

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

TUESDAY

● JANUARY, 02, 2018
 ● 14 RABI-AL-SANI 1439 AH
 ● ISSUE: 01
 ● VOLUME: 04
 ● PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	11.2	-4.4
JAMMU	18.4	6.7
LEH	-0.2	-14.5
KARGIL	-	-

SUNSET TUESDAY: 05:34 PM
 SUNRISE WEDNESDAY: 07:38 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
 Generally Cloudy sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 12°C & -4°C respectively.

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

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ABDUL HAQ SANCTIONS RS 2.47 CR PROJECT FOR ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION AT AGS

DISTORTION OF HISTORY A TERROR OF DIFFERENT NATURE: HISTORIAN

SBI CUTS BASE RATE BY 30 BASIS POINTS TO 8.65%

BATTING STARS KOHLI, DE VILLIERS SET TO RENEW RIVALRY

J&K budget session likely to begin on stormy note

JAMMU: The budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir legislature is likely to begin on a stormy note tomorrow with opposition parties planning to protest the recent government order barring its employees from airing political views on social media and take up other issues.

The rival parties are also expected to oppose forcefully the government's move to allow indirect election of sarpanches by panches instead of a direct election.

The session would begin with Governor NN Vohra's address to a joint sitting of the legislature and end on February 10.

The Budget for the financial year 2018-19 would be presented by Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu on January 11.

This will be his fourth budget on the trot.

The Congress, National Conference and CPI(M) have termed "eye-wash" the government's decision to regularize 60,000 casual and daily wagers in various departments. The issue is likely to be raised in the House.



The opposition may also denounce the Mehbooba Mufti government over the ongoing strike by contractual employees, including of the National Health Mission, who are demanding regularization of their services.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president G A Mir had earlier said the government order to its employees not to use social media for airing political views would be the biggest issue during the session.

"The order shows how scared the government is. It is a totally undemocratic decision and if not withdrawn, it will be the biggest issue during the budget session," Mir had said.

In December last year, the government barred its employees from using social media for any political activity by amending the conduct rules governing them.

The state government added a sub-rule to the Jammu and Kashmir

Government Employees Conduct rules which states that no government employee shall engage in any criminal, dishonest, immoral or notoriously disgraceful conduct on social media which may be prejudicial to the government.

The state Congress chief said the party legislators would question the government on its failure to implement its Agenda of Alliance, development inertia, tussle over political issues between the coalition partners and back door appointments.

BJP state president Sat Sharma, however, said the opposition parties were bereft of issues as the state government had done well to mitigate the problems of the people and had taken the state to new heights of development.

"The way development is going on in the state over the past three years, the opposition is left with no issues. It is merely a statement that we will corner the ruling party to raise public issues. They have no issues to rake up," he said.

▶ See **Budget**...Pg 02

Preserve Army's core values, apolitical character: Gen Rawat

NEW DELHI: Army Chief General Bipin Rawat today urged all army personnel to work with "added zeal" to preserve the core values of the force, including its "apolitical" character, while ensuring that it remains one of the most potent instruments of India's national power.

In a New Year message, Rawat also complimented the army for successfully meeting external as well as internal challenges with grit, determination and pride during 2017.

His comments were seen as reference to the 73-day-long border face-off between Indian Army and Chinese troops in Doklam and the anti-terror operations by the force in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Our unflinching loyalty, commitment to the nation and apolitical stance, confers on us a uniqueness that we must preserve," he said.

Therefore, Rawat said, "we need to continue to work with added zeal while upholding our core values of integrity, loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, courage and honour to fulfil our constitutional obligations and assigned roles."

▶ See **Rawat**...Pg 02



201 MILITANTS, 175 FORCE PERSONNEL KILLED IN 2017: UJC
 Says sacrifices of militants won't go waste

Srinagar, Jan 01: United Jihad Council on Monday said that in the year 2017, 201 militants were killed in the Valley. In an e-mailed 'annual report' issued to KNS, UJC spokesman quoted its

▶ See **UJC**...Pg 02

Indo-Pak NSAs met in Thailand: Pak official, says Doval's tone "friendly"

ISLAMABAD: National security advisors of India and Pakistan held a "secret" meeting in Thailand where the tone and tenor of India's NSA Ajit Doval was "friendly and positive", a senior Pakistani official said today.

A Pakistan's national security division official, on the condition of anonymity, said the meeting between Pakistan's NSA retired Lt Gen Nasser Khan Janjua and Doval took place on December 27 in Thailand. "The Dawn" newspaper reported.

"The meeting was good.



Doval's tone and tenor was friendly and positive," the official disclosed. The official maintained that he was briefed

Thousands participate in the last rites of two slain militants

Clashes leave many wounded

Pulwama, Jan 1: Amid restrictions thousands of people participated in the last rites of two fideen local slain militants at their native villages of Drabgam and Nazneepora Tral here in South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

The two fideen militants Manzoor Ahmed Baba of Drabgam and Fardeen Ahmed Khandey of Nazneepora Tral were killed yesterday when they resorted to an audacious attack on CRPF training centre at Lethpora killing five



troopers wounding couple of them.

Reports said that

▶ See **Rites**...Pg 02

Fidayeen Attack: POLICE RECOVERS BODY OF THIRD MILITANT

Pulwama, Jan 1: Police on Monday said that they recovered the body of a third militant from CRPF Training Centre in Lethpora area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

On Sunday during a fideen attack, five CRPF men and two local militants Manzoor Ahmed of Drabgam and Fardeen Ahmed of Nazneepora Tral were killed.

The operation today concluded with the recovery of the body of third militant whose identity has not been ascertained.

Jammu Kashmir Police Chief Dr SP Vaid took to twitter and said that the operation has concluded finally with the recovery of body of third militant.

▶ See **Body**...Pg 02

LADY DRUG PEDDLER ARRESTED

Kupwara, Jan 1: Continuing with the special drive of J&K Police to eradicate the drug menace from the society, based on specific information, a lady drug peddler has been arrested along with charas during checking of vehicles at Drugmulla area of North Kashmir's Kupwara district.

The lady has been identified as Mugli Begum wife of Abdul Qayoom Khan of Zurahama. 700 gms charas was

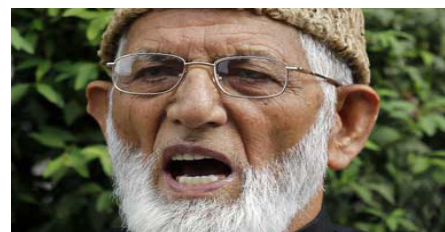
▶ See **Lady**...Pg 02

Triple Talaq bill is unjustified: Geelani

'Bill passed in parliament tantamount to infringement on Muslim community rights'

Srinagar, Jan 01: Syed Ali Geelani on Monday termed the triple talaq bill and allowing the Muslim women without Mehram as unjustified and interference with the religious matters of Muslim community, saying it is also an affront to the Muslim Personal Law.

Criminalizing the instant divorce practice and making it punishable offence is condemnable, Geelani as per the statement issued to



KNS said, adding that altering and inducing

▶ See **Geelani**...Pg 02

INDIA AWAITS CONSULAR ACCESS TO JADHAV: MEA

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD: India awaits consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav and other Indian nationals in Pakistan's custody, the External Affairs Ministry said today, as it exchanged with Islamabad the list of civilian prisoners and fishermen lodged in each other's jails.

"Lists of 250 civilian prisoners and 94 fishermen were

▶ See **MEA**...Pg 02

Peaceful and prosperity every Kashmir's New Year resolution

▶ Bilal Bashir Bhat

Srinagar, Jan 01: When whole of the world is making certain resolutions on the arrival of New Year 2018, the downtrodden people of Kashmir are focusing, praying for long lasting peace and prosperity. The annual gory statistics based on annihilation, pain, tragedies, anger, suffocation and fear psychosis has become a routine which needs to be ended, dreams every Kashmir cutting across the political ideologies.

Like last several years, the images emanating from Kashmir in 2017 were not of its picturesque resorts but wailing Kashmiris

mourning the death of around 400 precious human lives, including those of over 200 militants.

Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti while greeting people on the eve of New Year hoped 2018 to be a year of development, peace, harmony, progress and social integration in the State.

"I earnestly pray that the New Year brings along joy, happiness, peace and prosperity for our people who have suffered immensely," the Chief Minister said in her message, "Mehbooba added.

"As we enter into the year 2018, I pray

▶ See **Peaceful**...Pg 02

KASHMIR INDUSTRIAL UNIT HOLDERS PROTEST AGAINST DISCRIMINATORY SROS

Srinagar, Jan 1: The Industrial Unit Holders from Kashmir Valley Monday staged a protest against SRO 519 and SRO 521 recently passed by the state government.

Scores of unit holder assembled here in press enclave Srinagar to register their protest. They were carrying placards and banner accusing State Government of bringing up with discriminatory SRO's to devastate the industrial sector.

The protesters said that the "discriminatory SROs" were passed in a hurry to benefit "a handful of outside investors" based in Jammu region.

Police swung into action and detained dozens of

▶ See **Industrial**...Pg 02

Expecting some pioneering measures for education sector in Budget 2018-19: Altaf

8700 teacher vacancies to be advertised next month

JAMMU, JANUARY 01: The Minister for Education Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today hinted at big announcement for education sector in the coming budget session, while announcing that the government would refer 8700 more teacher vacancies to SSB to be advertised next month in addition to 2154 posts referred already to recruitment agency to meet dearth of staff in government schools.



Addressing teachers, students and senior functionar-

ies of education department here at the annual day function of Government Girls High School Gandhi Nagar, the Minister reiterated government's resolve to meet the targets set in the rolled-out roadmap to fill critical gaps in infrastructure and staff in the education sector. He said the Education Department is expecting some new initiatives to be announced by the Finance Minister

▶ See **Altaf**...Pg 02

GOVERNMENT NOT IN A MOOD TO IMPROVISE THE CONDITION OF SOPORE TOWN

▶ Sadaf Khursheed

Srinagar, Jan 01: Sopore which is now synonym with affronted, dingy, impoverished and what not and an area which is becoming a center of political negligence saw no development from last so many years and for the people of the town.

New Year brought no new hopes as they know nothing new is going to change for them in the present year 2018 as well. While many parts of the valley lit up with celebrations, Sopore had its own never changing woeful narrative to tell. Everything in the town presents a picture of gloom and fogginess, a story of being punished for having a

▶ See **Sopore**...Pg 02

VEERI FOR SPEEDY RECOVERY OF PAYMENTS, ARREARS OF CUSTODIAN LAND

JAMMU, JANUARY 01 - Minister for Revenue, Haq & Auqaf and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Rehman Veeri today asked the Evacuee Property department to take up the issue of delay in compensation against acquisition of custodian land with concerned collectors for early recovery of all pending payments.

This was stated by the Minister while reviewing the acquisition progress on custodian land acquired by various government departments and defence authorities in the state for various kinds of purpose.

The meeting was attended by Custodian General J&K, Aijaz Ahmad Bhat, Special Secretary Revenue, Farooq A Shah, Custodian Jammu, Mushtaq Hussain Malik, Custodian Kashmir, Bashir Ahmed Mir, Deputy Custodian Central, Mohammad Saleem Khan and collectors from various districts.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on district wise details of total land acquired

by the government departments and defence authorities with their compensation status. It was informed that the Evacuee Property department has handed over its land for carrying out developmental activities, creating departmental infrastructure and other necessary works projected by defence authorities.

The Minister sought details of payment made to the department against the land already acquired and status of pending payments with reasons of delay in receiving due compensation against their own land.

Collectors apprised the Minister about the land acquisition and status of payment in their respective jurisdiction and assured that the all pending payments will be done at the earliest. For some cases, the Minister sets timeline for the Collectors for clearing all pending payments to the Custodian department. He said that payments provided by the department who took over the



land and lie with the collectors must be transferred to EP department without any further delay.

Taking note of delay in getting payment against the land acquisition process, Veeri directed the officers of Custodian department to personally follow each case with the concerned collectors on regular basis and to ensure that issues involved in the delay of payments are resolved.

He also asked the collectors to expedite the process of clearing pay-

ments against the land acquired by them in their respective districts.

"Land anywhere in the state can be acquired for carrying out developmental and other activities but due compensation against the land acquired whether government or private, must be provided in time", the Minister said.

For better and effective monitoring of land handed over under acquisition process and its payment status, the Minister directed the Custodian department to compile

a book incorporating details of land given to which department, payment status and other necessary details.

