

TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

WEDNESDAY

- DECEMBER, 06, 2017
- 17 RABI-AL-AWAL 1439 AH
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- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	16.0	-3.8
JAMMU	24.1	7.4
LEH	8.5	-10.5
KARGIL	8.6	-5.2

SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 05:22 PM
SUNRISE THURSDAY: 07:24 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 13°C & -4°C respectively.

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

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CAREER COUNSELLING CELLS SETUP IN HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO FACILITATE

ANDHRA CM ATTENDS BUSINESS SEMINAR ON DAY 2 OF SOUTH KOREA VISIT

EDELWEISS RAISES RS. 500 CR TO CAPITALISE LIMITED LIQUIDITY IN REAL ESTATE

FABREGAS ATTITUDE CHANGED MY MIND, SAYS CONTE

No let up in operations against terrorists: Bapin Rawat



JAIPUR: Operations against militants in Kashmir will continue, Army chief General Bipin Rawat asserted today adding that while it was upto the "neighbouring country" as to how it treats terrorist organisations but India will continue to raise the issue.

"Operations in Kashmir are going on continuously and we an improvement in the situation in the

Valley. Such operations will go on," Rawat told reporters on the sidelines of a ceremony at Suratgarh military station.

The security forces in Jammu and Kashmir have eliminated over 200 militants this year, the highest number since 2010.

▶ See **Bapin**...Pg 02

All Amarnath Yatra attackers killed: DGP

Srinagar: The group of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militants behind an attack on Amarnath pilgrims in July has been "wiped out", the Jammu and Kashmir police chief said on Tuesday.

State police chief SP Vaid said in a series of tweets that the success was achieved when three militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in south Kashmir on Monday.

At last seven pilgrims to the Hindu shrine at Amarnath were killed and 15 others were injured when militants attacked a bus with 56 people near Anantnag on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway on July 10.

The suspected mastermind of the attack, Abu Ismail, was also killed in an encounter in September.

"With the elimination of Abu Ismail earlier and now these three Abu Mavia, Furkan & Yawar group that attacked Amarnath Yatries is wiped out (sic)," Vaid said.

In another tweet he said the "4th terrorist"



was caught.

Police said the arrested local resident, identified as Rashid Ahmad Allai, had recently joined the group. The militant was arrested with a Chinese pistol from a hospital in the area.

According to police, Furqan was heading the group after after Ismail's death and had

▶ See **DGP**...Pg 02

Countries don't talk about Kashmir due to strategic India alliance: PoK prez

Washington: Masood Khan alleged that the UN was not acting on its own resolution because of India.

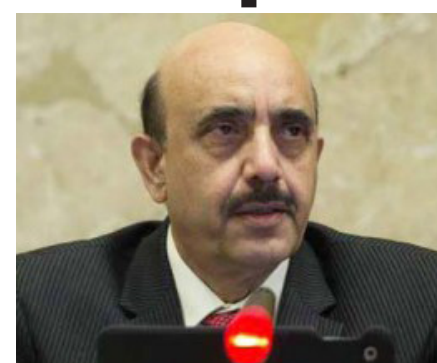
A former top Pakistani diplomat has said that because of India's influence and economic power, countries are unwilling to raise the issue of Kashmir at international level, including the UN.

Masood Khan, former Pakistani Ambassador to the UN who is now president of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), rued that India had veto on the talks between the two South Asian neighbours.

Khan is currently in Washington for what he described is part of his effort to apprise the international community about the current situation in Kashmir.

"India has strategic alliances with certain countries. Because of the lucrative deals that it offers to powerful countries in the West, it has practically imposed a gag order on Kashmir," Khan said on Monday in response to a question at the Atlantic Council, a top American think-tank.

Khan said that because of increasing Indian influence, "people here (in Washington DC), in Brussels, in London or other world capitals don't talk about Kashmir, because this would have consequences— for these



countries, like in terms of economic transactions, and strategic costs".

Responding to questions at the thinly-attended Atlantic Council event, Khan alleged that the UN was not acting on its own resolution because of India.

"The United Nations is not acting because of real politics," he said.

"The Security Council, first because of cold war dynamics, and now because of number of other factors is not taking cognisance of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, which is regrettable because of mandate that is given to the Security Council by the UN charter under chapter six and chapter seven," he said.

▶ See **PoK**...Pg 02

OVERSTAYING OFFICIALS, RULE THE ROOST IN PSUS

GAD unmoved

Srinagar, Dec 05: The overstaying officials and officers in the state owned corporations belie the claims of state government of pursuing austere transfer policy in departments.

"There are officers in some corporations who have completed decades at one place, as there appears to be no sincere transfer policy," said sources.

They said every now and then government talks about bringing transparency and accountability in government departments, but the ground reality is that no one actually cares.

The sources further revealed that there are certain officers in the PSU's those who have been appointed in

▶ See **Roost**...Pg 02

Mehbooba distributes appointment orders among visually impaired pellet victims

Disburses relief among fire sufferers of Reshi Bazaar, Anantnag

Srinagar, Dec 05: Further extending her policy of healing touch, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today distributed orders of appointment among a group of victims who lost their eyesight due to pellet injuries during the law and order situations in the Valley last year.

This is in continuation of her earlier measures taken for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence during the unrest of last year.



It may be recalled that on September 14 and 28 the Chief Minister had also disbursed financial assistance among two groups of such pellet victims. Besides, the Chief Minister had supervised the treatment of these victims last year as well.

Mehbooba Mufti, it may be mentioned here, has initiated a series of measures for the rehabilitation, social integration and empowerment

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

MULTIPLE FUNERAL PRAYERS OFFERED FOR LOCAL MILITANT IN SOUTH KASHMIR

Kulgam observes shutdown

Kulgam, Dec 5: Thousands of people participated in the last rites of local slain militant Yawar Bashir at his native village Hiblish in South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Reports said that back to back multiple funeral prayers were offered in favour of the slain militants amid pro-Islam and pro freedom slogans.

Yawar Bashir along with his two associates was killed in Bhadragund-Bonigam area on Srinagar-Jammu highway. Yawar according to his family members was a Hafize-Quran.

Reports added that police handed over the body of slain militant to family on Monday night. Thousands of

▶ See **Prayers**...Pg 02

Sher-e-Kashmir's 112th Birth Anniversary commemorated across J&K

Dr. Farooq, Omar lead Fateha Khwani at Naseem Bagh



Srinagar, Dec 05: National Conference on Tuesday held commemorative functions to mark the 112th Birth Anniversary of Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah across the State. The main commemorative function and congregational Fateha Khwani was held at Qaid Mazaar at Naseem Bagh in Srinagar. National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Working President Omar Abdullah, Party Leaders and Legislators along with hundreds of activists participated in the Fateha Khwani

NC PAYS RICH TRIBUTE TO SHER-E-KASHMIR ON 112TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

'His secular, progressive outlook will continue to be a source of inspiration for generations'

Jammu, Dec 05: National Conference leaders on Tuesday paid glorious tributes to Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah on his 112th birth anniversary and took pledge to stand guard against communal polarization and the alarming growth of hate politics.

"Isolating communal forces and strengthening the bonds of amity and brotherhood will be biggest tribute to Baba-e-Quom, who strived all his life for harmony among

▶ See **NC**...Pg 02

MEHBOOBA'S COMPASSIONATE MEASURES EVIDENCE OF HER CONCERN AND COMPASSION: PDP

'Mufti Saheb largely succeeded in his effort to bring peace, stability, relief to people'

Jammu, Dec 05: Peoples Democratic Party has said that rehabilitation of victims of unrest has been a deep concern for Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and providing resource and support to most affected persons is her desire she wants to pursue through absolute empathy and humility.

Referring to the gesture of compassion from her shown to Insha, a pellet victim of 2014 unrest by providing an honorable livelihood to her and several others, Party's Vice President Sartaj Madni said this is an act emanating from the pain felt by her for innocent sufferers and victims of

▶ See **PDP**...Pg 02

NC, PDP mother of all ills: Vakil

'Why Mehbooba silent on self rule, Farooq crying for autonomy out of power'

Sopore, Dec 05: President Jammu Kashmir Bachao Tehreek and Former Minister Abdul Gani Vakil Tuesday said dynasty politics propagated and promoted by National Conference and PDP is the mother of all ills including unprecedented delay in resolution of Kashmir Issue, erosion of State autonomy and political exploitation on "Self Rule and Autonomy" slogan.

Addressing one day convention of "Jammu Kashmir Bachao Tehreek" at Sopore today Vakil dared Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to break her silence on her party's demand for "Self Rule" and "demilitarization" and asked her to stop political exploitation of people by talking about Confidence Building Measures (CBM's).



Asking Mehbooba Mufti that how she can get her party's demand for "Self Rule"

▶ See **Vakil**...Pg 02

SKIMS observes 35th Annual Day

Lack of credible institutions hampering JK's growth prospects: Dr Drabu



Srinagar, Dec 05: Blaming the inadequacy of good institutions for the prevailing sense of hopelessness in Jammu and Kashmir, Minister of Finance,

Labour & Employment, Dr Haseeb Drabu today called for aligning the policy decisions to the social choices of people. He called for building

credible institutions to inculcate positivity in the society. Speaking at the 35th Annual Day of Sher-e-Kashmir

▶ See **Drabu**...Pg 02

POLICE ARRESTS ACCOMPLICE OF SLAIN MILITANTS

Srinagar, Dec 5: Police Tuesday said that after pursuing the leads available at Qazigund encounter one individual Rashid Ahmed Allai son of Farooq Ahmed of Hamzapora Sangam Bijbehera was arrested from Janglatmandi maternity hospital in South Kashmir with a Chinese pistol and live cartridges yesterday night.

Pertinently, this individual was missing since last two days from his house and had joined the Yawar group of LeT.

Investigation conducted so far has established that this individual was with the three militants (since killed) where the encounter took place and managed to escape from the site. Consequently, he took shelter at the hospital in Anantnag with the help of one of his associates. He along with his associates were intending to snatch

▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

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BAPIN

In an apparent reference to Pakistan, Rawat said that how the "neighbouring country" deals with terrorist organisation is their matter "but we will keep raising this".

We do not want that such organisations are promoted, he said.

Rawat was at the Suratgarh military station in Sriganganagar district to present the President's Standard to three regiments.

The Army chief presented the Standard to 87 Armoured regiment, 47 Armoured regiment and 10 Armoured regiment after a mounted parade which was attended by south western Army commander Lt Gen Cherish Mathson, Lt Gen P C Thimaya general officer commanding of Chetak corps and other senior officers.

The chief hosts of the event were the Colonels of the Regiments of three Armoured regiments— Maj Gen Vinod Sharma, Maj Gen S S Mahal and Maj Gen Kulpreet Singh respectively, according to defence spokesperson Lt Col Manish Ojha.

A formation of T-72 main battle tanks, the mainstay of Indian Armoured Corps, displaying might of the Army was commanded by Brig Praveen Chhabra, commander of Sand Viper brigade with Regiment contingent commanded by respective commanding officers.

The honour was bestowed upon the three Armoured regiments in due recognition of the dedicated and meritorious service rendered by them since raising, more than three decades back.

DGP

masterminded all recent attacks on security forces in the valley.

The encounter was the latest in a series of success by security forces that has resulted in the death of several top militants this year, including Let commanders Abu Dujana and Hizbul Mujahideen's Sabzar Ahmad Bhat, the successor of Burhan Wani as the outfit's Kashmir chief. Wani's killing last year had sparked months-long street protests in the Valley that left more than a 100 people, most of them civilians dead.

Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar's nephew Talah Rashid was also killed in another encounter.

Vaid had said earlier that around 170 militants had been killed by security forces in Kashmir till October – claiming it to be a record of sorts in the past decade.

POK

Khan argued that the UN should be acting. "It should be proactive. It's because of real politics. It is also because of two other factors," he said.

"One was that in the past 30 to 40 years, India and Pakistan have invested a lot of energy and time in bilateral talks. But these bilateral talks or dialogue have proved to be mirage for Kashmiris because it has produced no results," he said, adding that these talks have been non-productive.

Because of these talks, India has "acquired two vetoes", he said.

One on the agenda whereby they have in fact reduced the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir to a fraction of their whole agenda. It is one of 10 agenda items, he said.

Secondly, India has veto over the timetable he added. "They will start negotiations when it suites them and when they don't like it they will blame Pakistan for terrorism. And that has just got scuttled the dialogue process," he said.

Khan claimed that there are no terrorist camps in the POK.

"None whatsoever," he said during the interaction. "This is in fact a propaganda against the Kashmiris intended to demonise them," he said, and claimed that there is no terrorism right now in Kashmir. Neither there is any cross-border activities.

"This is not happening," he said. "Right now, India has fenced the Line of Control. There are two layers of the fence. In between there are landmines. There are motion sensors. They also have electronic surveillance, thermal imaging. If any crossing takes place they would be detected," he added.

ROOST

one unit office, have been bestowed with number of the promotions, are now heading the same unit for the last fifteen years. The list of the officer is in the possession of KNS.

Even the head of the PSUs who manage the corporations are overstaying as managing Directors for over five years now, sources maintained.

These all overstaying officers are enjoying the patronage of top babus. "The issue of overstaying is well in the knowledge of the government, but nothing is being done in this regard, said one of the social activists.

