

# TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

WEDNESDAY

● DECEMBER, 20, 2017  
● 01 RABI-AL-SANI 1439 AH  
● ISSUE: 297  
● VOLUME: 03  
● PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	8.7	-3.6
JAMMU	26.0	8.0
LEH	3.9	-13.2
KARGIL	-3.2	-15.4

SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 05:26 PM  
SUNRISE THURSDAY: 07:33 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR  
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 07°C & 0°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

16 NEW GDCS TO ESTABLISHED, 400 SCHOOLS TO BE UPGRADED IN JK: ALTAF BUKHARI

INTERSTATE | 5

CRIMINALS AS LAWMAKERS: OPPOSITION OBJECTS TO SPECIAL COURTS LAW

BUSINESS | 7

AU SMALL FINANCE BANK JOINS HANDS WITH SAHAJE-VILLAGE

SPORTS | 8

YOUNGSTERS ARE VERY EXCITED TO PLAY FOR INDIA: DINESH KARTHIK

## 22 hours long gun battle ends with the killing of 2 militants and a lady

6 houses 2 cowsheds damaged

Shopian, Dec 19: Two militants were killed in a gun fight while a lady died in post encounter clashes in South Kashmir's Shopian district.

The gunfight started on Monday evening after government forces launched an operation in Batmuran village of the district.

Shortly after 44 Rashtriya Rifles of Indian Army, CRPF and SOG of Jammu Kashmir Police cordoned off the area, locals hit to roads and clashed with them to disrupt the operation against militants.

The exchange of intermittent firing continued whole night while during wee hours; the Government Forces planted an explosive device in the house and blasted it.

Jammu Kashmir Police Chief Sheshpal Ved said that two bodies of militants were recovered from the encounter site while Deputy Inspector General of Police for South Kashmir Range SP Pani said that one of



the killed militant was a local. He claimed that the lady died in cross firing between militants and the government forces.

During the whole operation, locals pelted stones on Forces who responded with bullets, pellets and tear smoke

shells. Over a dozen people were injured in Forces action. A lady whom locals identified as Rubena Jan daughter of Abdul Rashid was hit by a bullet in her abdomen. She was shifted to hospital where doctors declined her

See **Battle...**Pg 02

### MILITANTS KILLED IN SHOPIAN GUNFIGHT INVOLVED IN ATTACK ON BANK VEHICLE: POLICE

Srinagar, Dec 19: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday claimed that the two militants killed in a gunfight with forces in Shopian were responsible for the killing of two bank guards on December 11.

A spokesman said they were involved in a number of violent incidents, including the recent attack on the vehicle of J&K Bank near Poju Shopian on 11th of December 2017 in which two bank guards were killed.

Giving details of the operation, he said that Shopian Police along with 44RR and 14 Bn CRPF cordoned a cluster of houses at village Bata

See **Involved...**Pg 02

## US asks Pak to take 'decisive action' against terror groups

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has asked Pakistan to take "decisive action" against terror groups operating from its soil, as he unveiled America's new National Security Strategy (NSS).

Mandated by the Congress, Trump yesterday released his first NSS, according to which the US has asked Pakistan to intensify its counterterrorism efforts.

"We have made clear to Pakistan that while we desire continued partnership, we must see decisive action against terrorist groups operating on their territory. And we make massive payments every year to Pakistan. They have to help," Trump said in his remarks as he announced the NSS.

Pakistan has received more than USD 33 billion from US since the 9/11 terror attacks.

"We will press Pakistan to intensify its counterterrorism efforts, since no partnership can survive a country's support for militants and terrorists who target a partner's own service members and officials," it said.

Observing that the US continues to face threats from transnational terrorists and militants operating from within Pakistan, the NSS said the prospect for an Indo-Pakistani military conflict that could lead to a nuclear exchange remains a key concern requiring consistent diplomatic attention.

The Trump administration has been talking tough with Pakistan after it came to power, but has stopped short of taking any action against it even though the Pakistani

legitimacy of its government and reduce



the appeal of violent extremist organisations," it added.

The NSS links its efforts to build trade and investment ties with Pakistan with improvement in security.

"We will press Pakistan to intensify its counterterrorism efforts, since no partnership can survive a country's support for militants and terrorists who target a partner's own service members and officials," it said.

Observing that the US continues to face threats from transnational terrorists and militants operating from within Pakistan, the NSS said the prospect for an Indo-Pakistani military conflict that could lead to a nuclear exchange remains a key concern requiring consistent diplomatic attention.

The Trump administration has been talking tough with Pakistan after it came to power, but has stopped short of taking any action against it even though the Pakistani

See **US...**Pg 02

## SRINAGAR CITY FAILS TO IMPRESS

Rameez Makhdoomi

Srinagar, Dec 19: Cradled in the lap of regal mountains of the Himalayas, Kashmir is considered among the most beautiful place on earth. On visiting the Vale of Kashmir, the capital city of Srinagar forms the focal point.

But the recent credible surveys which have listed Srinagar among the most dirty cities of India not only have pained the soul of all Srinagarites but has caused many jitters among Valleyites.

Srinagar, the picturesque city of lakes, gardens and hills, founded by King Pravarasena II around 10 BC, has been slowly witnessing degradation in terms of development.

At 241 rank in cleanness, Srinagar is just presenting

See **City...**Pg 02

## Aadhar enrolment touches 1 crore mark in JK

Jammu, Dec 19: Chief Secretary, B.B. Vyas reviewed the progress of Aadhar enrolment in J&K in a meeting held today at Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

Deputy Director General, UIDAI participated through video conference from Chandigarh. The meeting was attended by Chief Post Master General, J&K, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Commissioner/Secretary, GAD, Commissioner/Secretary Social Welfare Department, Secretary, School Education Department, Secretary, Information Technology



Department; Project Director SSA, Mission Director, ICDS; representatives of Registrar General of India, SLBC and other Senior Officers. Secretary, Information

Technology Department Saugat Biswas, while making a power point presentation on the status and progress of Aadhar enrolment in J&K

apprised that during the last six months 11,04,786 (Eleven lac) Aadhar enrolment has been done in J&K under the aegis of the Information Technology Department. For

See **Aadhar...**Pg 02

## Civilian Killings: JRL CALLS FOR SHUTDOWN TODAY

Srinagar, Dec 19: Joint Resistance Leadership Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik Tuesday said that Kashmir has been turned into a killing field where the lives of men, women and even children are not safe. The brutal killings of Misra Bano and Asif Iqbal of Kupwara, Ruby (Beauty Jan) Jan of Shopian and Zahid Ahmad who was killed in Rajasthan India, clearly show that Indian army, Forces and police are here only to kill Kashmiris and pro-India politicians are deployed to provide legal shield to these killers.

The leadership said that Kashmiris cannot and will never remain silent on this genocide and will observe a total shutdown on 20th December 2017 to protest against this growing

See **JRL...**Pg 02

## China says lessons should be learnt from Doklam ahead of border talks with India

Beijing: India and China will hold another round of boundary talks in New Delhi on Friday, in the first parleys under the special representative mechanism since the 73-day Doklam standoff.

Crisis management at the border, operationalising a hotline between the militaries and continuing discussions on clarifying the line of actual control (LAC) could be in focus when Chinese and Indian diplomats meet for the 20th round of SR-level talks.

State councillor Yang Jiechi will lead a team of diplomats to New Delhi to meet his designated counterpart for the talks, India's national security advisor AK Doval.

"The SR meeting is not only a high-level channel for the border issue discussion but



also the platform for strategic communication. This also allows the two sides to exchange views on the international and regional issues of major concern," Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said on Tuesday.

China and India institutionalised the SR mechanism in 2003, envisaging it as a

See **China...**Pg 02

## GOVERNMENT WAGING WAR AGAINST CONTRACTORS: KASHMIR CONTRACTORS

Srinagar, Dec 19: The civil contractors in Kashmir Wednesday accused the government of waging a war against them.

Apex body of the contractors - J&K Central Contractors Coordination Committee - during a meeting lashed at the government for its "anti-development and anti-economic policies towards the Kashmir region."

The meeting, chaired by JKCCC general secretary, Farooq Ahmad Dar, observed that government is more concerned with development of Jammu region manifested in various development works in Kashmir pending their completion period.

Dar said that treasuries are running dry and

See **Kashmir...**Pg 02

## Despite weather challenges, BRO trying to open Srinagar-Leh Highway

'Stretch has 35 avalanche prone sites'

Srinagar, Dec 19: Even as the weather remains challenging in hilly region in Sonamarg, BRO is making all out efforts to clear the snow on at Zojila to make the road through for vehicular traffic.

Despite freezing weather conditions and icy surface on the 25-km long stretch of Sonamarg to Gurni on Srinagar-Leh Highway, it is for the first time that Border Roads Organisation is putting its workforce and machinery in such a challenging weather to clear the road off snow to provide extended connectivity to Leh with rest of the state.

Colonel Awadhesh Singh, Director Works



Project Beacon, said, "We are making efforts to open the road for traffic to connect

See **Highway...**Pg 02

## NF APPEALS BAR TO VISIT TIHAR JAIL

Srinagar, Dec 19: Jammu Kashmir National Front has appealed the Kashmir High Court Bar Association to visit the Tihar jail, Delhi to know the plight of Kashmiri prisoners lodged in the infamous jail under inhuman and unhygienic conditions.

Expressing serious concern over the plight of Kashmiri prisoners including its chairman, Nayeem Ahmad Khan, the Front Deputy Chairman, Altaf Ahmad Wani has stressed upon the lawyer's body to visit the jail.

"We appeal Bar Association to take cognizance of the appalling reports about the Kashmiri prisoners lodged in Tihar jail," Wani said in a statement.

He said that continuous lodgement in Tihar jail under

See **Jail...**Pg 02

## Kheer Bhawani - Paragon of Faith, Love and Brotherhood

Srinagar, Dec 19: Kheer Bhawani temple dedicated to the Goddess Kheer Bhawani (originally just Bhawani) constructed over a sacred spring. The worship of Kheer Bhawani is universal among the Hindus of Kashmir. The temple is situated at Ganderbal district in village of Tul Mul. The term kheer refers to rice pudding that is offered in the spring to propitiate the Goddess, which became part of the name of the temple. As is the custom with Hindu



deities, she has many names: Maharagya Devi, Ragnya Devi, Rajni, Ragnya Bhagwati, and so on. Kashmiri Pandits believe that the color of the spring

inside the shrine annually predicts Kashmir's future. A visit to this sacred place reveals that in this mad world of hate and growing extremism still we have a hope for

better tomorrow of a world where love and peace dominate. The trust managing the affairs of temple is jointly run by the local Muslims and Hindus.

Ghulam Rasool, a middle aged local of Tul Mul and Trustee states - "We the local pandit community and Muslim community believe in brotherhood and peace. We both respect and adore this place. The overall affairs of the temple are run jointly

See **Kheer...**Pg 02

## FAKE JOB RACKET BUSTED IN SRINAGAR, THREE ARRESTED

Srinagar, Dec 19: Srinagar police has busted a fake job racket by arresting three of its members who were duping people on the name of providing government jobs against heavy cash payments siphoning crores of rupees from them. Fake appointment letters with Government Departmental Logo's, service books with fake seal and signature of Government Officials, relieving and transfer orders were also seized.

On 15th of December 2017, Police Station Ram Munshi Bagh received a complaint from one Abdul Rashid Mir resident of Nihalpora Pattan that he along with other 17 persons have been duped by three persons identifying them as Mushtaq Ahmad Gania of Kulgam, Fayaz Ahmad Dar @Ajiaz of Pattan Baramulla and Sham Lal @Manhas

See **Fake...**Pg 02

## DISTRICT LEVEL CONTENT MONITORING COMMITTEE MEET HELD

Grievances redressal portal to be established soon

JAMMU, DECEMBER 19 - A meeting of District Level Content Monitoring Committee to take stock of the violations of Programme and Advertisement Codes under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 by Private Satellite Television Channels and AIR Broadcast Code by Private FM Channels and Community Radio Stations was held at DC Office, here today.

The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, besides Deputy Director Information

(PR) Jammu Atul Gupta (Member Secretary), District Informatics Officer Sanjay Gupta, DySP Hqrs Raj Paul Singh, President Orphan/Militancy Hit Victims Children Bal Krishan Gupta (Member), Assistant Professor Department of Psychology Jammu University, Dr. Chander Shaker (Member), Vice President/Bureau Head Take-1 Channel, Jammu, Faheem Tak (Member) were also present in the meeting.

Deputy Commissioner deliberated upon the role of the District Level Con-

tent Monitoring committee and laid out procedure for handling of complaints and violations.

Pertinent to mention here that the role of District Level Committee is to keep a watch on the content carried by television distribution platform operators at local level, to monitor that all the notified mandatory channels of Door-darshan, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha are carried by the television distribution platform operators and in proper genres, to monitor that multi system operators

(MSOs) and local Cable Operators (LCOs) are operating after valid registration, to immediately bring to the notice of State and Central Government if any programme is affecting public order or causing resentment in any community and to keep a watch on the private FM channels operating in the District to abide the AIR Broadcast Code

Threadbare discussion was held to discuss vital issues pertaining to monitoring of violation of programme and Advertisement Codes under the Cable

Television Network (Regulation Act, 1995 by Private Satellite Television Channels, AIR Broadcast Code by Private FM Channels and Community Radio Stations.

The complaints received during the preceding period were also discussed and Committees under the SDMs were constituted to enquire into the complaints and furnish reports for perusal of the District Level Committee.

