

TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

SATURDAY

● DECEMBER, 16, 2017
 ● 27 RABI-AL-AWAL 1439 AH
 ● ISSUE: 295
 ● VOLUME: 03
 ● PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE

STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	8.3	-0.1
JAMMU	15.5	5.7
LEH	-3.9	-5.7
KARGIL	-4.8	-10.2

SUNSET FRIDAY: 05:24 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 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)

STATE | 3

INTERSTATE | 5

BUSINESS | 7

SPORTS | 8

DIY CM REVIEWS PROGRESS OF PROJECTS IN POWER, HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT

SC DISMISSES TEESTA SETALVAD'S PLEA TO DEFREEZE HER ACCOUNTS

SAVOUR USA PEARS AT GODREJ NATURE'S BASKET, WORLI

NO EVIDENCE OF PERTH TEST UNDER FIXING THREAT, SAYS ICC

Authorities foil JRL's 'public Jalsa'

Mirwaiz, others detained; situation remained peaceful, says IGP

Srinagar, Dec 15: Authorities on Friday foiled the Joint Resistance Leadership's (JRL) 'public jalsa' at Anantnag by imposing restrictions in Srinagar and Anantnag areas as precautionary measure.

The district administration Srinagar imposed restrictions in Srinagar areas falling under the jurisdiction of six police stations including Rainawari, Nowhatta, Khanyar, MR Gunj, Safakadal, Maisuma and Kralkhud partially while the Anantnag police imposed restrictions at various places across the district in view of the JRL's public Jalsa.

The JRL comprising of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik were scheduled to address public jalsa supposed to be held at Anantnag today.

Police and paramilitary troopers were deployed on the roads in large number to thwart any possible protests called by JRL, officials said, adding



that various exit and entry points of Srinagar city were sealed by the forces.

Earlier, an official in the administration had told KNS that the restrictions will be imposed as a precautionary measure while the Senior Super-

intendent of Police (SSP) Anantnag, Altaf Khan had informed that the restrictions will be imposed across the district to thwart any possible protest.

Meanwhile, various pro-freedom leaders tried to march towards An-

antnag but the attempt was foiled the authorities by arresting them on the way.

Hurriyat (G) chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq had tweeted that he will defy the curfew and will march towards Islamabad (Anantnag) at 12:30 pmbut the forces deployed outside his Nigeen residence didn't allow him to march towards Anantnag.

"Will defy house arrest today at 12.30 and try to march towards Islamabad as per the programme of JRL to show solidarity with the people of south Kashmir who continue to bear the severe brunt of occupation!" Mirwaiz tweeted prior to his arrest.

After Mirwaiz tried to come out from his residence where he was under house detention, the police deployed in large number outside foiled his attempt and detained him. "Not allowed, arrested by the shameful ruling regime, spoke to media just before

See JRL...Pg 02

2017 proved deadliest year since 2010

55 Civilians, 211 militants, 78 security forces loss lives

Srinagar, Dec 15: The year 2017 proved deadliest of all years since 2010 in terms of the killings due to various incidents of violence in the already strife-torn Jammu and Kashmir.

As per the records available with various defence portals, till December 10, this year, there were total number of 221 militants killed in

various anti-militancy operations in Jammu and Kashmir. Furthermore, the records reveal that 55 civilians lost their lives during different incidents of violence witnessed since January to December this year. Also, the number of security forces killed in various anti-militancy operations in the state is 78.

The year 2017 is considered

as most lethal for the militancy in the region as the insurgents suffered highest casualties this year since 2010.

In the year 2010, there were 270 militants killed by the security forces. In 2011, the number of militant casualties was 119. In 2012, there were in total 84 militants killed. While as the number

See Year...Pg 02

12 years on, 2005 Earthquake victims rue Govt

Inhabitants whose hamlets were declared unsafe yet to be relocated

Srinagar, Dec 15: The residents living in the 11 villages of Tangdar are up in arms against the administration for 'failing to rehabilitate them' after 2005 earthquake whose villages were declared as unsafe by the Geology and Mining department.

According to the KNS correspondent, Peerzada Adil Syed, the 11 villages including Sangri Nawa Gabra, Tangdar Naar, Gumul,

Trehbooni, Haridal, Teetwal, Batla, Bahadurkot, Pingla, Shahree, Dregid Gundi Shaat and Kani pora Maqaam were declared as unsafe by the authorities after the 2005 earthquake jolted the Valley.

The villagers as per the KNS correspondent said that the government at that time assured them that they will be rehabilitated soon.

See Earthquake...Pg 02

Money laundering case: PATIALA COURT EXTENDS REMAND OF 10 KASHMIRI PRISONERS

Srinagar, Dec 15: The Patiala court on Friday extended the remand of ten Kashmiri prisoners including seven Hurriyat leaders by 28 more days.

The family members of one among the Hurriyat leaders told KNS from Delhi that the seven Hurriyat leaders including Nayeem Ahmad Khan, Altaf Shah, Ayaz Akbar, Peer Saif-ullah, Mehraj-ud-

See Court...Pg 02

BJP upset over Govt's decision 'not to declare Maharaja Hari Singh's birth anniversary as holiday'

We have called for an urgent meeting in Jammu, will take up matter with CM: Sat Sharma

Srinagar, Dec 15: Showing strong resentment over Mehbooba led government's refusal to declare holiday on the birth anniversary of late Maharaja Hari Singh, The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), Friday said that it has called for an emergency meeting in Jammu to discuss a strategy against the matter.

"It is unfortunate that the government has not mentioned the September 23, as holiday. We are strongly against the move. We have called an emer-



gency meeting in Jammu to chalk out the strategy in this regard," BJP's state president Sat Sharma told KNS over phone from Jammu. The resentment comes

from the collation partner of PDP, day after the government issued an order of holidays which will be observed in 2018.

Sharma said that BJP had already informed the government to declare September 23 as holiday. "BJP ministers in the state cabinet were also exerting their influence on the chief minister for declaring a state holiday on the Maharaja's birth anniversary, but it is unfortunate that government has not shown

See BJP...Pg 02

Cabinet clears bill criminalising instant triple talaq

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Friday cleared a bill that criminalises the Islamic practice of instant triple talaq, ahead of it being taken up in the Winter Session of Parliament.

In November, the Narendra Modi government said it was ready with a bill that would provide a legal framework to prosecute Muslim men calling off marriages using a custom outlawed by the Supreme Court.

Instant triple talaq, or Talaq-e-biddat involves Mus-



lim men divorcing their wives by mentioning the word 'talaq (divorce)' three times in one

go, sometimes over email, WhatsApp messages or letters. See Talaq...Pg 02

TASADUQ MUFTI RESIGNS FROM CM GRIEVANCE CELL

Srinagar, Dec 14: Tasaduq Mufti, the brother of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti today resigned from Chief Ministers Grievance Cell.

He submitted his resignation before Chief Secretary Jammu and Kashmir BB. Vyas. "I hereby submit my resignation from the post of Co-ordinator J&K Chief Ministers Grievance Cell with immediate effect," the resignation letter reads.

Sources said that resignation will pave way for Mufti

See Mufti...Pg 02

Rana calls NGT clarification on Amarnathji Yatra more intrusive, seeks Governor's intervention

'Commandments in matters of faith unacceptable'

Jammu, Dec 15: Terming clarification of the National Green Tribunal over its controversial order on Shri Amarnathji pilgrimage on Kashmir Himalayas invasive on the religious affairs, National Conference Provincial President Devender Singh Rana on Friday said commandments of any kind on the matters of faith were unacceptable.

"The directive about maintaining silence before the holy Shivlingam in the cave sanctum sanctorum betrays logic as outpouring of hymens during the course of darshan is natural manifestation of sentiments and therefore the mouths cannot be ordered to be shut or stitched", Rana said in a statement, adding that a slew of measures have already



been taken by Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board in consonance with the spiritual and emotional aspects of the pilgrimage besides

See Rana...Pg 02

POLICE ARRESTS YOUTH FOR DELETING FB ACCOUNT OF DAK

Srinagar, Dec 15: Cyber Crime Police in Srinagar city arrested a youth for hacking the Facebook page of Doctors Association Kashmir.

The facebook page having lakhs of hits was run of Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) headed by Dr Nisar-ul-Hasan.

Confirming the arrest of the youth, a police official from Nigeen Police Station identified the accused as Naveed Ahmed Shah, a medical representative working for a drug company 'Alif Remedies'.

"We used this facebook to sensitize common people about the use and spread of spurious drugs. We believed

See DAK...Pg 02

Few NC Ministers halted Daily Wagers' Regularisation in 2014: Former Congress Minister

Says Ministers wanted induction of blue-eyed in selection lists

Srinagar, Dec 15: The former PHE Minister and Congress leader Sham Lal Sharma on Friday said that the regularisation of more than 61 thousand daily wagers would have been done during the previous regime but some ministers of National Conference acted as a spoilsport in the process.

The present government, which keeps beating the trumpet of taking measures of regularising the daily wagers and need based workers in the state, hasn't done anything new but only followed the roadmap that was drafted by the previous NC-Congress regime in the year 2014.

Sharma who was holding the PHE portfolio during Omar Abdullah led coalition in



the state, told KNS that he had to resign as a minister in 2014 in protest of the partialities being done in regularising the daily wagers.

See Former...Pg 02

INFLATION HITTING KASHMIR BADLY

Rameez Makhdoomi

Srinagar, Dec 15: The rising inflation is giving tough times to the general masses in the Valley of Kashmir. The monster of inflation is impacting all important sphere of life in the valley of Kashmir. Pertinently, Inflation means paying more for goods than what you were paying earlier. Off late, not only indispensable goods have seen a price hike, non-essential items have also seen this hike.

The worse part of it is that rising food prices have far outstripped the growth rate and overall income rise of masses. Tomatoes, Peas, onions, eggs and many types of pulses are costing twice as costly as they were about a year ago.

See Inflation...Pg 02

Govt regularizes services of 493 ReTs in Jammu division

Altaf, Priya give away confirmation orders

Jammu, Dec 15: The Government has regularized the services of 493 eligible Rehbar-e-Taleem Teachers of Jammu division as the Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari and Minister of state for Education and Culture, Priya Sethi handed over the confirmation orders to the educators at a function, here today.

With this batch, the total



number of ReTs regularized in Jammu region this year

has reached to 1193. The Directorate of School Education, Jammu had confirmed services of 700 eligible ReTs earlier this year.

Secretary, School Education, Farooq Ahmed Shah, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education, Veena Pandita, Director School Education Jammu Ravindar Singh,

See RET...Pg 02

Killing Junaid Khuroo: SHRC DIRECTS POLICE TO REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE THEN BMO SOPORE

Srinagar, Dec 14: The State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) directed the police to report on the status of Abdul Rashid Wani (Block Medical Officer, Sopore in June 2011).

On 17 August 2017 the SHRC had directed the police to produce Abdul Rashid Wani through the execution of bailable warrants. Till date neither has he been produced nor has the police filed any report.

The SHRC stated that if Abdul Rashid Wani does not appear on the next date, 15 February 2018, a decision on the case would be taken in his absence.

See SHRC...Pg 02

CHIEF SECRETARY CHAIRS 13TH DAL MONITORING COMMITTEE MEETING

JAMMU, DECEMBER 15: Chief Secretary B B Vyas on Friday chaired the 13th meeting of the Monitoring Committee for Preservation and Conservation of Dal-Nageen Lake.

Amicus Curie, Zaffar Ahmad Shah, Special DG, PHQ, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Commissioner/Secretary H&UDD, Secretary Tourism, Secretary, Law Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Secretary (Technical) Forest Department VC LAWDA, and other senior officers were present in the meeting. IGP Kashmir and Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir participated in the meeting via video conferencing.

The Committee reviewed the progress achieved in regard to formulation of comprehensive legal framework for the enactment of strong legislation for preservation of all water bodies in the state. Secretary, Department of Law Justice & Parliamentary Affairs informed that the draft bill is being finalized and will be submitted to the State Cabinet shortly.

Regarding estimation of pesticides in the Dal lake and conversion of de-



weeded material into compost, VC Lawda informed the Committee that the detailed survey carried out jointly by LDA and SKUAST-K has been completed and the preparation of DPR by SKUAST is in progress, besides LAWDA has received communication from Director, SFRI for dumping of de-weeded biomass from Dal Lake at SFRI – FRs,

Haran/Dagpora for converting into vermi compost.

VC LAWDA further informed that physical demarcation of 200-meter zone of Dal-Nageen Lake has been completed by erecting MS poles with proper Signages. He said the Authority has procured 10 Geo tagging apparatus for the purpose. The geo tagging of structures

is in process and so far 1321 structures have been geo tagged. The Authority has also completed the ETS survey of Anchar, Gilsar and Khushalsar and working maps have been prepared besides 80% laying of optical fibre has been completed.

The Committee took stock of the status of implementation of the recom-

mendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) with regard to creation of artificial wetlands, rejuvenation of six existing wetlands/retention ponds/reed belts, Water Quality Analysis, Vegetation Mapping and Portable Eco Sander. The Committee also took stock of the status of purchase of machinery & equipment for the cleaning of Dal-Nageen lakes from weeds and lily pads and progress on development of Rakh-i-Arth Colony.

