

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

THURSDAY

- DECEMBER, 21, 2017
- 02 RABI-AL-SANI 1439 AH
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- VOLUME: 03
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	7.6	2.2
JAMMU	26.5	12.2
LEH	5.8	-10.5
KARGIL	N/A	N/A

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

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 08° C & 1° C respectively.

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

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ZULFKAR FOR COMMUNITY MONITORING OF DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES

INDIA HAS COMPLETED DNA TESTING OF FAMILIES OF 39 INDIANS, SAYS SUSHMA

SIAM PRESENTS ROADMAP FOR 100 PCT ELECTRIC VEHICLES BY 2047

ASHES 2017: STEVE SMITH COULD SURPASS RICKY PONTING AS AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN, SAYS

Kashmir shuts against civilian killings

Authorities impose restrictions in Srinagar areas IGP says situation remained 'normal'

Srinagar, Dec 20: Authorities on Wednesday imposed restrictions in Srinagar parts while a complete shutdown was observed across the Valley to protest against the civilian killings in the Valley.

Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) including Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik had called for a shutdown today against the three civilian killings at different places in last one week.

However, the district administration Srinagar had decided to impose restrictions in Srinagar areas as precautionary measure.

The restrictions in Srinagar areas falling under the jurisdiction of Khanyar, Rainawari, Nowhatta, M.R. Gunj and Safa Kadal Police Stations were imposed to thwart any protest, officials said.

They said that areas under Maisuma and Kral Khud Police Stations remained under partial restrictions.



Heavy contingents of forces were deployed in Srinagar areas who had erected concertina wires on the road, which halted the pedestrian as well as the vehicular movement, local sources said.

Meanwhile, the Hurriyat Conference (M) chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was also put under house detention.

"Placed under #HouseArrest again,

while the inhuman brutal killings of #Kashmiris including our young women continue and the collaborators who preside over them sing paens of their masters!," Mirwaiz wrote on twitter.

Meanwhile, a complete shutdown was today observed across the Valley to protest against the civilian killings in the Valley.

All the shops, business establish-

ments and petrol pumps remained closed throughout the day while the vehicular movement was also thin on the roads.

In view of the shutdown call, authorities suspended the train services for "security reasons" in the Kashmir valley today.

"We have suspended all train runs in the Kashmir valley for security

Decks finally clear for Tasaduq to get into Upper House

Governor returns from New Delhi, sending back file in two days

Srinagar, Dec 20: Decks seem to have been finally cleared for Tasaduq Hussain Mufti to get into the Upper House as Governor NN Vohra has returned to Raj Bhavan after attending series of meetings in New Delhi.

Sources told KNS that the Governor N N Vohra is likely to send the file back to government with his approval for nominating Tasaduq Hussain Mufti as the member of the State Legislative Council in a few days, however the sources in the legislative council told KNS that the approval was still pending and they



are expecting it anytime soon.

See **Tasaduq**...Pg 02

KASHMIR'S TOURISM ON DECLINE AS ARRIVALS SEE 56 PER CENT DIP

People associated with the trade hope amid despair

Srinagar, Dec 20: The latest data coming to fore reveal the difficult phase through which Kashmir's tourism industry is passing at present.

As per the reports received by KNS there is mere 15 per cent occupancy, down from 70-80 per cent a year ago in Kashmir hotels and that the political uncertainty and

See **DIP**...Pg 02

WEATHER TO REMAIN DRY AND CLOUDY TILL DEC 31

Srinagar, Dec 20: Meteorological Department Wednesday said that till the end of this December month, weather will remain mostly remain cloudy and dry. It however added that on some occasion there will be scanty rainfall that will not affect the weather system to any extent.

Sonam Lotus, the Head See **Weather**...Pg 02

Road Widening: CITY TRADERS DEMAND REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION

Srinagar, Dec 20: The traders from Zero Bridge Rajbagh Wednesday expressed their anger towards Government apathy as it has undertaken road widening process for Zero-Bridge, IG link road without compensating and rehabilitating them.

Government has already laid foundation for upgradation of road from Zero Bridge to IG road with a length of 10.5 Kms.

The project will be executed at an estimated cost of Rs 28.79 crore and will cover areas between Zero Bridge to IG Road via flood spill channel and Kursoo Bund road

See **City**...Pg 02

Budget 2018-19 to be presented on Jan 11

Speaker issues provisional calendar for 6th session of 12th Legislative Assembly

Jammu, Dec 20: Speaker, Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Kavinder Gupta today issued the provisional calendar for 6th Session of the 12th Legislative Assembly scheduled to begin with Governor's Address on 2 January 2018. The session is scheduled to culminate of 10 February 2018.

The Budget for the financial year 2018-19 would be presented by the Finance Minister, Dr Haseeb Drabu in the House on 11 January 2018. This will be his fourth budget in a row.



The House will take up discussion on Motion of Thanks on Governor's Address on 3rd and 9th January. The discussion on Motion of Thanks on Governor's Address will continue on 10 January

See **Budget**...Pg 02

NC LEGISLATURE PARTY DISCUSSES STRATEGY FOR UPCOMING BUDGET SESSION

Discusses various issues likely to be taken up in Legislative Assembly

Jammu, Dec 20: To devise strategy and to discuss issues to be taken up during the ensuing Budget Session of the Jammu and

See **NC**...Pg 02

Death of new born baby: SRINAGAR FAMILY MOVES COURT AGAINST PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Srinagar, Dec 20: A family from Kashmir capital Srinagar has accused a private hospital of 'killing' their baby and has now approached a court against the authorities of the hospital.

The family has alleged that their baby died due to medical negligence and has sought de-registration and stern action against the hospital.

The hospital in question is 'Noora Hospital' located at Umarabad HMT area in the outskirts of Srinagar city while the complainant is Gazala Mumtaz, wife of Altaf Asrar, a resident of Narbal on the outskirts of Srinagar

See **Hospital**...Pg 02

40 days of biting cold: Chillai Kalan begins

Srinagar, Dec 20: The December 21st marks the beginning of the 40-day winter period known as 'Chillai Kalan'. This period is considered as the coldest period of winter in Kashmir. During the 40 day 'Chillai Kalan', it is said earth goes dead; air and water are the coldest. According to local beliefs, 'Chillai Kalan' is followed by 20-day-long 'Chillai Khurd' and 10-day-long 'Chillai Bacha'. Chillai Kalan is the period when the chances of snowfall are maximum and the most frequent as well and valleyites experience bone-chilling cold wave.



celebrated as Shab-e Yalda- "Night of Birth", or Shab-e Chelleh. - "Night of Forty". It is the Persian winter solstice celebration which has been popular since ancient times. Iranian Azerbaijanis call it Chilla Gejasi, which means the beginning of the first 40 days of winter.

See **Kalan**...Pg 02

FULLFILL DEMANDS OF NREGA EMPLOYEES: TARIGAMI

'Future of hundreds of qualified youths is at stake'

Jammu, Dec 20: Urging upon the Government to resolve the demands of contractual employees working under MG NREGA on different categories of posts Garameen Rozgar Sewaks (GRS), Technical Assistants, computer operators and program officers, senior CPI (M) leader and MLA Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said that these employees working under this flagship programme are protesting from long time demanding regularization of their services and enhancement of their wages.

In a statement issued to KNS, Tarigami said that their demand for regularization being quite genuine and justifiable should be fulfilled at the earliest. "These employees were recruited as per merit and that too in a transparent

See **Tarigami**...Pg 02

Free dialysis for poor kidney patients soon, Govt releases, 10 lac to each district hospital

On pilot basis, dialysis to be conducted in JLN, Anantnag District hospital: Minister

Srinagar, Dec 20: In a major relief to poor patients of chronic kidney disease, the dialysis facility will soon be available at the all District hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The government is making arrangements to start dialysis units at District hospitals. The facility would first be extended to 12 hospitals, 6 from Jammu and 6 Kashmir and then would be taken to other hospitals," Minister of the state for Health Asiya Naqash told KNS over phone.

Jammu and Kashmir has a severe shortage of facility of dialysis, a life-saving process for patients with kidney failure.

See **Kidney**...Pg 02



has already started the project and has released 10 lac to each District hospital across the state. "On pilot basis, the free dialysis for Kashmir

See **Kidney**...Pg 02

POLICE PREVENTS RASHEED FROM VISITING SHOPIAN

Srinagar, Dec 20: "Police disallowed legislator Engineer Rasheed from visiting Shopian where party had planned a protest march against the killing of Ruby Jan at the hands of security forces," AIP in a statement said on Wednesday.

Er. Rasheed was detained by police on way to Shopian and lodged in police station Rajbagh.

A Party spokesman condemned the police action and added that Government has lost the moral battle and is ruling only through the barrel of the gun. Spokesman said, "the claims of police officials that people are themselves responsible for the incidents claiming human lives by visiting encounter sites proves the fact that militants enjoy a popular support. Security agencies must introspect that why people risk their lives and feel their lives more

See **Police**...Pg 02

India, US discuss terrorist designation mechanisms

New Delhi: Even as China continued to block the listing of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar in the UN-designated list of international terrorists, India and the US discussed procedures for pursuing designations against terrorist groups and individuals through domestic and international mechanisms.

The discussion came up at the inaugural India-US



Designations Dialogue that was held in New Delhi on Monday and Tuesday. An identical statement

issued by both the governments said the dialogue was to discuss increasing bilateral cooperation on terrorism-related designations.

"The establishment of this mechanism reflects shared Indian and US commitments to strengthen cooperation against terrorist threats," it said.

"The Indian and US delegations exchanged

See **India**...Pg 02

OPPRESSIVE TACTICS PROVE FRAGILITY OF DEMOCRACY IN JK: MALIK

JKLF delegations visits Shopian, Kupwara, express solidarity with bereaved families

Srinagar, Dec 20: Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Muhammad Yasin Malik on Wednesday said that the handing over of political activists arrested at Islamabad on Dec 15 to Special Task Force (SOG) and using customary 'illegal police tactics' to prolong their incarceration has proved the 'fragility and absurdity' of Indian democracy in Jammu Kashmir.

In a statement issued to KNS, Malik while condemning the ongoing oppression and extra-judicial tactics applied

See **Malik**...Pg 02

2-DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR ON YOGA BEGINS AT CENTRAL UNIVERSITY JAMMU

BALI FOR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE YOGA, AYUSH FOR OVERALL HUMAN WELLNESS

Several initiatives in pipeline for augmentation of AYUSH by Central University: Prof Aima

JAMMU, DECEMBER 20 – Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat inaugurated 2-day National Seminar on “Role of Yoga and Naturopathy for Total Health” in the Central University of Jammu here today.

The event has been organized by the Yoga Centre of Central University Jammu in collaboration with the Union Ministry of AYUSH with an objective to highlight the importance of Yoga and its benefits for the human health. More than 150 delegates from across the State and about one and half dozen Resource Persons (Yoga Experts) from outside are participating in the seminar and deliberating in length and breadth on the Yoga.

Prominent among the participants are Vice Chancellor, Central University of Jammu, Prof Ashok Aima, Secretary Technical (Health & Medical Education) and Director Indian System of Medicines, Dr. Abdul Kabir Dar, In-charge Yoga Centre, Central University, Dr. D.S. Choudhary, key Resource Persons, Dr.

Upinder Babu Khatri, Dr. Sang Mittra, Dr. Udhm Singh, Dr. Surendra Kumar, Dr. Kamakshya Kumar, Dr. Subodh Tiwari, Dr. Omjee, several faculty Members of Central University and large number of students, members of civil society and Yoga lovers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that Yoga is an ancient traditional practice across the world to keep away from diseases and fitness of body and mind. Originated from India, now the entire world has recognized its importance and adapted it for their well being. With the efforts of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi the Yoga has received due recognition at the global level and world community commemorates it on 21st of June every year with all enthusiasm.

Emphasizing the need for creating awareness in the society for the promotion of Yoga and its benefits, the Minister called upon the social organizations, educational institutions to make collective and holistic efforts to enlighten the



masses and spreading it in every nook and corner of the State so that more and more people adept it in life and remain healthy. He said during the past two to three decades, the Yoga and traditional system of medicines like AYUSH has become popular in the society and number of patients has increased manifold. He said Government has taken several initiatives to upgrade the AYUSH

sector in the State to cope up the rush of patients. The AYUSH treatment is available in every district and sub-district hospital across the State, besides exclusive network of AYUSH health centres in the State, said the Minister.

