

TIME AND US

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Srinagar, Kashmir

FRIDAY

- DECEMBER, 15, 2017
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	5.1	-1.5
JAMMU	15.2	7.1
LEH	-2.5	-8.5
KARGIL	4.8	-8.0

SUNSET THURSDAY: 05:24 PM
SUNRISE FRIDAY: 07:31 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 06th °C & 0th °C respectively.

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

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SWITCH-OVER TO PAO SYSTEM: DGAT INTERACTS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

PM MODI'S ROADSHOW BLATANT VIOLATION OF MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT:

STUDENTING ERA ANNOUNCES CARE, AN INITIATIVE ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND

HOW ROHIT SHARMA HITS SIXES AT WILL, THE DOUBLE-TON MASTER REVEALS SECRET

Come, invest & engage with J&K: Drabu tells India Inc



New Delhi, Dec 14: Minister for Finance, Dr Haseeb Drabu today called for proactive engagement of major corporate houses from across the country with Jammu and Kashmir to channelize substantive investment to the State.

"There is tremendous scope for investment in potential sectors of strength like energy, horticulture, handloom and handicrafts, biotechnology, food processing, tourism,

information technology, education, skill development and sports in J&K which have strong inter-linkages with the other sectors," Dr Drabu said while addressing the 90th Annual General Meeting of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) here this morning.

He said J&K also has potential for becoming a Special Educational Zone for foreign universities and

Special Economic Zone for exquisite Handicrafts and Sports Goods besides attracting investment for setting up a Dry Port and Cold Chain.

"I would request you to start engaging with J&K and its people, to help us put the State on a faster path of development and growth," Dr Drabu told the business tycoons from India Inc present at the meeting.

See **Drabu**...Pg 02

GOVT WILL TAKE HOLISTIC REVIEW OF SRO-202: DR DRABU

Srinagar, Dec 14: The significant move by the Government to regularize services of daily earners languishing for nearly two decades or so, is going to benefit thousands of such appointees in around nine categories.

The beneficiaries will include Daily Rated, Casual, Seasonal, HDF and Local Fund Workers, NYCs, Land Donors, SPOs and Adhoc/Contractual appointees left out under the J&K Civil Services (Special Provisions) Act-2010 for want of eligibility criteria.

The Government has firmed-up the process for regularizing their services and the formal orders in this regard are likely to be issued soon by the Finance Department.

See **Holistic**...Pg 02

Is State headed for 'Bhai-Behan Ki Sarkar'? NC

'Has BJP diluted its stand on dynastic politics?'

Srinagar, Dec 14: Reacting to media reports suggesting the Government had initiated the process of nominating the Chief Minister's brother Tassaduq Mufti to the Legislative Council, National Conference on Thursday asked the Chief Minister to clarify which of her non-performing, corrupt Cabinet colleagues she was willing to sacrifice to officially create space for a parallel Chief Minister in her Cabinet? In a statement issued from Party Headquarters 'Nawa-e-Subha' in Srinagar, NC State Spokesperson Junaid Azim Mattu also asked the BJP to clarify if they had formally diluted their moral stand on dynastic politics?

"The PDP-BJP Government, as per media reports and as expected, has initiated the process of nominating the Chief Minister's brother Tassaduq Mufti to the Legislative Council, consequently paving his way to the State Cabinet. Improvising on the Honourable PM's rhetoric, we might soon have a 'Bhai-Behan Ki Sarkar' in J&K. Till now Tassaduq Mufti - as the Head of the CM's Grievance Cell - was functioning as a parallel CM and after his formal inclusion into the Cabinet, the State will now practically and formally have two Heads of Government pulling the Government and the Administration

See **NC**...Pg 02



PDP-BJP GOVT HAS WREKED HAVOC WITH SRINAGAR CITY: NC

'No visible movement on smart-city, acute dearth of essential supplies'

Srinagar, Dec 14: National Conference on Thursday lashed out at the PDP-BJP Government for wreaking havoc with Srinagar City by depriving it of vital infrastructural and developmental requirements and said there was no visible movement on the smart-city project despite frequent

See **PDP**...Pg 02

DRY SPELL TO BEGIN FROM FRI: SONUM LOTUS

'There would be dip in day temperature'

Srinagar, Dec 14: Three days after the Valley received intermittent rains and snow, the weatherman here has predicted dry spell for next one week, saying that the weather would mostly remain cloudy.

Talking to KNS, Director Meteorological (MeT) department, Sonum Lotus said that there is possibility of further dip in the day temperature

See **Dry**...Pg 02

Time to recognise Journalism as viable economic sector: JK Bank Chairman

Sahafat Scheme for JK Journos launched

Srinagar, Dec 14: The Jammu and Kashmir Bank chairman Parvez Ahmad on Thursday launched special financial scheme for print and electronic media journalists of the state.

The scheme will enable journalists to buy cameras, laptops, tablets and books. The minimum loan amount for the purpose has been fixed as Rs 50 thousand while as the maximum cap is Rs 3 Lac.

According to the KNS correspondent, speaking on the



occasion, JK Bank Chairman Parvez Ahmad said that the time has come when apart from empowering the state government employees; financial assistance is needed to be provided to the other sec-

tions of the society as well. Hailing the courage of the journalists working in the state, Parvez said that the present scheme is a mere beginning and much more is

See **Bank**...Pg 02

Hawal massacre 1990: SHRC's Probe Team submits interim report, seeks fresh inquiry

Says CRPF's COI indicted 15 personnel, but no idea if action was taken

Srinagar, Dec 14: The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) Police Investigation Wing (PIW) has revealed in its report that CRPF's Court of Inquiry (COI) had identified "15 CRPF personnel involved in the Hawal massacre" in which 35 civilians were killed, but there is no idea if any action has been taken.

The PIW's report comes two months after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of J&K Police in its report submitted to SHRC has



closed the case as "untraced". The SHRC's Police Investigation Wing (PIW) in its

See **Hawal**...Pg 02

POLICE BUSTS GANG OF THIEVES, TWO HELD

They used to buy items through fake cheques

Srinagar, Dec 14: Jammu and Kashmir Police has arrested two persons allegedly involved in over a dozen cheating cases. The accused were identified as Tahir Amin and Waheed Ahmad Bhat of Batmaloo area of Srinagar.

"The duo along with a lady accomplice, Masrat Tahir wife of Tahir Amin have cheated more than 30 business establishments all over the Valley

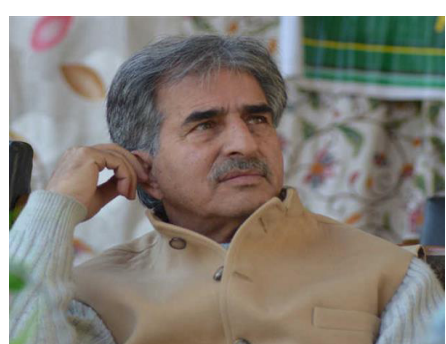
See **Police**...Pg 02

Regularisation of casual, daily wagers unprecedented governance measure: Madni

'Resolution of this lurking issue brings relief to thousands of families'

Jammu, Dec 14: Peoples Democratic Party has hailed the decision regularising over sixty thousand Daily wagers, Casual Labour and workers on consolidated basis as "unprecedented" administrative measure from any government which will sufficiently contribute to Chief Minister's resolve for good governance.

In a statement issued to KNS, party vice president Mohammad Sartaj Madni said that the resolution of this lurking issue brings relief to thousands of families and saves the career of workers who were faced with uncertainty and were hanging in wilderness from years together.



He said, besides amply empowering the basic structure, the decision comes in as

See **Madni**...Pg 02

INTERNET GAGS IMPACTING MASSES

Sadaf Khurshheed

Srinagar, Dec 14: Frequent Internet ban in Kashmir has become a norm due to one or the other reasons.

At a time when everything works on Internet is it simple filling of the examination forms or online marketing, Kashmir presents a different story with netizens often suffering.

"My business runs mainly on internet as I run an internet cafe where students and the job aspirants come on daily basis to fill the form and even Internet blockade for an hour is not good for my business, but here internet is blocked for days together," said a business man who owns a cafe in main market Sopore.

See **Internet**...Pg 02

Crackdown on Hurriyat leadership ahead of Islamabad Chalo

Srinagar, Dec 14: Ahead of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) call of 'Islamabad Chalo' the government on Thursday began the Crackdown on Hurriyat leaders and activists by placing them under house detention or either house confinement.

Pertinently, JRL has called for a public Jalsa on 15th December at Lal Chowk Islamabad to demonstrate before the whole world what people of Kashmir stand for. The JRL statement said it is a litmus test for the claimants of democracy, adding, this Jalsa will highlight the miseries and hardships faced by the people of Kashmir at the hands of forces, the leaders said that Indian leaders falsely presume to have defeated indigenous Kashmiri resistance by military oppression,



NIA and ED terrorism.

Reports reaching KNB said that almost all the pro-freedom leaders have been detained by the authorities to foil the Anantnag march called by JRL. Syed Ali Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq have been placed under house arrest at their Hyderpora and Nigeen residence.

See **Chalo**...Pg 02

JKSSB ASKED TO COMPLETE RECRUITMENT OF 2154 TEACHER POSTS IN 4 MONTHS

New Delhi, Dec 14: To meet dearth of staff in schools, the Government has directed the JK Services Selection Board (JKSSB) to complete much awaited recruitment for 2154 teacher posts in next four months.

The Department of Education has referred 3450 posts to JKSSB which include 2154 vacancies of teachers and 1,289 of non-teaching staff.

Chairing a meeting here today, the Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, asked Secretary School Education Department, Farooq Ahmed Shah and JKSSB Chairperson Simrandeep Singh to coordinate their efforts to complete the paperwork and start the recruitment process in January.

See **JKSSB**...Pg 02

Rana decries NGT directive on Shri Amarnathji pilgrimage

'Sentiments of a section of society have been hurt by this unjust directive'

Jammu, Dec 14: National Conference Provincial President Devender Singh Rana on Thursday decried the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directive on declaring route to Shri Amarnathji Cave Shrine on Kashmir Himalayas as 'silent zone', describing it infringement of religious rights.

"We respect judicial processes and have regard for NGT but expect as well that



there should be no interference in the matters of faith", Rana said at an impromptu press conference at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this afternoon.

Rana said the sentiments of a section of society have been hurt by this unjust directive which comes weeks after

the NGT directive on reducing the number of pilgrims to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. "We fail to reconcile with one after another directive in recent weeks on the two important pilgrimages of Jammu and Kashmir", he said and made a strong plea to Governor N N Vohra, who is also Chairperson of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board and

See **Rana**...Pg 02

DGP SANCTIONS SPECIAL REWARD, MERITORIOUS SCHOLARSHIP OF ABOUT RS.6.00 LAKH FOR 141 POLICE WARDS

'Scholarship has been sanctioned out of Central Police Welfare Fund'

Jammu, Dec 14: Director General of Police, Dr. S.P Vaid has sanctioned special reward and meritorious scholarship of Rs.5,77,000/- in favour of 141 wards of serving police personnel, who have secured above seventy five per cent marks in the annual examination of class 8th during the academic session 2016-17.

The scholarship has been sanctioned out of Central Police Welfare Fund. The contributory fund has been created to encourage and boost the talented school going children of police personnel. Those who have been

See **DGP**...Pg 02

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DRABU

He said FICCI can help in tourism promotion in the State by organizing various high-profile events and also facilitate building physical and digital connectivity and market linkages. "Given its network, FICCI can also help the state to strategize connectivity and infrastructure development for creation of wealth in the areas of social, economic and ecological enterprises in J&K," he said.

Dr Drabu said given its geographical location, Jammu and Kashmir could become a hub for forging a new economic linkage in the region between the South and the Central Asia. "There is a 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 implementation of GST, Dr Drabu said there may be operational and technical issues involved in the implementation of the new tax regime, but it has federalized the Indian economy and has transformed the business ethics in the country.

He called for doing away with the MRP (maximum retail price) under the GST regime. "MRP is from a pre-liberalized era. We need to now abolish MRP as it has become redundant under GST regime," Dr Drabu said. He also suggested that composition scheme for small businesses with an annual turnover of up to Rs 1 crore should be tweaked to allow some input tax credit. "Larger companies are not buying from small businesses due to lack of input tax credit," he noted.

He also called for bringing back the reverse charge mechanism under GST that has been deferred till March.

Pertinently, besides Dr Haseeb Drabu, the Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Sushil Modi, Finance Minister of West Bengal, Dr Amit Mitra and Finance Minister of Kerala Dr T M Thomas Isaac were specially invited to address the 2-day Annual General Meeting of FICCI which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi here yesterday.

President FICCI, Rahesh C Shah and FICCI General Secretary, Dr Sanjay Baru also addressed the session.

HOLISTIC

On the basis of their educational, technical and professional profile, these Workers have been categorized as skilled and non-skilled for regularization and imbursement of remuneration. "They will be in addition entitled to all the financial and service benefits including annual pay hike, pension under NPS, leave & medical reimbursement, periodical hike in remuneration akin to pay commission, maintenance of service records and will be covered under work, conduct and discipline rules including retirement," a Finance Department official said. "Following the initiative of the Chief Minister, Ms Mehbooba Mufti, the Government has already approved the roadmap for bringing the daily wagers onto the rolls of government and the formal SRO in this regard will be issued by the Finance Department within a couple of days," said Minister for Finance, Dr Haseeb Drabu.

Although skilled and unskilled workers are to be put in different scales of remuneration, it will correspondingly increase on the basis of their length of engagement.

Regarding the number of Workers to be benefitted by the regularization scheme, Finance Department officials said, although various figures are being projected regarding their number, but the exact number will be determined and finalized through bio-metric verification of every such worker.

The highest number of such workers are engaged in PHE Department followed by Power Development Department, School Education Department, Public Works Department, Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Forest Department, Health & Medical Education Department, Agriculture Department, Housing & Urban Development Department, Tourism Department, Animal Husbandry Department and Fisheries Department. There are also such workers in other Departments who will benefit from the regularization scheme.

Dr Drabu had during the last budget session made a commitment on the floor of the house that the process for regularization of casual workers of various categories will start from the next financial year in terms of the set guidelines and criteria. Pertinently, the state cabinet had, on October 23 this year, accepted the roadmap prepared by the high-level committee headed by the Chief Secretary for absorption/regularization of Casual/Seasonal Labourers/ Daily Rated Workers to ensure sustainable livelihood to hundreds of such Workers engaged over a period of several years. The cabinet had asked the Finance Department to draft and issue the formal orders for operationalization of the roadmap.

