

# TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

TUESDAY

- DECEMBER, 12, 2017
- 23 RABI-AL-AWAL 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 291
- VOLUME: 03
- PAGES: 08

| WEATHER TEMPERATURE |                 |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| STATION             | MAX TEMPERATURE | MIN TEMPERATURE |
|                     | ACT             | ACT             |
| SRINAGAR            | 5.1             | 3.1             |
| JAMMU               | 14.3            | 11.6            |
| LEH                 | 10.1            | -3.7            |
| KARGIL              | 6.0             | 0.1             |

SUNSET TUESDAY: 05:23 PM  
SUNRISE WEDNESDAY: 07:29 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR  
Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 06°C & 01°C respectively.

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

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ABDUL HAQ REVIEWS PROGRESS ON CM'S COMMITMENTS IN PULWAMA

BORN WITH GOLDEN SPOON, CONG. LEADERS DON'T UNDERSTAND POVERTY: PM

RADO LAUNCHES NEW HYPERCHROME COLLECTION IN BENGALURU

PV SINDHU LOOKS TO END 2017 ON A HIGH WITH DUBAI WORLD SUPER SERIES FINAL VICTORY

## Three militants and a woman killed in North Kashmir

Clashes leave many injured

Handwara, Dec 11: Three militants and a woman were killed in a night long encounter in North Kashmir's Handwara town of frontier district Kupwara.

Police said that a joint team of Rashtriya Rifles of Indian Army, CRPF and SOG of Jammu Kashmir Police cordoned off Unsoo village of Handwara after receiving inputs about the presence of militants.

"The contact was established after militants resorted to heavy firing. During the exchange of fire three militants were killed who are all non-locals," said a police official to news agency CNS adding that a woman Misra Bano daughter of Muhammad Shaban was also killed in cross firing.

Director General of Police (DGP) SP Vaid said that three militants were



killed in the gunfight. In a tweet, he said that all the three militants, "apparently Pakistanis", were killed by joint team of J&K Police, RR & CRPF.

"It has been raining whole night & boys (forces personnel) were out there in the cold," he tweeted.

On Monday morning, scores of people hit to roads and placed the dead body of woman on road demanding magisterial inquiry. The protesters who raised pro-freedom slogans alleged that woman was killed by Government Forces.

Agitated youth pelted stones on the government forces who responded with tear smoke shelling. The clashes continued for hours. Eyewitnesses said that many protesters suffered injuries during the clashes.

The clashes disrupted traffic on the roads.

Authorities suspended mobile

▶ See **Three**...Pg 02

## Two guards killed in deadly militant attack in Shopian

JK Bank Chairman expresses shock and assures support to victim families

Shopian, Dec 11: In a deadly attack, unknown gunmen resorted to indiscriminate firing on a Jammu Kashmir Bank Cash Van killing two security guards and injuring one in South Kashmir's Shopian district.

Reports said that a bank van had gone to Kral Chek from Shopian to lift cash from the bank branch there and when it left the place, unidentified gunmen appeared on the spot near Kral Chek and fired indiscriminately on the vehicle.

"The impact of firing was such that driver lost its control on the van and it turned turtle. Three security guards were wounded in the attack who were immediately taken to District Hospital Shopian," said an official to news agency CNS.

He said Doctors referred all the wounded to Pulwama hospital where two among the three guards succumbed to their injuries.

Medical Superintendent Pulwama

▶ See **Guards**...Pg 02

## SHRC DIRECTS POLICE TO CLARIFY POSITION OVER THE DETENTION OF FOREIGN JOURNALIST

Srinagar, Dec 11: A day after the arrest of a foreign journalist here in Kashmir capital Srinagar, State Human Rights Commission has issued notices to top police brass directing them to clear their position on the issue.

Pertinently, former award winning TV Channel TF 1 French journalist, Paul Comiti was arrested from Pratap Park Srinagar on Saturday while he was preparing a documentary on the pellet victims.

Police have registered FIR under number 87/2017 under section 14 (B) Passport Act and Comiti is presently lodged in Police Station Kothibagh.

▶ See **SHRC**...Pg 02

## HELPLINE FOR WOMEN: DIAL 7889799509 TO LODGE COMPLIANT

Call, text incase harassed, subjected to domestic violence: Mehjoor

Srinagar, Dec 11: J&K State Commission for Women (SWC) Monday introduced a helpline number for the women folk who face harassment or molestation or are subjected to domestic violence at home.

Talking to KNS correspondent, Mohammad Lateef Bhat, SWC chairperson Nayeema Ahmad Mehjoor while calling for protection of women rights said they have introduced a helpline number 7889799509 for women to lodge a formal complaint if they face any kind of violence at home, office or at any other place.

"We have kept this number exclusively for women to text, WhatsApp, message or give a missed call. The Commission will contact them soon and will take help of police or any other department if and when needed," she told KNS.

Mahjoor said they are also

▶ See **Helpline**...Pg 02

## At Doda Mehbooba continued to listen to deputations till 2 am, longest interaction in decades

Releases Rs. 25 lacs for digital X-ray at Distt. Hosptl; Rs. 20 lacs for local stadium

Doda, Dec 11: In what could be described as one of the longest public interactions over the decades, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti disposed the complaints and demands of the deputations till 1.30 am today during her grievances redressal camp here.

The camp started which continued till late in the night and the last deputation which met the Chief Minister past



mid night at around 1.40 am came from Palmas area of Doda. The deputation demanded construction of a footpath and connecting the area with the circular road of the town. Moved by their plight, the

▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

## JK ruling parties divided on timing of elections

Uncertainty continues over Panchayat polls

Srinagar, Dec 11: Uncertainty prevails over the holding of the panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir as the authorities of the state government are not on the same page before taking a final call on holding the polls.

On November 4 this year, Governor NN Vohra promulgated the Jammu and Kashmir Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017, which was expected to pave the way



for the much-awaited panchayat elections. Panchayats in state completed their five-year term in June 2016. The state government has

▶ See **JK**...Pg 02

## Overnight rains, snow end prolonged dry spell in Kashmir

Weather to remain affected for next 24 hours: Sonum Lotus

Srinagar, Dec 11: Binging respite to the people from prolonged dry spell, the overnight rains lashed Valley while the higher reaches including the famous tourist place, Gulmarg received a fresh snowfall today.

Director Meteorological (MET) Department, Sonum Lotus told KNS that the Valley would receive more rains and snow in plains and higher reaches respectively for next 24 hours. "There is possibility of light to moderate rains or snow at isolated places in the valley for the upcoming 24 hours," he said.

He informed that the higher reaches Drass, Kargil and Gulmarg has received a fresh



snowfall today. "The light snowfall would continue to occur for the next 12-24 hours,"

▶ See **Rains**...Pg 02

## RATION SCAM: 20 RICE TRUCKS MEANT FOR KASHMIR 'DISAPPEAR' MIDWAY

SRINAGAR, DEC 11: In yet another mega scam involving the looting of food grains, at least 20 trucks loaded with rice meant for the Food Corporation of India's (FCI) Baramulla, PEG, have reportedly been hijacked as they did not reach their scheduled destination, informed sources revealed here Tuesday.

Official documents in possession of PTK, revealed that some 20 trucks loaded with rice left from Punjab never reached its address in Kashmir, as the same were diverted and sold in private markets.

These trucks bearing registration numbers PB32P-2971, PB32P-8871, PB32P-5171, PB32P-3971 and PB32P-4271, 7971-PB32A, 5171-PB 32P, 3871-PB32P, 4571-PB 32P, 6771-

▶ See **Ration**...Pg 02

## Rasheed leads protest march against woman's killing in Handwara

Says Mehbooba survives on briefing of security forces

Handwara: Independent legislator Engineer Rasheed Monday led a protest march in Unsoo village of Handwara town against the killing of a woman Misra Bano.

The deceased woman according to police was killed in cross firing between government forces and militants, however, protesters alleged that Misra was killed by Army.

Protesters led by Rasheed chanted slogans seeking arrest of the army men and an end to what they call state terrorism.

As per a statement, Engineer Rasheed while addressing the protesters at Main Chowk Handwara condemned the killings calling



them unacceptable and added that killing of Misra has yet again proved that security forces are accountable to none and treat

▶ See **Rashid**...Pg 02

## J&K HAS TO SUSTAIN AS A COMPACT, HOMOGENEOUS ENTITY: MADNI

Addresses Party workers

Jammu, Dec 11: The unity and integration of the three regions of Jammu and Kashmir is of paramount importance for the Peoples Democratic Party. The founder leader and Patron Mufti Mohammad Syed held this objective high in his heart and Mehbooba Mufti is pursuing the same goal in the footsteps of her Mentor with absolute fidelity.

Addressing Party workers at a reception here accorded to him on his taking over as Party's Vice President for second successive stint, Sartaj Madni said without harmony state can fail to sustain as a distinct cultural unit

▶ See **Madni**...Pg 02

## Farooq decries exploiting religion for political, electoral gains

JAMMU DECEMBER 11- National Conference President Dr Farooq Abdullah on Monday decried exploitation of religious sentiments for political and electoral gains, saying Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi should take a lead in ending this malady in the larger interest of retaining secular fabric of India.

"The country of Mahatma Gandhi cannot afford to get fragmented into bits and pieces on the basis of religion



to satiate the political agendas of a few political outfits", Dr

▶ See **Farooq**...Pg 02

Farooq Abdullah said while addressing NC OBC Cell functionaries at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan here this afternoon, adding that nothing better can be expected from the reactionary forces, who were now taking pride in decorating the killer of the Father of Nation.

He expressed concern over vitiating the ongoing Gujarat elections on religious basis and described it as a saddest

## GEELANI EXPRESSES SORROW OVER KILLINGS IN JERUSALEM

Terms it as 'terrorism, beastly act'

Srinagar, Dec 11: Expressing deep sorrow over the killing and injuring peaceful and innocent protestors in Jerusalem, the Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman, Syed Ali Geelani today termed these killings as 'terrorism and beastly act'.

In a statement issued to KNS, Geelani stressed unity among Muslim Ummah and added that after US Presidents move to announce Alquodus (Jerusalem) as the capital of Israel, "we urge the OIC to take strong note and act unitedly against this anti-Muslim move."

▶ See **Geelani**...Pg 02

# 7 MORE DISTRICTS TO GET POS MACHINES AT FPSS BY MID-JANUARY: ZULFKAR

Exhorts officers to meet set deadlines under e-PDS

JAMMU, DECEMBER 11: As a sequel to equip the fair price outlets with Point of Sale (PoS) machines to ensure added accountability and transparency, the government is going to launch this hi-tech facility in seven more districts. Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Tribal Affairs, Chowdhary Zulfiqar Ali informed this today during a meeting held with the officers of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs department to review the progress on implementation of electronic Public Distribution System (e-PDS). The new seven districts to be covered under e PDS are Anantnag, Bandipora, Kulgam of Kashmir region while in

Reasi, Kathua, Poonch and Udhampur of Jammu region which would be provided PoS machines by mid-January 2018. The endeavor is aimed at to enable the department keep a track on all kinds of financial transactions. The Minister, while taking stock of installation of these devices in FPSS, directed M/s Linkwell Tele systems to install PoS machines in all left out FPSS in the already covered districts by 31st December. The Minister also reviewed the district wise target allotted and achieved under PDS besides variation under PHH, NPHH and Exclusion category. He directed the concerned to ensure that the

variation in the target reports shall be reduced to zero for both PHH and NPHH category. In view of inclement weather, the officers of FCS&CA department of both regions were directed to mobilize all resources to ensure adequate availability of food grains, K oil, LPG besides other essential commodities. With regard to stock position of ration, LPG, petrol etc, the concerned Assistant Directors in formed that department has stocked advance ration in sale centers across the valley and hilly areas of Jammu region. Reviewing the status of division wise target of ration cards for Aadhaar seed-



ing, the Minister assigned the target of 31,000 beneficiaries for Aadhaar seeding in Jammu and 22,500 for Kashmir asking the officers to complete it by ending December.

Regarding strengthening of the monitoring system in the department by geo-tagging of its assets through Geographical Integration System, the meeting was informed that mapping of

6334 fair price shops has been completed against the target of 6553 and entries of details of the Vigilance Monitoring Committee on the portal has been completed for 5884 FPSS till date. The meeting was informed that total number of 1392628 new ration cards have been distributed in Kashmir while 698380 in Jammu. The Minister directed Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA to constitute a task force under the supervision of administrative secretary and both the directors of FCS&CA who will submit a panel of officers and task assigned to them for smooth execution of supply chain management on the portal.