Keeping in view its importance, the Government has revived the Ayurvedic College in Jammu with 50 intake capacity of BAMS seats after more than four

decades. The said Ayurvedic College existed in Jammu about 42 years ago, but was closed down by the then Government for unknown reasons. Similarly, the Unani Medical College in Kashmir will also start its functioning from the next year as the building is at its final phase. To promote AYUSH sector in Ladakh, the Government will shortly notify and recognize the traditional Amchi and Sowa Rigpa system which already prevalent in the Ladakh region, said the Minister.

He said the State has lot of herbal potential, and Government will make every possible effort to tap it and utilize for the best patient care. He said Government will develop a High-tech Nursery for medicinal plants in Jammu to produce the raw material for the AYUSH medicines. He said that educational institutions, including Universities can play an important role in promoting the AYUSH sector in the State in association with the Government, for which a road-map will be drawn shortly. He called

upon the authorities of Central University to take initiative for establishing Naturopathy and Homeopathy Colleges as a first step to promote the AYUSH sector, for which the Government will fully coordinate, said the Minister.

Prof. Ashok Aima, Dr. Abdul Kabir Dar and other Yoga experts also highlighted the importance of Yoga and AYUSH and expressed their views to make this traditional system more popular and vibrant so that people from all walks of life can adopt the same easily in their day-to-day life.

The Vice Chancellor also honoured the guests with souvenirs. He also thanked the participants for making the event a grand success. He said the event will go a long way in promoting the Yoga among students and Members of the civil society. He said the Central University has already established a Yoga Centre and students are taking lot of interests in its short-term courses. He said several initiatives are in pipeline and will be pursued vigorously to give them practical shape.

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SHUTS

reasons following advisory from the police,” officials said. Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Range, Munir Ahmad Khan told KNS that the situation remained peaceful throughout the day. “No untoward incident occurred at any place,” he said.

TASADUQ

“It is most likely that Governor will put down his stamp of approval on the recommendation of the state cabinet and will send the file back to the government this week,” sources told KNS.

The State government had recommended Mufti’s nomination to Upper House last week and had sent the recommendation to Governor for an approval. Tasaduq is likely to be inducted as minister in the Mehbooba Mufti led PDP-BJP coalition government. However the PDP sources said that the induction may be put on hold till the assembly session that begins on 2nd of January was over. There is however now official confirmation from PDP regarding the same.

Prior to sending the file to Raj Bhavan, it was circulated among the cabinet ministers all of whom put down their signatures for recommendation one by one.

Tasaduq, as per the reports, is likely to be inducted into council of ministers and with his induction into the council of ministers the PDP would be filling its vacant cabinet berth left unfilled by the party for the last two years. The source also disclosed that Tasaduq is likely to get tourism portfolio.

DIP

continued violence has left no scope for this sector to witness any profits this year.

In a bid to rejuvenate Kashmir’s dying tourism industry, the government launched a new five-minute film to counter perceived “negative portrayal of Kashmiris” and highlight the hospitality offered by Valley locals to visitors. The video, Warmest Place on Earth, garnered over 1.5 million views on Facebook and 35 thousand views on YouTube in a little over 24 hours. It was released by the chief minister Mehbooba Mufti at a grand launch function in Srinagar on Saturday evening attended by senior minister and top officials.

However on ground, the hotel owners say the situation hasn’t changed at all. According to them, their hotels continue to wear deserted looks with tourists not preferring to visit valley amid the hostile situation.

As per the reports, the year proved worst for Kashmir’s tourism sector after 2016 that witnessed five months violence that resulted in the killing of 90 people.

According to figures from the government’s tourism department, some 403,000 tourists visited the valley during the first four months of 2016, but only 181,000 tourists arrived during the same period this year – revealing a dreadful dip of 56 percent.

Some 20 percent of the state’s 12.5 million people directly or indirectly depend on tourism for their livelihoods.

Data compiled by the Indian Journal of Economics and Development in 2016 show that 425,000 people are directly dependent on tourism for their income. They include management and employees of hotels, houseboats, guest houses, restaurant dormitories and tent houses.

A further 2.1 million Kashmiri people indirectly depend on tourism, such as taxi drivers, shopkeepers, vendors and fruit sellers.

Tourism accounts for 7 percent of the state’s income and is considered an important sector of Kashmir’s economy. The state government, as per official records, has spent over US\$ 1 million on promotional campaigns and advertising in the Indian and international media.

WEATHER

of the MeT office here in Jammu and Kashmir said the information available with him till date is that weather will remain dry and cloudy till December 31.

“The occasional rain or snowfall at some places can’t be ruled out. But, over all the weather will remain constantly cloudy till the end of this month,” he said.

CITY

(5.25 kms), area from Lal Mandi to Jawahar Nagar (1.75 kms) and areas from Lal Mandi to IG Road via Hazoori Bagh, Bakshi Stadium and Tulsii Bagh including Indoor Stadium link (3.50 kms).

The traders from Zero Bridge Rajbagh who staged protest said that they are not against the road widening plan, but want government to rehabilitate and compensate them.

The protesting traders told news agency CNS that their business will get affected badly and they will not be able to meet their both ends. “We request Divisional Commissioner

Kashmir to address our grievances,” the shopkeepers who held protest under the banner of City Traders Guild said.

President, Altaf Ahmed Dar appealed Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to look into the matter.

BUDGET

with the reply thereto. The annual statement of expenditure (Budget) for the year 2018-19 and supplementary statement of expenditure for the year 2017-18 will be presented in the House on 11 January while general discussion on Budget will be held on January 12 and January 15 in two sittings. The general discussion on Budget and reply thereto will be again held on January 16.

From January 17 to February 1, the House would take up for discussion demand of grants for individual departments. On February 2, the House would take up the Appropriation Bill.

Meanwhile, February 3 has been dedicated for Government Business, followed by Private Members Bills on February 5.

Private Members Resolutions will be taken on February 6 and Private Members Bills on February 7 while Government Business would be taken up on February 9 and February 10 also.

NC

Kashmir State Legislature, a joint meeting of the National Conference members of both the Houses was held at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here today.

Working President and Legislative Party leader in the Legislative Assembly Omar Abdullah presided over the meeting.

The meeting discussed various issues likely to be taken up in the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council during the session, beginning January 2, 2018. It also took stock of the prevailing political scenario in the state.

Omar Abdullah hoped that the members would vociferously take up the issues of immense public importance with special focus on difficulties faced by the people in their constituencies as also in the state.

HOSPITAL

city. The family has approached the State Commission for Consumer Protection against Noora Hospital for shifting her newborn baby to a government hospital without oxygen support, resulting in his death.

In her complaint to the court, Gazala Mumtaz has accused the hospital authorities of grave medical negligence, resulting in the death of her baby on November 21. She has submitted that the doctors at Noora Hospital handed over the baby boy to her without pediatric check-up soon after his birth.

Altaf Asrar, the father of the newborn baby told news agency CNS that there was no pediatrician available in the hospital while after the three hours of his birth, the family was told that the condition of baby critical and needs to be shifted to the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Bemina.

“Even the patient treatment sheet issued by Noora Hospital revealed that the baby had refused to take feed and may be shifted to higher centre for further management,” he said. “At SKIMS, we were told that the baby had respiratory distress as he had been shifted from Noora Hospital to SKIMS without oxygen support.”

“Patient received by the postgraduate doctor on duty without oxygen support,” reads a note on the baby’s admission slip issued by SKIMS.

The baby was put on the ventilator at SKIMS but after seven days of struggle he passed away, Asrar said.

Asrar said his wife was treated by retired professor of gynaecology Dr Saleem Akhtar at Noora Hospital.

As per records, the expected date of delivery of the baby was December 2.

Asrar alleged that Dr Akhtar insisted on operating upon his wife “almost 20 days before the due date”.

Gazala was operated on November 14, giving birth to a healthy and active baby, he said.

However, the baby was not taking feed and the family told the hospital authorities to get him examined from a pediatrician.

Mumtaz has sought a compensation of Rs 2.1 crore from Noora Hospital for medical negligence, resulting in the death of her baby.

Managing director, Noora Hospital, Manzoor Ahmad told CNS that there was no question of medical negligence. “In fact we provided an ambulance to the family but they refused saying they will shift the baby in their private vehicle,” he said.

KALAN

During this harsh cold period the electricity woes are set to irritate common People once again and likely even shortage of commodities due to closure of National Highway connecting Kashmir with rest of world.

Danish Bhat, a student states – “In Kashmir Chillai Kalan has its own charm and people with traditional dress and food etc enjoy in own way. Though there are some hardships during chillai Kalan but the traditional symbols like Pheran, Kangri, fried vegetables help people to face it with smile. If the administration and the government gear up and provide better electricity supply and other basic amenities to the masses entire period of Chillai Kalan would be a nice experience and help masses to face harsh cold in a better way.”

Pertinently, Chillai Kalan has also been a treasure for Kashmiri literature and folk as the bare trees, snowfall and winter chill of this period have provided awesome content for many folk songs and poems.

TARIGAMI

manner on the basis of higher qualification and are doing their job since years on meager salary.”

“Govt has no clear cut job policy for these employees due to which future of hundreds of qualified youths is at stake. Most of these employees have crossed the age limit fixed for a government job”.

The CPI(M) leader demanded that these employees be paid the remuneration on the pattern of employees working under SSA which is substantially higher than those working in J&K State.

KIDNEY

patients will start in JLN and District Hospital Anantnag,” she claimed.

She added that within two months, the free dialysis will be available in 12 hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister said that the state government had submitted the proposal for starting dialysis to Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under the program implementation plan of National Health Mission. “The Union Ministry has extended full support for establishment of dialysis units at district level, with the provision of providing free of cost dialysis to patients belonging to BPL category and charging others the minimum cost,” she maintained.

The move hopes to tide over the shortage of dialysis beds in government hospitals. As of now, only few government hospitals are equipped with the facility and the available resource is quite skewed. There are two dialysis units in SMHS Hospital and eight at SKIMS Soura. Eight new dialysis units were added to the infrastructure of Government Medical College Srinagar, at Super-Specialty Hospital, GMC Srinagar.

As per the reports a patient has to pay about Rs 1500 per session at government hospitals. The same costs at least Rs 6,000-8,000 in the private sector. Depending on the condition a patient needs 10-12 sessions per month, making it rather unaffordable.

One of the doctors in nephrology department SKIMS said that the demand of Dialysis would swell in future keeping in mind the projected increase in number of patients suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure.

Many states have already put in place dialysis centers, supported by GoI, or on public-private partnership, at various hospitals, to increase access to this service.

Union Health Ministry recently approved Rs 200 lakhs for J&K for “provision of free dialysis services to the poor” based on the proposal submitted by state government. The funding is part of Union Budget 2016-17 for starting of ‘National Dialysis Programme’ under NHM, the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme was rolled out in 2016.

POLICE

insecure at the hands of security forces than the militants”.

Spokesman further said, “it is disgraceful that the forces first kill Kashmiris and then don’t allow even to mourn their murders. If Government sincerely believes that Forces are innocent and killings take place because of cross fire it must allow everybody including political activists of different thoughts to visit the ground zero to find the truth. However the strict restrictions and caging genuine voices have exposed Government.”

Spokesman urged Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to move beyond her traditional condolences shedding crocodile tears and said that Chief Minister has failed miserably to protect the duty for which people had voted her to power.

INDIA

information on procedures for pursuing designations against terrorist groups and individuals, through domestic

and international mechanisms. They also discussed best practices for effective implementation of the designations.”

The statement said Washington would host the second India-US Designations Dialogue next year.

The meeting assumes significance after China said last month that due to the lack of consensus at the UN Security Council committee, the application seeking a ban on Azhar has been rejected.

Beijing has for the second time vetoed the proposal which was first moved by India at the Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council in March last year.

It did the same to a US proposal backed by France and Britain, first blocking it in January and then put a technical hold for three months in August. A new resolution will have to be moved now.

The statement is also important in the context of the US designating Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi as the masterminds of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack.

Saeed, who carries a \$10 million US bounty for his role in terrorist activities, was let go last month by Pakistani authorities in Lahore after a court refused to extend his house arrest citing lack of evidence. He had been under house arrest since January 30.

Over 160 people were killed and over 300 injured when the LeT militants launched a series of attacks on India’s commercial capital in November 2008.