Deputy Commissioner asked the DIO to establish grievance redressal portal where public can lodge their complaint

regarding content aired over any television distribution platform (Cable, DTH, HITS or IPTV), Private FM channels and community Radio Stations so that the action can be taken as per the procedure defined in this regard.

Role of Social media like news portals, facebook pages and whatsapp groups was discussed in detail and it was decided to take up with the Information Department and IT Department to make their registration mandatory before operations and their contents.

## Continue from Front Page

### BATTLE

brought dead.

At least five persons were hit by bullets and were shifted to Srinagar for advanced treatment. The bullet hit youth were identified as Ajaz Ahmed Dar son of Ghulam Muhammad of Batapora, Jahangir Ahmed Wani son of Ali Muhammad, a resident of Wathoo, Feroz Ahmed Lone son of Abdul Rehman of Ganapora, Feroz Ahmed Ganai son of Muhammad Abdullah and Showkat Ahmed Paswal son of Nazir Ahmed, both residents of Bhattipora Shopian.

Eyewitness told news agency CNS that at least 8 persons with pellet injuries were admitted in the hospital.

The locals according to reports staged massive pro-freedom protest in and around the encounter site.

As per local sources, the militants were trapped in the house of one Muhammad Yakub. Locals alleged that Government Forces used mortar shells extensively resulting in the damage of at least six residential houses and two cow sheds. Property worth crores was damaged during the 22 hours long gun battle.

A police official identified the slain militants as Tanveer Ahmad from Batmuran Shopian and Ali alias Qari of Pakistan.

### INVOLVED

Murran Shopian in the jurisdiction of Police Station Kelra following a tip-off.

He said that the militants opened fire while the cordon was being laid, ensuing an encounter. "The cordon was strengthened and the civilians of nearby area were evacuated," said the spokesman.

"During the encounter, on the request of family, police made repeated announcement to get Tanveer surrendered, which he ignored," he said.

The militants continued firing on the security forces which was retaliated.

Two JeM militants were killed in this encounter, who were identified as Tanveer Ahmad from Bata Murran Shopian and Ali @Qari, a foreigner. "Two AK rifles and other allied ammunition were recovered from the encounter site," said the spokesman.

"Two security personnel which includes one jawan from 44 RR and a police personnel of Shopian Police were also injured during the encounter. Their condition is stated to be stable."

He said another militant fled from the encounter site by taking advantage of the darkness.

"During cross-firing, one lady identified as Ruby @Beauty wife of Manzoor Ahmad Mir of Bata Murran got critically injured who later on succumbed to her injuries at District hospital Pulwama. Nine civilians were also injured whose condition is said to be stable," he said.

### US

leadership have shown reluctance in taking decisive actions against terrorist groups.

On November 25, the White House asked Pakistan to immediately re-arrest and prosecute Hafiz Saeed, leader of Lashkar-e-Taiba.

"If Pakistan does not take action to lawfully detain Saeed and charge him for his crimes, its inaction will have repercussions for bilateral relations and for Pakistan's global reputation," the White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders had said.

In his South Asia speech on August 21, Trump became the first US president to publicly point out for its support to terrorist outfits and leaders.

"For its part, Pakistan often gives safe haven to agents of chaos, violence, and terror," he said and asked Pakistan to "demonstrate" its commitment to civilisation, order, and to peace.

US, Trump then said, can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organisations, the Taliban, and other groups that pose a threat to the region and beyond.

Since then top US leadership, including the Defence Secretary Jim Mattis and the Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, have visited Pakistan to press the latter.

Mattis has refused to give necessary certification to Pakistan that it is taking action against Haqqani network, as a result of which blocking several hundred million coalition support funds to Islamabad.

### CITY

a very depressing picture.

Choked streets due to traffic jams, failed drainage system, roads in Shambles define the present day Srinagar city which many say is slowly being converted into urban mess.

Valleyites are terming this shabby ratings of Srinagar in terms of parameters of development the result of disappointing performance shown by the several developmental bodies concerned with the development of Srinagar. Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) And Srinagar Development Authority are criticized in this regard of failing the people and landscape of city.

Farooq Ahmad Madoo, a senior citizen said, "All the related Departments have utterly failed in changing the shape of summer capital-Srinagar towards betterment. Srinagar fails to impress as a quality City from every parameter. It is high time for the concerned departments to wake up from the slumber and change the face of Srinagar towards betterment. At least the efforts should be to place Srinagar among top 100 cities of India."

Youth of the Kashmir Valley are also expressing their anguish over the lackluster performance of Srinagar as City in terms of overall development.

Kumail Mir, a student said, "The people and concerned departments should take an honest pledge to change the ground realities related to developmental scenario of Srinagar which is currently quite abject towards betterment"

The realities of time call upon all the stakeholders to work untiringly to mitigate the sufferings caused to Valleyites on account of this under-development of historical Srinagar city.

### AADHAR

for this purpose, around 350 machines had been deployed at various locations in all the Districts of the State. The Department had contracted the work to the Electronic Corporation of India Ltd. (a public sector undertaking of the Government of India).

It was informed that the Aadhar enrolment which is being done on a continuous basis has reached 1.09 Crores and the Aadhar Cards of 97 lac residents have been generated so far. This is against a total population of 1.25 Crore as per 2011 census. With the shifting of Aadhar regime from Registrar General of India to the State Government under the UIDAI, the Aadhar enrolment was affected, however with the continuous monitoring and timely removal of the bottlenecks wherever required the feat has been achieved.

In order to universalize the Aadhar in J&K, the UIDAI has also appointed Project Director, SSA, and Mission Director ICDS as Registrars for Aadhar enrolment in the Schools and Aanganwadi centers respectively. In the last review taken by the Chief Secretary, it was decided that 100 enrolment centres shall be opened in Schools by the Project Director, SSA. It was apprised that the machines for these centres have been procured and distributed in the designated schools and out of those 14 machines have already started enrolment in the Schools. Deputy Director General, UIDAI apprised that 250 school education staff have already been trained for this purpose and training of another 400 school education staff shall be conducted shortly.

While reviewing the position, Chief Secretary directed that all the 100 machines should be deployed along with other requisite hardware within a week's time. Besides it was also decided that additional 100 machines shall also be procured by the Project Director, SSA for which the requisite funds shall be provided by the UIDAI. The Chief Secretary, directed that the Aadhar enrolment of Aanganwadi beneficiaries (age 0-5), and School students (age 6-18), be done on priority and special emphasis be accorded to the enrolment of the girl child. 410 Aanganwadi workers have also been trained for undertaking Aadhar enrolment by the UIDAI till now.

Further, the Government of India has also issued directions to the Post Offices and Banks to start Aadhar enrolment in J&K for which the UIDAI has also allotted separate Registrar Code to these institutions. Despite this, the Aadhar enrolment in the Post Offices was held up because of procedural issues which were resolved in today's meeting. The Secretary Information Technology Department proposed a draft Standard Operating Procedure for Aadhar enrolment to be done by the Post Offices and all other Registrars, which was considered in the meeting. The proposed procedure would come into effect in all Aadhar enrolment centers shortly and shall further make the process applicant friendly.

The Vice President, J&K Bank, representative of the SLBC apprised that Aadhar enrolment in 64 Bank Branches have already been started and another 20 will start within a few days. The Chief Secretary requested the bank to consider opening of another 40 Aadhar enrolment centers in equal number of Branches of the J&K Bank. He also directed that the non-performing banks, who have been accorded the mandate must start enrolment immediately.

The Aadhar enrolment shall benefit the general populace immensely as the Government of India has linked benefits of various schemes of the government with the Aadhar number of the beneficiaries.

### JRL

Indian aggression. Terming the ongoing killings of innocent men and women by Indian trigger happy forces as agonizing, JRL leaders in a joint press release said that spree of brutal killings has crossed every limit and has now become intolerable. Leaders said that no Kashmiri is ready to tolerate this genocide silently and no stone will be left unturned to stop these brutalities. Leaders said that some days back, a poor lady Misra Bano was targeted with bullets at Handwara and killers and their abettors tried to cover it up by putting blame on cross firing. Only few days after this brutal killing these trigger happy soldiers of illegal occupation gunned down another innocent boy Asif Iqbal who was a lone bread earner for his family and same theory of cross firing was repeated. Today these blood thirsty men in uniform have taken the life of another innocent woman namely Beauty Jan wife of Manzoor Ahmad at Shupian and injured many more critically and the story may remain the same.

Similarly another Kashmiri youth Zahid Ahmad was put to death at Rajasthan in mysterious conditions.

JRL Leaders said that be it Indian occupational army, its killer forces or abettors in the form of police and civil administration, each one of these is here to kill Kashmiris with impunity and at will and pro-India politicians remain deployed to provide them with a legal cover. He said that from 1947 till

date, Lakhs of people have been killed and maimed by Indian army, police and forces. Though these killings have been triggered by Indian forces but the responsibility lies on the shoulders of those pro-India politicians, assembly members and so-called rulers who provide legal cover and immunity to the killers and thus contribute in this genocide, added JRL leaders.

JRL leaders said that according to the law of nature every tyrant and tyrant has a fixed life and when tyranny exceeds its limits it is bound to perish, this is why Indian aggression and tyranny is also bound to die soon as it has also crossed every limit, said JRL.

Leaders said that tolerating oppression with silence has never been the practice of living nations and as such Kashmiris can and will not accept this brutality silently and will keep resisting this aggression with valor and passion. He said that Indian rulers and their forces have choked every little space on peaceful political activities and even space for every kind of protest has been banned and throttled.

JRL leaders announced that Kashmiris will observe a complete shutdown tomorrow on 20th December 2017, Thursday, against these killings especially against brutal killings of Misra Bano and Asif Iqbal of Kupwara, Ruby (beauty) Jan of Shupian and Zahid Ahmad who was killed in Rajasthan India. JRL leaders appealed people "to shutdown their offices, business establishments, transport and other activities for one day and raise their voices against growing Indian state terrorism."

### CHINA

three-step process.

New Delhi and Beijing reached an agreement on guiding principles and setting political parameters for a settlement in 2005. The two neighbours are now negotiating the second phase of working out a settlement framework, and the final step will be drawing a border line based on the framework agreement.

The 73-day military standoff at Doklam (Donglang) near the Sikkim border earlier this year will remain a big reference point at the discussion.

That's despite the fact that foreign minister Wang Yi had a detailed discussion about it earlier this month in New Delhi with external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj.

"In 2017, China-India relations have maintained a good momentum generally but the Doklam incident posed a major test for the two countries. We should learn lessons from this incident to avoid any further conflict of this kind in the future," Hua said.

She added: "We should follow our historical conventions on the border to uphold the tranquility and peace in the border region as well as safeguard of the larger picture of the India-China relations."

The talks in New Delhi this week will continue from the 10th round of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), initiated in 2012 to maintain peace along the disputed border, held in Beijing in November.

Post-Donglang, discussions on the border could take a two-pronged approach, Hu Shisheng, director of the Institute of South and Southeast Asian and Oceania Studies at the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations, told Hindustan Times.

"In the settled sections, especially in the Sikkim section where the border has no dispute, we can promote physical connect, people's interactions and trade and engagement. In the unsettled areas, crisis management is very, very important. It is unrealistic to expect a settlement in the near future, so crisis management is very important," Hu said.

During and after Doklam standoff, China had maintained that the Sikkim section of the border has been settled under the 1890 agreement between British India and China's Qing dynasty. "The bilateral ties after the Donglang standoff are in critical juncture. If both sides don't make further efforts, bilateral ties will further go down," Hu said.

Lan Jianxue, expert on India at the China Institute of International Studies, agreed.

"China and India relations are in a critical time now, very difficult time right now. But I think it (the talks) provide an opportunity for both sides to talk to each other and to defuse the intense atmosphere between the two countries, ease the atmosphere," Lan said.

"The most important issue is to ease the intense atmosphere, not allowing bilateral ties to free fall," Lan said.

### KASHMIR

government has the guts to tender fresh development works. "Like the previous times the state government this time too wants to divert the funds to Jammu," alleged Dar.

He criticized the government for waging a war against the Valley based contractors whose condition could not have turned worse than the way they were made to crave for a single penny.

"The present government has become a nuisance for economic development of Kashmir region....Just to keep their bosses in Delhi happy they are focusing much on Jammu region." There are various development works pending completion and work on others has stopped stressed Dar.

### HIGHWAY

Leh with the rest of the world even though the weather conditions are extremely unfavourable for such a task."

He said there are 35 active avalanche sites on Sonamarg-Gumri track with the snow accumulation of 4 feet recorded

on Zojilla, and many of the avalanche sites are yet to be neutralized.

He said that while clearing the snow at the track, avalanche threat always remains there. "But despite that our men are clearing snow to open the road for vehicular movement for an extended period of time in winter and for that BRO is very keen on making it possible," he said.

Niraj Singh, Engineer Incharge of Zojilla stretch said that snow clearance team is working at the Upper Alignment of Zojilla Pass since December 16.

"We are facing tough time during snow clearance. On daily basis, two avalanches trigger down the road making snow-clearance challenging for us," he said, adding the road will be cleared of snow "but it will not be advisable for all vehicles to travel as snow accumulation is several feet".

"Only 4/4 vehicles with chains will be allowed and advised to travel as the temperature dips to sub-zero and road surface is quite frozen and difficult to break," he said, adding the icing on the entire stretch of the road is "very dangerous" for vehicular traffic.

He said that the average snow accumulation on road is 3-4ft at Zojilla area and 2-3ft at Sonamarg.

"Continuous changing weather is also major challenge for snow clearance, as very small bracket of clear weather is available for snow clearance," he said.

### JAIL

inhuman and unhygienic conditions have put the lives of all Kashmiri prisoners including Nayeem Amad Khan in danger.

