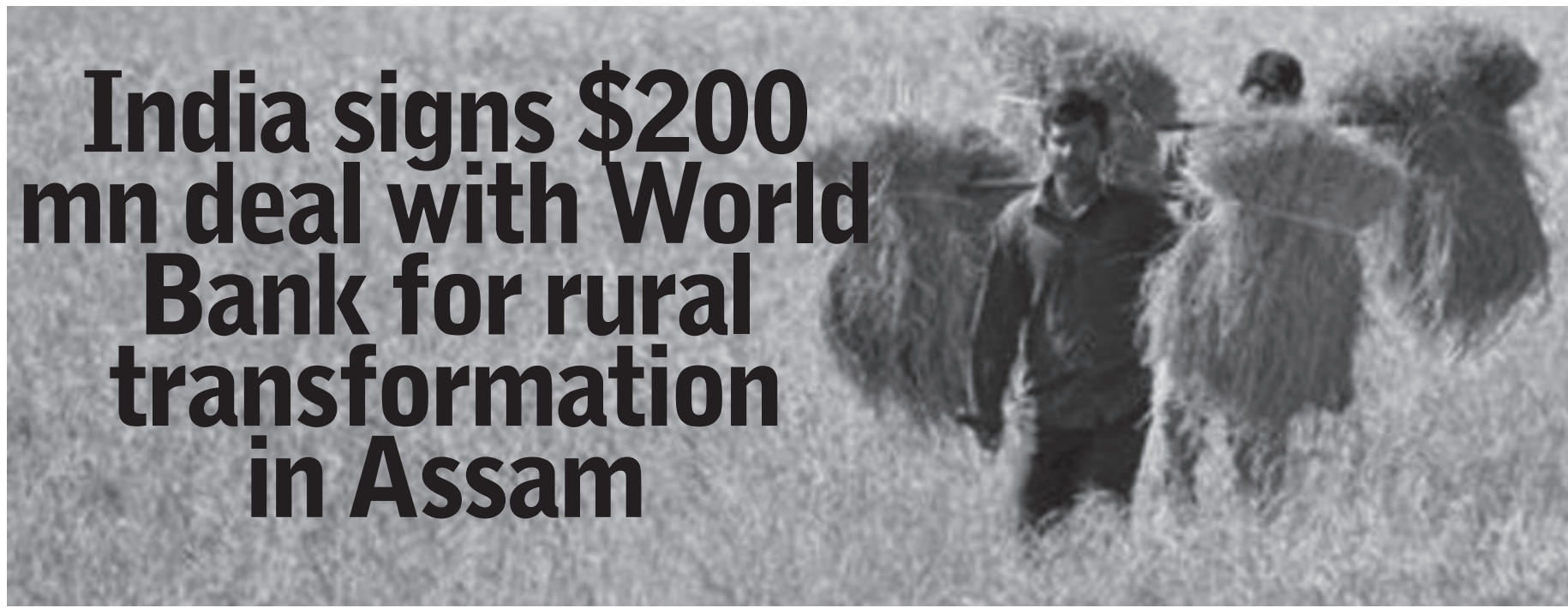
a bacterial protein to make chemical bonds that until now were thought to be made possible only by chemists in

labs. Molecules with silicon-carbon bonds are found in pharmaceuticals as well as in many other products, including agricultural chemicals and TV screens. Currently, these products are made synthetically as the silicon-carbon bonds are not found in nature. The new study shows that biology can instead be used to manufacture these bonds in ways that are environmentally friendlier and potentially cheaper. The ideal candidate turned out to be a protein from a bacterium that grows in hot springs in Iceland. That protein, called cytochrome c, normally shuttles electrons to other proteins, but the researchers found that it also happens to act like an enzyme to create silicon-carbon bonds at low levels. After some tinkering, the scientists claimed to have created an enzyme that can selective-

ly make silicon-carbon bonds 15 times more efficiently than the "best catalyst invented by chemists".