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### THREE

internet as a precautionary measure. Meanwhile, police on Monday evening issued a handout about the said gunfight. "Acting on a specific input, Handwara police along with 22 RR and 92 Bn CRPF launched a cordon and search operation in Mir Mohalla area of Uniso in the jurisdiction of Police Station Handwara. During search operation, terrorists hiding in the house of Abdul Hamid Mir fired upon the joint search party. The fire was retaliated, ensuing an encounter. Three unidentified militants of LeT were killed in this encounter. The identity of these militant is being ascertained. Three AK rifles along with other ammunition was recovered from the encounter site. During the encounter, one lady got injured in the cross firing and unfortunately she succumbed to her injuries."

### GUARDS

hospital Dr Abdul Rasheed Parra identified the slain guards as Bilal Ahmed of Tamhalhal Pulwama and Tariq Ahmed from Khanabal Anantnag. Shortly, after the attack, government forces cordoned off the area and a manhunt was launched to nab the assailants. Meanwhile, J&K Bank Chairman and CEO Parvez Ahmed expressed shock over these killings. He said, "It is very painful news and we at J&K Bank are shocked over the killings of security personnel namely Mush-taq Ahmad and Tariq Ahmad by the unidentified gunmen while guarding the bank's cash delivery vehicle. I express my heartfelt condolences and all our sympathies are with the bereaved families. I also wish speedy recovery to the three injured officials of the bank including security guard." "Let me add here that these innocent guards were there only to protect the people's money and such gruesome incidents create hardships for the general public and hinder us from serving the people of these areas well", he said. Meanwhile, the Chairman assured the bereaved families of appropriate support from the bank. "Human life is invaluable and its loss can in no way be compensated. However, the affected families need to be sufficiently supported financially and emotionally as they have lost bread earners."

### SHRC

Human Rights activist Muhammad Ahsan Untoo filed a petition (vide number 395) before State Human Rights Commission on Monday in this regard. The petitioner has asked the government to clarify whether any foreign journalist has any right to highlight the human rights issues in Kashmir Valley or not. The petitioner has described the detention of French journalist illegal and has requested the Commission to direct the government to produce the arrested journalist before SHRC. Acting upon the petition, Chairman SHRC Retired Justice Bilal Ahmed Nazki issued notices to Inspector General of Police, SSP Srinagar and SP East directing them to clarify their stand on the issue. The case has been listing for hearing on December 18 this month.

### HELPLINE

working to introduce a toll-free number which will be made operation sooner than later. She appealed people to share the message with more and more people and emphasized upon widespread dissemination of information regarding Central and State government schemes for welfare of women folk. Mehjoor also said a proposal for formation of temporary shelters and toll free 24\*7 helpline for women victims, is under active consideration of Government.

### MEHBOOBA

Chief Minister announced release of Rs. 15 lacs for construction of footpath and also extending facilities of electricity and drinking water. With this the more than 15 hours long public outreach programme concluded. Around 100 deputations met the Chief Minister during her public outreach programme and given the large number of people and their demands, it continued past midnight making it one of the longest interactions in the State in so many decades. It may be mentioned here that these grievances redressal camps convened by the Chief Minister generally extend upto late in the evenings. The camp at Kishtwar on Saturday which started at 11 am ended at 11.30 pm with a deputation from Drabshalla bringing their problems into the notice of the Chief Minister. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister announced release of Rs. 25 lacs for procuring a digital X-ray for the District Hospital, Doda and Rs. 20 lacs for completing the balance work of the stadium in the town. Mehbooba Mufti also announced construction of community halls in the Route, Behote and Batakund villages of

Marmat area of the district. This was in response to the demands of the people of these areas during the longest in decades' grievances redressal camp.

### JK

recently reportedly conveyed to the Centre its inability to hold panchayat elections. However, sources said that Vohra has called for holding early elections to Panchayats and Municipalities in Jammu and Kashmir. Sources told KNS that he (Governor) told this Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti when she called on him at the Raj Bhawan on Friday. Sources said that Union Home Ministry's has also directed to the state government to hold the elections by January to restore normalcy in Kashmir valley. "The government is yet to take a decision on holding the elections," a senior official said, when asked about the government's position on holding the delayed elections in the state. Sources said that the ruling parties in Jammu and Kashmir are divided on the timing of holding Panchayat polls in the state.

The BJP National General Secretary Ram Madhav during his visit to the valley, had asked the party cadre to gear up for the Panchayat elections. In one of the party meet, he told the party workers that Panchayat polls would be held before the winter. A BJP minister said that party workers and leaders have geared up for the Panchayat polls. "The Panchayat polls should be held as soon as possible in the state," the BJP minister said, wishing not to be quoted by name. It has been learnt that party leaders are also luring big wigs that include the former bureaucrats, politicians, retired police officers, who have good footings in their respective areas and asking them to campaign in favour of BJP candidates.

An official at the State Election Office said no decision has been taken about the Panchayat polls. "A ruling party (PDP) does not want polls before March next year. The State Election Office can't take decision on its own," he added. The state election office can't take the decision on Panchayat polls in Jammu and Kashmir unless gets a nod from the state government in absence of State Election Commission. The panchayats completed their term in July last year. Elections to panchayats were last held in April-May 2011 during Omar Abdullah led National Conference-Congress regime after a gap of 37 years. The government postponed these polls for several times in the last two years.

### RAINS

he said. In view of the weather advisory, the state government has also made adequate arrangements with officials claiming that 141 snow clearance machines have been deployed besides establishing control rooms in each district which would remain functional round the clock. "These 141 snow clearance machines have been tested in presence of designated officers and dispatched to different districts where they will operate under the control of respective district or sub-district control rooms," the officials said. Earlier, on Dec 09, in view of weather forecast of heavy snow and rains, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today directed Divisional Administration of Kashmir to be in a state of preparedness and responsive to any crisis thrown up by the inclement weather. The Chief Minister has directed all the concerned Departments like PDD, R&B, MED, ULB, PHE, Health and other Departments to gear up in view of the weather forecast and deploy their men and machinery on the ground beforehand. On Dec 07, Divisional Administration Kashmir issued weather advisory according to which moderate to heavy snow is expected at most places in the State from December 11 to December 13, 2017. "A western disturbance is approaching J&K and adjoining areas. This system is likely to affect J&K from 9th December onwards and produce moderate to heavy snowfall on 11, 12 and 13 December."

The concerned Deputy Commissioners of Kashmir Division have been asked to take all the precautionary measures in their respective districts.

### RATION

PB 32L, 3179-PB 32 P, 4171-PB32 P, 2071-PB32 P, 8771-PB09 Q; Challan numbers 279-49, 279-50, 279-18, 279-25, 279-28, 279-29, 284-51, 279-48, 284-52; date of loading 28, 28, 27, 27, 27, 28, 28, 28 of November 2015 respectively. Investigation revealed the scam is just the tip of the iceberg while the officials pass the buck when asked a question or two about the loot. "Some top officers of FCI of the rank of managers are involved in this," sources in the department said. The documents and photocopies of Challans in possession of PTK reveal a different story as narrated by some officials. "As per the photocopy of challans received from district office Jalandhar the date of unloading may be read as 15/17-Jan-

2016." The Committee has checked the receipt register and master ledger of PEG Baramulla of those particular dates. It has been observed that on 15 Jan 2016 only 7 trucks had been unloaded at PEG Baramulla out of which 2 trucks were received from district office Jammu and 5 from district office Gurdaspur, Punjab on 17-Jan 2016 (being Sunday). But not even a single truck has been unloaded at PEG Baramulla, read the documents. The challans, which sources say are forged, however, bear the sign of the authorities concerned showing trucks have been unloaded" at the supposed location at PEG Baramulla. But the committee report has found that not even a single truck has been unloaded.

### RASHEED

themselves above any law. Rasheed said "It seems that the price of Kashmiri lives has been fixed Rs. 1.00 lakh and a traditional enquiry. New Delhi wants to threaten Kashmiris and shut their mouth but denying them justice will only strengthen the commitment of Kashmiris to fight for their genuine political rights. It seems that for security forces killing every Kashmiri irrespective of age and gender is something they call serving the national interest," Rasheed said. He said the intellectual class of India needs to understand its duties and must do whatsoever required to make army and other security agencies accountable. Rasheed alleged that Mehbooba Mufti has lost complete control over the forces and she has been left to the mercy of false briefings of men in uniform. Rasheed also ridiculed Government for organizing a state sponsored Seminar on International Human Rights Day at SKICC.

He said "It is strange and astonishing that those who commit, advocate and facilitate Human Rights Violations were sermonizing about necessity of Human Rights, just to mislead the civilized world. The Govt. has been throwing into dust bin the recommendations of State Human Rights Commission but still appreciating the work of SHRC at the Seminar just to praise each other to justify their misdeeds. It is shameful for the law minister Abdul Haq Khan to chair the Seminar on Human Rights, despite the fact that a youth namely Manzoor Ahmad Khan hailing from his own constituency disappeared in broad day light in the custody of security forces and till now Law Minister has been doing nothing except authenticating the false version of security forces just to bury the serious issue.

### MADNI

and its identity and geographical complexion will also be put to threat in absence of mutual understanding and co-existence. He said this vision of PDP is above electoral politics and aims at orienting state's people into homogeneity with due regard for regional sensitivities. Madni said PDP faced a criticism for entering into Alliance with BJP from several quarters including some meaningful section from the state. Yet the Party leaders stood firm in the belief that sooner than later people of the state will reap benefits of the decision. He said it is now for everyone to see that many potential controversies on vital issues like Article 370 stand neutralized and gaps of any communal and regional divisions are getting filled. Madni said that it is true that lot remains to be done to familiarize state's people with value of co-existence and respect for dissent, the urgency to strengthen the discourse on regional parity through mutual respect and understanding needs to be appreciated. He said PDP's consistency in allowing the state to grow in cohesion and harmony is building a positive space for society and the state. He said people of Jammu deserve appreciation for putting their trust in the leadership of Mehbooba Mufti and sharing her concerns for peace, development and prosperity. He said PDP values their support in surmounting difficulties facing state. He said there is a huge baggage of mistrust being carried by the people of the region and repeat of Muff's politics, particularly his initiatives taken from 2002 to 2005 are now being repeated with the Union Government's support. Madni hoped that state will witness fresh political, diplomatic and economic initiatives in near future which will help bring the state out of difficulties to usher into an era of sustainable peace and development. Several senior leaders including Ved Mahajan, T.S. Bhajwa, Rafiq Hussain Khan, Dhaman Bhasin, besides former office bearers from Jammu province spoke on the occasion.

### FAROOQ

development in the Indian polity. He hoped the Prime Minister to appreciate danger of communal polarization, adding that the nation as such should also introspect over the sordid state of political affairs. "Mr Narendra Modi is the Prime Minister of all, irrespective of religious or regional affiliations and this fact should neither be ignored nor undermined", Dr Abdullah said, hop-

ing that he (Mr Modi) will not allow himself to get swayed by petty politics. He advised the BJP and the RSS to refrain from generating passions and exploiting public sentiments, especially during elections, adding that the growing trend of dividing the nation on religious lines is detrimental to the national interest and such a tendency should be eschewed at all costs. He lamented the attempts of provoking people to fight over Mandir and Masjid issues just in furtherance of political objectives. He said India does not belong to a specific religion but it is a beautiful vase of flowers of different colours. The people of all the faiths have equal rights in secular India, he added. "In the prevailing vicious atmosphere, National Conference has a challenging role to keep the flag of secularism aloft", Dr Abdullah said and recalled the sacrifices offered by its top leaders and front-ranking workers during the horrendous days of 1947. He said this spirit, bequeathed by Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, will continue to guide the people in general and the cadre in particular in shaping destiny of the State.

Referring to the issues raised by Co-Chairman OBC Cell Mr Abdul Gani Teli, the NC President said that the party legislators would vociferously raise their genuine demands in the legislature to seek redressal. On its part, he said the National Conference will give due representation to weaker sections of society in the upcoming panchayat and Urban Local Bodies elections. Dr Abdullah exhorted women and weaker sections of society to participate in the elections to grass roots democratic institutions in a big way, saying this was imperative for their politico-economic empowerment.

Additional General Secretary Dr Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, Provincial President Mr Devender Singh Rana and other senior leaders of the party were present on the occasion. Earlier, Mr Teli raised the issues confronting to OBC's and sought the intervention of Dr Farooq Abdullah in getting the rider of renewal of OBC certificates after every five years waived. He said these certificates should be issued on the analogy of the other communities.

Mr Teli also pitched for due representation to OBC segments of society in democratic institutions and demanded issuance of their category certificates as OBC's instead of Other Social Castes.