Tuesday’s statement gave rise to speculation that the two countries could be looking at designating and issuing sanctions against more people involved in terror-related activities in the region.

MALIK

by police and other occupational forces said, “Indian rulers and the local government should feel some shame on these oppressive and undemocratic acts.”

He said that the handing over of political activists of JKLF and Hurriyat (G) namely Merajuddin Parry, Mudasir Ahmad, Umer Aadil Dar, Shah Wali Muhammad, Moulana Mudasir Nadwi and Abdul Ahad to SOG and using traditional illegal police tactics to prolong their incarceration as ‘worst form of intimidation’. Malik said that by stopping a peaceful public rally using iron fist of police and forces, arresting peaceful political activists, using oppressive tactics to prolong their incarceration etc are all glaring examples of the fragility and absurdity of Indian democracy in Jammu Kashmir.

JKLF chairman said that in November 2017, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and others issued press statements about defeating the resistance movement in Jammu Kashmir.

“These Indian ministers boastfully claimed that whole Jammu Kashmir was with India and that no one was with Resistance movement here,” he said, adding that Joint Resistance Leadership while reciprocating these statements on 23rd November 2017 announced to hold a peaceful public rally in Islamabad and said that it was a litmus test for Indian democracy and if Indian Ministers and the local government really believed in democracy and had faith in their own claims will allow this public meeting.

“Arrogant Indian rulers and the local government led by PDP chose to ban the public rally and arrested me (Muhammad Yasin Malik) and Mirwaiz Muhammad Umer Farooq along with many others and kept Syed Ali Shah Geani under house as usual. Not only this, police also clamped a stringent curfew in Srinagar and whole of south Kashmir and arrested scores of people including above mentioned activists and thus banned the democratic program. This was a clear proof that Indian leadership and the JK government possessed no guts to compete with the resistance camp on political front and only believed in suppressing the people’s voices with military and police might,” Malik said.

While condemning the slapping of Public Safety Act (PSA) on JKLF activist in Banderpora Bijbehara namely Showkat Ahmad Bhat who has been shifted to Kuthwa jail now, JKLF chairman said that thousands of young and old have been put into jails and police stations by democrats, which is a glaring example of the tyrannical behavior and undemocratic attitude of India and the local government.

Meanwhile, JKLF leader Zahoor Ahmad Butt along with a delegation visited Kupwara and paid tributes to innocent martyr Asif Iqbal.

Similarly, JKLF district president Pulwama Javiad Ahmad Butt along with a delegation visited Batmuran Shupian and participated in the funeral prayers of martyr Ruby Jan.

He also visited the bereaved family of Tanveer Ahmad and expressed solidarity with them.

JKLF spokesman said that on both the places, JKLF leaders while addressing people said that the sacred blood of these martyrs will never go in vain and their mission will be taken forward at every cost.

Zulfkar for community monitoring of developmental programmes

Lays foundation of Rs 23 cr tribal cluster village project

RAJOURI, DECEMBER 20: The Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs Choudhary Zulfkar Ali today pitched for intensive Social Development Monitoring and periodic study of developmental activities by the project participants or targeted beneficiaries.

"They can suggest action for enhanced participation, achieve inclusiveness, articulation of accountability, responsiveness and transparency by implementing agencies with a declared purpose of making an impact on their socio-economic status," the Minister added.

He was addressing huge public gathering after laying foundation stone of Tribal Cluster Village Keri-Bhella-Gundah-Dhaleri here at Keri. He said the Tribal villages, untouched by development having marginalised sections of the society will be provided with sustained funding amounting to Rs 23 Crore over a period of three years for bridging the infrastructural gaps with focus on edu-

cation and healthcare and creating sustainable employment avenues for tribal population.

He said the Tribal Development Plan is aimed at enhancing capacity for growth, enhancing skills and faster generation of employment, managing the environment, providing markets for efficiency and inclusion, transfer of technology and innovation, improved access to quality education and better preventive and curative healthcare besides strengthening road connectivity, water and electricity supply to the inhabitants of Tribal villages.

The Minister, while advocating to make it as a model cluster village to be replicated in rest of the country, asked the DDC to revise the already formulated DPR and finalise a practically achievable development plan for keeping in view needs and aspirations of the locals.

Meanwhile taking forward the government's outreach initiative to the



remotest parts of the district, Zulfkar listened to the issues of Public at a series of public grievances redress camps held at Dharamsal, Gadyog, Keri and Taleri.

The People in scores thronged the camps and sought earlier redressal of their issues of non-availability of drinking water, electricity and adequate health-

care facilities, strengthening of poor road connectivity and provisions of pension to the old aged and widowed.

People demanded up-gradation of GMS Bayinamal to High School, GHS Badhal to Higher Secondary and GMS Keri to high school, primary schools at Khani, Keri, Chappar, Mora Cheen, and Khuriyan, transformers at Tangli, Gowdha and Khani, Anganwari centers as also early completion of Koterankhawas, Dalhori-Gadyog, Bayinamal, Keri-Gandoh, Dharamsal-Gadyog roads and inclusion of left out deserving households under PMAY.

Issue of compensation for land acquired for Khawas-Keri road, Sheep center at Chika Khait and water supply to households of Chika Khait were also projected in the camps.

District officers responded to the issues pertaining to their departments and apprised about the latest status of the projects and expected time of completion.

The Minister issued on spot directions to officers for timely resolving the issues. He enjoined upon the DDC to conduct frequent visits to the underprivileged areas to listen to the grievances of the public and also hold special PSGA and Medical camps. He said a robust district administration is a key to timely completion of the development projects of the government.

The Minister also directed the DDC to prepare detailed project report for development of Pandah, Badas and Pan-kassi villages as Tribal Cluster Village under Tribal Development Plan.

DDC Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary along with team of District Officers including SSP Yougal Manhas, CEO RDA Dr. Tahir Firdous, SDM Gopal Singh, DSWO Dr. Abdul Khahir, ADFCS & CAS Javaid Iqbal, executive engineers Nisar Khan, Munshi Khan, Sadeeq Wani and other District and sectoral officers accompanied the Minister during his day-long tour.

Adequate funds earmarked for solid waste management in Basholi town: Lal Singh

JAMMU, DECEMBER 20: Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment Choudhary Lal Singh today said that Government has earmarked Rs 1 crore for proper disposal of Solid and Liquid Waste in Basholi Town.

The Minister was speaking at a meeting of officers, here today at Civil Secretariat. Chairman State Pollution Control Board, B Siddhartha, Director Social Forestry Ashwani Gupta, Managing Director State Forest Corporation, Suresh Gupta, Additional Deputy Commissioner Basholi Sanjay Gupta, Additional Secretary to Tourism Gulzar Ahmed Shabnam, Chief Executive Officer Sarthal-Bani Development Authority Sundershan Kumar, Expert Solid and Liquid Waste Management Zaffar Iqbal besides other senior officers of Forests and



Tourism departments attended the meeting.

Choudhary Lal Singh said that under the project, Government has sanctioned two dustbins for each household for segregated collection of bio and solid waste. He said two auto rickshaws with trolley have been put in service for door to door waste lifting and dumping at the identified place.

The Minister asked the concerned department to educate the people of all 13-wards of Basholi town about proper disposal of Solid and Liquid Waste by holding awareness camps. He directed the officers to immediately complete tender and other codal formalities for early start of the project in the town.

Choudhary Lal Singh

asked the Experts of Solid and Liquid Waste Management to take immediate action to ensure proper sanitation and collection of garbage from narrow streets of the town.

Later, the Minister also chaired a meeting of the officers of Tourism department and reviewed the issues related to the identification of the area to be brought under newly created Basholi-Bani Development Authority.

Choudhary Lal Singh instructed for inclusion of all areas of tourism potential of the Basholi and Bani towns. He directed the Tourism Department to fill the vacancies in the Basholi-Bani Development Authority for making it fully functional. He stressed on fast tracking the execution of tourism infrastructure in the jurisdiction of the development authority.

Sale of fertilizers without PoS machines illegal: Dir Agri

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 20: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Syed Altaf Aijaz Andrabi today convened a high-level meeting to review the implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system and to review the progress on installation of Point-of-Sale (PoS) machines at all the fertilizer sale centres and outlets across Kashmir Division.

Chief Agriculture Officers of all the districts of Kashmir Division, officers of Law Enforcement Agencies, other concerned officers, representatives of different fertilizer companies, fertilizer distributors and dealers were present at the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Agriculture said that the installation of Point-of-Sale machines at all the fertilizer sale outlets across Kash-



mir Division is one of the series of reforms adopted by the department in bringing transparency in the fertilizer distribution system. He instructed the concerned agencies to achieve 100 percent target in the installation of "PoS machines" in all the fertilizer sale centres across the Kashmir Division within the

stipulated timeframe.

He said that these machines are connected to a server that uploads every transaction on the portal and can be monitored in any part of the country. He said these machines display price, quantity and other credentials of the customer, which leaves no scope for any malpractice in

the system. Director Agriculture said that the department is leaving no stone unturned in introducing digitization at its all the levels of functioning in order to strengthen transparency and accountability in the department. He said that the installation of PoS Machines will definitely keep a check on the black marketing.

FCS&CA Deptt making efforts to ensure adequate availability of food grains: Dir

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 20: Directorate, Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Kashmir today informed that the department is making best efforts to ensure the availability of food grains at every nook and corner of the State.

Clarifying on a news report published in a newspaper today, the Director FCS&CA Kashmir assured that rice, atta, sugar, kerosene oil and LPG is available in adequate quantity everywhere in Kashmir province, including remote and border areas of Ladakh, Gurez, Karanah, Machil, Keran, Tangdhar. He

informed the food grains, and petroleum products have already been duped abundance till May 2018 in these remote areas. Dumping of food grains has been made in full for 500 sale centres in Kashmir valley, which will suffice upto ending of March 2018, where there is heavy snowfall, he added.

Giving breakup about the food grains provided to the beneficiaries, the Director said that every soul under NFSA is entitled to 5 kg of foodgrains including rice and atta 5kg per soul under MMSFES subject to a maximum of 35kg per month

to each family in plain areas and 50kg per month per family in border areas where production of food grains negligible. The department is also distributing atta in every district as per the permissible scale and the rationees are at liberty to take either rice or Atta or both. However, for Kashmir Division the ratio of rice and Atta is 95% and 5% respectively under NFSA and Atta is not provided under MMSFES. The Atta is preferably distributed more in hilly areas where its demand is high.

It was further revealed that the

department is also regularly distributing sugar among the Priority Household (AAY, BPL and PHH) a scale of 500 grams/soul on the subsidized rates of Rs. 25/- per Kg. The department has already released 598621.65 qtls of food grains (rice and Atta) for the month of December.

'Similarly, Sugar to the extent of 19808 qtls for the month of December has been released out of which 16000 qtls have been made available at the sale centers as on date. Beside kerosene oil to the extent of 3000 kls has already been released for

the month of December 2017.

It was further revealed that during the month of October and November 2017, the Directorate has issued 3000 Kls (30 lac liters) each in Kashmir Valley. The distribution of the same is monitored in every district through the Assistant Director and other officials of the department.

The Director informed in case of any grievance, the public can contact the department on its toll-free No: 18001807011, 1967 and 0194-2455019 for redressal of their grievance if any.

ADC Bla penalizes 7 companies for violating FSS Act

BARAMULLA, DECEMBER 20: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla Farooq Ahmad Baba today imposed a fine of Rs 22,200 on 7 leading companies and hoteliers over providing sub-standard services to the visiting customers.

A team of officials led by the Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Azhar Iqbal and Food Safety officer Yasir Haleem inspected these companies and hotels wherein they found the sub-standard services being provided to the people. The matter was brought into the notice of ADC, who is also the adjudicating officer, imposed a fine under section 51 of Food Safety & Standard (FSS) Act.

DDC Anantnag reviews progress under district credit plan

Advance of Rs 285498 lakh pumped in different sectors

ANANTNAG, DECEMBER 20: The District Development Commissioner, Anantnag, Mohammad Younis Malik today chaired a review meeting of the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) for the 2nd quarter of 2017-18 with officers of line departments and bankers here at DC office.

On the occasion, the DDC was informed that by the end of September, 2017, Rs 386104 lakhs have been deposited out of which an advance of Rs 285498 lakhs has been made making the credit deposit ratio of 73.94%.