He said that prolonging Nayeem Khan and other's incarceration in the infamous Tihar jail is the most undemocratic way to silence the political opponents. He expressed serious concern over the failing health of Nayeem Khan who has developed several ailments in the jail and is not being provided any sort of medical aid.

Talking about the Kashmiri prisoners in other Indian jails, Altaf Ahmad Wani said that Kashmiris have to face not only the hardships of jails but also the cruelty of jail authorities. Even the criminals of the said jails think that troubling Kashmiri political prisoners is their right.

He stressed upon immediate shifting of all Kashmiri prisoners to the valley to ensure their safety. Stating that New Delhi is using cruel tactics against the genuine political leadership of Kashmiri people, he said that New Delhi is using its institutions to revenge the leaders like Nayeem Khan in one or the other pretext.

### KHEER

by the Muslim and Pandit trustees with more than dozen members from each community over viewing the smooth functioning and ensuring the facilities to devotees."

Locals state that one striking thing about this year's three-day festival held at Kheer Bhawani temple was when the visiting pilgrims were moved to tears seeing the warmth shown by Muslim organizers.

"This place represents the religious and civilization significance of Kashmir. We are a more than 5000 year old civilization and have seen many ups and downs. Kashmir is incomplete without Pandits and we are very much happy that message of brotherhood and urge for peace is alive on ground zero. Mata Kheer Bhawani temple has tremendous importance and we come to pray here with zeal, hope and full faith," stated a young migrant Pandit youth, who had come all the way from Gurgaon.

### FAKE

of Jammu. He further claimed that about 57 lac rupees have been given by them to these three persons on the promise of providing government jobs. Appointment letters were provided in different Government Offices by these three persons, which later proved fake.

On receiving the complaint, Police Station Ram Munshi Bagh registered a case FIR 124/2017 under section 420, 468, 471 RPC and investigation was started.

During the course of investigation, a special investigating team (SIT) was formed. The team arrested all the three accused within three days from Jammu.

During further investigation, it was learnt that more persons from different parts of valley are involved in the scam, who have duped dozens of other unemployed youth. Accordingly, 03 more persons identified as Bilal Ahmad Dar resident of Kralkhud, Arshad Ahmad of Sonwar, Abdul Jabbar Hajam of Kupwara are linked with the scam and are being probed into. These three person were working as motivators who would entice gullible unemployed youth for governments jobs against huge sum of rupees. After receiving money, they used to arrange their meeting with Mushtaq, Fayaz and Shamlal who would pose themselves as senior official working in secretariat. The candidates after paying money would receive appointment letters of different departments like Forest, Health, J&K Bank and Agriculture dept.

Many lower rung government and Bank officials are also believed to be involved in the scam and so far police have called up two officials for questioning.

Moreover, Police is looking for four more persons who are believed to be the master minds in the scam and are evading arrest. Srinagar police has also raided a documentation centre in HMT area of the Srinagar city where fake appointment letters, I-Cards etc were being printed. The computer centre owner was arrested and all the material used for printing has been seized. The investigation of the case is still going on and more arrests are expected.

## WCD Ministry once again cautions general public against filling up fake forms in name of BBBP

New Delhi, December 19: The Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD), Government of India, since the beginning of this year, has been receiving filled up fake forms from many duped girls/women, whereby the forms falsely promise cash incentive in the name of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme. A "Fake Form" is an application form for receiving any form of benefits either in kind or cash which is NOT prescribed or issued by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. BBBP has no provision for individual CASH Incentive TRANSFER COMPONENT by Government of India. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme focuses on challenging mindsets and deep rooted

patriarchy in the societal system, strict enforcement of PC&PNDT Act, advancing education of the girl child: focuses on issues of women empowerment on a life cycle continuum. It is not a DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) scheme. It is implemented through the office of Collectors/DMs/DCs in the Districts and for multi-media advocacy outreach through authorized media agencies.

The fake scheme started by miscreants, which first appeared in the State of UP, gradually spread to neighboring States like Haryana, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi. In some measures, forms have also been received from Bihar, West Bengal, Kerala, Rajasthan. Total forms received mainly by registered post

have flooded the Ministry running into lakhs of fake forms. We have taken up with the Authorities of the affected States for checking the menace. Also, we have carried out warning public notices against the illegal activity and advising citizens not to fall prey to such misleading and false activity through print media, TVs, Radio, Social Media, Ministry's website and through post offices, besides action taken by State Governments through their channels and local media. The warning has been broadcast several times. In the media campaigns, Ministry had advised that no personal details should be shared and no one should subscribe to such fraudulent scheme. However, many people continue to fall prey to the

fraud and even paying money and disclosing personal details for a non-existent benefit/scheme being falsely offered in the name of BBBP scheme. In other words, the menace is not dying down.

In view of the above, the WCD Ministry has decided that henceforth, ANY SUCH FAKE AND ILLEGAL FORMS RECEIVED IN THE MINISTRY WILL BE DISPOSED OFF SUMMARILY BY DESTROYING AND WITHOUT ISSUING ANY NOTICE. A notification to this effect has been issued and can be seen on the Ministry's Website.

The general public is therefore, once again advised not to fall prey to this fraudulent activity of filling fake forms, wasting energy and resource.

## Shri Gadkari interacts with participants of 44th Know India Programme

New Delhi, December 19: Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, interacted with a group of young students and professionals of the Indian diaspora in New Delhi today. The 40 member group that includes 20 women, is in India for a 25 day Know India Programmes (KIP) from 29th November to 23rd December. The group includes participants of Indian origin from Fiji, Guyana, Malaysia, Israel, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Africa, Surinam and Trinidad & Tobago.

Shri Gadkari talked to the participants about the importance of Indian culture and heritage and urged them to be torch bearers

of the same in their respective countries. He also answered their questions regarding transport planning in India, and informed them about strides the country is making in this area. KIP is an initiative of the Government of India aimed at engaging and making students and young professionals of Indian diaspora in the age group of 18 to 30 feel a sense of connect with their motherland, motivating and inspiring them by transformational changes taking place in India and giving them an exposure to various aspects of contemporary India's forms of art, heritage and culture. This is the 44th edition of the programme. KIP is organized by the Ministry of External Affairs in partnership.

## De-Addiction camps under "Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse"

New Delhi, December 19: The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment implements a "Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse". The Scheme has the provision of financial assistance to Non-Governmental Organisations, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Urban Local Bodies etc. for, inter-alia, running and maintenance of Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA) and to provide composite/integrated services for the rehabilitation of the addicts. These IRCA are responsible for Preventive Education and Awareness Generation programmes in their neighbourhood, educational insti-

tutions, workplace and slums with the purpose of sensitizing the community about the impact of addiction and the need to take professional help for treatment. Total number of beneficiaries under the scheme for the year 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17 & 2017-18 (up to 13.12.2017) are 108855, 146124, 114759 & 65682 respectively.

This Ministry has setup a National Toll Free Drug de-addiction Helpline No. 1800-11-0031 w.e.f. 7th January, 2015 to help the victims of drug abuse, their family & society at large. The helpline has become operational 24x7 since March, 2017.

The last National Survey on the extent, pattern and

trend of drug abuse was sponsored by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the year 2000-2001 and its report was published in 2004. It was estimated that about 732 lakh persons in India were users of alcohol and drugs. Of these 87 lakh used Cannabis, 20 lakh used opiates and 625 lakh were users of Alcohol. However, the sample size being small (40,697 males within the age group of 12-16 years both in rural and urban areas) vis-à-vis the country's population, the estimates can at best be taken as indicative only.

Thereafter, no National Survey on drug abuse was

conducted. However, the Ministry has, in the month of August, 2016, assigned the work of conducting the National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India to National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi. The survey will provide national and State-level estimates of proportion and absolute number of people who use various substances and people who are suffering from substance use disorders. This information was given by Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Vijay Sampla in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

## Use of plastic bullets against protesters

New Delhi, December 19: As per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) adopted by Jammu and Kashmir Police including law enforcing agencies for dispersal of unlawful assembly, less lethal weapons should be used as per the established use-of-force policy. The use of force should be guided by objectives of restoring peace, dispersal of violent unlawful assembly with use

of such force as is required to minimize the casualty but without compromising safety for Law Enforcement Elements and peace loving citizens. The hierarchy of usage of forces inter-alia includes use of rubber bullet/plastic bullets. Since, the contents of the SOP and the suggested security measures contain classified information, therefore, further details in the matter cannot be

disclosed in the interest of the national security.

The Government has appointed Shri Dineshwar Sharma, former Director of Intelligence Bureau, to initiate and carry forward a dialogue with elected representatives, various organizations and concerned individuals in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Considering the positive initial response from differ-

ent sections of people in Jammu and Kashmir, it is expected that all stakeholders in the state who believe in peace would support the Government initiative and join the dialogue process.

This was stated by the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir in a written reply to question by Dr. P. Venugopal in the Lok Sabha today.

## MLA Sopore distributes Scooties among specially-abled persons

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 19: Member Legislative Assembly from Sopore constituency, Haji Abdul Rashid Dar today distributed scooties to specially-abled persons of out of his Constituency Development Fund (CDF).

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said the aim of providing scooties to

differently-abled persons is to facilitate their mobility so that they can chase their dreams in a better way without any difficulty. Earlier, District Social Welfare Officer Baramulla informed the general public about the benefits of different welfare schemes being implemented in the district and stressed that

people especially poor and downtrodden should avail the benefits of these schemes. He also thanked the MLA Sopore for taking keen interest towards the rehabilitation of specially-abled persons. Additional Deputy Commissioner Sopore, Executive Engineer, Tehsil Dar Sopore besides other officers and officials.

## Several skill development initiatives launched to enhance employability of youth: Lal Singh

GDC Kathua organizes daylong conference on Skill Enhancement & Employment Generation

KATHUA, DECEMBER 19 - One Day National Conference on Skill Enhancement Courses & Employment Generation (SECEG-2017) was organized by the Department of Chemistry at the Auditorium of GDC Kathua here today in which Minister for Forests, Environment and Ecology Ch. Lal Singh was chief guest.

Former Dean Life Sciences, University of Jammu, Dr. M K Jyoti was the guest of honor.

After releasing the Abstract Book on one-day National Conference, Lal Singh said that productive and formal employment generation depends on the availability of an adequately skilled labour force, adding that this can be achieved through sustained investments in skills development and fostering opportunities for decent job creation through entrepreneurship.

The Minister said that to close skill deficit and increase employability, a range of policies and strategies are framed by the Central as well as State Government to address work-relevant education systems, career guidance, life-skills, and technical, vocational education and training schemes, along with on-the-job training in both formal and informal sec-



tors.

Underlining several initiatives launched by the present dispensation to provide skill development training and enhancing the employability of unemployed youth, the Minister said that these schemes should be discussed with students in colleges so that opportunities, space and scope for the development of the talents of the youth can be created.

He further said that J&K has unique requirement in skill based training depending on the natural resources,

industry and native trades.

He affirmed that the government has embarked on skill development missions to meet the aspirations of youth through training, enhance employability and employment. Several training partners, academic institutions and vocational training centers are actively involved in a range of programs that enable livelihoods, increase productivity and income levels of people in the state, he added.

The Minister also appreciated the efforts of the Department of Chem-

istry in organising a National Conference on a very important topic.

Principal, Prof Kartar Chand assured that this National Conference shall provide information to the students and faculty regarding job opportunities to be created due to skill enhancement courses. He also said that deliberations during the conference shall prove fruitful for all the participants. Speaking on various skill enhancement courses introduced by UGC for undergraduate classes he provided details of various sub-themes which shall be effective for creation of better employment opportunities.

He further added that the qualified graduates with sound knowledge of core discipline and expertise in a concerned skill will have more openings in service, industry and self-employment sectors.

Convener, Prof Sumanesh Jasrotia gave detailed account of the conference and the profile of GDC Kathua.

Among others Prof Kamal Kapoor of Department of Chemistry, University of Jammu, Delegates, Principals, Professors and students in large numbers, Research Scholars, Prominent citizens and DFOs were present on the occasion.

## 16 new GDCs to established, 400 schools to be upgraded in JK: Altaf Bukhari

Hails teachers for serving society even in times of turbulence

JAMMU, DEC 19: Education outreach in Jammu and Kashmir is getting a fresh boost as the state Government has decided to upgrade 400 schools and establish sixteen new Degree Colleges to fill the accessibility gap.

"Two hundred High Schools would be upgraded to Higher Secondary level, while 200 Middle schools would be upgraded to High School Level to fill the accessibility gap in the areas where students have to walk dozens of KMs to attend the classes" said Minister for education Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari here at annual Day Function of Doon International a Private School, as the chief Guest.

The Minister also informed that the Government is in the process of announcing sixteen new Degree Colleges for the deserving areas. He said there many important Tehsils which are still lacking the facility of higher education and they are being provided this facility soon.

World renowned tourist destination Pahalgam in Kashmir and Border Tehsil of RS Pura and many other areas greatly deserve Degree Colleges and Government has decided to meet the demand of people of such towns, Altaf Bukhari announced.

Vice Chairman Handicraft and Handloom Development Corporation, Nizam-u-Din Bhat was guest of the honour at the function. Also present were Commissioner Secretary School Education, Farooq Ahmed Shah, Director

School Education Jammu, Ravinder Singh, Project Director SSA A R Vaar and Director RMSA, Tufail Matoo.

Regretting the setback to education sector in past decades, the Minister gave full credit to the teaching fraternity for remaining committed to the cause of education in the times of turbulence. "Teachers both in Government and Private sector deserve all praise for their commitment towards their noble profession and the state is indebted to them" he said adding that the present Government led by Chief Minister is committed to take education sector to new highs.