It was informed that LAWDA has carried out 42 demolition drives in the last five months and so far 59 residential structures and one shopping line have been demolished. Encroachments have also been removed from Government land at Rakh-i-Arth, Ishber and Nageen.

IGP, Kashmir informed the Committee that in addition to deployment of over 20 police personnel on daily basis, the required police force is provided by the Police authorities as and when requisitioned for carrying out the demolition drives.

The Committee also reviewed the progress in regard to development of

Dole Demb and Rejuvenation and Revival of Brari Nambal Lagoon at Srinagar.

Vice Chairman LAWDA informed the Committee that removal of Lily pads from the area lying to the right of navigation channel from SKICC to NPL bund is in progress and about 1300 skilled laborers are engaged in the activity, besides the machines available with the Authority have also been pressed into service. So far 2.9 Sq Km area has been cleared from Lily patches both manually and as well as mechanically. The operation has also been extended to Hazratbal Basin, Dockyard and Nishat areas. The dewatering activity has also been extended to outflow channel of Tsuntikul and Khwajayarbalee areas. The Authority has resumed the dredging of Hazratbal basin and the total target for the current year has been fixed as 95,000 Cum, out of which 38,000 Cum of Lake bed area has been dredged out. The tendering process for de-silting of settling basin/Teilbal Nallah/inflow channels has also been completed and the work is in progress.

Continue from Front Page

JRL

arrest," he wrote in his another tweet. Mirwaiz while talking to reporters prior to his arrest condemned the imposition of curfew and suspension of internet services in view of the JRLs call.

"If the government believes in democracy then why it always choke our political activities us, he said, adding that the restrictions and raiding the house of pro-freedom leaders and activists clearly indicates that the JK has been turned into police state.

"From last nine days I continued to remain under house arrest while Geelani also continued to be under house detention. Malik and other pro-freedom leaders were also out behind the bars," he said.

Meanwhile, the senior Hurriyat leader and People's Political Party (PPP) Chairman, Engineer Hilal Ahmad War along with scores of other pro-freedom leaders were today detained after they tried to march towards Anantnag where a public jalsa was scheduled to be held on Joint Resistance Leadership's (JRL) call.

War said that the Nowgam Police intercepted them when they were marching towards Anantnag.

He was accompanied by Javaid Khan, Press Secretary, Mohammad Shafi Dar, Personal Secretary, Arif Khan, Youth leader PPP Hafeez ur Rehman.

Pertinently, the JRL comprising of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik had also asked the Government of India to allow the resistance leadership to hold public Jalsa if you believe in democracy.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Range, Munir Ahmad Khan told KNS that the situation across the Valley remained peaceful and under control.

YEAR

of militants killed in 2013 was 100. Similarly, there were 110 militants and 51 security forces personnel killed in the year 2014 and in 2015 the number of militants killed in 2015 has been estimated as 113. In that year, there were 41 casualties of security forces and 20 civilians. In 2016, the number of militants killed was 165.

However, the year 2017 is considered the deadliest one as in the current year, the total number of killings were 343 including of civilians, security forces and of militants.

As per the records, the highest number of militants were killed in June 2017. The number is claimed to be 30 followed by July when 27 militants were killed. In August, September, October and November this year, the militants killed were 25, 18, 18 and 27 respectively. Till December 10, there were six militants killed by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

EARTHQUAKE

"The previous government had identified the land to rehabilitate us but the land was not suitable," the residents said, adding that they appealed the government to identify other location for their rehabilitation.

They said that rains and snow from past several days has triggered landslides at Kuthlari which has also resulted in partial damage to the houses in Tangdar Bakhanya. "We are being forced to remain out of our homes during the night hours to remain vigilant over the landslides," they said.

They later appealed the government to look into the matter and redress their genuine grievances at the earliest.

Tehsildar Karnah, Nisar Ahmad Hawan while admitting that the residents of these villages are facing hardships told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the govt had identified the land for them but they were reluctant to live there. "Will raise the issue to the higher ups again," he said.

COURT

din Kalwal, Shahid-ul-Islam and Farooq Ahmad Dar alias Bitta Karati and a renowned businessman, Zahoor Watali, photojournalist, Kamran Yousuf and Javaid Ahmad appeared in hearing via video conference.

"Patiala house court New Delhi extended their remand till Jan 12, 2018," he informed.

Pertinently, the seven Hurriyat leaders were arrested by National Investigation Agency (NIA) on August 25, 2017 over their alleged involvement in money laundering case.

BJP

any seriousness in it. We will take up the matter seriously with the Chief Minister," Sat Sharma said.

He said that if there could be a holiday to pay respects to Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah, why can't there be a holiday on the birth anniversary of Hari Singh? We don't believe that the last Dogra ruler was an autocrat. Hari Singh was a democratic leader and even the NC has recognized it," he said.

The BJP leader said that there is anger against the party

leaders in Jammu region for failing to declare holiday on the birth anniversary of late Dogra ruler of the state, Maharaja Hari Singh.

He called for providing justice to all the communities of the state without differentiating on the basis of religion, region, caste and creed. "Declaring a state holiday on his birth day would honour the "emotions and sentiments of Dogras and the public at large in J&K," he said.

It is to mention here that the demand for state holiday on Maharaja Hari Singh's birth anniversary was growing as many political and social organizations in Jammu region have come out openly in favour of demanding the state holiday on September 23, with several of them appealing state employees to go on mass leave.

The controversy got triggered after the State Legislative Council adopted a resolution in January that called upon the government to declare 23 September as a public holiday. The resolution was moved by former minister and BJP MLC Ajatshatru Singh, grandson of the late Maharaja.

Senior BJP leader and deputy chief minister Nirmal Singh had already wrote a letter to Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti in this regard.

The government on Thursday issued an order of holidays which will be observed in 2018. "In exercise of the powers conferred by the explanation of Section 25 of Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 (Central Act 26 of 1881) read with the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs Notification No. 20/25/56/pub-1st dated 30.11.1957, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir hereby declares the days to be public holidays during the calendar year -2018," the order says.

These holidays will be observed under the Negotiable instruments Act.

As per the order, there will be 25 holidays observed in 2018 including the birthday of National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on December 25, and holiday on martyr's day on July 13, which the BJP has been demanding should be scrapped.

However, there is no mention of September 23, the birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh.

The Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) had lambasted the BJP for not raising the issue with People's Democratic Party, its coalition partner in the state.

National Conference had also demanded state holiday on birth anniversary of Maharaja Hari Singh on September 23.

NC Provincial President, Devender Singh Rana had said: "People of Jammu demanded holiday on September 23 (Maharaja Hari Singh's Birthday) in unanimity and I strongly support it and have made this clear on the floor of the Legislative Assembly also."

He had said the people of state live in peace because of State Subject Law introduced by Maharaja in 1927 and the land reforms introduced by Sher-e-Kashmir.

TALAQ

The proposed bill hands out a three-year jail sentence as well as fine, and states that the offence will be cognisable and non-bailable.

"We welcome this, it was much needed. Unlike previous governments, this government cares for rights of Muslim women. Appeal to all parties to ensure passage of this bill in Parliament," said Shaista Ambar of the All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board.

Titled the 'Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017', the proposed law also gives a "victim" of Talaq-e-Biddat a right to seek maintenance from her husband before a magistrate's court. She will also be entitled to her children's custody, the draft law says.

In August, the top court had struck down the custom as "arbitrary" and "unconstitutional" in a verdict that was hailed as a watershed moment for gender justice in India.

A law ministry official, explaining the rationale behind the bill, said: "Before the judgement this year, there were 177 reported cases of Talaq-e-biddat. Since then, there have been 67. These are only reported cases, the actual figure could be much higher."

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board, a non-governmental body that lobbies for the application of Islamic civil laws and opposes any ban on triple talaq, also welcomed the verdict, saying it "accords protection to Muslim personal laws".

MUFTI

to get elected as Member of Legislative Council. He is likely to be inducted in State cabinet as Tourism Minister.

RANA

keeping in view the sentiments and emotions of devotees. He hoped that these issues would be left to the sane counselling of religious and spiritual scholars under the aegis of the Board.

Rana said the NGT directives would create uncalled for restrictions during the course of pilgrimage and give rise to avoidable apprehensions. "The prudence demands that religious matters be left to the duly accredited bodies entrusted with the management of shrines and pilgrimages", he added.

Expressing concern over continuous interference of NGT in religious matters, the Provincial President referred to its earlier order of limiting the number of pilgrims to Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine on Trikuta Hills in Jammu, saying this amounts to infringement of the rights of lakhs of devotees thronging from the world over to pay obeisance 24X7 365.

"Apart from being seen as unwarranted commandments, the NGT directive will jeopardize the economy of Jammu region with sharp fall in the pilgrimage that has sustained the livelihood of thousands of people, especially during the disturbed conditions when tourism to Kashmir witnessed nose-dive", Rana said, adding that the people of the region would hugely lose their source of sustenance.

Rana made a passionate appeal to Governor N. N Vohra, who is also Chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board and Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board to take up the matter with the National Green Tribunal and take all necessary measures for insulating the most revered pilgrimages from outside interference. This is necessary for respecting the religious sentiments of the people of a particular faith, he maintained.

DAK

that facebook page was deleted by accused on the instructions of those who deal in spurious drugs in Kashmir Valley," said Dr Nisar-ul-Hasan told news agency CNS.

He added that on the launch of their website the accused introduced himself as an IT expert and sought user name and password of their facebook page.

"On November 18 last month, the two admins of this fb page, Dr Reyaz Ahmed Dagga and Shafiq Khambey received notifications that they have been removed as admins from the page. Accordingly we lodged a complaint before police station Nigeen and we are grateful to them for solving the case," Dr Nisar-ul-Hasan said.

FORMER

"Some ministers of NC wanted their own in the selection list. I remained adamant that services of the daily wagers should be confirmed on basis of the merit and no blue-eyed should be given least chances to infiltrate into the final list. I had to resign when turned nasty then," recalls Sharma.

The senior Congress leader added that the NC ministers were masquerading as 'Constituency ministers' when the regularisation was in its final shape. "That thing halted the process; otherwise, it would have been done then only."

Sham Lal Sharma maintained that even when at present, the government is taking the measures to regularise the daily wagers, it is following the same roadmap that was drafted by the previous regime in the state. "When the government tried to dodge the issue and threatened that it would dis-engage the daily wagers, I came up with the master file of the approval and gave it to the government. I even told the administration that I will go to court if the daily wagers aren't regularised as the process has already been completed in 2014."

The former Congress minister added that it took him more than one and a half years as a minister to compile the list and complete requisite formalities. "I have kept that file with me so that if tomorrow the present government comes up with some lame excuses of delaying the process again, I would produce the records that could pave way for the daily wagers to get absorbed into the government service," Sharma said.

INFLATION

From bakers to butchers and transporters everyone in Kashmir has increased the prices and has been following the trend continuously. According to experts the often hikes have more severe bearing on the inflation given the upcoming tough winter period.

This hyper inflation in Kashmir has hit the common man the most. Kashmir's logistical handicap has another reverse effect - its exports lose their competitiveness due to the relatively high transportation costs. To cope with inflation, Middle income group have cut back consumption wherever possible, buy cheaper products given alternatives, postpone the purchase of little indulgences and cut out discretionary spend altogether.

Adil Ahmad, a student stated - "Inflation is hitting hard every important sector of life in Kashmir. It is a known fact that inflation always hurts basic standard of living and worst hit is the man on street. Rising prices means you have to pay more for the same goods and services. If your income increases at a slower rate as compared to inflation, your standard of living declines even if you are making more. Inflation's

main consequence is a subtle reduction in your standard of living. Inflation doesn't affect everything equally. With food sucking up more of the incomes of households their saving is likely to disappear altogether."

Masses who are hit hard are appealing that the concerned authorities wake up more seriously to the challenges posed by the inflation and draft a visionary mechanism to tackle this monster of inflation as soon as possible.

RETS

Project Director Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) were also present at the function.

Addressing a jam-packed audience of senior functionaries of the department and representatives of teacher and ReT forums, Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari listed series of reforms taken and those in the pipeline to raise the education standard in Government Schools and address the issues of serving and retired teaching fraternity.

The Education Minister announced to establish a dedicated office of Nodal Officer in Kashmir and Jammu Education directorates to address the issues of retired educators, including Principals, Headmasters, Masters and Teachers with regard to their promotional regularization, gratuity, pension cases and others.

"The state owes a lot to the former educators who dedicated their lives to enlighten the people with education and achieve us what we are today. I firmly believe that they continue to be the partners in the department and their issues need to be solved on priority" the Minister asserted. He asked the department to give first priority to the retired officials, while regularizing the promotion of incharge Principals, Headmasters and ZEOs.

The Minister also informed that the Government is mulling to establish Teachers Welfare Fund on the pattern of Police department. He said orders have already been issued to concern to complete homework and come up with a workable mechanism for handling the Fund. He said the state Government led by Chief Minister want to restore and raised the dignity for the teaching fraternity as they are the only inspiring force for the young generation.

Congratulating the confirmed teachers, the Minister expressed happiness over the fact that all the regularized ReTs are Postgraduates with magnificent service record. He asked them to redouble their efforts and give their best to the students to dispel the wrong notions about their competence.

"Your confirmation is not a favour but your right. ReTs are backbone of the education department in rural areas so you need to come up to expectations of the people and government by giving your best", the Minister advised them.