Dr Drabu said policy enshrined in SRO-64 of 1994 for regularization of daily rated workers/work-charged employees engaged prior to cut off date of January 31, 1994 is already in place from the date of issuance of the SRO-64.

He said the Empowered Committee of the is meeting at regular intervals and will continue to meet till last one of the adhoc/contractual appointee, eligible and registered with the Finance Department is cleared for regularization, if eligible, in terms of the J&K Civil Services (Special Provisions) Act-2010. Dr Drabu said the Government is also taking a holistic review of SRO-202 which was issued on 30 June 2015. As per this SRO the appointees in non-gazetted cadre are entitled to basic minimum pay and grade pay during the first five years of the service.

NC

apart in two different directions. Till now Tassaduq Mufti used to humiliate Cabinet Ministers by by-passing them and directly summoning files and senior officers from their departments and now it seems he will soon be summoning the Cabinet Ministers too for direct, official explanations. One can only empathize with them", the NC State Spokesperson said. The National Conference Spokesperson also asked for an explanation of how a 'runaway candidate' from the aborted Anantnag Parliamentary elections was being deemed capable of holding a permanent seat in the Legislative Council. "What happens to all the promises made by this gentleman to the people of Anantnag during his campaign there before the election was aborted after PDP feared an imminent and resounding defeat? One had thought the 'runaway candidate' would at least pretend to serve the constituents of the Anantnag Parliament Segment after he ran away from the Lok Sabha elections but it seems that was just an

opportunity to seek power that has been replaced by another opportunity to be an unelected part of the Government now", the NC State Spokesperson added in the statement.

The NC State Spokesperson also questioned the stand and shrill rhetoric of the BJP on 'dynastic politics'. "As the Prime Minister and the BJP continue to speak against 'dynastic politics' - one wonders how they are going to justify a clear case of sheer nepotism and abuse of power in their Government in J&K. Have they changed their stand in Jammu & Kashmir by first allowing the 'father-daughter' ascension and now paving way for 'two siblings' in the same Cabinet? The BJP owes an answer to its voters if not the people at large", he added.

PDP

statements by the Government in this context. Addressing a high-level review meeting of Srinagar District at Party Headquarters, 'Nawa-e-Subha' on Thursday, NC Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani condemned the acute shortage of essential commodities and supplies in the city and said the Administration's ruthlessness was a cause of great suffering and misery for the people.

The NC Provincial President said every single promise made by the PDP-BJP Government with respect to Srinagar had been abandoned and broken. "This Government has ignored Srinagar District over the past almost three years resulting in a stagnation of developmental works and projects - even those that were started by the previous Government. It seems the Mehbooba Mufti Government is hell-bent to persecute the people of Srinagar by depriving them of their basic governance rights", Nasir Aslam Wani said.

"The Government has turned a deaf ear towards frequent appeals by people from various areas of Srinagar. The power crisis has been further accentuated in the city due to inadequate and faulty power distribution infrastructure that wasn't repaired and upgraded ahead of the harsh winter months. Our ration ghats are without basic supplies. Primary Health Centres (PHCs) across the District are dysfunctional and without basic medical supplies and doctors", Nasir added.

The NC Provincial President also reviewed various organizational activities and initiatives of the party in Srinagar District and asked the party leaders and office bearers to reach out to people, especially youth and involve them in the party activities aimed at alleviating public issues and grievances. The meeting was also attended by NC Srinagar District President Peer Afaq, Senior Leaders including MLA Habba Kadal Shameema Firdous, Irfan Ahmed Shah, Provincial Secretary Showkat Ahmed Mir, Provincial President YNC Salman Ali Sagar, Ahsan Pardesi and Sabiya Qadri.

DRY

from Friday while the weather would mostly remain cloudy for the next one week. "There is predication of dry spell from now onwards for the next one week. As per the prediction no rains or snow would occur at any place in this period," he said, adding that there would be occasional sunshine as well.

Earlier, the Valley including the tourist destinations, Gulmarg, Pahlagam, Sonmarg and others received snowfall.

The authorities had made adequate arrangements to tackle any 'deteriorate' situation.

BANK

about to follow. "The kind of courage, zeal and enthusiasm shown by the journalist fraternity over a period of time, it is time to recognise this sector as a viable economic sector and make it financially comfortable," Parvez said. However, he added, "I would like to request every one present here to please cooperate with the bank to make this product successful." The JK Bank chairman maintained that it is high time to understand that state's premier financial institution should not confine empowerment schemes to the state government employees only. "We have developed the mindset of securing our advances through the guarantees of the state government employees. If we see the other sections of the society, they have not been financially empowered because of not having the regular income from the state government or from the public financial institution," Parvez Ahmad said.

The chairman stated further that as JK Bank has the vision to develop each and every section of the society, then it is needed to empower all sectors of the state.

HAWAL

report submitted to SHRC against a complaint filed by chairman International Forum for Justice Human Rights Mohammad Ahsan Untoo, regarding killing of civilians at Hawal on May 21, 1990, revealed that CRPF's Court of Inquiry (COI) had "identified 15 personnel involved in the massacre, but there is no idea if any action was taken".

J&K Police's CID wing in its report submitted had stated that during the course of investigation, the statements of some CRPF personnel deployed at the place of occurrence on the date of incident were recorded. "As per CRPF personnel, curfew was imposed on the day and during curfew hours some unknown militants fired upon the CRPF men with intention to kill them and in retaliation CRPF fired in self defence in which some 35 civilians died on spot," reads the CID report. The report further reads the investigation of the case was entrusted to Crime Branch Kashmir. "During the course of investigation, the case has been closed as untraced as no clue was found despite strenuous efforts," further reads the CID report. However, the SHRC's Police Investigation Wing (PIW) punctures the CID report. The PIW report says that during its investigation it was found that an FIR 35/1990 stands registered in Police Station Nowhatta regarding the incident. The PIW report reads that according to the FIR, the sequence of events that had taken place on the day of incident. "At 2:40 PM on that day, ASI of J&K police Mohd Rafiq had submitted a written docket through Ct. No 686 to SHO P/S Nowhatta, mentioning that during the law and order duty, it was learnt that Moulvi Mohammad Farooq of Awami Action Committee has succumbed at Medical Institute Soura due to bullet injuries and his body was being taken to Rajouri Kadal in a procession and near Islamia College some rounds were fired as a result of which lot of persons in the procession had died," it reads.

The PIW reports further reads that on the day of incident, the then SSP headquarters, Srinagar, N Sarvade was entrusted to investigate the case. "Sarvade conducted investiga-

tion of the case from 21/05/1990 to 13 August 1990 and submitted 20 Case Diaries (CD), wherein he hasn't recorded statements of the eye witnesses, injured persons and has only recorded the statements of CRPF officials."

Afterwards, the case was taken up by then SHO Nowhatta, Farooq Ahmad. "In the same CD, the IO stated that vide PHQ order Number 20-C/92 dated 13/11/1992. The investigation of the case was later transferred to Crime Branch Kashmir. However, it's not known that from 13/08/1990 to 13/11/1992, where the case file had been and no efforts were taken to investigate it," it further reads.

Consequent upon the case in Crime Branch, the case was taken up by then Dy. SP Mir Ab. Qayoom. "During the investigation, in CD dated 16/03/1993, the IO mentioned that a list of 114 individuals has been provided by the Institute on 02/06/1990 showing the names of persons killed/injured."

"The IO further recorded the statements of the relatives of the deceased persons and during investigation of the case it was established that personnel of 69-BN were deployed at place of occurrence who were requested to provide the court of enquiry papers, besides the list of officials deployed at and around Islamia College," reads the report.

During the course of further investigation citing the sequence of investigations by Crime Branch, the CRPF had conducted a Court of Inquiry (COI) headed by a board of officers consisting MP Singh IGP NES-CRPF, NK Tiwari DIG (P) CRPF, R K Sharma Commandant 60-BN-CRPF. The COI held 15 CRPF officers and cops of 69 BN responsible for "indiscriminate firing". The personnel found responsible include one DSP, two SIs, three Lance-Naiks and nine constables of CRPF. "However, it wasn't known what action has been taken against the delinquent officials and whether any criminal proceedings have been conducted against them or not," reads the interim report submitted by DSP, SHRC, who is also IO of the case. While the Crime Branch has already closed the case as untraced, the SHRC's PIW has sought that fresh attempts be made to locate the injured persons and report be submitted within couple of months before the Commission.

Meanwhile, Untoo in his rejoinder of SHRC report said that despite the fact it was a case of massacre by CRPF personnel of 69BN, the Crime Branch is responsible for closing the case to give benefit to the involved CRPF men.

Untoo told KNS the report confirms about the persons involved, is there any need to get the matter further investigated by CBI? The Commission may direct IG Crime to register FIR against 15 personnel of 69 BN of CRPF named in the final enquiry report," he said.

POLICE

during last six months," said a spokesman. "The gang used social media Applications and websites like OLX.com to cheat gullible customers by buying used electronic articles like Cell Phones, Ovens, LED TVs etc against fake bank cheques." "Similarly, they used to buy articles including electric wires, bath fitting, clothing from renowned showrooms of the valley. Cheques of banks - Axis Bank, SBI and Punjab National Bank were used by them to make payments for the purchases." The duo was arrested by Police Station Ram Munshi Bagh after getting a written complaint from one business man of the Sonwar area. Accordingly, a case (FIR 115/2017) under section 420 RPC was registered in Police Station Ram Munshi Bagh. "During investigation, dozens of other cheating instances by the gang came forth and accordingly gadgets/articles worth lacs of rupees were recovered from them. Police said number of complainants from different parts of valley have approached Ram Munshi Bagh Police station. During the preliminary investigation police have so far recovered following items from the gang:

Mobile phone Note 8 = 02, Mobile phone C9 GALAXY = 01, MOBILE PHONE V7 = 01, MOBILE PHONE GALAXY J7 = 01, MOBILE IPHONE = 02, MOBILE PHONE SAMSUNG = 07, MOBILE PHONE J5 GALAXY = 01, LED TV SAMSUNG = 01, LED TV SMART TV = 01, LED TV PANASONIC = 01, LED TV SONY = 01, LED TV SANSUI = 01, INVERTER with battery = 01, Wire 1mm HAVELLS = 33, WIRE 1.5mm POLY-CAB = 09, Wire 2.5mm POLY-CAB = 15, Wire PolyCab = 1mm = 15, Microwave oven = 01, Jaguar Bath fitting items = 37.

MADNI

fulfilment of a major electoral promise made by Party President Mehbooba Mufti. PDP has a reason to draw satisfaction from this as thousands of families have been lent well-deserved support and thousands of youth have been relieved of perpetual stress. Madni said Mehbooba and her Government had to undergo a cumbersome exercise to clear or override legal and financial hurdles to resolve this complex and difficult issue. It was not an easy baggage to be jettisoned to the advantage of all stake holders and she did it ably, he added. Madni said that is why Chief Minister is being widely appreciated for showing sympathy towards the workers and the labourers and the political will to streamline services at the lower rung. He said the casual employment of workers was seen a liability and a feature of mis-governance. The decision for regularisation is a big incentive which will benefit both the state as well as the employees.

He said each Department will now have a legitimate manpower, skilled and unskilled to do the grass root work and each workers potential will be utilised to improve the quality of the work and functioning of the service particularly the emergency services. Madni said, Chief Minister has taken series of measures aimed at bringing relief to people and resolving complex issues of Governance and political nature. He hoped that her sincere efforts will bring the desired relief on all fronts and PDP's agenda will see sired accomplishment with public support in tune with its established policies and commitments.

INTERNET

With the coming of Internet to Kashmir, everything has slowly started shifting online be it online shopping, ordering food, e-tickets or studies. "Preparing for civil service examinations demands from an aspirant to study about everything around globe and internet comes handy at this point but when every now and then internet is blocked for pity reasons lose the track of my studies", said an aspirant preparing for civil services. According to a report of Freedom house (United States based research and advocacy NGO) people in Kashmir are denied internet for 18-25 days on average basis.

Many young people who online business had had to shut down their business in the past because of the internet gag and incurred heavy loss. Sane voices state Government justifies the internet ban in Kashmir to stop protests which erupt due to encounters or any other human rights violation however instead of stopping the violations, Government is restricting a freedom which has been provided by the constitution and upheld by Supreme Court. "I am a journalist and work with online media and my work requires me to be updated every time and keep people updated too, but how will I do that work when internet here is stopped for days together", said a journalist.

CHALO

The JKLF Chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik was earlier shifted to Central jail Srinagar along with other dozens of JRL leaders and activist when they tried to march towards Lal Chowk Srinagar against the US decision to declare Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Reports said that all the constituent party heads of both the factions of Hurriyat Conference have been either arrested or placed under house confinement.

The government has also decided to impose strict restrictions in parts of South Kashmir and Old City Srinagar to foil the pro-freedom march, besides shutting down the mobile internet services in South Kashmir. Meanwhile according to the Hurriyat leaders police are continuing the raids and have arrested many leaders from various districts as well. One of the leaders of Hurriyat (G) in house arrest told Kashmir News Bureau on phone "The crackdown on genuine leadership has shown yet again that there is no democracy here but forced and illegal occupation, adding, on the one side the Indian Government talks about freedom of expression and on the other places "all genuine voices" behind bars."

JKSSB

Setting the deadline, the Minister directed the SSB Chairperson to complete the recruitment in all respects in next four months. Meanwhile, the Minister also set three-month deadline for completing the ongoing recruitment for 1,289 non-teaching staff posts which include 575 posts of junior Assistants, 392 Laboratory Assistances, 228 Library Assistants and 94 posts of Junior Librarians.

It was informed that the 7 vacancies of drivers referred by the department would also be advertised by the JKSSB soon. The Minister assured JKSSB of all cooperation and said that department would ensure speedy flow of additional information and data if the Board needs so.

The SSB chairperson assured that the recruitment process would be completed within the stipulated timeframe.

Additional Secretary to School education department Mussarat-ul-Islam and other senior officers of education department were also present in the meeting.

RANA

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board to take up the issue with the NGT for corrective measures. He said the sensitive religious matters should be left to bodies concerned and every effort must be made to ensure freedom of practicing religion. The Provincial President described the pilgrimages to Shri Amarnathji and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi in Jammu and Kashmir highly sensitive and sacrosanct for the vast mass of Hindus across the country and hoped that NGT will reconsider and rescind its decision. "Let the Shrine Boards ensure ecology of yatra related areas", he suggested.