Sources said that even the promotions have been granted to many officials, while during the period they have overstayed at one place of posting.

Meanwhile sources said that hundreds of employees of clerical staff have been over staying for years in offices of various government departments.

Sources said that hundreds of employees have not been transferred for the last seven to ten years from various offices. "These employees are over staying at various places on the political and bureaucratic influence," an official of the General Administration Department, said.

The official said that most of the over staying clerical staff has been found in Health and Medical Education Department, Education Department, PHE, and various corporations.

Sources said that overstaying of officials also tantamount a loss to the state exchequer, when such employees draw their salaries without practically doing any work.

This is also a violation of the transfer policy. Sources said that government departments are violating the transfer policy by retaining officials more than two years. "Scores of employees in various departments have not been transferred for years. They don't want to get transferred from these places," an official said.

As per government's official transfer policy of 2010 all the employees having more than two years of stay at a particular place shall be transferred.

However, various departments have not been following the transfer policy either by premature transfer of officials

or retaining employees for years at a specific post, official sources said.

Sources said that premature transfers have been common in most of the government departments.

The government has issued several directives to department in the last one year to adhere the transfer policy. "The Health, Education, Rural Development, Social Welfare, Housing and Urban Developments have not followed the transfer policy," an official of the General Administration Department, said.

The authorities at the Rural Development Department issued an order in May this year that many of the officers are serving for longer duration in the districts.

"It has been observed that the district level officers don't follow the instructions of transfer policy circulated by the General Administration Department under government order no 861-GAD of 2010 dated 28 July 2010 wherein it has been ordered that all the employees having more than two years of stay at a particular place shall be transferred," the order reads.

Earlier, the government had sought the list of overstaying employees. An order was also issued in which it was mandatory for health department officials to serve in rural areas for strengthening of health centres in far-flung areas in the state.

The order was not implemented on the ground after most of the employees opposed the move, and were willing to serve only in district hospitals and various hospitals in Srinagar and Jammu.

MEHBOOBA

of youth of the State. Recently the Chief Minister directed withdrawal of cases against more than four thousand youth involved in various cases of law and order nature. The step was widely hailed by all sections of society.

Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today also disbursed relief assistance among the victims of recent fire incident at Reshi Bazaar, Anantnag in which more than 30 business establishments and houses were gutted on the intervening night of November 20-21.

The assistance includes Rs. 50,000 cash assistance for fully damaged structure, Rs. 30, 000 cash assistance for severely damaged structure and Rs. 25, 000 for partially damaged structure. This is in addition to the relief assistance given to them already on the instructions of the Chief Minister by the district administration under Red Cross, SDRF and other heads.

Interacting with a group of fire sufferers, the Chief Minister expressed her sympathies with them and assured all possible support from her Government for their proper rehabilitation.

Mehbooba Mufti assured them to look into their demands of revisiting insurance claims and availability of timber and other building material to raise back their structures.

PRAYERS

mourners visited his native village. A police official said that two non-local militants Furqan Ahmed and Abu Maviya who were also killed in the gunfight were laid to rest in the dead of the night at Gantmulla in North Kashmir's Baramulla district.

There are couple of grave yards reserved for non-local militants in North Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the killing of these militants sparked spontaneous shutdown in Kulgam and its adjoining areas.

Massive clashes erupted in several areas of Kulgam district after the killing of these pellets.

Eyewitnesses and reports said that clashes erupted near the site of gunfight in Nusu Badragund and Bonigam villages in Qazigund.

They said government forces resorted to tear-gas shelling to disperse the protesters, who in return pelted the forces with stones.

Clashes were also reported from Vesu and Devsar areas besides other adjoining villages.

An eye witness said that the traffic on Srinagar-Jammu highway was affected due to the clashes near Qazigund.

Officials said the traffic was diverted to Verinag-Anantnag highway.

The authorities suspended the train and Internet services in twin districts of Anantnag and Kulgam.

J&K

and paid glowing tributes to the Party Founder.

Speaking to reporters on the occasion, National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah said Sher-e-Kashmir's legacy of unimaginable struggles for the dignity of his people provides a guiding light for not just the party but the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a whole. "In Sher-e-Kashmir's legacy we find answers to many challenges that we are faced with today – including a challenge to our special status and unique political identity. The best tribute to Sher-e-Kashmir would be to leave no stone unturned to fight for the honour and dignity of our people who have suffered immensely due to various political machinations, instability and turmoil", Dr. Farooq Abdullah said.

On this occasion, National Conference Working President Mr. Omar Abdullah while paying glowing tributes to Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, said the party was committed to nurture the cherished goal of Sher-e-Kashmir to fight for the restoration of the political dignity and rights of our people. "Sher-e-Kashmir continues to inspire us to be united in our common mission to protect our State's honour and dignity against those divisive forces who are hell-bent to fragment and divide us on the basis of religion, region and language. Sher-e-Kashmir's statesmanship was defined by his secular thinking, his inclusive approach and his sense of justice for one and all without fear and favour. It is this statesmanship that should encourage us to face every adversity with courage and conviction", the National Conference Working President said.

Senior Party Leaders, Office Bearers and Legislators also spoke on the occasion and participated in the congregational Fateha Khwani and paid glowing tributes to Sher-e-Kashmir.

NC

different segments of society and unity between the three regions of Jammu and Kashmir", Provincial President Devender Singh Rana said while leading the party cadre

and leadership in paying homage to Sheikh Sahib at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this morning.

Rana exuded confidence that the National Conference cadre will stand tall in the prevailing vicious atmosphere of hate and mistrust and lead the society towards peace, harmony and tranquility in true spirit of secular ethos bequeathed by Sheikh Sahib.

Describing Sher-e-Kashmir as one of tallest leaders of the era of Mahatma Gandhi and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, the Provincial President said his secular and progressive outlook will continue to be a source of inspiration for generations.

Speaking on the occasion, former minister and senior leader Ajay Kumar Sadhotra recalled the contribution of Sheikh Sahib in ensuring equal opportunities of progress and development to Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, saying he was a strong proponent of regional autonomy to satiate the peculiar aspirations of the people.

Sadhotra cautioned against the challenge of divisive politics and exhorted people to stand unitedly and fight the forces, hell bent upon trifurcation of the State.

Sr State Vice President and former minister Surjeet Singh Slathia said that Sheikh Sahib struggled all his life for strengthening communal bonds between various sections of the society.

Slathia recalled the contribution of Sher-e-Kashmir in leading the people of the State towards the goal of political emancipation and socio-economic development braving numerous challenges.

State Vice President Th Kashmir Singh described Sheikh Sahib a visionary, who worked towards the political empowerment of people and laid sound foundations for the state to progress and develop.

Rattan Lal Gupta, State Vice President recalled the landmark and pioneering Land Reforms Act introduced by Sher-e-Kashmir and said this had empowered the farmers by making them masters of their own destiny

Former minister and State Vice President Syed Mush-taq Ahmed Bukhari lauded the crucial role of Sheikh Sahib in strengthening the bonds of amity, brotherhood and tranquility in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh regions. He said his vision and far sight helped the state to grow as a vibrant entity.

Recalling the contribution of Sheikh Sahib in ameliorating the lot of weaker sections of society, former minister and Chairman SC OBC Cell Babu Rampal said that said that the role of the late leader in strengthening bonds of amity and brotherhood will inspire generations to work for a society based on equality and social-justice.

Former MP Sheikh Abdul Rehman described Sheikh Sahib as a leader of global stature who believed in a just society where people belonging to all the religions enjoy equal opportunities of progress. He said Sheikh Sahib always respected opposition as an important pillar of democracy.

MLA Javed Rana, while paying tribute to Sher-e-Kashmir, referred to the atmosphere of mistrust and intolerance generated by divisive forces and expressed concern over the situation having taken such a turn in which the people were being singled out on the basis of their religious identities.

Dr Kamal Arora, MLA said that Sheikh Sahib's contribution to the governance of the State will always be an inspiration to again put Jammu and Kashmir on the path of peace, progress and prosperity

Former MLC Brij Mohan Sharma hailed Sheikh Sahib's role in cementing the bonds of brotherhood during most testing times.

Those present on the occasion included Mohd Shafi Uri MLA, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, M.Y Taing, Th Rachpal Singh, Qazi Jalal-ud-Din, Jagjeevan Lal, Ajaz Ahmed Jan, Bimla Luthra, Satwant Kour Dogra, Deepender Kour, Vijay Laxami Dutta, Master Noor Hussain, Ch. Wali Dad, Dharamveer Singh Jammwal, Bushan Lal Bhat, Bashir Ahmed Wani, Jugal Mahajan, S. Gurdeep Singh Sasan, Ch. Haroon, G.H Malik, Anil Dhar, Mohd Ayub Malik, K. D Singh, Abdul Gani Teli, Vijay Lochan, Pard-cep Bali, Romesh Motton, Dilshad Begum, Zaffarullah Rather, Ch. Shabir Ahmad, Rashida Begum, Daljeet Sharma, Sarika Singh, Iftkair Choudhary, Nar Singh, Sanjay Gupta, Ravi Dogra, Mohinder Gupta, Waris Gill, Asha Mehra, Rakesh Singh Raka, Rohit Kerni, Kr. Yashwardan Singh, Rohit Bali, S. Tejinder Singh, Reyaz Malik, Nitish Goswami, Munzali Malik, Som Raj Taroch, Ashok Singh Manhas and others.

The day started with Quran Khwani at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan that had been organized by G H Malik, which was followed by a visit to Vridh Ashram at Amphalla by senior leaders who distributed fruit among the inmates.

PDP

unfortunate circumstances that need to end.

Madni said that PDP leadership has always felt that state's people in general and youth in particular cannot thrive into a situation of conflict and confrontation. PDP's emergence in itself is an outcome of the critical need to lead the state into stability through reconciliation and healing.

He said the Coalition Governments headed by Mufti Syed vehemently pursued a course to find an answer to uncertainty and public dissatisfaction with a goal to end woes and miseries afflicted the masses.

Mufti Saheb largely succeeded in his effort to bring peace, stability and relief to people. Coalition headed by Mehbooba Mufti is only devoted to revive that positive discourse of reconciliation through free engagement and sustained development.

He said Mehbooba sincerely wants that her Government is transformed into an institution of relief and empowerment. She is taking consecutive measures of significance in this direction and has successfully been seeking engagement of state's people into reconciliation, dialogue and resolution of issues. She is the first Chief Minister who reaches out herself to provide relief and redress grievances at peoples doorsteps.

Relentlessly pursuing the agenda of peace, an imperative for success of the people-friendly policies She is committed to take her Government to door steps Madni said it is because of her efforts that New Delhi established an institution of dialogue which has started showing results.

He said Mehbooba's struggle to relieve the state from confrontation and conflict forms soul of the party and it is

her belief to provide conducive atmosphere for growth and dignified life to everyone. After Amnesty and withdrawal of FIR's against thousands of youth, the relief and rehabilitation for sufferers is another step that will further the cause of reconciliation and will provide youth a space to live free and dignified life.

VAKIL

conceded when her party has failed to get even a single power project from the Centre, Vakil regretted that Mehbooba Mufti could not get even pellet guns banned by the central government run by BJP at the Centre.

Launching a scathing attack on National Conference President and Former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah Vakil asked Abdullah to explain why he is crying over autonomy this time when National Conference is out of power and why he does not talk about late Sheikh Abdullah's statement in the assembly in which he said "Article 370 is not sacrosanct, and it can be scrapped".

Vakil asked Farooq Abdullah to recall and recount the role of his father in passed the land grants bill. Vakil alleged that National Conference is the architect of Public Safety Act (PSA) under which even innocents are jailed for years together without trial.

Vakil also said he was not surprised over Omar Abdullah congratulating Mehbooba mufti to become president as there has been all along commonality of National Conference and PDP to strengthen dynasty politics and to safe guard each others, interests especially on corruption.

Addressing the gathering General Secretary Jammu Kashmir Bachao Tehreek Syed Tehreek and Ex.MLC Syed Rafiq Shah he alleged that present dispensation has failed on all fronts as they cannot provide even basic necessities to the people like water electricity. He said corruption is rampant in present dispensation and administration defunct and government is watching like a mere spectator as they are busy in doing politics.

DRABU

Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura here as the 'Chief Guest', Dr Drabu said doctors as a class of professionals are an institution unto themselves and they need to be groomed and nurtured to address the despair in the society.

"Apart from the political issues, Kashmir lacks good institutions to which people can look up to with pride and honor. Like SKIMS and J&K Bank, we have very few institutions which can offer us hope and strength. The society must come together and think how we can fill this void," he said.

Dr Drabu said the people take a certain degree of pride in SKIMS and the J&K government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, will try to enhance its prestige in coming days through strategic interventions.

"SKIMS will continue to be an institution of eminence and relevance but new and credible institutions must be created to overcome the negativity we are going through. Also, I will humbly suggest getting fresh thinking into SKIMS in the way of competence and cultural diversity," he said.

Dr Drabu said the SKIMS will grow and prosper in coming months and years, and the state government is willing to consider ceding more institutional and financial autonomy to the institute in the interest of healthcare in Jammu and Kashmir.