Nanobodies to check inflammation

Scientists have designed "mini antibodies" that block an inflammatory ion channel, quelling skin and kidney inflammation in mice. These so-called nanobody, whose tiny design allows it to latch on to the nooks and crannies of cell surface molecules with greater precision, paves the way for potentially-novel treatment for a wide range of inflammatory disorders including inflammatory bowel disease, chronic pain and multiple sclerosis. Previous attempts to design such antibodies have shown limited benefit in clinical trials due to low selectivity and toxic side effects and due to obstruction by a molecule called P2X7.



India signs \$200 mn deal with World Bank for rural transformation in Assam

NEW DELHI: The finance ministry and the World Bank announced on Monday the signing of a loan agreement worth \$200 million for the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project.

"Project will support Assam Govt. to facilitate agri-business investments, increase agriculture productivity and market access among others," the finance ministry said in a tweet.

It said the project will enable small farm holders to produce crops that are resilient to recurrent floods or droughts in the state. "The \$200 million loan from International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a seven year grace period, and a maturity of 16.5 yrs," added another tweet.

The World Bank will release its Doing Business report on October 31.

Tata Steel posts Rs1,017 cr Q2 profit, misses estimates

MUMBAI: The company said sales volume in its European operations rose 15% from a year earlier due to improvements in the supply chain and some one-off sales. Tata Steel Ltd reported a profit in the fiscal-second quarter from a loss in the year-ago period, but its earnings missed analysts' estimates by a wide margin.

The company reported a consolidated net profit of Rs1,017.8 crore in the three months ended 30 September. That compares with the Rs 1,663 crore profit estimate by analysts in a Bloomberg survey. In the same quarter last year, Tata Steel had reported a loss of Rs 49.4 crore.

The main reason behind the company missing estimates is that, Tata Steel's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) of Rs 4,725.8 crore during the quarter came in well below analysts' expectations of Rs 5,235 crore despite rising by 52.8% from the year-ago period.

The Ebitda margin widened 320 basis points to 14.6% from a year earlier on lower raw material costs. A basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

Tata Steel, however, managed to meet revenue estimates by reporting a 19.7% jump from the year-ago period to Rs 32,464.1 crore. Sales volume jumped 15% from the year-ago period to 6.45 million tonnes.

The company said it had made the £550 million payment to the British Steel Pension Scheme (BSPS) during the quarter and accounted for it under other comprehensive income.

"The Pensions Regulator has approved the Regulatory Apportionment Agreement in respect of BSPS and payment of £550 million has been completed. The BSPS has been now separated from Tata Steel UK and number of affiliated companies. The next step would be completion of necessary formalities to set up a new scheme with lower risk profile following member consent process led by trustee," the company said.

Tata Steel said Ebitda in its standalone India business rose 71% from the year-ago period to Rs3,408 crore and was a function of both higher volumes as well as realizations. It added that its plant at Kalinganagar has been ramped up to operate at full capacity.

The company said sales volume in its European operations rose 15% from a year earlier due to improvements in the supply chain and some one-off sales. European revenue rose 32% year-on-year, while Ebitda fell 29% to £89 million due to lower spreads and higher raw material prices.

Tata Steel said its gross debt rose by about Rs 2,447 crore during the quarter and stood at Rs 90,259 crore, mainly due to working capital requirements and foreign exchange lines. The company incurred a capital expenditure of Rs1,834 crore during the quarter.

Abhisar Jain, an analyst at Centrum Broking Ltd, while terming Tata Steel's September quarter profit slightly below his estimates, said that the most interesting aspect about the management's commentary post the results was that it remained non-committal on its expansion in India, despite now operating at full capacity. "I think it's closely looking at the ongoing insolvency proceedings for inorganic growth before committing a large brownfield capex," Jain said.

IDFC, Shriram call off merger on differences over valuation

NEW DELHI: IDFC Ltd and Shriram Group on Monday called off their planned merger following differences over valuation. IDFC management said that it will continue to look at buying or merging with other non-banking financial companies at the level of IDFC Bank.

In a notification to stock exchanges, IDFC said that despite best efforts, the two entities were not able to find common ground on a mutually acceptable swap ratio for the merger.