### GEELANI

Terming it "unjust, biased, anti-Islam and unrealistic decision" Geelani said that prevailing situation in Palestine is very painful and blamed Zionist forces for hatching conspiracies against Muslim Ummah for carrying their sinister designs of bloodshed in Muslim world.

Geelani blamed west for backing Israel and said that this country is posing continuous threat for Muslim Ummah and promoting its plans to manufacture hazardous weapons, thus creating continuous threat and horrendous situation in territory.

Referring to 57 Muslim countries, Geelani said that it is unfortunate that instead of rendering their services for Muslim Ummah, they are acting as puppets for west and promoting and facilitating their agenda.

Lamenting at ruling class in Muslim countries, Geelani said that they are acting as mute spectator over genocide carried by west and instead purchases ammunition worth billions from these killers to suppress and subjugate their innocent people.

Allah has bestowed Muslim countries with enormous and rich resources for generating revenue and income, said Geelani saying, unfortunately these resources are being wasted over personnel luxuries for elite class.

Geelani accused America for carrying killing spree in Muslim countries and said that despite their tall claim for being sole super power, has turned Muslim world into a battle ground.

Blaming America for disturbances, bloodshed and terrorist activities in Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq, Geelani added that other countries including Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and other Muslim countries are their next target.

Commenting over UN role in Palestine, Geelani said that this organization has failed and follows agenda of America and added that, had OIC been active and followed effective strategies, Israel could not have carried its genocide in Palestine.

Blaming ruling class in Muslim countries for their extravagance, Geelani said that they are living in an illusion and fail to comprehend that they too are not safe and sooner or later it may be their turn.

Geelani impressed member countries of OIC to take concrete measures to improve this organisation and put halt over infighting among Muslim ummah.

Geelani said that Muslims are involved in infighting over sectarian issues among Shia and Sunnis and added if we overcome this issue, we can definitely defeat devilish plans of Israel.

Muslim Ummah is a one nation, said Geelani and stressed OIC to play its pivotal and key role in solving the problem of Palestinians and Kashmir dispute on priority basis.

# Abdul Haq reviews progress on CM's commitments in Pulwama

Stresses on time-bound completion of all developmental works

PULWAMA, DECEMBER 11: Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Law and Justice Abdul Haq on Monday chaired a meeting at Pulwama to review the progress made so far on Chief Minister's commitments to the people of the District Pulwama.

DDC Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar briefed the Minister in detail about action taken report on Chief Minister's commitments which she had made to the general public during the recent public darbar held at Pulwama.

On the occasion, the Minister was informed that DPR amounting to Rs.1.03 crore has been prepared for the additional accommodation for doctors on available land of CMO premises. Minister directed the DDC to issue authorization so that the work can be expedited.

Regarding the construction of Community hall in Town Hall Pulwama, the Minister was informed that a DPR for Rs.7.95 crore has been framed and submitted to Planning Department for the release of funds. Further a token amount of Rs 1 crore has also been released for starting the work while R&B has started the walling of the area. Minister directed the concerned authorities to tender out the work in next 15 days and start the work immediately after that.

Regarding the extension of Fruit Mandi Pulwama, the Minister was informed that though the Land acquisition proceedings have been completed

and award formulated thereafter, but due to the paucity of funds disbursement could not be taken. Minister was briefed that 3.43 Crores has been disbursed as compensation and further additional 6.50 Crores is required for disbursement among the awardees.

With regard to construction of Engineering Complex in existing R&B complex, it was informed that during a joint survey by Exen R&B and DDC, it was found that the site was not feasible for all practical purposes.

With regard to up gradation of Naina Hospital to SDH, the august house was briefed that the proposal for creation of additional Staff to make the NTPHC functional 24x7 has been submitted to Administrative Department along with request to release Rs. 80.00 lacs as additional funds for purchase of additional equipment.

With regard to construction of separate Maternity hospital for Pulwama, Minister was informed that land has already been identified at Chandgam Pulwama and DPR amounting to Rs 15 crores has been prepared.

Officials informed that till the time separate maternity hospital is constructed, the same can be made functional on temporary basis in SDH Rajpora where space is available.

In this respect proposal for additional staff has been submitted to H&ME department for creation and also demand for Rs. 2.00 core for purchase of machinery equipment has been projected.



Minister directed the health department to take up this matter with Commissioner Secretary Health for further action.

With respect to declaring village Naina and Dugripora as Backward, DDC informed the house that the file along with all the requisite formalities was submitted to Backward Classes Commission for approval. He informed that the file has been returned back with some observations and it is being examined by the concerned Tehsildar. Further the file will be sent back to Backward Commission for approval.

With regard to creation of Social Welfare Office, Minister was informed that the matter has been taken up with

Adm. Department while for the establishment of ZEO office Litter, the report has been submitted to Director School Education Kmr for further action.

With respect to the construction of Dogripora and Reshipora bridges, Minister was informed that the house that the two bridges were taken up at an estimated cost of Rs.14.38 crores and Rs.10.94 crores respectively.

With regard to widening and shifting of Chori Market in main town Pulwama, the Minister was informed that a DPR of 19.18 crore has been prepared which also include the beautification of area. Further when completed this will resolve the traffic jam of Rajpora Chowk. The Minister directed the executing agencies

to start the work within 10 days. With regard to establishment of maternity hospital at Aripal Tral, it was given out in the meeting that at Aripal, SHC is functioning and recently government has approved construction of new building for said institution. Meeting was informed that the proposal in this regard has been submitted to administrative Department.

With regard to the Installation of C.T Scan machine in District Hospital Pulwama, CMO Pulwama informed the meeting that Directorate of Health Services has released funds to JK MSC Ltd. for procurement of C.T Scan for the hospital.

Abdul Haq stressed on time-bound completion of all the developmental works and take CM's directions on priority. Calling for complete synergy between various Departments involved in infrastructure building and implementation of various welfare schemes, the Minister stressed on strict adherence to timelines for completion of all on-going projects so that the people at large can be benefited.

He asked all the officers to put in extra efforts for judicious and effective utilization of funds besides removing bottlenecks hindering developmental works.

The Minister directed the DDCs to ensure expeditious execution of developmental works to extend desired benefits to the people. He also asked them for keeping a strict check over quality of works, adding that efforts should be made to create sustainable assets catering to area-specific developmental needs.

In his concluding remarks the Minister appreciated the District Development Commissioner Pulwama and his team for taking the developmental works with all sincerity and dedication. Director Rural Development, ACD Pulwama, SEs of R&B, PHE and PDD, Exens of PHE, PDD, R&B, CMOs, District officers of Education, Social Welfare, Transport, Forest, Agriculture, District Youth Service & Sports, Sheep Husbandry, Labour, Horticulture, Fisheries, Industries, Tehsildars, JKPC, and other concerned departments were also present in the meeting.

## Comprehensive programme undertaken to augment infra, promote sports activities: Dy CM

Dr Singh inaugurates 63rd National School Games

JAMMU, DECEMBER 11: Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Nirmal Singh today said the government has undertaken a comprehensive programme to give a fillip to sports in the State by augmenting the existing infrastructure and organizing tournaments of national and international levels.

The Deputy Chief Minister was speaking at the inaugural ceremony of 63rd National School Games Football under-17 tournament organized by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports under the aegis of School Games Federation of India at MAM Stadium.

Minister of State for Youth Services and Sports, Sunil Sharma, Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Hilal Parry, Director Youth Services and Sports Sheikh Fazay Ahmad and other senior officers, sports persons were present on the occasion.

Nearly, 23 teams from different states of the country are participating in this five-day tournament and the finals are slated to be held on 15th December.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the Government has initiated a holistic programme in order to catalyze the sports activities in the State and the Center is also providing requisite funds for the same. He said funds amounting Rs. 200 crore have already been placed at the disposal of the State Government for upgrading



the Sports infra by way of constructing new stadia, playgrounds in different areas of the State under the Prime Minister's Package.

Dr Singh said the youth of the state have tremendous

potential to excel in sports which has been demonstrated by the recent achievements registered by our sports person both at National and International level. He said the need of the hour is to hone

the latent talent of the youth by providing them the opportunities of competing with National and International players so that they can make a mark and bring laurels to the State.

While referring to the initiatives being undertaken for upgrading and augmenting sports infra in the State, the Deputy Chief Minister said that several playgrounds have been constructed in the State and renovation work is also being carried out at others. He said that under Khelo India initiative of the Prime minister several new stadia including indoor ones are also coming up in different parts of the state.

Minister of State for Youth Services and Sports, Sunil Kumar Sharma also spoke on the occasion and enumerated various initiatives being carried out in the sports sector and asked the youth to play a participatory role in the same by actively participating in the sports activities and tournaments. He said that the youth of the state have a tremendous potential which needs to be channelized in a proper direction.

Commissioner/Secretary Youth Service and Sports, Hilal Parry highlighted the activities being undertaken by the department in different sectors of the sports and related activities.

A souvenir was also released on the occasion.

NDLI to provide JK students free online access to 1.5 cr learning resources

## Priya Sethi inaugurates workshop on 'Digitized Libraries' organized by DL&R

JAMMU, DECEMBER 11: J&K's Department of Libraries and Research today rolled out the maiden initiative of linking up with National Digital Libraries of India (NDLI) to provide free worldwide access to the students and academicians in the State to around 1.5 crore downloadable e-books and journals.

The unique initiative was launched on the sidelines of a workshop on 'Digitized Libraries' organized by the Department of Libraries and Research here this morning.

The Workshop was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Education, Ms Priya Sethi. Director Libraries and Research, Mukhtar-ul-Aziz, Professor IIT Kharagpur, Partha Pratim Das, Chief Librarian NDLI, N Gopal Chatopadhyay and other senior officers of the Libraries Department were present on the occasion.

National Digital Libraries of India is an online repository of the e-books under the aegis of Union Human Resource Development Ministry. It has been developed by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur.

The repository hosts con-



tent in multiple languages on multiple subject domains including technology, science, humanities, agriculture and others with educational material available from primary to PhD level. The learning resources include e-books, journals, articles, thesis, manuscripts, audio and video lectures.

To integrate J&K's libraries with the online repository of National Digital Libraries of India, the state's Libraries Department has already launched a massive digitization programme under which all the libraries in the State are going to be digitized in a

phased manner. The National Digital Libraries of India will be also imparting training to the staff of the Libraries Department in J&K regarding the use of online services.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Workshop, Ms Priya Sethi said in the age of internet, massive changes are occurring in life and it has become necessary to adopt and take benefit from new technological inventions and digital interventions.

She said the new initiative will help the students to get online access to the best possible educational resources within and outside the coun-

try. "Once our libraries are fully digitized, joining hands with NDLI will contribute a lot in facilitating the teaching-learning process and the research work," she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Libraries, Mukhtar-ul-Aziz said the department has computerized all District and some Tehsil level libraries in the state so far and in the process to make all state libraries fully digitized in a more user-friendly way. The aim of this project is to integrate all national libraries, which will be centrally linked with central server to facilitate J&K students to take advantage of the massive learning resources available online.

Partha Pratim Das in his speech said that project of MHRD was started in April 2015 with an aim to consider the needs of students and to put all those needs on single platform. MHRD came up with this idea and this program also aims at to make people aware how to access the program. He also said that virtual learning is to be introduced to the students to help them to understand the difficult concepts of various subjects.

## CIC Ganai meets Governor

JAMMU, DECEMBER 11: Sh. Khurshid Ahmed Ganai, State Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), called on Governor N.N. Vohra at the Raj Bhavan here today and apprised the latter about the

present state of functioning of the Commission and the work which was disposed of during the period when he was serving as a one man Commission. Governor discussed with Sh. Ganai

possible measures which could be pursued to introduce significantly increased accountability of the administrative apparatus and promptitude, efficiency and visible transparency in the functioning.

## Peerzada Mansoor reviews progress of KVIB schemes

JAMMU, DECEMBER 11: Vice Chairman Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), Mansoor Hussain Suhrawardy has congratulated the officials of the board for achieving No. 1 position among Northern States for facilitating people about different schemes of board.

This was stated by the vice chairman while chairing a review meeting of the board. He stressed upon the officers of the Board to promote the service of KVIB more effectively to the people of State.

Secretary/CEO KVIB, Rashid

Ahmad Qadri, Deputy CEO KVIB Jammu, Santosh Saraf besides senior officers of the Board were present during the meeting.

He told the officials to work with more zeal and honesty and speed up process of achieving more goals of the Boards for which it has been established so that the achievement will be seen on gross root level and people living in far flung, rural areas and especially youth may get benefit from it.