"No one can dispute the fact that the young generation of technocrats and officers serving the state at present are the lot which were educated by the teachers in the times of turbulence" he asserted and said both public and private sector institutions are contributing to raise the education standard in their own ways.

The Minister also advised the Private School association to follow the norms in the appointment of teachers, payment of salary and other incentives to achieve quality of education. Nizam-u-Din Bhat also hailed the contribution of teachers in steering the state out of the difficult times and remaining committed to their profession.

Highlighting the role of the teachers, Bhat said they are real nation builders and the society has great expectation from them.

## Ganga chairs 136th meeting of Board of Directors of SIDCO

Directs officers to ensure regular disposal of Industrial waste

JAMMU, DECEMBER 19: Minister for Industries and Commerce, Chander Prakash Ganga, chaired the 136th meeting of Board of Directors of J&K State Industrial Development Corporation Ltd. (SIDCO), here today.

Minister of State for Industries & Commerce, Syed Farooq Ahmad Andrabi, Vice-Chairman J&K SIDCO Subash Jandial besides other senior officers were present in the meeting.

Ganga, who is Chairman of the Board, took a detailed review of the progress on various industrial infrastructure projects being executed by the Corporation.

The meeting was informed that the Corporation has a fully developed land bank of 26839 kanal in the shape of industrial estates in the state and 2347 units have been

established in here, providing direct employment to 65667 persons.

Terming SIDCO as vital unit for creation of Industrial Estates in the state, Ganga asked the concerned officers to work with a missionary spirit to further develop industrial sector and attract industrialists for establishing industrial units in the state.

As a part of the Corporate Social Responsibility, the Minister directed Managing Director to take up initiatives for providing education and other facilities to differently abled children in the state.

Stressing on effective management of hazardous waste material in industrial estates, the Minister directed the concerned to ensure that the industrial units strictly adhere to the set norms



and set up effluent treatment plants for proper treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous waste to protect environment. He sought cooperation of all stakeholders in

this regard with proper information dissemination and awareness so that all contribute towards environmental protection.

The meeting also reviewed the

physical progress of projects being executed by the Corporation including Trade Facilitation Centre at Salamabad Uri, Phase II, National Institute of Fashion Tech-

nology (NIFT), I.T Tower building at Rangreth Phase-II, Construction of Conference Hall at IGC, Laspora, Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) and other works.

The meeting also discussed the proposal envisaging implementation of health insurance cover for the employees, sanction of honorarium in favour of Directors of the Board, revised budget proposals for financial year 2017-18 and proposed budget for financial year 2018-19 etc.

Among others, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Shailendra Kumar, MD SIDCO, Jasvinder Singh Dua, Director Industries & Commerce Jammu, Director Industries & Commerce Kashmir, Directors on BOS SIDCO, Rakesh Gupta, Lalit Mahajan, besides representatives from Finance and Planning Department and officers from Industries & Commerce Department & J&K SIDCO were present in the meeting.

## DAILY Editorial Time and Us

### DIVORCE AS CRIME: ON INSTANT TRIPLE TALAQ

The Centre's proposal to make instant triple talaq an offence punishable with three-year imprisonment and a fine is an unnecessary attempt to convert a civil wrong into a criminal act. By a three-two majority, the Supreme Court has already declared, and correctly, that the practice of talaq-e-biddat, or instant divorce of a Muslim woman by uttering the word 'talaq' thrice, is illegal and unenforceable. While two judges in the majority said the practice was arbitrary and, therefore, unconstitutional, the third judge ruled that it was illegal because it was contrary to Islamic tenets. Its consequence is that the husband's marital obligations remain, regardless of his intention in pronouncing it. When Parliament enacts a law to give effect to the judicial invalidation of talaq-e-biddat, it must primarily ensure protection to Muslim women against its use. Although the details are not yet available, the proposed Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, appears to have provisions for maintenance or subsistence allowance to the wife and children in the event of triple talaq being pronounced. It seeks to preserve the woman's entitlement to custody of her children. While these are welcome and necessary features of a law aimed to protect the rights of Muslim women against arbitrary divorce, it hardly requires iteration that the civil character of these aspects of marital law must be preserved.

Instant triple talaq is viewed as sinful and improper by a large section of the community itself. Therefore, there can be no dispute about the need to protect Muslim women against the practice. But it is also well established that criminalising something does not have any deterrent effect on its practice. That there have been 66 cases of its use after the Supreme Court verdict only underscores the need for protecting women against desertion and abandonment, but is it justified to send someone to jail? Also, the fine amount under consideration could as well be awarded as maintenance or subsistence allowance. The All-India Majlis-e-Ittehadul-Muslimeen president, Asaduddin Owaisi, has argued in a letter to the Union Law Minister that there is no need for a fresh criminal provision when existing laws, under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code or provisions of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, already allow the prosecution of a husband for inflicting physical or mental cruelty, emotional and economic abuse, and for deprivation of financial resources. Regardless of whether instant talaq would fall under any of these forms of cruelty or domestic violence, criminalising it risks defeating the objective of preserving the husband's legal obligations, and the payment of maintenance. The Centre would do well to reconsider its draft and limit its scope to providing relief to women, instead of creating a new offence out of a civil matter.

# HIGH ROAD TO DEMOCRATIC STABILITY

► Kanak Mani Dixit

Nepal has been in distress for two decades, since the start of the Maoist war in early 1996, through royal autocracy, palace massacre, earthquake, foreign interference and communal polarisation. Finally, in a second try, the new Constitution was promulgated by the Constituent Assembly in September 2015. The last roadblock to its implementation was overcome with a series of local, provincial and national elections over the summer-winter of 2017.

The parliamentary elections of November 26-December 7 ended the 70-year tradition of the Nepali Congress (NC) setting the political agenda in power or in dissidence. The Left alliance of the mainstream Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), or UML, and the Maoists have made a clean sweep to be able to form governments at the Centre and all but one of the seven brand new provinces. (The elected MP vote count for the five national parties came to 80-UML, 36-Maoist, 23-NC, 11-Rashtriya Janata Party and 10-Federal Socialist Forum.)

Constitutional confidence While this weakening of opposition is cause for concern, Nepal finally seems set for a stable government with longevity beyond a year. To begin with, Nepal's adherence to republicanism, federalism and its own brand of secularism are now set in stone, while earlier there was the fear of backsliding. The placement of elected representatives in three tiers from local, provincial to national — including in the restive Tarai plains — means there is now buy-in for the Constitution from all political stakeholders.

New Delhi's overt show of displeasure regarding the constitutional promulgation too has been overcome through sheer national public will. The citizenry feels empowered for having participated in each key episode of the last decade, including the People's Movement of 2006, blocking attempts at communal arson, and overcoming the five-month blockade of 2015-16.

The new Constitution marks an innovation in the South Asian landscape, with devolution of fiscal, legislative, executive and other powers not to two but three tiers 'sarkars'.

Besides the national Parliament, the Constitution has empowered representative government in the seven provinces, 17 cities, 276 towns and 460 village municipalities. Emerging from a history of Kathmandu-centrism and two decades without elected local government, today an entire superstructure of representation is in place. Says the constitutionalist Nilamber Acharya: "A system of democratic filtering is in place, and there is excitement among the people to experiment with this new system."

Deuba's debacle While the caretaker Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, deserves all credit for guiding society through the maze of elections, he did run a lacklustre campaign and will not be thanked for the debilitation of the country's premier democratic party. While NC voters remained loyal, the Maoist swing vote and the romantic call of 'Left unity' made all the difference.

During the Dashain holidays, the UML sprang a surprise, enticing Maoist Chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal ('Prachanda') away from the Congress with the promise of 60-40% share of seats in the provincial/national elections of November-December. This was a godsend for the Maoist party in decline.



Mr. Deuba's poor oratory could not stand against the UML's firebrand Khadga Prasad Oli, who rode the nationalist plank against the vivid backdrop of the blockade. Mr. Deuba's dire warnings that the communists as threats to democracy lacked credibility because of his own earlier embrace of Mr. Dahal.

Oli's moment All eyes are now on Mr. Oli, having emerged as paramount leader with both electoral and populist power. Under the new rules, a no-confidence motion against a new government cannot be brought for two years, and it is likely that he will get to complete a full five-year term. This situation has been unavailable to any of his predecessors in the entire modern era.

The new Prime Minister's biggest success will be to 'neutralise' the Maoist party — through power-sharing or unification — and Mr. Dahal may be agreeable as his main worry of late has been to keep the cadre placated. In his previous stint as Prime Minister, Mr. Oli had almost brought the transitional justice process to a successful closure, including accountability for conflict-era excesses. The peace process will not be complete till this is done, and Mr. Oli's staying the course will ensure long-term peace and represent a victory for liberal democracy.

Beyond the Maoists, Mr. Oli will have to build a working relationship not only with the NC but also the plains-based parties with whom he has been combative. Democratic stability would, ipso facto, release long-pending economic energy for which the new Prime Minister will have to fight rather than join the cronycapitalists who have entrapped the political economy during the decade of "political transition".

The economy has to start galloping, cre-

ating jobs for the young workforce, including the millions in West Asia, Malaysia and India likely to return due to pushes and pulls beyond Nepal's control. This requires movement on infrastructure projects, agro-forestry, tourism, service industries and irrigated agriculture in the Tarai plains.

The new Prime Minister will need to mend fences with New Delhi, energised by the strength of his electoral mandate. Based on the set of agreements signed in Beijing during his earlier stint at Singha Durbar, Mr. Oli is expected to accelerate connectivity to the north, utilising the Chinese railway network that has arrived on the Tibetan plateau.

Kathmandu does not yet fully understand Beijing's super-charged geopolitical agenda, but a confident Mr. Oli can be expected to seek a respectful rather than obsequious relationship. As the commentator Jainendra Jeevan wrote last week, "We don't want another 'India' across the northern border."

Nepal having become a feeble international player due to autocracy, conflict and transition, Mr. Oli has an opportunity to bring international respectability back to a level not seen since the time of B.P. Koirala in the 1950s. Insecurities having been dealt with, the confidence of the new republic will also be seen in shifting the office and residence of the President of Nepal from Shital Niwas to the former Narayanhiti Royal Palace.

The ride to democratic stability is bound to be bumpy, not least because the Constitution — written by politicians rather than jurists and constitutionalists — is so 'magnanimous' that it will be a challenge to implement. Hundreds of laws need drafting, the grey areas in the inter-relationships between the three levels of government have to be clarified.

The concurrent list detailing the rights and responsibilities of not two but three tiers makes Nepal's experiment unique. Already, one can sense reluctance among the topmost leadership and bureaucracy to devolve power to local government as mandated by the Constitution. The newborn Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court will need to gear up to tackle the deluge.

There are enough triggers out there for social discontent to erupt. The profligacy of the last decade of "consensus governance" has emptied the national coffers even as expenditure is set to rise to meet the needs of local and provincial administration. The post-earthquake reconstruction of households, infrastructure and heritage structures has yet to gather steam.

There is a sharp difference in the economic status of the seven federal units, with Province No. 1 (in the East) and No. 3 (including Kathmandu Valley) the best placed in the GDP and human development indices. An equalisation protocol is the need of the hour.

The power devolved to provincial and local government is liable to expose the population to mistreatment, from economic crimes to human rights abuse. Civil liberty forums must rise to the occasion in all seven provinces, to watchdog all tiers. A society heading out into uncharted waters amid economic, political and geopolitical challenges is asked to implement the democratic, inclusive and social justice-oriented ideals that are to be found in the Constitution of Nepal (2015).

**Kanak Mani Dixit, a writer and journalist based in Kathmandu, is founding editor of the magazine, 'Himal Southasian'**

# OH- But Do You Know Your Nose?

► Abdul Hameed Dar

Dy. General Manager (RDT) JKTD

W e all human as well as animal kingdom etc have a nose. So do but strangely I realized its importance only when I am virtually at the sun set of my life few days back I developed a technical swag small Boil in side my Nose nil (Punlyan E.N.T problem) and the tip of my Nose become red hot and assumed the color of the red cherry. Its natural through out my life or as a human weakness. We see and have a look into a mirror (Looking Glass) as how do we look like and this poor Nose of ours is always there and acts as a buffer zone of our face. As she does not mind in what context to our reference to context as how we in our local Kashmiri language call it. I mean if its ( Gerett tee chevet) nicely shaped its taken as a "Shoob dar Nuss". If small in size its "Mekkness". The small one if pointed tontull ness. If having curve totee ness (The nose of pigeon) If volomous in size (Bekkee ness) or god forbid having history geography of a monkey shape nose (Then its penzeez ness) etc. But like an ant its always busy. Inhaling oxygen an exhaling carbon dioxide the CO2 so its virtually. "The Chumney of our life" or a germ free AIRWASH passage as it confronts and acts as a speed breaker and arrests the dust particles and acts as a speed breaker arrests the dust particles as people or person with or without ourv an addharcard and are stoped their and then by its icons The Hair Follicals. Now about its forbanice

see you twist it around it will obey your command and choke its nosenils passages. She bears the in justices and high handness like which is mostly prevalent in the globe based on colour, creed, religion, misht is right dominance, suppression, oppression threat and indimention horror, terror etc or a tunnul / passage to stimulate our mind and mood by the fragrance of the flowers, or by the aroma of the delicious food, your realize a site as it's a acts as a sensor just have a look around when we stand invited at a marriage party for meal. Before the meal service you will find most of the invitee for no fault of her start playing with their noses. Just To Kill The Time Before The Time Kill Us. And some discum what not from AAJ KE TAZA KEBER TO KABRESTAN". But mind it at that point of time our mind is in need and on the level of an expectation or in sub in NEFFESS KE AVAREE GERDEE and contrary going against the sermon of Sheik Noor Din.