"Accordingly, both parties have agreed to call off discussions on a potential merger and the exclusivity period pursuant to the CES agreement entered into between the concerned parties stands terminated with immediate effect," the notification said. CES refers to confidentiality, exclusivity and standstill. "The decision to call off the deal is good for the shareholders of both the entities as it would have been value destructive," said Ashutosh Mishra, banking analyst at Reliance Securities.

Mint had reported on Monday that both parties are likely to terminate the exclusivity agreement, increasing the likelihood of the deal being called off.

IDFC and Shriram had announced their merger plan on 8 July, agreeing to a 90-day exclusivity period to complete the due diligence process. The exclusivity period was later extended until 8 November. Under a three-tiered structure, the retail arm Shriram City Union Finance Ltd was to be merged with IDFC Bank Ltd; Shriram Transport

Finance would become a fully owned unit of IDFC and be delisted; and IDFC would also become the holding company for the Shriram Group's insurance businesses.

But the talks failed following valuation concerns raised by some IDFC shareholders, including Enam Holdings and Sipadan Investments (Mauritius) Ltd, a unit of Malaysian sovereign wealth fund Khazanah Nasional Bhd.

Some IDFC shareholders were demanding a 60% premium to the current market value of the company, fearing a diminution of their holdings in the merged entity. Khazana and Enam hold around 15% in IDFC while the government holds 16.4%. Rajiv Lall, chief executive officer and managing director of IDFC Bank Ltd, said that the swap ratio IDFC proposed was one where it was "confident (of) carrying all our shareholders".

"That swap ratio was not at all unreasonable in our estimate. It was such (a ratio) that it had us take a greater discount to sum of parts valuation than Shriram Capital," said Lall.

Lall further said that Shriram did not come back with a counter offer despite having fewer key shareholders. He also added that a deal involving only the consumer finance arms of both groups might have worked.

"If the deal could have been unbundled we might have been able to save the deal. If we break Shriram Capital into its parts, we would have been able to save the deal. The easiest deal would

have been to (merge) Shriram City Union Finance and the (IDFC) bank. Because of Shriram Capital's structure that was not feasible," said Lall.

The merger with Shriram would have given IDFC Bank a network of 10 million customers of Shriram which could have been used to cross-sell the bank's products. For Shriram, merging with IDFC would have given it access to lower cost of funds, besides newer revenue streams from cross-selling products. It would have also given an exit opportunity to the employees of Shriram Trust, which holds 45% in the firm, as they become the shareholders of IDFC, which is a listed entity. Even for shareholders like Piramal, this deal was considered to be a backdoor entry into banking.

Lall said that IDFC will continue to look at inorganic opportunities for IDFC Bank in an effort to boost its return on assets (RoA). "We are still looking at inorganic growth. At this pace, it will take us three to three-and-a-half years to grow out of our legacy. The RoA won't be great because of Rs600 crore net interest income (pre-tax) drag due to the legacy bad loan book and bond portfolio," said Lall.

"We will look at less complex deal without involving IDFC (the parent)," he said.

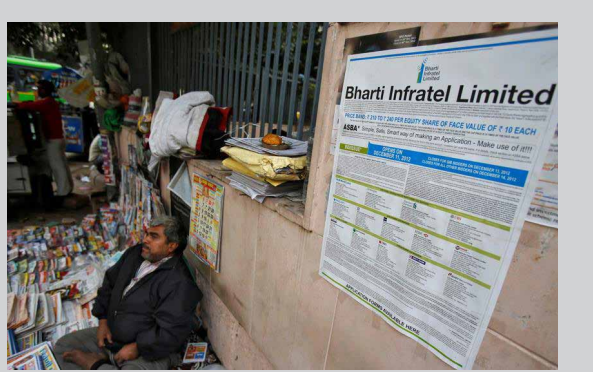
The IDFC stock fell 2.68% to close at Rs61.70, while Shriram City Union Finance rose 1.93% to Rs2,186.25. The benchmark Sensex rose 0.33% to 33,266.16 points

Bharti Infratel to explore acquisition of Indus Towers

NEW DELHI: Mobile tower firm Bharti Infratel on Monday said it will explore options to acquire country's largest telecom infrastructure firm Indus Towers.