He also put stress upon organize awareness programmes mostly in the rural areas and pro-



vide information of all schemes run by the Board especially youth folk education and skilled training

which can avail more benefits from such schemes to earn their livelihood.

Mansoor said that KVIB is imparting skilled development training to youths and also creating self-employment opportunities to the people. He said that main objectives of KVIB are to give women

so that board will work as a helping hand in their economic stability.

He further said KVIB is also working for strengthening of production of Khadi and village industry which are located in rural areas producing goods and render service in which beneficiaries will be benefited.

The meeting was informed that to develop khadi industry they have put up efforts to put promote products at national level. He was also informed that marketing linkages have been taken up with the

other Boards and States like Tripura, Goa and Karnataka to boost the sold outlets in these areas.

During the meeting it was revealed that the target of Rs 125 crore have been setup for selling of goods from entrepreneurs and various other units of the department through these marketing linkages.

It was further informed that trading activities like trade union business, boutique and other units have been initiated by the board and preference would be given to skilled persons.

## Time and Us

Editorial  
SRINAGAR  
& K

### UNWAVERING CAUTION — ON RBI HOLDING REPO RATE

For the Reserve Bank of India there is just one economic indicator that dominates its policymaking calculus: price stability. With inflation-targeting as its main mandate—the consensus position that was articulated when the RBI Act was amended in May 2016 was that “price stability is a necessary precondition to sustainable growth”—the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has opted yet again to keep interest rates unchanged. It is not hard to follow the rationale. Price gains as measured by the Consumer Price Index had accelerated to a seven-month high in October and the RBI’s survey of household expectations for inflation over both the three-month and one-year horizons showed a “firming up”. The RBI’s bimonthly policy statement also spelt out the data points and trends that informed its decision-making. For one, the moderation in core inflation in the first fiscal quarter has largely reversed. Price gains excluding the volatile food and fuel categories are particularly at risk from “the staggered impact of HRA increases by various State governments” that could push up housing inflation in 2018 and generate second-order ripples. Given India’s reliance on imports for a bulk of its fuel needs, the latest OPEC decision to maintain output cuts to keep global crude oil prices from softening can hardly provide much comfort.

Taking into account all factors, including some that may lend respite, such as the wide-ranging cuts to the goods and services tax rate, the RBI raised its estimate for inflation over the third and fourth fiscal quarters by 10 basis points from its October projection: headline CPI inflation is now expected to accelerate and range between 4.3% and 4.7% in the second half. The MPC is, however, more confident about the prospects for growth, concerns over higher oil prices and shortfalls in kharif crop output and rabi season sowing notwithstanding. The Centre’s move to recapitalise public sector banks has won a vote of confidence from monetary policymakers for its potential to revive credit flows. But, stressing the confidence in the economy are the findings in the RBI’s survey, which posit an improvement in demand in the services and infrastructure sectors and an uptick in the overall business environment in the January-March quarter. Ultimately, though, the central bank has once again proffered a word of circumspection to fiscal authorities: taken together, the farm loan waivers implemented by some States, the partial reduction of excise duty and VAT on petroleum products and the GST rate cuts could result in fiscal slippage with accompanying consequences for price stability. For the RBI, caution continues to remain its credo.

# Road to emancipation

By JAYATI GHOSH

It is fair to say that there would have been no Russian Revolution without the contributions—and sacrifices—of Russian women. The February revolution began (in fact on March 8, International Women’s Day) with the massive march of working women demanding “Bread and Peace” in St. Petersburg. It became the catalytic (and even totemic) force that brought more and varied sections of society into the movement for change that led first to the downfall of the tsarist regime in the early months of 1917 and then, after the chaotic months of the Alexander Kerensky government, the Bolshevik Revolution in November.

This political involvement of women was relatively new and therefore unexpected. Pre-revolutionary Russia was patriarchal in a typically feudal way and, indeed, much less advanced than several other European countries of the time with respect to the rights of women and the social constraints on their actions. Women were not allowed to vote or serve in elected office or, indeed, hold any public position. They were generally relegated to housework and social reproduction and, regardless of social class, were not seen as able to hold and control assets and generally did not earn independent incomes. At the end of the 19th century, only 13 per cent of Russian women were estimated to be literate.

However, towards the later part of the 19th century, there was an expansion of urban factories that led to some employment of poor women, typically very young women or girls who were often migrants from rural areas, in a classic pattern of early industrialisation. Such employment was often arduous and low-paid, but it also meant that women were able to venture out of their homes and achieve some degree of economic autonomy rather than living as “dependants” performing only unpaid work at home.

**The first women revolutionaries**  
At the same time, from the late 1860s and 1870s, there was some ferment in the upper and middle classes as well, as educated women from elite families became attracted to the nascent social democratic movement, seeking relief from sociopolitical absolutism. There were campaigns for women’s education and women’s suffrage, as well as demands for social changes resulting from more attention being given to “the women’s questions”. Women like Vera Zasulich, Maria Spiridonova and Vera Figner, who had typically engaged in higher studies abroad as they were not allowed to do so in Russia, indeed saw themselves as revolutionaries. Vera Figner’s autobiography was entitled *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, and as a member of the terrorist group Narodnaya Volya (People’s Will), she applauded the assassination in 1881 of Tsar Alexander II, who, ironically, had begun the process of opening up the political space through some liberal reforms.

Others like Catherine Breshkovskaya were influenced by the anarchist Peter Kropotkin and became Narodniks. Catherine Breshkovskaya advocated more peaceful means to political transformation but nevertheless had to spend decades in tsarist prisons in



Siberia. While she subsequently became strongly opposed to the Bolshevik regime and lived in exile in Prague after the revolution, she and other Narodnik women were important in changing both attitudes and aspirations of women involved in the turbulent Russian politics of the time.

Several other women, such as Nadezhda Krupskaya (Lenin’s wife), Alexandra Kollontai, Yelena Stassova, Inessa Armand and Konkordia Samiulova, were active in the struggles for women’s equality and became important figures of the Bolshevik leadership. In the decade leading up to 1917, there was tension between such women and feminists identified as “bourgeois women” because of Bolshevik fears (echoed over the subsequent century in so many other progressive movements) that the latter’s focus on women’s emancipation rather than class struggle would divide the working class. Among the Bolshevik women, “the women’s question” was clearly subordinated to the need for the working class as a whole to overthrow the tsarist state and usher in socialism, which it was believed would simultaneously bring about gender equality. Indeed, an attempt in 1914 by Bolshevik women to bring out a journal oriented to working women (Rabotnitsa) carefully avoided “feminist” issues, but even so it lasted for only seven issues, although it was revived after the revolution.

But these leaders were only a small part of the huge numbers of women who became essential to the mass uprising that culminated in the revolution. Alexandra Kollontai described them in her memoirs: “If one looks back into the past, one can see them, these masses of nameless heroines whom October found living in starving cities, in impoverished villages plundered by war.... A scarf on their head (very rarely, as yet, a red kerchief), a worn skirt, a patched winter jacket.... Young and old, women workers and soldiers’ wives, peasant women and housewives from among the city poor. More rarely, much more rarely in those days, office workers and women in the professions, educated and cultured women. But there were also women from the intelligentsia among those who carried the Red Flag to the October victory—teachers, office employees, young students at high schools and universities, women doctors. They marched cheerfully, selflessly, purpose-

fully. They went wherever they were sent. To the front? They put on a soldier’s cap and became fighters in the Red Army. If they put on red arm-bands, then they were hurrying off to the first-aid stations to help the Red front against Kerensky at Gatchina. They worked in army communications. They worked cheerfully, filled with the belief that something momentous was happening, and that we are all small cogs in the one class of revolution.”

This significant force of women had an impact during the upheavals of 1917: in July, women were granted the right to vote and to hold public office, and the first such vote was for the Constituent Assembly in November, when in several areas, women who voted outnumbered men. After the Bolshevik takeover, the egalitarian ideals of the revolution inevitably affected the attitudes and policies of the nascent Soviet state towards women as it sought to build a society free from oppression and inequality.

The Bolshevik leadership explicitly recognised the urgent need for women’s emancipation under socialism. Lenin himself argued: “The female half of the human race is doubly oppressed under capitalism. The working woman and the peasant woman are oppressed by capital, but over and above that, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, they remain, firstly, deprived of some rights because the law does not give them equality with men; and secondly—and this is the main thing—they remain in ‘household bondage’, they continue to be ‘household slaves’, for they are overburdened with the drudgery of the most squalid and backbreaking and stultifying toil in the kitchen and the individual family household.”

#### State recognition of women’s rights

Women’s active participation in paid work was seen as central to breaking out of that bondage. A range of legal changes reinforced women’s economic autonomy: changes in property relations; an end to restrictions on women’s mobility after marriage; equal rights across genders to own land and function as household heads. Social changes were also mandated by new laws. Marriage was made an entirely secular process, enabled through registration, and within a decade even that requirement was removed, while divorce was made much easier. Women were given free access to abortion, and no legal distinction

was made between children born within a marriage and those born out of marriage. Paid maternity leave was introduced and more maternity wards were set up in hospitals. These were significant advances not only over Russia’s previous patterns but in relation to other countries at the time, and it is likely that this extent of state recognition of women’s rights did not exist in any other society of the time, including in Europe.

The first decade after the revolution also experienced a major cultural flowering as newly liberated women experienced and expressed their emancipation in all sorts of creative ways. They must have been heady days for women, who were beginning to benefit from some of the fruits of the social and political changes brought about to a substantial extent through their own efforts and political involvement.

It is true, unfortunately, that some of these significant gains were relatively short-lived as the patriarchy inherent in society and the Soviet bureaucracy under Stalin began a pushback. The importance of family stability and the joys of motherhood were once again reiterated; the gendered division of labour within households was reaffirmed even though women were also expected to work outside, leading to significant double burdens of work; the legal notion of illegitimate children was reintroduced; divorce was made more difficult and expensive. Sexual freedoms were greatly curbed; homosexuality (which had been decriminalised in 1922) was once again made illegal in 1933; and by 1936 even abortion was banned.

By the time of the Second World War, women were once again the sufferers of events beyond their control, buffeted by decisions and policies that they neither determined nor benefited from. The sacrifices made by Soviet women during the War were enormous—but this time they were less recognised.

However, the emphasis on women’s education and work participation continued, and that meant that some of the gains made in the early years after the revolution simply could not be reversed. Even in the late 20th century, when perestroika had already begun to dismantle many Soviet structures, women in the Soviet Union were in general more educated, more involved in a range of professions and better paid in their work than their counterparts in Western capitalist societies. The extent to which much of this was dependent upon policies of the Soviet state to ensure some economic rights of women became evident after the collapse of socialism, when the regression to traditional gender roles and the increasing gender gaps in occupation and pay became even worse than in other market-oriented societies.

What this century-long experience suggests is that the process of moving towards gender equality—and thereby emancipating and empowering both women and men—is a long, complex and uneven road, in which there can be twists and turns, bumps and reversals, even within a forward movement over time. But there are shining moments of inspiration that suggest what can be achieved—and the decade after the Russian Revolution provides one example of that.

# Of virtual parleys in face-to-face proximity

Sandhya Vasudev

For an ordinary mortal, getting an appointment with the Prime Minister is next to impossible, but the same may seem probable with the local MLA or MLC, and definitely possible with the ward corporator. Such conjectures may seem neither here nor there but the point is they pale in comparison when the issue of finding the correct time to talk to the very own husband crops up.

The day begins with a warm message of “good morning” from him on WhatsApp through a picture suiting the day of the week. The image may be of a flower, scenery, god or guru. As I bump into him—busy preparing his morning dose of tea in the kitchen, whereas I am eager for my coffee—he seems to hardly notice me. Perhaps he is upset that he has to prepare his own tea—a task since his recent retirement—and I leave him discreetly to attend to my other morning chores. The sound of his placing his cup on the table is signal enough for me to enter the kitchen for preparation of my coffee.

As I come out, I see his eyes glued to the laptop screen scanning the latest news. At the same time, his cellphone curries equal favour with him, pulling him with alluring ring tones, one each for WhatsApp, SMS, current news and what not!

I settle down at my spot and boot my laptop. Even as I read a snippet of news, I suddenly remember that it is the last day to pay the property tax and I call out to him. Getting no reply, I simply reel off the reminder and turn my attention to the next snippet. It doesn’t matter to him that he had asked me to remind him of this two days ago, and like a scheduler, I had snoozed myself to give regular reminders.