"There is need for compilation of division wise data of departmental land acquired by government departments and others so that it becomes easier for the department to manage its resources", Veeri said.

The Minister asked the Custodian General to take up the issue with all concerned Deputy Commissioners so that recovery is made at the earliest.

DSEK LAUNCHES CM'S SUPER-50 COACHING INITIATIVE FOR CIVIL SERVICES ASPIRANTS

Coaching to begin at GHSS Kothibagh from Jan 8: Dr Itoo

Srinagar, January 01: In a pioneering initiative the Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) has, on the directions of the Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari, launched CM's Super-50 Coaching for Civil Services examinations.

"The objective of this maiden initiative is to provide free coaching to 50 meritorious students for the national and state-level civil services examinations," said Dr G N Itoo, Director School Education Kashmir.

He said the 50 students are being picked up for free coaching under CM's Super-50 initiative for civil services through a screening test.

Dr Itoo said it was heartening to note that around 400 aspirants appeared in the screening test for CM's Super-50 coaching initiative for civil services conducted by DSEK at Government Girls Higher Secondary School Kothibagh. "The screening test was conducted for social science and arts streams today," he said and added that 50 students would be selected for intensive 6 months coaching from subject experts from within and outside the Department.

The Director School Education said that the key of the screening test conducted by DSEK would be available on the website of the Directorate (www.dsek.nic.in) by tomorrow and the result would be declared within three days.

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BUDGET

Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, MK Bhandari said: "Security and all other arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth budget session."

He said there would be no problem as extensive drills and discussions have taken place over the past weeks especially related to security, traffic arrangements and other measures in connection with the session.

RAWAT

Rawat said the Army successfully dealt with various challenges it faced throughout the year, including combating terrorism and insurgency and guarding the country's borders.

"We have successfully progressed through an eventful year meeting all challenges, both external as well as internal, with grit, determination and pride. We have exhibited sincerity and commitment of the highest order while guarding our frontiers, combating terrorism and insurgency," he said.

Since beginning of the year, the Army pursued an aggressive anti-terror policy in Jammu and Kashmir, at the same time, forcefully responding to all ceasefire violations by Pakistani troops along the Line of Control with a tit-for-tat approach.

The Army chief also paid glowing tributes to those who made supreme sacrifices in the line of duty.

"Let us continue to strive for all round excellence to ensure we remain as one of the most potent, responsive, accountable and relevant instruments of national power," he said.

General Rawat called upon all the army men to "rededicate" themselves in the service of the nation and discharge responsibilities in the best traditions of our Army.

He said Indian soldiers in the UN Missions have made Army and the nation proud by displaying "outstanding professionalism" in the face of challenging situations. (AGENCIES)

UJC

General Secretary, Sheikh Jameel-ur-Rehman said, "the two slain militants including Fardeen Khanday and Manzoor Ahmad Baba by sacrificing their lives conveyed a message to the world that freedom is the only solution of Kashmir."

He in the annual report has also said that the sacrifices of the militants won't go waste and will bear the fruit.

"201 militants and 175 force personnel were killed in the year 2017 while 407 force personnel also sustained injuries in this year," he said in the annual report, adding that "17 force personnel have also committed suicide in last year."

Complimenting people of Kashmir for their enthusiasm of freedom, the report said that "93 civilians were killed in 2017 while 1640 were injured. 54 structures were also damaged in fire."

The report said that struggle will continue till any logical conclusion.

MET

also quoted the official as saying that the interaction might help in restarting some sort of engagement at the diplomatic level as well.

However, there was no word -officially or unofficially - from the India side.

The meeting, which appeared to be pre-decided, came two days after Indian death-row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav met with his family on December 25 in Islamabad.

The Jadhav-family meeting became latest flashpoint in already strained Indo-Pak relations with Pakistan terming its decision to allow Jadhav's family to travel to Pakistan to meet him as humanitarian gesture and India accusing it of violating mutual understandings.

New Delhi also hit out at Pakistan, asserting that the Indian national appeared coerced and under considerable stress during the tightly-controlled interaction and also accused Pakistan of disregarding cultural and religious sensibilities of family members under the pretext of security.

Jadhav, who was captured in March last year, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court for alleged spying, an accusation that India has dismissed as concocted.

New Delhi says Jadhav was kidnapped in Iran where he had legitimate business interests, and brought to Pakistan. To save Jadhav, India moved the International Court of Justice, which ordered Pakistan in May to stay his execution.

It was not the first meeting between the two NSAs in a third country.

In December 2015 also, the two NSAs, along with the two foreign secretaries, had met in Bangkok, which was not revealed from both the countries till after the meeting.

RITES

authorities had sealed the entry and exit points leading towards the native villages of two fidayeen slain militants to prevent the flow of mourners.

Police handed over the bodies of both the militants to families during late hours on Sunday. Reports said that both the militants were laid to rest at their native villages amid pro-freedom and pro-Islamic slogans.

Witnesses told news agency CNS that people rushing towards these villages in vehicles were stopped by government forces and disallowed to enter into the villages.

"The movement of the people had been curbed and yet people took different routes to participate in the last rites of these two slain militants," said an eyewitness.

A police official wishing anonymity said that restrictions had been imposed to stop militants from entering into these villages. "We had inputs that militants may appear in crowd and to stop them, restrictions were put in place," he added.

Earlier, a youth whom locals identified as Munir Ahmed Dar, a resident of Tahab was injured after he was hit by a bullet during clashes at Drabgam.

There were massive clashes between protesters and the government forces at Drabgam. Forces used tear-smoke shells to disperse the protesting youth who resorted to massive stone-pelting. Witnesses said that as the protesters didn't budge, Forces fired some rounds. A youth suffered bullet injury who was shifted to Srinagar hospital for treatment.

Reports said that clashes erupted in native Tahab area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district after the news about Muneer getting injured in Drabgam village spread there.

Scores of youth hit to roads and pelted stones on 182 Battalion CRPF camp. The trooper lobbed tear-smoke shells to disperse the protesters.

Meanwhile, the twin districts of Pulwama and Shopian observed a complete shutdown against the killing of two fidayeen militants.

All the shops and business establishments remained shut and transport was seen off the roads. Shutdown was also observed in Tral town of the district.

BODY

A top CRPF official also said that the operation launched after a Fidayeen attack on a forces' training centre in Lethpora yesterday has ended with the recovery of body of third militant.

The identity of the body is being established, said CRPF IG Ravideep Sahi.

He said three AK-47 rifles and eight grenades have been recovered from the site of the gunfight.

As reported yesterday, militants stormed a CRPF camp in Lethpora area along the Srinagar-Anantnag highway in an audacious pre-dawn strike on Sunday, killing at least five CRPF personnel.

LADY

recovered from the lady. A police official said that a case under NDPS Act was registered at Police Station Kupwara. Further investigation is in progress.

During the current year special drive against drug peddlers, the Special team of District Police Kupwara has so far arrested 54 notorious drug peddlers involved in drug peddling/narcotic smuggling, 31 Kgs of Charas, 2 Kgs of Heroine, 4.5 Kgs of Brown Sugar, large quantity of codeine and banned drugs have been recovered from the possession of arrested drug peddlers. A cross LoC narcotic smugglers module has also been busted and four notorious crossed LoC narcotic smugglers have been arrested.

GEELANI

amendments without taking into consideration the Islamic jurisprudence is sheer violation of Islamic practice.

Geelani expressed his deep concern and voicing serious reservations over provisions of the bill said that bill passed in Indian parliament were tantamount to infringement on rights of Muslim community in India.

Interference in religious matters is unacceptable, saying it has proved beyond doubt that BJP, RSS and Shiv Senna like fanatical factions are promoting their specific and biased dogma and while ignoring the interests and trampling the rights of other communities, are hell-bent to proclaim India as Hindu Rashtra, added Geelani.

They are following their hidden agenda, said Geelani and their nefarious designs stand exposed as they are desperate to change fundamentals of Islam as per their will and wish.

Islam is emerging as popular faith and new generations and particularly the youth are embracing Islam as their faith,

thus they feel frustrated, said Geelani while referring to BJP and RSS led regime in New Delhi.

Appealing OIC for their cognizance, Geelani urged to take serious notice of undue and uncalled interference by these fanatical and bias minded forces and asked take measures to stop this ill practice. Geelani called for establishing a unified command council to sort out minor differences without altering the basic norms and fundamentals of Islam.

He expressed his anguish and surprise, saying that it is quite strange that a fanatical regime is altering and changing the discourse of our faith, and added that no power on earth can change or alter these divine directives and every Muslim is obliged to follow Sharia and submit his will before the commandments of Holy Quran and Sunnah.

MEA

handed over to Pakistan," it said.

A list of 54 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 4 fishermen, who have completed their sentence and whose nationality confirmation is awaited from Pakistan, was also handed over and Pakistan was asked to expedite the confirmation, the Ministry said.

Asserting that it remains committed to addressing humanitarian matters, including those pertaining to prisoners and fishermen in each other's country, the Ministry said the Government has repeatedly emphasised the need for early release and repatriation of civilian prisoners, missing Indian defence personnel and fishermen along with their boats.

PEACEFUL

to the Almighty that compassion, humanity and tolerance prevails so that there is an end to pain and suffering and our children get a chance to see peace," stated Hurriyat (M) Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq.

"Praying that the New Year sees an end to the cycle of death and destruction that has yet again engulfed Kashmir for the past couple of years," reads National Conference statement issued to press.

"There is high need to acknowledge the fact that no amount of bloodshed and killings would resolve Kashmir conflict but accepting the people's democratic aspirations," said Mir Imran a Human Rights Activist.

Pertinently, the year 2017 ended with bloodshed after three militants were killed in Lethpora after they carried a Fidayeen attack at a CRPF camp on 31st December 2017. At least 5 CRPF personnel were also killed in the attack. At a time when I am filing this story, the clashes and protests are going on in parts of South Kashmir amid shutdown and restrictions thus marking the New Year in Kashmir on a note of pain grief and uncertainty.

INDUSTRIAL

protesters after they tried to march towards the busy Residency Road.

The protest held under the banner of Federation Chambers of Industries Kashmir (FCIK) saw presence of unit holders from several industrial estates across Kashmir.

FCIK President, Mukhtair Yousuf said providing 42 percent CGST refund from the state government to selected outside investors based in Jammu region is a burden on the state exchequer.

"Only 282 units out of a total 60,000 units in the state have been notified for the 42 percent CGST refund from state government while 58 percent refund to them is given by central government," he said.

Yousuf said SRO 519 and 521 show an "indifferent attitude" of the authorities towards the local industry which survives despite logistical and other constraints.

"We are not averse to refund for any industrial units but somewhere a "deal has been struck" which made government pass the SROs in such a hurry while ignoring majority of local industry," he claimed.

Industrialist Syed Shakeel Qalander said as a part of SRO 519, mostly the outside investors based in Jammu, Kathua and Samba have been notified for availing CGST refund.

Qalander said these outside companies have annual turnover worth thousands of crores which means the CGST refund to them also accounts for a huge amount.

"These two SROs are quite bizarre as they make state government to pay massive refund amount for these outside companies. Why did the government have to pass the SRO in such a hurry while putting this burden on state exchequer," he asked.

"There seems to be some outside pressure on government which is now going back and forth when asked about giving similar CGST refund for bulk of local industry," he claimed.

ALTAF

Dr Haseeb Drabu in the Budget 2018-19 for this key sector.

The function was also attended by Speaker Legislative Assembly, Kavinder Gupta and Minister of state for Education and Culture, Priya Sethi, Member Legislative Council, Vikram Randhawa the Secretary School Education, Farooq Ahmed Shah, Director School Education, Jammu, Ravinder Singh, Director RMSA Tufail Mattoo and Director SSA, A R War.

"We are tirelessly working on a well-defined roadmap to revamp education sector in the state which include consolidation of school infrastructure to meet the set standards at different levels and meet the staff strength in which the state still lacking" he asserted. He said that despite critical gaps the school education department and teachers have shown great results in recent past.

However, he took a dig over some political parties for playing politics over certain issues despite not having made much progress while in remaining power for several years.

"I have no hesitation to say that the education sector has been continuously ignored over last seventy years by these people, but despite that they are playing politics whenever the department comes up with new reforms and policies" he regretted.

He said the education department and the teacher fraternity of which he is also a part at the moment is working with full dedication and giving out its best despite limited means in terms of infrastructure and staff.