Minister of state for Education, Priya Sethi, urged the teachers to leave indelible footprints in their service to the society, while assuring that all their issues will be addressed in similar way.

"I think confirmation of eligible ReTs was pending for quite long time and the Chief Minister, state Cabinet and the Minister for Education were keen to address this and all other issues," she said adding that the process of delivance has been set in and it would be taken to its logical end.

However, she asked the teaching fraternity to shoulder their crucial responsibility to serve the young generation particularly the rural students who have minimum access to quality education.

Secretary Education also presented the counters of the education policy of the department and assured to explore all options to take school education system to new highs.

SHRC

The family of Junaid Ahmad Khuroo accuse the Sopore police of killing Junaid on 29 June 2011. The police have accused Junaid of being a militant who killed himself once he was trapped in an ongoing encounter.

The SHRC police investigation carried out investigations on directions of the SHRC and found that Junaid was not a militant and that the Sopore police was involved in his murder.

A separate investigation by the Crime Branch was recommended. Based on this report, the SHRC summoned Dr. Fida Hussain who had examined the dead body of Junaid. The doctor submitted before the SHRC that he was pressurized by the then BMO Abdul Rashid Wani and "police officials" to carry out the physical examination of the body at the Special Operations Group Camp, as opposed to the hospital, and he was unable to carry out an autopsy.

Then SHO Sopore, Gazanfar Ali and Sub-Inspector Nissar Ahmad are main accused in this case where it appears that numerous persons conspired to kill Junaid Ahmad Khuroo and then cover up the crime.

Dy CM reviews progress of projects in Power, Housing & Urban Development sectors

Calls for timely completion of developmental initiatives

JAMMU, DECEMBER 15: Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Nirmal Singh today called for early accomplishment of various developmental initiatives especially in the Housing & Urban Development and Power sectors. He said timelines shall also have to be strictly adhered to in the projects taken up under the Prime Minister's Developmental Package (PMDP).

The Deputy Chief Minister was speaking during a review meeting convened to discuss the pace of implementation of various developmental initiatives undertaken in Housing, Urban Development and Power Sectors.

The Dy Chief Minister called for regular monitoring of the projects in power sector to ensure their timely completion and judicious utilization of resources. He asked the concerned officers to regularly monitor the works on ground so that targets are optimally achieved.

Dr Singh reviewed the present position of power supply and pace of work on various ongoing PDD projects. He stressed on augmentation of power infrastructure, and strengthening of the system, which he said is vital to realize the dream of uninterrupted power supply in the State.

He asked the officers to follow the already notified curtailment schedule and avoid unscheduled power cuts



especially in the winter zone of the state. He also directed to re-examine all feeders and adding more feeders into the system wherever it is necessary to minimize snapping of high-voltage power lines.

To ensure speedy repair of electric transformers, the Deputy Chief Minister called for increasing the capacity of the Department's workshops. He said steps are afoot to increase the human resource of the Department to better cater to rising demands.

Dr Singh also reviewed progress on various ongoing works under PMDP. He stressed on the officers to expedite work on all the projects so that their time-bound completion is ensured. He said the Department needs to gear up to meet people's expectations. He said there is no shortage of funds and called for time-bound completion of the development projects.

While reviewing the initiatives being undertaken in the housing sector, the Deputy Chief Minister directed for maintaining a close co-

ordination between different executing agencies so that the fast pacing of the flagship programs is done. He said that the officers should hold regular meetings in order to monitor the implementation of schemes on the ground and also get the requisite feedback about their status on the ground.

Dr Singh while directing for early construction of Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUM) under NULM said that it would go a long way in addressing the housing needs of urban homeless. He also called for fast pacing development of parks and pathways in various colonies of JDA, construction of flats being undertaken by the authority and also early completion of modernization/development of general bus stand cum multi-level car parking cum commercial complex maintaining that adequate rehabilitation measures should also be undertaken for the affected people so that their means of livelihood does not get disturbed.

The Deputy CM directed officers to ensure proper development of parks and other related facilities in the housing colonies already set up by the Housing Board and also explore the possibility of including private partners in these ventures.

Dr Singh also directed for fast pacing the work on the projects being constructed under Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUH) maintain that these would ensure the housing facilities to the urban poor of the state. He said that the schemes being implemented by the agency should also be monitored at regular basis, so that the impact of these at ground level is got besides also obtaining the necessary.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary PDD, Mr Hridesh Kumar, Development Commissioner Power, MD JKSPDC, Director Urban Local Bodies Jammu, Managing Director Housing Board, Chief Engineers of PDD and other senior officers of the Housing, Urban Development and PDD departments.

Chief Secretary reviews progress on IIM Jammu, out-campus Kashmir

JAMMU, DECEMBER 15: Chief Secretary, B B Vyas Friday chaired a meeting here to review the progress on the setting up of the permanent campus of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu at Jagti Nagrota and IIM out campus in Kashmir.

Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Deputy Commissioner, Jammu, Director Colleges, Jammu, Additional Commissioner in the office of Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, DFO, Jammu, Executive Engineer, PW(R&B) Jammu and other senior officers attended the meeting. Divisional Commissioner Kashmir participated in the meeting via video conferencing.

It was informed that the joint inspection and demarcation of the site for establishment of IIM at village Jagati, Nagrota measuring 1600 Kanals has been completed and the construction work can be started immediately by the IIM team.

Chief Secretary stressed on immediately

starting the work on the construction of boundary wall at the site besides initiating the process of starting the work on the permanent campus.

Regarding establishment of IIM Out campus Kashmir, it was informed that the feasibility of the land identified at Narkara, Budgam is being ascertained in view of its marshy nature. If the site is not found feasible then suitable land for the purpose elsewhere will be looked into. Chief Secretary asked Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir to finalise the site at the earliest.

Meanwhile, efforts are on to start an incubation centre for IIM and a private building is being identified for the purpose at Srinagar.

Presently, IIM Jammu is functioning in old campus of the University of Jammu at Canal Road, Jammu. The Academic session of IIM Jammu started from November, 2016 with 54 students and second batch from August, 2017 with 67 students.

Div Com directs sealing of all unregistered coaching centres

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 15: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Baseer Ahmad Khan today directed the officials to seal all unregistered coaching centres and those centres which do not fulfil all the parameters laid down by the government for proper functioning of these centres.

The Div Com today chaired a high-level meeting that was attended DDC Srinagar, Director School Education Kashmir and other officials. The DDC's of other districts participated via video conferencing.

The Div Com stressed on the need to streamline the entire coaching sector so as to max-

imize the benefit to students and avoid any exploitation and offering of below par service by these centres. The Div Com said that all those coaching centres which are not registered or whose registration is still under process should be sealed immediately.

The Div Com directed the DC's and DSEK to form various teams that will inspect the coaching centres in their respective districts and see whether the coaching centres fulfill various parameters laid down by the government. He said that those coaching centres who lack facilities like qualified tutors or absence of heating arrangements.

Workshop on 'Wildlife Photography' begins at Media Complex Srinagar

Such events help professionals to gain knowledge about JK's flora & fauna: Lal Singh

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 15: A three-day national workshop on wildlife photography with the theme "A step towards wildlife conservation" started at Media Complex, Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) here today.

First, of its kind, the workshop is organized by DIPR, in collaboration with World-wide Fund for Nature (WWF-India) and is supported by J&K Department of Wildlife, Valley Skill and Craft Development Institute, Kashmir and Gulshan Books.

The workshop was formally inaugurated by Minister for Forest, Environment and Ecology, Chaudhary Lal Singh, who was the Chief Guest on the occasion. On the occasion, the photographs by various wildlife photographers were put on display and the various books written on Kashmir were also available



for sale. Speaking on the occasion, Lal Singh said such workshops should be conducted in future also as they educate the people about the need to conserve the wildlife and also teach about the importance of environmental conservation.

The Minister said that the State has the best natural resources throughout the world and it is important that people come forward to preserve these.

Lal Singh said the govern-

ment is trying to intensify the plantation drive throughout the State so as to create an environmental balance.

During the inaugural session, former Director BNHS, Dr Asad R Rahmani gave a detailed lecture on the ethics of Wildlife Photography and Dr Pankaj Chandan from WWF-India educated the participants about the passion and patience for wildlife photography. In the technical session, Dritiman Mukherjee talked about the commitment

and art of wildlife photography which was followed by the interaction with the Kashmir based photographers Mukhtar Ahmad and Sajad Bhat. Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director Information, Kashmir, Zahoor Ahmad Mir said that DIPR is organizing such type of workshops on the regular basis. These programs help in sending messages to the masses about the various issues and themes. He informed that the department received around 350 applications for the workshop, but only 120 participants were selected for the first phase of the workshop.

The three-day-workshop will witness interactive sessions with the acclaimed wildlife photographers and cinematographers from Kashmir and outside the state and will also include wildlife expedition to Dachigam National Park for the participants.

Naeem Akhtar asks students to be torch-bearers of peace, humanity

Addresses students on 13th Foundation Day of BGSBU

RAJOURI, DECEMBER 15: Minister for Public Works, Naeem Akhtar today stressed on the need to inculcate moral values and ethics among the students who become the future leaders and guide the nation towards the path of development.

The Minister was addressing a gathering of scholars, students and academicians at the 13th Foundation Day celebrations of Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University (BGSBU) here.

"It is imperative for the students of the University to realize the spiritual essence of being a part of legacy left behind by Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah and be the torch-bearers of peace and humanity," the Minister said, adding that, he was overwhelmed to see the vision of its founding patron and former Chief Minister Late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, come alive.

MLA Rajouri Chowdhary



Qamar Hussain, Vice Chancellor, BGSBU Prof. Javed Musarrat, Professors and staff of the University were also present on the occasion.

While addressing the students, the Minister advised them to be more forthcoming and move beyond the subcontinent and join South Asian nations through knowledge gathering process, research culture, job skills and training etc. He stressed that the contemporary times require students not only to excel in their respective fields but also develop an interdisciplinary and global perspective, practice humanitarian values and seek knowledge for the betterment of humanity.

Asking them to work hard to achieve their goals, the Minister said only those who work with honesty, dedication, efficiency and vision for progress leave a mark on the society. Congratulating the management for its unprecedented contribution in the field of education, the Minister appreciated the efforts of the University for being a frontrunner in providing quality education to the students and encouraging them to take up research activities.

"It is a moment of pride to see the way the University has come up and established itself as seat of learning," the Minister said, adding, the government shares a collective

vision of transforming the education sector in the region and making it unparalleled.

Meanwhile, VC, BGSBU shared achievements of the University in different fields and informed that efforts are underway to transform the University orientation from teaching to research.

He further said the University has announced five awards in different categories for inculcating passion for research among the students. The University has started 13 new courses and has developed state of the art infrastructure for various academic and administrative divisions, he added. The foundation day also saw felicitation of Prof. Ali Asghar and Dr. Shamas Kamal for their outstanding contribution in the field of Research in Science and Humanities respectively. Aftreen Rashid and Munazzir Rahim were awarded the best sports persons in male and female.

Zulfkar inaugurates LMD Working Standards Laboratory

Announces Girls Hostel, Cluster Model Village for Kathua

KATHUA, DECEMBER 15 - Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today inaugurated Working Standard Laboratory of Legal Metrology Department at Kathua constructed at the cost of Rs. 66 lakh.

The Minister, while speaking on the occasion, said the Legal Metrology Department has been entrusted with a noble responsibility of safeguarding the interests of the consumers and it is our prime concern to see that all schemes in this regard are implemented in letter and spirit.

"The objective of LMD is to safeguard the interests of the consumers by ensuring that goods bought by them have adequate quality and quantity as claimed by the manufacturers," the Minister said, adding, the laboratory will ensure standardization in measurements to the trading community and people of the district.

MLA, Rajiv Jasrotia was also present on the occasion.

Underscoring the importance of PDS in ensuring availability of food grains to the people at afford-

able prices, the Minister said under the stewardship of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, the department of FCS&CA has brought transparency, accountability and efficiency in its working. Rice and flour are being distributed among the beneficiaries at meager rates, he added.

The Minister said issuance of fresh ration cards, digitization of data, sanctioning of new Fair Price Shops, introduction of electronic weighing scales, linking ration tickets with Aadhaar, tracking made mandatory through GPS installed on commodities transporting vehicles, vigilance and monitoring committees constituted at village level to monitor distribution of food grains/kerosene oil are some of the important steps taken by the department for streamlining ration supply in the state. The Minister stressed on creating permanent procurement centers at Kathua and directed the Deputy Commissioner to identify land for establishing six procurement centers. He also informed that this year 1.5 lakh MT paddy has been procured in Jammu region for the benefit of farmers.

Congratulating all the stakehold-



ers for achieving 70 per cent coverage under PMUY in J&K, the Minister said that efforts need to be streamlined for 100 per cent penetration of this scheme so that left outs can be accommodated and benefit of the scheme can be percolated to the needy people. He directed the DC to immediately submit a list of left out PMUY beneficiaries so that they can be covered under the scheme at the earliest.

Later, the Minister chaired a meeting to review the funds released and utilized during 2016-17 under SCA to TSP and stressed that the government is working out a comprehensive development plan for tribal population with a view to stop

their distressed migration.