As I return from my daily routine of college, I see him again staring at the laptop intent on his online trading activity. The television set too is turned on for the latest market news. I am fresh with some fun news from college, and I address him. He nods, and encouraged thus I start narrating the funny episode which had my class in splits. I finish and wait for his reaction. He exclaims, “Oh, a neat 3,000 rupees profit!” (The amount



varies each day). I congratulate him and go about my domestic chores. Lunch is consumed at a hurried pace as he is ex-

cited about the fluctuations in share prices. The delicious rasam, bisibele bhath and mango syrup are consumed like tablets and tonic, and by the time I sit down for lunch after my brief prayers he is already done. I somehow have to tell him about the grocery that is needed urgently. He has already gone to his laptop and by the time I clear the table and get done with the kitchen wrap-up, it’s curtains down on trading time. I breathe a sigh of relief—but barely—as he picks up his cell phone with anticipation and excitement written over his face.

He soon enters into a sort of cataleptic stupor, and before I lose it, I call out to him, and express the urgency of the grocery item. He smiles and I’m confused as I’ve only asked him to get gingelly oil for the puja lamp.

“Please get two packets,” I say, and he laughs. Disturbed by this seeming mockery I nudge him and he looks at me with a vacant expression. I realise he hasn’t heard a single word I’d uttered and give up. I message him on WhatsApp and then he replies, “Okay”.

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## IAF Chief to review passing out parade of Sri Lankan Air Force

NEW DELHI: India's Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa is going to Sri Lanka on an official tour from December 11 to 14.

During his visit, the Chief of Air Staff is scheduled to hold meetings with the officials of Sri Lanka Air Force > Sri Lanka Air Force and deliberate on the matters of mutual interest to both the nations related to regional security. He will also review the Commissioning, Award of Wings and Passing Out Parade of the Lankan Air Force, which is scheduled for December 14. The occasion will be the first in Sri Lanka history to witness a foreign Air Force Chief reviewing the parade ceremony.

According to a statement by the Indian



defence ministry, the visit would provide impetus towards increasing defence cooperation between the two Air Forces and pave the way for greater interaction in the future.

## Born with golden spoon, Cong. leaders don't understand poverty: PM Modi

PATAN: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday took a jibe at Congress leaders and said "they are born with a golden spoon and will never understand what poverty is.."

Addressing a rally in Gujarat's Patan, Prime Minister Modi said, "When we went to the farmers, did Krishi Mahotsav, we did not go out helping the rich. We went among the poor." "Sadly, Congress leaders are born with a golden spoon they will never understand what poverty is," he said. Prime Minister Modi also stated that he had met the state farmers and advised them to educate their children. "During peak summer, I would go to the villages of Gujarat and ask parents to educate their children. Whose children were they? Were they Ambani's children? No. They were children of the poor. We are



working for poor," he said. Further lashing out at the Congress party, Prime Minister Modi said former's basic knowledge about agriculture is very poor. "Our farmers work hard and grow potato. If at all the Congress comes to power, there will be no need to do that because their leader says we will produce potatoes in factories. Congress' basic knowledge about agriculture is so poor," he added.

The crucial elections are being seen as a prestige battle for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which has been ruling the state for last 22 years, and a litmus test for the Congress.

The first phase of polling was held on December 9 and recorded a voter turnout of 68 per cent.

The second-phase voting will be held on December 14. The votes will be counted on December 18.

## Manmohan Singh rubbishes claims of colluding with Pak to fix Gujarat polls

NEW DELHI: Former prime minister Manmohan Singh on Monday quashed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's accusation about the former's clandestine meeting with Pakistani officials, and expressed 'anguish' at 'the canards being spread' by the latter.

"I am deeply pained and anguished by the falsehood and canards being spread to score political points in a lost cause by none less than Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi. Fearing imminent defeat in Gujarat, desperation of Prime Minister to hurl every abuse and lath on to every straw is palpable," Singh said in an official statement.

In one of his campaign rallies yesterday, Prime Minister Modi alleged Pakistan's interference in the Gujarat elections. Claiming that



Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, former prime minister Manmohan Singh and former vice president Hamid Ansari met with

Pakistan's High Commissioner and Foreign Minister at Aiyar's house just before the elections, the Prime Minister sought an explanation from the opposition.

Terming it a lie, Singh issued a clarification as follows, "I reject the innuendos and falsehoods as I did not discuss Gujarat elections with anyone else at the dinner hosted by Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar as alleged by Shri Modi. Nor was the Gujarat issue raised by anyone else present at the dinner."

The former prime minister, in turn raked up Prime Minister Modi's visit to Pakistan after the terror attacks in Udhampur and Gurdaspur, and sought explanation from him for the same.

"Let me remind Sh. Narendra Modi that he had gone to Pakistan

uninvited after the terrorist attacks in Udhampur and Gurdaspur. Let him also tell the country the reason for inviting the infamous ISI of Pakistan to our strategic Air Base in Pathankot to investigate a terror attack that emanated from Pakistan," the statement read.

Calling out the Prime Minister's "compromised track record on fighting terrorism," Singh said that his own track record over last five decades cannot be questioned by the former "to gain lost political ground."

Singh also demanded an apology from the Prime Minister for the grave accusation made by him

"I sincerely hope that he will apologize to the nation for his ill thought transgression to restore the dignity of the office he occupies," Singh added.

## Hardik Patel holds motorcycle rally in Ahmedabad

AHMEDABAD: Patidar agitation leader Hardik Patel on Monday along with his supporters took out a motorcycle rally in Ahmedabad ahead of the second phase of Gujarat Assembly polls on December 14. In the rally, Patel, the convener of Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS), expressed his confidence in winning the elections.

Patel told ANI, "I am getting very good response from the people and I am very confident."

Last month, Patel made headlines after he claimed that the Congress has agreed to give reservation to the Patidar community, if the party comes to power in Gujarat. Patidars or Patels are an important group in Gujarat, who enjoy great political dominance in the state. Often regarded as the deciding factor in the elections, the community has largely voted for the BJP since 1990s, but a section is miffed over a lack of quota in government jobs and education. The first phase of polling took place on Saturday and recorded a voter turnout of 68 percent. The second-phase of voting will be held on December 14. The votes will be counted on December 18.

## MoRTH reviews progress of India-Nepal road connectivity projects

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) held a meeting last week to review the progress of the India-Nepal road connectivity projects. The meeting was attended by officials from the MoRTH including, National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Commerce.

The Mechi River Bridge project which is currently being implemented at the Indo-Nepal border is on track. A Letter of Intent (LOI) is likely to be issued to the contractor shortly.

The project will begin from February 2018, an official statement read. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has received bids for restoration of Piprakothi-Raxaul Road (NH 57A). The award of contract for the repair is likely to be undertaken by this December-end, the statement added. The NHAI has done a survey of Mirganj Bridge, also located on NH 57A.

A proposal for a temporary bridge for strengthening would be formulated in January 2018.

## CENTRE TO ADVANCE UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

NEW DELHI: Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Monday said that the Government is committed towards advancing the agenda of Universal Health Coverage in the country and have therefore rolled out various initiatives to meet this aim. The Union Health Minister and Minister of State for Finance, S.P. Shukla at a function to observe Universal Health Coverage Day, 2017 today launched "LaQshya ??????" - Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative, a safe delivery mobile application for health workers who manage normal and complicated deliveries in the peripheral areas, and also released the operational guidelines for Obstetric High Dependency Units (HDUs) and Intensive Care Units (ICUs).

Addressing the participants, Nadda stated that this year is significant as the National Health Policy 2017 has been approved which envisages the attainment of the highest possible level of health

without anyone having to face financial hardship as a consequence. The Government has taken concrete steps to reduce the Out Of Pocket Expenditure (OOPE), he added.

Mission Indradhanush, one of the largest global public health initiatives was launched in 2014. In its four phases till date, MI has successfully reached over 25 million children in over 528 districts. "We are also focussed on increasing the basket of vaccines. Since 2014, we have launched Rotavirus vaccine, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), and the Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine, and also the JE vaccine for adults," he said. "The Pradhan Mantri Dialysis Program has also been launched where 1.43 lakhs patients have availed free services from 1,069 Dialysis Units and under Free Drugs and Diagnostics Program; AMRIT outlets nearly 47 Lakh patients have benefited from AMRIT Pharmacies through purchase of subsidi-



zied medicines", he added. Nadda also informed that to provide comprehensive primary care, the Government has announced transforming 1.5 lakh sub health centres to health and wellness centres. "The Ministry is now moving towards provision of com-

prehensive primary care through the Health and Wellness Centres", he said. He further stated that in a step towards provision of comprehensive primary care, the Government has initiated universal screening of common NCDs such as diabetes,

hypertension and common cancers at the sub-centre and primary health centre. "This will enable the strengthening of preventive and promotive health, improve patient referral and access to secondary care services," he said. The Union Health Minis-

ter also averred that the Government has been at the forefront to strengthen the tertiary care and as such six new AIIMS are functioning and six will come up in due course.

Reiterating the commitment of the Government towards Universal Health Coverage, Minister of State for Finance, S.P. Shukla, who is also present at the event stated that the Government is committed to providing the resources for achieving Universal Health coverage.

He further said that the Government has increased the budget of the Health Ministry for 2017-18 by 27.7 percent. "The Government has also through the 14th Finance Commission increased devolution from 32 percent to 42 percent of divisible pool - an increase estimated at Rs. 25 lakh crore over award period to provide States with greater flexibility and autonomy to design, implement and finance schemes," MoS Shukla said.

## Rahul Gandhi elected as Congress president

NEW DELHI: Rahul Gandhi has been formally declared as the Congress Party president.

Confirming the elevation, Congress' Central Election Authority Chairman Mullanpally Ramchandran said the committee had received 89 nomination papers, all proposing the name of Rahul for the coveted post.

"Eighty-nine nomination papers proposing the name of Rahul Gandhi for the Congress president have been received. All the nomination papers have been found valid.

Since the withdrawal date/time is over and as there is only one candidate, as per Article XVIII (d) of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress, I hereby declare Rahul Gandhi elected as the president of the Indian National Congress," said the party's returning officer in a statement.

Rahul filed his nomination papers for the post of the party chief at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters on December 4.

Rahul has succeeded his mother Sonia Gandhi, who held the post for nearly two decades.



## HC seeks Delhi govt's response on Chautala's plea for parole

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Monday issued a notice to the state government to file a response on a parole petition moved by former Haryana chief minister Om Prakash Chautala, who is serving a ten-year jail term in a teachers' recruitment scam case.

Chautala wanted a two-month parole to look after his ailing wife.

The court had listed the matter for further hearing on December 14. Earlier on March, the Delhi High Court had cancelled the parole which was granted to Chautala after he violated the terms and conditions of the parole. The police raised objections that he was holding public meetings in violation of his parole conditions.

The High Court also observed that Chautala was misusing his parole by attending public meetings across Hary-



ana. The Delhi High Court had earlier granted three weeks parole to Chautala, on health grounds. The court had also granted parole to Chautala to attend his grandson's engagement function.

Chautala, his son Ajay Singh Chautala and three others, are serving jail term in the case. On January 22, 2013, a trial court had sentenced 55 accused in the case. Among those convicted were 82-year-old Chautala's then political adviser Sher Singh Badshahi, the then Officer on Special Duty (OSD) Vidya Dhar, IAS, and then Primary Education Director Sanjiv Kumar, besides 50 others. A total of 55 persons were convicted under the JBT scam for illegally recruiting 3,206 teachers in Haryana in 2000.

The father-son duo, including two IAS officers, were among 55 persons convicted on January 16, 2013 by the trial court.

## India's first EMC is coming to Andhra Pradesh

HYDERABAD: India's first Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) will be coming to Andhra Pradesh.

The Government of India, through the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY), had announced in 2012 about setting up an EMC in India, with grant-in-aid for establishing such clusters.

An EMC is designed and developed for providing facilities and amenities for manufacturing mobiles and allied products.

In 2015, the Andhra Pradesh government announced the first exclusive mobile and electronic manufacturing cluster in the new capital, Amaravati.

A Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) called Sri Venkateswara Mobiles and Electronics Manufacturing Hub Private Limited was formed. The foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the same year. The SPV Company has applied for the final approval of the project. Three major Indian mobile manufacturers - Celkon, Karbonn and Lava have come forward to establish their units in the EMC.

An anchor unit has been formed in the



name of Seven Hills Digital Park Private Limited for the three companies. It will be involved in manufacturing of accessories to mobile phones and other related electronic equipment.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has allotted 113.27 acres of land for the new cluster, through Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC).

Nara Lokesh, Minister of Information Technology and Communications, had said that the new EMC is being developed at the cost of Rs 104 crore.

Around 50,000 jobs will be created every year in the cluster.

## Emojis aid in assessing cancer patients' overall well-being: Study

Our love for using emojis to accompany everything we do or say online is actually turning out to be a boon for medical science.