**Neffers sum kernnem – eddel tee veedel  
Neffers monee shattanus beddel avee.**

And we cursing the host for the delayed meal service while the poor host cursing his luck for the late arrival of the guests but in both the cases our hands are still on our Nuss The nose But who cares. Once the meal is served this poor in jured / mallined nose quietly sends her signals to the brain and our brain declares the operations stimulates our appetite, directs

the stomach to be ready for the meal land slide and its road clearing operation visaviv our desertion of the meal and the extra once of energy we got after this haffety meal for setting for a while the poor people or the persons globally who does not have a masal to eat / femiane sticken / ruffuges of the conflict zones etc. Now the second part which is very vital is "To Know" viza viz the tittle of the write up we should have learned or know about the hand reality of life as to what for we have come to this world what role we towards the allah TVT and towards our Bzo then society and in humanity in general to make this world an abode of peace / love Passion and happiness or to undertake or do a cocicour reherrals etc and tred on the path of surrat it musteekem (The path of risht fullness) Jetc. Let us come back to our nose. This nose of our is virtually a thermometer of our life because once we lose our breath we are declared dead as virtually the shah the breath or the shah the king is now more their with us thus this shaheen shah queen is the trisser of our life. Be loyal to it and feel its gmpertance or god forbid we will be completely lost in the wilder ness (again ness) of this world as "Deemes" seet chayee ieh dem darree

**"Deem Tellee foree- khya"**

**(The existence is depent on your breath once you lose the same what will you witter or say.**

Now the other aspect of this nose business id if its taken as a compliment what we locally call as (Ness Teven) meaning she or he kept our honour or reverse of as (Ness Teven) chopped on nose or as a boimeness (a soul which is having a drawn face, or is irritable or / toffee ) the (Khen ness) The running nose and touch wood the most dread full among them being the (NESS REKH) of our child hood days once our parents / serious / or teachers used us to rub our nose on a mud plustured wall / or floor, and we used to rub our tender lolly nose so hard so that it could form a reach ( a line ). So that we will not repeat our mischief , wrong doing or show any causal ness in our studies etc so this nose of what ever shape or size was used as a deterrent as does our world super power do with their show of neculer military mist animal and what KHOT to dominate the other countries to be know as super powers forgetting for a while that its allah TVT who is the supreme or the ultimate power authority / of the lord of the lords. My dear nose, these are some of the freactional duties / quallh I have pondered upon of your for rest let the others do to arise as how dutiful on are and in a knowledge ment of your service this is the compliment I can done to pass on you as khoderet naa bennya how gaa ferseet mee tojee mere yaar so keep breathing and living.

**(Article pledged With all my blessing to my very beloved ones Mr. Shamim Indarabi and to Mir Mur-tazza who recently entered into a matrimonial knot)**

# Cong wants PM's clarification on 'secret meet with Pakistan' allegation

NEW DELHI: The Congress party on Tuesday demanded clarification from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his allegation on his predecessor Manmohan Singh over a 'secret meeting with Pakistani officials'

The leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said, "Manmohan Singh" > Dr Manmohan Singh ji's integrity and loyalty to the country has been questioned. The prime minister should come in the House and make it clear."



Amid Congress' uproar in the Rajya Sabha, Union Finance Minister and Leader of the House Arun

Jaitley said, "We will certainly invite all my colleagues, including leader of the opposition and try and discuss, find a solution to the issue."

The Congress wanted a discussion on the issue under rule number 267 of Rajya Sabha's rule book, but Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu rejected all the notices.

During a poll campaign in Gujarat, Prime Minister claimed that Manmohan Singh, former vice president Hamid Ansari had attended a secret meeting at Congress

leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's house in Delhi in which Pakistani envoy and foreign minister of the neighbouring country also participated.

The prime minister said the former director general of the Pakistan Army, Arshad Rafiq, had insisted that Congress leader Ahmed Patel should be made the chief minister of Gujarat.

"The meeting had run for three hours and the next day, Aiyar called me 'Neech' (low-born)," the prime minister said.

# Criminals as lawmakers: Opposition objects to special courts law



NEW DELHI: Soon after the ongoing Parliament winter session resumed on Tuesday, Congress leaders in Rajya Sabha opposed the Centre's plan to set up 12 special courts to try pending criminal cases against MPs and MLAs.

Addressing the Upper House, Congress MP Anand Sharma said if the perception was created that special courts were needed only for MPs, other people should not have to bear the brunt of it. He added it had an inherent potential to be abused in entirety by the government of the day.

Sharma further asked the government to ensure adequate funds for setting up special courts to try criminal cases against politicians.

"The government should ensure allocation of adequate funds for setting up enough number of courts so that people do not remain in prison for long periods and the trial is done," he added. Responding to the debate, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said the law should be for

everyone and legislators alone should not be singled out.

"The law should be for everybody and legislators alone should not be singled out," he said.

In reply, Leader of the House and Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, "Everybody must get speedy trials." He asked if the people had vested interests in delaying trials of politicians. Joining the debate, Samajwadi Party MP Naresh Agarwal asked Jaitley if the NDA government would create special trial courts to try those who defaulted on Rs 8 lakh crore.

On Monday, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned as Congress leaders protested in both the Houses demanding an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi over allegations he made against his predecessor Manmohan Singh during the campaign trail in Gujarat.

The winter session of Parliament began on December 15 and will conclude on January 5 next year.

# Pakistan hints at possible nuclear war in South Asia

NEW DELHI: Hours before US President Donald Trump asked Pakistan to take "decisive action" against terror groups, the country's security head Nasser Khan Janjua possibility of a nuclear war cannot be ruled out in South Asia.

"The stability of the South Asian region hangs in a delicate balance, and the possibility of nuclear war cannot be ruled out," said Janjua, the National Security Advisor Lt Gen (retd) of Pakistan while addressing a seminar organised by the Centre for Global and Strategic Studies (CGSS), a think tank recently established by Lt Gen (retd) Zabeerul Islam, the Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) former chief, reported the Express Tribune. "India is being given priority over Pakistan in Afghanistan, something that will shape the political and strategic dynamics of the war-torn country," he.

He further accused the US of conspiring against the multi-billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with India.

"The US has given India role in Afghanistan's political process, giving New Delhi priority over Islamabad, and has opposed the CPEC."

Janjua further claimed that India has been stockpiling a range of dangerous weapons. Announcing its first public policy on Monday, the Trump administration asked Pakistan to assure that its nuclear arsenal is completely safe. "The United States will also encourage Pakistan to continue demonstrating that it is a responsible steward of its nuclear assets," reads the policy released by the White House.

"The prospect for an Indo-Pakistani military conflict that could lead to a nuclear exchange remains a key concern requiring consistent diplomatic attention."

# BJP's narrow escape in Gujarat: Akhilesh Yadav on Congress vote share



LUCKNOW: Commenting on Congress party's increased vote share in Gujarat elections, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday claimed that BJP's win is a narrow victory. "BJP made a narrow escape, if a little more anger would have transformed into votes, the results could have been different," said the SP chief.

The BJP on Monday scored a victory in the Gujarat polls winning 99 out of 182 As-

sembly seats. Congress, which managed to take the lead for sometime during the counting, won 80 seats.

Both parties increased their vote shares - BJP by 1.25 per cent and Congress by 2.47 per cent. Yadav on Monday said that Congress fared better in Gujarat polls than UP polls.

Samajwadi Party had entered into an alliance with Congress for 2017 assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh but faced a humiliating defeat.

"Congress did better work in Gujarat than it had in Uttar Pradesh.

The party looked at the ground-level problems intricately, unified its workers and worked for the youth. As for the final outcome, I welcome the decision of the people at large," Akhilesh told Zee News.

"BJP is a party of miracles. They do well in diverting attention from real issues," he said sarcastically.

# RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat says Muslims in India also Hindus, some laud, others oppose

ALIGARH: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's statement - Muslims in India are also Hindus - has stirred a controversy, with some saints supporting his remark while others opposing it. Endorsing Bhagwat's remark, Mahant Shakun Pandey said, "His statement is laudable. This is bitter truth that every citizen who lives in India is Hindu. Those who call themselves Muslims, I ask them to check their background. They will find that their ancestors are Hindu. All Muslims are Hindu." However, Mahant Dharmdas Maharaj slammed RSS chief's statement



saying that he should refrain from making such statements. "There is no point in raising this issue. What message he wants to give to Hindus and Muslims. They should make such statement after giving it a thought,"

he said. Addressing a public function in Tripura, Bhagwat had said, "The Muslims in India are also Hindus. We have no enmity with anyone. We want welfare of all."

"Hindutva is different from Hinduism and today the disturbed Western world is eagerly waiting with expectations towards India's Hinduism and its philosophy which has its roots deep in 'Sanatan Dharma' and shall revive their society out of the curse. So, to fulfill their expectations Hinduism has become more important today," he said at a public function at Swami Vivekananda Maidan on Sunday.

# Vacancies in NGT hit functioning

NEW DELHI: Established in October 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environment and conservation of forests and other natural resources, the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) functioning has been paralysed due to vacancies. As on Tuesday, which is NGT chairman justice (retd) Swatanter Kumar's last day in office, the green court will be left with less than one-third of its sanctioned strength of 20 officials. Two more judicial expert members, retired justices M S Nambiar and UD Salvi are set to retire in January and February respectively next year. Last ditch efforts by the NGT bar association to save the specialised forum from inching towards a closure also failed after the Supreme Court on last week refused to give a two-month extension to its retiring members. Advocate ADN Rao, appearing for the NGT bar, urged a bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra to pass a judicial order giving three months extension to retiring judicial and non-judicial members of NGT. Pointing to NGT's depleting strength, Rao pleaded with the top court to extend the concession of extension of service of retiring members as it did in the case of the Central Administrative Tribunal and the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) last month. When Rao asserted, the CJI told him he was "aware of the situation".

# Ivanka Trump thanks Telangana CM for warm hospitality during her Hyderabad visit

HYDERABAD: United States President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump has thanked Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for his warm hospitality during her Hyderabad visit last month. Ivanka, who is also an advisor to President Trump, in a letter penned

down by her to Chandrasekar Rao, thanked him for the 'exquisite gift' which he had presented to her at the Falaknuma Palace of Hyderabad. The chief minister had reportedly presented her a memento of Charminar in filigree works crafted by the artisans of Karimnagar dis-



trict. "I am deeply touched by your thoughtful gesture and by the warmth of the people of Telangana. I look forward to returning to India in the near future," she wrote. Ivanka had visited India to attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) last month.

She also visited the iconic Golkonda Fort during her visit. The spokesperson for the United States Department of State, Heather Nauert, had said that a Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) held in India was a "tremendous success".

# Anti-India Sentiment Creeping In Goa, Says Manohar Parrikar

PANAJI: Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar said on Tuesday those who compared the BJP government in Goa to Nazi rule should read European history, adding a pre-Portuguese era anti-India sentiment was resurfacing in the state. In his Goa Liberation Day speech delivered here, Mr Parrikar also asked people to be cautious against a negative mentality which he said was raising its head in the former Portuguese colony.

"Some people tried to compare this government with Nazis. I advise them to read the history of Europe, including that of the First and Second World War, then they will realise that when you point one finger at someone, then five fingers are pointing at yourself. We need to be careful of such mentality," Mr Parrikar said. In the run-up to the February state assembly poll, an article in a magazine run by the influential Roman



Catholic Church in Goa had likened the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led coalition government to Nazi rule in Germany. "Some people are extremely negative. We should be careful of such mentality. When Goa was made independent, many people would say that India had snatched Goa. There were many who refused to accept that Goa was a Union Territory of India. That mentality is repeating again," Mr Parrikar said.

# Train derailments not just an India-specific problem

NEW DELHI: The Amtrak train derailment in the United States has highlighted the fact that train derailment is not an India-specific problem and that all over the world, railway systems suffer accidents, according to safety experts who have commented on the train disaster.

This issue was also raised in Parliament when Members of the House asked Railway Minister Piyush Goyal about the progress Indian Railways had made since he got appointed, to which he replied that the progress was remarkable and noticeable. He said the incidents of derailments have come down as there was no major accident or mishap reported in the recent past. To bring his point home, Goyal even pointed out that the derailments didn't just happen in India and were not rare in developed countries

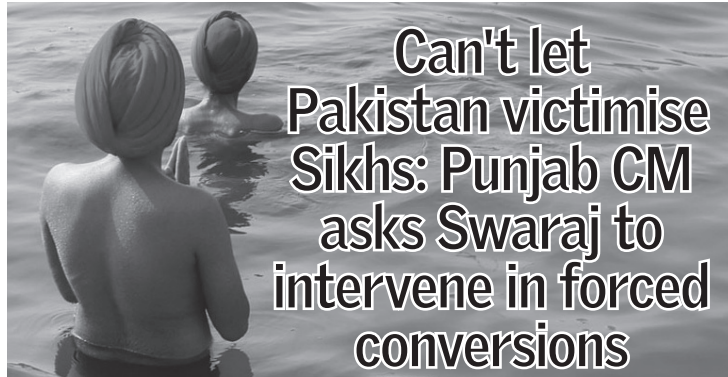
too, where one could boast of the infrastructural facilities. Goyal's comments were substantiated the same day when at least six people were killed after an Amtrak train derailed and fell off a bridge in southwest of United States' Seattle, adding Washington to the list of major global train accidents. In a collection of data and figures compiled from a number of web portals for the last seven years, France tops the list with as many as four major accidents between 2010 and 2017. The US is a close second with three accidents and Spain stands third.