To a question about BJP's silence over this important issue, Rana said though the answer lies with the party, which is ruling the Centre and partnering the government in the state, yet the 'silence' is intriguing. He said the directive of not chanting 'Bum Bum Bole' on the route to Shri Amarnathji Shrine has not gone well with the devout. Ironically, he replied to the repeated queries over the issue, "The party which raised its political edifice in Jammu on 'Bum Bum Bole' slogan in 2008, is now maintaining silence over the NGT directive".

He replied in affirmative to a reporter's question that BJP's silence over the declaration of Shri Amarnathji Shrine as 'silent zone' is its compulsion to remain glued to power.

Rana also took the BJP head on for ignoring the NGT directive on reducing the number of pilgrimages to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine on Trikuta Hills despite being in the government. He asked the BJP to come clear and take a position on NGT directives. He said in a secular country like India, an atmosphere is needed to be created wherein all the religions flourish in harmony. "There has to be inter-religious harmony and every organization should desist from infringing upon the matters of faith", he added. Prominent among those present in the press conference included State Vice President Thakur Kashmiria Singh, senior leader T S Wazir, Provincial Secretary Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, Provincial Vice Presidents Jugal Mahajan, Gurdeep Singh Sasan, Choudhry Haroon and Anil Dhar, Co-Chairman OBC Cell Abdul Gani Teli, District President Dharamveer Singh Jamwal besides S S Bunt, Dilshad Malik, Ch Riyaz Haqla, G H Malik, Rohit Bali, Som Raj Taroch and others.

DGP

granted reward include 72 girl students. Sixty one wards who have secured above 90 percent in the annual examination during the academic session 2016-17 were provided Rs.3000/- each. Twenty two wards were provided Rs.10000/- each for clearing examination conducted by UPSC/PSC/BOPEE/Central Board. They include Suhail Qasim Mir S/o HC Mohammad Qasim who qualified IAS, Tabassum Hassan D/o HC Gh. Hassan Lone, Shahiasta Malik D/o HC Mohammad Amin, Shafkat Ulla S/o HC Mohd. Sadiq, Aabid Nazir S/o HC Nazir Ahmad, Sonali Kotwal D/o HC Karan Singh, Alka Kumari D/o Ct. Hans Raj, Iram Jan D/o HC Jan Mohamad Altaf for qualifying MBBS, Arshi Sharma D/o Krishan Chand who qualified B.V.Sc., Pankaj Sharma S/o Insp. (S) Ashok Kumar, Rahul Chadgal S/o HC Sat Paul, Tajamul Islam S/o SGCT. Mohd. Ashraf, Aarif Manzoor S/o HC Manzoor Ahmad, Yasir Bilal Sheikh S/o ASI Bilal Ahmad, Dheeraj Anthal S/o ASI(M) Kulbir Chand, Gunjot Singh S/o SI(M) Varinder Singh, Akhil Sharma S/o HC Jagdish Raj, Faisal Ullah Khan S/o Insp. (S) Nassar Ullah Khan for qualifying B.Tech, Najam-us-Saqib S/o Ct. Jalal-Ud-Din for qualifying BDS, Ishrat Shafi D/o SI Mohammad Shafi for qualifying B.F.Sc and Kifayat Ali S/o SI Ghulam Mohammad Peer for getting selected for post of Lecturer.

Veeri conducts surprise inspection of SDM, Tehsil offices in Jammu

Calls for prompt delivery of services to people, proper maintenance of records

JAMMU, DECEMBER 14 - Minister for Revenue, Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation & Reconstruction and Parliamentary Affairs, Abdul Rehman Veeri today conducted surprise inspection at Sub-Divisional Magistrate and Tehsil Office in Jammu and scrutinized records of different sections of the offices.

The Minister was accompanied by Commissioner Secretary Revenue, Shahid Inayatullah and Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan.

Veeri first visited SDM and Tehsildar office in Janipur and enquired about the progress of issuance of Permanent Resident Certificates (PRCs) and other nature of works at the SDM and Tehsil Office.

The Minister also inspected the registers at the office and asked the concerned to maintain them regularly by putting in all the entries neat, clean and dependable. He also directed to expedite the process of clearing pending mutation cases besides carrying out work of retrieval of encroached state land in their respective jurisdiction.

Veeri also interacted with public visiting these offices and sought feedback from them regarding their functioning. He personally enquired from the people of the purpose they visited to this office and listened to their issues and feedback. The Minister asked the SDM to ensure redressal of the



issues raised by the people on priority and to deliver the services in a time bound manner under Public Service Guarantee Act (PSGA). 'Public visiting the offices with their cases/issues should be provided proper guidance regarding all requisite documents for timely delivery of services to them', the Minister asked the officers.

He asked the SDM to conduct field visits to listen people grievances related to the revenue department so that can be redressed properly.

Later, the Minister visited Tehsil office in Nagrota and conducted detailed inspection in different sections involved in issuance of PRCs, category certificate, income certificate and other important services related to land and revenue including clearing

pending mutation cases, retrieval of state land etc.

Veeri also inspected the Aadhar Enrollment process at the office and asked the concerned to expedite the work. He also directed to conduct special camps at far off places and Kashmiri Migrants Township in Jagti so that people living at these places can be enrolled for Aadhar.

He also interacted with the public and sought their feedback regarding their issues and working of the office. The Minister asked Tehsildar to ensure prompt service delivery to the people with regular monitoring of people's issues besides improving the work culture and instilling transparency in the working system.

Veeri directed the officials to maintain register and display their touring and office days for the convenience of general public. He further directed to ensure that office displays board highlighting services rendered by them under Public Service Guarantee Act. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that following public complaints regarding negligent and unsympathetic attitude of some revenue officials towards the general public and alleged lack of work culture in these offices, we have decided to conduct surprise inspections of revenue offices and similar kind of exercise will be carried out throughout the state.

Revenue department has a close relation with the public and it is sole duty of everyone working in this department to work with responsibility to live up to the expectations of common people, the Minister said.

The Minister said that the lackadaisical approach of any revenue official would not be accepted at all. Performance of every office would be monitored and appropriate action will be taken against those who do not takes his job seriously, he added.

Veeri stressed upon the revenue officers to ensure prompt and effective redress to the grievances of the people in an effective manner and to bring in work culture in the offices. 'It is our duty to provide justice to the people who have great expectations from us', he added.

J&K Bank Chairman launches 3-day Bajaj Allianz health camp for bank employees

Srinagar, Dec 14: Aiming to create awareness of heart related ailments due to sedentary lifestyle, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company (BAGICL) today launched a 3-day health camp under its country-wide campaign of "Dil Ko Dhadakne Do" for J&K Bank employees here at auditorium of Corporate Headquarters.

J&K Bank Chairman and CEO Parvez Ahmed inaugurated the camp in presence of BAGICL Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Milind Chaudhary, Zonal Head North (BAGICL) Aijaz Ahmad Khan, Bank's Executive Presidents S S Sehgal and Vagesh Chander besides senior management and other officials of the bank and Bajaj Allianz.

Expressing gratitude to Bajaj Allianz, Chairman and CEO Parvez Ahmed stressed upon the need to create a balance between employees' work and lifestyle.

"This is one of the best events I have ever chaired, for the issue of employee well-being always remains close to my heart and soul. And we know that the competitive and stressful job conditions make it difficult for us to look after our health as we hardly get time to undertake regular medical check-ups."

"I thank Bajaj for this great goodwill gesture as such initiatives will help our staff to evaluate their health and heighten their sense of health awareness thereby leading them to healthy and peaceful life", he added.

Highlighting the strong relationship between J&K Bank and BAGICL, Parvez Ahmed complemented the latter for their exemplary role in settling the claims of 2014 deluge to the tune of around Rs 1200 Cr thereby helping to revive the economy of state post floods.

"BAGICL has proved to be a tested, trust worthy partner for J&K Bank. The swift settlement of insurance claims to the tune of Rs 1200 Cr after 2014 floods helped in re-



vival and rehabilitation of affected traders, individuals to a great extent", he said.

"This health camp organized by them for J&K Bank employees shall further strengthen the time tested relationship between the two organizations," he added.

Meanwhile, he urged the Bajaj Allianz to extend the scope of these medical check-ups to the bank's Zonal Offices and other branches in the state, which was readily agreed upon the BAGICL representatives.

Earlier, speaking on the occasion, CFO BAGICL Milind Chaudhary said, "Nowadays our lifestyle is contributing to our ill-being at an alarming rate particularly among working class leading to various ailments which are life threatening at times. Health issues like abnormal Blood Pressure, heart ailments, diabetes are found to be affecting individuals even in age group of 30's which is a serious cause of concern. With such initiatives, we intend to make colleagues working with our partner companies aware of their personal health and urge them to maintain the healthy life standard in order to lead a normal, healthy life".

He urged the audience to register and avail the benefits of medical camp set-up right at their work place. The launching ceremony ended with a vote of thanks presented by Head Branding BAGICL Monika Mayur.

During the camp, various tests including BMI, BP, BSLR, HbA1C, Cholesterol, Triglycerides, LDL, VLDL, HDL and ECG were conducted by the doctors and technicians engaged.

Naeem, Kohli inaugurate Rs 7.41 cr Dhanwan-Chakli Bridge

Lay foundation of Rs 6.30 Cr bridges

RAJOURI, DECEMBER 14: Minister for Public Works, Naeem Akhtar and Minister for Animal and Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries, Abdul Gani Kohli today inaugurated the Dhanwan-Chakli Bridge.

Constructed with Rs. 7.41 crore under NABARD, the bridge will provide connectivity to more than ten thousand souls from Dhanwan, Chakli, Baryan, Dagan, Loorekote and other contiguous villages.

The Ministers also laid foundation stones for Rs. 4.69 crore Kallar-Potha Bridge being constructed under Prime Minister Re-Construction Package and Rs. 1.62 crore Chatiana bridge over Doongi-Nallah under NABARD.

Naeem Akhtar, while reviewing the Detailed Project Report of Kallar-Potha Bridge, took a serious note of non-inclusion of approach road in the DPR and directed the S E PWD Rajouri-Poonch to conduct a detailed inquiry in the matter and fix the responsibility of the concerned officer for this serious lapse on his part.

Later, the Works Minister



while speaking at a public meeting at Chatiana emphasized that the government is carrying out sustained and equitable development of all the three regions of the state with equal allocation of resources.

Referring to late Mufti Mohammad Sayed's vision of enhancing the inter-regional connectivity with State-of-Art road infrastructure and tunnels, Naeem Akhtar said the government has already undertaken the four-laning of all major highways in the state and the process for construction of tunnels on Mughal Road and Kashmir-Leh highway is also in final stages.

"A slew of projects including new roads and bridges worth Rs.180 crore would be started in the next financial year apart from completion of all ongoing projects in the

district", the Minister said adding the government's prime concern is to ensure the quality of work for which strict instructions have been given to the agencies to replicate the work standard of national highways for all sorts of roads.

Stressing that no project will be left uncompleted, Naeem Akhtar said that he has ensured that no work without DPR and administrative approval is taken up and time limit is fixed for completion of the approved projects.

While responding to the demands raised in the public meeting, the Minister assured time bound redressal of all issues.

Kohli, while speaking on the occasion, said the road connectivity is key to progress and prosperity of an area and this vital sector is receiving

special attention of present dispensation in this regard.

The Minister, while elucidating the initiatives of the government in expanding the durable ROAD NETWORK IN THE STATE, said that a number of roads have been constructed and upgraded under PMGSY, BAPD, CRF etc thereby ensuring connecting even in the remotest parts of the state.

The Minister asked the officers to ensure that all works done by them prove to be of immense help for socio economic empowerment of the people which is the ultimate objective of the present government. He also called upon the public to take benefit of various development and welfare schemes of the state and center government as well.

The Ministers were accompanied by Chief Engineer Sudhir Shah, ADC A S Chib, SSP Yougal Manhas, ACR Abdul Qayoom Mir, S. E. Majid Wani, X. Engrs. Saddeq Wani, Parvaiz Ahmad, Mushtaq Raina besides other district officers.

Later, Abdul Ghani handed over an ambulance to NTPHC Kallar Chatyar.

Sham Choudhary inaugurates tube well, guest house at Jourian

Hands over regularization orders to PHE DRWs

JAMMU DECEMBER 14: Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control, Sham Lal Choudhary today inaugurated tube well at Potha Kandyal and PHE guest house at Jourian of Akhnoor Constituency. The projects have been completed at a cost of Rs. 42 lakh and Rs. 16.50 lakh respectively.

MLA Akhnoor Rajeev Sharma, MLA Khour Dr Krishan Lal Bhagat, Chief Engineers, PHE and Irrigation & Flood Control, Jammu, Executive Director CCDU, besides large number of locals were present on the occasion.

The Ministers said that with the commissioning of tube well a long pending demand of locals has been fulfilled. He said the tube well would pump out 10,000 Gallons Per Hour (GPH) and would meet the requirement of water supply to Potha, Kandyal, Chak and adjoining villages of the area. He said that keeping in view the requirement of water in area, the work on installation of 4 more tube wells is going on, of them two are nearing completion.

Calling for maintaining proper sanitation in and around the Water Supply Scheme and Tube well prem-



ises, the Minister said that old machinery and worn-out pipes would be replaced to ensure the proper functioning of WSS. He said that all ongoing schemes in the area would be completed so that people can avail the benefit of these schemes. He asked the Chief Engineer PHE for proper furnishings of newly constructed guest house, Jourian.

Sham Choudhary said that the government has taken up several developmental projects under different sectors, adding that with their completion a new era of development would be witnessed in the area. He said that the govern-

ment is mulling to start water transportation from Reasi-Hamirpur Sidhar with five stations along with approach road at Akhnoor, Jio Pota, Sangrampur, Indripotton and Hamirpur, saying that this would go a long way in providing transportation, besides promote economic and tourism activities in area.

Highlighting the developmental initiatives taken by the government for the development of area, Rajeev Sharma announced Rs. 5 lakh for construction of bathing ghat at Jourian. Later, the Minister along with Legislators, Dr. Krishan Lal Bhagat

and Rajeev Sharma handed over regularization orders to 52 Daily Rated Workers (DRW) of PHE Department of Akhnoor and Khour Constituencies at Akhnoor.

Complementing the workers of PHE department who got regularization orders, the Minister exhorted upon them to work with dedication in extending their services to people. He said that daily wagers rendering services in different departments would also be regularized and the government is working in this regard. He said that the government has also enhanced the honorarium of DRWs.

