

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

FRIDAY

- DECEMBER, 08, 2017
- 19 RABI-AL-AWAL 1439 AH
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	15.2	-2.7
JAMMU	22.6	7.1
LEH	7.3	-12.0
KARGIL	4.2	-7.0

SUNSET FRIDAY: 05:23 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 07:26 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 14°C & -3°C respectively.

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

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YOUTH POWER NEEDS TO BE CHANNELIZED PRODUCTIVELY: IMRAN ANSARI

AIYAR'S 'LOW' REMARK REEKS OF CONGRESS' MUGHLAI MINDSET: PM MODI

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP CRUCIAL FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

VIRAT KOHLI MOVES TO SECOND IN ICC TEST RANKINGS, STEVE SMITH RETAINS TOP SPOT

CM chairs meetings of Yousmarg, Manasbal, Lolab Dev Authorities

Focus on developing catchment areas, people while developing tourist spots: Mehbooba

Jammu, Dec 07: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today directed the Tourism Department and allied agencies to focus on the development of catchment areas and people while developing facilities at various tourist spots. This, she said, would enable them to become equal partners and stakeholders in promoting tourism across the State.

Chairing a joint meeting of Yousmarg, Wullar & Manasbal and Lolab, Bangus & Drangyari Tourism Development Authorities here today, the Chief Minister directed them to raise as minimum concrete structures at tourist spots as possible and develop each destination vis a vis its own specialty. She asked them to ensure that the infrastructure being raised is in sync with the local culture and architectural pattern.

Ministers, Abdul Haq Khan, Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura and Sajad



Gani Lone; legislators, Usman Majeed, Er. Rasheed, Raja Manzoor, Farooq Mirchal, Ishfaq Jabbar and Bashir Ahmad Dar were present in the meeting. Mehbooba Mufti directed the CEOs

of these Development Authorities to devise packages particularly for school students, adventure lovers and youth from within and outside the State so that the footfall gets a steady increase. She also directed clearing of encroachments at these tourist spots with full force and take tough measures to check pollution at these places. She also directed promoting pilgrim tourism at these places to attract interested tourists to visit these places.

Terming Bungus as a world class tourist destination, the Chief Minister directed on maintaining its unadulterated aesthetic appeal. For this, she asked for getting good consultancy before going ahead with any major developmental initiatives in the area. She directed preservation of the ancestral place of Hazrat Maulana Anwar Shah Kashmiri (R. A.) as a heritage house and submission

See CM...Pg 02

File related to NHPC agreement continues to remain missing

From 50:50 deal, JK reduced to mere 12% share from power giant

Srinagar, Dec 07: The file containing Cabinet decision No. 328 dated 21-06-1975 about the Indus Water Treaty continues to remain missing from the official records with government have no clue about its whereabouts so far.

A senior official told KNS that it was due to this missing file that instead of the 50:50 partnership, the state is getting mere 12 percent out of the total power produced from its water resources by NHPC.

The other files related to the issue is the file bearing No. PD/IV/243/72 containing all the correspondences with regard to NHPC projects.

Reports earlier informed that the absence of relevant records directly at first affected Dul-Hasti Power Project of which the NHPC took control in the year 1979. The project got delayed but commissioned after a gap of nearly twenty eight years in. reports informed that the NHPC was not willing to work on terms & conditions as originally agreed by State Govt. for vide Cabinet decision No. 328

See NHPC...Pg 02

Only NHPC can run JK' hydro-power projects, says BJP

'If projects are returned to JK, who will run them and how'

Srinagar, Dec 07: The ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday stated that the power giant NHPC only can run the hydro-power projects in Jammu and Kashmir and that royalties can be discussed with the corporation but not the return.

The BJP general secretary Ashok Koul told KNS that his party believes that the NHPC is biggest company in India and is capable of running the power projects in the state.

When asked about his party's take on the demand over the return of the power

See BJP...Pg 02

FRESH SNOWFALL CLOSES SRINAGAR-LEH HIGHWAY

Road clearance work on, say officials

Srinagar, Dec 07: After receiving a fresh snowfall, the authorities here have closed the Srinagar-Leh highway since the intervening night of Wednesday-Thursday, officials said on Thursday.

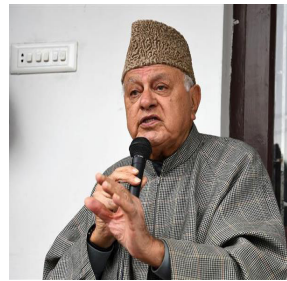
Officials in the Traffic Control Room told KNS that in view of the slippery condition of the roads triggered due to the fresh snowfall, the

See Fresh...Pg 02

US recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital unacceptable: Dr Farooq

'India obligated to oppose the move in line with its commitments, foreign policy'

Srinagar, Dec 07: National Conference President and Member of Parliament Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Thursday strongly condemned the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital by the United States President and said this move was unfair, unjust and oblivious to historical facts and also to the goal of reconciliation and peace in the Middle East.



In a statement issued to KNS from National Conference Headquarters, 'Nawa-

e-Subha' in Srinagar, NC President Dr. Farooq Abdullah said the move has hurt the sentiments of Muslims all over the world and made the goals of cooperation and stability farther and harder to achieve.

"This announcement by the United States President is in contradiction to history and the sentiments of millions

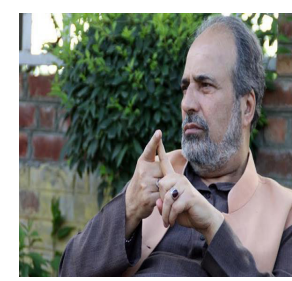
See Farooq...Pg 02

Baig takes first meeting of Party's constitution Amendment Committee

Members propose several amendments

Jammu, Dec 07: Senior PDP leader and Lok Sabha MP Muzaffar Hussain Baig, yesterday, took the first meeting at his Jammu residence with members of the committee nominated by PDP President Mehbooba soon after her re-election for the Party's top slot.

The six-member Committee with Baig its Chairman has been constituted to update the organisation's constitution in tune with the avowed objec-



tives envisaged in the First Declaration and later incorporated in its preamble. According to the statement issued to KNS, Baig gave the

background for why it was felt necessary to constitute committee to update the Party constitution and said that any proposals should hinge on the basic objective of the party to raise its stock as a purposeful, grass-root party based on stated goals, reflective of aspirations of the people. The changes 'if any' he added will be structural and reiteration of party's known agenda.

See Baig...Pg 02

WEATHER AND AVALANCHE WARNINGS

J&K Police Issues Helpline Numbers

Srinagar, Dec 7: In view of the weather and avalanche warnings, Jammu and Kashmir police has established helpline numbers at every district as well as in Police Control Room Kashmir.

General people of the valley are requested to contact their respective concerned Police Helpline's in case on any emergency and exigency. Inspector General of Police

See Weather...Pg 02

Erosion of State's Special Status primary goal of PDP-BJP alliance: NC

Will oppose any move to undermine State's special status by PDP: Nasir

Srinagar, Dec 07: National Conference on Thursday said the erosion of the State's Special Status and unique political identity was the primary goal of the PDP-BJP Alliance.

Addressing a special party convention in Anantnag on Thursday, NC Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani said recurring direct and sponsored assaults on the State's Special Status were patronized by the current political dispensation in the State which was cobbled up in utter contempt to the sentiments of the people.

"The primary goal of the PDP-BJP Alliance is to erode the State's Special Status. While



BJP has made it abundantly clear that they remain committed to their traditional

See Aslam...Pg 02

PDP-BJP GOVT POSES A GRAVE THREAT TO J&K'S INTERESTS: NC

'A collapsed economy, political uncertainty gifts of Mehbooba Govt to Kashmir'

Loolipora, Dec 07: Senior National Conference Leader and Former Finance Minister of the State, Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday said the PDP-BJP Government posed a grave threat to the interests of the State as it was working clandestinely to weaken and fragment the State to derive political dividends from such divisive and destructive politics.

Addressing a public meeting at Loolipora area of Chrar

See NC...Pg 02

Career not limited to a job: Dr Drabu

'Libraries should become knowledge hub for people to engage socially, intellectually'



Srinagar, Dec 7: Minister for Finance and Labour & Employment, Dr Haseeb A Drabu, today advised students to see their career as an instrument of empowerment rather than a tool for just landing in a job.

"Career is not limited to just having a job and earning some income. It also means pursuing growth and better positions deserving of your education, experience and effort."

See Drabu...Pg 02

DIV COM KASHMIR ASSURES ACTION UNDER RULES: DAK

"Delegation appreciates the patient hearing given by the Div Com"

Srinagar, Dec 07: Doctors Association of Kashmir (DAK) along with representatives of J&K Doctors Coordination Committee Thursday met Divisional Commissioner Kashmir who had invited the delegation for talks to discuss about the demands with regard to recent unruly behaviour of Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Zainapora with Consultant Surgeon at Community Health Centre (CHC) Zainapora few days back.

According to the statement issued to KNS, Khan

See DAK...Pg 02

JRL calls for shutdown on Sun against 'HR violations'

Calls for protests on Fri against US decision

Srinagar, Dec 07: In view of the international human rights day, the Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) Thursday called for complete shutdown on Dec 10 against what they termed as the 'gross human rights violations' in Kashmir.

JRL comprising of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik in a joint statement issued to KNS announced a



program on international human rights day.

"On 10th December, the international human rights

day, Kashmiris will observe a complete shut down and blackout against gross human rights violations. A protest rally towards UN observers' office at Srinagar will also be taken out from Lal Chowk on the same day. Similarly a seminar to highlight miseries of Kashmiris will also be held on 9th December 2017," they said.

See JRL...Pg 02

KASHMIR LOSES 2200 HECTARES OF SAFFRON LAND IN 2 DECADES

Rampant construction shrinks Pampore's saffron fields

Srinagar, Dec 07: The unabated constructions have taken a heavy toll on the saffron production in south Kashmir's Pampore area with a considerable cultivation land has turned into residential area over the years.

As per the official figures of the Agriculture Department, the saffron land has been shrinking at Pampore. This is because the government has failed to stop unabated constructions on the land despite Saffron Act 2007, which was to preserve it.

As per the official figures, saffron crop was being

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CM

of a conservation project of a spring at Trehgam for approval. She also directed transfer of all assets developed at the tourist destination to Tourism Department for their better upkeep.

The Chief Minister directed developing water sports facilities at Mansbal and holding of events at the lake to attract niche clientele to the place. She also directed exploring the possibilities of para gliding and para sailing to diversify the tourist attractions. She also directed complete restoration of all the 16 adjoining springs and development of a cycle track at the tourist spot to persuade adventure lovers to visit the spot.

The Chief Minister directed the Tourism Department to explore the potential of Nilnag, near Yousmarg and create facilities there so that it becomes a tourist attraction in itself. She said to further boost the tourist activities in Budgam district, Charar i Sharief is being developed separately as a pilgrim tourist destination.

Secretary, Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez; Deputy Commissioner, Budgam, Haroon Malik; Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Mehmood Ahmad Shah; Chief Executive, J&K Muslim Wakf Board, Fayaz Ahmad Lone and other senior officers were also present in the meeting.

NHPC

dated 21-06-75. Shockingly, the term discussed in 1975 submitted that 50 per cent of the power generated from the projects will be available to State and any profit earned on sale of balance 50 per cent will be shared between State Govt. and Union Government.

The file that still is missing from the official records, as per the reports was also about the agreement between the State Govt. and NHPC over the issue of 'exemption of Stamp duty' chargeable on Transfer deed of Land between Govt. Of India & NHPC in respect of Saal Project, as mentioned at para 11 of folder bearing No. PDD/IV/118/79. The absence of the file left the state authorities crippled to identify the exact status of NHPC in Jammu and Kashmir.

The former minister Taj Mohi-ud-din on the floor of the house admitted openly that due to the absence of the file from the official records, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is losing 10 thousand crore annually.

From the NHPC the state purchases power worth billions of rupees and despite having the potential of generating 30,000 MW of power, 25 per cent of state's population, as per figures, is without electricity and 55 per cent without safe drinking water, despite the huge water resources in the state.

Meanwhile, repeated attempts to call incumbent Power Minister for comments over the issue did not fructify.

BJP

projects to the state, Ashok Koul said NHPC is the only corporation capable of running the hydro power projects in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. "What will we do with those projects if NHPC returns them to the state? Who is going to run them and how? BJP believes that the projects should remain with the NHPC," said the party's general secretary.

He added that though he cannot comment on government's behalf but it would be wise enough if the state government discusses the quantum of power being given to Jammu and Kashmir by the power giant instead of pitching for the return of the power projects being presently run by the NHPC.

Pertinently, a senior PDP leader and minister in the present coalition Abdul Rahman Veeri had stated that the government was rigorously pursuing the issue of the return of the power projects from the NHPC and has been actively striving for the same. "We haven't given up the demand over the return of the power projects. We have this mentioned in the agenda of alliance that we signed with the BJP ahead of forming the government in the state," Veeri had said earlier this week.

However, Koul said that the issue has to be understood on merits and that the state can ask for more royalty from the NHPC but has to think twice before asking for the return of these projects.

The BJP general secretary also asked the separatists to talk to the GOI appointed Dineshwar Sharma and raise issued with him which the separatists deem necessary. "The reality is that the central hasn't put any pre-condition over the dialogue with the separatists. If the government is approaching them for talks, it becomes bizarre on the part of separatists that they still exhibit reluctance in being part of the exercise," Ashok Koul said.

FRESH

Srinagar-Leh highway has been closed. Officials informed that Sonamarg, Zojila, Meenamarg and other areas received a snowfall of about three inches. "Following the slippery conditions of three roads, the highway was closed," he said.

He informed that the men and machinery has been pressed to clear the roads. "The highway will be reopened after the clearance work," he said.

Earlier, the local Meteorological Department (MeT) had predicted moderate to heavy rains and snow across Jammu and Kashmir from Dec 11 to Dec 15, saying that a Western Disturbance would likely hit the state from Dec 11 onwards.