"The board of directors of Bharti Infratel Limited, in their meeting held on October 30, 2017, has decided to explore and evaluate acquisition of stake in one or more tranches in Indus Towers Limited with the aim of making it a subsidiary or wholly owned subsidiary of Bharti Infratel Limited," the mobile tower firm said in a statement.

Indus Towers, a joint venture between Bharti Airtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular, has portfolio of around 1.23 lakh mobile towers across 15 states in the country.



Bharti Infratel has consolidated portfolio of over 90,000 telecom towers, which includes over 39,000 of its own towers and the balance from its 42% equity interest in Indus Towers.

The three leading wireless telecommunications service providers in India by revenue - Bharti Airtel, Vodafone and Idea Cellular - are the largest customers of Bharti Infratel and for Indus Towers too.

RBI likely to cut rates in December 6 policy review: Report

NEW DELHI: The Reserve Bank is likely to cut rates at its December 6 policy review meet as retail inflation remains muted and the October number is expected to be about 3.3%, says a report.

"We continue to expect the RBI MPC to cut policy rates by 25bps on December 6, though the October MPC minutes sounded more hawkish than the actual policy," Bank of America Merrill Lynch (BofAML) said in a research note.

The core Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation, adjusted for house rent allowance is moderating, and the HRA impact (post 7th Pay Commission), is largely "statistical", it said.

"We expect October CPI inflation to remain unchanged at 3.3% as in September," the global brokerage noted.

The report further noted that "soft growth" numbers call for lower rates.

At 5.5% in old GDP series, even factoring in demonetisation shock-led base effects in December and March, India's GDP growth in this fiscal is expected to be well below our estimated 7% potential.

Moreover, a December policy rate cut will signal lending rate cut before the 'busy' season.

"...a December 6 cut will still signal a lending rate cut to banks before the 'busy' industrial season intensifies in the March quarter, especially as the government is set to recapitalise banks to revive loan supply," the report noted.

Earlier this month, Reserve Bank of India kept benchmark interest rate unchanged on fears of rising inflation while lowering growth forecast to 6.7% for the current fiscal. It also raised its inflation forecast to a range of 4.2 to 4.6% during remainder of current fiscal as against 4 to 4.5% previously.

Apple could drop Qualcomm components in next year's iPhones, iPads



MUMBAI: Apple Inc has designed iPhones and iPads that would drop chips supplied by Qualcomm Inc, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The change would affect iPhones released in the fall of 2018, but Apple could still change course before then, these people said. They declined to be identified because they were not authorized to discuss the matter with the media.

The dispute stems from a change in supply arrangements under which Qualcomm has stopped providing some software for Apple to test its chips in its iPhone designs, one of the people told Reuters.

The two companies are locked in a multinational legal dispute over the Qualcomm's licensing terms to Apple.

Qualcomm told Reuters it is providing fully tested chips to Apple for iPhones. "We are committed to supporting Apple's new devices consistent with our support of all others in the industry," Qualcomm said in a statement.

The Wall Street Journal first reported that Apple could drop Qualcomm chips Monday.

Bernstein analyst Stacy Rasgon said Apple's move is not totally unexpected.

Though Qualcomm has for several years supplied Apple's modems — which help Apple's phones connect to wireless data networks — Intel Corp has provided upward of half of Apple's modem chips for iPhones in recent years, Rasgon said. Intel recently acquired a firm that would let it replace more of Qualcomm's chips in iPhones, Rasgon said. Rasgon said it's too early to say definitively whether Apple fully intends to drop Qualcomm next year because Apple can likely make multiple contingency plans for different supplier scenarios.

"Apple is big enough that they want to support multiple paths, they can do that," Rasgon said. "Samsung (Electronics Co) did this too. A couple of years ago, Samsung designed Qualcomm out, but Qualcomm didn't even know until it was close to time to ship" Samsung's phones, Rasgon said.