Khursheed Alam chairs Privilege, House Committee meetings

Panel seeks comprehensive report regarding JK House New Delhi, spurious drugs

JAMMU, DECEMBER 14: A meeting of the Committee on Privileges of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council was held under the Chairmanship of MLC, Mohammad Khursheed Alam, here today.

Threadbare discussions were held on the breach of privilege notices given by MLC Surinder Choudhary against the Residence Commission Office, Kashmir House, New Delhi and by MLC Qaiser Jamsheed Lone against Superintending Engineer Electric Circle, Sopore and Executive Engineer Electric Division Kupwara, Kashmir.

Legislators, Thakur Balbir Singh, Surinder Choudhary and Aga Syed Mahmood Al-Moosvi attended the meeting and gave their valuable suggestions to make the Committee more vibrant and result-oriented.

The Committee was informed that the Resident Commissioner, JK House, New Delhi was expected to attend the meeting but due to sad demise of his father, the officer was forced to leave back and could not attend the meeting.

The Committee expressed its deep shock over the sad demise and condoled with the Resident Commissioner. The Members also prayed for peace to the departed soul.

In order to have brief about the functioning of Kashmir House, New Delhi, Former Resident Commissioner, Lokesh Jha briefed the meeting about the arrangements and other activities and said that the period involved in breach of privilege notice does not pertain to his tenure.

He maintained that the department is ethically, morally and legally duty bound to take care of



the protocol held by legislators, but at the same time the shortage of accommodation disrupts the same.

The Committee sought the

status report regarding officers/officials posted at New Delhi, date of posting, tenure/post, block wise detailed information regarding accommodation, charges, facilities

provided on account of lodging and boarding with time to time and block wise detail to provide accommodation to guests with effect from February 2, 2016 to

Feb 7, 2016 evening.

The Committee expressed its dissatisfaction over the facilities and protocol being provided to the legislators at Kashmir House, New Delhi and decided to discuss all the issues in the next meeting.

Later, MLC, Mohammad Khursheed Alam also chaired another meeting of House Committee constituted on spurious drugs/equipment being supplied in the state.

Threadbare discussions were held on directions and suggestions made by the previous House Committee headed by Dr Shehnaz Ganai.

Legislators, Showkat Hussain Ganai and Ramesh Arora attended the meeting and gave their valuable views and suggestions regarding substandard and spurious drugs prevailing in the health institutions and market.

The Committee sought a comprehensive detailed report on what action has been taken by the health authorities on spurious drugs and furnish the same to the members of the Committee so that they can scrutinize the matter and save precious lives of people of the state.

The Committee also sought a status report on 43 testing laboratories which have already been declared substandard and what action has been taken against them till date.

Special Secretary, Council Mohammad Ashraf Wani also briefed the Committee about the working and proceeding of previous House Committee besides, Additional Secretary, CM Secretariat, Sushil Kumar, Deputy Secretary Council, Ali Mohammad Rawat and other senior officers and officials of Council Secretariat were present in the meeting.

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Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K

HIGH-STAKES BATTLE: ON THE IRAN ELECTIONS

With Iranians going to the polls on Friday to elect a President, the odds appear to be in favour of the incumbent, Hassan Rouhani. Since the 1979 Revolution, all but the first President of the Islamic Republic, who had been impeached, have served two terms. Mr. Rouhani is particularly popular among the reformist section of the electorate, and is seeking to return to office on a clear political platform of integrating Iran further with the global order and initiating reforms at home. Still, his victory in the first round, for which he needs more than 50% of the vote, is far from certain. In 2013, after eight years of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's rule, which saw Iran's international isolation grow and repression at home harden, voters across the spectrum rallied behind Mr. Rouhani. He had promised to break Iran's isolation, resolve the nuclear crisis through diplomatic means and turn that into economic benefit for all citizens. He delivered on some of those promises. He clinched the nuclear deal and oversaw greater Iranian engagement on the world stage. But he has yet to make good on his goal of attracting foreign direct investment and modernising the economy. It is partly not in his hands. International companies and banking giants still shy away from making deals with Tehran. Though the UN-mandated sanctions on Iran were lifted after the nuclear deal, the non-nuclear sanctions imposed by the U.S. are still in place. The expected thaw in relations between Washington and Tehran did not take place in the wake of geopolitical tensions in West Asia. Worse, the Trump administration's anti-Iran rhetoric is not only scaring off western investors but also playing it into the hands of the hardliners in Iran.

The hardliners now see an opportunity to take back power from the "elitist" Mr. Rouhani. Ebrahim Raisi, a cleric and a former aide of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is Mr. Rouhani's main rival. Though Mr. Khamenei has not openly endorsed any candidate, the clerical establishment's preference is no secret. The Iranian presidency is not a strong institution compared to other presidential systems. In the Islamic Republic, real power lies with the Supreme Leader, who is not directly elected by the people. Nonetheless, the office of the President lends credence to the country's theocratic system, and a visionary, popular leader can manoeuvre within the limitations and push his agenda gradually. Mohammad Khatami, one of Mr. Rouhani's predecessors, tried to do so, with limited success. Though his first term was not flawless, Mr. Rouhani has demonstrated that he is capable of navigating through Iran's complex power dynamics, perhaps more efficiently than Mr. Khatami could. It is now his chance to convince voters to give him one more term so he can continue this gradualist but substantive reform agenda.

TAMIL CINEMA'S DOUBLE ACT

By SASHI KUMAR

IT is perhaps truer today than ever before that there is Tamil cinema and Tamil cinema. There is, at the very top, the rarefied realm of super-stardom, where Rajinikanth is firmly ensconced as the reigning deity and where Kamal Haasan, in spite of, or maybe because of, his multitasking with the medium, finds himself often on slippery ground. M.G. Ramachandran and, like Kamal Haasan to a less acute extent, Shivaji Ganesan form the other two of the quartet to ever occupy this hallowed ground. Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan, unlike contemporary stars in Hindi or other Indian language films including Tamil, do not ever endorse, or model for, commercial products in the market. They and their fans take their image far too seriously for any commercialisation other than that of the box office. Films—their plots, scripts, situations and dialogues—are custom-made for them; their remuneration accounts for a good portion of the lavish budgets which go into their films. And the films literally ride on their shoulders in the race at the theatrical circuit.

When age begins to work against the superstar in meeting the extraordinary expectations placed on him, especially in action sequences, modern, digital 3-D effects and animation can come to his rescue in creating his spitting proxy image in a computer rather than through live shot footage; a virtual doppelganger put together as pixels that can outperform him and his conventional human stunt double. The audience does not care as long as the verisimilitude is maintained. If his latest film and description of future films are any indication, this seems to be the shape of Rajinikanth's to come on the screen. This embrace of technology to perpetuate the mythico-physical persona of the star would be different from its application in Hollywood to create science-fictional humanoid or creatures. Here, it meets a peculiarly Indian hankering after youthfulness for stardom and reluctance to accept that stars can age and fade. Rajinikanth himself has made it manifest that he has no use for such delusion or pretence in his real life. He is one of the few stars who do not hide or disguise greying beard or balding head off-screen. But then, stardom and its attributes are not as much a state of mind of the star himself as of those that make and see him as one.

In the more stretchable "star" band just below this figure are younger actors such as Ajit, Vikram, Vijay, Surya, Dhanush, Karti, Jeeva and a few others whose filmic images, again, are caught in their fan club expectation trap. The directors may perhaps have better leeway in pushing character and plot in new directions here, but the films cannot escape being formulaic enough to protect the respective star brands. It is such a market of multiple niches and slotted appetites that, roughly over the last decade, a wave of new films and film directors has washed over,



many of them with impressive runs at the box office. Among them are Radha Mohan with his *Mozhi* (2007), Vasantha Balan with his *Veyil* (2006) and *Angadi Theru* (2010), Bala's *Naan Kadavul* (2009) and now *Paradesi* (2013), Ameer's *Paruthiveeran* (2007), Sasikumar's *Subramaniapuram* (2008), M. Anbazhagan's *Sattai* (2012), and Mysskin's *Chithiram Pesuthadi* (2006).

Their themes are, for the most part, sui generis. These are films that firmly belong to their milieu (not the hybrid variety of Bollywood catering more to the non-resident Indian sensibility) and articulate the colloquial tongue with assurance. They do not shy away from the device of song or dance, but use it befittingly to nuance or further the narrative. They are not self-consciously distanced or cosmopolitan, but redolent of the local idiom and custom. They do not pretend to be an alternative to the mainstream or to combat the star syndrome; and, in fact, often demonstrably defer, in their work, to the legacy and influence of the stars who exercise such a hold on the public mind. An extended scene in a police station in *Naan Kadavul*, for instance, has the enslaved and abused group of stunted, maimed or otherwise debilitated beggars doing a blissfully liberative mimicry routine, with MGR, Shivaji and Rajinikanth as their stock-in-trade subjects, to entertain the exploitative policemen. The protagonist in *Veyil*, a projectionist in a run-down cinema theatre, is as much a reveller as the spectators in the exultant fan ritual that accompanies every screening of each film featuring their favourite stars.

The approach of these directors to their "craft" and "technique" enunciates the difference between these two concepts as flagged by the Irish Nobel laureate and poet Seamus Heaney (in *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978*) in the context of verse. For a poet, he says, "craft is the skill of making.... It can be deployed without reference to the feelings or the self." Craft in the films of this clutch of directors too is uniformly external and competent; there is no great identifiable difference or personal stamp in their framing, lensing or editing. None of them is setting out to be an auteur in the sense of the European new wave film-maker. There is no attempt

at camera stylo—using the camera like a pen—personalisation here.

They are not, even within the Tamil filmic canon, clear-cut departures into the experimental or the artistic like, say, Jayabharathi's *Kudisai* (1979) or Nasser's *Avataram* (1995). They may not achieve the subtle amoral boldness of the sterling, one-of-its-kind, J. Mahendran's *Uthiripookkal* (1979), although they can be strident against traditional mores. At the same time, they steer clear of the sophisticated stylistics of Maniratnam or Gautam Menon, or the mannered commonness of Cheran. They combine, syncretise and improve on the breakaway languages of K. Balachander and Bharathiraja, avoiding their irritating angularities—the stilted situations and verbose punning in dialogues of the one and the cloyingly exotic ruralness of the other.

What Seamus Heaney describes as the technique, as against the craft, of the poet is as applicable to these directors. Their technique is the watermark that identifies and unifies their films without, however, making them uniform—technique which, as Heaney puts it, "involves also a definition of his stance towards life, a definition of his own reality. It involves the discovery of ways to go out of his normal cognitive bounds and raid the inarticulate: a dynamic alertness that mediates between the origins of feeling in memory and experience and the formal ploys that express these in a work of art... it is that whole creative effort of the mind's and body's resources to bring the meaning of experience within the jurisdiction of form." To pursue that quality and comparison further with Heaney, it is like the technique of the water diviner, "a gift for being in touch with what is there, hidden and real, a gift for mediating between the latent resource and the community that wants it current and released". They, therefore, meet a felt need in the interstices of a saturated and star-dominated market.

Bala's *Naan Kadavul* combines outlandishness and dismalness in a volatile mix that makes for a very uncommon and chastising viewing experience. Even as we recoil at the sight of the mangled physiques and bruised and bleeding spirits of the forced conscripts—

infants in arms, young boys and girls, old men and women—in the ruthless, organised trade of beggary, we cannot look away as we would when we run into them in any city or pilgrim centre. Their screen presence is compelling, and humiliating. The director does not use the afflicted, assorted group of distorted human forms as bait for our sympathy.

Their coarse, self-deprecatory humour, their beggary act to elicit attention and the mockery of those who won't drop coins into their bowls in response, their emotional give-and-take in their rudimentary, fragile community, threatened every once in a while by one traumatic intervention or the other and, above all, their stoic fatalism are worked in such behavioural detail as to make it look like documentation woven into fiction. In parallel, the narrative thread of the fierce Aghori, who is brought back to his home after long rigorous years of tantric self-mortification in Kasi and cannot naturally reconcile to this domestication, leads to a sublimated realm of a different moral order. It is a film that jolts any preconception we might have of Tamil cinema, even if less charitable viewers may resent being force-fed on slices of the raw underbelly of society and having aham brahmasmin (the *Naan Kadavul*, or, I am God, credo) dinned into their ears.

Bala's *Paradesi* pushes despondency further, in fact all the way, with no silver lining whatsoever. It is, again, an uncommon and uncertain, not to mention uncomfortable, feeling to be stuck on the threshold of suffering through the entire stretch of the film. Set in the pre-Independence period, it is about a poor but free village community in the old Madras Presidency being inveigled into working as bonded labour on the tea estates run by the British; their anomie and deprivation in their new circumstances are compounded by ordeal after ordeal visited on them by their British master, his Tamil Kanganai (overseer) and a coterie of henchmen.

The film has the effect of one sustained, relentless ululation. This is how it was, the director seems to defiantly tell us, and there is no escaping it. It is in fact the songs in between (scored, with the rest of the music, by G.V. Prakash Kumar) which provide some breathing space and emollient relief as they philosophise the irredeemable plight of the protagonist and his co-victims and, by transmuting it from sense perception into something to ponder about, make it to that extent bearable.

Bonded labour of the market is the theme of Vasantha Balan's *Angadi Theru*. We find ourselves amidst the exploited workforce, and its subhuman communal living conditions, of a busy textile shop complex in Ranganathan Street in Chennai. The workers, including the protagonist couple who turn lovers and struggle in vain to cope with this barely subsistence mode of existence, are gullible or helpless migrants from the countryside, drawn to the city in organised hordes in search of livelihood.

Contemplative triptych

SASHI KUMAR

THE ship of Theseus is as old as conundrums go, harking back to the vessel in which the mythic Greek slayer of the Minotaur sailed. The poser as it was first recorded by Plutarch was: if the planks of the ship were replaced one after the other until nothing of the old timber was left on it, would the ship remain the same? Ancient philosophers, including Heraclitus, Plato and Socrates, took a shot at this riddle, and Hobbes in the 17th century raised the obverse scenario: what if all the old timber of the ship had been saved and used to build another ship? Which would then be the original ship? Variations of this theme have engaged others down the ages. Now we have a young film-maker, Anand Gandhi, who sets up the paradox afresh as the framework for his film of the same title. In the process, perhaps unknown to himself, he sets off a subset of a paradox himself because the entry point to the film with a loaded title like this is essentially cerebral; but its philosophical overlay seems overwrought and to distract, if not detract, from the three situations portrayed of being and becoming, where the heart and free will, as much as the mind, play decisive roles and where the gestalt is not a sum of the body parts.