FAROOQ

of Muslims across the world, including India. At a time when the world is grappling with instability and hostility, especially in the Middle East, an arbitrary announcement of this nature is fraught with the risk of alienating people and adding to the widespread sense of injustice", Dr. Farooq Abdullah said.

The National Conference President, while strongly condemning the arbitrary announcement, said the global community is obligated to deliver justice to the people of Palestine and no responsible power should take any steps that would hurt sentiments centered around historical disputes and injustices.

"The Government of India is also obligated to strongly and unambiguously oppose this move in line with the country's historical foreign policy stand that is committed to the people of Palestine in their quest for justice and peaceful existence and is also pivoted on the policy of non-alignment and objectivity. The condemnation from the Central Government should be unequivocal and we should take a stand in consonance with our values and our place in the comity of nations", Dr. Farooq Abdullah added in the statement.

"India has traditionally and consistently supported the

cause of the Palestinian people, and our Foreign Policy has always noted East Jerusalem as the capital of an Independent Palestinian State. A failure of the Modi Government to strongly reiterate this commitment and stand would be a great disservice to our country's independent foreign policy goals and our commitments at the global stage", the National Conference President said.

BAIG

All the five members, Rafi Ahmad Mir, Nizamuddin Bhat Syed Basharat Bukhari, Ved Mahajan and Asgar Ali participated. Bhat was assigned the job to function as the Secretary.

Several amendments were proposed by the members during three-hour long deliberations to make the constitution elaborate and more perfect to further the cause of people of the state and to encompass their political, economic, social needs through unambiguous goals and a viable and highly inclusive party structure.

The members focused on how can constitution guide and help in ensuring activities involving the masses in a free, democratic manner, orient the party cadre into a discipline through transparent process for larger public service and commitment towards party's growth and viability.

In this regard some amendments are conceived to further strengthen the basic units from the lowest Mohalla Committees and Ward Committees upto the highest bodies at district, provincial and state level.

WEATHER

Munir Ahmad Khan has directed all the concerned district SSSPs to remain vigilant and keep their men readiness for the help of general public. IGP further said that these helpline's has been established in every district and will remain functional 24x7.

People from Anantnag can contact on 01932222870, 9596777669, 9419051950, People from Kulgam can contact on 01931-260253, 160, 7051510660, 0680 people from Pulwama can contact on 01933-241280, 241221, 241986, 8491942811, people from Shopian can contact on 01933-261891, 9596768831, 9596768826, people from Awantipora can contact on 01933-247369, 247702, 7051404001, 9419040154, 9906442505, people from Ganderbal can contact on 2416478, 2416564, 9622688825, people from Budgam can contact on 01951-255207, 255042, 9697048709, people from Handwara can contact on 01955-262295, 9906767076, 7051404206, people from Kupwara can contact on 01955-252204, 7051404938, 7051404914, people from Baramulla can contact on 01952-237830, 9596777668, 9596767717, 9596767701, people from Bandipora can contact on 9596767430, 9596767411, 01957-255271.

People from Leh can contact on 01982-258880 and people from Kargil can contact on 01985-232275, 8491938293, 9419219746.

A general helpline has also been established for the people of valley in Police Control Room Kashmir which can be reached on 2506508, 2506504, 2506506 or Dial 100.

NASIR

stand to abrogate Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Constitution of India, PDP's complicity is proven by their silence and tacit support to such nefarious designs. The assurance of maintaining status-quo on Article 370 and Article 35-A in the common minimum program of the PDP-BJP Alliance has been torn to shreds as BJP has openly supported various attempts to seek the abrogation and repeal of special constitutional provisions that form the basis of the State's accession to the Union under special circumstances", the National Conference Provincial President added.

"While the PDP-BJP Government has failed abjectly on the governance and administration front, it has also provided a political platform to divisive forces inimical to the State's political honour and dignity. This is a historic betrayal that is unprecedented in both its malice and repugnance and the people have realized the hypocrisy of PDP as the promises made by its leaders before coming to power have been effortlessly abandoned", Nasir Aslam Wani added.

The NC Provincial President said every single promise of the PDP-BJP Alliance - be it the return of power projects, the revocation of AFSPA, the initiation of dialogue with stakeholders irrespective of their ideological affiliations or the promise of safeguarding the State's special status - has been broken. "This alliance has broken every single promises that PDP tried to sell to the people of the State as a smokescreen to hide its Faustian bargain to occupy the Chief Minister's chair. Not a single promises made in their alleged 'Agenda of the Alliance' has been upheld. The height of shamelessness is evidenced by the fact that Senior PDP Leader and its Vice President, Muzaffar Baigh openly questioned the very existence of the 'Agenda of the Alliance', the National Conference Provincial President further said.

Party Leaders including NC District President Anantnag, Dr. Muhammad Shafi, Former MLC Dr. Bashir Ahmed Veeri, Advocate Riyaz Ahmed Khan, Dr. Rafiq Ahmed Kochak besides senior party functionaries and activists also spoke on the occasion.

NC

Constituency at the conclusion of an extensive tour of Charar, Abdul Rahim Rather said a completely collapsed economy and unprecedented political uncertainty were gifts of the Mehbooba Govt to the people of Kashmir.

"This Government is actively involved in disempowering the State and its institutions in an effort to further its long-standing agenda of revoking our special status. The PDP is playing an active and instrumental role in furthering BJP's agenda in the State. While BJP is openly working towards abrogating our special status - a strategy that will be unleashed perhaps ahead of the next General Elections, the PDP is not only playing along but also contributing to this unprecedented assault on our honour and dignity", the Former Finance Minister said while addressing the meeting.

The Senior NC Leader expressed disappointment at the State of misgovernance, corruption and ineptness that had become a norm as people were left to fend for themselves.

"Every basic responsibility of the Government has been abdicated as the Chief Minister continues to rule the State without a clear and well-defined vision. Remaining in power seems to be the sole focus of the present dispensation and pressing public grievances and economic issues have been summarily ignored. This Government has plunged the State into a dark phase of growing unemployment, economic recession and hopelessness. When it comes to the extension of GST

to the State, the Mehbooba Mufti Government has not only compromised on the State's fiscal autonomy but has also shattered our economy and is forcing thousands of business into closure and bankruptcy due to shoddy implementation and systemic chaos. This is resulting in a spiralling effect that adds to the level of alienation and isolation among our youth," Rather further said. The Senior National Conference Leader said National Conference was committed to fighting against a repressive, unjust and clueless Government and would evolve a consensus at the grassroots level to take the State out of the current morass.

"We have to work with cohesion and diligence to reverse the negative consequences being faced by the State and its people due to this Government's policies and misplaced priorities and the youth have to be at the forefront of this effort. Under the visionary leadership of Dr. Farooq Abdullah and the dynamic leadership of Omar Abdullah, our party will work with the hardworking and talented youth of our State to usher it into a corrective era of growth, stability, peace and prosperity", the Former Finance Minister added.

DRABU

Dr Drabu said.

He said career is more relevant and empowering than a job. "I was inspired to become a lawyer, studied to be a doctor, applied for a teacher's job, worked as an economist, edited a newspaper and ended up as a politician. In the end, it all ends well," he said, to a thunderous applause from the students.

The Minister was speaking at 'Career Counselling and Guidance Programme' organized by the Department of Libraries and Research in collaboration with the University of Kashmir and Indian Public Library Movement, Mindler Delhi and Planceess Mumbai.

The function was also attended by Commissioner Secretary, Culture, Dilshad Khan, Vice-Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Khurshid Iqbal Andrabi, Director, Libraries and Research, Mukhtar-ul-Aziz and other dignitaries.

Dr Drabu said libraries in J&K should become knowledge hubs which attract people from all shades and ages. "In this digital age, my idea was to leverage libraries as places where people can engage intellectually and socially. I am happy that the idea has got ahead well," he said.

The Finance Minister said counselling students is not a sufficient condition to get a good job since the idea of counselling has evolved over the years. "There has to be a real change in mindset. All of you must be looking for good jobs and not careers. But a job is not what you want. You must have a good career. You can have a good career without having a job," he said.

Underlining the changes required for grooming J&K as a hub of intellectualism, Dr Drabu said the civil society of the state has to come forward in addressing the social issues facing the state. "As a society, we make social choices, that the best and brightest choose medicine followed by engineers. When we try and understand when a society makes a choice to put best and brightest in a particular field, what is the policy choice government makes?" he said.

The Finance Minister said the policy choice of the governments across the developing world are different from social choices made by the society. "If our best boys and girls become doctors, it must be the most lucrative profession, which unfortunately it isn't because we are not providing the right kind of environment for the talent to flourish. In our part of the world, students are ill-equipped to handle the stress they face outside. How they can overcome it is the real challenge," he said.

Earlier, Director Libraries, Mukhtar-ul-Aziz presented a detailed resume of the 'Career Counseling and Guidance Programme' organized by his Department.

Hundreds of students from various parts of the Valley joined the special career counseling programme where the counseling of students and parents was done by IIT toppers including Prateek Bhargav, CEO Mindler, Prikshit Danda, a leading Professional Career Counselor in the country trained from Harvard University, Supriya Dhanda, Anoop Panday, CEO Plancees and Ranjit Gakaray, Professional Counselor for IIT and Medical Aspirants.

The students introduced to latest job-oriented and rewarding courses available in various institutions. They were also counseled about the colleges, procedure for admission and other related issues while planning for future studies.

DAK

assured that nobody will be allowed to disrespect or interfere unnecessarily and acknowledged the hardwork of doctors & paramedics keeping the ground realities into consideration.

He also stressed for serving the public with zeal of which the delegation apprised that the health personnel are delivering the same against all odds and are in continuous efforts to enhance the health care services.

The delegation had a half an hour meet with him where in he assured in strongest possible words regarding the demands put forth by the delegation.

As the dynamics of health functioning was discussed threadbare particularly regarding undue interference of Revenue Officials he has invited the delegation to discuss the same in a comprehensive & detailed manner on 14th December 2017.

The delegation also submitted complaint against revenue officials of Zainapora who tried to instigate public by uploading official documents on social media thereby misusing their official position and to scare the health personnel of said hospital.

DAK & JKDDCC has decided to defer proposed indefinite strike on the assurance of Health Minister Bali Bhagat & Chief Secretary B B Vyas & Divisional Commissioner Baseer Khan.

The associations appreciate the concern shown by authorities and also thanked Director Health Services, Kashmir also for acknowledging the grave issue.

DAK & JKDDCC while appealing doctors and paramedics to continue their work with passion & utmost dedication are hopeful that the assurances by the authorities will be fulfilled in a stipulated time so that "we are not forced to resume state wide protest again."

JRL

"Kashmiris are being subjected to worst kind of torture and oppression but the champions of human rights to safeguard their economic ambitions are maintain a criminal silence over it," JRL said.

JRL said that United Nations (UN) has designated Dec

10 as human rights day.

"On this day seminars, symposiums, and programs are held and statements are issued for safeguarding the human rights of every one. United Nations has itself created a forum namely human rights commission that also makes hue and cry on human rights abuses," JRL said.

JRL leaders said that Kashmir is also part of human civilization and human with same blood and flesh are living on this land but these humans are being treated like cattle by Indian oppression from a long time.

Leaders said that from last seventy years, people of Jammu Kashmir are facing Indian aggression and oppression. "Lakhs on people have been killed and this killing spree is continuing unabated. Thousands of young and old have been disappeared in custody, thousands of unmarked graves bear witness to extra judicial killings, attacks on the chastity of women is being used as a weapon of war and thousands of innocents have been going through jails and incarcerations," JRL said. JRL leaders said that if one only looks back at the events of past one year would find hundreds of young Kashmiris being gunned down and killing humans being glamorized by Indian state and its media. "During these days, thousands of men and women, boys and girls have been showered with pellets and their eyesight snatched. Many have been maimed and injured and are forced to endure a life time misery. During these days, thousands have been put into jails, police lockups, incarceration centers and so-called rulers are using arbitrary laws like PSA to prolong their incarceration," they added.

Leaders said that from Tihar jail Delhi to the jails of Jammu Kashmir, thousands of Kashmiri inmates are suffering at the hands of oppressive Indian authorities.

They said that north and south of Kashmir valley is witnessing a new phase of terror and torture. "Crackdown, vandalizing private residences and property, beating and humiliating people without the consideration of gender and age, arresting young, old, women and men indiscriminately, arresting fathers in place of sons and brothers in place of brothers and other oppressive operations are continuing without a pause. Kashmiris are being terrorized but no one in the international community seems to bother. India which claims to be the biggest democracy in the world has let loose a reign of terror in Jammu Kashmir but no one is raising his or her voice against this state sponsored terrorism," asserted JRL leaders. They said that Jerusalem represents the religious emotions and aspirations of about a billion Muslims living across the Globe. "This is our Qibla I Awwal and no Muslim can ever accept it as the capital of Zionist state of Israel. By taking this kind of irrational decision, US president Donald Trump is actually showing his imprudent politics, fascist behavior and enmity against Muslims," they said.

JRL leaders said that these kinds of unilateral anti-Muslim decisions are bound to deteriorate and damage already fragile peace and tranquility of the world.

"No Muslim can ever accept Jerusalem as the capital of Zionist state and so this decision is bound to fail," JRL said.

Leaders appealed Muslim Ummah to unite against this bizarre US decision and support the Palestinian cause.

"This world can never taste real peace, tranquility and progress if such kinds of decisions are implemented and instead of resolving the disputes confronting humans more problems are twisted," leaders added.

Leaders said that Kashmiris are and will continue protesting against this horrible US decision and tomorrow on Dec 08 (Friday), will stage peaceful protests across the valley after Friday prayers.

KASHMIR

cultivated on 5707 hectares of land at Pampore in 1996, which has now reached to around 3500 hectares, indicating that 2200 hectares of saffron land has come under constructions over the years.

"The land has shrunk because of constructions. Government needs to take some strict measures from turning saffron land into residential area," an official of the Agriculture Department told KNS. To give boost to the saffron production, ministry of Agriculture and Production, Government of India started a scheme 'National Mission on Saffron' in 2010 for seven years with project cost of Rs 400.11 crore. So far, the government has utilised only Rs 199.835 crore. The centre has extended the period of completion by March 2018. However, the state has recommended its extension to March 2019.