"As Finance Minister, I am looking for defined allocative parameters for sectors like health which can be backed by data and research. You can help us in making policy choices. Money is never a problem for the government. The question is how effectively you use it, with what purpose and to what end," he said.

Congratulating the faculty, doctors and paramedics of SKIMS on the 35th Annual Day, the Finance Minister said doctors are a source of inspiration for the civil society as they are working under difficult and stressful conditions.

"You deserve much more than what you are getting, monetarily and socially. Let me assure you that our government will not leave any stone unturned to improve your stature and quality of life in coming years," he said.

The function was also attended by Minister of State for Health, Housing & Urban Development and Social Welfare, Asiea Naqash. In her address, Asiea, who was 'Guest of Honour', termed SKIMS as a ray of hope in advanced health-care under single roof for people belonging to marginalized sections of society.

"This great institution is the last ray of hope for people living in far-flung areas who don't have means to afford private treatment. My suggestion will be to delink the specialists from the administrative work so that they can work for patient welfare alone. The government will have no problem in providing liberal funding for SKIMS," she said.

The function was also attended by MLA Langate, Sheikh Abdul Rashid, DC Srinagar, Aabid Rashid, Prof MS Khuroo, one of world's leading gastroenterologist from the Valley, Prof AG Ahaner, Director, SKIMS, Prof Altaf Kirmani, Dean Medical Faculty, SKIMS, Prof Riyaz Untoo, Principal, SKIMS Medical College, Prof Irfan Robbani, faculty from SKIMS and GMC Srinagar and paramedic and other staff from the institute.

Prof Tariq Gojwari, organizing chairman of the Annual Day, presented the welcome address.

On the occasion, the Finance Minister released the 2017 Annual Report of SKIMS. Later, 'Lifetime Achievement' Award 2017, was conferred on one of world's top neurosurgeon, M Afzal Wani, for his contribution to the field of neurosurgery.

POLICE

weapon from the Policemen by attacking them. Further investigation is going on to unearth the conspiracy leading to the entire episode.

At the encounter site, bodies of three militants Yawar (local), Furqan and Maviya along with weapons and ammunition have been recovered. Pertinently, this group headed by Furqan, was involved in a series of terror crimes in Anantnag and Kulgam area: the prominent being the Yatra bus attack case at Batingo, attack at Lower Munda and also on police party at bus stand Anantnag etc.

Earlier, Ismail of this group, was killed at an encounter in Srinagar. Furqan had replaced Ismail in South Kashmir and was responsible for the recent attacks perpetrated by LeT.

Career Counselling cells setup in Higher Secondary Schools to facilitate students: Altaf Bukhari

Education Minister inaugurates Provincial-level Career Counseling & Guidance session

SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 05: Minister of Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today said that career counselling cells have been constituted in every higher secondary school so that every 12th class pass-out gets the complete information about new courses in this competitive world beyond doctor and engineer profession.

The Minister was speaking during the inauguration of Provincial-level Career Counseling & Guidance session organized by Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) at Girls Higher Secondary School Kothi Bagh. Recently appeared in 12th class examinations, 20 students were selected from Srinagar, Ganderbal, Budgam, and Pulwama districts for the guidance session. The main aim of the programme is guiding the 12th



class students to opt for the career of their preference and calibre.

"This is the right time where a student needs proper guidance in choosing career options and subjects accordingly," the Minister said.

He said students can also avail

benefits of various scholarship programmes which would go a long way in polishing their skills and achieve higher targets in their career.

On the occasion, while interacting with students Bukhari informed that the Government has already approved

upgradation of 600 schools from Primary to Middle, Middle to High and High to Higher Secondary level. Besides, funds have been sanctioned for upgradation of infra at these educational institutes.

Director School Education Kashmir, Dr GN Itoosaid that on the directions of the Education Minister, the Department has started Rubaru programme across the valley where grievances of the students are being heard and redressed accordingly.

Experts and faculty members from the University of Kashmir, NIT, DIET and DSEK provided Career Counseling & Guidance to the students during the programme.

CEOs, Principals of the DSEK, Principal State Institute of Education, Mehboob Hussain and other concerned were also present on the occasion.

Kohli hands-over regularization orders to ReTs

Says Govt committed to provide quality education to students

RAJOURI, DECEMBER 05: Minister for Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries, Abdul Gani Kohli today distributed regularization orders among 15 Rehbre-e- Taleem (ReTs) Teachers of Kalakote Constituency at a function organized by Education Department at Kalakote today.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister appreciated the work of ReT teachers who serve their duties with zeal and honesty. He said teachers are the nation builders and urged them to provide quality and moral education to students so as to help them build foundations for a bright future.

The Minister asked the teaching fraternity to put in all efforts to upgrade the standard of education and make the students participate in challenges and competitions at State, nation and international level. He asked them to regularly hold interactions with parents as they will benefit the students in their aca-

demical and extra-curricular activities.

Kohli urging people to educate their children said that the Government has taken numerous steps to upgrade the basic infrastructure in all educational institutions of the State. He said several schools were upgraded from middle to high and high to higher secondary in Kalakote Constituency, especially in hilly and remote areas, with an aim to provide quality education to students at their door steps. Later, the Minister attended a large public meeting at village Simbalgala in Kalakote Constituency and highlighted the achievements of the present Government.

He said that the Government is committed to provide basic amenities like adequate drinking water, health, power and education facilities besides civic facility to the people of all three regions of the State. Local people put forth their demands which include construction of foot paths, protection bunds.

Development of far-off areas priority of Government: Haji Anayat

Chairman conducts extensive tour of Shargole, Bodh Kharboo, adjoining villages

KARGIL, DECEMBER 05: Chairman Legislative Council, Haji Anayat Ali today said that Government is fully committed for development of the far-flung regions at par with rest of the State in terms of infrastructure development and other developmental activities so that the people of these areas are not left deprived of necessary facilities.

The Chairman stated this during his extensive tour of Shargole, Bodh Kharboo, and adjoining villages here today.

Addressing a series of public meetings in these areas, Haji Anayat Ali said that the present regime under the leadership of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is fully conscious of the problems and difficulties of the people of snowbound areas. He said that Government is keen to eradicate poverty and backwardness, adding that focused attention is being given to unattended areas in this re-

gard. The Chairman said that priority of the Government is to provide basic amenities to the people besides improving the existing infrastructure in rural and hilly areas while as particular attention is being given to develop education, power, health, and mobile and road connectivity.

He said that the present government is taking a slew of measures to provide satisfactory facilities to the people of Kargil district and a number of road connectivity and other projects under State Share and CRF are going on in full swing. He said to provide facilities of ration to the people at their doorsteps 149 ration stores have been sanctioned in the district. He said that 157 mobile towers have been sanctioned that would go a long way in resolving connectivity problems.

Haji Anayat Ali called upon

the public representatives and the local people to work unitedly in realizing the goal of the Government to ensure progress and prosperity of the district.

He assured the people of these areas to allocate funds out of his CDF for the purchase of generator and kitchen sets, strengthening of women SHGs, and provision of solar home lights besides carrying out other developmental activities in the area.

He exhorted upon the officers that benefits of various development and welfare schemes should reach to the real beneficiaries in the best possible manner. He emphasized on regular monitoring of the development works besides the use of quality material. He said no stone would be left unturned in redressing genuine grievances of the people.

Meanwhile, the locals apprised the Chairman about

their grievances and demands mainly concerning the construction of link roads, irrigation khuls and bridges, installation of mobile towers and electric poles, restoration and repairing of water supply pipelines, up gradation of health centers and schools, improvement and blacktopping of roads, repair of irrigation khuls, establishment of weaving and tailoring centers for the women folk, construction of crate bunds, better medicare, etc.

The Chairman assured the people that all their genuine demands would be addressed at the earliest. He also assured the people for keeping funds out of his CDF for construction of a guest house at Mundik for visiting Buddhist spiritual gurus and high lamas. He also issued on spot instructions to the concerned for early disposal of the issues brought up during the public meetings.

Speaker launches construction work of Entry Gate for Apsara Market

Listens to public grievances, assures early redressal

JAMMU, DECEMBER 05: Speaker Legislative Assembly and MLA, Gandhi Nagar Constituency, Kavinder Gupta today launched construction work of entry gate for Apsara Market, here today.

This beautification project for the Apsara market is being executed by JMC at an estimated cost of Rs 15 lakh.

On the occasion, the Speaker said that this project will help showcase the heritage status of this market, besides giving boost to the market. He assured the people that executive agencies have been directed to ensure time bound completion of this project.

The Speaker was informed about by AEE, JMC, Gurcharan Singh about various components of the beautification projects of the Apsara market.

Later, Speaker undertook visits to Satwari and Gangyal area where locals and shopkeepers projected their demands regarding various



developmental works required in the area.

They informed the Speaker about the difficulties being faced by them due to limited access to MH Road Satwari as part of the expansion work of Jammu Airport, construction of bathrooms, lanes and drains, sanitation, providing safe drinking water etc.

Addressing the locals, the Speaker said that concerned agencies have been directed

to closely monitoring progress of these development projects and their completion will be taken on priority to ensure minimum hassle to people. He said that every demand related to the development of the constituency will be taken up at the earliest.

The Speaker also visited the family affected due to fire incident which occurred in Nai Basti area in Jammu yesterday and inquired about

their wellbeing. He also gave cash Rs 10000 to the affected family and assured that all possible help will be given to them.

The Speaker inaugurated Automated Teller Machine (ATM) of HDFC Bank amid good gathering of valuable customers, senior citizens and local businessmen near at CNC Hospital Trikuta Nagar in the presence of cluster and branch heads of HDFC Bank. It is 68th ATM machine installed by the bank authorities in Jammu Division.

On the occasion, the Speaker said that the installation of ATM machine will facilitate people and provide services at their doorstep. He urged the people to take maximum benefit of these technology-driven services.

Among others, senior officers of concerned department and agencies, besides many senior leaders also accompanied the Speaker during his visits.

Zulfkar calls on Odisha Food Minister, discusses food & consumer related issues

BHUBANESWAR, DECEMBER 05: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs & Tribal Affairs Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today said that to give thrust to the State's development, best practices of other states will be adopted in J&K so that 100 percent transparency can be brought in the system.

Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali is on study tour to Odisha to observe the functioning of the public distribution system in various States which will help in fine-tuning the system in Jammu and Kashmir in make it more efficient.

As part of the tour, Zulfkar today called upon Minister for Food and Consumer Welfare of Odisha Surya Narayan Patro, and had detailed discussions regarding various schemes being implemented in the Food and Consumer Welfare Department of Odisha.

Odisha Minister briefed Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali about Market Intelligence concept which has been entrusted with tasks of collecting of market data, issue of radio bulletins, weekly price bulletin, market news bulletin and submission of periodical reports and returns to different quarters including Government of India. He said that it is most important wing of Food, Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department which acts as a support system to the decision making process in formulating policies. "It takes action under EC Act, against traders indulging in unfair trade practices and also monitors prices and availability situation of essential commodities in open market on day-to-day basis through computer network", he added.

The Minister also briefed Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali about activities of Consumer Protection and informed him that Odisha Government has



established 31 District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forums (known as District Forums) and a State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (known as State Commission). He briefed that District Forums and the State Commission are composed of one President and two Members including one Woman Member. He added that District Forum can adjudicate consumer disputes involving amount of upto Rs 20 lakh, whereas the pecuniary jurisdiction of the State Commission is up to Rs 1 crore.

About the CONFONET scheme, the Minister said that District Forums and the State Commission are being provided with computers and technical support personnel by Govt of India at their own cost through NIC. He added that 500 consumer clubs have been set up in 21 Districts through voluntary consumer organizations as

co-coordinating agencies.

About the new initiatives in consumer affairs, Patro briefed that they are going to set up 7 more Working Standard Laboratories, strengthening of existing 73 Laboratories, development of a permanent training wing in the Directorate, setting up of a Museum of Weights and Measures in the premises of the Directorate and formation of the State Squad to strengthen the enforcement activities.

About Legal Metrology Department, Minister said that Orissa Legal Metrology Organisation was set up under the administrative control of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Department and its full-fledged Directorate is functioning at Khandagiri, Bhubaneswar. He said that the main function of the organisation is to provide better protection to consumers and also to constitute an es-

sential element in the economy by ensuring metrological accuracy in commercial transactions, industrial measurements and measurements needed for ensuring public and human safety and maintenance of standards in relation to weights and measures as prescribed by the Central Govt.

The Minister added that LMD also enforce various provisions of weights and measures laws, earn non-tax Govt. revenue in the form of fees for verification, compounding etc., regulation of manufacture, repair & sale of weights and measures, regulation of packaged commodities sold or distributed, regulation of commodities sold by heaps, and regulation of services rendered by weight, measure or number.

About ePDS, Minister briefed that they have started e-Despatch, an electronic portal on which every activity is being uploaded. He briefed that all day to day functioning of the Department can be seen on the portal which has changed the scenario of the Department by making it fully digital Department.

After discussing with Odisha Minister, Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali said that Odisha has adopted good practices in the Department of Food and Consumer Welfare and J&K Government will adopt best practices in its system to achieve goal of 100% transparency. "We want to study good practices in other states and we desire to adopt best practices of other Indian states so that to achieve our goal of bringing 100 percent transparency in Jammu & Kashmir", Zulfkar added.