The first in the triptych is about a blind young Egyptian photographer and

her transformation with a cornea transplant that bestows sight to her. When blind, she is surefooted, instinctive, works within a monochromatic axis of black and white, is drawn by her other sensory faculties—and some electronic jigs attached to her camera that can read off distances—to zero in on her shot, and driven by her keenly cultivated internal rhythm to capture the moment as the vision clicks in her mind. Absence of eyesight virtually invests her frames with a cutting edge. All this dissipates with the corneal transplant and the coming of sight and light in her life, and she finds herself faltering and struggling to cope with the abundance and disorder of what she sees around her.

Thanks to what seems a vague plagiarism charge—that this plot is modelled on another short film of a blind painter and the crisis of creativity that the gift of sight forces on her—Anand Gandhi has volunteered the information that the inspiration behind the character was the blind Slovenian photographer Evgen Bavcar, whose works of, and thoughts on, photography are seminal to an understanding of how the camera mediates between blindness and sight. Bavcar makes a distinction between the visual, as "that which our eyes see", and the visible, as "that which our mind sees". The camera view is, for Bavcar, "the gaze of the third eye" and imagining images is existence itself. "I can't belong to this



world," he says, "if I can't imagine... in my own way. When a blind person says 'I imagine', it means he too has an inner representation of external realities."

It is no coincidence that the camera images captured by the blind young woman in the film bear a resemblance to those of Bavcar. They are, both, manifestly digital—light sources leave an incandescent trail as the shot is of movement or in movement, the compositions have an oneiric strangeness about them. As an aside, it is interesting to note, in the larger context of the techno-cultural shift from the analogue to the digital, that as part of a write-up on Bavcar (titled "The Blind Photographer"), the psychoanalyst and expert on blind photography Benjamin Mayer Foulkes ob-

serves that "the main questions posed by the transition from analog to digital photography can be considered in relation to blindness. While analog photography tends to think of itself as not being blind, digital photography knows itself to be blind and operates accordingly. While analog photography equates the visual and the visible, digital photography presupposes their distinction. While the referents of analog photography appear to be ocular, digital photography demonstrates that pictorial referents are not merely the objects of sight, but essentially the objects of the gaze. In sum, blind photography is digital photography 'avant la lettre'."

There is no reason to infer that our blind protagonist with the camera, played

with a delicate combination of ruminant restlessness and coiled-spring terseness by the Egyptian actor Aida El-Kashef, may be afflicted by a crisis of identity just because after the corneal graft, to put it rather plainly, she begins seeing with someone else's eyes. Her dilemma is, rather, one of identification, expression and creativity as she moves from a state of being blind to one of becoming visually enabled. She has, literally, to readjust her sights to the colour and light and forms of the visual external world. Without a history of seeing, it is perhaps a quantum leap into sight and into the attendant problems of adjustment that Oliver Sacks has recounted in his case study ("To See And Not See" in *The New Yorker* of May 1993) of a middle-aged man he calls Virgil, who had been rendered blind from childhood by a form of complicated cataract; the cataract was surgically removed and he could then see, but he could never relate to his faculty of sight. But this is a different problem and the *Theseus* paradox seems far fetched in her circumstance.

The film leaves her there, grappling with sight, and moves on to the second situation about a young Jain monk, winsomely affable but resolute in his ways, and fighting, even while observing the austerities enjoined on him by his faith, a legal case against experiments involving animals by pharmaceutical companies. When he is diagnosed with cir-

rhosis of the liver and finds that the cure entails a liver transplant and medication using products manufactured by the same companies, he resorts to the ultimate act of "Santhara", or death by starvation sanctioned by Jainism, but relents in the last minute and decides to submit to the surgery. Again, there are other paradoxes at better work here than that of the film's title, but by now the overarching intellectual hypothesis no longer nags. We are, we realise, into a resplendent film whose every moment needs to be savoured, irrespective of the theoretical constructs. And it is in this segment of the monk and his cause that the film is at its heart-wrenching best.

The actor and theatre director Neeraj Kabi puts body and soul into the role with devastating effect, stirring us with his infectious warmth, spurring us to keep pace with his hurried strides on his unending karmic path, drawing us into his utterly selfless humaneness, touching us with the poignance of his inner turmoil, and challenging us to behold him as he wastes away into skin and bones before our eyes. The physical, the emotional, the intellectual and the spiritual come together into lived daily routine and banter without ever becoming overtly profound. This stretch of the film is covered with masterly finesse by the director, with the tightly engaging, peripatetic camerawork of Pankaj Kumar to match.

PM Modi's roadshow blatant violation of model code of conduct: Chidambaram

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Thursday launched a scathing attack at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for conducting a roadshow on the final day of Gujarat Assembly elections after casting his vote at a polling booth in Sabarmati and termed it as a gross violation of the model code of conduct.

In a series of tweets, the former finance minister said: "Allowing a roadshow of PM on voting day is a gross violation of code of conduct. It is an election campaign. What is the EC doing?"

Chidambaram said that conducting a full-fledged campaign on the polling day is a shocking violation of rules.

"The images on TV will leave no one in doubt that the BJP and PM have conducted a full fledged campaign on polling day. Shocking violation of Rules. EC is sleeping on the job," he tweeted.

Denouncing the roadshow, Chidambaram said it was a "blatant violation of the code of conduct on polling day".



He further stated, "Let the media look at the images on the TV screens, search its conscience and reach a conclusion. There has not been a more blatant violation of the code of conduct on polling day." The Congress leader concluded his Twitter tirade by saying, "Stand up Media to this unprecedented

violation of the code of conduct. Condemn the EC for allowing this gross abuse." A political slugfest erupted after Prime Minister Modi went to meet his supporters, who were chanting "Modi, Modi", after casting his vote for the Gujarat assembly elections.

Meanwhile, party leader Ashok

Gehlot accused the Election Commission of "working under the pressure from PM and PMO."

Voter turnout of 39 percent was recorded till 12 pm in the second and final phase of Gujarat Assembly elections on Thursday.

The voting will continue till 5 pm in more than 25,000 polling stations. The second phase of elections is underway in 93 constituencies spread across 14 districts in north and central Gujarat.

A total of 851 candidates are in the fray and over 2.22 lakh people will take part in the election to decide their fate.

The security has been increased in various parts of the state in the wake of the polls.

The BJP has fielded 93 candidates for this phase, while the Congress has fielded only 91.

The voter turnout in the first phase of the polls was 68 per cent.

The results will be declared on December 18.

In the 2012 assembly polls, the BJP won 115 seats, while the Congress bagged 61.

SC to hear Vodafone tax dispute case after Jan 10

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday said the Vodafone tax dispute case won't be heard before January 10.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said, "The Vodafone tax dispute case under India-UK treaty won't start before January 10 as it is listed for hearing before the Delhi High Court in early January."

Earlier on October 26, the Delhi High Court allowed the Vodafone Group to go ahead with arbitration proceedings against India, under a treaty with the United Kingdom, in connection with a Rs. 11,000-crore tax demand raised against the firm in relation to its USD 11-billion deal for acquiring a stake in Hutchinson Telecom, which held the group's Indian assets. However, in an interim order of August, the high court restrained the group or its subsidiaries from going ahead with arbitration under the India-UK Bilateral Investment Protection Agreement (BIPA) as the company had initiated similar proceedings on the same issue under the India-Netherlands BIPA. The court noted that the government was of the view the



USD 11 billion acquisition of stake in Hutch by Vodafone was liable for tax deduction at source under the Income Tax Act. As Vodafone had not deducted tax at source, the government had raised the demand of Rs. 11,000 crore, which was subsequently quashed by the apex court on January 20, 2012.

The government later made a retrospective amendment to the Income Tax Act which re-fastened the liability on Vodafone. This aggrieved the firm and the Vodafone International Holdings BV invoked the arbitration clause under BIPA between India and Netherlands.

Mandatory Aadhaar linking: SC reserves order

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday reserved its interim order for tomorrow on pleas seeking a stay on the government's decision of mandatory linking of Aadhaar with various welfare schemes.

A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said the final hearing on the petitions challenging the Aadhaar scheme itself would commence from January 17 next year.

The central government had yesterday attempted to convince the court not to interfere with its deadlines, promising to extend it for another three months till 31 March 2018 for those who do not have Aadhaar.

Earlier on October 25, the Supreme court had said that the deadline for compulsory linking of Aadhaar to receive benefits of government schemes has been extended till March 31, 2018 for those who do not have the 12-digit unique biometric identification number.

Earlier the court had tagged 22 cases to be heard by a smaller bench.

The cases challenge several aspects of Aadhaar, including the use of data collected under the unique identification programme.

As of now, the 12-digit Aadhaar number is compulsory to be linked to bank accounts, PAN cards, government services and cell phone services.

ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE LAUNCHED IN GURUGRAM

With a vision to improve road safety and reduce road traffic fatalities in Gurugram, Haryana, Anheuser-Busch InBev (AB InBev), UNITAR, CRRI, AIMTC, SRF, IRSC, DLF and OLA Cabs today announced the launch of the #SaferRoadsForGurugram initiative.

A working group of representatives from these eight organisations will lead this initiative - bringing together government, industry associations, academia, research, NGOs and corporates to tackle road safety in India with an initial focus on Gurugram.

The first focus of this working group will be to conduct a baseline study and analysis of existing road safety data, which will be used to define a clear roadmap and action plan to improve road safety in Gurugram.

Ben Verhaert, President-India, Anheuser-Busch InBev, said, "We are delighted to bring together a group of stakeholders with such diverse expertise to develop an integrated approach to improve Road Safety in Gurugram. We look forward to collaborating with our partners

to develop innovative programs that will have real-time impact on road safety." Prof. (Dr.) Satish Chandra, Director, Central Road Research Institute, (a national laboratory of CSIR on Road Research) congratulated the partners and said, "We are extremely proud, and motivated to be a part of this initiative, and hope to build strength into the campaign by providing robust research support on various aspects of road safety such as insights on road design and engineering."

"Road Safety is a quintessential part of DLF's vision to make Gurugram a sustainable city.

We are glad to extend our support in making Safer Roads For Gurugram initiative a roaring success, in conjunction with all the partners," said Col. Prakash Tewari, Executive Director, DLF CSR.

According to a report published by WRI, Gurugram is at the helm of this initiative as it is one of the fastest growing cities in the country and commercial hub for Indian and foreign companies. From the perspective of road safety, most number of road accidents in the state of

Haryana takes place in Gurugram as it also provides passage to two of the most important highways, NH8 and NH48.

Echoing the sentiment of commitment towards the initiative, S K Mittal, President, All India Motor Transport Congress, said, "In alignment with its aims, AIMTC extends its commitment to this campaign to reach-out to the truckers and tour bus operators, who form an integral part of this stakeholder spectrum. We look forward to working together with all partners to achieving the common target towards increasing road safety in Gurugram."

Mohammad Imran, Founder, Safe Road Foundation, expressed his opinion, "Safe Road Foundation is pleased to show its support, in partnership with other like-minded organizations, to raise awareness around the issue of road safety among various stakeholder groups."

We hope to garner more citizen partnership to make Gurugram roads safe for all. Road safety is one of the greatest global challenges in public health and well-being in the 21st century. According to the World

Health Organization, injuries caused by traffic accidents are increasing, being one of the main causes of death in the world, and representing a heavy burden on families and the national economy.

Speaking at the occasion, David Braunstein, President, Together For Safer Roads (an international consortium on road safety) said, "Safer Roads are a shared responsibility for all of us, and by striking the strategic partnerships Safer Roads for Gurugram has taken an important first step in the right direction. We are pleased to see this coalition gaining momentum and encourage other organizations to partner in improving road safety and in reducing road traffic deaths and injuries in Gurugram." Congratulating the partners on this first step, Alexander A. Mejia, Director, Social Development Programme, UNITAR (UN Institute for Training and Research) said, "UNITAR is committed to strengthening capacities to improve road safety, through the implementation of capacity building initiatives that contribute to achieving SDG 3.6 and to reduce

road fatalities. We hope to make road safety a top priority in the agenda of decision makers and private sector leaders. In this context, this partnership will be of strategic significance to us."

According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways 2016 report, 4,80,652, road accidents occur in India resulting in 1,50,785 deaths and 4,94,624 injuries. Haryana, in particular, has one of the highest fatality per capita in road accidents in India with an average of 43 fatalities in every 100 accidents

Amar Srivastava, Founder, Indian Road Safety Campaign, (largest Indian student lead movement on road safety) said, "We believe in the power of youth and is committed to support this cause by leveraging its vast network of college youth to be the carriers of change. We also look forward to bringing value to this campaign by suggesting relevant technical innovations." Safer Roads For Gurugram initiative will also contribute to the Haryana government's 'Haryana Vision Zero' campaign.

Congress workers protesting against PM Modi's roadshow detained

Congress workers marching towards Election Commission in protest over Prime Minister Modi's roadshow after casting his vote today were stopped by police outside Sardar Patel Bhawan near Patel Chowk here.

The Police also detained few Congress workers.

Earlier in the day, the Congress Party attacked the Election Commission (EC) saying that the poll body has gone mum and distanced itself from its responsibility.

"The way Modi is doing road shows with the help of Election Commission shows that the puppet EC has shut its



eyes while the constitution is being blasted every moment. Prime Minister Modiji forgot that after 22 years of poor governance, people of Gujarat have rejected the BJP and no techniques are going to help him. The EC too has dis-

tanced itself from all its responsibilities", Congress leader Randeep Surjewala said in a press conference here.

He added that Prime Minister Modi's sinking boat is getting help from the EC.

Another Congress leader, Ashok Gehlot, further said that Prime Minister Modi's road show after casting vote is a clear case of violation of the model code of conduct.

Bashing the Election Commission, Surjewala said that the former has become a "frontal organisation" of the BJP.

Surjewala had earlier said that the Congress party will expose the "double standards of Election Commission."