Under priority sector lending, a credit of Rs 544.67 crore has been extended in favour of 20581 beneficiaries against the target of Rs 1290 crore, thereby registering an achieve-



ment of 42%. The meeting was informed that a total of 133 bank branches are operating in the district, besides 83 Banking Correspondents (BC), while as new bank branches have been established at Peer Takiya, Hillar Arhama and Khanabal. Meanwhile, the DDC directed the bankers to establish BCs wherever, required.

While reviewing the PMEGP scheme, the DDC directed the GM industries to ensure the sponsoring of

cases to the banks as per the fixed targets. The DDC also reviewed the performance under NRLM, NULM, DEDS, Handicrafts, Handloom, Agriculture, Education, Housing for all and other schemes.

Following the low intake of education loans, the DDC directed the LBM to ensure more awareness camps are organized in Higher Secondary School level so that students are able to avail the loans.

Under Stand-up India scheme, 8 cases have been

sponsored in the district. The DDC appreciated the sponsoring under this scheme as this is meant for the downtrodden sections of the society viz. women, SC and ST beneficiaries under which a loan of Rs 10 lakhs to Rs 1 crore can be availed in manufacturing, services and trading sectors.

Meanwhile, the DDC instructed all the officers and bankers to work in synergy so that tangible improvements are witnessed at the ground level. He said that due to lack of awareness, people are not coming forward to avail benefits under different schemes. He also called for organising of camps at educational institutions so that students belonging to lower income families are able to avail loans

in order to get the better education.

Reviewing the performance of schemes like Housing for All, Himayat, DEDS, NURM, Stand Up India and like, the DDC called for putting in extra efforts so that the benefits under these schemes can be reached to the people.

The meeting was attended by Programme Officer ICDS, General Manager, Industries, Chief Planning Officer, ACD, Chief Agriculture Officer, officers from other line departments- Social Welfare, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, KVIB, NURM, NULM, Lead Bank Manager, Director RSETI and representatives from different banks.

Dir Tourism launches 'Free Fly' tour package

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 20: Director Tourism Kashmir Mahmood A Shah launched a 'Free Fly' holiday package exclusive for Kashmir offered by Cox & Kings - a tour company.

The special holiday package has been designed to give impetus to the tourist flow to Kashmir. The package offers free to and fro air ticket between Delhi and Srinagar on booking holidays to Kashmir.

Director Tourism Kashmir launched the package along with Senior Vice President of Cox & Kings Yusuf Poonawal here at Nigeen Club on Tuesday evening.

Hailing the efforts of the Cox & Kings, Director Tourism

Kashmir said such packages by the leading tour companies will help in improving the tourist flow to Valley. "We need customized tour packages to Kashmir for innovative marketing when other states have also upped their marketing strategies," he said.

A special marketing team of the Cox & Kings from all states of the country arrived Srinagar on December 15, 2017 and visited valley's most popular tourist destinations like Gulmarg, Pahalgam.

The team filmed the destinations and also reviewed the infrastructure development to showcase to their clients.

Director Tourism Kashmir

said such trips to Kashmir by the leading tour companies will surely dilute the negative perception among the intending visitors.

Cox & Kings Senior Vice President of Yusuf Poonawal said the package is for any traveller wishing to visit Kashmir. "Once the traveller books the land package, we will provide him free to and fro air ticket between Delhi and Srinagar," he announced.

He said Cox & Kings receives a good number of queries from the travellers for Kashmir holidays.

"Kashmir is on the priority list of the travellers. This offer will further boost tourist influx to Kashmir."

Time and Us

Editorial
SRINAGAR
& J&K

WIN WITHOUT THE SHINE

If winning were the only thing, then the BJP has plenty to cheer about in Gujarat, where it recorded a sixth straight victory in what was practically a straight fight with its principal rival, the Congress. Together, with a comfortable win in Himachal Pradesh, this may, on the face of it, seem like another step towards its stated goal of a "Congress-mukth Bharat". But, no. Whatever the BJP leaders may say, the victory — by an extremely slim majority and well short of the 150-plus seats it aimed to win — is a setback. After all, Narendra Modi's home State was the centrepiece of the BJP's campaign in the last Lok Sabha election, where it was sold to the rest of India as the model for development. If Gujarat was the launch pad for the BJP's national-level ambitions, it now seems to have held out a ray of hope for a Congress desperately looking to revive its political fortunes. Not having won in the State since 1985, the Congress put up its best showing in 32 years. Admittedly, the BJP was ahead by almost eight percentage points, but at the end of the day — thanks largely to the swing towards the Congress in the Saurashtra region — only about 20 seats separated the two parties. The Congress won by smaller margins in a vast swathe of rural Gujarat, where there is a palpable agrarian distress; as for the BJP, its relatively bigger wins in urban pockets were insufficient to convert its decent lead in overall vote share into a commensurate number of seats. In Himachal Pradesh, the difference in vote share was smaller, seven percentage points, but the BJP won a much higher share of the seats, close to a two-thirds majority. The caste or social alliances built by the Congress yielded rich dividends in its strongholds, allowing it to close the gap. The Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti led by Hardik Patel gave the Congress an edge in the Saurashtra-Kutch region. Alpesh Thakor, leader of a grouping of backward classes, and Jignesh Mevani, who organised Dalits against attacks by Hindutva cow vigilantes, won, giving the Congress the appearance of support from a wider social base. But the Congress probably failed to appear to be a cohesive formation with an alternative programme to challenge the BJP.

If Gujarat shaded the BJP's celebrations with a touch of grey, so in a way did Himachal Pradesh. Despite the big win, the party faced the ignominy of seeing its chief ministerial candidate, Prem Kumar Dhumal, lose to his Congress rival. In a State that has alternated between the Congress and the BJP in the last three decades, the vote was arguably as much against the Congress as for the BJP. With both States under its control, the BJP can be expected to push forward its reforms agenda with renewed vigour. It may well be tempted to believe that neither demonetisation nor the flawed roll-out of the GST regime has dented its support among traders and the middle class. But the heart-stopper in Gujarat has given enough reason for it to rethink, do a reality check and reconnect with the remote parts of India.

END OF MUGABE ERA

► John Cherian

THE Robert Mugabe era in Zimbabwean politics seems to be finally over. The 93-year-old leader had plenty of opportunities to leave gracefully but he insisted on keeping the top job. The Zimbabwean army, which removed the President and put him under house arrest on November 15, denied that there was a coup d'etat. The military spokesman said on national television that the "temporary" takeover was only to "target criminals" who had congregated around the head of state and were causing social and economic hardship in the country. "As soon as we accomplish our mission we expect the situation to return to normal," the army spokesman said. Tensions had been building up in the country with the date for new general elections nearing.

In the last couple of years, the veterans of the liberation struggle, who occupied top positions in the government, were methodically sidelined. The sudden removal of Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's senior-most colleague and presumed heir apparent, from the Cabinet in the first week of October set alarm bells ringing in the country's political establishment. Mnangagwa, known as "the crocodile", a nom de guerre he earned during the liberation struggle, has strong support within the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and the country's security establishment. The veterans of the liberation struggle still occupy key positions in the government, the bureaucracy and the army. They were loath to see Grace Mugabe, the President's wife, emerging as the flag bearer of the ZANU-PF in the coming elections.

In recent months, the youth wing of the ZANU-PF comprising a generation for whom the liberation struggle is a distant memory had rallied behind Grace Mugabe. Its leadership even warned the army leadership against interfering in politics. The "war veterans", who were the bedrock of support for Mugabe in the past, broke ranks in 2016 and threatened to tie up even with the opposition to defeat Mugabe at the elections in 2018. Chris Mutsangwa, the leader of the war veterans group, said in Johannesburg that Grace Mugabe was a "mad woman" who got power "through a coup—a marriage certificate". He praised the military for its action, calling it a "bloodless correction of gross abuse of power" that would help Zimbabwe return to "genuine democracy".

Zimbabwe's army chief, Gen. Constantine Chivenga, had publicly aired his displeasure about the alleged shenanigans of the Mugabe government and the ZANU-PF government two days before the army moved in. The army chief, also a veteran of the liberation struggle, had warned that the army was prepared to "step in" to end the turmoil in the ruling party. The army acted on its threat after signs of resistance from sections of the ZANU-PF aligned with Grace Mugabe. Soldiers blocked access to the President's official residence, the courts and government buildings. Otherwise, life in the capital, Harare, was reported to be normal, with people carrying on with their lives. The Zimbabwean security forces have historically close links with the ruling party. The main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), did not criticise the army's intervention but expressed the hope that the rule of law would be restored at the earliest. Senior opposition politicians told the media that the military



"COMRADE BOB", AS HE IS KNOWN, WAS AMONG THE GROUP OF PROGRESSIVE LEADERS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT AND COULD BE COUNTED ON TO STAND UP AGAINST THE MACHINATIONS OF THE WEST IN AFRICA. THE SPEECH HE DELIVERED IN THIS YEAR'S UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS A TESTAMENT TO HIS ANTI-IMPERIALIST CREDENTIALS. IN ZIMBABWE, HE WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SPREAD OF EDUCATION AND ADULT LITERACY.

top brass had established contact with them and suggested the formation of an interim government in which all the major parties would have a role. The opposition is expected to be offered the posts of Vice President and Prime Minister in a government headed by Mnangagwa.

South Africa and the broader region would welcome such an arrangement. The spokesman for the Zimbabwean armed forces assured his countrymen on national television that the President and his family were "safe and sound and their security is guaranteed". The spokesman once again denied that a coup had taken place and said "as soon as the armed forces are done, the situation will come back to normal".

South African nod

The military's limited intervention in Zimbabwean politics, which has so far been a one-off occurrence in southern Africa, seems to have the tacit approval of South Africa, the region's economic and political powerhouse. The Zimbabwean army chief was in China in early October. China is Zimbabwe's strongest international ally and has invested heavily in the country's economy. During the liberation struggle, ZANU's main backer was China. The country has a big role to play in keeping Zimbabwe's economy afloat.

Zimbabwe is a rich country, endowed with bountiful mineral riches, fertile land and an educated population. A combination

of factors, external and internal, led to the deterioration of its economy, and around a decade ago inflation made its currency worthless. The country had to jettison its currency and allow currencies such as the U.S. dollar, the South African rand and even the Indian rupee to become legal tender.

After his dismissal, Mnangagwa was allowed to take refuge in South Africa. He was also allowed to leave once the new chain of events was set in motion. South African President Jacob Zuma had a talk with Mugabe after he was kept under house arrest and expressed the hope that civilians would be back in control at the earliest. Efforts seem to be ongoing to convince Mugabe to either resign or designate Mnangagwa as the ZANU-PF's candidate for the presidency.

Zimbabweans still have a lot of respect for their leader. It will not be a surprise if Mugabe is allowed to spend the rest of his life in comfortable retirement in Zimbabwe or abroad.

Mugabe is the only leader Zimbabweans have known since their nation became independent in 1980 after a brutal war of liberation. Though Mugabe himself did not personally participate in the guerilla war against the white settler government of Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe was then known, he was the undisputed leader of ZANU.

"Comrade Bob", as he is known, was among the group of progressive leaders on the Af-

rican continent and could be counted on to stand up against the machinations of the West in Africa. The speech he delivered in this year's United Nations General Assembly is a testament to his anti-imperialist credentials. In Zimbabwe, he will be remembered for contributions to the spread of education and adult literacy.

The land reforms programme that he implemented came in for much criticism. It may have been executed in a haphazard manner, but it was long overdue. One per cent of the white population was owning more than 70 per cent of the best agricultural land in the country. It was only in the last two years that Mugabe allowed his wife, Grace, to openly test the political waters, much to the consternation of ZANU-PF's old guard. Mugabe had also started sidelining long-serving members of his Cabinet.

Last year, another Vice President and a veteran of the liberation struggle, Joice Mujuru, was dismissed from the Cabinet. Some of them had ambitions of their own to succeed Mugabe.

One reason why Mugabe could continue so long at the helm of affairs was the intense infighting in the ruling party to succeed him. Now, with the ruling party, with a little bit of help from the army, finding a candidate to fill the huge void left by Mugabe, Zimbabwe can hopefully enter a period of political and economic stability.