He further said education, skill development, healthcare and their economic sustenance form the main features of the plan which would be preceded by a wide-ranging survey to assess the economic and social indicators of the community.

MLA, Kathua demanded funds for improving road connectivity to Jarai Gujjar Basti, hand pumps for all nomadic habitations and electrification of rural hamlets. He also raised demand of new ration depots, fair price shop and inclusion of left out beneficiaries under PMUY scheme.

After reviewing achievements under various programmes and

Surinder Choudhary reviews functioning of R&B, Health & ME Depttsat DRSC meet

JAMMU, DECEMBER 15: A meeting of Department Related Standing Committee (DRSC-III) of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council was held here today under the Chairmanship of MLC, Surinder Kumar Choudhary to discuss status of works of Roads and Buildings department. Legislators, Showkat Ahmad Ganai, Charanjeet Singh, Thakur Balbir Singh attended the meeting and gave their valuable suggestions to make the department more viable and result oriented.

Commissioner Secretary, R&B Sanjeev Verma briefed the Committee about the functioning of the department and presented a detailed status of various projects being executed by R&B. During the meeting, Chairman took stock of status of 5 bridges taken up at Nowshera, Rajouri and directed the department to resume work on these projects at the earliest. He also stressed on the concerned authorities to formulate a plan for construction of a tunnel from Tanda to Chouki-Chora.

While briefing about the status of Partli Bridge, the Commissioner R&B informed the committee that department will receive a complete design for the bridge from IIT Rurkee and after finalization the work would be started.

The Committee directed BRO authorities to complete ongoing works on Akhnoor-Poonch road and other roads of the area in time. It also stressed on them to maintain quality of material being used in road constructions so that durable assets are created in the state.

Among others Deputy Director, Engineering staff and officers from BRO were also present in the meeting.

Later, Surinder Kumar Choudhary chaired another meeting of the Committee to discuss the functioning of Health and Medical Education Department.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us
SRINAGAR J&K

THE OUTSIDER: ON ADULTERY LAW

There is no doubt at all that a reconsideration of the law on adultery is long overdue. By agreeing to have another look at the constitutional validity of Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, under which men can be prosecuted for adultery, the Supreme Court has re-opened a question that has been decided thrice in the past. This time the court will have to do more than pronounce on whether the provision discriminates against men on the basis of gender and gives an unconstitutional exemption to women. While agreeing to issue notice to the government, the Bench has observed that the provision is archaic. It has further noted that in a case of adultery, one person is liable for the offence but the other is absolved, and that the concept of gender neutrality, on which criminal law normally proceeds, is absent. The court has also noted that once the consent or connivance of the husband is established, there is no offence of adultery at all. It rightly describes this as subordination of a woman and something that “creates a dent on the independent identity of a woman”. In the past, the Supreme Court has emphasised that a married woman is a “victim” and the man is “the author of the crime”. It has treated the exemption given to women as a special provision that has the protection of Article 15(3). It has rejected the argument that it is discriminatory by pointing out that neither a man nor a woman can prosecute their disloyal spouses. It is only the ‘outsider’ to the matrimonial relationship who can be prosecuted, and that too by the aggrieved husband alone. This is made clear in Section 198(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a provision also under challenge.

The matter now before the court goes beyond the limited question of the culpability of women involved in a relationship outside their marriage. It raises the related question whether there is an implicit subordination of the will of a woman. However, merely positing the issue as one of discrimination in the way the law treats two parties in a consensual relationship because of their gender is misleading. The real problem is the very fact that adultery remains a crime in the form of an archaic colonial era provision. Many countries across the world do not treat it as an offence any longer. In 2012, a United Nations Working Group on laws that discriminate against women wanted countries that treat adultery as a crime, to repeal such laws. It is one thing for adultery to be a ground for divorce, a civil proceeding, and quite another for it to be a basis for incarceration. It will be a travesty if in the name of empowering women the ambit of the criminal law is extended to cover both genders. The correct course will be to dispense with this archaic provision altogether; it serves no real purpose in the criminal statute.

Apparent heir

M. Karunanidhi's unequivocal assertion that his son M.K. Stalin will be his successor in the DMK has brought relief to the cadres and may put an end to the sibling rivalry in the party.

A SENSE of tremendous relief pervades the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu, with its president and former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi clearing the air on who will succeed him in the party. On January 6 he declared that “if I, as an individual, were to get an opportunity, I would propose only Stalin's name” for the DMK leadership, putting an end to the sibling rivalry between his elder son, M.K. Alagiri, and his younger son, M.K. Stalin, about who should succeed him. Although there was no doubt for several years that Stalin would be Karunanidhi's preferred choice, informed sources in the DMK said such an announcement now was the “need of the hour”, that he did so out of “compelling circumstances”, and that “an emergent situation had pushed him into doing so”.

Stalin is the DMK treasurer and Alagiri is the party's organising secretary for the southern districts in Tamil Nadu. Their half-sister Kanimozhi is a Rajya Sabha member. Alagiri is also the Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers in the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government at the Centre. The DMK is a constituent of the UPA.

Several factors have led to Karunanidhi naming his successor in the party now. Informed sources in the party said top party leaders had told the 89-year-old leader that if he did not name Stalin to succeed him when he was alive, the party might split later, with Alagiri making a determined attempt to capture party leadership. Another reason the sources cited was that the DMK president wanted the entire party to be with Stalin before party elections were held at various levels, from the village (branch) tier to the district secretaries' level. The election process has already begun with the renewal of membership cards of the cadre. Third, Karunanidhi wanted Stalin to be fully in command of the DMK before the party faced the Lok Sabha elections, due in April 2014. Besides, a communal lobby was building up to project Kanimozhi for a top party slot. Further, the “roughshod” manner of Alagiri has not endeared him to the majority of the DMK cadres and leaders. Also, Karunanidhi's family members were keen that the announcement on his choice of Stalin should be a birthday gift to Stalin, who will turn 60 in March. Plans are on to organise a “manivizha” (60th birthday celebrations) for him.

There is virtually no opposition to Stalin succeeding Karunanidhi as party president. Veerapandi S. Arumugam, the DMK's powerful Salem district secretary and former Minister, who had opposed Stalin's succession, died in November 2012. Ko.Si. Mani, another party stalwart, who never warmed up to the idea of Stalin succeeding his father, is inactive because of poor health.

While Stalin is delighted that his father has declared him heir apparent, there is nothing Alagiri can do. Karunanidhi's family members reportedly told Alagiri to be silent or face the prospect of being sidelined in the party. Although Alagiri is the DMK's organ-



ising secretary for the southern districts, only a few district secretaries have thrown in their lot with him. They include Madurai Rural district secretary P. Murthy and his Theni district counterpart L. Mookaiah.

Alagiri's initial reaction was sarcastic. “The DMK is not a [religious] mutt,” he said. “I am not saying this. The DMK president has said this. Even Stalin has given an interview to a journal to this effect. If you have any doubts, read the interview,” Alagiri said. His remarks were in reference to Karunanidhi's repeated sallies, in response to reporters' questions, that “the DMK is not a Sankara mutt” for him to nominate a successor but a democratic organisation where its General Council, the top policymaking body, elected the president and the general secretary after party elections were held at all levels.

Stalin's career A feud has been simmering between the two brothers for the past several years on the question of succession to the top party post. Karunanidhi had made his preference abundantly clear by systematically grooming Stalin. A youth wing (which did not exist earlier) was created in the DMK, and Stalin headed it. To this day, he is the youth wing secretary although he is touching 60. He was the directly elected Mayor of the Chennai Municipal Corporation from 1996 to 2001. From 2006 to 2011, he was the Local Administration and Rural Development Minister in the Karunanidhi Cabinet. In 2008, he became the party's treasurer. In May the next year, Stalin became the Deputy Chief Minister. In 2011, he was elected to the Assembly from the Kolathur constituency in Chennai. Earlier, in 1989, 1996, 2001 and 2006, he was elected legislator from the Thousand Lights constituency in Chennai.

A tireless worker, he has been systematically touring Tamil Nadu, meeting party leaders and cadres, and forging a rapport with them. As the situation obtains today, almost all the DMK secretaries are with him. Although Stalin's detractors say that the DMK high command has studiously created an “image that the entire party is with him”,

there is no denying the fact that an overwhelming section of the party wants Stalin to head it.

Despite Karunanidhi indicating repeatedly that Stalin would take over the party reins from him and even announcing on an occasion that his younger son would be given “a bigger responsibility”, the DMK president had desisted from openly naming him as his heir apparent. Despite his advancing age, Karunanidhi's inexplicable reluctance to name Stalin as his successor had sharpened the divide between the brothers and led to a turf war.

It was against this backdrop that Karunanidhi floated a trial balloon on January 3 in Chennai. On the occasion of several hundreds of Dalit youth from the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) from Vellore district joining the DMK, the former Chief Minister spoke on how the DMK, when it ruled the State, had built a memorial for Dr B.R. Ambedkar in Chennai and established a law university in his name. Karunanidhi then told the Dalit youth: “All of you have entrusted yourself with the DMK. I welcome you. I will work, as long as I am alive, for society's uplift and welfare. The question, therefore, arises who will do so after me and you should not forget that the answer is Stalin, who is seated here.”

Newspapers and television channels went to town, claiming that Karunanidhi had named Stalin as his successor in the DMK. DMK leaders, however, said the import of the party president's remarks was not to anoint Stalin as his political successor but Karunanidhi had merely mentioned that Stalin would take over from him the task of working for the welfare of society. But the media had interpreted the DMK leader's remarks to signify that he had named Stalin as his political successor, they said.

In fact, on January 6, when Karunanidhi met reporters after the meeting of the party's district secretaries in Chennai, he criticised the “mischievous reporting” done by the press. He asserted that “I did not mention that Stalin would become the DMK president after me”. He said: “The occasion was 2,000 Dalits from the PMK coming over [to the DMK].

When I touched on society's welfare during my speech on the occasion, I merely said that Stalin would continue to work, after me, in implementing my progressive and egalitarian social views. I did not mention that Stalin would become the DMK president after me.”

Clears the air But Karunanidhi quickly seized the occasion to clear the air. He asserted: “The DMK is a democratic organisation. In the party headquarters' elections, if one wants to contest for the post of the president or the general secretary, somebody should propose his name and he should be elected by a majority of the members of the General Council. I am telling you now. If I, as an individual, were to get such an opportunity, I would use that opportunity and propose only Stalin's name. The general secretary [K. Anbazhagan] had already proposed Stalin's name and I am just seconding his proposal.” But a General Council meeting could not be called on one's whims and fancies, Karunanidhi said. After the party elections were held at various levels, the General Council would meet to elect the party headquarters' office-bearers such as the president and the general secretary, he explained.

When a reporter asked the DMK president whether it was “not wrong” on his part “to project Stalin when Alagiri wants to become the party president”, Karunanidhi replied, “Everything will take place as per norms—who wants to contest when the General Council meets, who will propose and second them, and so on.”

However, when another reporter reminded him that he had said he would propose, if he were to get an opportunity, Stalin's name and whether Karunanidhi would, therefore, ask Alagiri not to block Stalin's chances of getting elected, Karunanidhi declared, “The DMK is not a dictatorial apparatus. It is a democratic party. If I propose Stalin's name, even a member from the DMK branch (village level) has got the right to contest against Stalin. This is the DMK.”

Karunanidhi's unequivocal assertion has brought relief to DMK leaders and cadres, the majority of whom are with Stalin. Ninety-year-old Anbazhagan, DMK general secretary, has declared several times that he has no qualms about accepting Stalin's leadership. Kanimozhi is happy at the turn of events. However, Stalin may have to wait for more than a year before he can formally get elected as the party president. The General Council, according to norms, is scheduled to meet only in March 2014 after the party elections at various levels are completed.

“Karunanidhi wants the party to be fully with Stalin. So our leader jumped the gun and made the announcement before the party elections got under way,” said a DMK leader. Besides, Karunanidhi was in a mood to take rest. “He does not want any speculation to build up. So he gave a clear message that Stalin was the right choice,” said another leader.

The facts do not matter

► Amit Varma

The most surprising thing about these Gujarat elections is that people are so surprised at the Prime Minister's rhetoric. Narendra Modi has eschewed all talk of development, and has played to the worst impulses of the Gujarati people. His main tool is Hindu-Muslim polarisation, which is reflected in the language he uses for his opponents. The Congress has a “Mughlai” mentality, they are ushering in an “Aurangzeb Raj”, and their top leaders are conspiring with Pakistan to make sure Mr. Modi loses. A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson has also launched a scathing attack on Congress president-elect Rahul Gandhi. None of this is new.

Mr. Modi's rhetoric in the heat of campaigning has always come from below. From his references to “Mian Musharraf” over a decade ago to the “kabristan-shamshaan” comments of the recent elections in Uttar Pradesh, it has been clear that the otherness of Muslims is central to the BJP playbook. Hate drives more people to the polling booth than warm, fuzzy feelings of pluralism. But, the question is, are the Congress leaders really conspiring with Pakistan to make sure the BJP loses?

In 1986, the philosopher Harry G. Frankfurt wrote an essay named “On Bullshit”, which was published as a book in 2005 and became a surprise best-

seller. The book attempts to arrive at “a theoretical understanding of bullshit”. The key difference between a liar and a ‘bullshitter’, Frankfurt tells us, is that the liar knows the truth and aims to deceive. The ‘bullshitter’, on the other hand, doesn't care about the truth. He is “neither on the side of the true nor on the side of the false,” in Frankfurt's words. “His eye is not on the facts at all, as the eyes of the honest man and of the liar are, except insofar as they may be pertinent to his interest in getting away with what he says.”