A study has found that using emojis instead of traditional emotional scales may help in assessing cancer patients' physical, emotional and overall quality of life. "Cancer patients receive complex medical care, including surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and targeted agents that may result in physical, emotional, financial and spiritual consequences that can negatively impact quality of life," said Carrie Thompson, a hematologist at Mayo Clinic in the US.

"These quality of life factors play an important role in predicting survival and determining the best treatment options," said Thompson, lead author of the research. Gauging a patient's quality of life and performance status can be challenging, because it typically involves completing lengthy paper questionnaires, which can be burdensome for patients and may be inaccurate.

"In our study, we wanted to determine if wearable technology data could be correlated with traditional, validated patient-reported outcome measures in cancer patients," said Thompson.

Researchers recruited 115 patients with lymphoma and multiple myeloma with expected lifespans of less than five years. All patients were provided with an Apple Watch and downloaded a study app at enrollment.

Researchers collected baseline data, including questions regarding physical function, fatigue, sleep, social role, function and quality of life.

In addition, researchers developed two electronic emoji scales to measure quality of life. "Emojis are a near universal, popular form of communication, understandable by diverse populations, including those with low health literacy," said Thompson. "There are several studies that attempt to predict individual well-being based on analysis of social media postings on Facebook and Twitter, but these studies do not focus on emojis as a mechanism for patients to express how they are feeling on a given day."



## Living in cold regions may up risk of developing cancer: Study

While many people may love the cold and snowy landscapes, a study has warned those living in areas with low temperatures saying that they may be at an increased risk of developing cancer. According to the study, those who live in cold regions, such as Denmark and Norway, had among the highest incidences of cancer in the world.

Researchers suggest that there is an evolutionary relationship between adaptation at extreme environmental conditions – like cold and high altitude – and increased cancer risk in humans.

"The findings of this study provide evidence that genetic

variants found to be beneficial in extreme environments, can also predispose for cancer," said Konstantinos Voskarides, from the University of Cyprus.

"Cell resistance at low temperatures and at high altitude probably increases the probability for malignancy. This effect hardly could be filtered out by natural selection since most cancers appear later on in age after most people have their children," said Voskarides.

Researchers focused on the effect of low temperatures, either within Arctic/Scandinavian climates or high altitudes.

Their analyses focused on

the relationship between cancer risk and local average annual temperatures. They concluded that the extremely cold environment contributed to the cancer risk.

For the study, they carefully examined the data of world-wide cancer incidence.

They probed the available literature bibliographic cancer incidence and genetic data for human populations living at extreme cold and extreme high altitudes.

A striking pattern began to emerge, with the highest incidence of certain cancers linked to those populations living in the coldest environments.

Additionally, analysis of 186 human populations showed a great linearity of high cancer incidence with the lower the environmental temperature.

"The data shows that these populations exhibit extremely high cancer incidence, especially for lung, breast and colorectal cancer," said Voskarides.

"This is the first study that provides evidence that high cancer risk may be a result of evolutionary adaptation in certain environmental conditions," he said.

The study was published in the journal *Molecular Biology and Evolution*.

## Painful menstrual cramps? Acupressure app may help, says study

Women all over the world don't dread their period as much as they do the horrible cramps that accompany them. Every girl and woman has different types of cramps, ranging from bearable to extremely painful – while some have it mild, others have the kinds where it literally renders them incapable of walking.

While many experts have recommended practicing Yoga to ease the pain, a recent study has suggested women with intense period pain may get more relief from smartphone app-guided acupressure than with typical medical treatments like common painkillers.

Some previous research has linked acupressure – which uses precise finger placements at pressure points throughout the body to relieve pain – with reduced discomfort from menstrual cramps. To see if a smartphone app could help women self-administer acupressure for cramps, researchers randomly assigned 221 women to use the app or to stick with usual care for six months. By the end of the study, women who used the acupressure app reported significantly less menstrual pain than women who didn't, the study found. "Because women with menstrual pain already practice self-management, an app for acupressure can be easily added," said senior study author Dr. Claudia Witt of the Institute for Complementary and Integrative Medicine at the University of Zurich in Switzerland.

"It is wise to try first non-pharmacological interventions, with a good safety profile, before using a painkiller that can have side effects," Witt said by email.

The target audience for the app, young women in their 20s and 30s, already use their phones for a variety of different tasks, making it natural for them to consider an app that teaches them how to use pressure points to ease menstrual pain, researchers note in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*.

Witt's team developed their own app, called AKUD, based on a consensus of acupressure experts from China, Germany and the U.S. For the current study, the researchers offered the app to women ages 18 to 34 in Berlin between 2012 and 2015.

All of the women reported their own pain levels for menstrual cramps on a scale of zero to 10, with 10 being the worst. At the start of the study, women reported pain of at least 6 on this scale.

Each participant was given an app to use for six months, but only half of the women had an app with an acupressure program. The rest had a "sham" app that didn't offer any new ways of treating pain from cramps. By the time women in the study went through their third menstrual cycle, participants using the acupressure app reported average pain scores of 4.4, compared with 5.0 for the other women in the study.

By the sixth menstrual cycle, women with the acupressure app reported pain scores that were typically 1.4 points lower, a large enough gap to represent a clinically meaningful difference.

With acupressure, women were also less likely to use pain medications and reported fewer days with pain during their monthly menstrual cycles, the researchers also found.

One limitation of the study is that most of the participants were highly educated and prone to intense menstrual cramps, which means the results might not represent what would happen for all women experiencing menstrual pain, the authors note.

Even so, the results suggest that an acupressure app may offer some women a good approach to managing menstrual pain, said Caroline Smith, an acupressure researcher at Western Sydney University in Australia who wasn't involved in the study but who is developing a mass-distribution app for this purpose.

"Adherence suggests the app was acceptable, and the reduction in pain over time was clinically meaningful with few side effects," Smith said by email. "This app is relevant to women who are looking for evidenced-based self-care options to manage their pain, although as the authors point out further research to address a more generalisable group of women is needed."

## STUDY ASSOCIATES PREMATURE BALDNESS WITH INCREASED HEART DISEASE RISK IN MEN

Baldness, also called hair loss, has become a common issue nowadays, particularly in men.

Earlier, the problem was associated with old age, however, the problem is starting to affect the young as well, mainly due to changing lifestyle. While previous studies have often associated early baldness with some health problems, a recent study has warned that male-pattern baldness and premature greying of hair is linked to more than five-fold risk of heart disease before the age of 40 years than obesity.

Obesity is associated with a four-fold risk of early heart disease.

Study author Dr Sachin Patil from the UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India said the

incidence of coronary artery disease in young men is increasing, but cannot be explained by traditional risk factors. "Premature greying and androgenic alopecia (male-pattern baldness) correlate well with vascular age irrespective of chronological age and are plausible risk factors for coronary artery disease," Patil added. The study investigated the association of premature hair greying and alopecia patterns in young Indian men with coronary artery disease, which included 790 men, aged less than 40 years, with coronary artery disease and 1,270 age-matched healthy men who acted as a control group.

All the participants had a clinical history taken, electrocardiogram (ECG), echocardiography, blood tests



and coronary angiogram.

The findings indicated that young men with coronary artery disease had a higher prevalence of premature greying (50 percent versus 30 per-

cent) and male-pattern baldness (49 percent versus 27 percent) compared to healthy controls.

After adjusting for age and other cardiovascular risk factors, male-

pattern baldness was associated with a 5.6 times greater risk of coronary artery disease (95 percent confidence interval [CI] 4.0-7.8, p<0.0001) and premature greying was associated with a 5.3 times greater risk (95 percent CI 3.7-7.5, p<0.0001).

Principal investigator Dr Kamal Sharma said, "Baldness and premature greying should be considered risk factors for coronary artery disease." Dr K Sarat Chandra, CSI President Elect, said, "It is an established fact that premature coronary artery disease is becoming more common in India with each passing day. We do not know the exact reasons behind this." The research is presented at the 69th Annual Conference of the Cardiological Society of India (CSI) in Kolkata.

## USING NICOTINE PATCH DURING PREGNANCY SAFER THAN SMOKING, SAYS STUDY

Smoking is a savage addiction and a habit expecting mothers find extremely tough to get rid of. Tobacco use during pregnancy is related to many effects on health and reproduction, in addition to the general health effects of tobacco. Numerous studies have shown that tobacco use is a significant factor in miscarriages among pregnant smokers, and that it contributes to a number of other threats to the health of the fetus. Carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke can keep the developing baby from getting enough oxygen.

A new study, however, has said that while nicotine may not be completely safe for a pregnant mother's foetus, nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is safer than smoking for women who are not able to quit on their own. Researchers suggest that the study, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, should give doctors the confidence about the safety of NRT, a medically approved way to ingest nicotine to help quit smoking.

The therapy includes the adhesive patch, chewing gum, lozenges, nose spray, or inhaler. "Smoking during pregnancy is the most significant, preventable risk factor for poor maternal and infant health outcomes," according to Yael Bar-Zeev, Head of the Ben-

Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) Centre for Smoking Cessation and Prevention in Israel. "Clinicians worldwide, including in the United States, report that they prescribe NRT at low levels due to lack of confidence and safety concerns. However, behavioural counselling combined with medication is the most effective smoking cessation strategy," Bar-Zeev said. Predominant guidelines worldwide recommend NRT for pregnant women who have been unable to quit smoking without medication.

However, prescription instructions such as "only if women are motivated", "only disperse a two weeks supply" or "under close supervision" send mixed messages.

The researchers noted that while using NRT during pregnancy improves smoking cessation rates, they may not adequately account for higher nicotine metabolism during pregnancy, and therefore may not adequately treat withdrawal symptoms.

"The most important guidance for NRT in pregnancy is to use the lowest possible dose that is effective," said Bar-Zeev.

"However, to be effective, women should use as much as needed to deal with cravings," Bar-Zeev added.

## TEENS LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL DUE TO DEPRESSION: STUDY

Older teens struggling with depression are more than twice as likely to drop out of high school as peers without that mental illness or those who recovered from a bout of depression earlier in life, Canadian researchers say. Understanding that current or recent depression raises dropout risk may encourage schools to put a higher priority on mental health services, the study team writes in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. "This is the first study of its kind to look at depression symptoms in the year before dropout," lead author Dr. Veronique Dupere, associate professor at the school of psycho-education at the University of Montreal, told Reuters Health by phone. "The role of depression in deciding to drop out was underestimated in previous studies because the timing was not properly considered. Depression is not stable. It tends to come and go," she said. For the new analysis, researchers asked 6,773 students in 12 disadvantaged high schools with high dropout rates in and around Montreal to complete a

screening questionnaire at the beginning of the school year. The brief assessment, conducted from 2012 to 2015, measured students' risk for dropout, and also asked for their sociodemographic information and their family's employment, education and structure. During a second round of interviews one year later, a subset of students were asked to participate in face-to-face meetings with a graduate student who assessed their mental health. Students who dropped out of school in the year following their initial screening were also assessed for their mental health. Researchers compared these students to a similar group, also in the program, who didn't drop out. Almost a quarter of the 183 adolescents who dropped out of school had clinically significant depression in the few months before quitting, researchers found. Dupere said rates of conduct disorders and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) were higher among the dropouts and the matched at-risk peers than among the average students. But ADHD was

not a factor significantly distinguishing dropouts and matched at-risk students, although conduct disorder might be. In 2015, an estimated three million adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the U.S. had experienced at least one major depressive episode in the past year, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. For many individuals, major depression can end up limiting their ability to carry out major life activities. "School dropout portends other bad outcomes, like the inability to gain employment, involvement in substance abuse and problems with the juvenile justice system," said Dr. Laura Mufson of Columbia University Medical Center in New York City, who wasn't involved in the study. More than one in eight young people ages 16 to 24 are neither working nor in school, according to the Social Science Research Council's Measure of America project. That estimate is based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2013 American Community Survey. "I'm excited about the study because we need data like

this," Dr. Tamar Mendelson of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Maryland, told Reuters Health by phone. "I think the problem of school dropout is really critical," said Mendelson, who wasn't involved in the new study. "Depression and other mental health issues can sometimes fall through the cracks. Administrators may not understand all the issues and the best course to take. Data like this is helpful in highlighting the risks associated between depression and school dropout." One limitation of the study is that a lot of teenagers have anxiety along with depression, Mufson noted. "The researchers looked at ADHD and conduct disorders. They left out anxiety and it's highly linked to school dropout," she said in a phone interview. Dupere emphasized that no cause-and-effect conclusions can be drawn from her research. "I believe studies like the one we did should be replicated in other places, as well, to see if the results are the same."