How Gujarat was won

► Sanjay Kumar

THE Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has managed only a modest victory in Gujarat, confirming some earlier psephological predictions and ground reports of a close electoral contest. Two polls conducted by us at Lokniti, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), one in end-October and another in end-November, had found the electoral race between the BJP and the Congress to have tightened considerably. In fact, the November survey had found the race to be neck-and-neck in terms of vote share. That trend, however, did not hold entirely till Voting Day. It now seems that a last-minute swing by some voters towards the final stages of the campaign ended up giving the edge to the BJP.

We say this based on evidence gathered from a post-poll, a survey of voters at their residences after they voted, conducted by Lokniti. The poll reveals that over two in every five voters (43%) took a final call on who they would vote for in the last two weeks of campaigning — and more than half of them (53%)

said they voted for the BJP while only about 38% went with the Congress. In fact, a majority of these late deciders are those who decided at the last minute, either on the day of voting or a day or two before it. In 2012 the share of late deciders had been much lower, at 31%, and back then they had split their vote evenly between the BJP and the Congress.

The question then is, what really happened, between the last week of November when our final pre-poll took place and the second week of December when actual voting took place, that made some disaffected voters planning to vote for the Congress change their minds? The answer to this question is not so difficult to find.

We believe that it is quite obviously Prime Minister Narendra Modi's campaigning, which was for the most part controversial and divisive, that played a role in turning a section of voters towards the BJP, thus saving it from a possible defeat. This is the period when the Prime Minister, who is hugely liked in Gujarat (by 72% of those surveyed, post-poll), campaigned extensively in

the State. Starting from November 27 right up till December 11, he addressed more than 30 election rallies across the State. Most of his speeches, especially the ones made at rallies post-December 5, focussed on divisive themes. Mandir-Masjid, Mughals, Pakistan, Ahmed Patel, Salman Nizami, etc., he practised classic dog-whistle politics by using coded language that might have stoked passions among some sections of the electorate.

In our final pre-poll done in end-November, we had found only about 45% of Hindu voters to be voting for the BJP. In the post-poll, we noticed that eventually nearly 52% of them ended up voting for the incumbent party. This is also three points higher than the Hindu support that the BJP received in 2012. While our post-poll also suggests an increase in Muslim votes for the BJP compared to last time, at the same time it also points to a consolidation of Hindu votes behind the party in Assembly seats where the Muslim population is much higher than average. In constituencies where Muslims in the population are less than 10%, the

BJP's lead over the Congress among Hindu voters is only 4 percentage points. In seats where Muslims constitute 10-20% of the population, the gap is six times higher at 25 points. And in areas where Muslims are over 20% of the population, the BJP leads the Congress by 42 points among Hindu voters. In our pre-poll, these gaps had been minus-3, 16 and 11 points, respectively.

Among the major worries of the BJP all throughout the campaign had been the Patidar disaffection with the party as well as the Congress's attempts to build a rainbow coalition of different castes by roping in young Patel, Dalit and OBC (Other Backward Classes) leaders on its side. By giving communal overtones to the campaign, the Prime Minister seems to have ensured a subsuming of some of these caste identities within the Hindu fold, thus helping the BJP hold on to its bastion. We notice a shift away from the Congress among all Hindu communities, be it Patidars, Kshatriyas, Dalits, and Adivasis, between the pre-poll and the post-poll. To be fair, it wasn't just the BJP that played the

Hindu card; the Congress tried doing it too, albeit covertly. All throughout the campaign, Rahul Gandhi, who led the party campaign, steered clear of raising issues concerning Muslim voters and instead chose to appeal to majoritarian sentiments by visiting temples across the State.

However, eventually it seems that in this competition to woo the Gujarati Hindus, most Hindu voters, particularly urban ones, were more convinced by Mr. Modi's insinuations than by Mr. Gandhi's attempts at asserting his Hindu-ness. The Congress's strategic abandonment of its pluralistic legacy for electoral gains is to our mind as worrying as the communal rhetoric in Mr. Modi's campaign.

Also, the fact that a seemingly neck-and-neck election can be turned around in such a short span by appealing to the majoritarian impulses of voters raises troubling questions about the health of our electoral democracy.

A section of the Gujarati press may have also played a role, perhaps inadvertently, in effecting the late swing of

some voters. A day after Mr. Modi raised a hue and cry at one of his rallies about Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar's remark calling him a "neech kism ka aadmi (a low type of man)", the hugely popular Gujarati newspaper, Gujarat Samachar, which has otherwise been quite critical of Mr. Modi over the years, ran a headline on its front page: "Modi neech jaatino maanas chhe: Mani Shankar Aiyar (Modi is a man from a lower caste says Mani Shankar Aiyar)". While Mr. Aiyar had described Mr. Modi as "neech", the newspaper chose to give the remark its own spin, or rather Mr. Modi's spin, by adding the word "jaati" to it. Such misreporting of Mr. Aiyar's comment in sections of the press just a day before voting was to take place in Saurashtra-Kutchh and South Gujarat may well have affected the mood of a significant proportion of voters. Our series of surveys in Gujarat suggest that on an average about one-third of voters in Gujarat are daily readers of newspapers. Among such voters, the BJP's lead over the Congress widened from 8 points in the pre-poll to 14 points in the post-poll.

India has completed DNA testing of families of 39 Indians, says Sushma Swaraj



NEW DELHI: India has completed the DNA testing of the families of 39 Indians missing from Iraq's Mosul city since 2014 and forwarded the samples to Iraqi authorities for matching with the mortal remains in the graves there, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

The government has been making all possible efforts to trace the 39 Indian workers missing in Iraq and currently it is trying to obtain proof of their being alive or dead, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said in a written reply to a question.

Asked if the government has initiated and completed the DNA testing of the families of 39 Indian workers who were kidnapped from Mosul, Swaraj said, "Yes, the government has initiated the process... DNA samples, as received from our respective state governments, have been forwarded to the Iraqi authorities."

Urgent steps were taken to arrange for DNA samples of the family members of the missing Indians to assist the Iraqi authorities in their investigations, she said. The process was initiated after Iraqi authorities informed India about the mass graves found in and around Mosul and Badush areas following the liberation of that region from the control of the terrorist organisation ISIS.

"The Iraqi Martyr's Foundation asked for DNA samples of the close relatives of the missing Indians for matching with the mortal remains...", the minister said.

BSP chief Mayawati demands withdrawal of UPCOC bill



LUCKNOW: BSP chief Mayawati has demanded the withdrawal of the UPCOC bill, which was introduced in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly today, saying the ruling government might misuse it to suppress Dalits and religious minorities. The state government introduced the bill to enact a stringent law on the lines of the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) to combat land mafia, mining mafia and organised crimes in the state. Mayawati said the Yogi Adityanath government is already

misusing various laws for communal and political reasons, and the UPCOC bill, if passed, will only worsen the situation. "Laws are grossly misused in the state to the extent that any BJP worker walks up to a police station and the police registers false cases against people," Mayawati said in a statement here. "The UPCOC will be used for suppression of the poor, Dalits, backwards and the religious minorities," she said, adding that she wanted the bill to be withdrawn in public interest.

MODI TURNS EMOTIONAL AT BJP MEET

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday turned emotional as he recalled the struggle and contribution of the Bharatiya Janata Party leaders in building the party in Gujarat where the saffron party notched up its sixth consecutive assembly win. Addressing the BJP Parliamentary party, Mr. Modi was seen holding back his tears, according to those present at the meeting, at least three times as he named Jana Sangh and BJP leaders, some of them now dead, who built the organisation in Gujarat, which has become a party citadel for over two decades.

It was a big achievement for the BJP to win power in the state for a sixth term with more vote share, he said, asking party leaders not to be affected by the Opposition's "disinformation campaign."

The Congress has projected Gujarat results, where it won its biggest tally since 1985 polls by winning 77 seats while the BJP with 99 seats got its lowest since 1990, as a "moral victory" for itself, a claim termed as a "laughable exercise" by BJP chief Amit Shah at Wednesday's meeting.

In his address, Mr. Modi also said that Congress under Indira Gandhi got to rule 18 states but the BJP and its allies were in power in 19 states as of now. The saffron party had achieved such a political feat in its three-and-a-half-year rule at the Centre.

Mr. Modi fondly recalled how former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee congratulated him in person when the party fared well in a Lok Sabha election from Gujarat, noting that he, then a relatively new entrant to the BJP from the RSS and a general secretary in charge of the state, was not widely known in the party, sources said. Mr. Modi also noted that it was Vajpayee's magnanimity to reach out to him. Mr. Modi broke into tears as he recalled the work of Makrand Desai, Arvind Maniyar and Vasantrao Gajendragadkar among others in building the party, known as Jana Sangh in its earlier avatar, in Gujarat, the sources said. He said they and countless other leaders and workers had made huge sacrifices as he asked party leaders to work with dedication and humility to win people's support. Seeking the promotion of young leaders at every level in the organisation, Mr. Modi referred to his association with Mr. Shah and spoke about how he groomed the BJP president, 14 years younger to the Prime Minister, the sources said.

Jaya's hospital video 'politicised to lowest level': Stalin

CHENNAI: Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Working President M K Stalin on Wednesday expressed anger and disgust over the video of former Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalitha on a hospital bed that was released by the TTV Dinakaran faction.

The irked DMK chief alleged that the video was "politicised to its lowest level".

"The death of Jayalalitha was mysterious and after the release of this video, it had been politicised to its lowest level. This video will not have any impact on the R K Nagar Bypoll," Stalin said while speaking to reporters here.

Stalin's statement comes hours after the TTV Dinakaran faction of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) released the video clipping of Jayalalitha.

Soon following that, the DMK is planning to approach the Election Commission (EC) against the TTV Dinakaran faction. DMK leader and Member of Parliament TKS Elangovan alleged that the video was released for personal gain and is a violation of Election Commission of India's Model Code of Conduct.

"When Jayalalitha was in hospital for more than a month and people were very anxious, nobody released the video. She was a great leader of the state. She was the chief minister of our state and people needed to know about her health. But these people did not release the video at that time and now, they are using it for their personal gain, which is absolutely wrong and violating the model code of conduct. We will complain to Election Commission," Elangovan told ANI. The video of Jayalalitha came a day before R K Nagar by-polls. Earlier, Dinakaran supporter P Vetrivel had denied the reports that no one met Jayalalitha in the hospital.

"It's false that no one met Jayalalitha in the hospital; there's a video proof. We waited for days and released it now as we were left with no option. The Enquiry Commission has not summoned us yet. If it does, we will submit evidence to them," Vetrivel told the media.

The video shows a frail Jayalalitha on a bed with an I-V drip attached to her right hand.

The Election Commission has issued a notice to all TV channels and newspapers to stop using the video that may directly or indirectly have any impact in the forthcoming elections. "This telecast is in violation to Section 126 (1)(B) of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1951, which prohibits display of the any 'election matter', inter-alia, on TV during the period of 48 hours fixed for conclusion of poll," the notice read. The release of the video can be viewed as an attempt by the Dinakaran faction to clear the speculations over Jayalalitha's death.

However, the death mystery is already being investigated by a judicial commission.

The former AIADMK leader was admitted to the hospital after she complained of chest pain.

The R K Nagar by-polls, necessitated after Jayalalitha's death, was earlier scheduled on April 12, but was cancelled following allegations that sums of money were distributed in a vote-for-cash scam. Counting of votes will be held on December 24.

Akali Dal meets Pakistan High Commissioner over Sikhs' 'forced conversion'



NEW DELHI: A delegation of Akali Dal, led by party president Sukhbir Singh Badal, met the Pakistan High Commissioner today over the issue of forcible conversion of Sikhs in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

This meeting comes after reports surfaced in regard to Pakistan's Sikh community alleged that they were "being forced to convert to Islam" by a government official. The delegation included other members

namely, Manjeet Singh, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Balvinder Singh Pundar, Trilochan Singh and Paramjeet Singh.

"An issue of forcible conversion (of Sikhs) in Pakistan has surfaced; a delegation of Akali Dal will have a meeting at the Pakistan High Commission this evening, over the issue," the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president said while addressing a press briefing here.

Earlier on Tuesday, External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj had expressed concerns over the reports and said that she will take up the matter with Pakistan government at the earliest.

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh took to Twitter to apprise Swaraj of the alleged forced conversions, urging her to take up the matter at the highest level with Pakistani authorities. On Saturday, the Sikh community members had lodged a complaint with the Deputy Commissioner of Hangu district, Hangu Shahid Mehmood regarding the same.