The ‘bullshitter’ is wise, for he has cottoned on to an important truth that has become more and more glaring in these modern times: that facts don't matter. And to understand why, I ask you to go back with me in time to another seminal book, this one published in 1922.

The first chapter of “Public Opinion”, by the American journalist, Walter Lippmann, is titled “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads”. In it, Lippmann makes the point that all of us have a version of the world inside our heads that resembles, but is not identical to, the world as it is. “The real environment,” he writes, “is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance.”

We construct a version of the world in our heads, and feed that version, for modifying it too much will require too much effort. If facts conflict with it, we



ignore those facts, and accept only those that conform to our worldview. (Cognitive psychologists call this the “Confirmation Bias”.)

Lippmann sees this as a challenge for democracy, for how are we to elect our leaders if we cannot comprehend the impact they will have on the world?

I would argue that this is a far greater problem today than it was in Lippmann's time. Back then, and until a couple of decades ago, there was a broad consensus on the truth. There were gatekeepers to information and knowledge. Even accounting for biases, the mainstream media agreed on some basic facts. That has changed. The media is fragmented,

there are no barriers to entry, and the mainstream media no longer has a monopoly of the dissemination of information. This is a good thing, with one worrying side effect: whatever beliefs or impulses we might have — the earth is flat, the Jews carried out 9/11, India is a Hindu nation — we can find plenty of “evidence” for it online, and connect with like-minded people. Finding others who share our beliefs makes us more strident, and soon we form multiple echo chambers that become more and more extreme. Polarisation increases. The space in the middle disappears. And the world inside our heads, shared by so many other, becomes impervious to facts.

This also means that impulses we would otherwise not express in polite society find validation, and a voice. Here's another book you should read: in 1997, the sociologist, Timur Kuran, wrote “Private Truths, Public Lies” in which he coined the term “Preference Falsification”. There are many things we feel or believe but do not express because we fear social disapprobation. But as soon as we realise that others share our views, we are emboldened to express ourselves. This leads to a “Preference Cascade”: Kuran gives the example of the collapse of the Soviet Union, but an equally apt modern illustration is the rise of right-wing populists everywhere. I believe — and I apologise if this is too depressing to contemplate — that the majority of us are bigots, misogynists, racists, and tribal in our thinking. We have always been this way, but because liberal elites ran the media, and a liberal consensus seemed to prevail, we did not express these feelings. Social media showed us that we were not alone, and gave us the courage to express ourselves.

That's where Donald Trump comes from. That's where Mr. Modi comes from. Our masses vote for these fine gentlemen not in spite of their bigotry and misogyny, but because of it. Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi provide them a narrative that feeds the world inside their heads. Mexicans are rapists, foreigners are bad, Muslims are stealing our girls, gaumutra cures cancer — and so on. The truth

is irrelevant. Facts. Don't. Matter.

Think about the implication of this. This means that the men and women who wrote the Constitution were an out-of-touch elite, and the values they embedded in it were not shared by most of the nation. (As a libertarian, I think the Constitution was deeply flawed because it did not do enough to protect individual rights, but our society's consensus would probably be that it did too much.) The “Idea of India” that these elites spoke of was never India's Idea of India. These “liberal” values were imposed on an unwilling nation — and is such imposition, ironically, not deeply illiberal itself? This is what I call the Liberal Paradox.

All the ugliness in our politics today is the ugliness of the human condition. This is how we are. This is not a perversion of democracy but an expression of it. Those of us who are saddened by it — the liberal elites, libertarians like me — have to stop feeling entitled, and get down to work. The alt-right guru Andrew Breitbart once said something I never get tired of quoting: “Politics is downstream from Culture.” A political victory will now not come until there is a social revolution. Where will it begin?

Amit Varma is the editor of the online magazine, Pragati, a blogger at India Uncut and a podcaster at The Seen and the Unseen

SC dismisses Teesta Setalvad's plea to defreeze her accounts

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed activist Teesta Setalvad's petition seeking to defreeze her bank accounts in Gulbarga Society fund embezzlement case. A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra was hearing the matter.

Teesta, her husband and the two NGOs - Sabrang Trust and Citizens for Justice and Peace - approached the apex court challenging the October 7, 2015, verdict of the Gujarat High Court, which had rejected their pleas for defreezing their personal bank accounts. Earlier in July, the apex court rejected an appeal from Setalvad for relief from charges of corruption and misappropriation of funds in this issue. The court had asked Setalvad to face trial in the case registered against her and her husband and said the chargesheet had already been filed in the case. Earlier on July 5, the top court reserved its order on her plea



regarding defreezing of her bank account and the NGOs.

Then, a division bench of the apex court, headed by Justice Misra and comprising Justice AM Khanwilkar, was hearing the arguments.

The Gujarat government told the top court that Setalvad had allegedly spent the NGO money meant for secular education for her personal purpose, including liquor consumption. Setalvad rejected the allegation

and told the court that the state government was harassing her and wanted to paralyse her activities.

She told the apex court, "Only Rs 7,850 were spent on liquor over seven years and the expenditure was approved by the Ford Foundation which donated money. Is it a crime?"

One of the residents of Gulbarga Society had filed a complaint against Setalvad and others alleging that the money was raised to make a museum at Gulbarga Society in the memory of those killed during the 2002 Gujarat riots, but it had not been utilised for the purpose.

The High Court had upheld the verdict of a lower court in this regard observing that the probe was at a serious point.

In their plea before the apex court, the petitioners have alleged that their accounts were "illegally frozen" without following the due process of law.

KILLER ROADS, RAIL TRACKS SNUFF OUT WILD ANIMALS

MUMBAI: Hours before sunrise on a cool February night this year, a four-year-old male leopard waited behind a bush along the National Highway 8 that cuts through the Tungreshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Maharashtra. As vehicles zipped passed along the high-speed motorway, it waited for a break in traffic to make it to the other side. But traffic never ceases on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway and the leopard had no other option but to take the risk. It was the big cat's last sprint. As it reached the middle of the road, the leopard was stunned by the bright headlights of an incoming four-wheeler, rendering it motionless. The impact of the collision flung it several feet in the air, breaking its ribcage and legs. The driver did not stop. The leopard lay on the road, its breath becoming shallower every minute, finally stopping completely as daylight broke. Death of a leopard does not make news. Nor does it create hashtags on social media. But latest data by the advocacy group, Wildlife Protection Society of India (WPSI), show that an ever growing network of roads and railways is killing more animals than ever before, exposing the country's sheer failure to understand wildlife and

their habitats. Besides other animals, leopards, elephants and tigers -- having the highest level of protection under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 -- are the worst affected with man-made infrastructure cutting them off from their source of food and creating hurdles on their natural migration paths. The result: increasing man-animal conflicts, leading to tragic consequences on both sides. According to WPSI data, show a sharp increase in deaths of protected animals in the first 10 months of 2017 as compared to previous year. "The startling increase in rate of habitat encroachment through such transport projects has resulted in a decrease prey base, territory and water sources for wild animals like leopards and elephants that are forced to come out closer to human habitation," said Tito Joseph, programme coordinator, WPSI. Wildlife experts say India's rich wildlife biodiversity has been severely affected with approvals of road and rail projects without pass-ways for animals. In the past few years, the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has approved a series of road and rail projects in wildlife areas, including a road widening project through the Bhoramdeo wildlife sanctuary in Chhattisgarh, a tiger corridor.

BJD to celebrate its 20th foundation day in Puri

BHUBANESWAR: Twenty years after Biju Patnaik's death, the party named after the chief minister of Odisha will celebrate its 20th foundation day on December 26 not very far from the place where he was cremated.

The Biju Janata Dal, formed after the death of Patnaik in December 1997, will celebrate its foundation day in Puri for the first time since the party was floated.

It was in Swargadwar in Puri where Biju Patnaik's mortal remains were consigned to flames in the presence of thousands of supporters and well-wishers.

The programme named Agami Odisha Vikash Samavesh is expected to attract over 30,000 party workers and will be addressed by Biju's son and incumbent chief minister Naveen Patnaik who is expected to tell his partymen to gear up for the 2019 assembly polls.

"The foundation day would be good opportunity to talk about our achievements in the last 20 years," said BJD MP Pratap Deb. "CM will advise party workers how to deal with the Opposition and successfully continue the party's work towards the growth of the state in all spheres," said senior BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra.

Chaos should be avoided in winter session: Naqvi

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Friday suggested that chaos should be avoided in the winter session of Parliament and through discussions and debate concerned issues should be put forward. Speaking to ANI, the Union Minister said, "In this Winter Session... crucial issues will be put forward by the Centre and the Opposition. I believe through discussion and debate all those issues should be taken into consideration. Any sort of chaos and mayhem should be avoided." He added that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has come to power, there has been no pressure on any particular matter or they

never tried to dominate the discussion. "I remember, when the UPA government was in power they did not let anyone else put his or her point in front and because of that we had to debate for weeks to discuss on issues like corruption and terrorism," Naqvi stated. Responding on Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad's remark on Prime Minister, he said that it is nothing but a reaction as a result of ongoing Assembly elections. Ahead of parliament winter session on Friday, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Azad said Prime Minister Modi should clarify his remark against former diplomats of the Gujarat Assembly elections. Speaking



to ANI, Azad said, "The entire Opposition has given a notice that for the first time a Prime Minister has accused former prime minister, former vice president and diplomats of conspiring with Pakistan for the Gujarat Assembly elections. I believe this is a very serious allegation and Prime Minister Narendra Modi must clarify this in Parliament. If the Prime Minister is using such allegations just to win the elections then it is

a worrisome issue."

The winter session of Parliament that began today was adjourned after paying tributes to its sitting and former members who passed away after the Monsoon Session. The session, which is set to commence more than a month after its schedule, will end on January 5, 2018 and this session of the Parliament will have 14 sittings. Issues like the Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill related to triple talaq and legislation on granting Constitutional status to the Backward Class Commission are among the important bills, which will be tabled for discussion and passage. Parliamentary Affairs Minister

Ananth Kumar said the Supplementary Demand for Grants and three ordinances, including GST compensation to states, will also be a prominent issue of discussion.

Parliament Winter Session is also expected to witness heavy fireworks as the Congress Party will try to corner the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government over a range of issues. The Centre was recently targeted by the Opposition for delaying the winter session allegedly in the wake of Gujarat Assembly elections.

Congress outgoing president Sonia Gandhi slammed the Centre, saying it was sabotaging the winter session of parliament on flimsy grounds.

Congress hopes Opposition does not stop them from raising imp issues

NEW DELHI: The Congress on Friday said the party is always in favour of constructive suggestions, but is unfortunately stopped by the Opposition, whenever they raise important issues.

"Many issues are there that will be discussed, provided the government should take interest and create such an atmosphere, which is up for discussion. They should respect the Opposition because in democracy the house mostly belongs to Opposition and they are there executive to answer the people's grievances. But unfortunately many times whenever we raise important questions either it will be stopped or is retorted," Congress leader Mallikarjun

Kharge told ANI here.

He stated that the Congress party is always in favour of constructive suggestions.

The winter session of parliament was adjourned on the first day today after paying tributes to its sitting and former members who passed away after the Monsoon Session. This session of parliament will have 14 sittings.

Issues like the Muslim Women's Rights on Marriage Bill related to triple talaq and legislation on granting Constitutional status to the Backward Class Commission are among the important bills, which will be tabled for discussion and passage. Parliamentary Affairs Minister



ter Ananth Kumar said the Supplementary Demand for Grants and three ordinances including GST compensation to states will also be a prominent issue of discussion. Parliament winter session is also expected to witness heavy fireworks as the Congress Party will try to corner the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government over a range of issues.

The Centre was recently targeted by the Opposition for delaying the winter session allegedly in the wake of Gujarat Assembly Elections. Congress outgoing president Sonia Gandhi slammed the Centre, saying it was sabotaging the Winter Session of Parliament on flimsy grounds.

Parliament's winter session: Lok Sabha adjourned till Dec 18



NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha has been adjourned till December 18 after making obituary references to the current and former members of the legislature.

The winter session of the Parliament began on Friday. The session, which is set to commence more than a month after its schedule, will end on January 5, 2018. This session of the Parliament will have 14 sittings. Issues like the Muslim Women's Rights on Marriage Bill related to triple talaq and legislation on granting Constitutional status to the Backward Class Commission are among the important bills, which will be tabled for discussion and passage.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar said the Supplementary Demand for Grants and three ordinances including GST compensation to states will also be a prominent issue of discussion. On the first day, the Lok Sabha will be adjourned for the day after paying tribute to its sitting and former members who passed away after the Monsoon Session. The Parliament Winter Session">Parliament Winter Session is also expected to witness heavy fireworks as the Congress Party will try to corner the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government over a range of issues.

I&B ministry orders two TV channels off air for violating cable act

NEW DELHI: The Union information and broadcasting ministry has ordered an Assamese television channel to go off the air for three days and a Gujarati channel for a day for violating the cable television network rules.