GUJARAT POLLS: 47.40% TURNOUT RECORDED TILL 2 PM

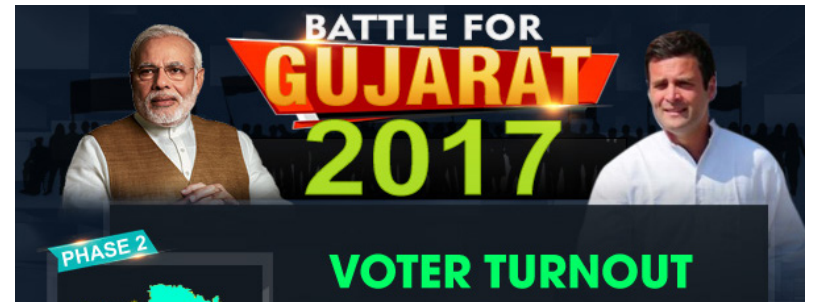
AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Chief Electoral Officer, BB Swain on Thursday informed that the voter turnout in the second phase of the state assembly elections 2017 is 47.40 percent till 2:00 pm.

Earlier in the day, a voter turnout of 39 percent was recorded till 12:00 pm.

Till 10 am, 12.39 percent of voter turnout was recorded.

The voting will continue till 5 pm in more than 25,000 polling stations.

The second phase of elections is conducted in 93 constituencies spread across 14 districts in north and central Gujarat. A total of 851 candidates are in the fray and over 2.22 lakh people will



take part in the election to decide their fate. The BJP has fielded 93 candidates for this phase, while Congress has fielded only 91.

The voter turnout in the first phase

of the polls was 68 per cent.

The results will be declared on December 18. In the 2012 assembly polls, the BJP won 115 seats, while the Congress bagged 61.

Just a case of sour grapes: BJP on Congress' 'puppet' remark

GANDHINAGAR: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) general secretary in-charge for Gujarat, Bhupendra Yadav, on Thursday said that the Congress Party always tries to pull strings and now that it is about to face a defeat, it is blaming the Election Commission (EC).

Speaking at a press conference here, the BJP leader said, "During the last Rajya Sabha elections when the Election Commission gave the verdict, we accepted it. Congress then hailed the same EC for being impartial. Now that the Congress is about to face a terrible defeat, they are putting allegations of all kinds on the Election Commission."

When Congress comes in power, it always tries to keep others as puppets. I would say, for whom grapes are sour, now they are blaming the constitutional bodies".

He added that the entire nation knows that in 1977, the Congress captivated the country. "They are known for breaking guidelines of constitutional bodies and we condemn it. Wherever there are elections between two or more parties, the Congress has always lost. Further, I congratulate the people of Gujarat for coming in such large numbers to vote," Yadav said. Yadav's remark came after the Congress party today

attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP on their road shows during the polls, saying that the Election Commission has gone mum and distanced itself from its responsibility. "The way Modi is doing road shows with the help of Election Commission shows that the puppet EC has shut its eyes while the constitution is being blasted every moment. Prime Minister Modiji forgot that after 22 years of poor governance, people of Gujarat have rejected the BJP and no techniques are going to help him. The EC too has distanced itself from all its responsibilities", Congress leader Randeep

Surjewala said in a press conference here. He added that Prime Minister Modi's sinking boat is getting help from the EC, which is not going to help the former. Another Congress leader, Ashok Gehlot, further said that Prime Minister Modi's road show after casting vote is a clear case of violation of the model code of conduct. "EC seems to be working under pressure from the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister Office", he added. Bashing the Election Commission, Surjewala further said the former has become a "frontal organisation" of the BJP.

The voting will continue till 5 pm in more than 25,000 polling stations. The second phase of elections is conducted in 93 constituencies spread across 14 districts in north and central Gujarat. A total of 851 candidates are in the fray and over 2.22 lakh people will

take part in the election to decide their fate. The BJP has fielded 93 candidates for this phase, while Congress has fielded only 91.

The voter turnout in the first phase of the polls was 68 per cent. The results will be declared on December 18.

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Private healthcare sector must improve credibility, says JP Nadra

NEW DELHI: Union Minister JP Nadra on Thursday said the image of private healthcare sector is at stake and that it should adopt a self regulatory system to improve their credibility.

"Private healthcare sector's image is on stake. Their credibility has to be seen and they should go for a self regulatory system. A common man's aspiration should also be taken care," Nadra said while addressing 14th India Health Summit here.

He added that the issue has to be resolved by improving communication within the organisations.

"We have to have a regulatory mechanism. I have written letters to all the chief ministers to look into the matter," Nadra further said.

The 14th India Health Summit was organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) today.

This is how chimps died in Uganda

Poachers, predators and deforestation are not the only threats that chimpanzees now face. New research finds that even a human "common cold" virus can give them a deadly blow.

The virus, known as rhinovirus C, was responsible for killing healthy chimps during an outbreak of respiratory disease in Uganda in 2013, said the study published online in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases* on Wednesday.

"This was an explosive outbreak of severe coughing and sneezing," said Tony Goldberg, Professor at University of Wisconsin-Madison in the US and a senior author of the study.

"It was completely unknown that rhinovirus C could infect anything other than humans," Goldberg said while giving reference to a two-year-old chimp named Betty, who succumbed to the virus and whose body was quickly recovered and autopsied after her death.

Rhinovirus C is one of three rhinovirus species, each causing respiratory disease in humans. But rhinovirus C is notably more severe than its relatives, rhinoviruses A and B.

"It was surprising to find it in chimpanzees, and it was equally surprising that it could kill healthy chimpanzees outright," Goldberg said.

The outbreak occurred in February of 2013 and affected most chimps in the community. During that time, five chimps out of 56 died, including Betty.

The findings are a cautionary tale about human interactions with wild apes, Goldberg said.

In Africa, people encounter chimpanzees and other apes when human settlements expand into ape habitats, through activities like tourism and research, and when apes leave the forests to raid crops.

Autistic people with psychosis at greater risk of attempting suicide

According to a study, autistic people, who have psychosis, are at greater risk of depression and thoughts of suicide. The research, led by Professor Stephen Wood at Orygen, the National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health, showed that, among people with psychosis, depressive symptoms and thoughts of self-harm were not because of the psychosis, but instead were linked to the level of autism traits a person had.

"The more autism traits people with psychosis had, the lonelier and more hopeless they felt and were more likely to think about suicide," Professor Wood said. "When a person presents with a psychotic illness, such as schizophrenia, they are at an increased risk of self-harm or suicide. People with autism are also at a heightened risk." Professor Wood's team explored how the two might be related by reviewing people with a clinical diagnosis of psychosis and those without. "What we found was that with both groups the more autism traits a person had, the more likely they were to have depressive symptoms and suicide ideation." Professor Wood said to prevent people attempting suicide it was important to identify those most at risk. "Our study shows that a person's level of autism traits is an extremely important marker in helping identify those people with psychosis at risk of suicide," he said. "What we need to do now is improve care for people with high levels of autism traits who develop a psychotic illness. This means better training for clinical staff to support people with both autism and psychosis, and the need to ask about autism traits in clinical assessments."

Music therapy along with traditional treatments may ease depression: Study

The power of music is undeniably unmatched. Various studies have confirmed highly effective results when it comes to the healing properties of music in situations of emotional and/or mental stress.

It not only has an impact on humans, but on animals too, which many researches have shown as well.

Many people resort to music when they feel low, sad or depressed, because it is soothing and makes you feel calm and at ease.

Supporting that, a research review has suggested that traditional depression treatments like psychotherapy or medication might work better for some patients when doctors add a dose of music therapy.

Researchers examined data on 421 people who participated in nine previously completed short-term experiments testing the benefits of music therapy on its own or added to traditional interventions for depression.

Overall, the analysis found patients felt less depressed when music was added to their treatment regimen, according to the analysis in the *Cochrane Library*.

Music therapy also appeared to help ease anxiety and improve functioning in depressed individuals, and it appeared just as safe as traditional treatments.

"We can now be more confident that music therapy in fact improves



patients' symptoms and functioning, and that this finding holds across a variety of settings, countries, types of patients, and types of music therapy," said senior study author Christian Gold of Uni Research Health in Bergen, Norway.

More than 300 million people worldwide have depression, which is projected to become the leading cause of disability by 2020, Gold and colleagues write.

Music therapy can include passive approaches that involve listening, active treatments that involve playing an instrument or singing or

participating in a musical performance, or some combination of these approaches. What sets therapy apart from other musical endeavors is that it is typically led by a person with training in counseling, psychology or treating depression.

Even though music therapy has long been used all over the world, research to date hasn't offered a clear picture of its benefits, Gold said.

The last review of music therapy published by *Cochrane* in 2008 didn't offer as much evidence of benefits, Gold said. A milestone study that came out in 2011 concluded that

music could help but was only done in one country and left many unanswered questions, he said.

"The present review update confirms these findings and broadens them," Gold said by email. "We still think that more research is needed; however, we feel that research on music therapy for depression can now turn to more specific questions, such as comparing different types of therapy to each other."

Studies included in the current review ranged in duration from six to 12 weeks. The smallest study had just 14 participants, and the largest

one included 79 people.

The total number of treatment sessions ranged from eight to 48, and the duration of sessions varied from 20 minutes to two hours.

Only one of the studies in the analysis compared active versus passive music therapy, and it didn't find a difference in the short-term severity of depression.

"The most important finding is that music therapy shows short-term beneficial effects for people with depression when added on top of baseline psychological or pharmacological treatment," said Dr. Gjin Ndrepepa, a researcher at Technical University in Munich, Germany, who wasn't involved in the study.

How it works isn't clear, Ndrepepa said.

But modern brain imaging studies have shown that music therapy activates regions of the brain that are involved in regulating emotions. Joyful and sad music can have different effects, too, Ndrepepa added.

More research is still needed to figure out what type of music therapy works best for specific patient situations, Gold said.

"Until we have more specific research results comparing different music therapies to each other, music therapy should be seen as one of a variety of options," Gold said.

"It is important to have choices because no therapy works for everyone."

Over 7,920,000 cancer cases worldwide may happen due to obesity, diabetes: Report

Obesity and diabetes are two such conditions that are mostly lifestyle-induced, apart from being hereditary.

Shown by numerous studies as the beginning of more serious health issues, both diabetes and obesity are rising in countries across the world, with medical experts expressing concern.

Adding to the disturbing situation, a new report has suggested that many cancer cases worldwide may happen at least in part because people are overweight or have diabetes. Diabetes and being overweight or obese were a factor in 5.6 percent of new cancer cases worldwide in 2012, or about 792,600 cases, the authors say.

Researchers examined rates of 12 types of cancer from 175 countries in 2012. Then, because cancer can take a long time to develop, they looked back at 2002 data on rates of overweight or obesity and type 2 diabetes, which is caused in part by obesity.

Overall, about 5.4 million cancer cases, or about 3.9

percent of the total, were linked with a high body-mass index (BMI, a ratio of weight to height), and 280,000, or 2 percent, were linked with diabetes. A BMI of 25 or higher indicates overweight, and a BMI of 30 or higher indicates obesity. "Increases in diabetes and high BMI worldwide could lead to a substantial increase in the proportion of cancers attributable to these risk factors, if nothing is done to reduce them," said lead study author Dr. Jonathan Pearson-Stuttard of Imperial College London in the UK.

"These projections are particularly alarming when considering the high and increasing cost of cancer and metabolic diseases, and highlight the need to improve control measures, and increase awareness of the link between cancer, diabetes, and high BMI," Pearson-Stuttard said in a statement.

Worldwide, an estimated 422 million adults have diabetes and more than 2 billion adults are overweight or obese, researchers report in the *Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology*. Both high BMI and diabetes are risk factors for various types of cancer, potentially due to biological changes caused by these conditions - such as high insulin, high blood sugar levels, chronic inflammation, and dysregulated sex hormones such as estrogen.



The biggest proportion of cancer cases related to diabetes and high BMI - about 38 percent - occurred in high-income western countries, followed by east and southeast Asian countries at about 24 percent. Although cancers are still less common in some low and middle-income countries than in high-income nations, these countries had particularly large impacts from diabetes and high BMI.

For example, between 9 percent and 14 percent of all cancer cases in Mongolia, Egypt, Kuwait, and Vanuatu were tied to high BMI and diabetes. Globally, liver cancer and endometrial cancer con-

tributed the highest number of cancer cases related to diabetes and high BMI, at 25 percent and 38 percent, respectively.

By 2025, growing rates of diabetes and obesity could contribute to a 30 percent increase in the number of cancers related to these conditions in women, and a 20 percent increase in related cancers in men, researchers estimated. The study wasn't a controlled experiment designed to prove whether or

how diabetes or obesity directly cause cancer. Another limitation is that because many cancers can take years to develop, a decade-long study might underestimate the connection between cancer and these other health problems.

"Perhaps most surprising is that the already striking findings of the study are likely to be underestimates of the true impact of obesity and diabetes on cancer rates," said Dr. Graham Colditz, author of an accompanying editorial and a researcher at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. The biggest increases in weight and diabetes-related cancers were seen in low and middle-income countries, where rates of overweight and obesity have been rising dramatically in recent years, Colditz noted. "It is hard to overstate the importance of working to maintain a healthy weight," Colditz said by email. "It lowers the risk of multiple cancers - as well as diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, and arthritis."

Gene therapy drug shows promise of haemophilia cure

A single treatment with a gene therapy drug has shown promise in curing patients with haemophilia - a disorder in which blood does not clot normally, results of a clinical trial in Britain show. Over one year on from a single treatment with a gene therapy drug, participants with haemophilia A (the most common type) are showing normal levels of the previously missing protein, and effectively curing them, showed the study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

"We really now have the potential to transform care for people with

haemophilia using a single treatment for people who at the moment must inject themselves as often as every other day. It is so exciting," said John Pasi, Professor at Queen Mary University of London.

A hereditary genetic condition dominantly affecting men, people with severe haemophilia A have a virtually none of the protein factor VIII which is essential for blood to clot.

It puts those affected at risk of excessive bleeding even from the slightest injury as well as causing spontaneous internal bleeding, which can be life-threatening.

Recurring bleeding into joints can also lead to progressive joint damage and arthritis. The only current treatment involves multiple weekly injections to control and prevent bleeding, but there is no cure. In the trial, a single infusion of the gene therapy drug showed improved levels of the essential blood clotting protein Factor VIII, with 85 per cent of patients achieving normal or near-normal Factor VIII levels even many months after treatment. The trial saw patients across England injected with a copy of the Wmissing gene, which allows their cells to produce the missing clot-

ting factor. Following patients for up to nineteen months, tests show that eleven out of thirteen patients in the trial now have normal or near normal levels of the previously missing factor and all thirteen patients have been able to stop their previously regular treatment. "We have seen mind-blowing results which have far exceeded our expectations. When we started out we thought it would be a huge achievement to show a five per cent improvement, so to actually be seeing normal or near normal factor levels with dramatic reduction in bleeding is quite simply amazing," Pasi said.