## AIIB gives nod to USD 250 mn loan to China

NEW DELHI: The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has approved a USD 250-million loan for a project that will reduce China's coal use by about 650,000 tons annually through connecting about 216,750 households in rural villages to the natural gas distribution network, the bank said in an official release on Monday.

"China's commitment to reducing its reliance on coal will change lives and improve the environment, and that is why we are investing in a project aligned with their ambitious plan," AIIB President Jin Liqun said. Through investment in the project, AIIB is also showing commitment to help members to meet their environmental and development goals, especially their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Upon completion and after subtracting the emissions of burning natural gas, the Beijing Air Quality Improvement and Coal Replacement Project is expected to reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by 595,700 tons and particulate matter by 3,700 tons.

The investment in the project represents AIIB's first corporate loan. The project, undertaken by the Beijing Gas Group Company, will involve the construction of natural gas distribution networks in villages and low-pressure gas pipelines and household connections. The project is scheduled for completion in 2021. "Enabling parts of rural China to transition off coal will have a marked impact on the quality of life for Beijing's residents," D.J. Pandian AIIB Vice President and Chief Investment Officer said while highlighting that the investment demonstrates the bank's commitment to helping members transition to cleaner sources of energy and its focus on enhancing the economic and social viability of Asia.

The coal-to-gas conversion will make rural households less reliant on coal for cooking and heating, improving indoor and outdoor air quality and lessening the risk of respiratory, and cardiovascular diseases in impacted regions, including Beijing.

## Tata Motors to hike passenger vehicle prices from January '18

NEW DELHI: Automobile major Tata Motors on Monday announced the company's decision to hike prices of its entire passenger vehicles range by up to Rs. 25,000, starting January 2018, attributed to rising input costs. "The changing market conditions, rising input costs and various external economic factors have compelled us to consider the price increase. We are optimistic on maintaining our growth trajectory in the coming year on the back of our robust product portfolio like TIAGO, HEXA, TIGOR and the recently launched NEXON," said Mayank Pareek, President, Passenger Vehicle Business, Tata Motors.

The introductory prices of the recently launched lifestyle compact SUV, NEXON, which comes with Level NEX Design, Performance and Technology features, will be ending by December 31, and this entire range will also witness a price hike from January 2018 by up to Rs. 25,000.

## Ola appoints Viraj Chouhan as its Chief Communications Officer

NEW DELHI: Taxi aggregator Ola on Monday announced the appointment of Viraj Chouhan as its Chief Communications Officer (CCO).

A corporate communications veteran, Viraj brings with him over 20 years of experience across global brands like MTS, Coca-Cola, and Bharti Airtel.

He was most recently, Executive Director of Corporate Communications at MTS India.

As Chief Communications Officer, Viraj would be reporting to co-founder and CEO, Bhavish Aggarwal. Viraj will be based in Gurgaon, shuttling between the Millennium City and Bangalore. Anand Subramanian, who was leading the Communications mandate thus far, will be moving into a new role within Ola.

"I'm excited to welcome Viraj onboard to lead Ola's Corporate Communications efforts. I'm looking forward to working with him to share the Ola story and vision across customers, driver partners, employees, and the nation and world at large! Our aim is to build Ola as a brand and organisation that every customer identifies with and takes pride in," said co-founder and CEO at Ola, Bhavish Aggarwal. "I am thrilled to join Ola and be part of this growing internet conglomerate. Ola has not only positively elevated India's mobility experience, but is also a key driver of our country's digital economy at large. Ola's mission of building mobility for a billion people will have a lasting impact on our nation's development. And that is what makes the Ola story so inspiring and deserving, to be taken to every stakeholder and citizen. I'm eager to join the Ola team in this mission," said Viraj Chouhan on his appointment.

Viraj started his career in Communications with Ogilvy and Mather Public Relations and went on to become the Executive Director, Corporate Communications at MTS India. Prior to joining MTS, Viraj headed the brand public relations function within the Corporate Communications team of Coca-Cola India and South West Asia across multi-country business units (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh) for all the beverage brands.

# Rado launches new HyperChrome Collection in Bengaluru

BENGALURU: Rado, the Swiss watch brand known for its innovative use of design and materials, unveiled the new Rado HyperChrome collection with global brand ambassador Hrithik Roshan at an event in Bangalore on Monday.

The official launch of brand's new timepieces took place Rado boutique at UB City mall. Situated in a prominent location at city's most premium mall, the boutique offers an attractive selection of Rado's latest collections.

Sporting a Rado watch from the new collection, brand ambassador Hrithik Roshan stated, "Being a time keeper and a watch aficionado myself, I feel excited to launch the new HyperChrome collection by Rado at its newly opened boutique at UB



City mall, Bangalore. The brand has been an important catalyst in making watch industry smart, relevant and chic. I feel ecstatic to be a part

of this new collection and congratulate Rado on setting a new benchmark in the watch industry. This innovative range is my personal favourite because every timepiece reiterates my personal sense of style."

"I feel delighted with the launch of the new HyperChrome collection. Through these timepieces, Rado has once again shown its ultimate dedication to creativity and innovation. With the belief of pushing itself to challenge the boundaries of traditional watchmaking, Rado has successfully mastered the art of innovative materials and technology, resulting in the creation of pieces that were once believed to be impossible," said Rado CEO Matthias Breschan.

"With their new collection, Rado

has set a benchmark by launching their signature all day, every occasion timepiece. We hope that we keep receiving the love from the Indian market which helps us to expand more. This new launch in Bangalore city is like one step forward to win the hearts of all watch lovers who can choose from the wide and exquisite range of timepieces that the brand has to offer," he added.

The HyperChrome collection includes the best of both the worlds. Being stylishly understated, the collection offers an elegant take on Rado's distinctive new designs.

The new Rado boutique in Bengaluru is located at 108, First Level, The Collection, UB City mall. It is open seven days a week from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

## Vahdam Teas raises USD 1.4 mn towards marketing, customer acquisition

NEW DELHI: Global direct-to-consumer tea brand Teas">Vahdam Teas has announced raising of USD 1.4 million in Series A funding round led by Fireside Ventures.

The investment capital raised by Teas">Vahdam Teas, which had earlier this year raised its seed round, stands at USD two million.

The Delhi-based company, which gets 100 percent of its sales online and primarily through its website, has grown seven fold in the last 12 months and plans to use the fresh funds to further focus on marketing, product development, strengthening warehousing and logistics in its key market, the United

States of America.

As part of the deal, Kanwaljit Singh of Fireside Ventures will be taking a board seat in the company.

"Over the last two years, we have worked very hard in setting up an efficient supply chain, right from the estates of India to our consumers in USA and other parts of the world, with a sole vision to make available the freshest cup of tea to consumers by leveraging technology. We plan to now further penetrate our key markets with customer acquisition and marketing," said founder Teas">Vahdam Teas, Bala Sarda.

The company currently gets 70 percent of its revenue from the US and the

remaining 30 percent from over 83 countries across the world.

Teas">Vahdam Teas is disrupting the supply chain of tea, by making available premium garden fresh to consumers across the world in the shortest periods of time, by leveraging technology, cutting out all unnecessary middlemen and launching innovative packaging formats.

The tea leaves do not travel in containers for months before being packaged and sold. All the contents are procured direct from plantations and tea growers within 24-72 hours of production, packaged and shipped directly from source in India.

## Sensex rises 205 pts, up for 3rd day

MUMBAI: Rising for the third straight session, benchmark Sensex finished over 205 points higher at 33,455.79 on Monday on persistent buying by domestic institutional investors amid positive global cues.

The broader NSE Nifty too closed above the 10,300-mark.

Optimistic buying in blue-chip stocks ahead of release of industrial production and retail inflation data later this week drove stocks higher. Participants are also betting on a favourable result for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the Gujarat assembly polls, which added to the buying momentum, brokers said. The Sensex opened strong at 33,317.72 and touched a high of 33,535.97, but settled at 33,455.79 due to profit-booking, still showing a gain of 205.49 points, or 0.62 per cent. This is its highest closing since November 29, when it had closed at 33,602.76. The gauge had risen by 653.12 points in the previous two sessions. The 50-share NSE Nifty ended 56.60 points, or 0.55 per cent, higher at 10,322.25 after shuttling between 10,329.20 and 10,282.05

## Ultimate Sun Systems hires Prabhuraj Ambli as ED, exclusive business partner for Karnataka

NEW DELHI: Ultimate Sun Systems, renewable energy solutions pioneer and ISO 9001:2008 certified MNRE Channel Partner company has announced appointment of Prabhuraj Ambli as Executive Director and exclusive business partner for the Karnataka region. Prabhuraj will be using his vast experience in marketing, production planning and execution, and technical consultancy to bear to enhance Ultimate Sun System's growth, especially in the Karnataka region where he will act as the company's exclusive business partner. Prabhuraj began his career after graduating from SKSJ Technological Institute, Bangalore University, in 1992, when he started working as an executive for textile production, handling outsourcing initiatives and quality control. After working in the sector for four years, he started his own apparels manufacturing industry in 1996, catering to several premium brands such as Arrow, Marks & Spencer, Lacoste, and Zara, amongst others. It was at this time that he became a technical consultant for upcoming businesses,

given his immense success in the industry. In 2010, he was appointed as an advisor for the Cotton Advisory Board (CAB) for the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, gaining considerable experience of, and insight into, government policymaking and industry promotion. Continuing his technical consultancy work, he was drawn to the power sector due to its major impact upon industry, and became knowledgeable about the practical applications and implementation of renewable energy for industry, and was associated with Green Fuel Supplies Pvt. Ltd., a renewable energy company, from 2013 to 2015. "We are delighted to bring him on board, with his long experience and unique insights, as both an Executive Director and a partner to promote the company's interest in the vital Karnataka market. His incredible knowledge of developing and promoting business will be pivotal in guiding us to providing our cutting-edge and meticulously engineered solar solutions to a larger section of Indian consumers, as we take our growth to the next level," said.

## GolfLan introduce world's first 'Made in India' cloud based smart golf solutions for global golfers

NEW DELHI: World's leading online golf community and marketplace GolfLan Technology Solutions Pvt Ltd, today announced the launch of their two 'Made in India' flagship devices, Elite Pro+ and Tee-Walkers. Elite Pro+ is currently the most advanced golf cart fleet management system in the global market. Elite Pro+ & Tee-Walker are state of the art devices to navigate the course, enhance their game and the golf course experience.

The solution gives complete control of fleet of vehicles, reduce operating costs, enhance your revenues and cart efficiencies. Speaking on the occasion, Dhruv Verma, Founder and CEO, GolfLan said, "GolfLan last year acquired StayPrime Global, a leading Dubai-based Golf Technology Company, in all cash deal, which was one of the first instances of an Indian start-up taking over a big international company to make golf more accessible and experiential. Since then we have significantly changed and completely revamped the smart software to ensure scalability at a large scale and at

the same time to make it future ready for the global golfers."

Elite Pro+ GPS can be deployed on any course, any cart, anywhere in the world. The system gives golf course owners, managers and golf directors full control over their fleet of golf carts, and, at the same time, give the golfer easy-to-use information and features that enhance their golf experience.

Tee-Walker has all the advanced Elite Pro+ three features for the golfers walking the course. With only five inches in size and weighing only 230g, Tee-Walker can be carried by walking golfers to enhance their golfing experience, while the golf course is able to automate the management of their on-course players. Both devices are available on GolfLan.com at USD 995 and USD 45 per month on leasing model for Elite Pro+ 10" version. Elite Pro+ 8" version is available at USD 795 and USD 35 per month on leasing model. On other hand Tee-Walker is available at USD 350 and USD 19 per month on leasing model.

## Cash Suvridha, HomeCapital tie-up to bring credit to home buyers

NEW DELHI: Cash Suvridha, a startup fintech company has joined hands with HomeCapital to provide unsecured credit at zero percent interest to first-time homebuyers in Pune, Bangalore and Mumbai region.

First-time homebuyers have always been a driving force in real estate because they enable existing homeowners to trade up to bigger homes and create demand for new construction.

Through the tie up, Cash Suvridha and Home Capital aim at changing the way loans are procured, assessed and disbursed and through the Down payment Assistance Program it is targeting the salaried people in the age group 20 to 45 years.

"We extend credit to applicants who don't have access to traditional lending practices. We have developed our own 'Suvridha Social Score' for assessing creditworthiness using social media portals to check educational and professional backgrounds, track lifestyle spending, payments behavior, and spending patterns," said founder Cash Suvridha, Rajesh Gupta.