Why stock market and economy are not always in sync with each other

NEW DELHI: Indian equities continue to be on fire, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty touching new highs every other day. However, a bullish stock market need not necessarily indicate that all is well with the economy. A recent Credit Suisse analysis showed the ties between the economy and markets is tenuous at best. "Not only are market returns more P/E (price-to-earnings) than earnings per share (EPS) driven, markets and economy also have different structures," the brokerage said in a presentation on September 13. Markets and the economy have different structures, meaning there exists a large informal economy, large parts of the formal economy may not be listed, and a large part of the market is driven by



global factors or growing penetration and share, it said. India's quarterly growth saw a sharp decline from 7% in the third quarter of fiscal year 2017 to a three-year low of 5.7% in the first quarter of fiscal year 2018, hurt by demonetisation and implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). However, the market's continued ascent does not reflect the pain impact of these events on the large informal sector, a key contributor to GDP.

Ola adds Wi-Fi connectivity to autorickshaws

NEW DELHI: Commuters using autorickshaws can now enjoy free Wi-Fi on board the three-wheeler vehicle when they book their rides using cab hailing app Ola. The SoftBank-backed company today said it has piloted its proprietary 'Auto-Connect Wifi' feature for 'Ola Autos' in major cities and will extend it to 73 cities in the country over the next few weeks.

These include the four metros as well as cities like Pune, Ahmedabad, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Hyderabad, among others. "With Auto-Connect Wifi, we are reinventing the 3-wheeler and enabling a connected experience for our customers," Ola Senior Director and Category Head (Auto) Siddharth Agrawal said in a statement.



Ola's Auto-Connect Wifi experience is built on the foundations of key government initiatives such as Digital India, he added. "Through this first-of-its-kind innovation, we want to not only improve the quality of time spent

while on the road, but also help build easy access to millions of users across the country," Agrawal said. The company, however, did not disclose the investment details or the number of vehicles the service will be available

on. Ola, which recently raised USD 1.1 billion funding from Tencent and others, had said it will make strategic investments in supply, technology, and innovation for the country's transportation needs. Ola had launched the Wi-Fi feature in 2015 for its 'Prime' category users. Users of its 'Select' membership programme can also use Wi-Fi in Micro and Mini (affordable categories) vehicles. With the latest initiative, 'Select' users will be able to connect seamlessly with the Wi-Fi while on board the autorickshaw. For first-time users, once the Ola Auto ride starts, they need to tap on 'Wi-Fi' on the 'Track Your Ride' screen. They will find their unique Wi-Fi access point name and password to connect to the service.

Kohli reclaims top spot in ODI rankings

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli reclaimed his throne as the world's best One-day International batsman on Monday after smashing his sixth ton of the year in India's series-clinching victory over New Zealand.

The India skipper, who cracked a 106-ball 113 in Kanpur, surpassed South Africa's A.B. de Villiers as number one as he resumed the top spot after a gap of just 10 days.

Kohli was the top run-scorer in the New Zealand series, accumulating 263 over three matches including his 32nd ODI century

on Sunday as India secured a 2-1 series victory.

He also paired with opener Rohit Sharma for a 230-run stand as they became the first batsmen to share four double century ODI partnerships.

Kohli, who also tops the Twenty20 batting chart, also became the fastest batsman to reach 9,000 ODI runs in the game at Kanpur's Green Park Stadium.

The incomparable Kohli has also reached a career-high in terms of rating points.

The 28-year-old Delhi batsman has reached 889 points, which is the best ever by an India batsman. The previous highest points' tally of 887 was managed by Sachin Tendulkar in 1998 and by Kohli earlier this year.

Sharma's 174 runs in the series against New Zealand, which included a fine 147 in Sunday's final match, has seen him reach a career-high rating of 799 points, even though he remains in seventh position. Similarly, Pakistan's Babar Azam (fourth position) and South



Africa's Quinton de Kock (fifth position) have also attained their highest in terms of rating points.