The Minister also conducted visit of various Fair Price Shops in Bhubaneswar and various godowns to get knowledge of operations of these shops. He also observed the end to end computerization and supply chain management besides inspect online mechanism of PDS.

Chief Secretary reviews developmental scenario in Kishtwar

Visits several project sites, calls for reinforcing coordination to square-off bottlenecks

KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 05: Chief Secretary, Mr B B Vyas today visited Kishtwar to take stock of the progress of developmental works on the ground.

The Chief Secretary personally visited the sites of various developmental projects in the district including District Hospital Kishtwar, Naigadh water supply scheme, Government Polytechnic College, Govt Degree College hostel, Indoor Stadium coming up at Girls Higher Secondary School and the satellite campus of Jammu University.

During his visit to the proposed airstrip at Kishtwar, the Chief Secretary while taking note of the bottlenecks hampering the project, took up the matter, on the spot, with the concerned army officers seeking their cooperation in getting the issues resolved at the earliest so that the much-needed airstrip could be made operational. He said the Government is keen to make the airstrip functional at the earliest for the convenience of the people as also to increase the tourist footfall in the area.

After extensively visiting various project sites in the district, the Chief Secretary chaired an officers meeting at the Mini Secretariat Kishtwar to seek details of physical and financial progress on the ongoing development works in the district. He also sought information about the bottlenecks, if any, hampering the development works so that the same could be taken up at the appropriate levels for early resolution.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Dr Mandeep Bhandari, District Development Commissioner Kishtwar, Angrez Singh Rana and other senior officers of the civil and police administration were present at the meeting.

The Chief Secretary took detailed review of the works being executed in health, education, R&B, PHE, I&FC & FCS&CA sector.

The meeting held threadbare deliberations on the difficulties impeding the smooth execution of projects including land compensation and other technical issues.

Expressing concern over the sluggish pace



of fund utilization, the Chief Secretary asked the officers to access the resources available for developmental works and make optimum and judicious use of the same to build requisite public infrastructure in the area.

Hailing the officers for trying to give their best amid challenging situations, the Chief Secretary asked them to work in close coordination with their colleagues at various levels in the administration to address the bottlenecks hampering the smooth and timely execution of the development works. He said there should be regular follow-up and monitoring of the projects to meet the timelines set for their completion.

The Chief Secretary also called for keeping a close watch on the quality of development works. He said senior officers should regularly conduct inspection and take samples and get these tested to maintain the quality of works.

Taking note of the issues raised by the DC Kishtwar at the meeting, the Chief Secretary asked FCS&CA Department to distribute the ration cards in the area by 5 January 2018. He asked District Statistical Officer to conduct evaluation of all the ICDS centres in the district within 15 days.

Regarding relief for Suknai fire victims, the Chief Secretary said the funds will be provided from the Chief Minister's relief fund for construction of IAY houses for the victims.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

CAPTURING CRIME — ON THE NCRB DATA FOR 2016

The National Crime Records Bureau data for 2016 on two important aspects, violent crime and crime against women, should prompt State governments to make a serious study of the underlying causes. Not all States are equally affected; Uttar Pradesh and Bihar record the maximum number of murders. The national tally on crimes against women, which includes rape, abduction, assault and cruelty by husband and relatives, is up by 2.9% over that of 2015. Going by the data, there is a distinct urban geography as well for violence against women, with Delhi and Mumbai appearing the least safe: Delhi recorded a rate of crime that is more than twice the national average. As several studies have shown over the years, the annual data is useful in reviewing trends of extreme events, such as murder, but less so in the case of other offences that tend to be underreported. Viewed in perspective, the murder rate today has declined to the level prevailing in the 1950s, which was 2.7 per 1,00,000 people, after touching a peak of 4.62 in 1992. But that macro figure conceals regional variations, witnessed in U.P. and Bihar, where 4,889 and 2,581 murder incidents took place during 2016, respectively, while it was 305 in densely populated Kerala. One question that needs to be analysed is, how much does social development influence a reduction in crime?

In the years since the Delhi gang rape case of 2012 that shook the country, the definition of the heinous offence has been broadened, police forces have been directed to record the crime with greater sensitivity, and some measures initiated to make public places safer for women. This approach could lead to a reduction in violent crime over time. A focussed programme to universalise education and skills training would potentially keep juveniles from coming into conflict with the law. Last year's data indicate that there is a rise in the number of cases involving juveniles. There are also basic issues that need urgent reform, such as modernising the police, recruiting the right candidates and teaching them to uphold human rights. The orders of the Supreme Court on police reforms issued in 2006 have not been implemented in letter and spirit by all States. With genuine measures, Ministerial superintendence over the police would become more transparent and socially accountable, eliminating political interference in its working. This would lead to a reduction in crimes committed with impunity and raise public confidence in the criminal justice delivery system. As a measure of data improvement, it should be mandatory to record not just the principal offence in a case, as the NCRB does, and list all cognisable offences separately. Rather than view the available data passively, governments would do well to launch serious studies that result in policies and measures for freedom from violence.

The gag on free speech

► Gautam Bhatia

On Wednesday, a special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Court, hearing the Sohrabuddin Sheikh and Tulsiram Prajapati fake encounter cases, issued a gag order prohibiting the press from reporting on the court proceedings. This order, allegedly issued at the behest of the lawyers for the defence has come only a few days after the Allahabad High Court gagged the media from reporting on an ongoing case concerning an alleged instance of hate speech by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, in 2007, who was then a Bharatiya Janata Party parliamentarian from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

A GROWING TREND

These two instances, which are not isolated, are representative of an alarming trend of creeping judicial censorship, increasingly across large domains. The Indian judiciary has had a historically ambivalent relationship with free speech, from upholding the constitutionality of sedition in 1962, to endorsing the law of criminal defamation in 2016. Recently, however, it has begun to go further than simply rejecting constitutional challenges to the state's speech-restrictive laws. Traversing well beyond the bounds of the Constitution, it has begun to actively censor or compel speech of its own accord, without even the existence of a parliamentary law on the subject. Recent, notorious examples include the Bombay High Court constituting a "committee" to recommend cuts to the satirical film, "Jolly LLB 2", the Madras High Court telling condom manufacturers to have the illustrations on their packets cleared by the Advertising Standards Council of India, and the Supreme Court directing cinema halls to play the national anthem before the screening of every movie.

However, the CBI Court and the Allahabad High Court's gag orders, are significantly more serious because they strike at the heart of our system of democratic governance. The task of courts under the Constitution is to deliver justice, and a functional democracy is defined by a justice system that is open, transparent, and, above all, public. The authority of judges and courts, we must always remember, stems not from popular consent and periodic elections, but from their fidelity to the laws and the Constitution, and the strength and quality of their legal reasoning. For these reasons, "secret justice" — bringing to mind the infamous trials of the Star Chamber in medieval England — is a paradox in terms. As the great British judge, Lord Diplock, noted, "if the way that courts behave cannot be hidden from the public ear and eye, this provides a safeguard against judicial arbitrariness or idiosyncrasy and maintains the public confidence in the administration of justice."

TRACING THE LINE

Unfortunately, however, the judicial gag orders, by the CBI Court and the Allahabad High Court, were enabled, at least in part,



by the Supreme Court itself (although it is questionable whether the CBI Court had even the power to pass a gag order, let us assume, for the purpose of argument, that it did). In 2012, the Supreme Court held that in certain circumstances, courts could pass "postponement orders" barring coverage of specific judicial proceedings. The court framed the issue as requiring a balancing of two competing rights: the right to free speech, and the right to a fair trial. Observing that sometimes excessive publicity could jeopardise a fair trial, the court held that to the extent it was reasonable and proportionate, "prior restraints" on court reporting could be imposed.

There are, however, two problems with this. First, the idea that "media trials" might distort the outcomes of cases makes sense in a jury system, where guilt or innocence is decided by a jury of twelve men and women who do not possess specialised legal training, and need to be immunised from undue forms of influence. In India, however, we abolished jury trials more than 40 years ago, and it is judges now who decide cases on their own. Judges, by definition, are not only supposed to apply the law but also have to have the relevant training and temperament to apply the law regardless of whatever public outcry that might exist outside the courtroom. The argument for fair trial, therefore, betrays a startling lack of faith in the judiciary's own ability to decide controversial cases objectively.

Second, and more importantly, the 2012 Supreme Court judgment failed to adequately limit the kinds of cases in which these exceptional "postponement orders" could be passed; it failed to limit the duration for which they could be passed. In fact, by using subject-

ive words such as "reasonable" and "proportionate", it left the door wide open for future courts to issue sweeping gag orders, insulating themselves from public reporting and, thereby, public criticism. As media and civil rights lawyer Apar Gupta noted at the time, the judgment was so "open to interpretation and probable abuse" that, in the course of the years, it could well transform itself into a "gag writ." The recent orders of the CBI Court and the Allahabad High Court indicate that this is precisely what has happened.

HANDLING MISREPORTING

It is often argued that the media reports court proceedings inaccurately; judicial observations are published out of context just to provide good headline copy, and sometimes, there is outright misquotation. In fact, this was precisely the reason cited by the Allahabad High Court to justify the gag order, although the court did not provide any examples of "misquotation". There are, however, laws to deal with inaccurate reporting, especially the Contempt of Courts Act, which the judiciary has never shied away from invoking. Perhaps more importantly, however, there is a more straightforward way of dealing with the spectre of misreporting: to make written transcripts and audio or video recordings of court proceedings available to the public. Until that happens, to ban reporting of court proceedings by invoking "misquotation" is to invoke a bogey at worst, and to throw the baby out with the bathwater at best.

Of course, there might be situations where inaccurate reporting could cause imminent damage. Imagine, for example, the cross-

examination of the principal accused in a communal riot, in an already charged atmosphere. There might also be situations where a case involves arguments pertaining to national security, which cannot at that time be made public. In these situations, a temporary halt on reporting could be justifiable, but it is in the very nature of these situations that the bar would be limited to a single hearing, and only in the most exceptional of situations. The CBI Court and the Allahabad High Court's sweeping gag orders do not even come close to satisfying that condition.

Ultimately, the trial courts and the High Courts take their cue from the Supreme Court, which is the ultimate driver of jurisprudence. And unfortunately, earlier this year, the Supreme Court passed a sweeping gag order of its own. While convicting (the now retired) Justice Karnan of contempt of court, a bench comprising the seven senior-most judges of the Supreme Court ordered that "no further statements issued by Shri Justice C.S. Karnan would be publicized". Whatever the special circumstances of that case, there is little doubt that such a command sends a clear message about the appropriateness of sweeping gag orders, should a court feel that they are necessary.

The CBI Court and the Allahabad High Court's gag orders demonstrate an urgent need for some conscious course-correction by the judiciary. They come with a democratic cost that is simply too high to pay: sunlight, they say, is the best disinfectant. Often, it is the only disinfectant.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

Has a Rahul Gandhi who 'bloomed late' become Congress chief?

► Vinod Sharma

The long-delayed, much-spectulated change of guard in the Congress is finally a reality.

Rahul Gandhi is president now of the party founded in 1885 — and facing its worst political test since Independence.

In many ways it's a transition from de facto to de jure. The sixth generation Gandhi-Nehru scion has called the shots since his elevation as vice-president in the beginning of 2013 without picking up the testamur that makes a leader: a poll victory!

The ongoing campaign in Gujarat is his chance to prove skeptics wrong by winning or at least improving the party's tally. For the victory in Punjab, where he campaigned, was attributed to the charismatic Amarinder Singh. The sole silver line amid the run of defeats were the 20-odd seats the Congress won in UP in the 2009 general elections.

In fact, the party's return to power then was popular acceptance of Sonia Gandhi's inclusive persona, Manmohan Singh's economic prowess and Rahul's youthful appeal. There was a reassuring blend for city dwellers and rural folks alike in the backdrop of the 2008 US



subprime economic crisis that had global ripples.

That's the past the Congress's striving to revive in post-GST and demonetisation Gujarat where its challenger is the same Narendra Modi who took it

to the cleaners in 2014. It's from that rump of 44 Lok Sabha seats the new president has to rebuild the Congress.

Does he have it in him? Can he help the party regain the enviable past that's in a shambles? There's a tenuous body

of evidence now that he's no longer the fumbling, bumbling Rahul who came across as the Congress family's reluctant, reticent 'karta.'

Not till long ago, a widely shared impression in the party was that unlike

his mother, he wasn't a consensus builder. That he was a chronic absentee prone to deserting the post amid battles he should've led from the front.

But the leader some of his colleagues are seeing in Gujarat is 'another' person:

willing to listen and accept advice; take party-persons across age-groups along rather than restricting himself to a cabal of chosen aides.

A Gujarat PCC office holder said it was unusual for him to hear Rahul asking for seniors on seeing them missing from his entourage. He dwelt as much on his self-correcting ways at a public rally, admitting that the hammering he got from the BJP was for him a lesson.

"I'm a changed person," the Gujarat leader quoted him as telling the crowd.

The pragmatist in him was evident as much at the Dwarkadheesh Temple.

He was all attention as priests showed him records of earlier visits by his family elders: Pandit Nehru, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. He wore through the day's campaign the vermilion tilak they applied, till he reached another temple at dusk.