The ministry's decision comes after an inter-ministerial committee that has representatives from ministries including, defence, external affairs, women and child welfare, home affairs and culture found DY 365 TV and VTV guilty of breaching the provisions of Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995.

The ministry ordered DY 365 TV, which aired a programme in 2016, showing newborn babies being tossed in the air following a ritual in Assam, off the air from December 15 to 18. VTV, which broadcast a programme showing children being beaten in an orphanage in Egypt but presented it as an incident that occurred in Gujarat, will be taken off air on December 17. "The video meant to expose an extremely dangerous superstition allegedly prevalent in some parts of Assam where people believe that undergoing this ritual will keep the child safe. The visuals are extremely disturbing and not suitable for unrestricted public exhibition," the ministry said in its order regarding DY 365.

The channel, for its part, told the ministry that it did not disclose the identity of the child in the video and the programme intended to highlight "the unethical and dangerous practices being carried out in the country and had vehemently spoken against such practices". It also said that the practice was "detrimental to child welfare" and the "channel is duty bound to expose, criticise and impart education to the people." The channel said it spoke "vehemently against such illogical, unscientific, unethical dangerous practices that are being carried out in India. Hence they tried to educate through the news." The inter-ministerial committee, however, concluded that the channel had violated the provisions of the cable act and its representatives were unable to give information about the video, including what the ritual is called in Assam, and the reason it was telecast. In case of VTV, the ministry said it broadcast a programme in March in which a man could be seen brutally beating up children in an orphanage and the video started trending on social media alleging that the incident occurred in RMVM School of Valsad in Gujarat. "However, when the channel conducted their investigation about this video, it found that the video was of an incident in an orphanage in Egypt.

Sushma Swaraj grants medical visa to five Pakistani children

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Thursday announced granting visa to five Pakistani children, including a 10-month-old baby, for medical treatment in India. "There is a request for medical visa from some Pakistani children - Muhammad Ahmad (10 months), Abuzar (7 years), Mohit (7 years), Zainab Shahzadi (8 years) and Muhammad Zain Aslam (9 years). We grant visa for all these Pakistani children for their treatment in India," Swaraj tweeted. She also announced accepting request for medical visa of two other Pakistani nationals. "Pakistani

nationals Altaf Hussain and Amir Raza have also requested for medical visa. On the recommendation of Indian High Commission in Pakistan, we accept their requests too," Swaraj tweeted. "I have received the report from Indian High Commission in Pakistan.

We will issue visa for your father Haji Ashique Hussain for his liver transplant surgery in India immediately and pray for his early recovery," she added. Swaraj has adopted a sympathetic stand on granting medical visas to Pakistani nationals notwithstanding the strained ties between the two countries.

Amit Shah reaches Rajya Sabha ahead of Parliamentary debut

NEW DELHI: Ahead of the winter session, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Amit Shah on Friday reached parliament for his Parliamentary debut in Rajya Sabha.

Shah will occupy the front row seat at the session, which was once occupied by present Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu. The winter session of the Parliament is beginning today.

The session, which is set to commence more than a month after its schedule, will end on January 5, 2018.

This session of the Parliament will have 14 sittings.

Issues like the Muslim Women's Rights on Marriage Bill related to triple talaq and legislation on grant-



ing Constitutional status to the Backward Class Commission are among the important bills, which will be tabled for discussion and passage.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar said the Supplemen-

tary Demand for Grants and three ordinances including GST compensation to states will also be a prominent issue of discussion.

On the first day, the Lok Sabha will be adjourned for the day after

paying tribute to its sitting and former members who passed away after the Monsoon Session.

Parliament Winter Session is also expected to witness heavy fireworks as the Congress Party will try to corner the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government over a range of issues.

The Centre was recently targeted by the Opposition for delaying the winter session allegedly in the wake of Gujarat Assembly Elections.

Congress outgoing president Sonia Gandhi had slammed the Centre saying it was sabotaging the winter session of parliament on flimsy grounds.

International Tea Day: Here are six recipes to keep you warm

What unites busy summer mornings, rainy monsoon evenings, and lazy winter afternoons in India? The undisputed answer has to be tea. December 15, being International Tea Day, what better way to raise a toast to the country's favourite drink than by celebrating it in its myriad avatars? Tea is what fuels us and there are so many different ways to consume it than just in the form of a creamy, sugary, milky brew.

In a nation obsessed with tea, it's only fitting that connoisseurs, brewers, and chefs keep coming up with innovative versions and accompaniments. From therapeutic and herbal teas to tea-infused cakes, the humble leaf has come a long way. So, pamper yourself with some much-needed warmth this winter.

MATCHA TEA MACARONS

A fusion of traditional Japanese matcha tea and the classic French dessert, these macarons have a signature flavour, and are gluten-

free. Mix 425gm almond flour, 368gm icing sugar and 1tbsp matcha powder. In a separate bowl, whip 5 large egg whites till they are frothy. Slowly add 20gm granulated sugar and continue to whip until stiff peaks form. Fold one quarter of the almond flour mixture into the whites till a thick batter forms. Fill a pastry bag with the batter quickly or the meringue will loosen. Pipe into 2-inch rounds, spaced about 1-inch apart. Let the macarons rest at room temperature until the tops are dry and a smooth skin has formed. Ten minutes before baking, heat the oven to 160 degrees Celsius. Bake each side for six minutes. Let cool. Make chocolate ganache by boiling 60ml heavy cream and mixing it with 170gm chopped white chocolate. Once it has cooled, pour into a piping bag and pipe onto macaron shells. Shared by Chef Geneva Talwar, The Artful Baker.

A drink that gives the kick of whiskey, minus the effect, Whis-



ky Chai is a perfect companion on chilly evenings. Take 2 tps of non-alcoholic single malt along with black tea. Infuse it with 350 ml water at room temperature for 40 minutes. Strain the mixture and add sugar powder to taste (op-

tional). Take it warm or serve on the rocks. Shared by Rishav Kanoi, The Tea Trove. A boozy twist to masala chai, this drink has the punch of lemon and the depth of bourbon. Take 60ml bourbon with 20ml masala chai reduction (con-

centrated masala tea infused with water), 20ml lemon juice, 2 dashes of Angostura Bitters and 15ml sugar syrup and give a good shake. Garnish with a wheel of dehydrated lemon. Shared by Chef Harangad Singh, Prankster.

RUBY RED TEA

A warm Christmas-perfect drink that is loaded with spices and herbs. Take loose ginger tea leaves, 2 pieces clove, one stick of Ceylon cinnamon, and a few pods of rosehip. Muddle in hot water, add honey and stir. Strain before serving. Shared by Narendra Shukla of Coffee Bond.

EARL GREY TEA CAKE

Empty two bags of Earl Grey tea in a cup and add 60ml boiling water. Let cool for three minutes and add 80ml milk and transfer to a large bowl. To this, add 100gm butter, 2 eggs, 160gm castor sugar and 190gm self-rising flour. Mix lightly with electric beater, later increasing the speed till the mixture is pale and creamy. Spoon this mixture in greased pans and bake in preheated oven for 20-22 minutes or until golden. Serve with marmalade icing, made with 1-1/2 cups icing sugar and equal part breakfast

marmalade (murabba). Add 1-1/2 tsp orange juice to make a thick paste. Spread it over the cake and let it rest before serving. Shared by Exec Chef Anil Dahiya, The Bristol.

GREEN TEA AND HONEY CAKE WITH RUM CARAMEL

In a bowl, whisk 100gm butter and 160gm sugar. Once all sugar granules have dissolved, add 2 egg whites, whisking all the while. Add 50gm honey, green tea decoction (1 tea bag in 50gms of water), orange zest, few drops of caramel, and 1/2 tsp five spice powder. Fold in 125gm refined flour and 1tsp baking powder, and add 10ml rum. Bake at 180 degree Celsius for 20-25 minutes. Prepare the rum caramel by melting 100gm sugar in a pan and adding 30ml full flat cream. Mix it well and then add 10ml rum. Drizzle on the cake and sprinkle some ground pistachios. Shared by Chef Kartar Singh, Terminal 1.

Beyond chest pain and dizziness: Here's a surprising sign of a deadly heart attack

Although some heart attacks are sudden and intense, most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. But, according to a new research, the life-threatening condition could be spotted early by this surprising sign. According to Express.co.uk, sweating profusely could be an early sign of a heart attack, especially if the patient isn't exercising or being active.

Pumping blood through the body becomes more difficult when the heart becomes weaker, so the body uses more energy to deliver the blood supply. To cool itself down after the assertion, the body may sweat more than usual. Dr Catherine Ryan, the project co-ordinator of Medical-Surgical Nursing at the University of



Illinois, said, "The typical heart attack symptoms include chest pain, shoulder and arm pain, and neck and jaw discomfort. Bells should ring off if a person suddenly starts sweating pro-

fusely." She added, "They shouldn't think they have the flu.

If they don't have fever, then they should start to think about something else." Night sweats are also a com-

mon sign of a heart attack, but some women may mistake it as an effect of menopause. If a patient wakes up to find their bed sheets are soaking wet, or if they can't sleep due to sweating, they should definitely go and see a doctor. A heart attack is caused when the blood supply to the heart is suddenly blocked. The condition can even lead to a cardiac arrest - where the heart stops pumping blood around the body.

People most at risk of heart disease are smokers, diabetics, people with high blood pressure, and people that are overweight. Regular exercise and maintaining a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI) will also help to reduce the risk of a fatal heart attack.

Cannabis ingredient holds promise as antipsychotic medicine

An ingredient in cannabis called cannabidiol or CBD has shown promise in a clinical trial as a potential new treatment for psychosis, scientists said on Friday.

In research involving 88 people with psychosis, a mental disorder characterised by anxiety, paranoia and hallucinations - the scientists found patients treated with CBD had lower levels of psychotic symptoms than those who received a placebo.

They were also more likely to be rated as "improved" by their psychiatrist, the study found, and there were signs of better cognitive performance and functioning.

The main psychoactive ingredient in cannabis is delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC. It can induce paranoia and anxiety and other unpleasant psychotic symptoms.

But its second major constituent, CBD, has the opposite effects to THC - leading scientists to think it might one day be useful

as a treatment in mental health.

Scientists at King's College London's Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience conducted a placebo-controlled trial of CBD in patients with psychosis and published their findings in the American Journal of Psychiatry.

In the trial, 88 patients with psychosis received either CBD or placebo for six weeks, alongside their existing antipsychotic medication. Beforehand and afterwards, the scientists assessed symptoms, functioning and cognitive performance, and the patients' psychiatrists rated their overall condition overall.

"The study indicated that CBD may be effective in psychosis: patients treated with CBD showed a significant reduction in symptoms, and their treating psychiatrists rated them as having improved overall," said Philip McGuire, who co-led the trial.

Beware of seasonal flu. It kills more people globally than previously thought



As many as 646,000 people are dying globally from seasonal influenza each year, US health officials said on Wednesday, a rise from earlier assessments of the disease's death toll. Global death rates from seasonal influenza are likely between 291,000 and 646,000 people each year, depending on the severity of the circulating flu strain, they said. That is up from a prior estimate range of 250,000 to 500,000 deaths, according to officials from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, published in the medical journal The Lancet. The CDC did not give reasons for the hike in estimates but said the study by it and global health partners was based on data from a larger, more diverse sample of countries than previously. It excludes deaths during flu pandemics and from conditions exacerbated by the flu, such as heart disease.

"These findings remind us of the seriousness of flu and that flu prevention should really be a global priority," said Dr Joe Bresee, associate director for global health at the CDC's Influenza Division and a co-author of the study. The greatest flu mortality burden falls on the world's poorest regions and among older adults. People aged 75 and older and those living in sub-Saharan Africa had the highest rates of flu-associated

respiratory deaths, the study found. Eastern Mediterranean and Southeast Asian countries had slightly lower but still high rates of flu-associated respiratory deaths, the researchers said. Dr Peter Salama, executive director of the World Health Organization's Health Emergencies Programme, said the findings "highlight the importance of influenza prevention for seasonal epidemics, as well as preparedness for pandemics." US officials are predicting an especially challenging 2017/2018 flu season, which is just getting underway in the northern hemisphere. Flu cases in Australia during the 2017 southern hemisphere winter resulted in record-high numbers of lab-confirmed hospitalizations and deaths, Dr Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, wrote recently in the New England Journal of Medicine. Fauci noted that the flu vaccine was only 10% effective at fighting the predominant flu strain - Influenza A (H3N2) - making people sick in Australia. As the vaccine for this year's northern hemisphere flu season is the same, that could mean the season may be especially severe. Fauci and other experts have long called for investment in the development of a universal flu vaccine that would protect against both seasonal and pandemic flu.

MEDICAL MARIJUANA CARRIES NO HEALTH RISKS, ISN'T ADDICTIVE: WHO

Describing it as a useful treatment for epilepsy and palliative care, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared that medical marijuana carries no health risks. Marijuana is a widely known drug and cannabis leaves, the plant which it is prepared from, are normally smoked by people across the world to get a high.

However, the medicinal properties of cannabis leaves are gradually coming into the public view as scientists reveal one discovery after another.

Despite legalization of cannabis across the world, health officials were still issuing warnings about the drug and were considering making it illegal.