President, Saffron Growers Association, Abdul Majeed Wani, said farmers started using new technology under the centrally sponsored scheme. "But the irrigation project has not been completed," he said.

He said that decline in saffron production was due to dry weather.

Ghulam Mohidin, a saffron grower said, he would cultivate saffron over five hectares of land at Pampore, two decades back. However, these days he is worried that there may be decline in saffron production due to dry weather. The government has so far failed to keep the irrigation facilities available.

"Had there been irrigation facilities available, we would not have been dependent on rainfall," he said.

Saffron flowers are sensitive to vagaries of the weather. Its production depends on the weather conditions and the irrigation facilities. There has been slight rainfall for the last three months in the valley.

He held several reasons responsible for decline in its production. "The government did not show much concern for the prized crop. The authorities are not implementing schemes properly," he said. "People also sold a large part of saffron land on which constructions have been built," he added.

Farooq Ahmad, another saffron grower, said that saffron production has been on decline due to government's "mismanagement". "The funds of centrally sponsored scheme have been kept unspent. There is water deficit and the government has failed to complete the irrigation project," Farooq said. A senior official of the Agriculture Department said that saffron growers were "not coming forward" to get benefits under the scheme. "The saffron production has been increased. However, the irrigation component of the scheme has not been completed yet. Saffron growers are also not coming forward to get benefit under the scheme," the official said.

He admitted that constructions were raised on the saffron land over the years. He said land mafia was creating hurdles for laying of pipe network for irrigation facilities. He said that Iranian saffron, which does not match the quality of Kashmir saffron, was being imported in India. "It is being rebranded and sold in domestic market on high value thereby defacement of the Kashmir saffron," he added.

Governor inaugurates Baba Jitto Auditorium and Annual Group Monitoring Workshop of TIME-LEARN Programme

JAMMU, DECEMBER 7: Governor N.N. Vohra, Chancellor of the Sher-e-Kashmir Agricultural University of Science and Technology, Jammu (SKUAST-J), inaugurated the Annual Group Monitoring Workshop of Technology Intervention for Mountain Ecosystem-Livelihood Enhancement through Action Research & Networking (TIME-LEARN) Programme, organized at the University, here today.

Earlier, Governor inaugurated the newly constructed Baba Jitto Auditorium of SKUAST-J which has a seating capacity of more than 900 persons. He took a round of the complex and viewed the well equipped facilities in the Auditorium. A documentary about the various activities and programmes being run by the SKUAST-J was screened in the Auditorium. Governor planted a sapling in the premises to mark the inauguration of the Auditorium.

TIME LEARN Programme is a joint initiative of Science for Equity, Empowerment & Development (SEED), Department of Science and Technology (DST), New Delhi, Himalayan Environmental Studies & Conservation Organisation (HESCO), Dehradun and Wild Life Institute of India, Dehradun for addressing environmental conservation and sustainable development of mountainous ecosystem.

Dr. Pradeep Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-J; Dr. Tej Pratap,



Vice-Chancellor, APG Shimla University; Dr. Anil P. Joshi, Founder HESCO, Dehradun; Dr. Sunil Kumar Aggarwal, Scientist 'E' and Incharge, TIME-LEARN, DST-SEED; Dr. J.P. Sharma, Director Research, SKUAST-J expressed their views on the Workshop. Dr. R.K. Srivastava, Nodal Officer & PI, TIME-LEARN Project SKUAST-J, scientists, faculty and students were among those present on the occasion.

Highlighting the vital importance of technological intervention for enhancing production and productiv-

ity in agriculture and its allied sectors Governor observed that transfer of technology is of vital importance for bringing transformational change in the agricultural scenario in rural India. He lauded the efforts of TIME-LEARN Programme in making farmers prosper through various technological innovations in the North Western Himalayan States of Uttarakhand, J&K and Himachal Pradesh.

Appreciating the past contributions of Dr. Anil P. Joshi, Founder HESCO, Governor noted that sev-

eral approaches suggested by him are proving beneficial for improving the farmers standard of living. He also lauded the work done by Dr. Tej Pratap as Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir.

Governor advised that various technological innovations which are of local relevance in the agriculture and its allied sectors should be produced on an adequate scale for distribution in the villages. He observed that a time frame needs to be adhered to for affecting revolutionary changes in the agriculture and its allied sectors as the challenges of climate change, growing population and food grain deficiency is an area which calls for focussed and time bound interventions. He emphasised the need for a cohesive approach being followed between various stakeholders in the agriculture and its allied sectors for meeting the arising challenges.

Governor noted that the good work being done by the scientists requires to be readily applicable in the farmers fields and thus help in bringing about the II Green Revolution.

Governor congratulated Dr. Sharma, VCSKUAST-J for organizing this Workshop of SEED Division, DST, and wished fruitful deliberations to all the participants. He urged that a regular programme of monitoring, feedback and review must be followed for ensuring the success of all technological interventions.

Youth power needs to be channelized productively: Imran Ansari

Minister declares open inter-district football tourney at TRC



SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 07: Terming youth an engine which can propel societies forward, Minister for Information Technology, Technical Education and Youth Services & Sports Imran Raza Ansari today advocated that youth be exposed to different cultures to create a platform for the exchange of ideas.

He made these remarks while inaugurating the inter-district football tournament which is being organized by CRPF. Minister said that "Youth are an engine to take the vehicle of family, society or nation forward. Youth are a great promise to each nation and additional efforts need to be made to expose them to their immediate surroundings and realities," he said.

To exploit the potential of youth, he advised parents and sports associations to "give way to youth to express, to develop skills, to build competency and to gain confidence, because investment in youth is insurance for future," he added. Minister praised the CRPF for organizing such type of events in the valley under civic action programme.

On the occasion, IG CRPF Ravideep Sahi said that CRPF is trying to organize extracurricular activities for local youth to develop

their overall personality so that they will show their talent in national and international level.

A total of eight teams consisting four top teams from Srinagar district, two teams from Budgam district and two teams from Ganderbal district have been selected for this Inter-District tournament which is being conducted at TRC Football field Srinagar from December 7th to December 18th, 2017. Winner team will be rewarded with Rs 20,000. Further, top two teams of Srinagar, Budgam and Ganderbal will be taken to "Bharat Darshan" to coastal areas of Cochin, Goa and Andaman & Nicobar Island to understand different cultures besides they will also play friendly matches with the local football teams there.

Meanwhile, Minister felicitated Sheikh Umer and Huzair Yaqoob who had won Bronze medals at recently held International Taekwondo Championship at Bangkok, Thailand.

DC Srinagar Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Divisional Sports Officer J&K Sports Council, DIG CRPF, Representatives of J&K Football Association and other concerned officers were present on this occasion.

Zulfkar for comprehensive plan to relocate, rehabilitate nomads in Jammu

Pitches for their one-time settlement

JAMMU, DECEMBER 07- Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs, Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today asked for formulation of a comprehensive plan for relocation and rehabilitation of landless nomads, living below poverty line in hilly and border areas of Jammu region.

The Minister said this while speaking during a meeting with the concerned officers held here to deliberate upon issues related to nomads.

Vice-Chairman, State Advisory Board for the Development of Gujjars and Bakerwals Choudhary Zafar Ali Khatana, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Dr MK Bhandari, Commissioner Secretary Tribal Affairs Department Kifayat Hussain Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner, Samba Sheetal Nanda, Vice Chairman Jammu Development Authority Rajesh Kumar



Shavan, Director Tribal Affairs, Mohammad Rafi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Jammu Arun Manhas and other senior officers of civil administration besides police officers attended the meeting.

The Minister directed the Deputy Commissioners and VC JDA to ensure that the nomads carrying livestock from one area to other should not be harassed. He asked them for due consultation with the Tribal Affairs Department while deciding on any eviction drive of the tribals.

The Minister asked the

concerned to conduct survey about the status of nomadic population in their respective districts within two months so that a comprehensive policy is framed to rehabilitate them as they are forced to live migratory life due to their livelihood issues.

The Minister said the tribals are very simple people and attached to their lifestyle, customs and tradition and displacement of these people amounts to disturbance in their way of life, which automatically leads to destruction of their social, cultural, and economic traditions affecting

their ethnic identity. He reiterated the commitment of the government for integrated socio-economic development of the Schedule Tribes saying that coordinated steps are being taken up to ensure that they get their due rights with regard to rehabilitation and livelihood.

Later, the Minister asked the district administration to conduct magisterial inquiry into the recent Gole Gularal incident and asked the officers to identify those responsible for the happening and take appropriate action against them under the law.

JK to soon have mega poultry hatchery plant: Mir Zahoor

Minister reviews performance of animal, sheep sectors

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 30: Minister of State for Forest, Animal, Sheep Husbandry, Cooperative and Fisheries, Mir Zahoor Ahmad today said that government is working on a proposal to establish a mega Hatchery Plant to give poultry farming a boost in the State.

He said a Detailed Project Report (DPR) would be formulated and submitted to for approval and funding.

Chairing a meeting of the officers of Animal, Sheep Husbandry Departments here today, Mir Zahoor reviewed the pace of progress of various works undertaken under these sectors. The Minister said that the state is lacking in poultry and egg production and there is a huge monopoly of rates in the market. He said it is the need of the hour to fill the gap and establishing of a mega Hatchery Plant in the State



will greatly help in meeting the demands for poultry and eggs.

The Minister also sought feedback on various issues including conduct of Departmental Promotion Committee meetings, regularization of promotions, referring of vacancies to recruitment agencies and pace of progress of ongoing works.

It was given out in the meeting that the process for importing Ram sheep has been started and for the purpose a DPR of Rs 3 crore has already been submitted to the con-

cerned quarters. The Minister asked the Sheep Department to go for high quality multipurpose merino ram, taking the agro climatic condition of J&K State in consideration.

It was informed in the meeting that 4.5 crore Day Old Chicks (DOC) are produced in the Kashmir division and 2.5 crore (DOC) imported per year, while Jammu division produces 1.5 crore DOCs per year.

It was informed in the meeting that of 77 Veterinary Surgeons posts, 40 are in

position. The Minister asked for close monitoring of existing poultry units and sheep farms with special focus on cleanliness and hygiene in and around the units.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Animal Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries, R K Bhagat, Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu, Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu and other Senior Officers of Animal and Sheep Husbandry Departments.

Lal Singh, Jugal lay foundation of Forest Guest House in Nowshera

Also kick-start Bhawani-Dharal-Bhajwal road near Mangla Mata in Nowshera

RAJOURI, DECEMBER 07- Minister for Forests, Ecology and Environment Choudhary Lal Singh and Member Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma today laid foundation stone of Forest Guest House near Mangla Mata in Nowshera to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 50 lakh by Forest Department.

MLA Ravinder Raina, MLC Surinder Choudhary, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Ravi Kesar, Chief Conservator of Forests Farooq Gillani, Managing Director SFC Suresh Gupta, Director Soil Water and Conservation Javed Iqbal Punju, Director Forest Protection Force Asif Mehmood Sagar, Director SFRI B M Sharma and other concerned senior officers accompanied the Minister.

After laying the foundation stone for Forest Guest House, Choudhary Lal Singh said that the Government is making all efforts to provide basic amenities to the pilgrims near Mangla Mata in Bhawani village. He informed that Government has released Rs 28 lakh out of total project cost of Rs 50 lakh for commencing the construction work of the Forest Guest House. He directed the executing agency to gear up their men and machinery for completing the work within stipulated time frame.

Responding to the demands of locals, Minister announced Rs 50 lakh



for upgradation of basic amenities in the Bhawani village near Mangla Mata. He further informed that Government has earmarked Rs 1 crore for construction of Nowshera bye-pass road, adding that work of the road is under progress and would be completed within prescribed time.

Choudhary Lal Singh asked MD SFC to dump two truck timber of diffident kind of wood in Bhawani village so that the locals could purchase the same on Government rates.

The Minister said that Government has prepared a comprehensive plan to beautify every barren and roadside strip. He emphasized the importance of trees and plants and mentioned that trees are best friends of mankind

as they serve in a variety of ways to every creature on planet earth.

Member Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma announced Rs 10 lakh for upgradation of lanes, drains and improvement of drinking water facilities in Bhawani village. MLC Surinder Choudhary also announced Rs 10 lakh for development works in Nowshera.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Ravinder Raina said that Nowshera constituency would be developed with all modern line basic amenities like adequate drinking water, uninterrupted power supply, road connectivity, health, education besides better lanes and drains. He said central Government headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched

various centrally sponsored schemes for upgrading the socio-economic condition of the weaker sections of the society particularly in far-off areas of the State.

Regarding development of Sher Makkadi and Jhunger villages as Model villages under BADP, MLA informed that Rural Development Ministry has submitted a detailed project report to Union RDD Minister for development of both villages as model village.

For construction of Sher Makkadi-Junger road, he asked the concerned department to prepare DPR and submit the same for funding so that the construction work of the road would be started for the convenience of the general public. On the demand of locals of the Bhawani village, MLA announced Rs 11 lakh for basic amenities at Mangla Mata.

Later, the Minister along with other dignitaries kick starts works for construction of 11.075 kilometer long Bhawani-Dharal road, to be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 14.14 crore by Border Road Organisation (BRO) and Dharal-Bhajwal road, to be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 11.19 crore by R&B department. He asked the executing agencies to complete both the roads by January 2019 for the convenience of the people.

MLA Ashraf Mir chairs Estimate Committee meet

Asks to provide suitable accommodation to legislators as per protocol

JAMMU, DECEMBER 07: The Estimates Committee of J&K Legislative Assembly today recommended enhancement in budget allocation to the Estates Department for maintaining the infrastructure of the department including repair and renovation work of the existing property. The Committee met today under the Chairmanship of MLA, Mohammad Ashraf Mir to discuss the present status of accommodation being provided to the Ministers, Legislators, Bureaucrats and various categories of employees in the State.