Applauding the performance of the students, the Minister said time has come to dispel the notion about the government schools and government under the leadership of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is taking every possible step in this direction.

"The performance we have seen today bears testimony that government school students are far more talented than their counterparts in private schools" he said and asked the teachers to prove their strength as they are the best by all means.

He said of late, the government schools are doing fairly well in all fields and government would continue to encourage them by holding more such events in future.

He also applauded the teacher fraternity for putting up their best efforts to prepare students to face competitions. "We may not have uniform infrastructure in all Government schools, but our strength is our teachers which have no match in qualification and competence" he said and called upon them to put in more efforts to realize the goal of taking the education standard in government schools to new heights. He said government's goal is to attract maximum enrollment and for that the teachers have to put in more efforts.

SOPORE

different political ideology. Fruit Mandi: Sopore houses the second largest Fruit Mandi in Asia and the government apathy towards the development of the Mandi has led to the outrage by many people associated with fruit business as for them the bad condition the Mandi has forced many of them to either leave their business or to look out for other alternates. "although this Mandi is of great economic importance to the people, the condition is not up to the mark, we time and again have requested to the successive governments to look into this matter but they are paying no heed," said Ghulam Qadir a fruit merchant.

Apple factory: in spite of the apple juice factory can be a good source of income to the people of the town and that it can provide livelihood. Government is again not in a mood to improvise the condition of the same.

Bijli, Sadak and Pani, even these things of basic requirements in Sopore are a dream. While these things in other parts are still being provided even for fewer hours, here they show up only after days.

Traffic mess, while the police officials boast that there are personals that regulate the traffic, but it's a blunt lie. Everyday traffic jams cause so much trouble to the people that now travelling even within the town has become a nightmare. Many pedestrians are of the view that traffic jam has become so frequent that even to walk on the road is not a good option. There are other concerns also that have become so grave in recent years that people now have left everything on the hopes of Almighty.

There are only a few people left who now raise their voices to talk about the discrimination but they too have gone into wilderness so for the people of Sopore new year would be that day when the problems of people would come to end, voices would not be silenced and that day there will be celebrations.

World Class Research Facilities

New Delhi, January 01: Government is focused on improving quality of education and research in Higher Education Institutions. Joint Research Programmes are being taken with countries like USA, UK, Israel, Norway and New Zealand, Special Scheme for Faculty Development to provide an opportunity to teachers to pursue academic/research activities, establishment of Inter University Centers (IUCs) that provide state-of-the-art equipment and facilities. Government of India has introduced various schemes like: Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY): The objectives of UAY scheme are to promote innovation in IITs addressing issues of manufacturing industries; to spur innovative mindset; to coordinate action between academia & industry and to strengthen labs & research facilities.

Impacting Research, Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT): The objectives of this initiative is to identify areas of immediate relevance to society requiring innovation, direct scientific research into identified areas, ensure higher funding support for research into these areas and measure outcomes of the research effort with reference to impact on the standard of living in the rural/urban areas. Under the scheme the proposals are to be funded 50% by MHRD and 50% by other Ministries/ Departments/ Industries/ alumni/ other non-MHRD sources. Setting up of Research Parks in IITs: Five new Research Parks at IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati, IIT Kanpur, IIT Hyderabad, and IIT Bangalore at a total cost of Rs.75.00 crore each have been approved by the Government. Approval has also been accorded for

continuation of two already approved Research Parks at IIT Bombay and IIT Kharagpur at a cost of Rs.100 crore each. The Research Park at IIT Gandhinagar at a total cost of Rs.90 crore is being funded by the Department of Science & Technology Quality Improvement Programme (QIP): To upgrade the expertise and capabilities of the faculty members of the degree and diploma level institutions in the country. Margdarshan: Institutions of repute as a mentor within an existing facility to serve as the hub to guide and disperse knowledge to and between technical institutions to encourage best practices. A Notification was also issued on 29.08.2017 and guidelines were published on 07.09.2017 for providing regulatory structure for enabling higher educational institutions to become world class teaching and re-

search institutions. The selected public universities/ institutions will be eligible to receive Rs.1000 crores (Thousand crore) over a span of 5 years to develop into a world class university. SWAYAM, an indigenous On-line Education platform has been launched on 9th July 2017. Through this platform courses in teachers training and other subjects both at the graduate and post-graduate level are offered. The platform is successfully achieving the objective. As on date, there are 837 courses and 16,83,828 people are registered in the SWAYAM platform. Access to SWAYAM is also being widened by linkage with DTH channel, SWAYAMPARBHA, dedicated to education. This information was given by the Minister of State (HRD), Dr. Satyapal Singh today in a written reply to a Lok Sabha question.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

New Delhi, January 01: Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is implementing Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), which is a major credit-linked subsidy programme, aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth. General category beneficiaries can avail of margin money subsidy of 25% of the project cost in rural areas and 15% in urban areas. For beneficiaries belonging to special categories such as Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/OBC/Minorities/Women, Ex-serviceman, Physically Handicapped, NER, Hill and Border areas etc. the margin money subsidy is 35% in rural areas and 25% in urban areas. Any individual above 18 years of age is eligible. For setting up of projects costing above Rs.10 lakh in the manufacturing sector and above Rs. 5 lakh in the business/service sector, the beneficiaries should possess at least VIII standard pass educational qualification. The maximum cost of projects is Rs. 25 lakh in the manufacturing sector and Rs. 10 lakh in the service sector. Benefit can be availed under PMEGP for setting up of new units only. Subsidy under PMEGP Scheme is pro-

vided by the Union Government. The PMEGP Scheme was launched during 2008-09. Since its inception, a total of 4.47 lakh micro-enterprises have been assisted with a margin money subsidy of Rs 9326.01 crore providing employment to an estimated 37.32 lakh persons from inception till 2017-18 (up to 30.11.2017). Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal agency at the national level. At the State/District level, State offices of KVIC, KVIBs and District Industry Centres (DIC) are the implementing agencies in the States in the ratio of 30:30:40. An online PMEGP e-portal <https://www.kviconline.gov.in/pmegportal/pmegphome/index.jsp> has been introduced from 1st July 2016. Entire process is made real time and online. Applicant has to apply on the online portal and he can track the status of his application on the PMEGP-e-portal. There is an online feedback mechanism for providing feedbacks by the beneficiaries, which has been encouraging. This Press Release is based on information given by the Minister of State for MSME (Independent Charge) Shri Giriraj Singh in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha on 01.01.2018 (Monday)

DDC Baramulla reviews implementation of PC & PNDDT Act

BARAMULLA, JANUARY 01: A meeting of the District Advisory Committee for Pre-conception and Pre-Natal Sex Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PC&PNDDT Act) was today held at Baramulla, under the chairmanship of District Development Commissioner, Dr Nasir Ahmad Naqash. As many as 14 registration cases of Ultra Sonography (USG) clinics, including 4 fresh cases and 9 renewal cases were taken up during the meeting. Various cases were also cleared for registration. Moreover, all necessary rules and guidelines under PC & PNDDT Act were taken into consideration. The DDC impressed upon the Chief Medical Officer to keep a strict vigil on the functioning of the USG clinics in the district. It was said that that strict action under Law will be initiated against Clinics which don't follow all the provisions and rules of PC & PNDDT Act. Joint Director Planning A.G Malik, Chief Medical Officer, Medical Superintendents, Block Medical Officers and Medical experts attended the review meeting.

Abdul Haq sanctions Rs 2.47 cr project for additional accommodation at AGs Office

Visits High Court; Asks JKPC to start construction work this week

JAMMU, JANUARY 01: Minister for Law and Justice Abdul Haq on Monday sanctioned an amount of Rs 2.47 crore for construction of additional accommodation for Advocate General's Office at Jammu wing of JK High Court. Responding to the grievances highlighted by several law officers during a review meeting on Sunday, Minister personally visited the high court on Monday to take stock of the accommodation facilities being provided to the government advocates, Law officers and other officials of the AGs Office. He was accompanied by Advocate General Jehangir Iqbal Ganai, Secretary Law, Abdul Majid Bhat, Additional Secretary Law Achal Sethi, Director Litigations, Additional Advocate Generals and senior officers of the department. The minister visited the chambers of various Additional Advocate Generals, Government Advocates, Law Officers, library and record rooms and interacted with the ministerial staff who informed the minister about various issues. Law minister said he has already sanctioned a project for construction of addition-



al accommodation at an estimated cost of Rs 2.47 crore and directed the officials to start work on the construction of additional accommodation within this week and also directed to release an amount of Rs 1 crore immediately. "Law officials had complained about the accommodation constraints in review meeting on Sunday and hence I personally visited the spot and found the grievances genuine," he said and assured that all the genuine demands will be fulfilled at earliest. The minister later held a meeting with ministerial staff of the Advocate General's office and Directorate of Litigations including Record Keepers, Stenographers and reviewed their working. Minister said the government will always work for the benefit of its employees. While stressing on the officials to work with dedication, he said government will not allow their stagnation and instead is working to facilitate avenues for their career progression. He said he has already directed to conduct DPCs and recently as many as 125 employees were promoted. Law Minister said while the government is providing facilities to the employees, simultaneously it expects its employees to work diligently to produce positive results. He said government will make every employee accountable and will regularly monitor the performance of its staff and those not willing to work or show poor performance, will be shown doors. Later the minister also interacted with the members of Bar Association Jammu lead by Bar President B.S. Salathia. The members discussed various issues of public interest and also regarding the improvement of facilities being provided to them by the government. The minister assured every possible support to the bar for the welfare of the state.

Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi to inaugurate tomorrow online portal 'NARI' for women empowerment

New Delhi, January 01: In a big leap forward to empower women, the Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi will inaugurate an online portal NARI in New Delhi tomorrow. Developed by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, the portal will provide women citizens with easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women. Further to provide a platform for NGOs and Civil Societies to interact with the Ministry of Women & Child Development, e-Samvad portal has also been developed which will be inaugurated by the WCD Minister. The Minister of State for Women & Child Development, Dr. Virendra Kumar will also remain present on the occasion. The Government - both Central and State - has implemented a number of schemes & legislations for women to

provide them equal rights, economic opportunities, social support, legal aid, housing etc. However, there is often a lack of awareness of these provisions and difficulties in accessing their benefits. For example, many are unaware that One Stop Centres are available in 168 districts for women in difficult circumstances, PM Awas Yojana gives priority to registrars of homes in the name of women and many State Governments offer financial support for the education of girl children. However, information related to women centric schemes/legislations are all scattered on different websites/portals. In order to make this information more easily accessible in one place, the NARI portal summarizes over 350 government schemes and other important information for the benefit of women, with more being added everyday. It provides links to the Ministries, Departments and autonomous bodies offering these schemes as well as easy access to online applications and grievance redressal. NARI will provide information to women on issues affecting their lives. There are tips on good nutrition, suggestions for health checkups, information on major diseases, tips for job search and interview, investment and savings advice, information on crimes and against women and reporting procedures, contacts of legal aid cells, simplified adoption procedures and much more. It will endow women with the power of information to build their life skills and facilitates them in taking full advantage of the services provided by the Government for them. Through e-Samvad portal, NGOs and civil society can provide their feedback, suggestions, put up grievances, share best practices etc.