But the question remains: has Rahul changed or people are looking at him differently? Is he, as Mani Shankar Aiyar often says, blooming late the way Nehru, Indira, Rajiv and Sonia did?

The jury is out and watching. Credit nevertheless goes to him for assuming command in the middle of a poll battle that can go either way.

Andhra CM attends business seminar on day 2 of South Korea visit

AMARAVATI: Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Make in India Korea Center signed a Memorandum of Understanding to set up Korea Industrial Complex in Andhra Pradesh.

The delegation led by the chief minister went to Busan city from Seoul in Speed Train to attend a business seminar.

Naidu wished the business delegates in Korean- "Aan Yong ho sei". The Chief Minister's presentation was translated into Korean language and distributed to the industrialists, in order to attract investors. "We will give first priority to South Korea in the matter of investments. We are developing 14 sea ports. Of them, six ports are already working vigorously. 13 percent of Indian sea coast are in AP," he said at the summit.

Naidu enumerated the progress marked in the state in the agricultural sector, as well as the industrial sector. "Agriculture sector is

always a big challenge in India. But Andhra Pradesh is achieving a double digit growth rate. We have recorded a whopping 25.6 percent growth in agricultural sector which no any other state in India could achieve," he said.

Naidu said the state government aims for Andhra to be one of the top three states in India by 2022, the best state in India by 2029, and world's destination with international standards by 2050.

The government's aim is to achieve 15 percent growth rate for 15 years, Naidu stated.

"We are working with the aim of 89 percent public satisfaction. We took family development and social development as indicators. We want to develop happiness index," he added.

In order to encourage industrialists, Naidu said the government is giving all necessary permissions within 21 days through hassle free single desk portal, and as of now,

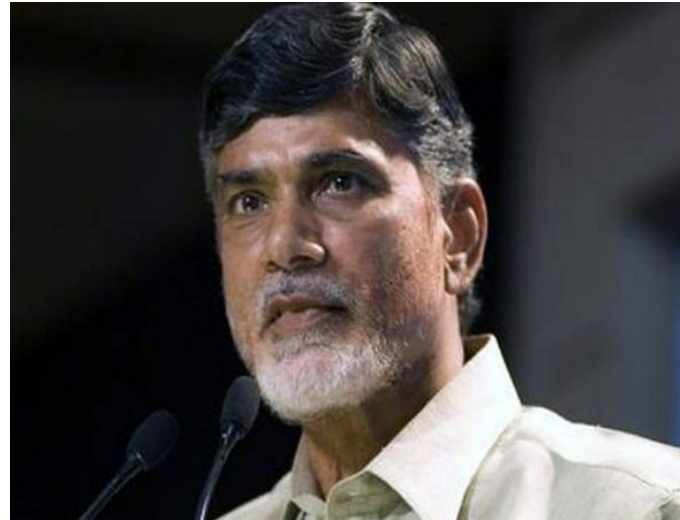
23,414 permissions have already been given.

The Chief Minister further elaborated that Andhra Pradesh is the state with best connectivity with road ways, rail ways, sea ports, airports and other infrastructure, and also has the best industrial policy. In automobile sector, companies like Isuzu, Kia, Hero, Bharat Benz, Amararaja, Apollo etc. are operating in Andhra Pradesh.

"Twenty years ago, I brought in many reforms. I built Cyberabad as additional city to the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Now Hyderabad is reaping the benefits. After bifurcation of our state, my work started from the scratch. Our journey began with crises, however I took it as an opportunity," Naidu said.

Naidu also praised Korea for developing "very fast" despite facing similar problems as that of Andhra Pradesh.

"Taking inspiration from you,



we are passing on the path of development. I request your participation in building a new Andhra Pradesh. Our state has many resources. Thousands of kilometers of sea coast are one of the advantages. There are no labor problems, nor issues of law and order. We

have a peaceful ecosystem for industries," he added.

"I will be available on a phone call or SMS text. I believe South Korea can be a confidential business partner to Andhra Pradesh. All of you come with each project and invest in our state," Naidu said.

Busan metropolitan city vice mayor Kim Young Wan addressed the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister as a dynamic leader, and said there were many similarities between South Korea and Andhra Pradesh, and underlined the need for mutual cooperation in various areas like health and medicare, agriculture, renewable energy, sea ports, development of cities, and the like.

Indian ambassador to South Korea Doraiswami expressed happiness over Naidu's visit, and said Busan city and AP have many comparisons in work culture, usage of technology, development of ports etc. He also recommended Andhra as the best place for doing business in India, to the Korean industrialists.

Doraiswami further said that the land allotted to Kia motors in Anantapur district was a rocky land. "We thought it will take one year but Andhra Pradesh govern-

ment cleared and flattened it in just three months," he added.

Later a short film on development works at the land allotted to Kia motors was screened.

During the Busan Business Seminar, Government of AP and Make in India Korea Centers signed an MoU to set up Korea Industrial Complex in Andhra. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh Center will be set up in Busan city.

Later, AP Chief Minister interacted with Korean industrialists during the lunch.

Busan Vice Mayor and Naidu discussed the chances of mutual cooperation between fisheries university of AP and Pukyong national university of Korea.

After lunch, the AP delegation went to Busan New Port that was started in 2006. The port officials gave a presentation describing its capabilities. Busan new port is operating with 500 ports from 100 countries.

Yashwant Sinha pledges to fight for Maharashtra farmers

AKOLA: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Yashwant Sinha has pledged to continue his protest supporting cause of farmers in Maharashtra, a day after he was released from the police station for leading a march in the connection. On Monday, Akola Police detained Sinha along with 250 farmers under Section 68 of the Bombay Police Act, after he vandalised the barricades of the District office on his way out, following an unsatisfactory discussion with the DM over

demands of the farmers.

"We were present at the district office yesterday regarding some of our demands. There was a long discussion, the District Collector from Mumbai talked with us but we did not receive a satisfactory answer. So despite the SP's announcement that he has released us, we decided to remain here and we'll go wherever the police takes us, but unless our demands are accepted, our protest will continue," Sinha told ANI here.

All decks cleared for Rahul to be next Congress president

NEW DELHI: Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi is the only one validly nominated candidate in the fray for the party president election, party's returning officer said on Tuesday. Congress' Central Election Authority Chairman Mullanpally Ramchandran said that the committee has received 89 nomination papers, all proposing the name of Rahul for the coveted post.

"89 nomination papers all pro-

posing names of Rahul Gandhi have been received by us.

We have scrutinised each and found all valid. There is now only one validly nominated candidate that is Rahul Gandhi left in the fray for Congress president election," said Ramchandran.

The Congress Central Election Authority received the nominations for the party president on Monday.

The committee also explained



that if there were nominations other than that of Rahul, an election would be conducted, else he would be elevated to the post of the party president.

Rahul filed his nomination papers for the post of the party chief at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters yesterday. If elected, Rahul will succeed his mother Sonia, who has been holding the post for nearly two decades.

Bullock cart race ban: SC to hear Maha govt's appeal on Monday

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday submitted Maharashtra government's appeal challenging Bombay High Court's order of banning bullock cart races in the state, and listed the case for Monday. In orders passed on August 16 and October 11, Bombay HC banned bullock cart racing in the state till final disposal of the matter pending with the court. On November 10, the Maharashtra Government issued a notification stating the rules for conducting bullock cart races in the state.

The very same day, another notifica-



tion was issued warning collectors against allowing bullock cart races in their respective districts.

The resolution warning collectors against issuing permissions states a

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) which was filed in the High Court in August and the court had stayed all bullock cart races in Maharashtra till final decision was taken on the matter.

'Hat' symbol case: OPS files caveat in Delhi HC

NEW DELHI: Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam on Tuesday filed a caveat in Delhi High Court in connection with the election symbol 'hat'. In the petition filed by Panneerselvam, he has appealed the court not to pass order in any of the plea filed by sidelined All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) leader, TTV Dinakaran without hearing both the parties. Yesterday, the Delhi High Court dismissed the interim plea of TTV Dinakaran to get 'hat' symbol allotted for R K Nagar bypolls. The High Court has left the decision in the hands of Returning Officer of the Election Commission (EC) to allot the symbol to Dinakaran as an independent candidate for the bypolls. By-election in Tamil Nadu's R K Nagar is scheduled on December 21. The seat of R K Nagar has been lying vacant following the death of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa in December 2016, who represented it for two terms.

Verdict on 2G scam to be pronounced on Dec 21

NEW DELHI: Delhi's Patiala House Court will pronounce verdict in the 2G spectrum scam case on December 21, one of the most high-profile scams involving politicians and renowned industrialists.

Special Judge OP Saini has been exclusively dealing with cases arising out of the 2G spectrum scam. Two cases have been filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and another one by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

In its charge sheet filed against former telecom minister A. Raja, DMK Rajya Sabha member Kanimozhi and others in 2011, the CBI had alleged that there was a loss of Rs. 30,984 crore in the allocation of 122 licences for 2G spectrum.

In April 2014, the ED filed a charge sheet against 19 people, including Raja and Kanimozhi in connection with a money laundering case relating to the scam.

Yogi donates Rs. 5 Cr to cyclone victims



NEW DELHI: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday donated Rs five crores from the Chief Minister Distress Relief Fund to Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the Cyclone Ockhi affected people in Lakshadweep and other states.

Adityanath handed over a cheque of the sum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in New Delhi.

On Monday, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar also sent Rs two crores from the Chief Minister Fund to the Prime Minister Fund for the victims, while Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh offered to send 100 metric tonnes of rice for the cyclone affected people in Lakshadweep.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also met the fishermen families affected by Cyclone Ockhi at Vizhinjam, Thiruvananthapuram and assured them that the search and rescue operations are being conducted with full force.

She informed that, so far, 357 fishermen, including 71 from Tamil Nadu, who had been stranded in the sea due to Cyclone Ockhi, have been rescued.

On November 2, the Tamil Nadu authorities stated that the total number of deaths caused due to the cyclone has reached 19.

The deadly cyclone, which has claimed many lives, lashed the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Saturday with torrential rainfall and gusty winds.

IIS officers association protests transfers, says media units heads not consulted

NEW DELHI: Indian information service (IIS) officers have flagged "discrepancies and shortcomings" in the fresh round of postings after the Union ministry of information and broadcasting issued transfer orders late last month "without consulting the heads of the media units".

The IIS Group 'A' officials' association has alleged that some senior officials have been transferred to stations where the posts allotted to them do not exist, while some have been transferred to places where multiple officials have been designated the same role without any clarity on the allocation of work. Some have been transferred from Delhi to other states.

"The transfer orders have been issued without consulting the heads of the media units or taking into account their requirement," the association complained in a letter to



I&B secretary NK Sinha on November 29. The association alleged that the 24 postings announced by the ministry on November 24 will adversely impact the flow of information and hamper the functioning of government's broadcast divisions such as the press information bureau, the directorate of audio visual publicity and Doordarshan.

"Some of the officers have been posted to places where no such posts exist, for example in Moradabad, Agra and Varanasi.

In the first two places, there is no office of the media unit (of PIB) from where they would be drawing their salary," the letter said.

It also said that reallocation of posts in some cases will affect the

focus of key sectors.

"The additional director general PIB, Ranchi has been directed to work from the directorate of field publicity in Moradabad, which takes away the focus from the Left Wing Extremist area." While I&B secretary Sinha did not respond to HT's query, sources in the ministry said the postings have been in the works for a while.

"It was decided during the tenure of the then minister M Venkaiah Naidu to depute some senior officials to regions outside Delhi for better propagation of the union government's policies and people-centric programmes. However, some of the officials are concerned by the fact that they have been posted to regions where they are unfamiliar with the local language and that in turn could affect their work," said an official not wishing to be named.

Publicity and broadcast of its schemes has been the focus of the BJP-led NDA government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi too had asked the government's information wings to take concerted steps to counter misinformation about schemes such as demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax roll out.

The publicity wing, PIB has been given the direction to undertake campaigns to counter any negative publicity about schemes and programmes through informative ads on social media platforms and traditional media such as television, radio and newspapers advertisements.

"The recent transfers where some officials have been posted to stations without adequate infrastructure will result in wasting manpower," the official quoted above said.

Babri Masjid demolition broke India's heart, says Lalu Prasad

PATNA: Former Bihar chief minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad was catapulted to the national stage when he ordered the arrest of BJP leader LK Advani in 1990, in the run-up to the eventual demolition of the Babri Masjid two years later. Advani was then marching through parts of North India on his Rath Yatra.

Twenty-five years later, Prasad says that he suspects the demolition was a ploy by right wing forces to weaken the movement for backward classes empowerment after the Mandal commission recommendations on job quotas was implemented. Edited excerpts: How do you see 25 years of demolition of Babri Masjid?

The Sangh Parivar and its affiliates have always tried to whip up communal passion to weaken secularism despite the fact that India, since pre-independence days, has been known for her secular credentials.

The Babri Masjid issue was raked up just to weaken the empowerment of backward classes following the implementation of the Mandal commission report on job reservations. The demolition broke the nation's heart and it gave a big blow to secular credentials. The wounds have still not healed after 25 years. So you believe the demolition was part of a larger game by the BJP to weaken the backward classes movement?