Legislators, Mubark Gul, Ch. Sukhandan Kumar, Vikar Rasool Wani, Abdul Majid Wani, Abdul Majid Paddar, R S Pathania, Shakti Raj Parihar and Yawar Ahmed Mir attended the meeting and gave their valuable suggestions to ensure suitable accommodation as per the protocol provided to them in a categorization manner.

The Committee expressed displeasure over the non-suitable accommodation to the legislators and asked for construction of new quarters including all requisite facilities besides converting old MLA hostel building as guest houses for the legislators, former legislators at Jammu and Srinagar so that they can avail accommodation facilities during their visit at both the capital of the State. The Committee also stressed for providing adequate accommodation to PROs of Legislators.

The committee recommended that increase in the budget allocation of the Estates department for maintenance/repairs of old building as per its requirements. The committee also



stressed for streamline the e-tendering process. The Estates department was asked to demolish old buildings in Srinagar and Jammu to construct new quarters to meet out the shortage and requirement of the MLAs.

The Committee also recommended providing rest rooms to the legislators during their visit at Civil Secretariat.

Director Estates, Tassaduq Jeelani briefed the Committee about the action taken by the department on queries raised by the Committee and said that the department is working on the plan to construct new quarters for the Ministers, Legislators, Bureaucrats and employees in both the capital cities of the States.

He also informed about the issues and difficulties faced by the department including shortage of funds to repair the building and quarters, besides other activities of the department. He assured the Committee that issues raised by the committee will be taken up with the concerned quarters for their early settlement.

Special Secretary, Legislative Assembly R L Sharma, besides senior officers of Estates Department and Assembly Secretariat present in the meeting.

Time and Us

Editorial
SRINAGAR
J&K

NEW INDIA FORMULA? — ON THE 15TH FINANCE COMMISSION

The Centre has moved swiftly to notify the presidential orders setting up the Fifteenth Finance Commission, within five days of the Cabinet's approval. The constitutional body is tasked with recommending a fiscal road map and a sharing of resources between the Centre and the States. On Monday, former Revenue Secretary N.K. Singh, who has been appointed chairman of the Commission, held preliminary discussions on its "wide-ranging" terms of reference and decided to hold expeditious consultations with stakeholders at all administrative levels as well as with political parties. Think tanks and academics will be consulted. The Commission has less than two years to complete its deliberations and submit its report by October 2019, giving the government a little over a quarter to consider and implement its recommendations for the period from April 2020 to March 2025. Accepting the 14th Finance Commission's recommendation to raise the States' share in the divisible pool of taxes to 42% from the previous 32% level, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had told Chief Ministers that although this meant less money at the Centre's disposal, his government had decided to strengthen the States' capacity to move away from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. While Mr. Modi's disdain for Central planning is well-known, the terms of reference for this Commission seem to suggest that the record hike in the tax transfer rate to States is pinching.

The Centre has urged the Commission to finalise its tax-devolution formula after factoring in the impact on the Union's fiscal situation, keeping in mind "the continuing imperative of the national development programme including New India - 2022". Taken together with its need for resources for essential spending in areas such as defence, security, infrastructure and climate change, the Centre seems to be seeking a rollback of the 42% share for States. The government's top brass has repeatedly asserted the need for revenue to maintain public spending in the face of flak for high petroleum taxes. But a reduction from the 42% rate could dent States' faith in the Centre's claims of cooperative federalism. The rollout of the goods and services tax, which marks a new chapter in tax administration with both the Centre and States working together through the GST Council, makes the challenge trickier. The Centre is committed to compensating States for any revenue losses arising out of GST implementation till June 2022, thus covering nearly half the period for which the Commission is to recommend a formula. Its mandate includes formulating performance-linked incentives for States on a range of desirable outcomes such as attaining a replacement rate in population growth, deepening the GST net and improving the ease of doing business. Devising a fiscal nudge for development goals sounds attractive, though the challenge would lie in quantifying the good from the ugly — especially when one has to reward a State for showing 'control or lack of it in incurring expenditure on populist measures'.

INDIA'S PLURAL SOUL

► **Gopalkrishna Gandhi**

The partitioning of India broke us, shamed us. It is estimated that nearly two million were slaughtered during the weeks around Partition, almost no Muslim surviving in East Punjab and no Hindu or Sikh in West Punjab. About 7.5 million Muslims left India for the newly formed state of Pakistan and about 7.5 million Hindus trekked to the new India from Pakistan. Both sets of displaced persons were seeking the security of a religious majority, their majority.

Gandhi's scorching presence, the new government's unwavering commitment to pluralism and the humanity of millions of ordinary people saved the tragedy from becoming a cataclysm.

The triptych of an agenda

After that traumatic year, three dates, three events, shook Indian pluralism again. Gandhi's assassination — January 30, 1948; the Babri Masjid demolition — December 6, 1992, and the unveiling of V.D. Savarkar's portrait in Parliament House — February 26, 2003

The first of these three saw a believer in the criticality of India's pluralism being put to death. The second witnessed a pre-eminent Islamic monument reduced to rubble. The third valorised a man who believed India was meant to be a Hindu Rashtra. The first was murder, the second vandalism, the third a celebration.

Those three form a triptych.

All three occurrences singed India's plural soul.

Their "work" is still on. It is still affecting ways of thinking, acting, reacting.

The assassination was a carefully planned plot by people who owed allegiance to the concept of a Hindu Rashtra. Its aim was threefold: punish, by murder, one who believed India to be the home of all the faith traditions in it, reverse Gandhi's idea of "Ishwar Allah Tere Naam", pronounce the primacy and power of Hinduism in India. It was meant to tell the Muslims of India that they were here by leave of the Hindus and that all talk of Hindu-Muslim unity and equality was sentimental and meaningless.

Gandhi's killing traumatised the country. It devastated Muslims in India. Who would, hereafter, be its rakhvala (protector)? Nehru said that evening: "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere." For India's Muslims who had said "no" to Pakistan and stayed back in India because they had faith in Gandhi's India, that darkness was real. Along with the light, the oxygen of confidence in the air fled, too.

Several years and countless Hindu-Muslim riots later, the unhealed wound on India's plural ethos was violently cut open once again.

Another dateline

Ayodhya, December 6, 1992 is a dateline, a hate-line, a fate-line.

Babri Masjid, the 16th century mosque was built spitefully, it is said, on the exact spot in Ayodhya, where Rama was born. In fact, the pious say, a temple stood where the mosque came up. The mosque had, over the years, become a contested site, a Hindu v Muslim akhara. And on that day, Hindu



muscle power asserted itself. Watched by unwitting, unsure or captive seniors of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and with a police force unable or unwilling to intervene, 1,50,000 delirious Hindu kar sevaks brought the mosque down.

In the rubble lay all hope for Hindu-Muslim concord. In it lay shattered Muslim trust in India's secular future. And in it lay tattered, the Constitution's guarantees about the freedom of religious belief.

The broken stones said more: Here rises, at long last, they proclaimed, Veer Savarkar's dream of a Hindu Rashtra.

India partitioned was now India polarised. Savarkar's spirit must have felt more than fulfilled.

Moving over to Parliament

A decade later, the BJP in power at the Centre, decided that for Savarkar's fulfilment to be complete, due ceremony was in order. It decided to place in Parliament House's Central Hall, along with portraits of the Greats of India's freedom struggle, a portrait of this freedom fighter as well. Savarkar was, of course, a fighter for India's freedom. On his terms, in his own light. With Mohammed Ali Jinnah, also a freedom fighter according to his own terms and his own lights, Savarkar believed that Hindus and Muslims formed Two Nations. Jinnah realised his goal with Partition. Savarkar did not, could not, for India insisted, through its Constitution, its laws and public policy pronouncements, that it was secular. Asoka's Lion Capital was, after all, the Republic of India's new emblem.

Savarkar's dream remained un-realised until the unveiling of the portrait. That completed the triptych.

The unveiling in Parliament House did

three things. First, it placed against the Indian Republic a conceptual alternative — Hindu Rashtra. Second, it made demolition the exact co-relative of construction. Third, it made Veer Savarkar, the precise opposite number of Mahatma Gandhi. And thereby, his peer, alternative and equal. It juxtaposed the Two Nations theorist against the One Nation preceptor.

An agenda at work

The assassination, the demolition and the portrait's unveiling, together, go to spell a long word with a short agenda: polarisation.

The ghastly terrorist attacks in Mumbai of 1993, in Parliament House of 2001 and again in Mumbai in 2008 may or may not have been retaliatory for Ayodhya. I believe the attacks would have happened, Ayodhya or no Ayodhya. For such is the blind bloodlust of terror, such the radicalisation of unemployed, callow youth in Pakistan. And such the mutually nourishing agenda of polarisation.

That agenda, as I said, remains at work. The Ayodhya dateline etched hate, stretched fate — the fate of secularism — to its limits. It continues to do so.

The demolition in Ayodhya was the first step. Like a bhumi-puja. The second step is the building of the temple. The third, its consecration. And there will be as many more steps as the rites of polarisation require.

The building of a Ram temple at the site of the Masjid is not going to be easy. But keeping the idea of that building alive is all too easy.

For polarisers, better than a temple built is a temple that is waiting to be built. It keeps spirits up, tensions high. It keeps terrorists on the other side activated. And it keeps cad-

res on this side motivated.

December 6, 1992 is not a fading date in history; it is marked ochre red in the future calendars of the Hindu Rashtra. For those who hailed it, the 25th "anniversary" of the demolition promises future sport. For those who were aghast by it, it promises future struggle.

The struggle to keep polarisation at bay will be unrelenting for the memories of Partition and the mayhem of terror will keep churning up hate, fear. Bigots face each other, unblinkingly. Their bigotry feeds each other, untiringly. The higher the Hindu bigotry in India, the happier the Islamic zealotry in Pakistan. Polarisation is their common nourishment.

But hate and fear are not a normal condition; fanaticism not a natural emotion. Plain common sense and Gandhi's miraculously still-alive spirit have staved off communal frenzy. Never more effectively than when bloodthirsty terrorists sought to mutilate life in Mumbai in 1993 and then to maim the House of India's Parliament in 2001. All of India could have erupted then into communal frenzy, but it did not. Likewise, when Gujarat 2002 could have spread, but did not.

The India of Asoka, Akbar, Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar is strong but pinioned under the blades of the Two Nations theory. It is for the inheritors of their India to match the date-lines of hate and the fate-lines of death with the life-line that Gandhi made from the essences, the intangible susman of his belief that India is One Nation and Ishwar Allah two names, among other ones, for the One.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi is a former administrator, diplomat and Governor

Of crime and punishment

► **Mukul Sanwal**

Police reform in India has been concerned with political interference ever since the landmark Supreme Court judgement, in 2006, on the subject. The focus should really be on reorganising criminal administration.

The annual publication of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), "Crime in India 2016", which was released recently, presents a dismal picture of the key performance statistic with only 47% convictions in Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes at the national level.

Delhi provides an interesting case study, where there is no political interference and the Police Commissioner reports to the Lieutenant Governor, and not the Chief Minister. With a population smaller than Mumbai, it has two times the number of police stations. Yet, in Delhi, while 1,90,876 persons were sent to trial last year, there were only 9,837 IPC convictions in the year. In Delhi only 58% of those arrested were chargesheeted, while in Mumbai, more persons were chargesheeted than were arrested for IPC crimes. In Delhi, 13,803 crimes against women were reported and no chargesheets filed in 4,371 cases (32%); in Mumbai with 5,128 crimes reported against women, final reports were filed in only 15% of cases. The key

statistic of police performance is not merely correct reporting and recording but chargesheets and convictions, as this impacts on criminal behaviour.

DNA testing

In Delhi, DNA testing, which can secure higher conviction rates, is, inexplicably, a low priority. There is only one forensic testing laboratory, with around 9,000 samples pending for examination. Over 5,000 are DNA samples. Delays in this crucial evidence, which plays an important factor in acquittals, are a setback as samples deteriorate with time. Consequently Delhi has a conviction rate of only 21%, 24% and 30% in cases of kidnapping and abduction, rape and murder, respectively.

The Delhi Police website says that it is perhaps the world's largest metropolitan police force and arguments that Delhi accounts for 38% of the total crime under the IPC because of its migrant population are a simplistic explanation. Delhi accounts for five times the IPC crime when compared with Mumbai, and 33% of violent crime in metros when compared with 13% in Mumbai. Crime prevention is affected by conviction rate, beat patrolling, and by the police and community working together.

There is a need to distinguish between accountability and operational responsibility. For example, the Mayor of London is responsible for setting policing

priorities that will hold the Met Police Commissioner to account. Operational decision-making on day-to-day policing remains the responsibility of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner. The Police and Crime Plan 2013-2016 has clear performance measures that focus on results such as 20% reduction in key neighbourhood crimes, 20% reduction in delays in the criminal justice system,

and 20% reduction in reoffending by young people leaving custody. The plan was based on extensive consultation which included town hall meetings, additional stakeholder forums, focus groups and an online survey.

Unresolved issues

In addition to those related to roles and responsibilities, there are also systemic issues. Despite the recommenda-

tions of Law Commissions and the Supreme Court, as well going by experience in the developed world, we do not have separate wings for investigation of crime and for law and order. Related to this reform is the debate whether the police is a functional "service" based on skills of investigation or a "force" oriented towards "effect" which on command will operate regardless of the cost to itself or the social fabric. Similarly, in most countries, the prosecutor, and not the police, has discretion on whether to press charges as they involve adjudication. Years ago, the Law Commission had suggested a directorate of prosecution independent of the police to guide investigation.

Second, there is still controversy over which kinds of conduct are best controlled by the application of criminal law and which kinds by other means.

For example, special and local offences account for as much crime as under provisions of the IPC, with nearly 60% of cases under liquor and narcotic offences at the national level. Causing simple and grievous injuries under rash driving accounts for 11% of IPC crimes; theft also accounts for 16.6% of IPC crime at the national level.