CJ inaugurates Induction Training programme for newly appointed Civil Judges



JAMMU, JANUARY 01: Chief Justice J&K High Court Badar Durrez Ahmad on Saturday inaugurated a one-month long Induction Training Programme for newly appointed Civil Judges (Junior Division) organized by State Judicial Academy. Chairman, J&K State Judicial Academy, Justice Alok Aradhe, Member, J&K State Judicial Academy, Justice Janak Raj Kotwal, Member, J&K State Judicial Academy, Justice M K Hanjura, Director JKSA, Abdul Rashid Malik, Registrars, Principals, Judicial Officers, Resource persons and Newly Appointed Civil Judges (Junior Division) were also present in the inaugural ceremony. Speaking on the occasion Chief Justice Badar Durrez Ahmad said that there is no competition for a Judge except fairness and sense of doing justice and being fair. While stressing on maintaining integrity, Chief Justice said that it is the hallmark of judicial system and an ability to be true to your thinking and practice what you preach. "Doing justice and being fair is the most important aspect of judicial system and one's integrity shall not be doubtful while delivering

justice," he added. He further said that it is also one's honesty and ability to accept mistakes and rectify the same. "It is beginning where you build your confidence and proceed with hard work, positive minds and dedication," he noted. "The job of judge should be like a hermit, unbiased, fair and think independently. Besides, judges have to be very careful of priming and should not get influenced by the prosecution, defence or any other thing," he added. Justice M. K. Hanjura, in his address highlighted that the office of Judge is not a matter of status and authority but it is a pious responsibility to be discharged with great care, concern and compassion. On the occasion, Justice Janak Raj Kotwal emphasized that the most important function of the Judge is to conduct the proceedings in a fair, orderly and dignified manner. He also said that finding the truth of contested issues of fact is the first concern of a trial judge. "Based on facts ascertained, the judge has to apply the law and give his decision on guilt, liability etc.," he added. Justice Alok Aradhe in his speech

stressed upon the Trainee Judges that it is paramount on the part of a judicial officer to constantly remember that at court he is alone, "It only conveys a simple thing that is 'you' and you alone are responsible for your own deed and action and to that extent you are alone". "A judge must have intellectual integrity which means avoidance of egoism and self-hypocrisy. Social hypocrisy at times may be excusable but self-hypocrisy is not only inexcusable but condemnable. A judge should have physical morality, intellectual objectivity and constitutional ethicality," he added. Earlier in the proceedings, Director JKSA welcomed the newly appointed civil judges and also thanked Chief Justice for arranging one-month intensive training program and briefed the participants regarding the intensive training course for one month and stated that the integrity of a Judge should never be compromised. "We are hopeful that after undergoing this training you will feel confident and more positive after taking job of court judges and to act on different complex situation you face at court," he added.

Commissioner Secy Animal Husbandry convenes State level Sanctioning & Monitoring committee meet

JAMMU, JANUARY 01: The first meeting of state level Sanctioning and Monitoring committee (SLSMC) for entrepreneurship development and employment generation (EDEG) component of National Livestock Mission, was held here under Chairmanship of commissioner secretary Animal/Sheep Husbandry R.K. Bhagat. The Meeting was also attended by Director Planning Animal/Sheep husbandry, Directors of Kashmir and Jammu and senior officers of NABARD

Regional office Jammu and SLBC. Taking stock of implementation of poultry venture capital scheme and Integrated Development of Small Ruminants and Rabbits (IDSR) under EDEG, the chairman stressed upon the need to have focused attention on simplifying the sponsoring and sanctioning procedure of the cases forwarded to the banks and close coordination should be maintained between officials of banks and animal/sheep husbandry at field level in selecting genuine cases for sponsoring and

sanctioning. The Chairman said that it would go a long way to encourage them to establish units under the scheme. It was also decided that banks will accept cases under the EDEG component only after they are endorsed by respective district officers. Meeting was informed that this year GOI has allotted Rs 4.44 crore as subsidy for the EDEG component to NABARD and SLSMC sanctioned 87 cases under IDSR and 113 cases under PVCFS.

Bali, Sat dedicate 3 buses to GMCJ

JMRA felicitates Health Minister on New Year

JAMMU, JANUARY 01 - Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat and MLA Sat Sharma today dedicated three passenger vehicles (Busses) worth Rs. 52.73 lakh to the Government Medical College, Jammu to facilitate the medical students. "The newly acquired vehicles will transport the medical students from different destinations to GMC and drop them back on daily basis. This was a much-needed facility for the students, as earlier; there was only one vehicle that was being used for transportation of students, which too has outlived". Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that this is the best New Year gift to the students of GMC, Jammu and the facility will meet the re-



quirement of a large number of students as well as staff. He congratulated the management and students for the facility and urged for its judicious use. On the occasion, the Minister and the legislator exchanged New Year greetings with the doctors, paramedics and students of GMC and wished them prosperity and good health. They also called on the medical fraternity to work with added zeal and dedication and serve the

mankind with best missionary spirit. Meanwhile, the Jammu Medical Representatives' Association (JMRA) felicitated the Minister for Health & Medical Education, Bali Bhagat to mark the beginning of New Year at an impressive function organized here today. They extended good wishes and exchanged pleasantries with the Minister which were equally reciprocated by the Minister. Speaking on the occasion,

the Minister appreciated their role of the Medical Representatives and said that they are immensely contributing to the society and helping in State's GDP. He urged them to work in close coordination with the doctors and promote good and genuine products, which are beneficial for the poor patients and general masses. He politely urged them to follow the protocol of visiting and meeting the doctors in the hospitals strictly after the duty hours without disturbing the schedule of the medicos. Besides, President and General Secretary of JMRA, P.S. Khalsa and Bavnnet Singh, a large number of Medical Representatives from across the Jammu Division were present on the occasion.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

BY EVIDENCE ALONE: ON THE 2008 MALEGAON BLAST TRIAL

There are occasions when not only the accused but the criminal justice system itself is on trial. The case relating to the Malegaon blast of 2008 is one such. By overruling the National Investigation Agency's finding that key members of a Hindu right-wing group called Abhinav Bharat were not involved in the explosion that killed at least six persons and wounded over a hundred in the Maharashtra town, the Special Court in Mumbai has chosen to let the evidence decide their guilt or innocence. It has framed charges against them for conspiracy, murder and other offences, including under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The Anti-Terrorism Squad of the Maharashtra police and the NIA have come to varying conclusions on the culpability of Abhinav Bharat members. The ATS chargesheet claims it was primarily a conspiracy hatched by Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur and Lt. Col. Prasad Purohit, among others. In a supplementary chargesheet, the NIA concluded there was either no or insufficient evidence to proceed against some of them. Special Judge S.D. Tekale has chosen to steer clear of pronouncing his decision on which of the two he would go by. Where two conflicting reports are on record, he ruled it is better to go through the trial and consider the evidence it brings. His decision is the right one and it rises above the competing narratives of the two agencies.

What made this case politically sensitive was the debate over whether 'Hindu' or 'saf-ron' terror had come into being given the alleged role of an organisation with the objective of establishing 'Hindu Rashtra' in the country. Initially, an Islamist group was accused of being behind the blasts that took place in September 2006 at Malegaon, killing 37 people, but a later chargesheet said the perpetrators belonged to a group of Hindu activists. It took nearly ten years for those initially arrested to be discharged, for want of evidence. These factors cast an unfortunate shadow on the trial related to the 2008 case. Allegations surfaced that the NIA prosecutor was under pressure to dilute the charges against Pragya and others. Against this backdrop, it is better that the evidence, whether substantive or dodgy, is assessed at a trial, lest it be said later that there was any miscarriage of justice. Based on preliminary material, the judge has thrown out charges under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act. He has discharged three persons for want of evidence, and sent two to regular courts to be tried under the Arms Act. The rest will face trial. This decision augurs well for the integrity of the process, as it is the best way to put at rest suspicion that one agency tried to frame the suspects, while another was deliberately soft. It is important that this trial, although agonisingly delayed, is nothing but fair.

On another New Year's Day: Mahatma Gandhi's 'khorak' a 100 years ago

► Gopalkrishna Gandhi

One hundred years ago this day, on January 1, 1918, Mohandas K. Gandhi was in Ahmedabad. And — no surprise here — he addressed a meeting of residents in that city. One would imagine the meeting was about the Great War that was coming to an end or the battle for Swaraj which was just beginning under his leadership. But no, it was about — and again no surprise — something entirely different.

Three necessities It was about securing three basic necessities which he spelled out as: "Air, water and grains." He spoke in Gujarati and his key sentence was: Hava pani ane anaj e khorakna mukhya tattvo chhe (air, water and grains are essential to human nourishment). If Swaraj, he said, means self-rule, then securing these three khorak means securing Swaraj. Explaining himself with typical concision, Gandhi said: "Air is free to all but if it is polluted it harms our health... Next comes water... From now on we must take up the effort to secure water. Councillors are servants of the people and we have a right to question them." On the subject of grains, he spoke with action, not just words. In a parallel initiative on the same day, he got the Gujarat Sabha, of which he was president, to write to the Bombay government to exempt in some cases and postpone in some others land revenue assessment due to the failure of crops in Kheda district.

Air, water and grains were the triple khorak of a people in Swaraj. This was the essence of his address.

On this, the first day of 2018, if we were to take, with great difficulty in Delhi and less so elsewhere, a deep breath and look ahead on where we stand on Gandhi's first khorak point, namely, clean air, or on atmospheric pollution, we would find, first, that India today is among the world's largest carbon emitters, following China, the U.S. and the European Union, is hurting itself by the global rise in extreme climate events and water and food crises. Second, that having ratified the non-binding Paris Agreement on climate change, India has undertaken a huge moral responsibility in terms of reducing the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35% by 2030 from 2005 levels, changing over from coal-based generation to renewable energy sources and, increasing the annual target of forest cover. Third, and the most stark, with the U.S. pulling out of the treaty, the financial aid for the follow-up expected from developing countries is in jeopardy. This makes default and deficits in follow-up a distinct possibility. We need to ask and need to know how equipped we are to meet our commitment to the Paris Agreement. The outlook, as we enter 2018, for India's commitment to the Paris treaty is fraught.

Running dry The scene on the second khorak, water, is even more worrisome. For millennia India has lived from monsoon to monsoon. But now, the relentless thirst of 1.3 billion Indians for water — domestic, agricultural, industrial, 'construction' — has turned our land into one giant groundwater sieve. Tech-



nically renewable, our groundwater as a resource is hopelessly overdrawn. Per capita availability of water in India dropped from 6,042 cubic metres in 1947 to about 1,545 cubic metres in 2011. Today the figure should be much lower, and by 2030, India's water scarcity will have reached alarming proportions. Are we — the peoplehood of India — who form the stakeholders in our water resources really aware of this? We are not. The rock-hard fact is that the National Water Mission's efforts notwithstanding, we are dangerously water deficient and deplorably water iniquitous. Water-profligacy by a few contrasts with the water-inadequacy of the many. And water, or the lack of it, is the cruellest of these. Scarce water is also about unsafe water, and it is estimated that 21% of communicable diseases in India are caused by poor and un-overseen water supply. A significant percentage of our waste water, it has been estimated, is discharged raw into rivers, lakes. Will this new year, 2018, see someone, anyone, from government or our polity scream a warning about our water peril? Most unlikely.

Gandhi's third 1918 khorak — grain — is in dire distress. Behind the dispossession caused by the real estate mafia and corporates, the corrosive impact of cash-cropping and shrinking of timely credit lines is a deepening gloom over output costs and minimum support prices (MSPs), of which farmer suicides are chilling testimony. The five reports of the National Commission on Farmers that M.S. Swaminathan chaired consolidated his warnings and his recommendations. It has been deeply disturbing to hear him urge implementation of his recommendation on the MSP. In a plangent comment powerfully reminiscent of Gandhi, he has said, "The future will belong to nations with grains, not guns." P. Sainath has been speaking of the agrarian crisis with unflagging zeal. Aruna Roy's Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan and Yogendra Yadav's Swaraj Abhiyan have done likewise. The Kisan Sabha has remained an inspiration for the cause and the energy brought to the farmers' agitation in Maharashtra by Yashwant Sinha's espousal of their demands has been salutary. And yet, looking into just the twelve months ahead of us, I cannot see any helpline to India's lifeline, agriculture.

While these three essential khorak essential for India to 'simply live', as Mr. Sain-

ath has put it, struggling for breath, what are we getting instead, and on a priority? Three other khorak: the hava of intolerance, the pani of polarisation and the anaj of uniformity. And why? Because these distract, they divert attention from the real life-and-death crises. Intolerance, blowing strong since 2014, is likely to blow stronger in 2018. Polarisation, tried and tested in the 2014 election, then fielded formally in Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, is likely to be tried with greater impunity in the elections due in 2018. And as for uniformity, the India of many-grained people, all secure in their plurality, is now being dispossessed by an India which believes in codes being uniform rather than civil. To stand in line, sit in postures, speak in chants, sing in tune is to be uniformly patriotic. To make Muslims self-conscious at Eid, Christians nervous at Christmas is to be systematically patriotic. And notwithstanding the lessons of history, to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to be more than patriotic. It is to be mightily patriotic.

Gandhi spoke of Swaraj's three basic khorak. But he also gave, in the same 1918 speech, a fourth khorak for Swaraj. And that lay in his words, "we have a right to question." This fourth khorak extended to political rights, social and economic rights. And very specifically, it led that year, 1918, to the Kheda peasants satyagraha. Looking ahead in 2018, it seems quite clear that after about four years of cowering, the right to question is reviving in India. The democratic opposition is more confident than before of overcoming the fume of fear that had all but choked it. The emphatic improvement in the Congress's seats share in Gujarat is a sign that the fourth khorak — the right to question — can make our democracy breathe the hava of Swaraj again. I see 2018 confronting the behemoth of majoritarianism with increasing success.