Zaira Wasim molestation: Accused granted bail by Mumbai court

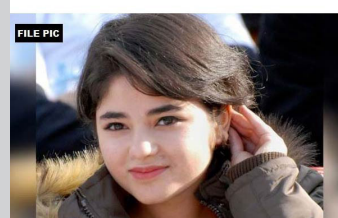
MUMBAI: The accused in actor Zaira Wasim molestation case was granted bail by a Mumbai court on Wednesday.

Vikas Sachdeva, accused of molesting Dargal star on Delhi-Mumbai Vistara flight on December 10, was granted bail

on surety of Rs. 25,000.

The defendant had filed a bail plea after the court, in a December 13 hearing, had sent him to police custody till December 22.

The incident came to light when Zaira shared the ordeal



in an Instagram story.

Reportedly, the man was caressing her neck while she was asleep.

She tried to record what the man was doing, but failed due to dim lights.

Right after deboarding the

flight, she took to Instagram to narrate her experience in a live video.

In the video, she can be seen fighting her tears and saying, "This is not done, I am disturbed. Is this how you're going to take care of girls?"

Suhaib Ilyasi sentenced to life imprisonment

NEW DELHI: Suhaib Ilyasi, who shot to fame with the TV show 'India's Most Wanted' in late 90s, has been sentenced to life imprisonment by a Delhi sessions court for killing his wife in 2000.

The court also ordered him to pay Rs. 10 Lakh as compensation to the victim's family and Rs. 2 Lakh as fine.

Ilyasi was convicted by the court on December 16, while an order was passed by additional sessions judge, SK Malhotra, who found Ilyasi guilty under the Indian Penal Code. Ilyasi's wife Anju was murdered in 2000 in Delhi after which the police arrested him on the basis of inquest report by the area magistrate. He was booked for dowry death and destroying evidence. But in 2014 the Delhi High Court ordered that he be tried for



murder even as he was out on a bail.

Anju's family wanted capital punishment to Ilyasi but his lawyer requested for minimum punishment, stating that his client was distressed and shall not be liable for the extreme sentence.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu anguished over absence of ministers

NEW DELHI: Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday expressed displeasure at ministers not making it to the House in time for laying the papers listed against their names. The provocation was apparently caused by the absence of ministers like Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Tourism Minister K J Alphons when their names were called by the Chair for laying of listed papers. "I would like to advise the Parliamentary Affairs Minister to see that Ministers who are supposed to lay papers on the Table of the House are in the House on time," Naidu said. If some Ministers have other engagements, they should not list papers against their names, he said.

"If they (ministers) have any problem, they should not give their names. It can be done subsequently. Please take note of it and convey it to the ministers," the Chairman said.

Pradhan's name was on the top of the list of ministers who were to lay the papers relating to their ministries in the Upper House today. However, he was not present when his name was called to lay the papers such as copies of rules for payment of subsidies under Aardhaar Act and the annual reports of PSUs under



his ministry including Indian Oil Corp, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum. Tourism Minister Alphons too was absent when his name was called to lay copies of annual reports of institutes under his ministry.

While Alphons came in a few minutes after his name was called, Pradhan was absent even when his name was called the second time to present a statement regarding the status of implementation of recommendations contained in a standing committee report on ethanol blended petrol and bio-diesel policy.

When Pradhan finally entered the House, Naidu called him to present the first set of papers.

But he was not called to make his statement on a standing committee report relating to his ministry.

Sikhs will be protected against forced-conversions, assures MoS Home

NEW DELHI: Minister of State for Home Affairs Hansraj Ahir on Wednesday said that talks would be held at the "highest level" in the Pakistani Government to discuss the reports of Sikhs being forced to convert to Islam in Hangu district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. "External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj herself has given a statement that talks will be held at the highest level in the Pakistani Government. I think it is our duty to protect and provide them security. The government is working on this," he said.

Earlier, Swaraj expressing concerns over the reports, said she would take up the matter with the Pakistani Government at the



earliest. "We will take this up at the highest level with Government of

Pakistan. @IndianPakistan Sikh community in Hangu 'being forced

to convert," Swaraj tweeted on Tuesday.

Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh had also taken to Twitter to apprise Swaraj of the alleged forced conversions, urging her to take up the matter at the highest level with Pakistani authorities.

On Saturday, the Sikhs community members lodged a complaint with the Deputy Commissioner of Hangu district, Hangu Shahid Mehmood regarding the same.

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president, Sukhbir Singh Badal, also has said that a party delegation will meet officials of Pakistan High Commission this evening, to discuss the reports.

Fitness enthusiasts, here's everything you need to know about nutritional supplements

6 Major Holiday Fitness Deals Happening Right Now

For those of us spreading holiday cheer at the very last minute, we're in luck—our favorite activewear brands are still on sale. Right now, you can score up to 50% off at Athleta or up to 40% off the Gap with free shipping. If you're looking for sports apparel and fitness equipment, Dick's is having sales on both, and so is Amazon. In fact, Amazon is offering 25% off select fitness gear. EliteFTS is having a huge sale on resistance bands, and for the yoga aficionado in your life, CorePower Yoga is offering \$100 gift cards for just \$80. Check out the rest of our favorite last-minute gift ideas here Accio leggings! Check out this fantastically nerdy (we mean that in a good way) Harry Potter activewear. Bust out your Nimbus 2000, because Australian brand Black Milk dropped a collection of Harry Potter-inspired performance gear perfect for high-intensity Quidditch training (or bingeing all eight movies during a snowstorm). The line includes tanks, dresses, shorts, leggings, and sweatshirts emblazoned with all four Hogwarts house crests. Prices range from \$53-91. #gryffindor Here's what to expect from the wellness movement in 2018.

2017 was a big year for the wellness industry, between the rise of turmeric, and viral trends like goat yoga. Our friends at Well + Good put together a list of their predictions for 2018 and it's worth checking out. Predictions include moringa drinks, at-home fitness like ClassPass Live, and biohacking going mainstream. AirPods could be Apple's next fitness tracker. Apple should be focusing on wearables for the ear, not the wrist, according to one electrical engineer. CNBC talked to Steven LeBoeuf—who develops bio-sensors for brands like Samsung—and he explained that the ear offers access to heart rate, temperature and pulse, but offers a more reliable measurement because earpieces aren't constantly moving like wrist wearables. "If there's a big advancement in wearable tech for Apple, my bet is that it will be an ear-worn device and not a wrist-worn one," LeBoeuf said. If you haven't heard of food tech startup Beyond Meat, you need to have them on your radar.

On Monday, food tech startup Beyond Meat launched its line of plant-based sausage at a Colorado Whole Foods location, according to Fortune. The vegan brand is known for its plant-based burgers, so the sausage was a natural progression. "We just always want our product to be indistinguishable [from meat]," CEO Ethan Brown told the magazine. To mimic the texture of meat, peas, fava beans, rice, beet, paprika, and coconut oil in an algae-based casing.

Fitness is a key factor in our day-to-day life, and many choose to work out at the gym. But when you work out, your body burns calories and you require supplements to make up for the energy loss. It is essential to avoid exhaustion and burnout. Fitness enthusiasts often take supplements to get adequate and measurable essential nutrients. But people often don't understand the science behind supplements and there are several myths circulating about them. Akshita Goyal, nutritionist at Proquest Nutrition, debunks some of the common myths:

Myth 1: Supplements are good only for men. Many women work out at gyms but consciously avoid supplements because of the belief that supplements will give them a masculine physique and take away their femininity. This is not true. Actually, men are able to build muscle mass because of the male sex hormone, testosterone. Unless women take synthetic testosterone (steroid), they will not develop masculine muscle tone. The fear of looking "manly" is completely unfounded and needs to be dispelled. **Myth 2: If you eat a balanced diet, you don't need supplements.** It's true that nearly all nutrients found in supplements are available in food sources or are generated by the body. However, not many people know what the body needs and where to get it from. Even if they do, it's nearly impossible to eat the right foods in just the right proportion to be able to access all the vital nutrients that your body needs to meet its caloric and nutritive requirement. Moreover, the nutrients present in our daily diet are often compromised while growing, processing and cooking. Research finds our diet lacks in essential nutrients, including proteins, carbohydrates, calcium, potassium, magnesium, and Vitamins A, C, and D. A good supplement ensures that you get adequate and measurable essential nutrients to make up for the lack of nutrients on account of faulty farming practices and overcooking of the food we eat. There are only a few manufacturers who blend all the revitalising ingredients in the right quantities and combinations to come up with products that help your body recover whatever it has lost through exercise. **Myth 3: A high-protein diet puts stress on**

your kidneys. This is another common myth. Remember, our kidneys are incredibly efficient at filtering unwanted substances from our bodies. Hence, a high-protein diet can't strain your kidneys. The kidneys are built to handle this problem. It can flush out unwanted stuff through urination. It is therefore advised that you increase your water consumption when taking proteins in higher quantities. This helps to eliminate the by-products of protein breakdown through urine. Consuming the recommended amount of protein is not going to stress your kidneys.



Using amber-tinted glasses could lead to improved sleep in insomniacs: Study

Using amber-tinted glasses to selectively block blue light from smartphones and other devices in the hours before bedtime could lead to improved sleep in individuals with insomnia, a study suggests.

Researchers from Columbia University Medical Center in the US tested a method to reduce the adverse effects of evening ambient light exposure, while still allowing use of blue light-emitting devices.

Smartphones, tablets and other light-emitting devices are lit by LEDs, which have a peak wavelength in the blue portion of the spectrum.

Blue light at night suppresses melatonin and increases alertness; the use of amber-tinted lenses that block blue light mitigates these effects, researchers said. The team, led by assistant professor Ari Shechter, reasoned that selectively blocking blue light in the hours before bedtime would lead to improved sleep in individuals with insomnia. To test their theory, the researchers recruited 14 individuals with an insomnia diagnosis to take

part in a small study.

For seven consecutive nights, participants wore wrap-around frames with amber-tinted lenses that blocked blue light or with clear placebo lenses for two hours before bedtime. Four weeks later, participants repeated the protocol with the other set of glasses.

The researchers found that participants got around 30 minutes extra sleep when they wore the amber lenses compared to the clear lenses.

In self-reported sleep surveys, participants also reported greater duration, quality, and soundness of sleep, and an overall reduction in insomnia severity.

These findings, published in the journal Sleep Medicine, are consistent with prior studies showing a benefit of blue-light-blocking lenses in improving sleep, but should be replicated in larger controlled studies, Shechter said. "Now more than ever we are exposing ourselves to high amounts of blue light before bedtime, which may contribute to or exacerbate sleep problems," Shechter said.

"Amber lenses are affordable and they can easily be combined with other established cognitive and behavioural techniques for insomnia management," he said.

Many smartphones screens can now be adjusted to emit amber instead of blue light, and Shechter said these settings should help to improve sleep.

"I do recommend using the amber setting on smartphones at night, in addition to manually reducing the brightness levels. But blue light does not only come from our phones.

"It is emitted from televisions, computers, and importantly, from many light bulbs and other LED light sources that are increasingly used in our homes because they are energy-efficient and cost-effective," he said.

"The glasses approach allows us to filter out blue-wavelength light from all these sources, which might be particularly useful for individuals with sleep difficulties," said Shechter.

The use of amber lenses also appeared to reduce blood pressure in the study's participants, researchers said

250 billion calories will be eliminated by 2020 says PureCircle!

PureCircle, a leading producer of great-tasting stevia ingredients for the global beverage and food industry, on Tuesday announced that it is committing to help Indian companies reduce 250 billion calories in the Indian diet by 2020. Rising obesity and diabetes rates are increasing concerns of health practitioners, government agencies and responsible companies in India. Moreover, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one person in 11 (422 million worldwide) has diabetes and predict that by 2030, diabetes will be the 7th leading cause of death.

As a plant-based, zero-calorie, sustainable and great-tasting sweetener, stevia has achieved wide global acceptance. PureCircle has invested significant funds and resources into the research and development of stevia as the next global, natural sweetener. "Ever increasing consumer desire for a natural ingredient and 'clean' labels have contributed to the world-wide growth of Stevia leaf extract. Stevia has no calories and has zero glycemic index and our extensive research has shown stevia is safe for all populations. Extensive safety and metabolism studies conducted by the scientific community and reviewed by major authorities led to the approval of stevia leaf extract, and supports stevia's role in a healthy lifestyle," said VP, Global Scientific and Regulatory Affairs, PureCircle, Dr. Sidd Purkayastha.