For Delhi, half of theft cases involve motor vehicles. Cases related to liquor and motor vehicles account for more than a third of all cases. The criminal

justice system should be limited to crimes under the IPC, while enforcement of administrative law and social legislation requires a different approach involving summary trials, changing societal attitudes and modes of behaviour. For example, in Britain part-time lay judges outnumber full-time judges, leaving the judiciary to concentrate on the real crime.

Third, the effectiveness of prisons is now being questioned. Nearly two-thirds of the prison population is awaiting trial and half the number of under-trials are normally acquitted. Over 80% of prisoners are sentenced to terms less than three months, 40% are under 30 years old, semi-literate and convicted under special and local acts. Criminologists now feel that short-term sentences expose such prisoners to criminal indoctrination in jail and social condemnation on release, with a strong case for greater reliance on compounding, probation and parole.

The main purpose of criminal administration should be the prevention of crime, and the police cannot be an instrument of social change. Administrative measures and fines levied by honorary and executive magistrates will change behaviour better than penal action.

Mukul Sanwal is a former civil servant

Aiyar's 'low' remark reeks of Congress 'Mughlai mindset': PM Modi

SURAT: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday lashed out at Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar for calling him a 'neech aadmi' and termed such remarks from the party as reeking of their 'Mughlai mindset'.

Speaking at a public rally here, the prime minister said, "The Congress leaders are speaking in a language that is not acceptable in a democracy. One Congress leader, who has studied in the best institutions, served as a diplomat and was a cabinet minister, he has called me 'neech' (low-life). This is insulting and is nothing but Mughlai mindset." He added the people of Gujarat would give a fitting answer to such deplorable language.

"They can call me 'neech' - Yes, I am from the poor section of society and will spend every moment of my life to work for the poor, Dalits, tribals and the OBC communities. What all have they called us - donkeys, Neech, Gandhi Naali Ke Keede; they can keep their language and we will do our work," Prime Minister Modi further said. He added, "Have I done any shameful thing? Then why are they calling me 'neech'? I beg to the people of India to let them be. Let them keep calling me 'neech', we will not respond. We do not have this mindset and want to congratulate them for theirs. If anything, we will answer them for their mindset by our votes on December 9 and 14." "We have nothing to say to such elements. Our answer will come through the ballot box. We have seen enough insults from them. They insulted me when I was the chief minister. They called me 'Maut Ka Saudagar' and wanted to jail me."

The political slugfest between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress Party reached a new low when Mani Shankar Aiyar, earlier in the day, referred to Prime Minister Modi as a "neech aadmi" for appropriating Babasaheb Ambedkar into his election campaign for the imminent assembly polls in Gujarat.



Aiyar, while talking to ANI, said it was the first prime minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who turned Dr Ambedkar's wish into reality and it was not correct to badmouth the Nehru-Gandhi family.

"This person is a 'neech aadmi' (low-minded). He is not civilised and in a situation like this, there is no need to practise such dirty politics," Aiyar said.

In the run up to the Gujarat polls, the BJP has been appropriating Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar to accuse the Congress Party of meting out an unjust treatment to legends like them.

Earlier yesterday, Prime Minister Modi said the Nehru-Gandhi family did the greatest injustice to Babasaheb Ambedkar and Sardar Patel.

The prime minister said the injustice with Ambedkar was done when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru enjoyed full influence over the Congress Party.

He today again took a jibe at the Opposition, saying that the political parties who asked for votes in the name of Dr B. R. Ambedkar have lately turned into "Shiv bhakts". This is not the first time Aiyar has made a derogatory remark about the prime minister. He had, in January 2014, before the Modi-wave took the nation by surprise, said "Modi would never become prime minister, but he was welcome to serve tea to Congressmen." The BJP had then turned the Congress leader's attack into a campaign asset - "chai pe charcha".

Rajasthan govt. aiming to bring down infant mortality rate

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Health Minister Kalicharan Saraf said the state government was aiming to bring infant mortality rate to 28 by 2022 with facilitation of adequate resources.

Speaking at a press conference at the health directorate here, the minister said, "The infant mortality rate in Rajasthan was 49 per 1,000 live births which has come down to

41 per 1000 live births in 2016. We are aiming to further bring it down to 28 by 2022. We will facilitate if we get adequate resources today." He added that such deaths occur due to limited resources.

The ministry had come under criticism after 32,002 infant deaths were reported from the state between October 2016 and October 2017.

Saraf further said they were constantly improving on developing infrastructure for childcare.

Responding on primary health centres (PHCs), he said they were giving good results currently. Under the Adarsh PHC Yojna, 295 PHCs became operational in 2016 and, in July 2017, 286 more PHCs were converted to Adarsh PHCs.

Armed Forces Flag Day observed with pride and honour

NEW DELHI: To mark the occasion of the Indian Armed Forces Flag Day, which is observed on December 7 every year, the political fraternity expressed solidarity and paid homage to honour the sacrifice of the Indian soldiers. President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the officers of the Kendriya Sainik Board in New Delhi to mark the event. An important feature of this day that it provides an opportunity to all citizens to voluntarily contribute towards the well-being of the veterans and the families of those who laid down their life in the line of duty. In the spirit of the day, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urged the people to contribute to the Armed Forces fund for the welfare of ex-servicemen and their families.

"On the Armed Forces Flag Day we salute and pay respect to the courage, bravery and supreme sacrifice of our soldiers and veterans. Our armed forces will always remain the pride of our nation. I appeal to the citizens to voluntarily contrib-



ute at <http://ksb.gov.in/FundPayment.htm>," Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted. Army veteran and defence and security expert, Col. (Retd.) Jaibans Singh said, "The Indian Army has incessantly been called upon to face the most brutal forms of foreign sponsored terror-

ism and insurgency in various parts of the country."

Indian soldiers work in some of the harshest climatic conditions, especially in border areas of Jammu and Kashmir and India-China border. "It is due to the operations being conducted at the cost of great

sweat and blood that foreign sponsored terrorism has not succeeded in its objective of breaking the country's intrinsic fabric," Col. (Retd.) Jaibans added. Underscoring the need of the nation to acknowledge the endeavours of the soldiers, the army veteran said that, "The Indian soldier is an epitome of all that is the best in the country due to his demonstrated qualities of courage, self sacrifice, integrity, strength of character and commitment to the cause of the Nation. It is therefore, the bounden duty of the nation to ensure that the blood spilled by the soldier as also his contribution to the national cause is given its due acknowledgement." The Indian Armed Forces Flag Day is observed every year since 1949. The fund, collected on this day, is administered by the Kendriya Sainik Board and managed by a committee headed by the Union Defence Minister. The funds are utilised for the welfare of the veterans as it's not the money but the thought behind the act that is important.

All notifications to link Aadhaar to services valid: UIDAI

NEW DELHI: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on Thursday said all notifications for presenting the Aadhaar card for various government services stood valid and legal as the Supreme Court had not put a stay on it.

The clarification comes in lieu of a video being circulated on the social media and Whatsapp referring to an order passed by the apex court restricting the use of Aadhaar to only a few programmes.

Advising people to not get misled by the video, which it said was from August 2015, the UIDAI recommended people to verify their bank accounts, investment accounts, SIM cards, etc. as per the current laws and deadlines at the earliest to avoid any inconvenience.

The agency said all notifications issued under section/s of the Aadhaar Act for requiring it as a primary identifier by various ministries and departments of the Government of India and States/UTs Governments for various services, benefits and subsidies stood lawful.

Under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016, it is mandatory to present Aadhaar card for verification of bank accounts, PAN card, SIM card and various welfare schemes such as Public Distribution System (PDS), LPG, Mahatma Gandhi Nation-

al Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), scholarships, pensions, etc. The Act was passed by the Parliament on March 16, 2016 and was notified in the Gazette of India on March 26, 2016.

The UIDAI added the Supreme Court had also approved the verification of all SIM cards with Aadhaar through an order passed in February 2017 in Lokniti Foundation case.

It also said that the apex court had upheld the linkage of Aadhaar with PAN in the case of Binoy Viswam vs Union of India which mandates Aadhaar for income tax returns and PAN.

Earlier in the day, the Centre informed the Supreme Court it was willing to extend the deadline fixed for compulsory linking of Aadhaar card till March 31, 2018 for availing various services and welfare schemes.

The case will now be heard by the Supreme Court next week.

The Income Tax Act was amended in March 2017 to make Aadhaar mandatory for PAN cards.

In June 2017, the Prevention of Money Laundering (PML) Rules have been amended to make Aadhaar mandatory for linking all bank accounts, insurance, pension, mutual funds, DMAT accounts.

Don't understand why my nomination was rejected: Ayub Ali

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Ayub Ali expressed his disappointment over the rejection of his nomination papers for the post of the Congress party president.

Ali told ANI, "On December 3, I went to the Returning Officer of Congress central election authority Mulla Ramachandran and told him that I would like to stand for the Congress President's post. Suddenly, he got angry and told me that there will only be one candidate - Rahul Gandhi. He then asked me to leave immediately." Eighty-nine nominees have been proposed for the post from all over the country. There are two sets of nomination papers to be filed with conditions. Still, Ramachandran ji did not accept my nomination. He could have told me whether I had filed my nominations properly or not," added Ali.

Ali said that he had filed for the nominations properly, as per the rules and regulations of the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

He alleged that despite this, Returning Officer Ramachandran did not accept his nomination.

Ali backed Rahul Gandhi to win the internal elections and take over the post of Congress President.

He said, "I am not angry with Sonia ji (Gandhi) and will always remain the leader of the party. When Rahul Gandhi takes over, I will respect him and he will also remain our party's leader. I won't challenge my nomination in the court. I will not allow Congress party to go down the drains." However, Ramachandran denied any wrongdoing and said, "No nomination was received before December 4. The form shown by Ayub Ali is also of a wrong format. The forms for nomination were only in English and no Hindi form was issued. There is no receipt or my signature on the same. He is just doing cheap publicity." On being asked about his rejection for nomination by Ramachandran, Ali blasted him, by saying that he does not know anything about the election process. He alleged that if Returning Officer Ramachandran had accepted his nomination, then he would have stood alongside Rahul Gandhi for the elections.

Earlier, Maharashtra Congress Secretary Shehzad Poonawalla on November 29 questioned the process to elect the Congress party President, calling it "rigged". He said that Rahul should first resign from the Vice-President post.

Ready to sacrifice life to save democracy: Sharad Yadav

NEW DELHI: Rebel Janata Dal (United) (JD(U)) leader and former Member of Parliament Sharad Yadav on Thursday said that he was ready to sacrifice his life to save democracy, if need be.

While attending a press conference in Delhi, the JD(U) leader said, "In my present fight to save democracy, I am ready to sacrifice anything in life." Sharad Yadav further alleged he was disqualified from the Rajya Sabha because he spoke against the undemocratic style of breaking the Mahagatbandhan in Bihar.

"I am disqualified from the Rajya Sabha as I spoke against the undemocratic style of breaking the Mahagatbandhan in Bihar which was formed to defeat the NDA. It is my fault but I will continue my fight to save the democracy," said Yadav.

"I was not shocked that I have been disqualified from the membership of the Rajya Sabha by the Chairman of Rajya Sabha when I was away to Gujarat for campaigning.

I was expecting the same outcome. I had resigned two times from the Lok Sabha - one on the issue of Emergency and another on Hawala issue.

I never cared for positions in my politics life," added Sharad Yadav.

Sharad Yadav, along with another JD(U) leader, Ali Anwar was disqualified from the Rajya Sabha on December 5.

Deep depression to trigger heavy rains in Odisha today

BHUBANESWAR: A depression over southeast Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify further into a deep depression in the next 24 hours, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted. Rain will occur in various parts of the state starting this evening.

"Depression is likely to reach South Odisha and North Andhra Pradesh coast by around December 9. Rainfall may start tonight and will continue till December 10. Fishermen are advised not to venture into the sea from December 7 to December 10", said Sarat Chandra Sahu, an IMD official.

As per a release issued by the Regional Met Department, heavy rainfall is likely to occur in 11 districts of coastal Odisha tomorrow. The weathermen said that rains would continue in the state till December 11, though the impact could be felt till December 13.



Panchkula violence: Court to hear case on December 11

PANCHKULA: The Panchkula District Court on Thursday fixed December 11 for the next hearing of the case in connection with the violence that followed the conviction of Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim on August 25, 2017. The court announced the date after a copy of the chargesheet was handed over to prime accused Honeypreet Insan and the other accused in the case by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Haryana Police. Honeypreet, who is Ram Rahim's adopted daughter, was produced before the court on Thursday along with her close aide Sukhdeep Kaur in connection with the violence in Panchkula and Sirsa, after a special Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) court convicted the Dera chief for raping two of his disciples 15 years back. Ram Rahim has been sentenced to 20 years of prison in the case. Honeypreet, whose real name is Priyanka Taneja, was arrested on October 3 on charges of inciting the Panchkula violence and was sent to Ambala Central Jail on October 23. Earlier, the SIT had also arrested the chartered accountant of the Dera chief and the CEO of MSG Company CP Arora over alleged involvement in the violence conspiracy.

Assam breathes easy after SC ruling on NRC, but security forces to stay alert

GUWAHATI: The Supreme Court's recent ruling that certificates issued by panchayat secretary or an executive magistrate can be used for claiming citizenship has eased the simmering tension over publication of an updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam.

Setting aside a Gauhati high court order issued in February, a two-judge SC bench on Tuesday allowed certificates issued by secretaries of Gaon Panchayats (GPs) as admissible documents for claiming citizenship "if issued after conducting proper enquiries".

In a separate judgement, Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Jus-

stice Rohinton Fali Nariman stated that the issue of 'original inhabitant' (OI) can't be linked to the process of updating NRC.

In its order, the HC had ruled that certificates issued by GPs were not admissible as proof of citizenship.

Updating of NRC in Assam, which last took place in 1951, to distinguish Indian citizens from illegal immigrants, had led to lot of apprehension and anger following the HC order.

The move affected nearly 29 lakh people, most of them women, who had submitted those documents to the NRC.

This had led to fear among these applicants, most of who

belong to the minority community, about whether their names would get excluded from the updated NRC.