The PIL (public interest litigation) and RTI (right to information) methods, combining with electoral turnarounds, can well make 2018 lead to 2019 becoming the kind of year 1919 was — a year when India, Hindu and Muslim together, gave the British Raj a taste of India's Swaraj.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi is a former administrator, diplomat and Governor

The task before Cyril Ramaphosa, the new leader of the African National Congress

► Garimella Subramaniam

Aruling by South Africa's Constitutional Court on Friday, December 29, that Parliament should put in place a mechanism for Jacob Zuma's removal is a judicial setback for the President. The potentially premature end to his scandal-plagued tenure will also be a political blow for Cyril Ramaphosa, the Deputy President, who was elected leader of the African National Congress (ANC) at the party's conference last month. The business tycoon and trade union leader narrowly beat Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, a former minister, Mr. Zuma's ex-wife and preferred candidate, in the December 18 vote. As the organisation's new leader, Mr. Ramaphosa will also lead the party into the country's 2019 general elections.

His victory intensified speculation over the early exit of the beleaguered Mr. Zuma, who has been embroiled in allegations of high profile corruption that predate his presidential tenure since

2009. But the election of a number of Mr. Zuma's supporters to the ANC top executive in last month's organisational poll may have put paid to such hopes, even if their populist programmes will constrict Mr. Ramaphosa's pragmatic approach on the economy before the 2019 popular vote.

The most spectacular of Mr. Zuma's controversial links involves "state capture," a cryptic description of the strategic connections between the President's family and the mining and media empire of the now notorious Gupta brothers. Tales of how the Guptas cornered lucrative state contracts and even influenced ministerial appointments in their adopted home were recently recounted before the U.K. House of Lords by veteran anti-apartheid campaigner Peter Hain. Dealings with the Guptas have tarnished the reputation of a U.K.-based public relations agency, beside other global consulting, software and financial management firms.

Storm of litigation A scathing report in November 2016

by South Africa's former public protector — which the President initially blocked — argued for an inquiry into Mr. Zuma's ties with the Guptas. A year later, in December, the Pretoria High Court ordered Mr. Zuma to act on that recommendation within a month, even as it characterised the delay as tantamount to disregarding the ombudsman's constitutional duties. The court referred the task of appointing the judges on that commission to the Chief Justice, citing the obvious conflict of interest involved in the President's bid.

But even as a combative Mr. Zuma has brazened out mounting judicial challenges and growing opposition to his rule, his past record of excesses seems to be fast catching up with him. In October, the country's highest appeals court upheld a verdict reinstating nearly 800 charges of corruption, fraud, money-laundering and racketeering in a multi-million dollar arms deal. These cases have a long history of mysteriously being reopened and set aside several times since the eve of Mr. Zuma's ascent to



office in 2009. Perhaps buttressing the prospects for trials on this occasion, the Pretoria court in December ordered the removal of the country's chief prosecutor, a Zuma appointee, handing responsibility to select his successor to the Deputy President.

The verdict of the country's highest court last week acquires significance against this engulfing storm of litigation. The majority ruled that Parliament had failed to hold Mr. Zuma to account for the use of millions of rands of public funds to upgrade his rural home in Nkandla, in his native province of KwaZu-

lu-Natal. The court left no room for doubt as to what precisely it meant by the failure of the legislature. It cited Section 89 of South Africa's Constitution, which provides for the President's removal for gross misconduct or violation of the Constitution, if two-thirds of the National Assembly backed such a move.

Challenges ahead The latest verdict is a sequel to the court's unanimous 2016 ruling, when it held that Mr. Zuma's refusal to reimburse the state, as per the 2014 recommendations of the country's public protector, was inconsistent with the Constitution. Mr. Zuma survived an opposition-triggered impeachment motion in Parliament within days of the judicial rebuke, as also a string of motions of no-confidence in more recent months.

But the ANC, under a dynamic new leader, could find it hard to ignore both its diminishing moral authority as the champion of the liberation movement or the political price of defending an embattled Mr. Zuma. Conversely, the prospects of Nelson Mandela's protege

winning the country's presidency depend on regaining the trust of the black majority that has grown alienated from the erstwhile anti-apartheid movement. Critical to redressing the malaise is a boost to school education and black empowerment programmes that cater to wider sections outside the ANC's ranks.

The promise of free university education and the expropriation of land without compensation — planks of Mr. Ramaphosa's rivals which the party adopted in December — underscore the difficult trade-offs the perceived market-friendly new leader would have to negotiate. Another contentious resolution on the nationalisation of South Africa's central bank has been received with some caution by the institution. Vibrant civic campaigns, a strong opposition and an independent judiciary have been the hallmarks of democratic South Africa. Their further consolidation is an imperative more than ever.

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Distortion of history a terror of different nature: Historian

Attempt made to "fabricate and distort history" is a terror of a different nature, general president of Indian History Congress KM Shrimali said, expressing concern over the shrinking space for reason and debate in the country.

The sole agenda behind the RSS-BJP trying to rewrite history is to create a Hindu nation, where minorities are treated as second-class citizens, he said.

"It is a matter of concern that the space for reason and debate is shrinking in India. We have never witnessed such a disturbing trend. Those with little knowledge about history are trying to fabricate and thrust their idea. It is a terror of a different nature," the former history professor of Delhi University told PTI.

The RSS and the BJP are determined to divide the nation on religious grounds, Shrimali said, adding that history is a discipline of reason and cannot be written with fabricated



truths, imagination or myth-making.

Reason and debate have become the biggest casualties in the Sangh Parivar's interpretation of history, the former professor rued.

"There are ways of understanding mythology... Not everything which is part of mythology is history... But you don't enter into arguments, you try to bully people. That's not the way to write history," he said.

The historian also explained that Hindutva and Hinduism are different concepts with the former being a political ideology. Shrimali said Hindutva is being used as a tool to access power. The uproar over Ayodhya temple and the film, 'Padmavati', is aimed at consolidation of Hindu votes.

Reacting to a RSS-BJP criticism that a distorted version of history is being taught in India by the "Left and

liberal historians", Shrimali said historians don't need to take lessons on nationalism from those "who had surrendered before the British during the Independence movement".

He also said that the party in power is trying to obliterate the contributions and legacies of the Mughal Empire. He, however, expressed confidence on the "functioning of the minds" of Indian people in their attempts to resist fabricated history.

Shrimali's view found resonance in eminent historian Irfan Habib, who said history depends on "events of facts" and any attempt to invent facts will be treated as fiction.

Slamming the rising political intolerance and the recent killings of rationalists Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and M M Kalburgi, Habib said an atmosphere of fear is prevailing in the country, where these murders are grisly reminders of an ongoing campaign against the freedom of thought, speech and expression.

18 people die in separate incidents across India during New Year celebrations

At least 18 people, including minors, died in separate incidents across the country on the New Year's Eve and Monday, the police said.

According to officials, five men drowned in the Damodar river in West Bengal on Sunday while on a picnic. The residents of Sri-pally area in West Burdwan, all 21 years old, were killed after they stepped into the quicksand on the river bed and were sucked into the waters near Burnpur.

"The area where they went for a picnic is not frequented by revellers," Debasish Banerjee, a local resident and former councillor of Asansol municipality, said.

The police said a ban has been imposed on going into the river in those areas due to strong currents.

In another incident in the eastern state, five people were killed after their car was hit by a truck in Hooghly district while they were returning home from Digha on the New Year's Eve.

"One person has been taken to a hospital. We have detained the truck and its driver,"

HK Pai, sub-divisional police officer of Arambag, said.

Three boys were feared drowned in Bihar's Bhagalpur district on Monday when a country boat capsized in the Ganga river.

Locals said nine boys, all between 11 and 13, were going to a riverine village across the Ganga for a picnic when the boat sank at Ransidhpur village in Sabour police station area of Bhagalpur district, 235km east of state capital Patna.

Bhagalpur's senior superintendent of police Manoj Kumar said six boys were rescued by local divers. Three boys were still missing, he said, adding that personnel of National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Response Force have been pressed into service to search for them.

A 24-year-old man under the influence of alcohol crushed four people, including three minors, to death in Andhra Pradesh's Kadapa district. The incident occurred early on Monday near Indiranagar in Pendlimarri block when the group was sitting around a fire, police said.

Triple Talaq bill: Opposition to meet to decide on stand in Rajya Sabha

Opposition parties such as the Congress, DMK, Left and Trinamool Congress will go into a huddle on Tuesday to decide their stand in the Rajya Sabha on the bill to criminalise the practice of instant triple talaq.

Several opposition parties had demanded amendments and sought a review by a standing committee of Parliament before the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill was passed by a voice vote in the Lower House last Thursday.

The bill will now be sent to the Rajya Sabha for passage before it is forwarded to the President for signing it into law.

"We will take a collective decision after talking to other political parties," a senior leader of the Congress party said.

Sources said that opposition parties may avoid taking an individual stance vis-à-vis the triple talaq bill as it might send a wrong message when the government has pitched



the bill as a major step for women rights and empowerment.

Also, pushing the bill to a standing committee can also be seen as an effort to delay its passage.

The opposition parties in the Lok Sabha, however, had pointed out what they think as loopholes in the historic bill.

The proposed law, which stipulated up to three years of jail and a penalty for violators, was passed amidst concern from opposition members that it was criminalising what was essentially a civil procedure, and that it could be

misused. Some Muslim women's groups have also raised concerns about "maintenance" if the husband is sent to jail.

The bill seeks to "ensure the larger constitutional goals of gender justice and gender equality of married Muslim women and help sub-serve their fundamental rights of non-discrimination and empowerment", Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told the Lower House.

The bill will only be applicable to instant triple talaq or "talaq-e-biddat" and gives power to a woman to approach a magistrate seeking "subsis-

tence allowance" for her and her minor children. A woman can also seek the custody of her minor children.

Under the proposed law, instant triple talaq in any form — spoken, in writing or by electronic means such as email, SMS and WhatsApp — is illegal and void.

Though the Congress supported the bill, it wanted the government to refer the proposed legislation to a parliamentary standing committee for wider consultations and broader consensus on the move.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), Rashtriya Janata Dal, Samajwadi Party and Indian Union Muslim League were among those that endorsed the Congress' stand.

Talaq-e-biddat is banned in 22 Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan and ultra-conservative Saudi Arabia. Muslim men in India can still divorce using two other forms of talaq that have a three-month cooling off period.

Yeddyurappa will be Karnataka CM, no truth in 75-year age bar: BJP gen secy

BJP general secretary P Muralidhar Rao has predicted a five-year term for 74-year-old BS Yeddyurappa as the Karnataka chief minister, denying claims of the party unofficially implementing a 75-year age limit for ministerial positions. Rao, the party in-charge of Karnataka, also accused the Siddaramaiah government of being on friendly terms with anti-national outfits and favouring Muslim ruler Tipu Sultan over freedom fighters like Sardar Patel. Excerpts from an interview:

How is the BJP placed in Karnataka?

The BJP has a major advantage in Karnataka. As we have governed the state, people know what our leadership and symbol stand for. The failure of the Congress government and its leadership is working in our favour.

What are the main issues likely to be raised by the BJP in the Karnataka elections?

Over 3,000 farmers have committed suicide in Karnataka. Farmers' woes are going to be a major issue. The law-and-order situation comes next. It has got two aspects. Radicalisation has taken place



people who have nurtured and developed Karnataka's culture for thousands of years, but the Congress does not celebrate their achievements with zeal. Sardar Patel is important for Telangana as well as north Karnataka, but the Congress is more interested in commemorating Tipu Sultan than him. It is all about vote-bank politics.

What is BJP's stand on treating Lingayat as a separate religion?

The Congress has done this in Punjab and other states. What is the role of Siddaramaiah and the Congress in the Lingayat community? Don't you think the community understands this? The BJP believes this issue concerns ashrams and saints. They should sit and resolve the issue, not politicians. Sid-

daramaiah is a non-Lingayat who is playing politics with the community. They want to benefit from the division of the community.

Is the BJP worried about the ongoing tussle between Yeddyurappa and others over poll tickets?