South Africa batsman Faf du Plessis (up two places to 8th), former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (up one place to 11th), New Zealand batsman Tom Latham (up 15 places to a career-best 23rd), Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed (up three places to 37th) and Sri Lanka's Lahiru Thirimanne (up six places to 47th) are among the batsmen to move up in the rankings. The list for

bowlers continues to be led by Pakistan pace bowler Hasan Ali while India pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah has reached a career-best third position after finishing with six wickets in the series against New Zealand.

Other bowlers to move northwards include left-arm spinners Mitchell Santner of New Zealand (up two places to 14th) and Pakistan's Imad Wasim (up 14 places to 27th). Adam Milne has also made significant movement, gaining 11 slots to reach 42nd position.

India vs New Zealand: How Kuldeep Yadav is trying to negate dew factor in New Delhi

NEW DELHI: Anticipating that gripping the ball may prove to be a stiff challenge because of dew, Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav was seen practising with the wet ball on the eve of the Twenty20 series-opener against New Zealand.

Dew has always been prevalent whenever Indian teams play at home from October to January. Any score becomes chase-able under lights during this time of the year as bowlers find it extremely difficult to grip the ball. During the optional net session in the afternoon, Kuldeep was seen soaking the white cherry in mineral water after every second delivery.

The idea was conceived by bowling coach Bharat Arun, who was seen



discussing the strategy with the Chinaman bowler. India pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar had also adopted the same strategy to prepare himself for death bowling in the past. Bowling with the wet ball will help Kuldeep learn to get more control as it turns into a slippery bar of soap

after gripping. The wet ball also skids off the pitch making it easier for batsmen to score. For a wrist spinner, the grip becomes all the more important as there are more chances of wet ball slipping out of the hand.

Kuldeep primarily bowled to Dinesh Karthik at the nets but the batsman was seen negotiating the deliveries easily. In between, he asked scribes at what time in the evening dew factor sets in.

During the net session, rookie Shreyas Iyer was hit on the right forearm by a throw-down from support staff member Raghavendra.

Iyer looked in pain and did not take any further part in the nets after that.

BCCI's anti-doping policy gets ICC's thumbs up

NEW DELHI: The International Cricket Council says it is happy with the anti-doping measures taken by the Board of Control for Cricket in India.

Although the ICC became a signatory of the World Anti Doping Agency in July 2006, BCCI does not follow WADA or its accredited Indian arm, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).

The BCCI has engaged a private agency to control doping and although its policies are not clear.

The ICC told Hindustan Times that "the BCCI's anti-doping policy is based on the ICC template code."

Indian cricketers have found the "whereabouts" clause particularly irritating.

According to ICC's anti-doping code, it is necessary to conduct "out-of-competition

testing" where the player selected for testing gets no advance notice of the test.

And for this to be possible, certain information is required about the whereabouts of the player when he/she is out-of-competition. The ICC said it has not received any letter from either WADA or NADA questioning BCCI's anti-doping policy.

"It is mandatory for the BCCI to adopt the ICC template code for national federations, which itself is based on the ICC's WADA compliant Code," said the ICC.

Although the Indian sports ministry is trying to enforce WADA/NADA guidelines, the BCCI is in no mood to adopt these.

The Indian cricket Board is perfectly happy with its private anti-doping agency and ICC doesn't seem to have a problem with its most influential full member.

Kumar Sangakkara, Sri Lanka cricket legend, not in favour of four-day Tests

MUMBAI: Kumar Sangakkara has rejected the idea of four-day Test cricket, with the former Sri Lanka captain stating that he has started to lose track of the many changes that have been introduced in the sport.

"Can you imagine an Ashes series where a Test match only goes four days? To have all of that watered down into four days is a bit of a blow, but I understand the whole importance of commercial viability and the economics of it. There is also tradition and history to consider. There have been so many changes over the last five or six years to cricket, even I am losing track," Sangakkara told Sportsday Radio, according to Fox Sports.

"I'm not a big fan of four day Tests. I understand the thought process behind it to try and have fans interested and attract them so they don't have to spend so much time. It's also an advantage for local TV networks and sponsors.