However, after months of investigation, the UN health agency has concluded that that cannabidiol (CBD) does not carry any addiction risks and cannot be a scheduled drug. A scheduled drug refers to a product that is regu-



lated by the government and is illegal to manufacture or distribute. Had they chosen to make it illegal, it would have banned physicians from prescribing medical marijuana across the world.

According to the Metro UK, the report published on Thursday stated: "There is increased interest from Member States in the use of cannabis for medical indications including for palliative care.

"Responding to that interest and

increase in use, WHO has in recent years gathered more robust scientific evidence on therapeutic use and side effects of cannabis and cannabis components." "Recent evidence from animal and human studies shows that its use could have some therapeutic value for seizures due to epilepsy and related conditions."

Preliminary evidence shows that CBD could help manage Alzheimer's, cancer and Parkinson's.

Tens of thousands of people in the UK already break the law and use cannabis for relief.

According to the Sun when the issue was debated in 2015, the government responded by saying, "Substantial scientific evidence shows cannabis is a harmful drug that can damage human health.

"There are no plans to legalise cannabis as it would not address the harm to individuals and communities." Raul Elizalde, who campaigned to get his epileptic daughter CBD treatment, welcomed the new report. He told Daily Mail Online: "I'm ecstatic that these international health leaders agree that CBD is a substance that should not be scheduled and has therapeutic value for a variety of medical conditions." "It has changed our life." Elizalde, who is founder and president of HempMeds Mexico, added: "We look forward to continuing our conversation about its many benefits in 2018."

Media use triggering growth in childhood obesity, warn doctors

While restricted screen time and gadget use for children has been strictly advised by numerous studies and health experts to curb various health problems, European doctors have now also associated it with childhood obesity.

As per the doctors, children's waistlines have been expanding in lock step with the amount of time they spend with televisions, computers, smartphones and tablets.

According to a consensus statement from the European Academy of Pediatrics and the European Childhood Obesity Group published in Acta Paediatrica, in the past 25 years,

obesity rates have climbed rapidly among European children and teens.

Roughly one in five kids and teens in Europe are overweight or obese, according to a 2017 World Health Organization study, the authors note.

Today, 97 percent of European households have a TV in their home, 72 percent have a computer, 68 percent have internet access and 91 percent have mobile phones, according to the statement. This has spurred a surge in screen time, contributing to inadequate sleep, worse eating habits and less exercise - all of which can make it easy for children to become over-

weight, the statement authors argue.

"Mass media has been shown to have a broad effect on children's health and can affect them physiologically and have an impact on their socio-cultural functioning and psychological wellbeing," said senior author of the statement, Dr. Adamos Hadjipanayis, a researcher at European University Cyprus in Nicosia and secretary general of the European Academy of Pediatrics.

"There is evidence of a strong link between obesity levels across European countries and childhood media exposure," Hadjipanayis said by email.

Parents are part of the problem, Hadjipanayis and colleagues argue.

Even as children's screen time rises, parents demonstrate little awareness about what their kids do online or how much time they spend with tablets, smartphones and computers, the statement emphasizes.

Food advertising is another problem, because it can convince kids to crave and demand more junk food and make them less likely to eat their fruits and veggies, the statement also notes. Kids also tend to consume a large portion of their daily calories while watching TV, when ads may influence their food choices.

The fix is more vigilance, the authors argue.

Savour USA pears at Godrej Nature's Basket, Worli

MUMBAI: Complementing the National Pear Month and the ongoing #PearUpIndia campaign, Mumbaiers have yet another reason to cheer for the arrival of juicy and delightful USA Pears at a swanky newly opened store of Godrej Nature's Basket at Worli.

USA Pears are among the world's finest pears. Grown in Oregon and Washington where the right mix of volcanic soil, clean mountain water and warm spring and summer days, with cool nights, combine to produce some of the world's finest pears.

Having adequate fiber in our diet is very important and its importance for digestive health is well known. However, pears' fiber does a lot more than just encourage healthy digestive functions.

Numerous studies also show that

it helps reduce cholesterol levels, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and even Type II diabetes. USA Pears are rich in potassium, Vitamin C and have absolutely no sodium or fat content, thus making it an ideal choice for any healthy diet. "India is one of our most important markets. We are delighted to partner with Godrej Nature's Basket in bringing this wonderful fruit to discerning consumers. We will be promoting taste and health attributes of USA Pears to Indian consumers across the country through similar partnerships with media and retail," said Jeff Correa, Director of International Marketing for Pear Bureau Northwest.

Reiterating the consumer positioning of USA Pears, Sumit Saran, India representative for USA



Pears said, "India is one of the most important growth markets for USA Pears. Awareness about health and

nutrition among Indian consumers is growing and these tasty USA Pears are a perfect addition to the

fruit basket."

"Godrej Nature's Basket epitomises freshness and abundance which is brought alive through our retail experience and the produce we offer. Our flagship store in Worli, centered around the promise of "Daily Food Delights" is an expression of this. We are happy to partner with USA Pears, which are a natural and quick source of energy for modern day consumers," added Avani Davda, Managing Director, Godrej Nature's Basket.

A wide array of colorful, delicious and tasty USA Pears is available at Godrej Nature's Basket's stores in Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru. You can also order them online on at www.naturesbasket.co.in through the Nature's Basket Android and iPhone mobile application.

FinTech startup Cash Suvidha raises USD 2.7 mn for expansion

NEW DELHI: Delhi-based FinTech startup Cash Suvidha, the trade name of Usha Financial Services Pvt. Ltd., raised an institutional debt of USD 2.7 million from various financial institutions towards driving growth. The company provides a variety of loans such as entrepreneur loan, SME loan, and personal loan among others.

The funds raised have come from six Financial Institutions and will be primarily used to facilitate further lending to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and personal loans, particularly in Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

"This working capital infusion will provide propulsion for further accelerating the company's exciting growth plans.

The funds so raised will be used to replenish our loan book and widen our reach across the country. We are confident that our relationship with these institutions will help us in empowering more SMEs by addressing their working capital requirements," said founder Cash Suvidha, Rajesh Gupta.

With the increased focus towards a cashless economy, India is undergoing major shifts in this era of increasing digitisation.

In addition, government's push for financial inclusion, digitisation, and start-up activity has led to the introduction of various policy initiatives which has provided a strong foundation to the FinTech sector in India.

Cash Suvidha receives around 15,000 loan applications per month and has disbursed a total amount of Rs. 102 crore since its inception in 2016.

It has developed its own 'Suvidha Score' for assessing creditworthiness using social media portals to check educational and professional backgrounds, tracking lifestyle spends, payments behavior, and spending patterns.

Cash Suvidha is driven by information based lending, online application acceptance; and viability based financing.

It disburses loans in 48 hours at 19-28 percent on reducing balance EMIs.

The decisions are taken based on its logarithms of human behavior, the social quotient of the borrower, and so on.

CBEC hikes customs duty on import of microwaves

The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) on Friday announced an increase in the customs duty on import of microwave ovens and certain sections of mobile phones. On microwaves, customs duty has been doubled to 20 percent, from the earlier 10 percent rate.

Meanwhile, the import of mobile phones which have push button will be costlier by 15 percent, it noted. Earlier, this bracket of commodities was not liable for custom duty. However, the CBEC has now imposed 15 percent custom duty on push button mobile phones.

Axis Bank to launch 'Axis Start-up Social'

NEW DELHI: Axis Bank, India's third largest private sector bank is launching an exclusive networking property, Axis Start-up Social, at a 'one-of-its-kind' event aimed at supporting the country's start-up ecosystem. 'Axis Start-up Social' will go 'live' today at a gathering of the country's leading start-up players at 'WeWork' a leading co-working place in Bengaluru. The objective of this platform is to provide an opportunity for start-ups to network and share knowledge. Significantly, this initiative firmly underlines the bank's unflinching commitment towards providing multiple opportunities for start-ups in India to thrive and scale to the next-level-of-growth.

The unveiling of 'Axis Start-up Social' comes close on the heels of the launch of the bank's innovation lab, 'Thought Factory', which looks to aid start-ups to expand, besides opening up avenues with potential investors and companies.

The Bank also launched its Axis Start-up Banking product earlier this year, which is bundled with all key technology-enabled products and caters comprehensively to banking needs of start-ups. Over 100 leading names among the start-up community are expected to converge at the launch.

India continues to be a hotbed for start-ups, especially with the Government's relentless focus to provide a congenial environment for them to conduct business.

As per a recent Nasscom Startup Report, the year has seen an addition of over 1,000 start-ups bolstering India's position as one of the leading start-up ecosystems across the world. This takes the total number of technology start-ups in the country to over 5,000, as per the Report.

Importantly, while technology continues to dominate conversations, start-ups in other sectors such as healthcare, and education and logistics have also gathered pace.

Speaking about the initiative, Sidharth Rath, Group Executive, Corporate & Transaction Banking, Axis Bank said, "We are excited to launch Axis Start-up Social, a platform through which we hope to provide the much required, 'extra edge' to the start-up community by handholding them, sharing knowledge and providing the required financial solutions.

Today, the Indian ecosystem is flooded with innovative ideas but what is missing is the presence of the right channel and guidance in terms of acceleration, scaling up and funding. Through Axis Start-up Social, we endeavour to create an ecosystem to encourage innovation and the next-level-of-growth opportunities to start-ups that are ready to take that leap."

AITC with a methodical outlook reinventing the Indian Logistics Industry

NEW DELHI: AITC is a carrier aggregator logistics company. The company started its operations in November 22, 2016, with an aim to bridge the gap between carrier owners and ware suppliers. The company addresses some of the key problems which still persist in the transportation industry such as indefinite waiting time and unpredictability in fetching loads for a carrier.

The company has designed an integrated connectivity based model, called Nodal Network System providing efficient and cost effective flow of loads. AITC has created Direct Transit Route (DTR) and Indirect Transit Route (ITR) routes wherein the carrier reaches its home location at the end by securing a return ware/load from the destination location.

Led by Mr. Himanshu Arya Rawat, the company has a stronghold in the Northern cluster, primarily Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Ghaziabad. Expansion plans to Southern and Eastern clusters of India are in the pipeline. With optimal network utilization, AITC has been able to generate revenue of 2.2 Cr. within a year of operation along with 571 enlisted carriers. AITC's month on month bottom line showed a healthy trend and has had a positive EBITDA, higher than the industry standard.

In the words of Himanshu Arya Rawat, Co Founder - AITC, "We strive to create a scalable product with an exponential



year on year growth. Currently, our focus is to acquire a major market share in the FMCG logistics, with continued exploration of other sectors such as E-commerce, cement, electronics etc. and to create a pan-India network in the next 8 months. AITC has a vision of integrating this highly defragmented industry, eliminating the unpredictability for the carrier owners and strengthening accountability for the ware suppliers."

To augment network expansion, AITC is developing Cerebrum, a data science driven technological platform which will enable them to fully realize their poten-

tial. The platform will optimally formulate DTRs and ITRs of its enlisted carriers on the basis of load availability. AITC works on a commission based model wherein it provides an assured load to its enlisted carriers by fulfilling carrier requirement of its ware suppliers.

The company currently caters corporates like Patanjali, Haldiram & J.K Cement, just to name a few, along with a few SME clients such as Prince Pipes, Raja Biscuits etc. and would soon be commencing movements for corporate giants like Britannia, Unilever and ITC Limited.

CDOs vital to digital reinvention of companies, says Accenture report

NEW DELHI: Chief Digital Officer (CDO) is a critical player in the company's success in the digital era who defines the digital reinvention roadmap and helps lead the organization, a recent report by Accenture said.

This report further recommends three steps for CDOs to succeed in digital transformation.

Step I: Set a digital-first strategy: Developing a 'digital strategy and roadmap' for the business.

Step II: Set the agenda in the C-suite: Understand the priorities of the C-Suite and collaborate with

them successfully implementing a digital-first strategy and digital reinvention.

Step III: Manage implementation: CDOs should address and meet the six core imperatives, identified through the research, to profitably combine digital technologies, deliver new efficiency gains and create enhanced customer experiences in parallel.

A handbook for Chief Digital Officers summit utilizing data from the global Accenture report and based on interviews with senior digital functionaries across com-

panies was unveiled at the Chief Digital Officers summit organized by IMAI. The global survey of more than 900 executives across 12 industries by Accenture found only 13 percent companies positioned to drive both growth and efficiency with digital technologies

The report further states that 64 percent of the executives fear for their company's survival if they are unable to deliver on these two imperatives with their digital investments. "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.

Realising the potential of digitization, 96 percent of the senior executives surveyed by Accenture globally, say that they are investing in digital to pursue these twin goals.

Some of the leading retail companies, interviewed in India for the purpose of the report, for example have started leveraging digital technologies such as virtual reality to enhance in-store customer experiences and drive sales simultaneously adopting digital to optimize operations and achieve higher operational efficiencies. As many as 84 percent of the executives surveyed in Accenture's global report, believe that delivering differentiated customer experiences will strengthen their competitive advantage.

RANBAXY LABS, NO LONGER INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR'S BACKBONE

NEW DELHI: In recent times, standards of corporate governance and responsibility have been questioned, so much so, that the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) appointed a panel in October this year to examine existing norms and concluded that a major overhaul is required.