We have a well-laid out procedure. No individual in any state, not even the chief ministerial candidate, goes around declaring candidates. We have a system where the state committee recommends and the central committee takes decisions. We have created a process that decides on candidates based on surveys, winnability and (social) combinations. Yeddyurappa himself has declared this at meetings.

Is Yeddyurappa sure to keep the party united?

We have decided (to appoint him as the chief ministerial candidate) after a lot of brainstorming and consultation. Nobody questions this decision. He is the tallest BJP leader in Karnataka right now. He wouldn't have been able to galvanise people to such an extent on his yatrass unless he enjoys overwhelming popularity and acceptability.

Naidu likely to send BJP motion against Rahul Gandhi to Lok Sabha

Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu may forward to the Lok Sabha the BJP's privilege motion against Congress president Rahul Gandhi for mocking finance minister Arun Jaitley by twisting the spelling of his surname.

"The matter relates to a member of the Lok Sabha (and) is likely to be forwarded to the Lower House for further action," a source privy to the matter told Hindustan Times.

BJP MP Bhupendra Yadav on Thursday submitted a privilege notice against Gandhi for his tweet in which he questioned Jaitley's claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi "did not question" his predecessor Dr Manmohan Singh's commitment to the nation when he accused him of conspiring with Pakistan to affect the



outcome of the Gujarat elections through a "secret meeting" at the house of Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar.

The former PM had slammed Modi for spreading "falsehood and canards" to "score political points in a lost cause."

Gandhi had spelt the finance minister's surname differently while thanking him "for reminding India that our PM never means what he says or says what he means".

At a rally in Palanpur earlier this month, Modi had triggered a contro-

versy by asking Singh and former vice-president Hamid Ansari to reveal the purpose behind their "secret meeting" with Pakistan diplomats at Aiyar's house during the assembly elections in Gujarat.

Significantly, the Rajya Sabha chairman had rebuked Congress for demanding an apology from Modi for his controversial remark. "Nobody is going to give apology. Nothing happened in the House. The statement was not made here," Naidu had said.

The BJP, meanwhile, has taken strong exception to Rahul's remarks, with its leader calling the jibe at the finance minister as "unacceptable".

The party is expected to raise the matter in the Rajya Sabha again when the Parliament resumes work on Tuesday.

MP records one-fourth of tiger deaths in India in 2017, highest in country

Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest tiger mortality in the country for a second successive year in 2017, with 25 out of the 95 big cat deaths reported in the country taking place in the central state, data showed.

According to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), the maximum number of deaths — nearly a quarter of those in the entire country — were reported in Madhya Pradesh followed by 17 in Maharashtra and 15 each in Karnataka and Uttarakhand. With eight tiger deaths, Assam was next on the list followed by Uttar Pradesh with seven. Three deaths occurred in Tamil Nadu, two in Kerala and one each in Rajasthan, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

In 2016 too, Madhya Pradesh had the dubious distinction of recording the highest number of tiger deaths in the country — 30 out of 97. According to state officials, the tigers died due to various reasons ranging from poaching and infighting to infection and col-

lision with train. The high tiger mortality in the state has become a cause of worry for wildlife enthusiasts and officials. Once known as the tiger state, Madhya Pradesh lost the tag to Karnataka in 2010 following a census conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India.

According to the tiger census conducted in 2015, the big cat numbers had increased in Madhya Pradesh from 257 in 2010 to 308 in 2015. However, since January 2016, 55 tigers have died in the state.

While tiger deaths continue to plague the state, wildlife officials said all was not gloomy. Ritesh Sirothia, in-charge Special Task Force (wildlife crime), said although the state recorded a high number of tiger deaths in 2017 the figures were less than what was registered in 2016. He also said authorities were able to crack down on poachers and cited the four-year jail term awarded to five traffickers, including one operating on the global stage, in October to cement his claim.

What Rajinikanth's X factor could mean for Tamil Nadu politics

The last two Sundays in succession have thrown up two disruptors in Tamil Nadu's Dravidian political firmament.

If last Sunday belonged to sidelined AIADMK leader TTV Dhinakaran's win in the RK Nagar by-election, the spotlight on the year-ending Sunday was on Tamil film superstar Rajinikanth's political turn. Both are challengers to the ruling AIADMK and the opposition DMK. There may, how-

ever, be a difference.

Dhinakaran is a known political entity and can be challenged as one, but Rajinikanth may not be as much of a conventional rival.

With a legion of diehard fans across the state and beyond, 800 registered fan associations and many unregistered ones, Rajinikanth has an enviable base of goodwill to feed off. What's more, the timing of his political avatar appears impeccable at this point

in time. Ever since J Jayalithaa passed away last year, Tamil Nadu has seen a political vacuum. Edappadi Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam found common ground to form the government, but Dhinakaran is laying claim to the Jayalithaa legacy, even more so after his by-election win.

If the by-election loss was embarrassing for the ruling AIADMK, it was seen as even more damaging for the DMK, which was posi-

tioning itself as the government-in-waiting. Rajinikanth has that indescribable X factor which will spice up state politics. To boot, his contemporary and fellow superstar Kamal Haasan's speculated political turn is also making for a fascinating political script.

Star charisma may or may not be enough to propel Rajinikanth to the throne, but he can play a spoilsport and upset the traditional political applecart. He can

potentially eat into the vote share of the two big parties. This is something that another actor-turned-politician, Vijayakanth, did before squandering it away.

This is what C Srinivasan, an avowed Rajinikanth fan, cited. "Even with Jayalithaa and DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi around, Vijayakanth marched away with a 10% vote share in 2006."

Vijayakanth allied with Jayalithaa in 2011 and his DMDK

party won 29 assembly seats, relegating DMK to the third position. Rajinikanth's entry into politics could also have a bearing on national politics. Certain sections perceive him to be amenable to a tie-up, either formally or informally, with the BJP.

Prof Ramu Manivannan of Madras University said any such development would probably hurt Rajinikanth. "If the perception that he is like a front shop of the

BJP gains ground in Tamil Nadu, Rajinikanth has more to lose."

Political analyst John Arokiasamy felt Rajinikanth's appeal could shape public perception that both AIADMK and the DMK were on the decline in the state. DMK spokesperson A Sarvanan is quick to dismiss talk that Rajinikanth's political entry will hurt his party. "First, he has to work hard in the field for five years to 10 years before he can think of seriously.

Cancer cells override body clock to survive conditions that kill normal cells

For tumours to grow and spread, cancer cells must make larger than normal amounts of nucleic acids and protein, so they can replicate themselves. Yet in both normal and cancer cells that increase their synthesis of protein, a small percent of those proteins do not fold properly.

When that happens, the cell activates its unfolded protein response (UPR), which slows down the making of new proteins while the misfolded proteins are refolded. Eventually, the buildup of misfolded proteins becomes toxic and leads to cell death. However, cancer cells have learned to use the UPR to slow protein synthesis when needed, in order to handle the backlog of misfolded proteins. This helps them survive in conditions that would kill normal cells.

This pattern of adaptation is often seen in tumour cells, according to J Alan Diehl, from the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) in the US. "What a tumour cell is doing is taking a pathway that's already in the cell and using it to its advantage," said Diehl. Researchers used chemicals



to activate the UPR in osteosarcoma cells. They found that, when activated, the UPR changes levels of an important protein called Bmal1, which is a transcription factor that rises and falls with cycles of light and dark. As it does, it regulates the expression of major circadian rhythm genes. When cells were exposed to cycles of light and dark, Bmal1 levels peaked during dark hours.

When the UPR was chemically activated, Bmal1 stayed low during both light and dark phases, which

caused a phase shift in the expression of circadian genes. When one of the main parts of the UPR machinery was absent in cells, the phase shift did not happen. Researchers found that the UPR functions much like a "middleman" between light-dark cycles and the ability of cells to establish a circadian rhythm from those cycles. Levels of the circadian protein Bmal1 continued to decrease, as the UPR was increasingly activated.

In rodents that had their light-dark cycles suddenly reversed, Bmal1

stopped rising and falling - a clear sign that their circadian rhythms were disrupted. Shifts in light exposure activated the UPR in those rodents' cells. Patients with breast, gastric or lung cancers survived longer when they had higher levels of Bmal1 protein. In myc-driven cancers, the UPR was causing the loss of Bmal1 protein, which caused the tumours to grow. Myc-driven tumours lost circadian rhythm, whereas normal cells maintained it.

Conversely, high levels of Bmal1 overtook the UPR, thereby allowing protein synthesis to continue, which was toxic to tumour cells. In this way, Bmal1 directly encourages protein synthesis. This is the first study showing that human cancer suppresses circadian rhythm by controlling protein synthesis through Bmal1. "Physicians are beginning to think about timing delivery of therapies in such a way that, say, if we deliver a drug at a certain time of day, we'll get better on-target effects on the cancer and less toxicity in the normal cells," he said.

Diabetics, say good bye to injections soon. Scientists create pain-free insulin patches

If you are one of those who are suffering from diabetes, then we might have some important news for you. In a new research, a group of scientists have created the special patch which stimulates the body's own insulin production - and is completely pain-free.

According to Daily Express, the game-changing invention delivers a natural substance extracted from brown algae - completely removing the need for painful and unpleasant daily injections. Patients would apply the patch once a week and it would automatically stimulate the body to produce the required insulin. The patch would work by delivering a naturally produced substance, derived from brown algae, via microneedles.

Dr Richard Leapman, scientific director of the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering (NIBIB) in Maryland, US, where the patch has been developed, said, "This experimental approach could be a way to take advantage of the fact that persons with type 2 diabetes can still produce some insulin. A weekly microneedle patch application would also be less complicated and painful than routines that require frequent blood testing."



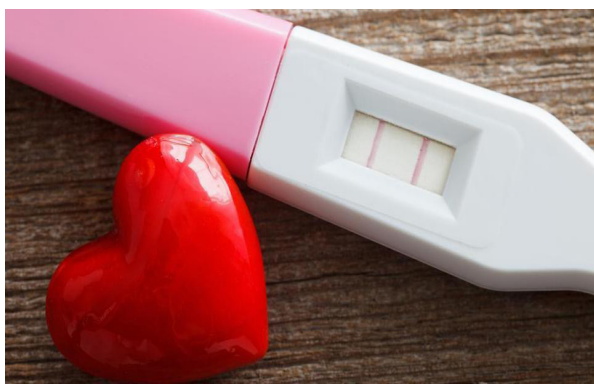
The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimates around 371 million people in the world suffer from diabetes so this new patch will be very welcome. The easier delivery method may mean more people get treated and prevent diabetes related conditions such as blindness, heart attacks and amputations. At the moment they have to undergo injections to regulate insulin levels. However, according to the research team, insulin therapy is still not managed well in half of all cases. So they argue that the new patch would offer a viable and painless alternative and unlike insulin injections, it need not be applied so often.

Dear women, are you looking to conceive? Here are 6 ways to boost your fertility

Everyone makes resolutions every year but few people only stick to it. So, let's begin this New Year with a healthy lifestyle. Researches has proven that if you are trying to conceive then it is very important for a woman to maintain a healthy lifestyle and being physically fit is of utmost importance as it helps in regaining stamina and rejuvenating the energy level.

Go by the following tips that you should maintain and sustain whole this year suggested by Dr. Shobha Gupta, Medical Director and IVF specialist from Mother's Lap IVF Centre and Dr. Shweta Goswami, Gynecologist and IVF Expert from Jaypee Hospital:

-Eat good, eat right: Too many of us are eating too late in the day or when we go to bed at night, when we're meant to digest during the day. It is crucial for a woman to have a balanced diet which is full of multi-vitamins and minerals. Vitamin C is very important



to women for those who are planning a baby as it significantly increases the pregnancy rate. Protein in your diet is important for your fertility as it helps to maintain blood sugar balance. Include more salads and fruits in your diet.

-Go out and walk: Walking is an ideal pre-conception exercise. It is a great cardiovascular exercise especially if you step up to a reasonable pace and it also helps to tone your legs, back and tummy. All these are very important in treating infertility as being fit is the most

integral part of your conception plan. So, go for a regular walk in the morning and evening.

-Seek mental peace: Find a quiet place away from distractions. Clear your mind and focus on your breathing for 10 to 20 minutes. Try to do it daily, so you give your body a physical and mental rest. Listening to some soothing sounds like sea movement, waterfalls and rainforest noises, can also eliminate stress.