"Unlike artificial sweeteners like sucralose, aspartame or saccharine, stevia leaf extracts come from a plant. Stevia or Meethi Tulsi or Madhu Patra as it is called by Indian farmers is an ideal sweetener for Indian consumers to control calories without compromising great taste. India is a major part of our global calorie footprint. We are confident that by 2020 we will be able to help India to cut down 250 billion calories from Indian diet," said senior director and head of south Asia, PureCircle, Ajay Chandran.

SEVEN REASONS WHY COFFEE MAY ACTUALLY BENEFIT YOUR HEALTH AND GIVE YOU A LONGER LIFE

Your daily cup of coffee may be doing more for you than providing that early-morning pick-me-up.

Coffee isn't just warm and energising; it may also be extremely good for you. There have been many studies that have shown the effects of coffee on various aspects of health.

A research does suggest that coffee drinkers are less likely to suffer from certain illnesses.

Here are seven ways how coffee may actually benefit your health and give you a longer life:

1. Protection against cirrhosis of the liver

A recent study found that drinking more coffee is associated with lower risk for cirrhosis. Drinking one cup of coffee per day was shown to be linked with a 22% reduced risk for cirrhosis, a liver disease that is often caused by heavy alcohol consumption.

Two daily cups were associated with a 43% reduced risk, three cups with 57% reduced risk, and four cups with 65% reduced risk.

2. Lowered risk of Type 2 Diabetes
Those who consumed six or more cups per day had a 22% lower risk of diabetes. A large number of review studies have found that every additional cup of coffee one drinks per day was correlated with a 7% reduced risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Decaf coffee decreased risk by 6% per cup.



3. Coffee drinkers have less risk of heart disease

A study found that participants who consumed 3 to 5 cups of coffee a day were less likely to show the beginning signs of heart disease. A review of more than 200 studies found that people who drank three or four cups of coffee per day were 19% less likely to die from cardiovascular disease.

There is some evidence that coffee may support heart health by protecting against arterial damage

caused by inflammation.

4. Coffee reduces colorectal cancer risk

Even moderate consumption of coffee can reduce the odds of developing colorectal cancer by 26%. Meanwhile, a review of studies found that heavy coffee drinkers (who had at least three cups a day) had an 18% reduced risk for cancer. Another review found that at least one cup each day was associated with 15% reduced risk for liver cancer and an 8% reduced

risk for endometrial cancer. Some data indicates that coffee drinkers may be less likely to suffer from oral/pharyngeal cancer and advanced prostate cancer as well.

5. Coffee may lower your risk of Alzheimer's and dementia

Not only can coffee make you smarter in the short term, it may also protect your brain in old age. A meta-analysis of studies about coffee intake and brain health calculated that regular coffee drinkers were approximately 16% less likely

to suffer from Alzheimer's, dementia, or cognitive decline. There are smaller studies that suggest drinking coffee can lead to even bigger risk reductions for Alzheimer's.

6. Coffee reduces suicide risk and Depression

A detailed study of more than 50,000 women showed that drinking at least a cup of coffee each week was associated with 15% reduced risk for depression, and drinking two to three cups per day was associated with 20% reduced risk. The research that looked at more than 1,00,000 men and women found that coffee drinkers were 45% less likely to die from suicide and heavy coffee drinkers (four or more cups a day) 53% less likely to die from suicide.

7. Overall mortality

One large study of more than 5,00,000 European people found that in a 16-year-period, men who drank three or more cups per day were 12% less likely to die, and women 7% less likely to die. In particular, people were less likely to die from circulatory and digestive diseases. Heavy coffee drinkers also had healthier livers.

A study of 1,85,855 participants confirmed that result. People who drank one cup per day were 12% less likely to die. Two to three cups were associated with an 18% decrease in risk for early death.

Effective R&D for new drug molecules needed in India, says study

There is a need to step up effective research and development for formulating new drug molecules in the country, a senior official said on Tuesday.

"The formulation of generic drugs in our country is very good, but it is not the same in case of the new drug molecules. For this, we need to have very effective research and development and expertise, in which we are still a bit low profile," National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education Android Research (NIPER) Director V. Ravichandran said at a programme here.

He stressed that scientific inventions in the field of medicine needs to be integrated more with pharmaceutical technology and clinical aspects for better results. About the expenses of cancer treatment, Ravichandran said the drugs used to treat the disease would only become cheaper if they come to the open market, "but if the drug is patented after the discovery, then only that person gets all the business benefit. That is not shared with anybody".

"India is not getting many of the good new drugs in the open market for treating cancer," he said on the sidelines of a conference organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce on comprehensive cancer care. Ravichandran said while a lot of good work is being done in the science aspect in West Bengal, the state is lagging in integrating its scientific inventions with the industry.

SIAM presents roadmap for 100 pct electric vehicles by 2047



NEW DELHI: The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on Wednesday presented a roadmap for the complete shift towards electric vehicle regime by 2047. SIAM, which has suggested that forty percent of all new vehicle sales in the country should be electric vehicles by 2030, noted that all new vehicle sales for intra-city public transport fleets should be electric by 2030.

It also recommended that sixty percent of all new vehicle sales in the country should employ greener technologies like hybrids and other alternate fuels by the year 2030. To ensure smooth phasing in of pure electric vehicles and to sustain the transition to cleaner fossil fuel vehicles, the ICE engine upgradation must continue over the next decade or so. Progressively cleaner fossil fuel vehicles would be an essential stepping

stone in this journey towards hundred percent electric vehicle regime. Finally, all new vehicle sales should be electric vehicle by 2047," SIAM said in an official release. Dr Abhay Firodia, President, SIAM in a statement said that to make sure that this vision is realized, the industry, government and various stakeholders will need to collaborate and invest with 100 percent commitment. He further emphasised that the pro-

posed policy measures by SIAM would be needed for creating a robust market and manufacturing eco-system for electric vehicles in the country and such a policy must be sustained over time to enable industry to commit investments with full confidence. Firodia also added that the policy should allow outcomes in a planned manner to ensure that the necessary transformation takes place with the

minimum disruption and socio-economic impact in terms of industrial growth, employment and livelihood of people in the auto industry. SIAM has made these recommendations in the White Paper on Electric Vehicles submitted to the government in line with the vision of Government of India of 100 percent electric vehicles for public mobility and 40 percent electric vehicles for personal mobility by 2030.

Watch out for these 5 recruitment trends in 2018!

NEW DELHI: Every year there are multiple number of students passing out from colleges and institutes and the demand for employment is increasing stupendously. The talent acquisition and recruitment are the priorities of the organizations not only in 2017, but also in the coming 2018. In the recent past, recruiters are hiring employees in bulk and on the other hand, firing for cost-cutting despite various funding from the outside. There is a job shortage in India, not because of less organization or companies, but because of rising competition in terms of skills and experience. This has resulted in recruiters looking for a right candidate for the profile. The year 2018 will have some recruitment trends which recruiters should work upon in order to hire the best and suitable candidate that will boost the growth of the organization too. Vidur Gupta, Director Spectrum Talent Management - Global Recruitment firm lists some new recruitment trends that will be trending in 2018:

Unconscious Bias

Recruiters, unconsciously and unknowingly consider applicants on the basis of sex, race or age despite being impartially evaluating the candidate's skills, tasks and competencies. To do away with unconscious bias decision, the recruiters moving towards text messages instead of phone calls for the recruitment process. This helps to disclose candidate's identity such as name and gender and there is also no voice recognition, creating a canvas between a recruiter and the candidate. This will make the recruiter's decision bias and the focus will be on the right applicant for the job.

Marketing Business

The employees can now select their organization or jobs as per their needs, culture and company's reputation. For this, the recruiters should look into marketing their business that will attract more applicants. They should promote the job, positions not only for the sake of hiring a candidate, but also as a product through videos, photographs, documents and presentations. They should also build a strong employment brand that will let the candidate consider the company. This can further improve the overall quality of the hiring process as well as reduce cost per hire.

HR or Workforce Analytics

In order to advance business performance, recruiters must invest in HR analytics which will lead to higher sales growth and higher sales per employee. It can improve policy, showcase insights on everything from hiring needs to candidate attraction and even provide an evidence-based perspective on challenges within the organization. In 2018, the recruiters should focus on employees who are willing to learn and accept new ideas, starting small projects and moving to a big one, nurture relationships with other business like finance or IT. Workforce analytics can help HR develop strategies to that lead to employees' leaving the organization, which is a key to organization stability and growth.

Digital Tools for Recruitment

The country is getting more advanced day by day as new digital tools and technologies are coming up that transform employee's daily activities. These digital tools are user-friendly that meets the needs of organizations and investing in these tools and strategies will witness a rise in 2018. This will, furthermore, will reduce time to spend on developing key strategies and help grow their organization.

Employee Experience

These days millennials prefer working in an organization that has culture and employee engagement activities such as offices equipped with sports like table tennis, gyms, and other refreshments. This has led the companies to invest in such work environment as employee experience is much more important than culture and engagement.

Despite all this, there is no surety that the recruitment trends in 2018 will be however, studies and reports sight digital tools, the employee experience, and the rise of workforce analytics are some of the major trends for 2018. The technology, on the other hand, will continue to impact the recruitment process and to grow further, recruiters should prepare themselves and their organizations for the next year.

Policybazaar.com launches first ever TV campaign on travel insurance



NEW DELHI: Policybazaar.com (twitter handle: @policybazaar_in), India's largest insurance website and comparison portal, has launched its first ever television campaign on travel insurance, highlighting its importance especially when travelling overseas. The campaign emphasizes particularly on the unforeseen medical emergencies that a traveller may face in a foreign land which may burn a hole in their pocket without an adequate travel insurance cover. Some people travel abroad for medium to long term work, and they are generally insured by their employer. However, there are 40 to 50 percent Indians who are eligible to take travel insurance from India but they don't due to various reasons.

"We have found through our internal research that people tend to believe travel insurance takes care of only air accidents, while some others assume their regular health policy will take care of any unforeseen incidents abroad.

Both these assumptions are incorrect. If you fall sick or become a victim of an accident abroad, it is only travel insurance that can give you protection against substantial expenses in a foreign land," said Tarun Mathur- Director, Policybazaar.com.

As per the estimates of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the number of Indians travelling abroad has been growing with an average 10-12 percent annual growth over the last seven years, and by 2020, India will account for 50 million outbound tourists.

"Even as more and more Indians are travelling abroad, what we have observed is most people ignore buying travel insurance where it's not mandatory. This is being penny wise but pound foolish.

People don't realize that a medical emergency in a foreign land can cost them heavily on their pocket. We, the largest insurance aggregator in India, feel it is our responsibility to create mass awareness about the importance of travel insurance when traveling abroad," added Sai Narayan, Associate Director and Head of Marketing, Policybazaar.com.

The week-long campaign is designed by the in-house team of Policybazaar.com and executed by K Silent Productions.

The TV campaign has gone on air since December 16, 2017.

The TV commercial starts with a young traveller (actor Aparshakti Khurana) sitting on his bags with one broken hand in a sling.

He says before he could enjoy his foreign trip, he suffered the hand injury.

He rues that travel insurance was available on policybazaar.com for as low as Rs. 300, but he did not take it, and had to shell out Rs. 3 lakhs to get his injury treated. The ad ends with the young man saying, "Policybazaar.com par apna travel insurance zaroor karana."

Morepen Gets US FDA clearance for its Bulk Drug Montelukast Sodium

NEW DELHI: The United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has cleared Montelukast Sodium, a bulk drug / API manufactured by Morepen Laboratories Ltd., for sale in the US market. This gives Morepen an entry into the Rs. 2000 crore (Approx. \$ 300 million) US market for Montelukast. The first commercial orders for the bulk drug are expected in Q2 of FY 2018-19.

Expressing happiness on the development, Sushil Suri, Chairman and Managing Director, Morepen Laboratories Ltd., said, "It's a big development for us as it is in recognition of our continuous efforts to produce world class APIs over more than three decades. Our image as a quality API supplier gets cemented with the entry of Montelukast in the US market. It would provide a major boost to the company's top line and thus the bottom line in the years to come."