Among the suggestions made was the need for limiting chairmanship of companies to only non-executive directors and appointing at least one woman as an independent director. The panel also suggested increasing the minimum board strength to six members and expanding the number of board meetings to five in a year. The suggestions assume significance in the backdrop of alleged corporate governance-related issues at Tata Group and Infosys and Ranbaxy. This month, SEBI again flagged the need for improve-

ment in the corporate governance framework, and for more research to be done, particularly in the area of board evaluation. It has said contours of board evaluation need to be clearly spelt out to ensure better corporate governance.

Take the example of pharmaceutical major, Ranbaxy Labs, which once had a wonderful reputation. It was a company that was profitable, pioneering in some of its research and had acquired a well-healed reputation over decades. It manufactured generic drugs and all manner of life-saving medicines indigenously, and claimed that it was curing AIDS in Africa. Ranbaxy was the backbone of the Indian pharmaceutical sector and very deserving of admiration while profiting from the sales of medicines at affordable rates. It was company India and its citizens were told to be proud

of. In Ranbaxy's case, however, poet Geoffrey Chaucer's famous and oft-repeated saying - "All good things must come to an end" - comes to mind. In business circles, it was a sad day when former promoters Malvinder and Shivinder Singh decided to sell Ranbaxy to Japanese company Daiichi Sankyo in 2008. Daiichi Sankyo did their due diligence such as inspecting the books, talking to managers; touring plants, and came to the conclusion that it was worthy buying the gem that was Ranbaxy.

After all, it was the first foreign company to successfully sell generic medicines in the United States. When Ranbaxy was sold, it could be said that those familiar and accustomed to the brand in India mourned. Too many, it was a "precious jewel" given away for something as crass as money.

Daiichi Sankyo paid USD 4.6

billion to acquire a two-third share of Ranbaxy in 2008. They must have thought they'd got an exceptionally good deal. Six years later, however, the Japanese firm was glad and relieved to sell what remained of Ranbaxy to one of its competitors, for USD 3.2 billion. The company had lost half its value in six years.

According to a report appearing in the Economic Times last month, the Japanese firm is locked in a bitter legal battle to recover an arbitration award of Rs. 3,500 crores from the Singhs for allegedly concealing information regarding wrongdoings at Ranbaxy when they sold a majority stake in the firm to Daiichi in 2008.

What is now surfacing and very much in the public domain is that it was not all hunky-dory at Ranbaxy. Media has reported that there have been complaints of unsanitised

rooms and unclean toilets in some of the plants of the pharmaceutical major. Also, there have been disclosures of pills being compressed or having oil spots, and of refrigerators not being kept at predetermined low temperatures.

It is also a well-known fact that Ranbaxy had to plead guilty to felony charges in the United States because some of its medicines were found to be 'adulterated'. The company ended up paying USD 500 million as a fine. One by one, Ranbaxy's plants were declared unsafe. Eventually, none of the four could still export its generic version of its cholesterol-reducing drug Lipitor, taken by millions of Americans in the United States. Millions of Lipitor tablets were recalled from chemists across America when glass particles were discovered in them. Ranbaxy was also allegedly accused falsifying its test

records. Batch after batch of its generics was shown as genuine in the test documents - all of which were invented. Regulators in South Africa soon realized that the AIDS drugs from Ranbaxy were little better than placebos. Test data of various batches turned out to be identical and even photocopied. In Brazil, for example, of the 163 medicines that it was selling, Ranbaxy had reportedly tested only eight. Recently, erstwhile Ranbaxy promoters, Malvinder and Shivinder Singh, were in the news again for the wrong reasons. A seven-year old girl, admitted to Fortis Hospital, Gurugram, died on November 21 of Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS). It was then alleged the Fortis Hospital charged Rs 16 lakh for treatment spread over 15-days. The hospital denied the allegation and further rejected suggestions that it had offered

a bribe to the dead girl's father, as was claimed by him.

The father claimed last week that Fortis offered Rs 35,37,889 to stop his social media campaign and any legal action against them. A Fortis statement said the hospital offered a refund for out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the family, in good faith.

A committee formed by the Haryana Government, however, said this week that the hospital had committed an act of criminal negligence and was guilty of several alleged irregularities, including refusal of appropriate ambulance service to the patient, not following leave against medical advice (LAMA) protocol, and overcharging. A spokesperson of the Singh brothers' holding company - RHC Holding - has denied any wrong doing, and also denied violating any court orders.

No evidence of Perth Test under fixing threat, says ICC

PERTH: The International Cricket Council (ICC) are taking allegations in a British newspaper about attempts to organise spot-fixing during the third Ashes Test 'extremely seriously' but do not think the match has been compromised, global cricket's governing body said on Thursday.

The Sun reported that underground bookmakers from India had offered to sell undercover reporters from the newspaper information about spot-fixing in the Test between Australia and England, which started at the WACA in Perth on Thursday.

Cricket Australia said the report was a 'serious concern', while the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said they were 'aware' of the allegations even if there had been no suggestion any England players were involved.

Spot-fixing occurs when corrupt players agree to manipulate part of a match by, for example, bowling a wide on a particular delivery or ensuring a particular run rate. The corruption does not usually affect the overall outcome of the match but gamblers in the know can use the information to

beat the betting market. The underground bookmakers told the reporters they had previously manipulated matches in the Indian Premier League and were also targeting Australia's Twenty20 Big Bash League. The newspaper said it had passed all the evidence to the ICC, who said they would be investigated by its Anti-Corruption Unit. "From my initial assessment of the material, there is no evidence, either from The Sun or via our own intelligence, to suggest the current Test match has been corrupted," Alex Marshall, ICC General Manager Anti-Corruption, said in a statement.

"At this stage of the investigation, there is no indication that any players in this Test have been in contact with the alleged fixers. "The allegations are wide ranging and relate to various forms of cricket in several countries, including T20 tournaments. We will look closely at all the information as part of our investigation."

Cricket Australia (CA) Chief Executive James Sutherland was briefed by Marshall on the allegations in a conference call early on Thursday which also included ICC



boss Dave Richardson among others. He said Marshall had told him there was "no evidence, substance or justification" to suggest any players or officials from CA, the ECB or the ICC were under suspicion. However, he declined to comment on whether any Australia players were named in the dossier of evidence passed to the ICC from The Sun. "I'm sure the ECB can

make their own comments, but we have absolute confidence in our players, our team officials and others involved in the game," he told reporters outside the WACA.

The ECB said the body worked closely with the ICC and its Anti-Corruption unit to 'protect the integrity' of cricket.

"We are aware of these allegations and there is no suggestion

that any of the England team is involved in anyway," said a spokesman. The Sun alleged two bookmakers, including an Indian 'Mr Big', had offered to sell it details of rigged periods of play in the Test in Perth which could be bet on to win huge sums.

One of them claimed to have worked on the scam with former and current internationals includ-

ing a World Cup-winning all-rounder. They said they liaised with a fixer in Australian cricket known as 'The Silent Man'.

No Australia or England players were named as being involved.

The tabloid said their undercover reporters were asked for up to £140,000 (\$187,000) to 'spot fix' markets such as the exact amount of runs scored in an over.

"Before match. I will tell you this over, this runs and then you have to put all the bets on that over," one of the bookmakers was quoted as saying. Asked if it was a good source, he said: "Absolutely correct information." The Indian pair — secretly filmed at hotels in Dubai and Delhi during the paper's four-month investigation — claimed corrupt players would signal the fix was on by making a subtle gesture on the field, such as changing their gloves. Spotters in the crowd then tell bookies who put millions of bets into the illegal Indian betting market. The Indian fixers claimed they could get players to follow 'scripts' — such how many runs would be scored in a session, or an innings, when a wicket would

fall and what a team would do if it won the toss, The Sun said.

"I will give you work in Ashes Test. Session runs. Maybe day one, two, three. We have two session work, one session costs Rs60 lakh (\$69,000), two sessions Rs120 lakh (\$138,000)," it cited one of the men as saying.

"If you are interested [we] will talk to the Silent Man."

The Sun said the men also bragged to their reporters, who posed as financiers for underworld London bookies, that they could corrupt games in lucrative Twenty20 leagues such as Australia's Big Bash and the Indian Premier League (IPL). Cricket has been dogged by corruption cases in recent years. In February, two Pakistan players — Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif — were caught in a spot-fixing scandal which rocked their Twenty20 league held in United Arab Emirates. They were both banned for five years. More recently, a probe was launched by the ICC into pitch tampering claims against a ground official ahead of the second One-day International between India and New Zealand in Pune in October.

Ishant Sharma to miss Delhi's Ranji Trophy semi-final vs Bengal due to ankle niggle

NEW DELHI: Delhi will miss the services of its regular skipper Ishant Sharma in the upcoming Ranji Trophy semi-final against Bengal in Pune, starting December 17. Ishant reportedly sustained an ankle niggle during the final Test against Sri Lanka in the capital earlier this month.

With Test regulars Mohammed Shami and Wriddhiman Saha playing for Bengal, Delhi would have loved to get the services of its regular skipper who has taken 20 wickets in four Ranji games this season.

"Ishant has a slight ankle niggle and he would not like to aggravate his injury before the South Africa series.



The Delhi team reached Pune this evening without Ishant," a member of the Delhi team management said. The BCCI has allowed all the Test

regulars whose teams have qualified for the semi-finals to play for their respective states in order to get match time.

The Indian team is not playing any practice game so national selectors wanted Test regulars to play Ranji semi-finals.

KL Rahul will not be available for Karnataka as he is in the T20 squad along with Manish Pandey.

For Delhi Rishabh Pant will be leading the side in Ishant's absence. Navdeep Saini will be leading the attack alongside Vikas Tokas.

Akash Sudan will be the back-up pacer for Delhi.

FEDERER WANTS TO PLAY FOR FEW MORE YEARS

JOHANNESBURG: World number two and one of the most successful players in the Open Era history Roger Federer has refused to anticipate that 2018 would be his last season in tennis. Federer, who chose to sit out the second half of 2016 in order to recover fully from his knee surgery as well as a back problem, made a stunning return to rise to No. 2 in the ATP Rankings. He went on to clinch seven titles during his comeback campaign, including the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

However, the victory at Melbourne Park was particularly special for the Swiss maestro as he defeated his old-rival Rafael Nadal in a five-set thriller.

Though Federer's future fixtures are now most likely to be reduced and he would play only when fully fit, the retirement is not at all on his mind yet.

"I currently intend to continue to play for a longer period, hopefully for a few more years. Australian Open, Wimbledon and US Open are cornerstones, everything which lies between we'll take it from there, Sport24

quoted Federer, as saying. "We'll only step on court if we are 100 percent fit," he added.

The 36-year-old, however, admitted that he is expecting a tougher battle next year, with many top players set to make a return after recovering from respective injuries.

"I wonder how (Novak) Djokovic, (Andy) Murray, (Stan) Wawrinka, (Kei) Nishikori and (Milos) Raonic will come back.

That will have an impact. I'm assuming that one of those players will also tear up ropes," he said.

Federer, who received a season-end defeat from David Goffin in the semi-final match of the ATP World Tour Finals, is all set to play in season-opening Australian Open, beginning January 15 at Melbourne Park.



Mohammad Hafeez visits England to undergo remedial work on his bowling



KARACHI: Pakistan all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez has once again flown to England to undergo remedial work on his bowling action after the ICC suspended him for having an illegal action.

After his bowling action was reported for the third time in October during the Pakistan and Sri Lanka ODI series, Hafeez went to England to take the ICC's bowling assessment test but failed to clear the biomechanics test, after which the ICC officially suspended him from bowling in international cricket for 12 months.

But in the latest development, the all-rounder has now once again flown to England, where he will work with biomechanic specialist Dr Paul Herron and bowling coach Carl Crowe.

"The specialists will study Hafeez's bowling action and put him through different unofficial tests and then suggest remedial measures, so that he can again take the ICC test to get clearance to bowl in international cricket once again," an official in the Pakistan Cricket Board said. Sources said that the PCB had agreed to send Hafeez to England after some reluctance as the all-rounder insisted he could correct his bowling action and take the ICC test again.

Hafeez, 37, was not satisfied with the bowling action review committee formed by the board to work on his bowling action and insisted on flying to England to get help from Crowe and Herron.

With the national selectors due to announce the squad for the upcoming tour to New Zealand on December 22 after fitness tests at the National Cricket Academy in Lahore, Hafeez is certain to be picked because of his batting abilities and experience.

Hafeez has so far played 50 Tests, 195 ODIs and 85 T20s, and also led Pakistan in the shortest format.

Manchester City look 'very frightening', says Tottenham Hotspur's Danny Rose



LONDON: Premier League leaders Manchester City are on a "frightening" run of form but Tottenham Hotspur are looking forward to the challenge of halting their record-breaking 15-game winning streak, Spurs defender Danny Rose has said.

City have opened up an 11-point lead, while Tottenham, in fourth, trail them by 18 points.

"They do look very frightening - scoring goals and they've kept a clean sheet against Swansea. We've done alright there in the past couple of seasons and that should give us some confidence at the weekend," Rose told

British media. "We were the first ones to beat City last season and we disrupted Chelsea's unbeaten run. It's another challenge we all look forward to."

Since Mauricio Pochettino took over as manager in 2014, Spurs have won only one of 17 away matches against Manchester City, Manchester United, Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool.

"We haven't done so well away from home against the top teams this season so we hope to go there with some confidence and keep pushing on after three wins that we've had over the last week."