Yes, it was. See, when the Mandal commission report was implemented, it brought a big social change with the voiceless getting a voice in the society. It confounded the BJP which raked up Babri Masjid. They gave a call Mandal vs Kamandal. L K Advani started a Rath Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya to push the Hindutva agenda by arousing religious sentiments among Hindus. (Eventually) It was me, who arrested Advani, and it sent a signal across the nation and the world that India's

secular forces were still strong and capable of fighting fascist forces. Can you recall the days before the demolition of Babri Masjid? Those were eventful days. As a chief minister, I attended the national integration council in November 1992 just weeks before the demolition. In the meeting, L K Advani as BJP president assured us that there would be only parikrama of kar sevaks and the mosque would not be demolished. It was an assurance that then Prime Minister P V Narshima Rao took seriously and paid a heavy price. Rao was misled and the central government became lax in handling the volatile situation. What is your take on the present situation in the country? Do you feel Babri Masjid demolition changed the political dynamics of the country?

Now in power, the BJP is once again playing on old issues, be it Babri Masjid or triple talaq just to divide the nation and influence the youth by fanning communal passions. This is a strategic ploy to divert attention from the country's burning issues be it unemployment, farmers distress, demonetisation and GST (goods and services tax).

Moms beware: Lack of sleep in pregnancy may lead to gestational diabetes

A new study has found that lack of sleep during pregnancy can lead to gestational diabetes.

Gestational diabetes is defined as high blood sugar levels in a pregnant woman, who has no prior history of diabetes, usually in the second half of pregnancy.

Incidence of this are rising with time because of many reasons; lifestyle and genetics being the most important ones. Pregnancy causes many hormonal changes in the body leading to a diabetes like state and resistance to insulin. Placenta produces many insulin opposing hormones. The risk factors are:

- Obesity
- History of gestational diabetes in previous pregnancy
- History of unexplained still birth
- Previous baby weight on high side >4 kgs
- Family history of diabetes
- Patient with PCOS
- Age >25
- Overweight i.e. BMI > 30
- Pre diabetes

Several studies have proved that lack of sleep also raises the risk of gestational diabetes.

"In various studies after adjusting various variables such as age,

BMI, ethnicity - it was found that women who slept less than six hours per night were more likely (almost two times) to have GDM as compared to women who slept adequately. Good sleep is associated with reduced likelihood of hyperglycaemia and GDM," said Dr. Monica Agarwal, Consultant Obstetrics & Gynaecology Paras Bliss Panchkula.

Sleep is a very important lifestyle change besides diet and exercise which can do wonders to the blood sugar levels. Reduced sleep duration is a significant contributor to metabolic dysfunction. This is already proven by various studies in non pregnant people, now being true in pregnancy as well. Recommended sleep duration is 7-8 hours per night and 8-10 hours during pregnancy. It is also an independent risk factor for increased mortality. During recent times, sleep duration has fallen by 2-3 hours per night.

Sleep pattern in pregnancy-sleep pattern in pregnancy undergoes a drastic change according to the various trimesters.

First trimester- During the first three months of pregnancy, there is increased sleepiness with increased total sleep time. This is due to the various hormonal changes during



pregnancy. Progesterone or the pregnancy hormone has a strong soporific effect and causes increased daytime sleep.

Organogenesis also places additional burden on the maternal body causing increased sleep time in order to conserve energy. Second trimester- During the next three months, increased frequency of urination leads to increased night-time awakenings and poor sleep quality due to the interrupted sleep. Third trimester- Physical changes of body cause a lot of discomfort and ability to fall asleep and maintain sleep is reduced a lot. Backache and itching also cause a lot of problems.

These changes cause reduced sleep, frequent awakenings and poor

sleep quality in all.

Glycemic control maybe compromised as a result of this.

Obstructive sleep apnea can also develop in pregnancy which is characterised by repetitive episodes of upper airway obstruction, reduced airflow and hypoxia. Obesity increases chances of obstructive sleep apnea. It is associated with various problems like hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Both sleep duration and quality are important for good glycemic control. Sleep questionnaire consists of assessing sleep duration, sleep disordered breathing, daytime sleepiness, restless leg syndrome, insomnia etc.

Mechanism- Sleep can alter the

effectiveness of both glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity.

Hormonal interplay during sleep promotes normoglycemia which is disrupted by sleep deprivation. Sleep restriction leads to stress which leads to increased secretion of the stress hormone cortisol which is diabetogenic, causing raised sugar levels. It also causes systemic inflammatory response causing insulin resistance and raised blood glucose levels. Other risks of sleep deprivation can be:

- Miscarriages
- Preterm delivery
- Developmental delay
- To minimise sleep deprivation, few measures that can be adopted are limiting caffeine use and avoiding electronics during bedtime.

In conclusion, pregnancy is associated with significant hormonal, biochemical and physical variations. Sleep is also modified trimester wise. Total sleep time and quality is compromised. More research is needed to confirm the findings and to investigate whether increasing sleep duration can lower the risk of GDM. But it is a simple measure which you can adopt in your lifestyle and save yourself from many problems related to sleep deprivation.

Dear men, here's how to up your shoe fashion game this winter

Winter is a great time to experiment with cuts and colours and explore your fashionable side. Men, layering is the game for apparel in winter but don't forget to team it up with right shoes to add the final touch to your ensemble. Here are some great tips on the kind of shoes to wear this winter:

*White sneakers: White men's trainers are a must if you want to wear something sporty yet trendy. One could argue that they get dirty but they go with everything and are especially useful when layering.

*Black casual shoes: It goes well if you are going for a monochromatic look this winter or your game is neutral colours. From high-tops to slip-ons to lace-ups, there is so much you can choose from.

*High-top sneakers: If you have been eyeing that high top pair, now is your chance to get it.

These shoes will keep your feet warm and at the same time add to your style quotient. Mix and match the print or the fabric of the shoe to suit your requirement: from leather to suede or print to plain.

*Leather lace-up boots: Lace ups are a great look. These kind of boots go great with skinnier jeans. A nice pair of jeans, a t-shirt and some lace ups boots will put you head and shoulders above the other people in the room. Not only are they great winter boots, but they are great any season boots for men.

*Cap toe leather boots: Who said one couldn't wear boots with formal attires.

A cap-toe boot has the added advantage of extra leather on the toe, which gives it a little bit more protection from snow and rain.

Plus, just as with cap-toe oxfords, it's a nice added element of style.

*Chelsea boots: While Chelsea can come in either suede or smooth leather; the typical pair includes a leather sole, rounded toe box and minimal stitching. If you're looking to sharpen up your act however, both styling and the boot's ankle height come into play.

The taller ankle height is very on trend and adds a smarter feel for a sharper look.

These look great when worn with slim jeans, a crisp white shirt and a smart wool coat.

Baby blues: Behaviour not best way to assess pain in stressed newborns



Newborns' behaviour such as crying or facial responses that are widely used as a measurement of a baby's pain experience may not be appropriate for babies who are already stressed. The study found that hospitalised newborns, who are already stressed by their environment have a much larger pain response in their brain following a routine clinical skin lance than non-stressed babies. But this is not matched by an equivalent increase in their pain behaviour. This disconnect between the behaviour of newborn babies under stress and their brain activity in response to pain has not been shown before and suggests that stress is an important factor in influencing how babies perceive and react to pain. "We see that an increase in pain related brain activity in hospitalised babies is not always accompanied by an increase in typical pain behaviour, such as body movement and facial expressions.

This leads us to question the use of behaviour alone as a way of assessing infant pain, especially in a stressful environment. In adults, stress can increase pain experience and our findings suggest that this is also true for babies," explained study lead, Dr Laura Jones (UCL Neuroscience, Physiology & Pharmacology). "We know that repeated painful and stressful experiences in early life can negatively impact on the development of the central nervous system and our results suggest that controlling the stress levels of hospitalised infants may not only reduce their pain but also contribute to their healthy development."

Researchers simultaneously measured the behaviour and brain activity of 56 newborn babies before and after a clinically necessary heel prick in their first days of life, while also monitoring their stress.

In the babies with the lowest stress levels, brain activity and behaviour were associated with each other in that greater brain activity corresponded to a longer period of crying and/or grimacing. In the babies with the highest stress levels this association was broken: greater brain activity was not necessarily matched by a more marked behavioural

response. "These results are important for people who care for newborn babies.

Behaviour such as crying or facial responses is widely used as a measurement of a baby's pain experience. Pain scores used for babies are based on these observations, because babies can't speak.

While these methods are very useful, our findings suggest that they may not be appropriate for babies who are already stressed. We need to explore better ways to monitor pain, reduce stress and tailor our interventions accordingly," added co-author, Dr Judith Meek (University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust).

The researchers measured the background level of stress in the babies using two approaches - heart rate variability and the level of cortisol in saliva. Each baby had a different level of stress due to natural variability in the population and their environments prior to the test. During the test, brain wave patterns were tracked using electroencephalography (EEG) and behavioural changes, including facial expressions, and physiological changes were scored using a standard method called the premature infant pain profile (PIPP).

Two thirds of infants show a characteristic brain wave pattern for pain and a similar proportion display typical pain behaviour and a moderate pain score. The results show that the amplitude of the pain evoked brain waves was greater in babies with high stress compared to those with low stress.

"This work arose from a collaboration between scientists and clinical investigators. Our basic laboratory studies in the biology of pain processing in the developing nervous system have led to new discoveries about the formation of pain connections in the human infant brain. In the future, we plan to explore other environmental factors, such as maternal interactions, that may influence how our brains process pain at the beginning of our lives," added Professor Maria Fitzgerald, co-author and head of the UCL research group. The findings have been published in Current Biology.

Addicted to drugs Marijuana may not help patients who are fighting pain, depression

Frequent marijuana use may not help manage pain, depression and anxiety among patients in treatment for opioid addiction, finds a study. Patients in medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid addiction believe that using marijuana helps them with their pain and mood symptoms. However, the findings showed that using cannabis could be making it harder for patients to handle their symptoms, as opposed to making them feel better. "For people who are using cannabis the most, they have a very strong relationship between pain and mood symptoms, and that's not necessarily the pattern you'd want to see," said Marian Wilson, from the Washington State University.

"You would hope, if cannabis is helpful, the more they use it the fewer



symptoms they would see," Wilson added. More cannabis use is associated with reduced self-efficacy in managing emotions, which makes it more harder for such people to man-

age their symptoms. In fact, the relationship between pain and depression and anxiety increased with the frequency of marijuana use, the researchers said. For the research,

published in the journal Addictive Behaviors, the team involved 150 patients and found that nearly 67% of the patients use marijuana regularly.

"Some are admitting they use it just for recreation purposes, but a large number are saying they use it to help with pain, sleep, and their mood," Wilson said. "We don't have evidence with this study that cannabis is helping with those issues," he stated.

The study noted that opioid overdose rates have more than tripled in the past two decades and are now the second-leading cause of accidental death in the US. "The effectiveness of cannabis for relieving distressing symptoms remains mixed and requires further research," Wilson said.

Exercise essential for changing gut bacteria

Researchers have found evidence that exercise can change the intestinal microbiota independent of diet. The research provides clues to how exercise could benefit people suffering from inflammatory bowel disease. The findings, published in the journal Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, are based on two studies -- one in mice and the other in human participants.

In the first study, scientists transplanted fecal material from exercised and sedentary mice into the colons of sedentary germ-free mice, which had been raised in a sterile facility and had no microbiota of their own. In the second study, the team tracked changes in the composition of gut microbiota in human participants as they transitioned from a sedentary lifestyle to a more active one -- and back again.

"These are the first studies to show that exercise can have an effect on your gut independent of diet or other factors," said one of the lead researchers Jeffrey Woods, Professor at the University of Illinois in the US. In the mouse study, changes in the microbiota of recipient mice mirrored those in the donor mice, with clear differences between those receiving microbes from exercised and sedentary mice.

"That proved to us that the transplant worked," Woods said.

Recipients of the exercised mouse microbiota also had a higher proportion of microbes that produce butyrate, a short-chain fatty acid that promotes healthy intestinal cells, reduces inflammation and generates energy for the host.

They also appeared to be more resistant to experimental ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease. In the human study, the participants performed supervised cardiovascular exercise for 30-60 minutes three times a week for six weeks.

The researchers sampled their gut microbiomes before and after the end of the exercise programme and after another six weeks of sedentary behaviour.

More reasons to brush your teeth regularly. Gum disease bacteria linked to esophageal cancer

Researchers have found that some bacteria that lead to gum disease may also increase the risk of esophageal cancer that affects the tube running from the throat to the stomach.

This study, published in the journal Cancer Research, examined whether oral microbiota were associated with subsequent risk of esophageal cancer. Tracking the oral health of 122,000 people in the US for a decade, the researchers found that two bacteria species linked with common gum disease can increase the risk of the cancer. Esophageal cancer is the eighth most common cancer and the sixth leading cause of cancer death worldwide, said one of the researchers Jiyoung Ahn, Associate Professor at New York University (NYU)

School of Medicine. Because the disease is often not discovered until it has reached an advanced stage, five-year survival rates range from about 15 to 25% worldwide. "Esophageal cancer is a highly fatal cancer, and there is an urgent need for new avenues of prevention, risk stratification, and early detection," Ahn said. The most common types of esophageal cancer are esophageal adenocarcinoma (EAC) and esophageal squamous cell carcinoma (ESCC). The researchers found that higher levels of the Tannerella forsythia bacteria were associated with a 21 per cent increased risk of EAC. The bacteria Porphyromonas gingivalis was associated with a higher risk of ESCC.