In France's Montpellier train crash on August 17, 2016, more than 60 people were injured, while in Eckwersheim train derailment, 11 were reported dead, and 42 injured. In US' Brooklyn train crash on January 4, 2017, more than 100 people were said

to be critically injured, while in Spain's Santiago de Compostela derailment, 77 were reported dead with 143 injured. The reasons reported for these accidents include collisions between two commuter trains, technical failure, or excessive speed. The data is nowhere close to India's. In August, 2017, 23 passengers were killed and 150 injured when the Utkal Kalinga Express derailed in Uttar Pradesh. This accident was followed by the derailment of nine coaches of the Kaifiyat Express on the intervening night of August 22 and 23, injuring around 50. In November 24, the Patna-bound Vasco Da Gama Express train derailed near the Manikpur railway station in Uttar Pradesh, leaving three passengers dead and nine injured. Apart from these sporadic incidents of technical failures leading to a major tragedy, India has not seen a "global

train accident" in the last seven years, or at least does not feature in the top five of the list. These infrequent instances are, however, illustrative of an accelerating decline of large public infrastructure in the country, which the Centre is certainly working upon, and most substantially on highways, airports, harbours, railways - which have not seen enough investments for decades. Statistics show there has been a 42 per cent drop (from 85 to 49) from April 2016 to November 2017 in consequential train accidents in India.

On the contrary, the above-quoted list serves as a symbol of a deeper malaise in the society belonging to the developed nations, more so drawing attention towards failing bridges, other deadly train crashes and an erosion of major subway systems in the United States and Europe.



# Can't let Pakistan victimise Sikhs: Punjab CM asks Swaraj to intervene in forced conversions

CHANDIGARH: With reports of Sikhs in Pakistan's 'being forced to convert to Islam', Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh has requested External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to take up the matter with Pakistani authorities.

Tweeting about it, Singh wrote, "Request @SushmaSwaraj ji to take up this issue

with Pakistan. We cannot allow the Sikh community to be victimised in such a manner. It's our duty to help protect the Sikh identity and the @MEAIndia should pursue the matter at the highest levels."

Within hours, Swaraj tweeted back. "We will take this up at the highest level with Government of Pakistan," she wrote.

The Sikh community in Hangu district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, alleged that they were 'being forced to convert to Islam' by government officials. The Chief Minister also wrote a letter on the subject to Swaraj.

The Indian government is duty-bound to ensure that Sikhs in any part of the world

are not victimized or coerced in any manner, wrote Singh in the letter. "We are duty-bound to protect the identity of Sikhs, wherever they (Sikhs) may be living."

Pointing out that the community, which had been living in the area for more than a century, was reported to have filed an official complaint to the district deputy

commissioner, Captain Amarinder said it was a serious issue, especially considering that the forced conversions were allegedly being spearheaded by a government official.

Religious freedom is the right of every human being and should be upheld by all countries in the larger interest of humanity, he added.



## Merely 27% Indians covered by health insurance, says report

A joint report by FICCI and KPMG has revealed that only 27 per cent of Indians have health insurance coverage. The report, titled "Health savings account in India", revealed that the healthcare sector in India is largely underpenetrated with government expenditure constituting approximately 1.4 per cent of the country's GDP. On the other hand, private sector expenditure constitutes 70 per cent of the total healthcare expenditure out of which 62 per cent is out of pocket while only eight per cent is covered through pre-financed instruments, as per World Bank Data.

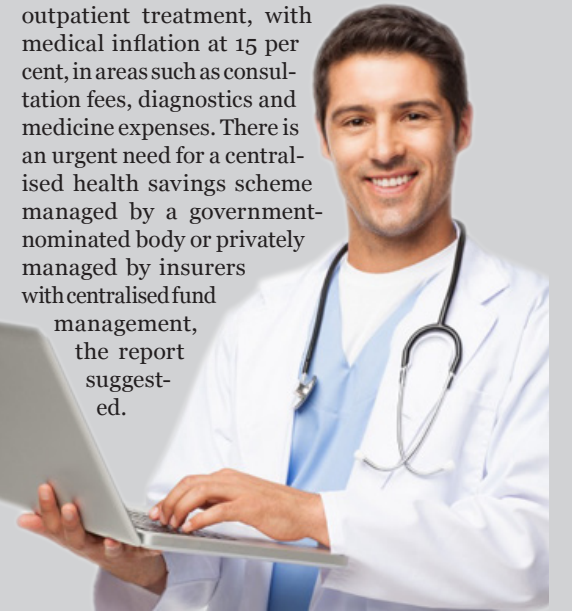
This indicates a significant gap in coverage offered by current products and the need for a comprehensive ecosystem of financed healthcare.

"Healthcare costs today are going up by the day due to lifestyle diseases in particular and the only way the gap between rising healthcare costs and affordability can be bridged is if the insurance sector develops a sustainable and viable mechanism," Antony Jacob, Co-Chair at FICCI Health Insurance Committee, said in a statement on Monday.

"Today with out of pocket expenses accounting for nearly twice as much as institutional expenses, there exists a real need for an all-inclusive solution towards healthcare in the Indian market.

"Currently, the health insurance industry caters largely to institutional treatment leading to considerable opportunities in targeting

outpatient treatment, with medical inflation at 15 per cent, in areas such as consultation fees, diagnostics and medicine expenses. There is an urgent need for a centralised health savings scheme managed by a government-nominated body or privately managed by insurers with centralised fund management, the report suggested.



# Being socially isolated may put you at diabetes risk

A study has found that men and women who are not active socially and remain isolated may be at an increased risk of developing diabetes than individuals with larger social networks.

The findings showed that a lack of social participation was associated with 60 per cent higher odds of pre-diabetes and 112 per cent higher odds of Type 2 diabetes in

women compared to those with normal glucose metabolism.

Men who lack social participation in clubs and groups had a 42 per cent higher risk of Type 2 diabetes, while those living alone had 94 per cent higher risk.

"This study is the first to determine the association of a broad range of social network characteristics--such as social support, network size or

type of relationships--with different stages of Type 2 diabetes," said lead author Stephanie Brinkhues, from the Maastricht University Medical Centre, in the Netherlands.

"As men living alone seem to be at a higher risk for the development of type 2 diabetes, they should become recognised as a high risk group in health care. Social network size and participation in social activities

may eventually be used as indicators of diabetes risk," added co-author Miranda Schram, from the varsity.

For the study, published in the journal BMC Public Health, the team involved 2,861 men and women aged 40 to 75 years.

Early changes in glucose metabolism may cause non-specific complaints such as tiredness and feeling unwell, which may explain

why individuals limit their social participation.

Promoting social integration and participation may be a promising target in prevention strategies for type 2 diabetes, the researchers suggested.

"Our findings support the idea that resolving social isolation may help prevent the development of Type 2 diabetes," Brinkhues added.

## Try these seven expert tips to slow down the process of ageing

Skin ageing is a common occurrence as the human body begins to age. While you can't really prevent the inevitable from happening, you can certainly slow down the process. Experts have suggested a number of solutions like using natural ingredients like jojoba rich in vitamin E and vitamin C, or by exploring skin resurfacing solutions to aid you. Dr. Atinderjeet Singh Tulla, Head of Department of the Dermat, Laser, Hair Transplant and Medical Services category at VLCC and Shubhika Jain, Founder of RAS Luxury Oils, have some tips:

### Skin Resurfacing solutions:

Skin resurfacing is a skin therapy is nowadays used for various skin corrections ranging from skin brightening, skin lightening, skin hydration, pigment correction, acne and acne scars improvement, reduction in superficial wrinkles and correction of photo damaged skin.

### Healthy diet:

Our diet can help make our skin healthier and youthful. Plenty of fresh fruits and green, leafy vegetables are recommended. While vitamin C is responsible for collagen production found in oranges, lemon, broccoli and kale, vitamin A from carrots, antioxidant rich berries must be included in our diet.

Nuts are a good source of vitamin E, healthy fats, selenium, magnesium and other micronutrients.

### Avoid sugar:

Food high in sugar accelerates aging of skin and inflammation. The most effective way for clear youthful skin is water which helps flushing out toxins.

### Thermage:

Due to ageing process, the facial skin starts drooping down and jowls appear on the face with the laugh lines becoming prominent. A bipolar radio frequency device which causes tissue heating resulting in collagen remodelling helps to improve the jowls and makes the laugh lines better resulting in lifting of face skin giving a younger fresher look to the face.

### Clean and natural ingredients:

What we apply on our skin must be good enough to eat as 60 per cent of what meets our skin goes directly into our bloodstream. Ingredients should be prioritised to reduce the adverse effects of using chemical loaded anti-ageing creams lotions which can lead to irritation, temporary fixations, long term respiratory issues and even cancer.

### HIFU (High Intensity Focussed Ultrasound):

This device-based treatment is based on ultrasound rays which cause tightening of the muscle layer beneath the facial skin and also works on the face skin resulting in collagen remodeling.

# India home to over one-third of world's malnourished children, six percent in Pakistan

According to a report released in November, India is home to the largest number of malnourished children in the world.

The report found that till the beginning of 2016, 40 percent of Indian children were undernourished. On the other hand, it pointed out that urban India is faced with the challenge of over nutrition.

The study came after a seminar in Guwahati also declared nearly 195 million of India's total population as 'undernourished', being devoid of access to healthy diet.

According to Wikipedia, despite India's 50% increase in GDP since 1991, more than one third of the world's malnourished children live in India. Among these, half of them under 3 are underweight and a third of wealthiest children are over-nutritioned. As per World Bank estimates, India is one of the highest ranking countries in the world for the number of children suffering from malnutrition. The prevalence of underweight children in India is among the highest in the world, and is nearly



double that of Sub Saharan Africa with dire consequences for mobility, mortality, productivity and economic growth. The 2017 Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report ranked India 97th out of 118 countries with a serious hunger situation. Amongst South Asian nations,

it ranks third behind only Afghanistan and Pakistan with a GHI score of 29.0. As India continues to consume non-nutritious, non-balanced food either in the form of under nutrition, over nutrition or micronutrient deficiencies, the availability of nutritious

food in markets plays an equally significant role in motivating the community to make the right choices. While the situation in India is certainly concerning, the Global Nutrition Report 2017 launched on

Monday revealed that 6 percent children in Pakistan, mostly belonging to the urban areas, are not only stunted but also facing obesity due to the consumption of junk food. The report, launched by the Planning Commission of Pakistan in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme, also revealed that Pakistan's spending on nutrition -- 3.7 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) -- was the lowest in Asia.

According to Dawn, National Manager for Pakistan Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement Dr Irshad Danish said that in Pakistan 70 percent people cannot afford a balanced diet. Dr Danish said 40 percent food was wasted in Pakistan but no one took steps to check it or create awareness about it. As per the report, a vast majority of the world's hungry and malnourished lived in developing countries. Southern Asia faces the greatest hunger burden with about 281 million undernourished people.

## Winter fashion 101: These 7 tips will help you look smart and stay warm

Make your winter stylish by opting for some smart jackets that are also warm.

Think of those classic biker jackets or doll-hued numbers when you are going for a trek with your squad or for a regular day at work.

On days when you feel you're looking basic, slip into a burgundy biker jacket and get sassy. It can amp up your classic black sweater and denim duo.

Go for a stylish mustard trench coat. Wear it with a pair of calf-length boots or with black office pumps.

Think a little vintage! Layer

your duos with a vintage denim jacket and get that up-and-urban look instantly.

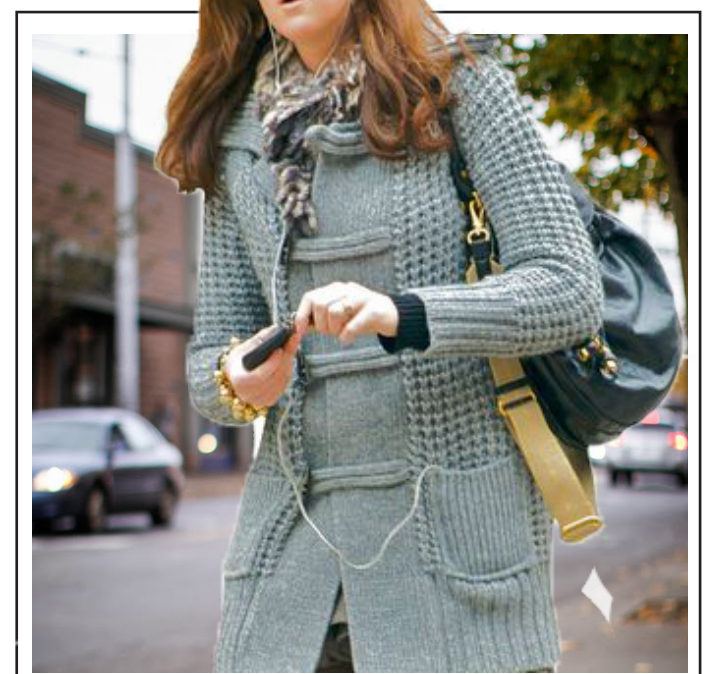
Get into a cutesy doll-hued number to prettify any of your regular looks. Style it with rose gold hoop earrings. Corduroy makes a comeback. Corduroy not only makes for a great fashion statement but is also extremely comfortable due to its soft, rich feel.

There are several styles in corduroy that are both chic and versatile and are available in deep colours like olive, burgundy and navy. You can opt for printed corduroy jackets or go

for the ones with intricate embroidery or patches.