Want to lose that extra belly fat? Cut out this one food from your diet



One of the most common questions people ask these days is how to lose belly fat. Belly fat is actually the most dangerous type of fat - besides aesthetics, large waist lines are indicators of disease. According to *Express.co.uk*, weight loss can be a slow process, but there are foods and exercises dieters can try to speed things. As well as eating the right foods, it is important not to

eat the wrong foods, and studies have shown there is one type in particular that should be avoided.

Sugar and foods high in sugar have been linked to type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease. Many studies have shown a relationship between high sugar intake and increased abdominal fat. In a study conducted in 2009, a group of researchers

observed a group who drank sugar-sweetened drinks with their meals over an eight-week period. Their diets didn't otherwise change, but they put on an average of three pounds. However, this wasn't all, as participants were found to have significantly increased abdominal fat too. But how to actually cut out sugar and lose belly fat? One of the most popular diets for those trying to cut out sugar and lose belly fat is the keto diet. Fighting belly fat is 80% healthy diet. Reduce calories by filling yourself up with protein, vegetables, whole grains, and replacing bad habit snacks with good ones.

A great trick is a sprinkle of cinnamon in your morning coffee or oatmeal - the spice has been shown to help stabilise blood sugar. It also slows the rate at which food exits the stomach, which helps you feel fuller longer.

Half the world's population lacks access to basic health services: WHO



The World Health Organisation (WHO), in a joint report with the World Bank, on Wednesday revealed that essential health services are out of reach for at least half the world's population, while many others are forced into extreme poverty by having to pay for healthcare they cannot afford.

Approximately 800 million people worldwide spend at least 10 percent of their household income on healthcare for themselves or a sick child, and as many as 100 million of those are left with less than \$1.90 a day to live on as a result, the WHO said.

Expressing their concern and disappointment with the situation, the UN health agency further said that it was completely unacceptable that more than half the world's people still don't get the most basic healthcare.

"If we are serious - not just about better health outcomes but also about

ending poverty - we must urgently scale up our efforts on universal health coverage," World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said in a statement with the report.

The report, however, also had some good news: This century has seen a rise in the number of people getting services such as vaccinations, HIV/AIDS drugs, and mosquito-repelling bed nets and contraception, it said.

But, there are wide gaps in the availability of services in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia, the report found. In other regions, basic services such as family planning and child immunization are more available, but families are suffering financially to pay for them. Yong Kim said this was a sign that "the system is broken".

"We need a fundamental shift in the way we mobilise resources for health and human capital, especially at the country level," he said.

Studenting Era announces CARE, an initiative on child development and behavioral management

NEW DELHI: Studenting Era has announced a major initiative for child development and behavioral management called CARE to socially contribute to the student community. It was announced at The Park, New Delhi in an inauguration ceremony and conclave that was attended by prominent people in the education sector including academicians from schools, colleges, institutions, universities and the government.

CARE is an initiative by Studenting Era whose main objective was to build an ecosystem which supports the process of internal and external development of a child and take initiative to address various aspects of their behavioral changes as they grow up,

especially at the stage of adolescence. It is a collaborative platform where leaders from across the fraternity have joined together for a common cause. Anil Swarup, Secretary, School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, made a keynote speech in the inauguration and said "Child Development is that aspect of child's growth that we all need to focus. At this time of our growth cycle there is a need for proactive guidance and support from parents, mentors and teachers. Managing behavioral changes among children is the key and we should observe the changes, analyze them, initiate discussion, engage and collaborate with the child and to help

transform into a happy human being." Raja Dasgupta, CEO of Studenting Era, shared that "Through this initiative, Studenting Era would like to address the positive aspects of adolescence like education, aspirations, self-confidence and motivation as well as the challenges like addiction, child abuse and safety, cybercrime and social media protection."

Anu Aggarwal, iconic actress and model, said, "Yoga and meditation can prove to be a panacea in child development. It has been adopted in many major universities abroad and the results have been found to be quite positive."

A panel session was also organized in the program, in which panelist Saeed Kausar said that,



"The children need to have adequate emotional nutrition in the school and family, to remove them from the problem of child trafficking

and their development." Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, Senior Psychologist, Moolchand Hospital, Delhi also believed that there is a huge lack

of counselors in the schools, which is also causing such problems. In addition, many panelists also supported that lifestyle is very responsible for all of these.

Cyber Expert Gururaj P said, "Social media may at times play a role in enhancing the crime. To what extent the Internet is to be used and it is important to understand the side effects on children."

More speakers such as Vasant Agarwal (Author and Leading speaker on De-addiction), Prof. Daniel Khan (An International Educationist), Alka Verma (Senior Consultant for Education, Priya Bhargava (Freelance writer and Author), Navin Gulia (Accomplished Author and Motivational Speaker), Rameesh Kailasam

(Business Strategist), Sudipta Gupta (Director ELT), Varun Khullar (Vice President, Education Category at Paytm), Dr. Paresh Rughani (International, Motivational and Inspirational Speaker ACMA (UK). Some more panelists were Anshul Pathak (Vice Chairman, Delhi Public School, Ghaziabad Society), Dr. Nanditesh Nilay (Social Scientist and Thinker) and Arunabh Singh (Principal and Promoter of Nehru World School Ghaziabad).

Studenting Era will be organizing a series of activities under this initiative. These will include collaborative tools, seminars, conferences, workshops, online communities, and others to help create a difference in the grassroots.

38 pct people have symptoms of mental health difficulties, require immediate professional advice: survey

NEW DELHI: As many as 38 percent of the people show some significant signs of mental health difficulties and require immediate professional medical assistance to know the actual well-being of their mental health, reveals a survey conducted by Cosmos Institute of Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences (CIMBS) and LiveHindustan.com on UC Browser.

The objective of the survey was to create awareness about mental health issues among readers and

make them aware of the existing risks. The survey was conducted during the last week of November and witnessed over 50,000 unique participations.

The participants had to respond to 10 questions, especially designed by CIMBS, in order to test the mental health risks of users.

The survey was conducted on UC Browser, a leading content distribution platform in India, which leveraged the strength of its huge user base to attain maximum participation.

The platform uses latest big data technology to personalize the homepage of each user, as per their interest area. Participation in the survey was made easy as it was shared on a mobile phone, a personal device having exclusive access to the user only.

"With the rising prevalence of mental illnesses, the society's focus needs to shift on not just treating these disorders but also to effectively detect them at an early stage and also towards promoting

mental health. The survey has been prepared to allow people to self-rate and help become aware of early signs of any mental health issue," said Dr. Sameer Kalani, Consultant Psychiatrist at CIMBS, New Delhi. As per the survey, only 8% people reported of not having any symptoms of mental health difficulties. The survey findings highlighted that 52 percent people showed psychological difficulties which may be warning signs of mental disorders. While making

moderate changes in health and lifestyle may help in some cases, if the symptoms persist for a long time or impact one's quality of life, one may need to consult a mental health professional for assessment and help at the earliest.

RS Sharma, Business Head, LiveHindustan.com said, "We are delighted to participate with UC Browser for such reader-oriented campaigns. We will be happy to be part of such campaigns in future as well."

W.Bengal Finance Minister says GST rollout a hasty one

NEW DELHI: West Bengal Finance Minister Dr. Amit Mitra on Thursday described the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as a hasty one, but added that the state government had agreed in principle to its necessity and gradual implementation. Dr. Mitra was taking part in a special session on GST along with his counterparts from Jammu and Kashmir (Dr. Haseeb Drabu) and Bihar (Sushil Kumar Modi). The event was organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

GST has been dubbed as the single-most important reform measure in the annals of India's taxation regime. The three state finance ministers expressed their views, ranging from "unprecedented in its adverse consequences, especially for the SMEs" to "a deal that gives a virtual tax insurance policy to the states" and "a Herculean task of integration of all taxes into a common and uniform tax code".

Dr. Mitra declared that West Bengal's stated position was that it had agreed, in principle, to bringing in GST. But the hasty manner, in which it was rolled out, had taken a huge toll on the revenue collections. For instance, revenue collections in October 2017 at Rs. 83,346 crore are significantly down from the September figure of Rs. 95,131 crores. He expressed concern at the dip that the November figures would show. Dr. Mitra cautioned the business chambers to be wary of the provisions of arrest under the GST law and advised them to oppose the provision. According to him, filing of FIR under the due judicial process was the way to go. Alluding to the political economy of the GST, he said that it was demonetisation that first throttled SMEs and the pre-mature launch of GST has landed them in dire financial straits. Dr. Haseeb Drabu said these were still early days and it would be unfair to judge the GST system just yet. "Give it another three to four months. If the government and the GST Council are as responsive as they have been, what we have in the making is a robust GST which works for business, the Central Government and the States", he emphasized.

He said that the biggest gain of GST was that it represents India's first truly genuine federal legislation. Revenues may not have increased in the last couple of months, but the regime has given the States a sub-national freedom to legislate. The transition, he said, was not as glamorous as globalization and liberalization, but it marks a certain move towards formalization of the economy.

Dr. Drabu said, "The most important aspect of the legislation was that GST changes the basic ethics of the country and the regime's transparent processes enable us to know exactly what is going where." The States, he said, have got "a wonderful deal as GST guarantees revenues at 14 percent growth year-on-year and what we have is a virtual tax insurance policy for five years".

Mr. Sushil Kumar Modi said that GST was being opposed by fabric and textiles sectors, MSMEs and small traders as they had come under the tax net for the first time. Besides, the consumers were opposing GST as a tax rate of 28 percent seemed too high. However, he noted that in the pre-GST era, the tax rate was more than 28 percent but as excise was included in the commodity price, it was not visible. He hoped this would be resolved by the GST Council and the final visible tax rate brought down to 14 percent.

Mr. Sushil Modi, who has witnessed the process of implementation of both VAT and GST regimes closely, said that when VAT came into force, the then finance minister had announced compensation for three years for states. But even after two years, no state came forward to claim compensation. He was, therefore, confident that with the government announcing a compensation period of five years after roll out of GST, there would be enough cushion to satisfy the States. He said that the aim of the GST Council in the coming months would be to reduce the number of GST slabs and bring electricity, petroleum & real estate under the GST ambit. Speaking about the anti-profiteering clause, he said that it was brought about to ensure the passage of benefits to consumers by the manufacturers.

Mr. Modi said that sorting out 37 different tax jurisdictions and 16 different tax levies and integrating various taxes in GST was a Herculean and unprecedented task. Highlighting some of the challenges in the implementation of GST, Mr. Modi said that simplifications of the IT network and processes were the top priorities besides the need to reduce the existing tax slabs.

Mr. Harsh Mariwala, Chairman, FICCI Task Force on GST and Past President, FICCI, who moderated the session, said that while the complex GST legislation faces issues in Implementation, it was just a matter of time before these would be resolved.

FICCI's Outgoing President Mr. Pankaj R Patel, Incoming President Mr. Ramesh Shah and FICCI Secretary General Dr. Sanjaya Baru also shared the dais.

ANAROCK Launches Report on Affordable Housing in NCR

NEW DELHI: ANAROCK Property Consultants on Thursday released its definitive research report 'NCR - An Affordable Housing Goldmine' at the Delhi leg of Economic Times' ACETECH - Asia's leading trade fair for architecture, building materials, innovation and design.

The report pitches the phenomenal expansion and urbanisation rate of India's largest planned region against the real estate industry's affordable housing response. Intensely data-driven, this study lays bare the opportunities, shortcomings and challenges that Delhi-NCR presents to the real estate sector.

Anuj Puri, Chairman - ANAROCK Property Consultants said, "Affordable housing has once again taken centre-stage in all real estate forum discussion, and deservedly has the undivided attention of all industry stakeholders including developers, investors, customers and the Government."

"As India's largest urban agglomeration, Delhi-NCR is extremely important from every perspective - not least of all since it contributes as much as 7-8 percent of India's total GDP. The region's sheer size and exponential growth bring forth an immediate and ever-escalating requirement for affordable housing. This report takes a deep-dive into how appropriately the region's real estate sector has been able to address this requirement - and what factors aid or hinders this response," he added.

With the vast area under coverage and the presence of well-established services, manufacturing and automobile sectors, NCR's massive employment generation yields a very high demand for affordable housing. This report takes a deep-dive into the supply-absorption trends of affordable housing in NCR, examines how existing policies and regulations have helped meet the huge gap, and frankly states the major challenges that impede the effective implementation of affordable housing projects in the region.

Only 13 pct companies use digital for both growth and efficiency: Report

NEW DELHI: A recent joint survey by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Accenture India has stated that only 13 percent companies use digital technologies to drive both growth and efficiency.

The survey which focused on deployment of digital technologies to drive efficiency and customer experiences said that 34 percent of the companies focus on digital to unlock new levels of efficiency whereas 44 percent utilise it to drive new sources of growth.

Companies no longer perceive digitization as an end state and instead focus on an ongoing process aimed at two objectives, greater operating efficiency and new customer experiences.

"Regardless of which industry you are in today digital transformation is absolutely critical and very important to understand how your consumers are evolving, how their behaviours are

changing, how their purchasing journeys are changing and then evolve your products and services to be able to delight the consumers," Rajan Anandan, Chairman, IMAI and Managing Director, Google India, said.

However, the report further stated that 64 percent of the executives fear for their company's survival if they are unable to deliver on these two imperatives of efficiency and customer experiences with their digital investments.

"Rapid changes to technology coupled with falling technology costs and an easier access to capital is leading to never before envisaged technology led innovations. This pace of technology change is unlocking unique digital opportunities for organizations which they can harness to achieve extraordinary gains," Nachiket Sukhtankar, Senior Managing Director for Accenture's technology practice in India said.

Sukhtankar also pointed out that the role of a Chief Digital Officer (CDO) will play a critical role in defining the digital reinvention and the roadmap which complements the organization's business journey.

Research shows that combining technologies leads to higher savings and greater enterprise value for companies. In the Indian automotive sector, if the average company uses autonomous robots, artificial intelligence, blockchain, big data analytics, and 3D printing, in combination, it can raise productivity equivalent to USD 63,000 per employee in savings.

The joint IMAI - Accenture India survey conducted in 2017, interviewed 931 senior executives from large companies mostly with turnover exceeding USD one billion and spread across 12 manufacturing and production industries in India and other leading economies.