Happy feet: Follow these 5 expert tips to make sure your feet are healthy and smooth

After a long day's work, your feet probably ache. Give yourself happy feet by using emu oil, going for foot reflexology and by massaging them daily to keep them stress-free, suggest experts. Simal Soim, Aesthetic Wellness expert at Aayna Clinic and Sudheendra Udbalker, Consultant Dermatologist at Fortis Hospitals Bengaluru, have listed ways to have happy feet: We now have specialists dedicated to foot care like podiatrist and

chiropractors. Fine instruments like drills and burrs do away with dead skin build up and leave your feet looking smooth. The treatment specialises in foot concerns including medical discomforts like psoriasis, plantar keratoderma, toe nail fungus and exfoliative dermatitis. Foot reflexology helps improve circulation especially in diabetics and people with chronic venous insufficiency. Foot massage and reflexology also relieves mi-

graines, lowers blood pressure and decreases chronic sinus infections. Emu oil has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties which results in healing, skin renewal and repair. The treatment at night calms, strengthens the nerves and improves circulation. However, if the feet are not healthy and have corns and dead skin build up, medical healing pedicures and reflexology must go hand-in-hand to improve the health of the feet.

Edelweiss raises Rs. 500 cr to capitalise limited liquidity in real estate

Edelweiss Alternative Asset Advisors Ltd., has announced the final close of its onshore AIF Edelweiss Real Estate Opportunities Fund (EROF or Fund) as of November 2017, at the targeted fund corpus of Rs. 500 crore.

The fund by the company aims to capitalise on limited liquidity in real estate market through multi-strategy approach with focus on top six Tier-I cities in India, namely Mumbai, NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune and Chennai across residential and commercial real estate. "We believe that residential real estate is poised to bounce back with existing regulation available to protect consumer interest. In addition, limited capital availability

creates an ideal opportunity for providers of alternative sources of capital to invest in real estate. Improving business sentiments and a recovery in the demand for office space will lead to further investment opportunities," said Nitin Jain, CEO, Global Wealth and Asset Management, Edelweiss Group.

"Post demonetisation, the market in India has stabilised and RERA has given confidence to the buyers on timely completion of projects. The investments in alternative space in India have picked up significantly over the past year or so," opined Vibhor Gujarati, Head of Marketing - India, Edelweiss Alternative Asset Advisors Limited.

Edelweiss Private Wealth Man-



agement Team (PWM) raised majority of the fund corpus from their client base that includes Family

offices, business owners and promoters, UHNIs and corporate treasuries. However, EAAA manages seven

funds catering to global and domestic investors across illiquid strategies in India including collateralised credit, real estate and distressed assets. The domestic real estate fund, EROF is managed by a fund management team headed by Nitin Goel.

Edelweiss group offers asset management and advisory capabilities and currently has Rs. 1,93,000 crores of assets under management. The group over the years has been offering holistic and end-to-end solutions to developer requirements from financing real estate project development, project monitoring, supporting developers in distress situations till the project is completed and assisting in sale of the real estate assets.

Paytm unveils 'Paytm Ka ATM' partner outlet for banking operations



India's largest digital bank Paytm Payments Bank is the only bank providing zero balance accounts and zero charges on digital transactions.

The bank has unveiled 'Paytm Ka ATM' outlets that allows customers to open Saving Accounts and deposit/withdraw money from their bank accounts. These specially branded outlets will play a key role in bringing banking access to smaller cities and towns by ensuring customers find it easy to locate an access point near them.

The company has also introduced a dedicated 'Bank' section on Paytm app where the entire range of banking services including payments, digital debit card, passbook, help and support among others.

The bank has been designed to help achieve financial inclusion in the country and is in line with Paytm's mission of bringing half a billion Indians on to the mainstream economy. In the first phase, Paytm has started with 3,000 'Paytm Ka ATM' points in select cities including Delhi NCR, Lucknow, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi and Aligarh.

These outlets feature local banking correspondents who help customers in depositing and withdrawing money from their Paytm Payments Bank account, making banking simpler and more accessible for one and all. For example: an auto/taxi driver can now visit 'Paytm Ka ATM' outlet to deposit his money into a Paytm Payments Bank Savings Account to earn interest; and withdraw whenever required.

The company is set to add over 100,000 Paytm Ka ATM banking outlets across India to expand the reach of its banking services to the entire country, including the south and east.

It has committed Rs. 3000 crore over the next three years to expand offline distribution network by allowing trusted local partners to act as potential cash-in and cash-out points.

"This will enable our customers to visit their trusted neighborhood outlet to open their bank account, deposit and withdraw cash, in addition to getting their Aadhaar linked.

We believe this hyper-local model of banking will play a crucial role in enabling hundreds of millions of under-served and un-served customers to gain access to quality banking services," said MD and CEO - Paytm Payments Bank, Renu Satti.

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley formally inaugurated Paytm Payments Bank on Nov 28, marking a major milestone in the history of India's financial services sector.

Property seekers up by 61 pct in twelve months

With the implications of the policy interventions in India's real estate industry settling in, Magicbricks' 'Consumer Search Trends' revealed that there has been a 61 percent rise in property seekers over the last 12 months, with the number of active property seekers going up sharply on a year-on-year (YoY) basis from 3.4 Lakh in July'16 to 5.5 Lakh in September'17.

Though on-ground transactions are yet to pick steam, there has been an 18 percent rise in returning users over the last quarter (July-September, 2017) indicating a positive shift in consumer sentiment towards what has otherwise been a muted real estate industry for the last few years.

The rise in returning users could be attributed to the fact that consumers are not exiting the market out of despair but are taking longer to close deals.

"Deal-seeking" is the new normal and developers and agents would do well to work on strategies on how to close a transaction in a buyer driven market.

"The rise in returning users indicates that end-users haven't exited the market, but are taking longer to finalise a transaction. The growth trend over the last 12 months seems to continue from the last quarter with a four percent sequential quarter on quarter growth. At a city-level in Delhi-NCR, Pune Mumbai and Hyderabad, we have seen growth varying from three to ten percent on a sequential basis," said Magicbricks CEO, Sudhir Pai.

Magicbricks' Consumer Search Trends also revealed that demand at a city-level continued its uptrend from last quarter to this quarter. Cities like Pune, Mumbai, NCR and Hyderabad have shown growth varying from three to ten percent on a sequential basis. These cities have shown a robust growth of over 35 percent from last year, with Hyderabad leading the pack at 66 percent growth. Bangalore, Chennai and Kolkata have had a muted increase in the number of buyers sequentially, but have given a 30 percent growth as compared to July last year.

There are multiple factors driving the current jump in consumer demand and changes in consumer preference. With supply in abundance, it is now a buyers' market. Further, from an end-users' perspective, this is the best time to get the proverbial 'bang-for-the-buck', the survey notes.

GOOGLE-TATA TRUSTS INTERNET SAATHI PROGRAM TO CREATE JOBS FOR WOMEN

Building on its mission to improve digital literacy amongst women in rural India, Google India and Tata Trusts on Tuesday announced the extension of the Internet Saathi program, to support the Foundation For Rural Entrepreneurship Development (FRENED) set up by Tata Trusts. Under this initiative, Google will jointly work with the new foundation, to create digitally enabled livelihood opportunities for the Internet Saathis. FRENED will become a vehicle for other like-minded companies and institutions to utilise the Internet Saathi network and enable dissemination of information and services in the rural areas thereby creating newer avenues of income for these women in rural India. This will be in addition to imparting digital lit-

eracy to millions of rural women under the ongoing Internet Saathi program.

"In spite of the socio-economic challenges, thousands of Internet Saathis have gone on to do amazing things, once they learnt the Internet.

It was this winning spirit that inspired us to create a new sustainable framework with Tata Trusts, that aims to deliver employment opportunities to Internet Saathis," said Sapna Chadha, Marketing Head, SEA and India, Google. Over 12,000 Internet Saathis across India have voluntarily signed up to take up projects in their villages as part of this next phase of Internet Saathi program. Along with Tata Trusts, Google has conducted successful pilots with organisations such as Tata Water Mission, Haqdarshak, Kantar and

Nielsen with encouraging outcomes. "For several years now, livelihood generation has been a core area for the Trusts.

Given the progressive penetration of Internet Saathi program, it was only natural for us to bring income generating opportunities to these women so that they become self-dependant and further encourage women in their communities to emulate them. We are happy that several organisations have already tested the strength of this platform," said Raman Kalyanakrishnan, Head - Strategy, Tata Trusts. Since its launch in 2015, Google and Tata Trusts remain committed to expand the Internet Saathi program to cover 300,000 villages across India and enable women across villages to benefit from the Internet.

DEBT MANAGEMENT REPORT: PUBLIC DEBT AT RS 65,65,652 CR AS OF END-SEPT

The Public Debt (excluding liabilities under the 'Public Account') of the Central Government has witnessed a provisional increase of Rs. 65,65,652 crore as of end-September, from Rs. 64,03,138 crore at end-June 2017, stated the Ministry of Finance.

Further, the internal debt constitutes 93 percent of public debt as of end-September, while marketable securities account for

82.6 percent of public debt, as per the Quarterly Report on Debt Management for the quarter July-September 2017. During Q2 FY18, the government had issued dated securities of Rs. 1,89,000 crore, higher than Rs. 1,68,000 crore in Q1 of FY 17, taking the Gross Borrowings during H1 FY18 to Rs. 3,57,000 crore. Further, auctions of both, the government dated securities and Treasury Bills

during Q2 of FY18 went over smoothly. The weighted average maturity (WAM) and weighted average yield (WAY) of the issuance made during Q2 FY18 was 14.58 years and 6.77 percent respectively, the report noted. The liquidity in the economy remained in surplus, due to demonetisation, during the quarter. The cash position of the Government during Q2 of FY18 was

somewhat stressed and the Centre was required to resort to W&M advances from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on a few occasions, the report observed. Based on the assessment of prevailing and evolving liquidity conditions, the RBI conducted sale of government securities under Open Market Operations for an aggregate amount of 600 billion during the quarter.

Indifi Technologies rolls out working capital solution for B2B startups

To support the growth of such businesses in the country, SME financing enabler in India, Indifi Technologies has launched Invoice Discounting line of credit, a debt financing-based working capital solution for B2B startups to get easy loans and improve cash flows. With Indifi's collateral-free Invoice Discounting loans, businesses can finance their working capital needs by getting funds against unpaid invoices to large/regular B2B clients, and ensure smooth operations. B2B companies reach a certain point, from time to time, where their revenues exceed the amount of equity capital they have. Despite achieving a massive growth rate, these businesses usually suffer from cash deficits, due to the credit period they have to give their customers.

To reduce this deficit, they must raise equity capital. However, raising capital through

equity is a costly and time-consuming proposition for small businesses just starting up or beginning the next phase of growth. With Indifi's Invoice Discounting credit lines, these B2B businesses can get the money when they need it, and repay the amount when they receive payments from the client. "Indifi is dedicated to solving the credit issues faced by small businesses across sectors in the country. Having spent over a decade as a VC and angel investor, I've seen several B2B companies use equity to fund working capital, as a result of which they are unable to realise their plans to scale up," said CEO and co-founder Indifi Technologies, Alok Mittal. The services offered by Indifi are being actively availed by businesses belonging to an array of industry verticals, including technology, food, retail, e-commerce, and travel.

Honda 2018 Gold Wing launched at Rs. 26.85 lakhs

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) has announced the commencement of bookings for 2018 Gold Wing, the latest edition of Honda's flagship touring at Rs 26.85 lakhs (Ex-showroom, Delhi). The 2018 Gold Wing is powered by a completely reworked 1,833cc engine. The engine is still a horizontally-opposed flat six, but now with four valves per cylinder instead of two. Peak power of 125bhp arrives at 5,500rpm, with peak torque of 170Nm delivered at 4,500rpm. The bike comes with a Throttle by Wire system and has four rider modes (TOUR, SPORT, ECON and RAIN) to prevent loss of grip in the rear wheel. This, mated with Honda's seven speed dual clutch transmission allows riders great maneuverability. The bike also has a reverse and walking mode to ease in and out of tight parking spots. The bike comes with a seven

inch TFT screen which can be used to control the suspension settings of the bike and connect your iPhone using Apple CarPlay. The 2018 Gold Wing was first showcased at the Tokyo Motor Show in November 2017 and Honda is today starting the bookings for this legend. The new generation Gold Wing gets a seven-speed DCT, revolutionary suspension setup, Apple CarPlay, HSTC and a brand new engine, making it a true rider's motorcycle," said Yadvinder Singh Guleria, Senior Vice President - Sales and Marketing, HMSI. The new Gold Wing's die-cast aluminium twin beam frame is stiffer and lighter by two kilograms, which will enable smoother handling and a comfortable ride. A first for Honda globally is the Gold Wing's new double wishbone front suspension which reduces friction in comparison to traditional telescopic setup.