Threats and speculations of violence by those left out of the NRC, the first draft of which is to be released by the end of this month, had led,

The Assam government to seek additional security forces from the Centre.

Though the names of those who had submitted GP certificates won't get included in the first draft (as their certificates have to be verified as genuine), the SC order has been welcomed by most organizations across the spectrum.

The All Assam Minority Students Union stated that the SC verdict would remove apprehension of lakhs of women who were worried about getting left out of the updated NRC.

All Assam Students Union (AASU), the state's biggest student body, and 28 organisations of indigenous communities of the state also expressed hope that the SC verdict would help detect 'illegal citizens'.

"The SC ruling has stated that certificates issued by GPs would be admissible only after proper verification and it should be corroborated with other valid identity proofs.

This would identify those

who had sought to be included in the NRC based on fake or forged documents," said an AASU leader.

Opposition Congress and the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) termed the SC ruling as historic and far-sighted. "The SC order is historic. It would help find a solution to the long pending issue illegal immigrants in the state," state Congress president Ripun Bora said. A senior police official stated on condition of anonymity that though the possibility of violence has eased after the SC ruling, security forces would be on the alert to prevent any eventuality.

Fathers more stressed for preemies than mothers



Fathers of premature babies usually take more stress than the mothers, especially in the transition period from the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) to home, says a new study.

The researchers noted that fathers had high levels of the stress hormone cortisol in their saliva prior to the discharge of babies.

The stress levels are particularly more pronounced with medically vulnerable babies leaving the NICU and going home.

"While finally bringing a baby home is really wonderful, it can also be stressful because of sleep deprivation, the lack of control and having to respond constantly to the baby's needs," said Craig Garfield, Associate Professor at the Northwestern University in Evanston, the US.

"Father goes from a situation where the baby and mother are cared for by experts in the hospital to having to simultaneously care for his baby, partner and work. He is supposed to be the 'rock' for his partner but the stress can really set in."

An increased level of stress might also impact the parenting of the child and alter the level of attachment between the babies and their parents.

The study, published in the journal of Perinatal and Neonatal Nursing, measured the parents' stress levels in two ways -- salivary tests and surveys.

They tested the participants initially the day before they were discharged from the hospital, then one day, five days and 14 days after coming home.

To help relieve fathers' stress and ease the transition, more emphasis should be made for the father to become comfortable and gain confidence with the baby while still in the NICU. Mothers need to remember that fathers too need time to relax, Garfield said.

"Babies thrive when parents thrive, and if parents are stressed out, that can impact their parenting of the child, the relationship between the mother and father can alter infant attachment," Garfield said.

Treating menopause symptoms with artificial ovaries better and safer: Study

Menopause is a testing phase for every woman, especially when it happens earlier than expected. The fluctuating hormonal changes -- including hot flashes and vaginal dryness, sleep disturbances and sometimes even anxiety and depression -- can tend to take a toll on them.

However, a study conducted on mice has suggested that implanting artificial ovaries may be a more safer, natural and effective alternative in menopausal women who face hot flashes, sleep problems, weight gain, and bone deterioration due to the loss of ovarian function.

Women going through menopause lose their ability to produce hormones such as oestrogen and progesterone

resulting in these symptoms.

Hormone replacement medications, although effective in the production of these important hormones, are not recommended for long-term use due to the increased risk of heart disease and breast cancer.

The findings showed that transplanting lab-engineered ovaries may be a better alternative for menopausal women than the regular intake of synthetic hormones.

"The treatment is designed to secrete hormones in a natural way based on the body's needs, rather than the patient taking a specific dose of drugs each day," said Emmanuel C. Opara, Professor at the Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center



in North Carolina, US.

"Safe hormone replacement will likely become increasingly important as the population of aging women

grows," Opara said.

To engineer the bioartificial ovary, as reported in the journal Nature Communications, the team

isolated the two types of cells theca and granulosa -- found in ovaries -- from rats.

A thin membrane was used as a capsule to contain the cells and then implanted in rats that had their ovaries removed.

The new treatment could naturally produce hormones oestrogen and progesterone and had better bone and uterine health as well as were prevented from menopausal symptoms such as bone deterioration, weight gain and sleep problems.

"This study highlights the potential utility of cell-based hormone therapy for the treatment of conditions associated with the loss of ovarian function," Opara said.

Nuts, oily fish may cut kids' risk of asthma, rhinitis

Including nuts, oily fish like salmon, flax seeds, and soybean oil -- rich in essential polyunsaturated fatty acids -- in your children's diet may prevent their risk of developing allergic diseases, especially asthma and rhinitis by teenage, a study has suggested.

Both asthma and rhinitis affects the kids since their childhood, either due to hereditary or environmental factors.

The results show that the presence of an increased amount of polyunsaturated fatty acids such as Omega-3 and an omega-6 fatty acid called arachidonic acid in the blood is associated with a reduced risk of allergic diseases among children. Children who had higher blood levels of omega 3 at the age of 8 years were less likely to have developed asthma or rhinitis by the age of 16 years.



High levels of an omega-6 fatty acid called arachidonic acid were associated with a reduced risk of asthma and rhinitis at 16. "Since allergies often debut during childhood it is of particular interest to study if children's environment and lifestyle affect the development of these diseases," said Anna Bergström, researcher at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden.

For the study, published in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, the team conducted a survey over the blood samples of 940 children.

Among children with asthma or rhinitis at the age of 8 years, higher blood levels of arachidonic acid were associated with a higher probability of being symptom-free at age 16 years, the researchers said.

Previous studies have also suggested that Omega-3 fatty acids helps in preventing Alzheimer's and reduces the worsening of liver damages.

Feeling restless at night? You may be at Parkinson's risk



Are you in the habit of hitting or kicking in your sleep? Beware, according to a study, this could be a sign of a disorder associated with Parkinson's disease, especially in men.

The rapid eye movement sleep behaviour disorder or RBD, which most often affects persons aged 50-70, and more frequently in men than women, is characterised by disturbances in the part of sleep where dreams take place.

While healthy people are relaxed and lie still during dream sleep, people suffering from RBD live out their dreams and during sleep they hit, kick and shout. The study, published in the journal The Lancet Neurology, showed that men with RBD lack dopamine -- a chemical in the brain that affects emotions, movements and sensations of pleasure and pain -- and have a form of inflammation of the brain.

As a result, their risk of developing Parkinson's disease or dementia when they grow older increases. Parkinson's disease occurs precisely because the group of nerve cells in the brain that produce dopamine stop working.

"These patients have an inflammation of the brain in the area where the dopamine-producing nerve cells are found," said Morten Gersel Stokholm from Aarhus University in Denmark.

Researchers were not previously aware that there is a form of inflammation of the brain in patients who are at risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

"The findings would be used to determine which patients with the sleep disorder will later develop Parkinson's disease.

At the same time, this can also help to develop drugs which can stop or slow the development of the diseases," Stokholm explained.

In this study, patients with RBD and no clinical evidence of Parkinson's and cognitive impairment were recruited from tertiary sleep centres in Spain and Denmark and their brain changes were analysed using Positron emission tomography (PET).

MIT engineers print 'living tattoo' with bacteria cells

Engineers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have found a way to 3-D print a 'living tattoo' using a new kind of ink made from genetically programmed living bacteria cells.

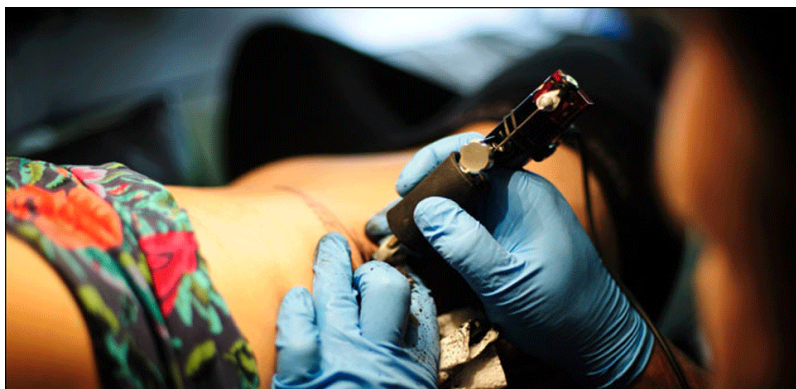
The 'living tattoo' - a thin, transparent patch patterned with live bacteria cells in the shape of a tree, could have implications for future wearable sensors and in the manufacturing of drug capsules and surgical implants.

The cells were engineered to light up in response to a variety of stimuli, showed the study published in the journal Advanced Materials.

The researchers came up with a recipe for their 3-D ink, using a combination of bacteria, hydrogel, and nutrients to sustain the cells and maintain their functionality.

"We found this new ink formula works very well and can print at a high resolution of about 30 micrometres per feature," said Xuanhe Zhao, Professor in MIT's Department of Mechanical Engineering.

"That means each line we print contains only a few cells. We can also print



relatively large-scale structures, measuring several centimetres," Zhao added. They printed the ink using a custom 3-D printer that they built using standard elements combined with fixtures they machined themselves.

To test the patch, the researchers smeared several chemical compounds onto the back of a hand, then pressed the hydrogel patch over the exposed skin. Over several hours, branches of the patch's tree lit up when bacteria sensed their corresponding chemical stimuli.

The researchers also engineered bacteria to communicate with each other. For instance they programmed some cells to light up only when they receive a certain signal from another cell. The researchers believe that the technique can be used to fabricate "active" materials for wearable sensors and interactive displays.

Such materials could be patterned with live cells engineered to sense environmental chemicals and pollutants as well as changes in temperature.

Blood test can predict skin cancer's return

A simple blood test of skin cancer patients can now help doctors to predict the chances of an aggressive cancer returning years before the symptoms appear, a study suggests.

The findings could pave the way to identifying patients who are most at risk of their disease returning, and who might benefit from new immunotherapy treatments.

The research, which was led by researchers based at the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute and The Christie NHS Foundation Trust, studied blood samples taken after surgery from 161 patients with stage 2 and 3 melanoma.

They then looked for faults in two genes that are linked to 70 percent of melanoma skin cancers - BRAF and NRAS. After five years, 33 percent of patients who had a positive blood test for faults in either of the two genes were alive, compared to 65 percent of those who did not. The results also revealed that skin cancer was much more likely to return within a year of surgery in patients who had faults in either of the two genes. Lead author Richard Marais from the University of Manchester said, "For some patients with advanced melanoma, their cancer will eventually return. We have no accurate tests to predict who these patients will be, so our findings are really encouraging."

"If we can use this tumour DNA test to accurately predict if cancer is going to come back, then it could help doctors decide which patients could benefit from new immunotherapies," Marais added.

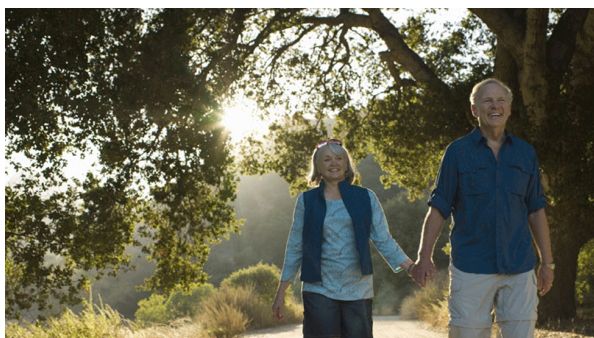
Exposure to air pollution can wipe out benefits of exercise in elderly

Even a two-hour exposure to air pollution mainly in the form of traffic exhaust can wipe out the positive health benefits of walking on the lungs and hearts of the elderly, researchers have warned.

The findings showed that even short-term exposure to traffic exhaust can have negative effects on both healthy people, as well as those with pre-existing cardiorespiratory conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or coronary disease. The study comes at a time when north India is facing a serious crisis due to rising levels of pollution.

"This adds to the growing body of evidence showing the negative cardiovascular and respiratory impacts of even a short, two-hour exposure to motor traffic pollution," said Junfeng "Jim" Zhang, Professor at Duke University in North Carolina, US.

On the other hand, people who walked for two hours in a large city park -- away from direct exposure to street-side traffic fumes -- reduced arterial stiffness by more than 24 percent in healthy and COPD volunteers and



more than 19 per cent in heart disease patients. However, those who got exposed to pollution experienced a maximum reduction of just 4.6 per cent in arterial stiffness, 16 per cent reduction in COPD and an 8.6 per cent reduction in heart disease.

"For many people, such as the elderly or those with chronic disease, the only exercise they very often can do is to walk," added Fan Chung, Professor at the Imperial College London. The study, published in The Lancet, highlights the need for stricter air quality limits and better traffic-control measures in our cities as well as greater access to urban green spaces for people to exercise, the researchers said.

Sexually transmitted infection HPV raises reinfection risk in men, says study

A study says that men infected with a particular type of genital human papillomavirus (HPV) may be at twenty times more risk of reinfection with the same type.

The findings show that men who are infected once with HPV16, the type responsible for most HPV-related cancers, are at 20 times higher risk of reinfection after one year, and 14 times higher after two years. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection and it is a major cause of genital warts and cancers of the genitals, mouth and throat.

The same effect was observed in both men who are sexually active and celibate, suggesting that they are not reacquiring the virus from another sexual partner.

This increased risk suggests that infection confers no natural immunity against HPV, and emphasises the importance of vaccination for preventing the spread of HPV in young men before they



become sexually active. Vaccination could potentially prevent re-

infection in older men who have already contracted the virus, the

researchers said.

"Vaccinating boys before HPV exposure could be a highly effective way to reduce the burden of HPV infection. Vaccinating men who have already been infected might also be effective," said lead author Sylvia Ranjeva, doctoral student at the University of Chicago. For the study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the team analysed data of over 4,000 unvaccinated men from three cities in Florida, Mexico and Brazil to understand what allowed over 200 genetically-distinct HPV types to coexist.

The researchers found that the diversity of HPV types may stem from recurring infections of particular types within individuals.

While relatively few people are infected with any one type, the high overall HPV prevalence occurs because nearly half the adult population carries at least one type of genital HPV.