Quilted jackets are forever trending in both soft shades of beige and grey and in darker tones of navy, brown and black. Faux fur trimming at the neckline and cuffs gives an edge to the overall look and keeps you cozy in the chilly winds.

Colourful ponchos are increasingly taking over the winter fashion scene. Whether it is the classic poncho or ones with a hood or turtleneck style, ponchos are much favoured when it is about an effortlessly fashionable look.



## Bharti Airtel to acquire Millicom's operations in Rwanda



NEW DELHI: Telecom giant Bharti Airtel on Tuesday entered into a definitive agreement with Millicom International Cellular S.A. under which Airtel Rwanda Limited will acquire 100 percent equity interest in Tigo Rwanda Limited. The acquisition will consolidate the Rwandan telecom market and position Airtel as a strong operator in Rwanda. The consideration for the transaction is based on approximately six times EBITDA multiple, payable over two years, and the agreement is subject to regulatory and statutory approvals.

Furthermore, existing Millicom Rwanda customers will join over 370 million customers on Airtel's global network across 17 countries and avail the benefits of a superior network, international roaming, and high quality 3G, 4G speed as well as Airtel Money services. "Airtel has taken proactive steps in Africa to consolidate and realign the market structure in the last few remaining countries where its operations are lagging on account of lower market share and presence of too many operators. Airtel and Tigo have already merged their operations to create a strong viable entity in Ghana. Today, it has taken yet another important step to acquire Tigo Rwanda to become a profitable and a strong challenger in a two-player market," said chairman Bharti Airtel, Sunil Bharti Mittal.

"We are also committed to the long term viability of our operations in two other countries- Kenya and Tanzania, to ensure that in 2018 all our 15 operations in Africa start contributing positive margins and cash flows towards a healthy and profitable Airtel Africa," he added. In the past, Airtel acquired assets in Uganda (Warid) and Congo B (Warid), Kenya (yu Mobile) and consolidated operations in Ghana (Millicom). The customers in these markets today enjoy a superior and wider network, affordable voice and data services, Airtel Money and better customer care.

With presence across 15 African countries, Airtel is one of the largest telecom service providers across the continent in terms of geographical reach and had close to 83 million customers at the end of quarter ended September 30, 2017.

Globally, Airtel is ranked as the third largest mobile services provider in terms of customer base. "The acquisition reinforces our commitment to the Rwanda market and is a significant step towards creating a stronger presence in the country. It will create synergies with our existing business and help boost operational efficiencies in the market. The Rwandan telecom market will significantly benefit from this acquisition, further reiterating our stand that in-market consolidations do not just help achieve better market positions but benefit customers and the industry as a whole," said MD and CEO Airtel Africa, Raghunath Mandava.

## KaHa raises USD 4.5 million to fuel expansion Drive

NEW DELHI: Early-stage venture capital fund YourNest on Tuesday announced that it had successfully participated in a round of fundraising for a Singapore-based consumer IoT company, KaHa. The funding is led by Metals International with the participation of Jungle Ventures, Spring Seeds Capital, Singapore, and existing investor YourNest. A total of USD 4.5 million is invested in KaHa, which will help drive the IoT company's expansion plans. "KaHa is a technology company which provides end-to-end solutions to its brand partners to achieve world-class smart products. Our IP in both software and hardware come with a state-of-the-art social platform," said founder and CEO, KaHa, Pawan Gandhi.

"Consumers across Asia, Europe, and North America are some of the most tech-savvy in the world, and our R&D is focused on anticipating their needs and wants in this fast-developing field. What sets us apart as a brand is our obsession with redefining the consumer experience, solving everyday problems and creating delightful social journeys," added Gandhi.

KaHa's key offerings include COVE and CO-VENet; IoT platforms which provide flexible solutions for launching smart networked devices and a one-stop solution for brands to bring exciting smart wearables to their customers.

They support a range of patented vertical consumer experience ranging from standard clinical health, wellness, sports and fitness, safety, smart payment, sensor-based gaming, smart fashion, home automation to smart automobile and is currently deployed in over 100,000 devices across Asia.

KaHa also offers an end-to-end solution for smart analogue watch tech, integrating everything from design, hardware, and firmware, iOS/Android application, to cloud services, analytics and after-sales service tools.

# SOBHA, Puravankara launch Marina One - Kerala's Premium Waterfront residential project

SOBHA Limited and Puravankara Limited, in co-ownership, launched Marina One, one of Kerala's largest Super Luxury waterfront homes in Kochi. Located in the heart of the city along Marine Drive amongst tranquil oceans views, the project offers an exclusive unmatched opulence.

Marina One has the unique distinction of a pristine 497-metre waterfront the likes of which Kochi is yet to witness. The proposition offering is of 1141 homes in total in 3BHK+study and 4BHK, ranging from 2296 sq. ft. to 3710 sq. ft. of super built up area.

These homes are arranged in a unique C-shaped design to offer splendid waterfront views to all the homes. Marina One is centrally located in the heart of the city and offers access to several super-specialty hospitals, some of the city's

best educational institutions, malls, markets, places of worship and much more. "Kochi is fast emerging as the commercial and industrial hub of Kerala. Industries such as tourism, spices, seafood, shipping and international trade are thriving in the city in recent times. The IT and ITES sector has also shown remarkable growth towards transforming the city into a key IT hub.

This has augmented the demand for luxury housing in the city, reflecting the aspirations of people. Kochi is also among the fastest growing 'tier II' cities in India with a major thrust on the real estate, making it a profitable investment option for Indians and NRIs. With Marina One, our aim is to meet the expectations of quality conscious and value discerning customers looking for luxury, style and comfortable living," said Chairman,



SOBHA Limited, Ravi Menon.

"We have been upbeat about the Kerala market. A lot of HNI Indians, along with NRIs from the US, UK, Singapore and the well informed local population see Kochi as an investment destination. Kochi too has undergone trans-

formation since the time we started operations here in 2005. The city is now well connected with the Metro line, has access to world class healthcare and educational facilities which have resulted in the growth of luxury home market. Marina One is another testimon-

ial to the home buyers' penchant to invest and settle in God's Own Country. We have used the state-of-art construction technology, unique design aesthetics and bespoke landscape which brings luxury at its best," said Managing Director Puravankara Limited, Ashish R. Puravankara. The residents of Marina One will have exclusive access to an expansive 5-acre Urban Park at the centre of 16.7 acres property. There is a large array of amenities offered in the Urban Park such as two vast swimming pools, including a 50-metre lap pool, mini theatre, landscaped parks and walking zones, kids' play area, community spaces and expansive greenery all along it. Additionally, it offers a luxurious club-house replete with sports and lifestyle spaces such as badminton courts, gym, spa, sauna and a convenience store.

## AU Small Finance Bank joins hands with Sahaj e-Village

NEW DELHI: AU Small Finance Bank has announced signing an MoU with Sahaj e-Village for extending its banking service in remote areas through Business Correspondent Agent (BC) model.

With this MoU, AU Bank will be able to further foster its mission of financial inclusion and greater customer outreach. Started in 1996, as AU Financiers, today AU Small Finance Bank has a track record of over twenty years of serving the underbanked and unbanked.

As per the agreement that was signed at the Jaipur headquarter of AU Bank, the BCs will act as an intermediary between the Bank and the customers in the interior locations where the Bank does not have a presence. The Sahaj Agents will gather information, counsel and provide customized products and services to these customers.

"Making banking easier, simple



and accessible is our key mission component. With this BC model tie up with Sahaj, AU Bank will be able to significantly expand its outreach to the hinterlands of India. With this MoU, we will be able to provide banking at 90+ new locations that did not have banking access hitherto and expand our customer out-

reach to over 500+ locations by March 2018," said MD and CEO, AU Small Finance Bank, Sanjay Agarwal. "We are delighted to associate with AU Bank for offering banking to the bottom of the pyramid. Sahaj has been working across 70,000 touch points in multiple gram panchayats for last ten years," said

Group CEO Sahaj e-Village Ltd., Sanjay Nandrajog.

"We bring assortment of financial inclusion, social inclusion and digital inclusion services to rural areas through village level entrepreneurs. This association is very synergic as AU Bank has a history of providing financial services to this strata as an NBFC, Au Financiers," added Sanjay.

Sahaj e-Village Limited is a venture initiative of SREI Infrastructure Finance Limited (SIFL) that has been bridging the digital divide between urban and rural India under the flagship of NeGP of the Government of India.

With the objective of ensuring enhanced financial inclusion and achieving greater outreach of the banking sector, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had permitted the banks to use the services of Business Correspondents (BC).

## Adidas to exit wearable fitness device segment



NEW YORK: German sportswear and equipment MNC Adidas announced that it will be closing down its hardware division, and therefore, will stall the production of wearable fitness devices. The announcement is one that has been doing rounds in the past as well, as Adidas had already been shifting focus from hardware development for a while now. "We're not going to see a new running watch from Adidas for a while," The Verge reported while quoting Stacey Burr, the vice president of wearable sports electronics at Adidas. Adidas had, in the past, released multiple wearable fitness trackers under the name miCoach, culminating in the miCoach Smart Run smartwatch. However, the company plans to move over to the software segment, specifically, the Adidas App and Runtastic, Adidas' mobile fitness company that combines traditional fitness with mobile applications, social networking and elements of gamification, which made its comeback in 2015.

However, the exit is not permanent, as Adidas has reportedly announced plans to partner with Fitbit for a curated edition of the iconic smart watch, scheduled for sometime in 2018.

## Motorola, Poorvika Mobiles tie-up to bring Moto Hub experience to TN, Karnataka

CHENNAI: Motorola on Tuesday partnered with a prominent retail chain in south India, Poorvika Mobiles, to strengthen its retail presence through Moto Hub stores across Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

This is the first of its kind strategic partnership where customers can access and experience the entire portfolio of Motorola devices in a retail format. "Offering premium customer experience has been a key pillar

of our strategy and our partnership with Poorvika Mobiles is a step further in that direction. Moto Hub will offer unique Moto experience to customers in an environment they are familiar with, further helping us engage our customers better," said MD Motorola Mobility India, Sudhin Mathur. "We are confident that Poorvika Mobiles' in-depth understanding of the local market and its substantial reach will be instru-

mental in consolidating Motorola's retail presence," added Mathur. "We have been operating in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka for the last 15 years and have a deep understanding of the needs and challenges of our customers. While we have the strength in reach, Motorola brings in the legacy of unparalleled customer experiences making this partnership a perfect combination. We share Motorola's vision of providing premium

customer experiences and are excited to kick start this relationship," said CEO Poorvika Mobiles, Uvaraj.

Motorola has been aggressively increasing its retail presence in south India; a market that has witnessed significant growth in the recent past. As part of the strategy to consolidate its offline presence, Motorola plans to open Moto Hub over 250 Poorvika stores across the 43 cities in Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and

Karnataka. The Moto Hub store will house the entire portfolio of Motorola devices, including the online exclusives like Moto e4+, Moto C+, Moto X4 and the popular Moto G families as well as Moto Z franchise and Moto MODs. They will also house Motorola accessories like on-ear and in-ear headphones, moto shells and covers. The newly launched Moto Mods will also be available for customers to experience and purchase.

## Aditya Birla Finance, MoneyTap partner to ease consumer lending

NEW DELHI: MoneyTap, an app-based credit line on Tuesday announced a strategic partnership with Aditya Birla Finance Limited (ABFL), a subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited, allowing MoneyTap users to avail credit from the latter.

Targeted at the middle-income consumer segment in 20 cities across India, the new partnership enables ABFL to leverage MoneyTap's technology and data platform to evaluate and issue credit to the customers and provide the best customer experience.

The partnership is in line with ABFL's commitment to provide easy financing to customers through digital channels. Currently, the company supports over 5000 daily online applications in the MSME and personal finance categories with an all-cloud hosted technology stack.

"Our partnership is aimed at ensuring hassle-free access to credit to address the growing needs of consumer credit. Given ABFL's rich expertise of SME underwriting and MoneyTap's innovative solution, this synergy allows us the opportunity to stay ahead of the industry curve while providing a world class experience to the customers," said Rakesh Singh, CEO-Aditya Birla Finance Limited. Since its launch in September 2016,

the app-based consumer credit line has attracted over one million users. The company also aims to offer Rs. 300 crores worth of credit by March 2018 and plans to partner with five other banks and NBFCs in the next six months. To keep up with its rapid expansion plans, MoneyTap is increasing its employee count and plans to add 50 new team members in tech, data, product, marketing and ops in the next six months.

"The partnership serves as a good example of disrupting a traditional banking process and leveraging technology to make the experience significantly better for customers," said Bala Parthasarathy, CEO and Co-founder, MoneyTap. On a related note, "Credit Line" means that the customer will be issued a credit limit of up to Rs 5 lakhs, without any collateral or charging any interest. The app also allows customers to decide their EMI plans and provides flexible payback periods ranging from two months to three years. The app also allows for the credit line to be replenished once all existing EMIs are paid back. All financial transactions such as billing and repayment are directly dealt with the respective bank or NBFC, using secure APIs, thus ensuring 100 percent secure transactions.