Natural pregnancy is any day better. Keeps a check on

your biological clock, as we age our biological clock starts ticking. Dr. Shobha Gupta said, "Women are most fertile in their early 20s and their fertility declines with age. From the age of 35, this fall becomes steeper. The more "fertility aware" you are the better, so you can make an informed decision and be aware that it might take you longer to conceive."

-Limit the usage of laptops, computers and phones:

Especially during night, limit the usage of electronic devices as radiation from them harms your fertility. Instead of working on laptops or sticking to your phone, invest your time in other things.

-Pay attention to your digestive system:

Goswami explained, "You can have a great diet, but if you have a poor digestive system, with inflammation, fermentation and poor gut function, the way everything functions in the pelvic cavity won't be optimal."

Can supplements of calcium, vitamin D help prevent fractures?

Supplements containing calcium, vitamin D or both may not protect older adults against hip fracture and other bone breaks, a study claims. Practice guidelines recommend calcium and vitamin D supplements for older people to prevent fractures in those with osteoporosis, according to the study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Previous studies have come to mixed conclusions about an association between supplements and fracture risk, researchers said. The study conducted by researchers at the Tianjin Hospital in China included 51,145 adults over the age of 50 who lived in their communities and not institutions, such as nursing homes and residential care facilities.

The adults participated in 33 randomised clinical trials comparing supplement use (calcium, vitamin D or both) with placebo or no treatment and new fractures. The



study found that supplements were not associated with less risk for new fractures, regardless of the dose, the sex of the patient, their fracture his-

tory, calcium intake in their diet or baseline vitamin D blood concentrations.

"These findings do not support routine use of supple-

ments containing calcium, vitamin D, or both by older community-dwelling adults for prevention of fracture," the researchers said.



Eating fibre-rich food like whole grains and legumes can help lose weight and trim your waistline

Your mom was right. Scientists have discovered that eating more fibre can help trim one's waistline and combat obesity. Fibre can be found in whole grains, fruit, vegetables and legumes, and it is recommended we consume around 30g a day.

In the research, the scientists revealed that fibre intake could affect weight, as well as blood sugar, insulin sensitivity and bowel health. The study points out that the food group can be as important to a healthy diet as counting calories.

This is because fibre helps promote gut health by being consumed as fuel by 'good' bacteria during digestion. They discovered that low-fibre diets led to weight gain, high blood sugar, and insulin resistance in mice.

Talking about the research, Gunnar C Hansson, a study author from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, said, "Diets that lack fibre alter the bacterial composition and bacterial metabolism, which in turn causes defects to the inner mucus layer, something that triggers inflammation and ultimately metabolic disease."

In May, another study had revealed that a high-fibre diet could ease painful knee osteoarthritis. After looking at the diets of 4,051 people, they discovered that a high cereal fibre intake reduced symptoms.

Want to lose weight but hate going to the gym? Stick to this doctor's simple advice

In a world, where being fit has become a 'mantra' for everyone, a balanced diet is the most essential thing people need to take care of. And now a doctor has revealed that people don't need to sign up to a gym as a balanced diet of plenty of vegetables, fish, dairy and healthy fats can do wonders for their waistline, reports Daily Express.

Cutting sugar and refined carbohydrates, like cakes, pasta and pizzas, is also key to good health. Dr. Aseem Malhotra noted, "It is clear that diet and lifestyle are far more powerful than drugs or taking to the gym. Lifestyle changes such as consuming less



sugar are more powerful than any medication doctors can prescribe. You cannot outrun a bad diet - this should be what doctors are advising their patients. Eating junk food and then trying to beat the bulge with heavy workouts is a waste of time."

Enjoying dark chocolate and a glass of wine in moderation, however, would be beneficial to health, said Dr Malhotra. He also explained that following a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle can transform a person's health in just 21 days, reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes and increasing longevity.

Insufficient zinc supply to lung cells can cause respiratory diseases

Respiratory diseases that develop due to an overproduction of mucus are caused by an insufficient zinc supply to lung epithelial cells, a study has found.

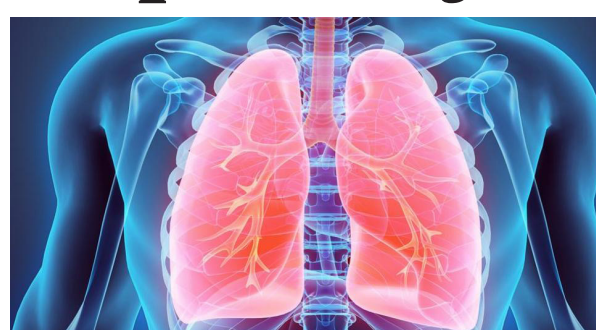
Obstructive pulmonary disease is a collective term for refractory respiratory diseases with chronic airway inflammation and excessive mucus retention that are accompanied by airway obstruction.

They include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) that presents with chronic bronchitis or pulmonary emphysema, and cystic

fibrosis (CF), an intractable hereditary disease characterised by mucus retention and chronic bacterial infection.

A main cause of COPD is cigarette smoke, and the global mortality rate for the disease now places it in third place. The onset and progression of the disease is caused by transporter proteins that allow ions to permeate ion channels into cells.

COPD is thought to involve the overactivation of the epithelial sodium ion channel (ENaC). CF, on the other hand, is a frequently occurring genetic disease in Western



countries that is caused by genetic mutation of a chloride ion channel called the cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator (CFTR).

Excessive production of mucus-producing genes (such

as MUC5AC) in the lungs has been known for some time to be important in the development of diseases such as COPD and CF. However, it was not clear why excessive production of these mucus genes occurs

in these pulmonary diseases, particularly since they have such different causes, ie, tobacco and heredity.

Researchers of Kumamoto University in Japan have now made it clear that abnormalities of the ion channels ENaC and CFTR reduce the body's ability to deliver zinc ions to lung epithelial cells. In addition, the researchers also revealed that COPD and CF lung epithelial cells have abnormalities in mRNA ligation, which, as a result, causes overproduction of mucous genes. In other words, the diseases developed due

to an overproduction of mucus was, in turn, was caused by an insufficient zinc supply to lung epithelial cells.

In general, zinc is a very important element, not only for the lung but also for entire body. Until now, the importance of zinc in the lung was only understood from a nutritional aspect. The researchers believe that this discovery is the first in the world that clarifies how zinc is involved in the onset of pulmonary diseases, as well as its effects on the regulation of mRNA, one of the molecule responsible for life as we know it.

SBI cuts base rate by 30 basis points to 8.65%

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, on Monday reduced interest rates on loans linked to the base rate by 30 basis points.

With this reduction, SBI's base rate now stands at 8.65%.

The move is likely to benefit a large number of old borrowers, said a senior SBI official.

Since April 2016, banks moved to the marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR) system as the base rate regime was found to be rigid and weak for rate transmission.

Though some borrowers have migrated to MCLR, large number of borrowers, especially in the retail segment, are still on base rate, according to banking analysts. Currently, SBI's MCLR is in the



range of 7.70-8.10%.

SBI's move to cut the base rate comes at a time when a committee set up by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

in October recommended linking bank lending rates to a market benchmark, in a bid to hasten monetary policy transmission as well as improve trans-

parency in rate setting by lenders.

The panel—headed by Janak Raj, principal adviser, monetary policy department—recommended that all floating rate loans advanced from April could be referenced to one of three external benchmarks—risk-free curve involving rates on treasury bills, or certificate of deposits rates or the central bank's policy repo rate.

The panel pulled up banks for "arbitrariness" in calculating the base rate and marginal cost of funds-linked lending rates (MCLR), two existing benchmarks to which retail lending rates such as car loan and home loan rates are fixed. The spreads charged over these internal benchmarks "has undermined the integrity of the interest rate setting process", it said.

Bandhan Bank files IPO papers, to raise over Rs 2,500 crore

Kolkata-based private sector lender Bandhan Bank filed draft papers with markets regulator Sebi on Monday for its initial public offer (IPO) to raise an estimated amount of over Rs 2,500 crore.

"Bandhan Bank Ltd has filed a Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) for its proposed initial public offering of up to 11,92,80,494 equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each," the lender said in a statement.

The IPO consists of a fresh issue of up to 9,76,63,910 equity shares and an offer for sale of up to 1,40,50,780 scrips by International Finance Corporation (IFC) and up to 75,65,804 shares by IFC FIG Investment Company.

The issue, which is the touted as the biggest banking sector IPO till date, is expected to raise over Rs 2,500 crore, merchant banking sources said.

The equity shares are proposed to be



listed on BSE and NSE.

Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, Axis Capital Ltd, Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Pvt Ltd, JM Financial Institutional Securities and JP Morgan India Private Ltd are the book running lead managers to the issue. Bandhan Bank is the first instance in India when a micro-finance entity transforming into a universal bank.

In April 2014, the Reserve Bank of India had granted banking license to Bandhan Financial Services as well as IDFC.

IndusInd Bank raises \$500 million from overseas lenders

IndusInd Bank said on Monday it has raised \$500 million (about Rs 3,193.75 crore) term loan from overseas lending bodies to expand its business.

The private sector bank has concluded the syndicated term loan facility from a group of overseas investors, it said in a regulatory filing.

The fundraising, along with the funds raised during the ongoing financial year from multilateral institutions ADB and OPIC, will help the bank expand its lending to clients, it said.

The tenor of the loan is for three years and will be used for general banking purposes, it added.

Earlier in June, IndusInd Bank had raised \$225 million (about Rs 1,445 crore) from the US government funding agency Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) for lending to small and medium enterprises.

And in September, the bank had raised \$200 million (about Rs 1,282 crore) loan from Asian Development Bank (ADB) to serve low-income women borrowers in rural areas.

Stock of the bank traded at Rs 1,641.80 a piece on BSE, down 0.51% from previous close.

Sensex retreats from record high, falls 244 points

The benchmark BSE Sensex on Monday dropped by 244 points, its biggest single-day fall in past one month, to close below the key 34,000-mark on the first trading day of 2018 after a late sell-off in auto, banking and IT stocks.

The 50-share Nifty cracked below the 10,500-mark to hit a low of 10,423.10 before settling 95.15 points, or 0.90 per cent down at 10,435.55.

Investors started booking profit at record highs in absence of cues from global markets that remained closed for the New Year holiday.

There was accelerated selling, particularly in the last hour of trading dragging the key Sensex from record highs, brokers said.

Bouts of buying were, however, seen in power, capital goods, realty, healthcare and consumer durables sector



stocks that capped the losses to some extent.

The benchmark index touched a low of 33,766.15 before settling down 244.08 points, or 0.72 per cent, at 33,812.75. This is the biggest single-day fall since December 1 when it had lost 316.41.

The gauge had gained 208.80 points to end at an all-time high of 34,056.83 in the last session of 2017 on Friday.

DoT to issue notice to five telecom operators to recover Rs 2,578 crore

The Department of Telecom (DoT) will issue notice to five telecom operators, including Tata Teleservices, Telenor and Reliance Jio, to recover Rs 2,578 crore, in the wake of the CAG red-flagging understatement of revenues by the firms.

"The DoT will raise demand of Rs 2,578 crore from the five telecom operators as was mentioned by the CAG in its report this month. The demand will be raised after reconciling the accounts," an official source told PTI.

As per the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) tabled in Parliament on December 19, Tata Teleservices, Telenor, Videocon Telecom, Qadran (a Videocon Group firm) and Reliance Jio have understated revenues by over Rs 14,800 crore, resulting in a shortfall of nearly Rs 2,578 crore to the exchequer.

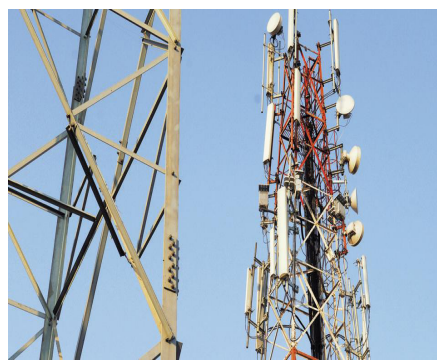
The CAG report said the government was paid Rs 1,015.17 crore less in licence fee, Rs 511.53 crore less in spectrum usage charge, and Rs 1,052.13 crore less as interest applicable on delay in payment.

The government collection from Tata Teleservices is short by Rs 1,893.6 crore, Telenor - Rs 603.75 crore, Videocon - Rs 48.08 crore, Qadran - Rs 26.62 crore and Jio - Rs 6.78 crore for licence fee, spectrum usage charge (SUC) and applicable interest charges.