Digital lending platforms are proving how technology can strengthen lenders' position by providing the benefits of basic efficiency improvements and cost avoidance. Applicants without credit scores are taking the digital journey to procure loans via these alternative digital lenders. Access to funding can change with the way lenders determine an applicant's creditworthiness. With the new and innovative financial technologies and systems we work on a person's social credit rather than traditional creditworthiness, Gupta added.

## Essar Vizag Terminal to shutdown to commission 8 KTPH ship loader

MUMBAI: Essar Vizag Terminal Ltd (EVTL) today said that it was taking a week-long shutdown ahead of the installation and commissioning of an 8,000 TPH (tonnes per hour) Ship Loader that forms a part of the Company's Rs 830-crore expansion plan to upgrade the iron ore handling capacity of the Vizag Terminal (outer harbour) from 12.5 MTPA to 23 MTPA.

During the shutdown (13 December 2017 - 19 December 2017), other cargo handling equipment, including a new reclaimers and a mechanical conveyor system, will also be commissioned. Following these developments, EVTLE expects to achieve a cargo handling rate of 120,000 TPD (tonnes per day), which will translate to shorter turnaround times and competitive freight costs for exporters on the east coast.

C H Satyanand, CEO, EVTLE, said: "The shutdown is a planned move and is being undertaken without any disruption to exporters' shipments. Given that we are replacing a 41-year old ship loader with this new one, the short turnaround time is quite remarkable."

Essar Vizag Terminals Limited (EVTLE) took over the Vizag Port expansion proj-



ect in May 2015 on a Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT) basis for a period of 30 years. Since then, the company has ramped up the iron ore loading capacity of the terminal from 25,000 TPD (tonnes per day) to 70,000 TPD. After the completion of the upgrade-cum-modernisation project, not only will the loading capacity increase to 120,000 TPD, but the facility will also be able to berth vessels up to 200,000 DWT, with a draft of 18 metres, on the outer harbour.

Essar Ports specialises in develop-

ment and operations of ports and terminals for handling liquid, dry bulk, break bulk and general cargo. It is one of the largest private sector port companies in India in terms of capacity and throughput.

It has four operational terminals in India-one each in Hazira and Salaya (both in Gujarat) on the west coast, and in Visakhapatnam and Paradip on the east coast. The current operational capacity of the port terminals in India is 82 MTPA, which is expected to increase to 110 MTPA in 2017-18.

## Messi and Suarez Maintain Barcelona's Lead at the Top

MADRID: Barcelona restored their lead at the top of La Liga to five points as Luis Suarez and Lionel Messi struck in the final 20 minutes to edge out 10-man Villarreal 2-0 on Sunday.

Daniel Raba's red card on the hour mark for a wild lunge on Sergio Busquets handed Barca the initiative.

And their pressure told when Suarez rounded off a fine team move before Messi blasted home a second to get the Catalans back to winning ways after successive draws with Valencia and Celta Vigo in La Liga.

Valencia remain Barca's closest challengers five points back, but Atletico Madrid also maintained their title charge with a 1-0 win at Real Betis to stay six points off the top. Real Madrid are eight points back in fourth and Barca will have the chance to go into El Clasico away at Real in two weeks' time with an 11-point lead over their rivals. Barca host Deportivo La Coruna next weekend, whilst Madrid are in action at the Club World Cup in Abu Dhabi. Gerard Pique nearly gave Barca the perfect start at the Ceramic Stadium, where they have struggled in recent seasons, as his header came back off the crossbar from Messi's corner just four minutes in. However, Barca dominance of possession was largely stale before the break as Villarreal posed the greater threat on the counter-attack.

Nicola Sansone had the hosts' best effort that forced Marc-Andre ter Stegen into a stunning one-handed stop high to his left.

Messi orchestrated the visitors' attacking threat after the break as he constantly freed Jordi Alba down Barca's left. Paco Alcacer was denied by Sergio Asenjo from Alba's low cross before the left-back teed up Messi for a cushioned effort that drifted inches wide.

Villarreal had to survive the final half hour a man light when Raba was dismissed for connecting with his studs on Busquets' ankle as the Spanish international cleared. Another Alba cross was turned onto the post by Suarez on the stretch. However, the Uruguayan finally broke Villarreal's resistance after exchanging a neat one-two with Alcacer to round Asenjo and net his seventh goal of the season. And Messi secured all three points seven minutes from time as he was played in by Busquets to smash past the helpless Asenjo.

Earlier, Atletico bounced back from the disappointment of being the Champions League in keep their title challenge.

The hosts dominated throughout but were made to pay for



their lack of cutting edge, as well as some fine goalkeeping by Jan Oblak. By contrast, Atletico were clinical even in the absence of the injured Antoine Griezmann as Saul Niguez slid back post to home Sime cross with serious



# PV Sindhu looks to end 2017 on a high with Dubai World Super Series Final victory



DUBAI: Olympic silver-medallist PV Sindhu is satisfied with what she has achieved so far this year but wants to cap a successful season with yet another title at the USD 1000,000 Dubai World Super Series Final starting on Wednesday.

After the high of Rio Olympics last year, Sindhu continued her rampaging run this season clinching the India Open Super Series and Korea Open Super Series, besides bagging the silver at Glasgow World Championship and finishing as runners-up at Hong Kong Open last month.

"It has been a good year for me and I'm very happy with my performance. I won two Super Series and a runners-up and also a silver at World Championship. I have no

regrets because I did pretty well this season. Now I really hope the year ends on a good note, that is at the Dubai Super Series Finals, I hope I do well there," Sindhu told PTL. "It is not going to be easy as all the top players will be playing in this event. Each match from the first round itself will be very tough. So I will have to be prepared from the start to do well in Dubai," added the Hyderabad, who had reached the semifinals at Dubai event last year.

Asked which matches impacted her most this season, Sindhu said: "Each match was comparatively different and in the starting it was Sindhu-Marín and then it was Sindhu-Okuhara at the World Championship and also there were other good matches." "I think each player has a different style of play and every match is different. Well, not one in particular but I think the World Championship final impacted me the most." The 22-year-old Indian has played all the 12 Super Series tournaments this season and she credited her training sessions which helped her to manage the workload.

"Training was going well and I had to be prepared for every match. Every month we had tournaments and I am happy the way I have managed the workload. It worked out fine for me," said Sindhu, who played five back-to-back tournaments in October-November. Badminton World Federation (BWF) has revamped the international circuit and made it mandatory for the top 15 players to play at least 12 tournaments next year. Asked about the schedule next year, Sindhu said: "I think it would be a hectic

schedule next year and we have to plan it out accordingly and play tournaments because each event will be important and also we have other important tournaments such as Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. It's just that we have to be prepared. I will have to sit with my coach and plan accordingly. The scheduling will depend on the training sessions, how fit I am and how I am playing and also it's my coach's decision, so I will sort it out with him which tournaments to play," she added.

Sindhu, who finished runners-up at the Senior National Championship in Nagpur, said it would be difficult to figure out a window for the domestic tournament next year.

"It depends on the schedule as 2018 would be very hectic. It would be difficult to figure out which month or which date it would be. It would not be easy for me or other players. It depends on the scheduling of the tournaments which I play and I will decide accordingly," she said. BWF has decided to trial a new kind of service rule next year starting at the 2018 All England Open Championships and Sindhu said they would have to practice it during training before playing at the tournaments. "I heard about the new service rule. I think we all have to be really conscious about it, it would be implemented from the All England and we have to really practice it before we play in the tournaments but I think it would be good for everybody," said Sindhu.



## Ross Taylor hits record ton as hosts eye series sweep

HAMILTON: Ross Taylor celebrated a record-equaling 17th Test century for New Zealand to leave West Indies fighting to avoid a series whitewash.

Taylor joined Martin Crowe and New Zealand captain Kane Williamson atop the country's list for hundreds after finishing 107 not out on day three in Hamilton. The 33-year-old raised his bat during the final session of Monday's play at Seddon Park before the hosts declared on 291-8 in their second innings – a lead of 443. The Kiwis – who won the series opener by an innings and 67 runs – wanted to have a crack at West Indies' vulnerable batting line-up late in the day, having skittled the Caribbean.

And it proved to be a wise decision by Williamson as Trent Boult (1-11) claimed the wicket of opener Kieran Powell, who finished with a pair, and Shimron Hetmyer (15) fell victim to Tim Southee (1-18) following a poor shot – the Windies reaching 30-2 at stumps, still needing 414 runs to win. New Zealand were in control upon the resumption of play on Monday, with the Windies resuming at 215-8 in response to the Black Caps' 373. West Indies only added six runs to their overnight score as Boult (4-73) cleaned up the tail via Miguel Cummins (15) and Shannon Gabriel (0). The Windies, though, made a bright start with the ball after openers Jeet Raval (4) and Tom Latham (22) fell cheaply. Raval – who missed out on a century in the first innings – was caught and bowled by in-form paceman Cummins (3-69), while Latham was trapped lbw by debutant Raymon Reifer (1-52) as the Black Caps slumped to 42-2.

## How MS Dhoni's brain works like magic on a cricket field



MUMBAI: Former Indian cricket team skipper MS Dhoni's articulate calls with the Decision Review System (DRS) are quite well known and the swashbuckling batsman maintained his record on Sunday when he helped extend Jasprit Bumrah's stay at the crease towards the fag end of the Indian innings at Dharamsala during the first ODI encounter against Sri Lanka. India were reeling under pressure at 87 for the loss of eight wickets when

Bumrah was hit on the back pad off Sachith Pathirana's bowling and umpire Anil Chaudhary adjudged the latter to be dismissed. However, MS Dhoni, who was at the non-striker's end signalled for the DRS immediately, even before Chaudhary could complete raising his finger to reveal his decision. The decision went upstairs with television replays suggesting that the impact was outside the off-stump, thus saving Bumrah the blushes. Although he didn't last long

and was dismissed by Pathirana in his next over, MS Dhoni's accurate call sent Twitterati in a frenzy given there was hardly much to cheer for a side that crumbled to their third lowest total at home. This is not the first time that MS Dhoni has pulled off brilliant calls though. Such has been his success rate while dealing with the technology, skipper Virat Kohli has often been seen to refer to Dhoni before signaling to the on-field umpire for a referral. India were on course to get bundled out for their lowest ever ODI total after Sri Lankan pacer Suranga Lakmal ran through the Indian top-order before finishing with figures of 10-4-13-4, bowling all of his allotted overs on the trot. But a timely half-century by Dhoni, including a 41-run partnership with Kuldeep Yadav for the eighth wicket helped the hosts go past the 100-run mark. Sri Lanka chased down the 113-run target at ease, losing just three wickets in the process.

## Ashish Nehra to return to Indian Premier League as mentor: Report

NEW DELHI: According to sources, discussions are on board for Ashish Nehra's new role as mentor for either Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), Delhi Daredevils (DD) or Rajasthan Royals (RR) for the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL) season. Former India pacer Ashish Nehra, who recently retired from international cricket, could soon make a comeback as behind-the-scenes man for one of the Indian Premier League (IPL) teams.

According to sources, discussions are on board for Nehra's new role as mentor for either Royal Challengers Bangalore, Delhi Daredevils or Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming IPL season.

While there has been no official confirmation regarding Ashish Nehra's association with any of the teams but chances of him mentoring the Virat Kohli-led RCB are probably higher.

The speedster had already returned to cricket as commentator earlier in India's Kolkata Test against Sri Lanka.

The 38-year-old retired from all forms of cricket at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in the T20 match against New Zealand.

The left-arm fast bowler made his international debut way back in 1999 against Sri Lanka in Colombo.

The Indian star retired from the game with a tally of 235 wickets from 164 matches across formats.

## BCCI SGM today: India may get more T20s, home games

MUMBAI: As state unit representatives of the BCCI get ready for Monday's Special General Meeting (SGM), that will discuss India's new Future Tours Program (FTP) at the International Cricket Council (ICC), there's a lot for them to be 'happy' about. The executives at the BCCI have pulled off a coup as far as India's bilateral commitments in the next rights cycle of the ICC is concerned. On Sunday, TOI had reported that the BCCI had worked out a bilateral-free IPL window, a more guarded and specified home season, a more organized schedule for cricketers so as to not have them overworked and more.

TOI has also learned further that in putting this new FTP in place, what the BCCI has tried to ensure is that "India will never have to go through another patch like the one between January 2018 and March 2019 when it does not end up playing any meaningful cricket at home". Between 2015 and 2017, India played a flurry of series at home that began with South Africa's tour of India in October 2015 followed by New Zealand, England, Australia and finally Sri Lanka touring here. During this time, India only toured for one Test series (Sri Lanka in July-August this year), which in turn will see BCCI not hosting any games in the next one-and-a-half years.