Public Private Partnership crucial for infrastructure investment

A mature Public Private Partnership (PPP) framework is one of the most useful tools with the Government to facilitate private investment into infrastructure, claimed Aman Hans, Public Private Partnership Specialist at the NITI Aayog.

In order to bridge the growing infrastructure deficit in the country considerable efforts have been made towards increasing the investment in physical infrastructure, especially since 2004 when several measures were undertaken to promote private investment in infrastructure both directly and through Public Private Partnership (PPPs).

"During 2007-12, private sector contributed 36.6 percent in the overall infrastructure investment, leading to infrastructure investment rising from ~5 percent of GDP during 2002-07 to 7 percent of GDP during 2007-12. But this momentum could not be sustained and it is estimated to have slowed down to 5.6 percent of GDP during 2013-17," Hans stated.

This decline in infrastructure investment is attributed to the slowdown in overall private sector investment, though it has partially been offset by the fiscal stimulus measures into infrastructure in recent years.

In the next five years (2017-22), in order to maintain a similar level of infrastructure investment, it is estimated that spending on infrastructure needs to increase to Rs. 50 lakh crore, Aman said that this would require

the Government to take proactive and expeditious measures to leverage on the private sector finances and to judicially exploit private sector capacity to build and manage infrastructure facilities, in a sustainable manner.

"A mature PPP framework is one of the most useful tools with the Governments to facilitate private investment into infrastructure. PPPs are long term contracts between the Government (sponsoring authority) and a private company that may typically provide for financing, construction, operation, and maintenance under a single firm or a consortium," Hans stated and it is generally advised to adopt a suitable PPP framework in case of large and complex projects that

can justify the associated transaction and monitoring costs and thus provide value for money considering the project's lifecycle cost to the Government.

Hans said that the advent of PPP framework can be dated back to 1980s, when governments in countries like U.K and Chile, post success of privatization in sectors like electricity, telecommunication and sanitation, sought to extend benefits of privatization to sectors deemed exceedingly difficult to privatize, such as transportation, schools, and hospitals under suitable PPP models.

"In India, the period from mid 1990s to 2004 marked the inception of PPPs, with transport and power being the focus sectors. The country however experienced

limited success due to absence of a mature PPP framework. Subsequently during 2004-12, with the government laying foundation for a mature PPP framework, by formulating guidelines and standardization of documents for PPP projects, the country experienced a spurt in award of PPP projects" he said. As per the latest available data from Ministry of Finance, 1,539 PPP projects have been awarded so far in India. Out of these, about 50% are currently in operational stage, while others are either scrapped or are under different stages of implementation. Sector-wise break-up shows that transport sector accounts for 58% of these projects, followed by energy sector with 24%, while social and commercial

infrastructure sector accounts for 9% and water & sanitation for the balance 8%.

However with the absence of a robust PPP enabling ecosystem, i.e. 'twin balance sheet problem', paucity of credit from alternative sources, lack of a suitable framework for dispute resolution, and with the dearth of bankable PPP projects, a significant number of projects awarded during 2004-12 period failed to take off and the private sector investments witnessed considerable decline thereon, thereby further miring India's PPP ambitions.

Also, given the federal structure of India, and in the absence of a unified PPP law or policy and a national level PPP institution, the framework of PPP in India

remains heterogeneous. Only about 32% of the projects are implemented by the Government or its agencies, while the remaining are implemented by the State governments.

"This emphasizes on the importance of State level policy and governance framework in overall success of PPP in India. In terms of number of operational PPP projects, States like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Maharashtra are much ahead of others while States like Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh can be considered progressing. Some State governments have even formulated laws and policies and set up the necessary institutional structures for streamlining PPPs," Hans said.

Paisabazaar.com sources biggest ever single unsecured loan of Rs. 75 Lakh for Kotak Mahindra Bank

Paisabazaar.com, India's No.1 Marketplace for loans and cards, today announced it has sourced an unsecured business loan of Rs. 75 lakh - its biggest ever in the unsecured product category. The loan, applied from the Paisabazaar.com platform, was provided by Kotak Mahindra Bank.

Paisabazaar.com said it believes the Rs. 75-lakh loan is possibly the biggest unsecured loan sourced from an online platform.

Naveen Kukreja, CEO and co-founder, Paisabazaar.com, said, "While

the average industry ticket size of an unsecured loan would be around Rs. 3.5 lakh, Paisabazaar.com has witnessed a big surge in high ticket loan applications this year. HNI customers have begun to realize the transparency and convenience Paisabazaar.com provides. Kotak, one of our most valuable partners, is helping us provide this experience to customers and we look forward to achieving bigger milestones with them."

Sumit Bali, Sr. EVP and Head - Personal Assets, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, "At Kotak, our aim is to

grow our retail loan book with high quality assets across products without losing sight of customer convenience. We leverage technology extensively to design banking solutions that simplify products and services, and is easily accessible to our customers. Over the past several months, we have seen a steady rise in the sourcing of personal loans through digital channels. Our partnership with Paisabazaar.com is yet another step in delivering world-class banking solutions to our customers."

The Rs. 75 lakh loan was disbursed

to Yousuf Raja (name changed), who owns a software company and plans to use the loan to expand his business.

"I found the Paisabazaar platform very easy to use. The entire process was also extremely convenient. The Paisabazaar team assisted me throughout and ensured the loan was disbursed quickly without any hassle or delay. This loan will help me expand my business," he said.

Paisabazaar.com has also disbursed what is believed to be the country's largest online home loan disbursement of Rs. 5.68 crore.

First-time ever in India: The Global Partnership Summit 2017

India Center Foundation (ICF), a not for profit and non-governmental organisation, which has been working for over two decades towards nation's socio-economic development, brings to India for the first-time ever, The Global Partnership Summit (GPS) 2017 which is scheduled to be held at Aerocity, New Delhi from 11th to 14th December 2017.

The GPS will focus on clean energy, healthcare, infrastructure and logistics, energy, tourism, art and culture, agro economy, banking and finance, education and skill development and information communication technology.

The visionary behind the initiative is Vibhav Kant Upadhyay who has been at the forefront of many key development initiatives in the past two decades. He is also the Founder Chairman, GPS which is evolved from the successful - India-Japan Global Partnership (IJGP) Initiative. Inspired by Japan's process of successful nation building, India Center Foundation believes, a global partnership between India and Japan is not only of mutual national interests but will contribute to the rest of the world.

GPS 2017, will witness the presence of 3000 delegates and over 200 speakers participating, including prominent business leader, policy makers, think tanks, social change makers, youth leaders, influencers and academicians. This year's summit is expected to lay the foundation for a long term mutually beneficial dialogue on key issues affecting the world as whole. The event GPS 2017 is lead by Global Chair-

man Toshihiro Nikai, Founder Chairman, Vibhav Kant Upadhyay with co-chairmen Dr. Subhash Chandra and Dr. Subramaniam Swamy.

Eminent dignitaries and policy makers from India, speaking at the event include Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highway, Gajendra Singh Sekhawat, Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister at Ministry of Science and Technology, Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Earth Sciences, J. P. Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Alphons Joseph, Minister of Tourism, to name a few.

Other distinguished Indian and Global leaders, speaking at the event include Masayoshi Son, Founder, Chairman and CEO, SoftBank Group Corp, Shervin Pishavar, Co-founder and Executive Chairman, Hyperloop One, Manoj Kohli, Chairman, SoftBank Energy, James Scott McCullum, Former Governor, Wisconsin, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Founder, Art of Living, Amitabh Kant, CEO & CEO, NITI Aayog, Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi, children's rights activist and Founder of Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, Bhavish Aggarwal, Founder and CEO, Ola Cabs, Daisaku Kadokawa, Mayor, Kyoto City, Japan, to name a few, will also speak at the event.

There will be around 40 sessions and about 10 plenary during the summit that will be focused towards devising efficient and sustainable measures for achieving the set goals.

In2IT Technologies appoints Gursharan Saggi as CEO for USA

IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies, the leading IT consulting and services company announces appointment of Gursharan Saggi (GS) as CEO for Americas. In his new leadership role as CEO, Gursharan will focus on anticipating the rapidly changing technology landscape and the impact on clients' businesses. He will be responsible for growth of IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies' overall business operations in The Americas. Gursharan joins IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies from Tech Mahindra where he established and successfully ran high performing multimillion-dollar businesses in the Americas. He comes with 20 years of Global experience in executive leadership roles including Business Development, Operational Excellence, and Professional Services.

GS has led multi-functional corporate initiatives for major corporations such as Tech Mahindra, Fidelity, and Perot Systems (now NTT Data Systems).

As CEO of In2IT Americas business, his focuses are on anticipating the rapidly changing landscape and ensuring a positive impact toward global expansion on clients' businesses.

Under his leadership, In2IT endeavors to be established as premier IT Consultancy in chosen areas including Application Development and Maintenance, Infrastructure Services, Program and Project Management, and Innovative Solutions for our clients.

Speaking on the occasion, Rudra Shankar Shatpathy, Group MD, CEO, IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies said, "USA is an important market for IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies and we will continue to invest heavily in the region to drive growth. GS will drive strong regional growth, strengthening our business model, and providing leadership to partners and clients. His strong industry experience will be instrumental in establishing and growing our brand in The Americas.

"According to Vishal Barapatre, Group CTO, IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies, "GS is an entrepreneurial business leader with an outstanding record of establishing profitable businesses. Under his leadership IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies endeavours to establish itself as a premier IT Consultancy firm in chosen areas including Application Development & Maintenance, Technology Infrastructure Services, Program and Project Management, and Future Edge Services." Gursharan Saggi, CEO for USA at IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies says, "I'm thrilled to be a part of the IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies leadership team and look forward to contributing to the company's vision and growth. We are on a global expansion spree and my goal will be making a positive contribution to our clients' businesses in this rapidly changing landscape."

Since its inception, IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies has been growing in leaps and bounds to emerge as one of the fastest growing IT companies. IT Technologies">In2IT Technologies is currently on a global expansion spree with plans to expand to continental Europe by the end of the year.

Having offices across USA, South Africa, India, Singapore, Australia, Kenya and Dubai, among many others, the company is highly focused on Digital, Managed Services and Remote Infrastructure Management (RIM).

Paytm to be majority shareholder in Nearby and Little merger entity

In a move to further strengthen offerings for merchants, Paytm has become the majority shareholder of the entity formed through the merger of Nearby.com and Little Internet. Paytm's strategic holding in Nearby-Little will provide its merchant partners an opportunity to offer deals to acquire new customers and grow their business. Additionally, Paytm will serve its consumer base by showcasing a large number of exciting deals on its platforms and will further strengthen its presence in the offline commerce space.

"This combination of Nearby and Little marks a great opportunity for us to reinforce our commitment to support small and large retailers in the new age of mobile commerce and payments.

I am sure consumers will love the greater selection and reach of everyday deals and discount offers," Vijay Shekhar Sharma, Founder and CEO, Paytm said.

Nearby.com and Little Internet have merged to create India's largest discovery and deals platform for local merchants and it will help offline merchants by enabling them to acquire new customers through deals.

Nearby and Little work with over 40,000 small and large merchants across food, beauty, travel and other categories.

The combined entity will continue to enable customers to discover deals and save money whenever they step out, and also help merchants effectively utilize their inventory and acquire new customers.

Developer Group India wins the award for the most ethical company in real estate



Developer Group received India's Most Ethical Companies (Real Estate) Award at The World CSR Congress, the establishment that recognise the positive role of organisations where ethics, compliance and good governance are translated into action. The award was presented by N.I Nahid, Minister for Education of Bangladesh. The fact that Developer Group is India's first 100 percent Japanese corporates' promoted Real Estate Company, serves as a root cause for the highest degree of transparency and earnestness maintained throughout each and every operation of the Organisation. Integration of the Japanese ethos clubbed with the Indian value system forms the backbone of the Organisation. As a Company that bases everything on

ethics, Developer Group aspires to lead by example and shall embark on changing the way the construction and development industry operates. This is not only good for the customers but also great for the industry and the nation.

There are many reasons that have helped Developer Group win this prestigious award - the group operations entail regular stringent audits involving the leading audit firms, completely and fully legal transactions across the company display the strong commitment to rules and laws of the nation. Not only are the corporate regulatory compliances of the company in perfect order, they shine through by attaining 100 percent project specific regulatory and legal compliances as well. However, what makes Developer

Group stand out is its commitment to the environment. Every project in the portfolio reflects their green initiative and incorporates new and innovative technologies to give back to the environment. Developer Group is committed to bringing in new practices and new ways of thinking in an industry that impacts the lives of millions and shapes the way society evolves. At the cornerstone of this vision are professionalism, transparency, ethics and reliability.

Currently, the company has two residential projects under development at Visakhapatnam and near Bengaluru and plans to launch four projects in the National Capital Region, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Chennai and Ludhiana in the near future.

Razorpay ties-up with Visa to offer certified QR solutions

India's first converged payment solutions company Razorpay on Thursday announced its partnership with Visa to roll-out Visa-certified QR solutions under the Visa Ready Partner Programme.

Razorpay, which is India's first converged payment solution provider, will associate to roll out QR code solutions for convenience, security and reliability provided by the Visa brand.

With QR technology, merchants need not invest in payment terminals at point-of-sale, enabling them to transact electronically while solving many pain points associated with the use of cash. Driven by superior technology and an exclusive suite of products, Razorpay has been scripting new solutions to aid more and more Indian companies to go digital.

"We at Razorpay have always been working towards improving the payment infrastructure in India and making it easily accessible to businesses. Now with BharatQR, we would be able to bring new payment innovations to our merchant base, both online and offline," said CEO and co-founder Razorpay, Harshil Mathur. "In the context of a rapidly evolving Digital India, the solution has great synergy with Razorpay's expertise to onboard merchants instantly and support advanced features like multi-tier reporting. Brought together, this represents a quantum leap in solving cash on delivery for Indian businesses."