"But at the end of the day Test cricket has always been defined as five days. Records have been established, history has been made over five days," he added.

Sangakkara said the expansion of T20 cricket, with several countries staging their own tournaments, has broadened the scope for a player to make a future in cricket.

"Cricket has changed over the last few years, especially with franchise cricket coming in. Now there is a place for everyone. Not everyone will be able to play Test cricket and not everyone will be able to fit into a one-day or T20 side." On the question of whether a player should choose the format he wants to play, Sangakkara said, "I think there is nothing



wrong with aspiring to be either. I think it's completely up to the individual to decide where he wants to play.

"Of course we tend to kind of impose on younger cricketers that Test cricket is where they should learn their skill and expect to be proficient."

However, the former cricketer said a player must get an opportunity to play in all three formats. "The beauty of it is that everyone's talent and ability will allow them to explore where they can get to in each format. I don't think it sells anymore to force or the other down someone's throat.

"Of course, being a purist, you might argue with me and say 'that's blasphemy'. But to ensure that players have a balanced view of what cricket is they need to be allowed to explore all three formats," he said.

"Test cricket needs to be protected and safeguarded yes, but not just by forcing it down the throats of players, but by informing them and getting them to understand the culture and read about the history. Allow them to fall in love and take their own time to do it. It's about balance and each individual finding his or her place," he concluded.

Zimbabwe vs West Indies 2nd Test evenly poised as Kraigg Brathwaite falls late on

BULAWAYO: West Indies suffered the loss of Kraigg Brathwaite late on day two to reach stumps at 78-1, trailing Zimbabwe by 248 runs in the second Test in Bulawayo.

Brathwaite (32) was forced back by a flat Graeme Cremer (1-31) delivery and pushed at the ball, directing an outside edge to Hamilton Masakadza, who took a good low catch at slip. The tourists will resume with Kieran Powell (43 not out) and Devendra Bishoo (0 not out) at the crease on day three.

Having won the first Test by 117 runs last week, another victory or a draw will be enough for the Windies to come out on top in the two-match series. Zimbabwe resumed on 169-4, with Masakadza not out on 101. The centurion was the first man to fall on Monday, reaching 147



before finally being dislodged by Bishoo (2-82). A flighted ball outside off tempted the opener into a sweep that he top-edged behind to wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich for Bishoo's 100th scalp in Test cricket. Malcolm Waller followed for a golden duck in the next over, his attempt to drive Brathwaite (1-23) ending with the ball clattering into middle and leg.

Regis Chakabva managed to add just 10 before he was bowled by Bishoo, attempting to sweep

the spinner but missing entirely.

Sikandar Raza, though, made an important contribution for the hosts, weighing in with a half-century of 80 from 147 deliveries. Raza entertained the spectators with six boundaries and a maximum, Shannon Gabriel (2-64) eventually removing him by eliciting an edge that was taken by Kyle Hope at second slip.

Zimbabwe's tail failed to wag after that, with skipper Cremer (11) run out by a direct hit from counterpart Jason Holder at the non-striker's end. And the home team's innings came to a close when Tendai Chisoro (nine) followed an over later, trapped lbw by a slower, full delivery from Kemar Roach, who led the Windies attack with figures of 3-44.

Heena Sidhu strikes gold, Deepak wins bronze in Commonwealth shooting

BRISBANE: Heena Sidhu clinched the 10m air pistol gold medal to give India a perfect start at the Commonwealth Shooting Championships in Brisbane on Tuesday.

Sidhu shot a combined score of 626.2 (386+240.8) to claim the top honours.

This was Sidhu's second successive international gold after she, along with Jitu Rai, claimed the top position in the 10m air pistol mixed team event in the ISSF World Cup Finals in Delhi earlier this month.

Among other Indians in fray here, Deepak Kumar won a bronze medal in the 10m air rifle event.



London Olympic bronze-medallist Gagan Narang finished fourth in the same event, while Ravikumar ended fifth. Narang shot 626.2 in the qualification to create Commonwealth record.