Korn Ferry Futurestep - India hires Kunal Sen as MD

NEW DELHI: Korn Ferry on Thursday announced appointment of Kunal Sen as Managing Director, Korn Ferry Futurestep - India with effect from December 12.

In his role as Managing Director, Kunal will be responsible for the growth, profitability and overall management of the Futurestep business in India. He will be based out of Korn Ferry Futurestep's Bangalore office.

Kunal is a business leader with strong operational background and has over two decades of diverse experience. He has held senior positions in eminent Indian and multinational organizations such as

StoveKraft Private Limited, Dell, Idea Cellular, Colgate Palmolive, Agro Tech Foods and Heinz prior to this. Also, most recently he was the Senior Vice President for Team Lease, which is, India's largest and first publicly listed staffing and HR Services Company.

Kunal holds a Masters in Business Administration from XLRI, Jamshedpur. He has featured among some of the Most Influential HR Leaders in India 2017 by the World HRD Congress in Mumbai.



WeDoSky, Drone Data Science, solutions raises funds from Mumbai Angels Network

NEW DELHI: Higher in resolution than Google Earth/Maps and updated as often as daily, WeDoSky's Drone Data Science solutions help answer the 'What' and the 'Where' for a geographical area that needs to be monitored.

WeDoSky™ is a data science company focused on generating actionable business insights using drone imagery, to assist various industries like mining, construction, energy and solar. The data extraction and analysis is done using their proprietary software 'visualAI™'.

This is also offered as a standalone SaaS platform for Drone-enabled businesses across the globe. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers,

Drone data for business intelligence is a USD 127 bn opportunity

WeDoSky™ counts titans like Adani Enterprises, Tata Power, Azure Power, and ACC Cement amongst its many clients. The company was established in August 2014 when the founder, Jaspreet, thought of commercializing his passion in robotics and drone building.

Noting the tremendous need for drone-based data in multiple industries, the team developed the software for improved project management. Reports laud the company's solutions to be 72x faster than conventional survey technologies as it has a million+ data points with ground resolutions much higher than anything



else currently available in the market. WeDoSky™ has now raised its first round of investment from Mumbai Angels Network, after bootstrapping for over two years. The funds will be used for the global expansion of visualAI™ and to integrate solutions for agriculture, infrastructure, and insurance industries after successfully assisting leading organiza-

tions in India. Jaspreet Makkar, Founder, WeDoSky™ has been featured in "Forbes 30 under 30" under Enterprise Technology category.

"I was impressed when I met Jaspreet in Jan 2017 and the business potential of the model was evident. After tracking his progress over the past few months, I am glad to lead the investment in this high potential company in a high growth industry. I further look forward to welcoming the team at RevStart, the Co-Working, Incubation and Acceleration centre where I'd be able to personally oversee their growth, mentor them to achieve key milestones, along with helping the

startup better market and promote its undertakings. With a strong team in place, I am positive that WeDoSky is set to scale heights," said Deal Lead Mumbai Angels Network, Ishan Singh.

"We are excited to be associating with leaders like Ishan Singh and Mumbai Angels Network to catapult WeDoSky's growth. We are glad to be providing services that can eradicate inefficiency from growing sectors of Data Science and Drone imagery. We are charged to be the front-runners in initiating a change from experience driven decision making to data driven decisions," said founder WeDoSky, Jaspreet Makkar.

How Rohit Sharma hits sixes at will, the double-ton master reveals secret



MOHALI: Soon after scoring a record breaking third doubleton in ODIs, Rohit Sharma revealed the secret to scoring big and his art of hitting sixes at will. Having scored 208 off 153 balls with 13 fours and 12 sixes, India's stand-in skipper said that unlike AB de Villiers, Chris Gayle and MS Dhoni, who sometimes use their sheer power to clear the ropes, he has to rely on timing and play the field. Sample this: for his 100 off 115 balls, Rohit had hit nine fours and just one six of Nuwan Pradeep in the 27th over on Wednesday.

But as the innings progressed, Rohit hit four more boundaries, but his sixes count reached 11, effortlessly clearing the field each time. It may

have looked easy from the stands, but Rohit insists says there was more to hitting sixes than meets the eye. "Nothing is easy. Maybe when you watch it on TV it looks easy, but it is not. Trust me, when you are out in the middle, you have to use your brain and you have to time the ball. I was trying to play according to the field, playing the scoop shot, trying to hit over point. Those are my strengths," he said.

Another thing that has helped Rohit is the rule of having five fielders inside the circle, which opens up enough gaps for a batsman like him who has a full repertoire of shots. India plundered 147 runs off last 10 overs. The acceleration was

MS Dhoni treated like 'god' in Mohali ODI despite Rohit Sharma's record double ton

MUMBAI: Rohit Sharma created history when he slammed his third double hundred in ODIs, becoming the first batsman in history to achieve this feat. His 153-ball 208 helped India beat Sri Lanka by 141 runs to level the three-match series 1-1. Despite all the attention on Rohit's world record double ton, Mahendra Singh Dhoni had an unforgettable moment which stole Rohit's thunder. During the second half of the match when India were on the field, a fan ran on to the playing arena to touch Dhoni's feet. Though Dhoni tried



to stop him from doing so, the fan had his moment as he did manage to touch the stumper's feet. He was then taken off the ground by security personnel. The incident underlined the god-like status of Indian cricketers.

This was not the first instance of Dhoni receiving this kind of treatment. Earlier in January this year, a fan was seen touching Dhoni's feet during a warm-up match between India A and England. The same scene was witnessed during a Vijay Hazare Trophy match later this year.

so fast that India were 245/1 at the start of 41st over and by the end they almost touched 400-run mark. Suranga Lakmal, the toast of Sri Lanka's win in Dharamshala, went for four sixes in the 44th over as Rohit raced from 116 off 126 balls to 140 off 131 balls. It

is not always that you can clear the rope easily. So, that is the advantage of having five fielders inside. You can play according to the field and shot selection becomes key. I don't think T20 cricket has made me what I am today. I have started playing three-day cricket at school.

And then, the Ranji Trophy (four-day) cricket. Then the ODIs. T20s came much later," Rohit said, whose most productive shot was the pull which fetched him 71 runs (2x4, 9x6). "Their bowlers were trying to bowl yorkers outside off stump with just three fielders on the leg side.

So first I tried to penetrate the on-side, but I could not. So I tried hitting straight because the fielder at long-on was up inside the circle," he said. Rohit said after spending time on the field it becomes relatively easier to place the ball, find the gaps. "I started off slow. I

knaw if I stayed long enough, batting will only get easier.

You have been there, took out the toughest part of the game. You have batted, your team is in a good position and you also have wickets in hand. So all those put together, gives you freedom to play those shots," he said.

Real Madrid rally to beat Al Jazira 2-1, reach FIFA Club World Cup final

ABU DHABI: Real Madrid's Gareth Bale needed less than a minute to help them reach the FIFA Club World Cup final after his team faced a potential shock elimination from the tournament.

Bale scored with his first touch after coming on as a substitute in the 81st minute as Real Madrid came from behind to beat Emirates club Al Jazira 2-1 in Wednesday's semi-final. Madrid will try to win its third world title in four seasons when it faces South American champion Gremio of Brazil on Saturday.

The match had two goals disallowed by video review, one for each team. There was confusion when Madrid's first-half goal was ruled out by a decision that took a few minutes before the Video Assistant Referee became involved.

Madrid struggled early and allowed the local league winners to open the scoring with a goal by Brazilian forward Romarinho just before halftime.

But Cristiano Ronaldo equalized early in the second half and Bale netted the winner less than a minute after replacing Karim Benzema.

The Wales forward, coming off a series of injuries, scored with a



low left-foot touch from the center of the area after a pass by forward Lucas Vazquez, who had also come off the bench.

"It was great to be able to score, but the most important thing was the victory," said Bale, adding that he's still not at 100 percent. "It's been a long wait, I've had to be patient." He has played only 11 matches with Madrid this season because of lingering muscle problems.

"Bale is all about scoring goals," Madrid defender Nacho Fernandez said. "He is a fantastic player. He scored a goal that means a lot to us.

It's a shame that he has been injured, because he is very important for the team." European clubs have made it to the Club World Cup final every time since the competition's new format started in 2005, winning nine out of the last 10 titles.

Madrid, which fielded its top players, was in control from the start but made a series of mistakes in front of goal and couldn't capitalize on its numerous chances. Al Jazira goalkeeper Ali Khaseif made several difficult saves before being substituted with an apparent injury early in the second half.

Madrid appeared to have opened the scoring with a header by midfielder Casemiro in the 30th minute. Brazilian referee Sandro Meira Ricci initially disallowed the goal, then said it counted and carried the ball back toward the center circle for the restart, only to eventually rule it out again after requesting a video review. He signaled that his final decision, made nearly three minutes after the goal, was based on Benzema being offside.

"The issue of video review is not something that is up to me to decide, but I think football is better off

without it," Bale said.

Madrid had already seen a goal by Benzema disallowed about 10 minutes earlier, after the referee signaled a foul by Ronaldo on a defender. The hosts took advantage of Madrid's early struggles and opened the scoring in a counterattack just before halftime. Madrid defenders were unable to clear a ball near midfield, and allowed Romarinho to enter the area and send a low shot into the far corner. The UAE team had the chance to take a shock 2-0 lead early in the second half after another mistake by Madrid's defense, which allowed two Al Jazira players to break into the area with only goalkeeper Keylor Navas to beat. Mbark Boussoufa scored, but a video review later showed that he was just offside when he received the pass from his teammate. Madrid began to rally a few minutes later, with Ronaldo controlling a pass from Luka Modric inside the area before sending a low shot into the far corner for his sixth goal in the Club World Cup, surpassing Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez, who each have five. Benzema had twice hit the post as Madrid pressed forward after conceding before halftime.

IPL 2018: Kings XI Punjab name Brad Hodge as head coach



NEW DELHI: Former Australia cricket team batsman Brad Hodge has been appointed as the head coach of the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) for a three-year term.

Hodge, 42, held a similar role with Gujarat Lions for the last two seasons and will now report to KXIP's mentor-cum director of cricket, Virender Sehwag. KXIP's head coach's job was informally held by Sehwag after India team's batting coach Sanjay Bangar resigned in December 2016.

"We have signed a three-year agreement with Brad, who will be our head coach," Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "Virus (Sehwag) will be actively involved, too, as our director of cricket." Hodge continues to feature as an active player and will be playing for Melbourne Renegades in the 2017-18 Big Bash League (BBL) before joining KXIP as the head coach.

Indore's Holkar stadium to host Ranji Trophy final for second consecutive year

NEW DELHI: Indore's Holkar stadium will host the final of the 2017-18 Ranji Trophy, according to a BCCI media release. The final will be played from December 29 to January 2.

This is the second consecutive time the Holkar stadium is hosting the Ranji Trophy final. In the 2016-17 season, it played host to the final between Gujarat and Mumbai, with Parthiv Patel's side winning by five wickets.

The semi-final dates and venues were also announced. Bengal will take on Delhi at the MCA stadium in Pune while Vidarbha will take on Karnataka in Kolkata on December 17-21. Bengal knocked out the 2016-17 winners Gujarat thanks to the first innings lead in their drawn quarter-final game in Jaipur.

On the other hand, Karnataka ham-



mered 41-time Ranji champions Mumbai by an innings and 20 runs in Nagpur. Delhi defeated Madhya Pradesh by seven wickets while Vidarbha, the team that have sprung plenty of surprises in this season of the tournament, hammered Kerala by 412 runs.

In the last Ranji Trophy final at the Holkar stadium, Parthiv Patel led from the front and smashed 143 as Gujarat chased down 313 against Mumbai to win the Ranji Trophy for the first time ever.

Gremio beat Pachuca to reach Club World Cup final

AL AIN: Gremio have put a South American team back in the Club World Cup final. The Brazilian team defeated Mexico's Pachuca 1-0 with a goal by winger Everton five minutes into extra time on Tuesday, giving South America a shot at the title after missing out on the final last year.

The Copa Libertadores champions will face Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid or Al Jazira of the UAE for the title on Saturday.

The 21-year-old substitute Everton scored the only goal when he drifted inside from the left wing and slammed home a fierce right-footed strike beyond Pachuca's 44-year-old goalkeeper Oscar Perez into the far corner. Pachuca, who qualified as club champions of the Caribbean and North and Central American region, saw their hopes of an equaliser all but end with Victor Guzman sent off for a second booking 10 minutes from time. "We were nervous at the start and we didn't need to be," said Gremio coach Renato Portaluppi. "We improved in the second half, and in extra time Everton got the goal that we needed. We overcame a great opponent to make it to the final.



"It's the end of the year as well, we are tired but we were the better team and now we can concentrate on the final."

Last year, Kashima Antlers of Japan knocked out South American entry Atletico Nacional of Colombia in the semi-finals, then lost to Real.

Gremio, winners of the Intercontinental Cup — the forerunner to the Club World Cup — in 1983 and runners-up in 1995, will now aim to become the first non-European team to win the title since compatriots Corinthians beat Chelsea in 2012.

Pachuca made it to the semi-finals by defeating African champions Wydad Casablanca of Morocco 1-0 in extra time on Saturday.

Both Latin teams fought out a scrappy 90 minutes in Al Ain that featured 35 fouls and few clear-cut chances. "We were too anxious, making too many passing mistakes," Everton said. "It took a while but eventually we were able to get into the game." Gremio were the slightly more positive side, particularly in the second half, with Edison coming close to scoring with three free kicks

and Pachuca keeper Perez doing well to turn a goal-bound shot from Luan round the post after an hour. At the other end, Gremio defender Bruno Cortez made two excellent blocks in the first half while Pachuca's Guzman scraped the outside of the post with a header after 80 minutes.

The defeat was another let-down for the CONCACAF Champions League winners. The Mexican side have now played in five Club World Cup tournaments without reaching the final.

"The team competed incredibly," Pachuca coach Diego Alonso said. "But in extra time the team started to feel a bit tired. But I'm delighted, I need to congratulate my players."

Earlier, Japan's Urawa Reds claimed fifth place as two goals from Brazilian Mauricio steered the Asian Champions League winners to a 3-2 victory over African champions Wydad. Ismail El Haddad had cancelled out Mauricio's opener, but Yosuke Kashiwagi put back Urawa back in front before Mauricio netted again on the hour mark, with Reda Hajhouj grabbing a late consolation for the spot.