The Visa Ready Partner Programme will provide structure and clarity to allow mobile device manufacturers, technology partners, mobile network operators, and others, to gain access to Visa IP, licenses and best practices and quickly introduce devices and solutions that can initiate or accept Visa payments.

However, under the Visa Ready Partner programme, Razorpay and Fomo Pay of Singapore, the First Asia Pacific partners will leverage Visa tools such as QR code generators, merchant QR code test cases and QR code testing utilities, to refine their proposed payment solutions and ensure they meet Visa's interoperable QR standards and specifications.

Virat Kohli moves to second in ICC Test Rankings, Steve Smith retains top spot

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli was rewarded for his brilliant performances against Sri Lanka in the recently concluded three-match Test series as the Indian cricket team skipper moved up three places to grab second position among batsmen in the latest ICC Test Rankings on Thursday. Kohli, who was the top-scorer against Sri Lanka with 610 runs, scored three centuries and one fifty against the hapless visitors to guide his side to a comfortable 1-0 series win. Virat Kohli had a disappointing start to the series as he was dismissed for a duck in the first innings in Kolkata, but the 29-year-old bounced back with a gritty century in the second innings to take his team within inches of a stunning victory. The second Test was no different as the Indian skipper completely dismantled the Sri Lankan bowling attack and ended up scoring a mammoth 213 off 267 balls.



the last Test in New Delhi as the Indian cricket skipper slammed a career-best 243, then followed it up with a 58-ball fifty in the second innings.

Thanks to these impressive performances, Kohli leapfrogged David Warner, Cheteshwar Pujara, Kane Williamson and Joe Root to claim the

second spot – just 45 points behind Australia skipper Steve Smith. However, it will be tough for Kohli to take away the top spot from Smith right now as the Aussie right-hander was in a class of his own against England in the first Ashes 2017-18 Test match in Brisbane.

Smith, who is currently the joint fifth-highest in terms of the highest points tally in batting history in Tests, scored an unbeaten 141 on a tough Gabba pitch to lay the foundation for his team's victory. Although he was not so successful in the Adelaide day-night Test, he will be looking to regain his form. Sri Lanka captain Dinesh Chandimal gained eight places to take ninth position after scoring 366 runs in the series against India – the second-highest after Virat Kohli. All-rounder Angelo Mathews also moved up seven places to 23rd position while Dhananjaya de Silva's match-saving 119 lifted him nine places to 47th position. For Australia, left-hander Shaun Marsh's unbeaten 126 in the first Test in Adelaide took him to a career-best 27th position while Tom Blundell entered the rankings in 70th position after becoming the first New Zealand wicketkeeper to score a century on Test debut after scoring 107 against West Indies.

Yasir Shah wishes to play against Kohli, return to T20 and ODI squads

LAHORE: Pakistani leg-break bowler Yasir Shah has expressed his wish to play against Indian skipper Virat Kohli, and put up a stellar performance for his side in Test and One Day Internationals (ODIs).

The 31-year-old has recently broken Ravichandran Ashwin's record of fastest 150 Test wickets and needs 35 wickets in seven matches to become the fastest to reach 200.

Talking to reporters on Wednesday, Shah said he is working on his googly and flipper and is very hopeful to register another record in his name.

"I try to perform in every match I play for my country and I am very hopeful to become the fastest to get 200 Test wickets," he said.

Shah praised the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for prioritising fitness of players and introducing Yoyo test.

"I have come from Swabi and did not have many facilities for fitness. Therefore, I couldn't achieve the set target but later, when I gave the fitness test, I cleared it," he said.

The bowler who helped Pakistan win their first ever Test series in West Indies said the addition of young blood has increased the



competition for a permanent place in the national team. He also praised 19-year-old Shadab Khan on his performance.

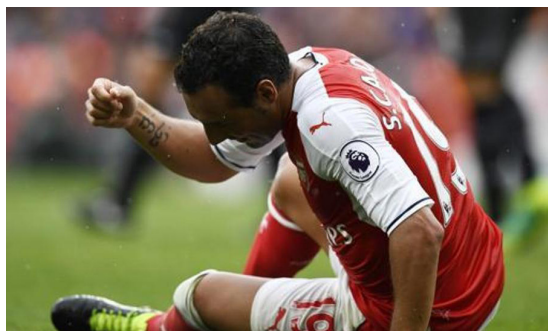
"I always feel happy to see him performing for Pakistan in ODIs and T20s and believe that he will take some time to start performing in Test matches as well."

Shah played his second match of Quaid-i-Azam Trophy for SNGPL on Wednesday in Karachi and will soon leave to play Twenty20 Big Bash League.

"I am going for Big Bash, and hopefully I will perform well and make a comeback in the national squad," he said.

Arsenal's Santi Cazorla starting rehab 'from zero' after latest surgery

LONDON: Arsenal midfielder Santi Cazorla will have to start his rehabilitation "from zero" after undergoing yet another surgery on his Achilles, Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger revealed. Spain international Cazorla has spent over a year on the sidelines due to multiple surgeries on a tendon injury and came close to requiring an amputation of his foot after contracting an infection.



The 32-year-old went under the knife again last month, forcing a revision to his expected January return to Premier League action. Wenger labelled the midfielder's ongoing injury strife "very sad" as he looks to start his rehabilitation from square one. "I sent him a message [after the surgery] and wished him well. He answered, 'Look I have to start again from zero', basically. And it's very sad, honestly. What he has gone through, this guy, is unbelievable," said the

Arsenal boss. "It's really, really sad. But unfortunately, he has to start again from zero. That means if all goes well, he has to wait until he can run. And after, when he starts to run, it will at least take six weeks to come back to training. When he will be able to start to run again, I don't know."

Asked if Cazorla will ever return, Wenger said: "I hope so, but certainly not before February now."

Mohammad Shahzad handed one-year suspension by ICC for doping violation

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council today suspended Afghan wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Shahzad for one year after he pleaded guilty for failing a dope test.

"The wicketkeeper-batsman had inadvertently ingested the prohibited substance, as a contaminant of a weight loss product he was taking, Hydroxycut," the ICC said in a statement.

The 29-year-old Shahzad, who has played 58 ODIs and as many T20s for his country, breached article 2.1 of the ICC Anti-Doping Code.

"Mr Shahzad had provided a urine sample as part of the ICC's out-of-competition testing programme in Dubai, UAE, on 17 January 2017," the ICC stated. His sample was subsequently tested and found to contain clenbuterol. Clenbuterol is classified as a non-Specified Substance by WADA



and is prohibited both in-competition and out-of-competition.

"Mr Shahzad admitted the violation and a twelve-month suspension has been imposed, backdated to 17 January 2017, the date of his sample

collection. Mr Shahzad will, therefore, be eligible to return to cricket on 17 January 2018," the ICC said.

The ICC, however, accepted Shahzad's explanation that he had inadvertently ingested the substance,

as a contaminant of a weight loss product he was taking, Hydroxycut.

"Mr Shahzad was able to satisfy the ICC through evidence and submissions prepared on his behalf that he had no intention to enhance his sporting performance through the use of prohibited substances..." the ICC said. ICC General Manager (Cricket) Geoff Allardice said the world body has zero tolerance for doping violations. "It further serves as a reminder to all international cricketers of the dangers and risks associated with taking supplements," Allardice said. "Before thinking about taking a supplement, cricketers should weigh up the risks and dangers of doing so and should fully research the supplement in question so they can make an informed decision," he added.

Inter Milan face test of Serie A title hopes against champions Juventus

MILAN: Having ended Napoli's unbeaten start to the league season last week, champions Juventus will try to do the same to Inter Milan when they host the Serie A leaders in a mouth-watering "Derby d'Italia" on Saturday.

Inter were left as the only unbeaten team in the league after Juve won 1-0 last Friday away to a Napoli side which had not lost in the opening 14 games. The result last weekend also allowed Inter to go top with 39 points thanks to a 5-0 win over Chievo.



Juventus, third with 37 points, will top the standings if they win on Saturday although Napoli (38 points) would overhaul them if they can beat an improving Fiorentina at home on Sunday. Whatever the outcome, it is already clear that Juventus, chasing a seventh successive

title, have far more of a fight on their hands than in previous seasons where they often left the rest of the field trailing in their wake.

It is also evident that reports of Juve's demise have been premature.

The cracks which appeared during a 2-1 loss to Lazio - Juve's first

home defeat in more than two years -- and a 3-2 defeat at Sampdoria

have quickly been filled by their pragmatic coach Massimiliano Allegri. They have been especially resolute in defence and their 2-0 win away to Olympiakos on Tuesday, which took them into the Champions

League last sixteen, was their fourth successive clean sheet since the Sampdoria defeat.

Morocco defender Mehdi Benatia has stepped into the defensive void left by the departure of Leonardo Bonucci, new signings forward Douglas Costa and midfielder Blaise Matuidi have fitted in quickly and Gonzalo Higuain is as deadly as ever in attack.

Inter's renaissance Juventus have one point more than they did at the same stage last season when they were top of the table with a four-point lead over Roma and AC Milan.

The only worry is Argentine playmaker Paulo Dybala's lacklustre form. "It's not going so well for Dybala at the moment but it happened at this stage last season too," said Allegri. "Paulo needs to relax and

keeping doing the simple things, training hard and finding the right fitness levels." Inter, meanwhile, have blossomed under Luciano Spalletti and are unrecognisable from last season when they employed three coaches on the way to finishing seventh.

Defender Andrea Ranocchia said it was the most united group he has seen in his six seasons with the club.

"Spalletti is great because he treats everyone the same way. It doesn't matter who you are or what your salary is, we are all treated the same. I've been at Inter for many years and it's the first time I've seen the dressing room like this," added the 29-year-old.

Ranocchia said that spirit would be needed to deal with setbacks across a long season.

"When things don't go our way, we must retain this same unity."

Moeen Ali to captain England XI in Ashes tour match vs Cricket Australia XI



LONDON: Moeen Ali headlines the twelve man England squad for a two-day Ashes warm-up game vs a Cricket Australia XI that will start on Saturday. Moeen Ali will captain an England XI in a two-day warm-up match against a Cricket Australia XI ahead of the third Ashes Test in Perth.

Moeen Ali headlines the twelve man England cricket team for the Perth clash, starting on Saturday, with the all-rounder the only player from the 11 who suffered a 120-run loss to Australia at Adelaide Oval on Wednesday set to feature.

The England XI includes five players who did not take to the field in the day-night match in Adelaide – Jake Ball, Gary Ballance, Ben Foakes, Mason Crane and Tom Curran.

Paceman Ball was involved in England's 10-wicket rout against Australia in the Ashes Opener but he made way for Test debutant Craig Overton for the Adelaide contest, while Crane was also in the mix but missed out.

The remainder of the side is made up of six players from the England Lions – Ben Duckett, Keaton Jennings, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Liam Livingstone and Mark Wood. Ashes spots could be up for grabs at Richardson Park with England trailing Australia 2-0 heading into the Perth Test, starting on December 14.

England's tour-match squad: Moeen Ali (captain), Jake Ball, Gary Ballance, Mason Crane, Tom Curran, Ben Duckett, Ben Foakes, Keaton Jennings, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Liam Livingstone, Mark Wood

Johanna Konta to work with Maria Sharapova's former coach ahead of Australian Open

SYDNEY: World number nine Johanna Konta has named American Michael Joyce as her new coach for the 2018 season following her split from Belgian Wim Fissette in October. The 26-year-old enjoyed a solid start to 2017, winning the Sydney International and Miami Open titles, and hit a career-high number four world ranking before injury and poor form saw her miss out on a WTA Finals berth. The 44-year-old Joyce has previously worked with former number ones Maria Sharapova, whom he guided to two grand slam titles, and Victoria Azarenka, whose team he joined in early 2017 before leaving the Belarusian's coaching squad last week.



"I'm delighted to confirm that Michael Joyce will be joining my team for 2018," Konta said in a statement.

"Michael is a fantastic coach with a great pedigree and I'm really excited to work with him. 2017 has been amazing but I feel like

there is so much more to come." Konta will begin her 2018 season at the Brisbane International, which is scheduled to start on Dec. 31. Elsewhere, Czech Barbora Strycova, who won the Linz Open in October, has named compatriot David Kotyza as her new coach after splitting with Tomas Krupa earlier this year.

Strycova, 31, will play her first competition under Kotyza at the season-opening ASB Classic in Auckland.

Sunil Gavaskar takes a jibe at these Indian cricket team stars for weak fielding

MUMBAI: One of the areas in which Indian cricket team has improved drastically under the leadership of Virat Kohli in the recent times is their fielding. The cricketers are super fit and probably for the first time, they can match the athletic skills of traditional fielding powerhouses like South Africa and Australia.

However, former India captain Sunil Gavaskar believes that there are still some slow movers in the team and he identified two such fielders on the fifth day of the third Test against Sri Lanka in New Delhi. Gavaskar, who was covering the game as a commentator, first decided to take a potshot at Cheteshwar Pujara before taunting spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. "He seems like an automotive that runs with a handbrake on," were the on-air words of the legendary opener while describing the fielding skill of Pujara. About Ashwin, he had this to say: "There may be intent however no longer a lot growth." Both Ashwin and Pujara, though, had a decent match in New Delhi.

While Ashwin claimed four wickets, Pujara came up with scores of 23 and 49. The game, which ended in a draw, though, would be primarily remembered for Virat Kohli's double hundred and the sight of Sri Lankan players wearing masks and leaving the field on the second day due to rising level of pollution.

India won the series 1-0 with the hosts beating the visitors in the second Test at Nagpur. The first Test in Kolkata had ended in a draw too. This was India's ninth consecutive Test series win and with that, they equalled Australia's record for the most number of Test series victories on the trot.

Under Ricky Ponting's captaincy, Australia had recorded nine straight series wins between 2005 and 2008. Virat Kohli's men have not lost a Test series since 2015 with their victories coming against Sri Lanka (thrice, 2-1, 3-0, 1-0), South Africa (3-0), West Indies (2-0), Bangladesh (1-0), England (4-0), New Zealand (3-0) and Australia (2-1).