Hong Kong to become first Asian host of Gay Games

HONG KONG: Hong Kong will become the first Asian city to host the Gay Games in 2022 with rights campaigners celebrating the winning bid for a city often criticised for lagging on LGBT rights. Hong Kong beat Mexico's Guadalajara and Washington DC to host the 11th edition of the event, with the jubilant bid team saying it would attract 15,000 participants and bring HK\$1 billion into the local economy.

Organised by the LGBT community, the Gay Games features a range of sports and is open to all participants, "without regard to sexual orientation, and there are no qualifying standards", the Hong Kong bid team said in a statement. Competitors come from many countries, including those where homosexuality remains illegal, it added. The Gay Games was founded by former Olympic decathlete Tom Waddell and first held in San Francisco in 1982. The next edition will be held in Paris in August next year, featuring 36 sports, from mountain biking to fencing and athletics.

Hong Kong's Pink Alliance, which promotes equal rights for the LGBT community, said the games would "help to bring a wider understanding and acceptance of our community", not only in the southern Chinese city but throughout the region. When the constitutional court in neighbouring Taiwan ruled in favour of allowing gay marriage in May, campaigners in socially conservative Hong Kong highlighted the city's lack of progress on equality issues.

Hong Kong does not recognise gay marriage and only decriminalised homosexuality in 1991. But a landmark court decision in September that granted a British lesbian in Hong Kong -- known as "QT" -- the right to live and work in the city as a dependant of her long-term partner was hailed as a decision that could reduce more hurdles for same-sex couples. QT had previously been denied a dependant visa by immigration authorities, forcing her instead to stay in Hong Kong on a visitor visa, which did not allow her to work.

UEFA Champions League: Barcelona not complacent ahead of Olympiacos tie

PARIS: Barcelona must appreciate matching the club's record of nine wins and a draw in their first 10 games of a Liga campaign, especially after Real Madrid's defeat at Girona, coach Ernesto Valverde told a news conference on Monday.

Barca rode their luck to beat Athletic Bilbao 2-0 away on Saturday to maintain a four-point gap at the top of the table, thanks to an outstanding display from goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen and a Raul Garcia shot that bounced off the bar.

On Sunday, Spanish and European champions Real blew a 1-0 halftime lead to lose 2-1 against Girona, who are playing in the top flight for the first time in their 87-year history.

Real are now eight points behind their arch-rivals.

Barca won 3-0 at Girona last month and only dropped points in a 1-1 draw at Atletico Madrid. They also have a perfect record in the Champions League and could reach the last 16 if they win at Valverde's old club Olympiacos Piraeus on Tuesday.

"La Liga is really difficult," Valverde said ahead of the Group D game in Athens.

"We aren't the only team that has to suffer to win. Madrid lost at Girona and Atletico drew at home (to Villarreal). The points are worth a lot and you have to work very hard to win. "We all expect to slip up at some point and the distances between teams can increase or decrease, but last

weekend shows that we have to really appreciate these victories."

Barca beat Olympiacos 3-1 two weeks ago despite playing the second half with 10 men but Valverde expects a tougher time at the noisy Karaiskakis Stadium, where he is revered for leading the Greek giants to three league titles and two domestic Cups.

"It's very exciting to come back to this stadium again. It means so much to me and I'm looking forward to the game for every reason," added Valverde, who coached Olympiacos between 2008 and 2012 in two separate spells.

"We are playing for the right to qualify from the group, three points are at stake and we get to experience a marvellous

atmosphere." Barca's rampant start to the season contrasts to Olympiacos's dismal run of results. They have lost all three games in the Champions League and on Saturday were beaten 1-0 by fierce city rivals Panathinaikos.

"In Barcelona they played defensively and tried to catch us out but at their place they'll have a huge lift from their fans and they'll want to beat us," Valverde said.

Barca captain Andres Iniesta has a calf injury, Gerard Pique is suspended, while fellow centre back Javier Mascherano, who has travelled to Greece, has been suffering with a fever meaning Thomas Vermaelen could make his first appearance of the season.