Oracle Academy, ICT Society of Karnataka partner to empower workforce

Oracle Academy and the ICT Society (ICTS) of Karnataka announced a three year collaboration to incorporate the Oracle Academy curriculum into the institution's academic program.

Through this relationship, the Government of Karnataka will provide relevant industry skills and upgrade skill sets of the existing as well as future workforce in the state. The initiative is aimed at increasing the productivity and employability of the state's working population, both in the organized and unorganized sectors. Working with the ICTS, Oracle Academy is set to facilitate a 'train-the-trainer' course to ramp up skillsets of 120 faculty representatives in over 60 colleges, over a period of three years. As part of this collaboration, these colleges will be able to leverage the resources of Oracle Academy in areas such as Java Foundation, Java Fundamentals, Java Programming, Database Foundation, Database Design and Programming amongst many

others. "Karnataka is an emerging hub for education and technology. We are delighted to work with the ICT Society of the State to meet the snowballing global demand for highly skilled, industry-ready professionals. With this collaboration, Oracle remains committed to creating a future-ready workforce and thereby, address the skills gap challenge," said Damian Haas, JAPAC Regional Director, Oracle Academy. "Our single, most crucial aim is to equip the youth of Karnataka with the essential skills and internationally recognised qualifications that can ensure their employability. Oracle Academy offers a wide range of courses, self-study instructions, workshops and resources that can prepare students to meet the increasing demands of the IT industry," added Priyank Kharage, Minister for ITBT and Tourism, Government of Karnataka. In the past fiscal year, Oracle Academy supported over 3.5 million students in 120 countries across 12,000 institutions through an in-kind grant value of USD 3.75 billion. In India, Oracle Academy currently teams with more than 1,700 educational institutions.

USA Pears Back with PearUpIndia on World Pear Day celebrates National Pear Month

Complimenting the World Pear Day, the PearUpIndia campaign was a huge success in India. World Pear Day was the perfect reason to cheer for the arrival of juicy and delightful USA Pears. The event which took place at the HyperCity, Malad, Mumbai, Spencer's Hyper Store, MG Road, Gurgaon and with roadside retailers in Saket, New Delhi hosted some of the finest and crunchiest Pears in India. USA Pears were sampled all day on Saturday, December 2nd.

The excitement did not end there, consumers also got a chance to be a part of one of the world's largest retail sampling program that started in New Zealand and ended in USA. On the occasion of World Pear Day, Mr. Sumit Saran,

Director of SS Associates and India Representative for USA Pears said, "Highly nutritional, delightfully juicy and elusively flavored USA Pears add a whole lot of value to ones' physical well-being.

Glad to share that these flavoured fruits will now be available in your nearest retail stores across India. It is our constant endeavor to reach out to maximum consumers in India and introduce them to the freshness and taste of USA Pears. We are certain that the National Pear Month will help us create a lot more awareness about USA Pears this year."

USA Pears are among the world's finest pears. Grown in Oregon and Washington where the right mix of volcanic soil, clean mountain



water and warm spring and summer days, with cool nights, combine to produce some of the world's finest pears.

Having adequate fiber in our diet is very important and its importance for digestive health is well known. However, pears' fiber does a lot more than just encourage healthy digestive functions. Numerous studies also show that it helps reduce cholesterol levels, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and even Type II diabetes. USA Pears are rich in potassium, Vitamin C and have absolutely no sodium or fat content, thus making it an ideal choice for any healthy diet. Go to your nearest store to grab a bite of a tasty, healthy and mouth-watering USA Pear!

Fabregas attitude changed my mind, says Conte

LONDON: Chelsea midfielder Cesc Fabregas worked hard to win back his place in the starting line-up last season and has been rewarded for his excellent attitude, his manager Antonio Conte said.

Ahead of Tuesday's final Champions League group match against Atletico Madrid, Fabregas has played more than any other Chelsea midfielder this season in terms of minutes on the pitch.

At the same stage last season, Fabregas had started just four games in all competitions. "I think Cesc at the start of the last season did not play a lot, but I was very happy because through work he tried to change my mind and it happened," Conte told reporters.

Conte said that in the early part of last season he started nearly every game with N'Golo Kante and Nemanja Matic in central midfield but Fabregas played many games in the run-in. "I think he was very important for us to win the title last season," Conte said. "In this season he has continued to work very hard and he's shown me great commitment, great behaviour."



Fabregas turned 30 in May and Conte is backing the former Arsenal and Barcelona midfielder to perform at the highest level for at least five more years.

"He is still young for sure. When you are 30 years old, you have at least five more years to play football at this level," the Italian manager added.

"You must have great desire and great will to play at this level because it is not simple. He's a winner in his mind, in his mentality, for this reason he is very strong."

Fixers keep International Cricket Council on tenterhooks, 7 cases being probed

MUMBAI: The demon of match fixing is rearing its ugly head again. However, this time the International Cricket Council (ICC) has detected the threats well in advance.

According to a report published in The Guardian, the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) has initiated as many as seven investigations into match-fixing after three international captains reported approaches by bookies in the past two months.

Pakistan skipper Sarfraz Ahmed and Zimbabwe's captain Graeme Cremer made the concerned authorities aware about the approaches made to them by intermediaries within an hour. The name of the third skipper who was approached is yet to be known as the ICC is not willing to share any further details on the matter.

The reporting of such cases to the ICC is a positive and the game's world



governing body will take heart from the fact that their players' education programme organised by the Anti-corruption Unit is working to a certain extent. Justice Mukul Mudgal, who investigated the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal, had told Hindustan Times a couple of weeks back that the only

tool with the otherwise 'toothless' ACU is its players' education programme.

Sarfraz, under whose leadership Pakistan clinched the title of the ICC Champions Trophy in June earlier this year, admitted to have been contacted by a bookie in the run up to an

ODI match against Sri Lanka in October. The wicketkeeper captain turned down the offer immediately. Pakistan is still trying to come out of the PSL fixing scandal which has already seen quite a few players, including Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif, banned.

Craemer, on the other hand, claimed to have declined an offer from a former Zimbabwe cricket board member to fix his team's Test against the West Indies in the same month.

There are also reports of match-fixers taking interest in women's cricket along with cricketers from under-17 and under-19 levels. The age group cricketers in particular are on the radar of fixers as they want to catch fresh youngsters and keep exploiting them when they make a transition to the senior level. The money on offer is understood to range from US\$5,000 to \$150,000.

Nathan Lyon can take 400 Test wickets for Australia, says Ricky Ponting

MUMBAI: Nathan Lyon can finish as one of Australia's best-ever bowlers in their history and maybe even bag more than 400 wickets in Test cricket, believes former Australian cricket team skipper Ricky Ponting. (2nd Ashes Test scorecard)

Lyon is currently in contention with Ravichandran Ashwin in finishing the year 2017 as its highest wicket-taker, having overtaken the Indian spinner on the third day of the ongoing second Ashes 2017-18 Test at the Adelaide Oval. The 30-year-old Lyon is already the most successful off-spinner in Australian history, with 274 wickets so far in 70 Tests.

Ponting, in his assessment, has backed Lyon to grab 400 Test scalps. He was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au, "He could play for another five to seven years quite easily. He's fit, he's bowling brilliantly, it doesn't look like he's going to slow down anytime soon. (Lyon's) is probably an underrated record. He's someone who's not spoken about anywhere near as much as he should be."

"Look at what he's done through his career, it's fantastic. If he plays for another four or five years, and he's taken 50 wickets this year, times that



by five or six and he could end up with 400 wickets-plus, there's no doubt about it," Ponting said.

Lyon attracted criticism when he spoke about ending careers of a few members of the England cricket team before the Ashes, but since then he has arguably been Australia's most potent weapon. "Nathan's confidence

has gone through the roof and it's grown tenfold since the tour of Sri Lanka last year when he lost all confidence. To be able to bounce back from that and have the year that he's had so far says a lot about him and the confidence the captain has in him. I've watched him for a long time, I've played with him for a few years, the

way he's releasing the ball now is just absolutely superb," Ponting said.

"He sums up the conditions really well too. We saw that in Brisbane with a bit more over-spin that he put on the ball in the first innings of the game, he tries to get as much bounce as he can and he does get a lot of bounce for an off-spinner," Ponting added.

Indian cricket team chief selector MSK Prasad takes big call on Yuvraj Singh's career

NEW DELHI: With Yuvraj Singh boasting of success in the Yo-Yo fitness test on Monday, there were murmurs of his possible return to the Indian cricket team. However, all those hopes were dashed the same evening when the MSK Prasad-led selection committee chose to keep him out of the side for the three-match Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka. Yuvraj last played for India during the side's tour to the Caribbean earlier this year. One of the reasons cited by the selectors behind the Punjab batsman's omission was that he, along with Suresh Raina (another out-of-favour Indian cricketer), failed to clear the Yo-Yo test, the new mandatory fitness test introduced by the management. (IND vs SL, 3rd Test Day 4 scorecard)

The Yo-Yo test is multi-stage variation of the beep test which is used to determine a player's fitness. The credit for developing the test goes to Jens Bangsbo, a football physiologist from Denmark. With Yuvraj making a strong statement about his comeback during an event on Monday, it was hoped that the selectors may consider him for the T20 matches against the touring Sri Lankans.

"I would like to tell that I am failing. I still fail. I failed the last three fitness tests but yesterday I passed my fitness test. After 17



years I am still failing," Yuvraj was quoted as saying by the Deccan Chronicle.

MSK Prasad, though, had different views on the matter and it seems the Southpaw has to wait longer for his comeback. "With Yuvraj Singh, there were also the fitness issues," Prasad said. On learning the news of the southpaw clearing the Yo-Yo Test, the former Indian wicketkeeper said, "I am happy that he has cleared that fitness test. Since, he has not played cricket for quite some time, let him have a good match time. We will definitely see him in the times to come." The Indian squad announced for Sri Lanka Twenty20s include young faces in Deepak Hooda, Washington Sunder, Jaydev Unadkat and Basil Thampi. Rohit Sharma will lead the side in the absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli, who has been rested for the series ahead of the tour to South Africa. The first T20 is to be played on December 20.

Cricketers choke in Delhi smog, doctors want ICC policy on pollution

NEW DELHI: Unprecedented scenes of Sri Lankan cricketers wearing face masks have reignited debate about hosting major sports in heavily polluted New Delhi, where doctors are increasingly vocal about the health risks posed by smog. Medics on Monday urged cricket's governing body to revise its rulebook after a Test match between India and Sri Lanka went ahead in the capital despite players vomiting and wheezing for air.

International cricketers returned Monday for day three of the third Test even as air pollution at Feroz Shah Kotla stadium soared to hit 18 times the World Health Organization's safe level. Play had been disrupted three times on Sunday as Sri Lankan players complained of illness, but umpires ruled the match would proceed.

The Indian Medical Association condemned the decision, warning that playing in such conditions put athletes' health at serious risk. "This match should not have taken place in the first place. It is time the ICC (International Cricket Council) comes up with a policy on pollution," said IMA president K. K Aggarwal.

"You have fast bowlers, batsmen and fielders out there exposed to these very harmful pollutants over five days at a stretch. It takes a serious toll on your health in the long run." The sport's governing body declined to comment.

Tim Southee returns in New Zealand Test squad after birth of child

WELLINGTON: New Zealand paceman Tim Southee is back for the Black Caps' second Test against West Indies, replacing George Worker in the squad.

Tim Southee missed the series opener, which New Zealand won by an innings and 67 runs, due to the birth of his child. However, the paceman returns for the second and final Test starting in Hamilton on Saturday.

Tim Southee will likely take the spot of Matt Henry, who took three wickets in the first Test.

BJ Watling was not considered by the Black Caps as he "continues to work towards full fitness", with wicketkeeper Tom Blundell enjoying a fine debut by making an unbeaten 107.

New Zealand squad: Kane Williamson (c), Trent Boult, Tom Blundell, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Jeet Raval, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner.



Shikhar Dhawan's 50 puts India in commanding position vs Sri Lanka in Kotla Test

NEW DELHI: Shikhar Dhawan continued his rich vein of form as he scored a half-century to strengthen India's lead on Day 4 of the third and final Test against Sri Lanka at the Ferozeshah Kotla ground. The Indian opener reached the landmark with a single off Chinaman bowler Lakshan Sandakan in the 34th

over. This was Dhawan's 5th half-century and third vs Sri Lanka. After losing Murali Vijay and Ajinkya Rahane early, Shikhar Dhawan put on a 77-run partnership with Cheteshwar Pujara to extend the hosts lead.

Dhawan, who is known for going after the bowlers from the word go, dealt

more in singles and doubles early on.

The left-handed batsman slammed his first boundary in the 27th over. In the process, he completed 2000 Test runs and 8000 first-class runs. He scored 67 before falling to Sandakan. Dhawan, who missed the second Test



in Nagpur due to personal runs, has been in splendid form this series, smashing two half-centuries.

Earlier, India bowled out the visitors for 373, securing a 163-run first innings lead.

Dinesh Chandimal, who hit a career-best 164, was the last man to

be dismissed.

Ishant Sharma and R Ashwin took three wickets each while Mohammed Shami and Ravindra Jadeja finished with two apiece.

India lead the three-match series 1-0 and the Virat Kohli-led side will look to end their brilliant run over the last one year with a win in Delhi.