## Wheelstreet launches dockless commute in motorbike rental segment

BENGALURU: Smart mobility solution for urban commuters Wheelstreet on Tuesday launched a dockless commute platform - 'Wheelstreet Go' for its users. After getting a boost of USD 120k from American seed accelerator, Y Combinator, earlier in September, the start-up is expanding its offerings and looking to create a niche in the motorbike rental market. A one of its kind model, the dockless commute provides transportation from point A to point B without any human intervention. Moreover, the commuter will now be able to pick-up a bike within 100 metres, without any third party involvement. "The dockless commute has been launched in three specific regions in Bangalore including Koramangala, BTM, and HSR Layout. We have observed the trends of early adopters in these areas and have received a hearty response with high repeat usage per day trying the dockless commute in the pilot phase," said co-founder and CMO, Wheelstreet, Moksha Srivastava. Wheelstreet Go will make intra-city commute hassle-free and allow the user to book a scooter by merely scanning the QR



Code on the scooter available at the user's doorstep. "The dockless commute will solve a real problem in the Indian market. Technology enabled GPS, smart locks and immobilisers will ensure security of the bikes. We are excited with this newest feature of Wheelstreet and our consumers have reflected the same enthusiasm. We are also looking at adding 25,000 scooters to our existing fleet in the upcoming quarter," said co-founder and CEO, Wheelstreet, Pranay Shrivastava. Being the first ever company to launch a bike rental marketplace in India, Wheelstreet has taken the first mover advantage to launch station-less bikes in the form of 'WS GO'.



## YOUNGSTERS ARE VERY EXCITED TO PLAY FOR INDIA: DINESH KARTHIK

CUTTACK: Indian batsman Dinesh Karthik on Tuesday lauded the young players for grabbing opportunities and are excited to play for India.

Addressing a press conference, Karthik said, "It's a great opportunity for the young boys to come in and play for us. This is the first time and a very long time, the youngsters are playing in the team."

Karthik also thanked the Indian

selectors for giving them the opportunity to play for India.

"These are very exciting times for them (youngsters). Lots of guys are having Indian Premier League (IPL) experience and seniors are there to guide them. The youngsters are confident to play at the international level", added Karthik.

On being asked about the constant experimenting of the team squad,

Karthik explained, "That is the selectors' decision. We are trying out new players and assessing them that how they would react to a situation, whether it's ODIs or T20s. This (T20 series) is also a platform for the young guys to go out and show their talent."

The left-handed batsman also clarified that he would be batting at No 4 position in the limited-overs format. But, if required, depending

upon the situation of the match, he would be ready to bat anywhere down the middle order.

Asked about Basil Thampi, who is included in the squad, Karthik said, "Basil is a very good bowler. He is someone who bowls yorkers consistently. He is also very good in bowling slow balls and occasionally bowls the knuckle ball. He has all the ingredients for any T20 match."

India won both the Test series 1-0 and the ODI series 2-1 against Sri Lanka. They will play the first T20 international match at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack tomorrow.

Rohit Sharma will once again captain the T20 side, in Virat Kohli's absence. India will be looking to win the T20 series as well, as a confidence booster, ahead of their tough South Africa tour in January.

## Babar Azam quashes comparison with big player` Kohli



KARACHI: Pakistan middle-order batsman Babar Azam has played down his comparison with Indian skipper Virat Kohli, saying he should not be likened with such a 'big player'.

Describing Kohli as 'the No.1 batsman in the world', the 23-year-old said that he took wants to perform like the Indian skipper for Pakistan.

"He compared me with a very big player. I think it shouldn't be done. But that is the coach's thinking. Maybe the stats at the start of our careers are similar, but he is the No.1 batsman in the world. I want to perform at a high level for Pakistan too," ESPNcricinfo quoted Azam, as saying.

Last year, Pakistan head coach Mickey Arthur had likened Azam with Kohli, saying the 22-year-old is an exceptional player and could perform as good as the Indian swashbuckling batsman.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan batsman further revealed that he used to draw inspiration from South African star batsman AB de Villiers in the early days before, adding that nowadays he also looks at Kohli, Hashim Amla and others. "I loved watching AB de Villiers in the early days. I used to follow him closely. I copied him a lot too. In the nets, I used to at least try some of the shots he played in the matches. Those hadn't been played back then. I still don't try those shots. I play normally. Nowadays I follow Virat Kohli, Hashim Amla, and of course, de Villiers," he said.

When quizzed what advice he would give to the aspiring cricketers, Azam said that he would ask them to never compromise on their game and spend more time on the ground.

"I would say never compromise on your cricket. The more time you give to the ground, the more it will give back to you. Keep an eye on your fitness and give your 100 per cent in matches. Stay focussed," Azam said. Azam was called up to represent the green shirts during an ODI series against Zimbabwe, thus making an international debut on the home ground amidst Pakistan's isolation as an international cricketing venue in May 2015. In January this year, Azam became the joint-fastest player in history to score 1,000 career runs in one-day internationals when he struck a 100-ball 84 against Australia in the third ODI at the WACA, Perth. He reached the landmark in just 21 innings to join West Indies great Viv Richards, England's Kevin Pietersen and Jonathan Trott as well as South Africa's Quinton de Kock. Azam has appeared in a total of 36 ODIs for Pakistan scoring 1,758 runs and 11 Tests smashing 475 runs. He has also played 14 T20Is amassing 468 runs for the country.

Kohli, on the other hand, has performed exceedingly well across all formats of the game in the recent years. The Indian skipper, ranked No.1 in T20 and ODI cricket, has also moved up to the second spot in the latest Test batting rankings behind Steve Smith after his double century of 243 and 50 against Sri Lanka last month.

## De Villiers, Steyn back in Proteas squad for inaugural four-day Test

JOHANNESBURG: Wicketkeeper-batsman AB de Villiers and fast bowler Dale Steyn have made their long-awaited return to the 14-man national Test squad for the inaugural day-night Test against Zimbabwe, beginning at the St. George's Park in Port Elizabeth from Boxing Day.

De Villiers, regarded as one of the best batsmen of his generation and also as one of the greatest of all time, stepped down from Test captaincy in December 2016 following an elbow injury, which kept him out of the team for a long period. Later a self-imposed exile sidelined him from Tests in 2017.

The 34-year-old has been out of action since injuring his shoulder during a series against Australia in Perth in November last year. He recently made a return from long injury lay-off when he played for Titans in the Ram Slam T20 Challenge last month.

Meanwhile, Vernon Philander has also been recalled in the Proteas squad after missing the most recent series against Bangladesh following an injury picked up during the winter tour to Eng-



land. Reflecting on de Villiers and Steyn's inclusion, Cricket South Africa (CSA) National Selection Panel Convener Linda Zondi said that he feels really excited to have the two icons of the game back in the longest format of the game.

"It is a very exciting moment not just for South Africa but for world cricket to have Dale and AB, two icons of the game, back in the multi-day format. After Zimbabwe we have two very tough home Test Series coming up against India, the No. 1 ranked side in the world, and Australia, who have just regained the Ashes in their current series against England," Zondi said. "AB and Dale bring loads of experience to the side apart from being two of the South African all-time greats. It is also good to have Vernon back and

it is very encouraging that our four premium fast bowlers - Steyn, Philander, Kagiso Rabada and Morne Morkel - are all back in the selection mix," he also said about Vernon. Skipper Faf du Plessis, who was earlier doubtful for the day-night Test against Zimbabwe as Cricket South Africa was considering not to rush with his inclusion in the squad, has returned to the team after remaining out of action for six weeks.

The 33-year-old has not played cricket since sustaining an acute lumbar disc injury during the third ODI against Bangladesh late October and was subsequently sidelined for six weeks.

Following lone Test against Zimbabwe, South Africa are slated to host India for three-match Test series, six ODIs and three T20Is, starting on January 5 in Cape Town.

Standard Bank Proteas Test squad: Faf du Plessis (capt), Hashim Amla, Temba Bavuma, Quinton de Kock, Theunis de Bruyn, AB de Villiers, Dean Elgar, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Morne Morkel, Andile Phehlukwayo, Vernon Philander, Kagiso Rabada, Dale Steyn.

## Du Plessis doubtful for inaugural four-day Test



JOHANNESBURG: South Africa Test skipper Faf du Plessis, who is recovering from a back injury, is doubtful for the inaugural four-day Test against Zimbabwe, starting on Boxing Day.

The 33-year-old sustained an acute lumbar disc injury during the third ODI against Bangladesh late October and was subsequently sidelined for six weeks.

However, du Plessis underwent surgery on a problematic shoulder during that period and, therefore, was forced to miss the recently-concluded Ram Slam. He was also not named in the Cricket South Africa (CSA) Invitation XI for a warm-up match against Zimbabwe, which is to be held on Wednesday. Last week, South Africa team manager, Dr Mohammed Moosajee, had said that though du Plessis is 'on track' to full fitness, a late decision would be taken given the workload over the coming three months.

"If we reach next week and see that Faf would benefit from another week off, then we will give him that time. We are not going to be foolish with his return, because there is a lot of cricket over the next few months," ESPNcricinfo quoted Moosajee, as saying.

In case du Plessis miss the inaugural four-day day-night Test, South Africa would have a ready-made replacement in AB de Villiers, who is eager to make a return in the longest format of the game. South Africa can also rope in stand-in skipper Dean Elgar, who led the side at Lord's when du Plessis was on paternity leave. Following lone Test against Zimbabwe, South Africa are slated to host India for three-match Test series, six ODIs and three T20Is, starting on January 5 in Cape Town.

## Vijender Singh's trainer confident of his 'knockout win' over Ernest Amuzu



NEW DELHI: With just few days to go for the mega double title defence fight, Vijender Singh's trainer Lee Beard is confident of the Indian boxing sensation's knockout win against African middleweight champion from Ghana Ernest Amuzu at the Saiwai Mansingh Stadium on December 23 in Jaipur.

Vijender will be defending his WBO Oriental and Asia Pacific Super middleweight titles, which he won after winning six bouts abroad and three in India. This bout will be his fourth in the country.

While Ernest Amuzu is leaving no stone unturned to make his punches stronger by the day, the Indian boxing sensation is not far behind either.

As the fight is coming closer, the intensity of Vijender's training is increasing day by day and his trainer Lee Beard is very impressed with the hard work Vijender is putting in.

"He is training very hard in India from the last sometime, he has been sparring 10-12 rounds daily with 3-4 different guys and also putting the strength and condition to work hard also. We know about the opponent, and we have been working on the technical part of the game planning. We have run a few tests on him and he looks in good shape for the fight," he said. Talking about Vijender's opponent, Lee Beard said "You know Ernest Amuzu has got a good record, and he is strong fighter who has played a lot of fights but Vijender is an amazing boxer and always focused on the strategies planned by us. Vijender has boxed off many tough fighters who have had different style of boxing, but southpaw is bit more difficult to fight & he has fought less opponents of southpaw. But he is good at every technical style boxing. This is a fight which he should

be able to control easily enough with his jabbing and boxing abilities, it's just he's been in the ring many times with fighters similar to Amuzu, so this should not oppose to many difficulties to adjust from southpaw to orthodox because he has done too many times in his career over the years". "We are looking to put on a good show, he has been training hard. We just had a great session and he feels strong. Technically also he is going great and is hitting it very clean and accurate. So I think he will be able to control the fight in the first 2-3 rounds, start breaking his opponent down, hopefully in the middle rounds get the guy out with it. And vijender is much more gifted than Amuzu, it's not about what Amuzu is going bring for him, he just has to put a good show and perform his best when gets in that ring that'll be enough for him.

And as long he will perform and sticks to the game plan that we have set on he should be able to control able to the control first few rounds" added Lee Beard. This will be Vijender's last fight of 2017 and the Indian wishes to end the year on a winning note that too with a knockout win. On the other hand, Amuzu holds a good record of 25 fights with 23 wins (21 Knockouts), and two loss having played 122 rounds of professional boxing. Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Amandeep Singh and two times Asian Boxing champion Kuldeep Singh will also be featured in the six all-Indian undercard bouts of Vijender Singh's fight night.



## Smith closes in on Bradman's record in ICC Test rankings

DUBAI: Australian skipper and top-ranked Steve Smith's phenomenal run has lifted him to new heights in the latest ICC Test Player rankings as he has moved closer towards Don Bradman's highest-ever ranking points after a match-winning double-century in the third Ashes Test against England in Perth.

The Australia captain's innings of 239, which helped his team regain the Ashes by taking an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series, has seen him reach a tally of 945 points to take joint second position in the all-time list along with Len Hutton.

Smith had reached 941 points after the first Test in Adelaide before dropping briefly to 938 after the Brisbane Test.

Smith, who has gained seven points after his Perth performance to overtake Peter May, Ricky Ponting and Jack Hobbs and to within 16 points of Bradman's tally of 961 points, has had a minimum of 918 points over the past 12 months, which is 25 more than second-placed Virat Kohli's current total.

His batting average of 62.32 is second only to Bradman in terms of batsmen with at least 20 Test innings and by the time the fourth Test of the series starts on Boxing Day, he would be the number one for two years.

Smith is already ahead of Bradman with regard to the number of Tests at the top. He has now been number one for 114 Tests, which is the fifth-most in a list led by Gary Sobers (189 Tests) and with Viv Richards (179), Lara (140) and Tendulkar (139) the others ahead of him.

Other batsmen to reach career-best rankings after the Perth Test include Dawid Malan of England (up 47 places to a career-best 52nd) after his innings of 140 and 54 in Perth and Mitchell Marsh of Australia (up 44 places to 65th) after his score of 181.

Meanwhile, Jonny Bairstow (up one place to 15th) and Usman Khawaja (up two places to 19th) have also moved up.

In the bowlers' list led by England's new-ball bowler James Anderson, Australia pace bowler Josh Hazlewood has gained one slot to move into the top five after finishing with eight wickets in the match. Pat Cummins of Australia (up four places to a career-best 39th) and Craig Overton of England (up seven places to 89th) have also gained in the latest rankings.

Australia, who won the Perth Test by an innings and 41 runs at the WACA to regain the coveted urn, will now play the inconsequential fourth Test against England, beginning December 26 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).