Montelukast's global market is estimated at about Rs. 13000 crore (Approx. USD 2 billion) out of which US market alone is Rs. 2,000 crore. The patent for Montelukast has expired in all the markets worldwide. In U.S., the product patent got expired in 2012 and subsequently process patent expired in 2014.

Montelukast is another blockbuster product for Morepen after Loratadine. Morepen is amongst the largest producers of Monte-

lukast globally with an annual capacity of more than 30 tons. Besides, Morepen is the market leader for Montelukast in India with over 50 per cent market share, supplying to almost all major finished dosage manufacturers in India. Already crossed Rs. 100 crore annual sales from Montelukast Sodium alone, Morepen is going to get a business of around Rs. 500 crore from this API in next three to four years. Morepen holds process patent for Montelukast Sodium Amorphous for US, Canada and Europe markets.

The company's manufacturing process yields very less impurities, very less residual solvents, higher assay, better color of the API and is an environment friendly process as it does not involve use of class II solvents. Morepen's API Montelukast supplies are regular to various countries in Europe and also to China. Morepen also holds accreditations for other countries including Canada, Russia, Taiwan, Iran for Montelukast. Commercial sales of Montelukast are presently reaching customers in about 35 countries. U.S. supplies would also commence following the USFDA clearance.

Montelukast is manufactured at Morepen's Masulkhana facility, which has been inspected by various global regulatory agencies like US FDA, EU GMP, TGA and others.

Amazon drops sale of circumcision kit in UK after complaint



LONDON: The British arm of Amazon has dropped sale of a circumcision training kit from its website after concerns were raised.

The kit had been offered by a third party seller and offered instructions and instruments that could be used to practice circumcision on a model of male genitals.

Circumcision consists of removing part of the foreskin of the penis and is typically done for religious or medical purposes on very young boys. The National Secular Society in Britain complained to Amazon that the training kit violated Amazon's standard's policy.

The group said it feared the sale of the kit would encourage unqualified practitioners to carry out unneeded surgery in non-clinical conditions.

NITI Aayog proposes scheme for saving jobs from automation

NEW DELHI: Federal think tank NITI Aayog has proposed that the government set up a labour utilisation fund that will make the country's workforce more skilled and cost-competitive, encouraging businesses to hire more at a time when automation and the use of artificial intelligence are making low-skill labour redundant.

NITI Aayog vice-chairman Rajiv Kumar said in an interview that the government should consider setting up the fund, which will foot the bill for skilling workers and providing them social security, making workforce more cost-competitive for the industry to employ. The government has been encouraging automation in the textile industry under a technology upgradation fund (TUF) to make it capable of competing with large production houses in countries such as China. Kumar suggested that instead of capital subsidy for businesses, there was a need for labour subsidy now. TUF, which was announced in 1999, was further modified for continuation in the 2012-17 period, giving capital subsidy to the sector

for adopting technology. "Just like that, we should have a labour utilization fund. It doesn't have to pay salaries but can be used for better training, for paying provident fund contribution and for covering the health costs. In advanced economies, all these things are provided by the public sector," said Kumar.

Since social security benefits in India do not match those in developed economies, there is a need for a dedicated policy and schemes to lower labour costs, said Kumar, adding that it will also help bridge income inequality in the country. From the time Kumar took over from Arvind Panagariya, the think tank has been working on a blueprint for the government to create jobs. "The objective of our policy should be maximizing employment generation.

If you do that, everything will fall in place," said Kumar, adding that labour-intensive sectors such as housing, construction, exports, garments, tourism, education and health should be in focus.

The economist also suggested that the impediments to growth in these sectors should be studied in detail to figure out where the shoe pinches. According to Kumar, economic growth will accelerate further from the 6.3% recorded in the September quarter in the three months to December on account of the reforms undertaken so far. Economic growth in the September quarter was an improvement over a three-year low of 5.7% in the June quarter, indicating businesses have shaken off the effects of demonetization and GST rollout.



Ashes 2017: Steve Smith could surpass Ricky Ponting as Australia captain, says Darren Lehmann

SYDNEY: Australian captain Steve Smith's statistics in the ongoing Ashes Test series against England are enough to summarise his current form. In 4 innings, Smith has scored 426 runs, including a double ton, at an average of 142. He is the leading run scorer of the tournament so far. On the back of his performances, Australia went on to win the 5-match series at WACA after defeating England by an innings and 41 runs.

Speaking about Smith, Australia coach Darren Lehmann says that he may better the records established by former Captains Ricky Ponting and Michael Clarke. "By the end it might be a bit different, but Pup and Ricky Ponting at times were exceptional captains and exceptional batters, when they were leading the team. Statistically, you only see that at the end I suppose, but the way he's gone about it, averaging 72 or 73 as a Test captain, that's pretty special. For him to keep delivering what he needs to do is exceptional under the pressure he's under in Ashes series," the former Australia allrounder said.

Lehmann further added that the 29-year old has developed his game over the years. "So for me, seeing him evolve from that first Test hundred at the Oval to now - he just changes his own plans to what the bowlers are doing and what the wicket's doing, and what the game needs. He's gone to another level, which is

pleasing," he said.

The 47-year old also went on to praise Smith's Perth partner-in-action, Mitchell Marsh, who added 301 runs for the 5th wicket with the skipper. "But Mitchell went back to refine his game a little bit, worked with some different people, and just looked like he enjoyed himself out there... the way Mitchell played was exceptional and really drove us to that total," he said.

But Lehmann was also quick to point out that the allrounder still has to work a lot on his bowling. "One innings doesn't make a cricket career. For him he's got to back that up next game and do the right thing and continue to make runs. I thought his bowling was a little bit disappointing, which he spoke about with me the other day. He's got to get his bowling right, his fielding right and his batting and if it all comes together that's fantastic," he said.

With the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne approaching, Lehmann added that the Aussies can now go out and express themselves more after securing the Ashes. "Ashes cricket is high pressure, everybody is nervous every ball, every session. It's been that way for 15 days so far, so they can go and express themselves a little bit more. We'll be playing the same brand of cricket but obviously with less pressure on us. It'll be interesting to see how we respond to that. Boxing Day and SCG are fantastic Test matches to be a part of," he said.



Former Wimbledon champ Marion Bartoli announces return to WTA tour

LONDON: Marion Bartoli, the 2013 Wimbledon champion, says she is coming out of retirement and returning to the tennis tour next season. The 33-year-old Frenchwoman made the announcement via a Twitter post on Tuesday. "Hi, guys. I have something to tell you: I am coming back. ... It's going to be a huge challenge," Bartoli said in a video she put on Twitter. "I have still a lot of practice ahead of me, but I am hoping to be ready for March and the Miami Open."

Bartoli mentioned three events she is particularly looking forward to: the French Open, the Fed Cup and

of course, Wimbledon. She surprisingly won her only Grand Slam title while seeded No. 15 at the All England Club four years ago.

Less than two months later, after losing a match at another tournament, she abruptly retired from professional tennis.

Bartoli was an original player and personality during her playing career. She hit two-fisted shots for forehands and backhands, just like her idol, Monica Seles, whom Bartoli recalled admiring as early as at only 7½ years old. Bartoli was coached by her father, a doctor, and they came

up with other unique elements.

She would cross her arms before serving, never bouncing the ball before a toss. She would stand well inside the baseline to receive an opponent's serve. And she would hop in place or take practice swings between points. Her first big breakthrough came in 2007, reaching the Wimbledon final before losing to Venus Williams. Then came the magical two-week run to the championship there six years later. Bartoli never dropped a set and capped her fortnight with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over Sabine Lisicki in the final, closing the match with an ace.

A year later, Bartoli became the first woman in 17 years who declined to try to defend her Wimbledon title.

At a news conference before the 2014 tournament, Bartoli tugged at the collar of her white top to reveal strips of blue tape providing support for her right shoulder and explained: "Literally, I can't even lift my arm every morning." That, she said, was why she harbored "definitely no regrets at all" about walking away from tennis back then. She since moved on to other pursuits, including TV commentary, launching a shoe line and designing jewelry.

Chris Gayle fails to fire for West Indies in first ODI against New Zealand

WHANGAREI: Gutsy half centuries from Evin Lewis and Rovman Powell helped the West Indies scramble to 248 for nine in the first one-day international against New Zealand on Wednesday.

The tourists struggled after losing the toss and being sent in to bat, with dangerman Chris Gayle failing to fire and managing just 22.

Gayle fell victim to resurgent New Zealand paceman Doug Bracewell, who celebrated the end of a 15-month exile from the national team by taking four wickets for 55.

Spinner Todd Astle contributed three for 33 in his ODI debut as the Black Caps attack maintained constant pressure at Whangarei's Cobham Oval. Opener Lewis was the pick of the



West Indies batters with a classy 76, while Powell staged a stirring rear-guard action to score 59 off 50 balls.

But it was as a disappointing batting performance after West Indies

skipper Jason Holder said this week that 300-plus was the benchmark score in modern ODIs.

Gayle -- fresh from notching a record 18 sixes in the Bangladesh

Premier League T20 final -- was uncharacteristically subdued, failing to score until the fifth over.

His aggressive instincts surfaced when he charged down the wicket to dispatch Tim Southee for six, going on to score freely with Lewis for a short period. But Bracewell then made a dream return, snaring Gayle with his first ball and then Shai Hope for a duck two deliveries later.

Debutant Shimron Hetmyer came to the crease and helped steady the innings with Lewis, easing the West Indies past the 100 mark in the 23rd over. But a steady stream of wickets to Astle and Bracewell denied the West Indies any momentum and they were limping along at 201-8 before Powell's late heroics.

India vs Sri Lanka: Rohit Sharma chases record in T20I against Sri Lanka

MUMBAI: India will field a fairly young team in the first T20I against Sri Lanka in Cuttack on Wednesday but they are likely to play with the same intensity as the ODI series. Rohit Sharma will lead the side in the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli. He led India to a 2-1 series win over Sri Lanka in the ODI series and will like to start the T20I series on a winning note. Though India will have a young squad, Rohit will look to keep things normal on the field and also have an important role to play in guiding the youngsters. He is also chasing a personal landmark in this match. Rohit, an opening batsman for India, has 1485 runs in T20 Internationals and can become the second batsman for India to complete 1500 runs in T20Is. Only captain Kohli, who is not playing this T20I series, has more runs than him for India.

The stand-in skipper for India has 1485 runs in 68 T20I matches at an average of 30.30 and a strike rate of 129.92. He is one of the three Indian batsmen who has a T20I century. He scored that against South Africa in 2015. He has 12 half-centuries as well.

India won the ODI series against Sri Lanka 2-1 after winning the second and third matches in Mohali and Visakhapatnam. They had lost the first game in Dharamsala rather tamely.

Rohit is the only cricketer to hit three double centuries in One-Day Internationals. His latest double century came a week back in the second ODI against Sri Lanka in Mohali. He scored 208*, his third double century in ODIs and the second against Sri Lanka. Rohit also has the record of highest individual score in ODIs - 264.



Gary Kirsten set to be appointed batting coach of Royal Challengers Bangalore

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The 2016 season was one of the best as they marched into the finals before losing to Sunrisers Hyderabad.

BANGALORE: Gary Kirsten is all set to join Royal Challengers Bangalore as batting coach for the upcoming season of Indian Premier League. He has been in IPL previously

in coaching roles and the RCB stint could be another addition in his resume.

The former South Africa batsman was coach of the Indian cricket team that won the 2011 World Cup in India and was earlier part of the Delhi Daredevils franchise.

RCB are yet to announce Kirsten's agreement officially but it is likely that he will take the batting coach's role because Daniel Vettori, who has been the head coach for RCB, will remain in the team's coaching staff.

Kirsten is currently the head coach of the Big Bash League franchise Hobart Hurricanes, his first stint in BBL.

Bangalore have Vettori as their head coach for four years now. His stint with the team has given mixed results. In the 2014

season, RCB finished second from the bottom and a season later, they lost the second qualifier to Chennai Super Kings to finish third. The last season was a disaster as they won only three matches out of 14 and finished bottom of the table.

Kirsten had coached Delhi Daredevils in 2014 and 2015 before the franchise decided to remove him, ending his three-year contract after two years only.

In the two seasons he was coaching Delhi, the team finished last and second-last.

The auctions for IPL 2018 will be held on January 27 and 28 in Bangalore and a franchise can retain upto five players.

Virat Kohli, captain of the franchise, is one name that the team would like to retain for sure.