"The notices are expected to be sent to telecom operators in January," the source added.

The CAG findings are based on the audit of Tata Teleservices and Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) Ltd from 2010-11 to 2014-15; Qadran Televentures (2006-07 to 2014-15); Videocon Telecom (2009-10 to 2014-15); Telenor (2009-10 to 2014-15) and Reliance Jio Infocomm from 2012-13 to 2014-15.

Videocon Telecom, Telenor (Telewings)



and Tata Teleservices have sold their mobile businesses to Bharti Airtel, while Qadran has shut down its mobile services.

CAG observed that telecom operators deducted discounts offered to dealers and customers; free talktime; interest earned from investments and some asset sales from their gross revenue.

As per the auditor, these should have been part of the adjusted gross revenue (revenue earned from telecom services) for calculation of licence fee and SUC.

CAG said these expenses are in the nature of marketing spends and cannot be deducted from revenue meant for calculating the government's share.

The auditor found that Tata Teleservices had written off bad debt that resulted in understatement of its gross revenue by Rs 1,026.01 crore.

Unitech Wireless transferred its mobile business to Telenor's Indian arm Telewing Communications at a profit of Rs 251.5 crore in 2013-14, but this profit was not included for computing revenue share with government.

Most of the deductions considered by the CAG for computing of revenue of telecom operators are sub-judice matters.

Honda Cars logs 26% uptick in December sales

Third largest carmaker Honda Cars reported a 26% growth in domestic sales at 12,642 units in December as against 10,071 units in the same month a year ago.

By selling 62,573 units, its flagship the City has emerged as the top selling mid-size sedan in the year just gone by, the company said in a statement.

For the nine months of the current fiscal year (April-December) cumulative sales grew 20% to 1,29,964 units from 1,08,522 in the same period in 2016, the company said, adding for the full year of 2017, cumulative volumes grew 15%, selling 1,78,755 units as against 1,56,107 units in 2016.

Commenting on the sales numbers, Yoichi Ueno, president and chief executive at Honda Cars India, said, "the year just gone by has been a milestone for Honda Cars, as our best seller City completed two decades of unparalleled success in this market."

"The City has emerged as the highest selling mid-size sedan in 2017 selling 62,573 units," he added, pointing out that the robust sales growth in 2017 was backed by the City



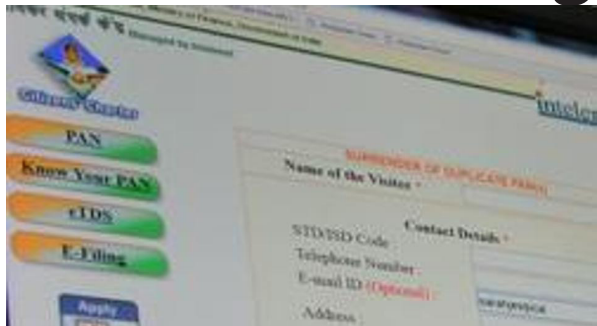
and the WR-V.

For the reporting month also, the City led the chart with 4,365 units, followed by the WR-V with 3,760 units, the Jazz at 1,891, the Amaze at 1,415, the BR-V at 880 units, the Brio at 291, and the CR-V at 40 units, taking the total domestic sales at 12,642 units.

The company also shipped 730 units to other markets, taking the total volumes to 13,372 units in the month.

Honda Cars India entered the country in December 1995 and now runs two manufacturing facilities in Greater Noida, and Tapukara in the Alwar district of Rajasthan.

New helpline for income tax e-filing



The Income Tax Department on Monday notified a new helpline number for taxpayers who e-file their returns and conduct other tax-related businesses online.

The department issued an advisory and said: "Attention taxpayers: e-Filing help desk number has been changed. New Help desk number is: India Toll Free- 18001030025. Direct Number-+918046122000."

Taxpayers use the e-filing portal of the department to file their income tax returns (ITRs) and perform other income tax related tasks on the web portal: <https://www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in>. "The new helpline numbers can be called in case of any trouble on the e-filing portal," a senior official said.

The department has separate helpline numbers to take questions and queries on various other issues that a taxpayer faces.

PNB hikes interest on fixed deposits- know about the new rates

New Delhi: Public sector Punjab National Bank on Sunday announced raising interest rates by up to 1.25 percent on domestic term deposits of up to Rs 10 crore for different tenures, effective January 1, 2018.

For domestic retail term deposits of less than Rs 1 crore, the rate has been increased by 1.25 percent to 5.25 percent from the current 4 percent in the maturity tenure of 7 to 29 days.

Similarly, in the maturity bucket of 30 to 45 days, rate has been raised from 4.50 percent to 5.25 percent. For the tenure of 46 to 90 days, the interest would be up from



5.50 percent to 6.25 percent. In the maturity bucket of 91 to 179 days, the rate is up from 6 to 6.25 percent.

For domestic bulk term deposits of Rs 1 crore to Rs 10 crore, the bank has increased the rate from 4 percent to 4.8 percent in the maturity bucket of 7 to 45 days.

Similarly, for 46 to 179 days, the rate is increased from 4 percent to 4.90 percent. In the maturity bucket of 180 days to less than one year, the rate went up from 4.25 percent to 5 percent.

For 1-year term, PNB has increased the rate from 5 percent to 5.7 percent on bulk

term deposits. For the maturity term of more than 1 year to 3 years, the rate would be up from 5 percent to 5.5 percent.

In the maturity buckets of 3 years to 10 years, the rate has been increased from 5 percent to 5.25 percent from Monday.

FPIs withdraw Rs 5,900 crore from equities in December

New Delhi: Overseas investors have pulled out close to Rs 5,900 crore from domestic equities this month, with widening fiscal deficit and higher crude prices making market participants cautious on macro-economic front.

In spite of December performance, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) ended the year with a net inflow of over Rs 51,000 crore.

Market experts, however, believe FPIs may not be able to repeat this showing in 2018 as withdrawal of liquidity and rate hikes in developed economies pick up. According to the depositories data, FPIs withdrew a net Rs 5,883 crore from equities during December.

However, such investors had put in Rs 2,350 crore in the debt markets during the period under review.

The outflow comes following an eight month high inflow of Rs 19,728 crore in November, mainly on account of the government's plan to recapitalise PSU banks and surge in India's ranking in the World Bank's ease of doing business.

This also marked the highest net investment by FPIs since March, when they had poured in Rs 30,906 crore in the equity market.

"Rising crude prices and widening fiscal deficit have prompted them to adopt a cautious stance. In addition to that, appreciating rupee and rising domestic markets too provide a good profit booking opportunity to them, especially before Christmas and New Year," said Morningstar India's senior analyst manager (research) Himanshu Srivastava. As per the recently released data,

India's fiscal deficit rose to 96.1 percent of the full-year target by the end of October. The fiscal deficit data, which was released on November 30, overshadowed a resounding GDP growth of 6.3 percent for September quarter, which was also released on the same day.

Overall, it has been a tremendous journey for the Indian equity markets in the calendar year 2017. After taking a break from buying into Indian equities in the months of August and September and returning cautiously in October, FPIs bought Indian equities in abundance in the month of November. However, they withdrew funds in this month.

"Given 2019 would not be far, the expectation of some other economic reforms from the government would be high. But the major for FPIs.

Pak-India cricket series unlikely in light of 'high number of LoC violations': Sushma Swaraj

Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj has poured cold water on the possibility of resumption of cricketing ties with Pakistan, citing the frequent exchange of firing at the Line of Control (LoC) as the reason, the Times of India reported on Monday.

Swaraj made the comments at a meeting of the consultative committee attached to the Indian foreign ministry. "The high number of cross-border firings did not set the tone for engagements such as a cricket series," Swaraj was quoted as saying.

The foreign minister was replying to a query on whether restarting the long-suspended cricket exchange could be an option for easing tensions between the two countries.

Due to political tensions, the two arch-rivals haven't faced each other in a bilateral cricket series since Pakistan's tour of India during the



2012-13 season. Meanwhile, the 2005-06 series remains India's last visit to Pakistan, with the Men in Blue failing to honour at least two bilateral series despite the existence of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between

the two countries' cricket boards.

The Indian minister, speaking on the issue of tension along the LoC, said that 800 cross-border violations took place in 2017, Times of India reported.

Swaraj's remarks would not bring any joy for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) which, in November, sent a legal notice to its Indian counterpart, the Board of Control for Cricket in India, seeking up to \$70 million in damages for failing to play two contractually agreed upon bilateral series.

On Sunday, in an interview with The Week, PCB Chairman Najam Sethi stressed upon the importance — both financial and otherwise — of Indo-Pak cricket series, urging the two countries to set aside their political differences for the sake of the game.

"It is absolutely vital that the two countries play against each other," he said in the interview. "There is no doubt that India-Pakistan is the most exciting series, much ahead of the Ashes. It is also important, both, in terms of eyeballs and financial health of the two boards."

New Zealand vs West Indies T20I abandoned after Colin Munro New Year fireworks

The second Twenty20 between New Zealand and the West Indies ended as a no-result washout at Mount Maunganui on Monday.

After a 20-minute rain delay at the start, only nine overs were possible before the rain returned and the umpires took the players from the field with New Zealand 102 for four.

Colin Munro blasted a whirlwind 66 off 23 deliveries after the West Indies won the toss and put New Zealand into bat. Munro equalled his own New Zealand record when he reached his half-century off 18 deliveries. His rollicking knock included 11 fours,



three sixes, and just two singles and a two. However, following the wicket of Munro, West Indies struck back with quick wickets before the rain descended and ensured no further play was possible.

New Zealand lead 1-0 in the series with the third and final match at Mount Maunganui on Wednesday.

James Anderson rubbishes 'ridiculous' ball tampering accusations in Ashes Test

England pace bowler James Anderson has described as "ridiculous" accusations that he was involved in tampering with the ball during the drawn fourth Ashes test against Australia in Melbourne last week.

The 35-year-old was shown on television appearing to try to scuff up the ball with his thumbnail on the fourth day on Friday and local commentators seized on the footage as the match meandered to a draw.

England coach Trevor Bayliss, however, labelled the accusations as 'Pommie bashing' while Anderson scoffed at the suggestions.

"It escalated quite quickly, didn't it?" Anderson said in comments published by Britain's The Telegraph newspaper. "Ridiculous, but what we've come to expect. (I was) getting dirt off the ball. They'd watered the square so the footholes on the old wickets had mud. We went to the umpires to make sure they were happy with it."

Anderson's comments echoed those of Bayliss, who said the umpires had told him on Saturday the accusations were a 'beat-up'.

Both sides had been warned by the umpires during



Australia had already regained the Ashes before the Melbourne game after they took a 3-0 lead in the five match series following victory by an innings and 41 runs in Perth.

the match about deliberately throwing the new ball into the ground to scuff it up in a desperate attempt to exert some assistance from a drop-in pitch that offered both sides little help.

Australia had already regained the Ashes before the Melbourne game after they took a 3-0 lead in the five match series following victory by an innings and 41 runs in Perth.

In Melbourne, however, England dominated for much of the match, led by Alastair Cook's unbeaten 244 and were thwarted by rain that washed out much of the fourth day's play.

Anderson, undoubtedly on his last Ashes tour of Australia, said his side were looking ahead to try to grab a face-saving victory in the fifth test in Sydney, which

starts on Thursday.

"We have played well at times in all four tests," Anderson said. "It would be nice if we can carry that on and have one last push at Sydney and try to get a win. It would mean a lot to the lads and all the English support we've had over here. You see them just non-stop and it means a lot to us that sort of support."

Batting stars Kohli, de Villiers set to renew rivalry

CAPE TOWN: Virat Kohli's rivalry with fellow batting star A.B. de Villiers is likely to provide a compelling side-show in the three-Test series between South Africa and India starting at Newlands on Friday.

"It's not like only two guys are playing in this series," said Kohli, playing things down when asked about de Villiers, his Royal Challengers Bangalore team-mate in the Indian Premier League.

"AB is a great friend of mine, I respect the way he plays the game and I've always respected him as a person as well," Kohli said at India's arrival press conference. "But when you're playing against each other it is just about getting AB out quickly and I'm sure the opposition would want the same when I play or [Ajinkya] Rahane plays or [Cheteshwar] Pujara plays as well."

While Rahane and Pujara may be high-quality players — in the same way that Dean Elgar and Hashim Amla are for South Africa — no player on either side can match the aura created by Kohli and de Villiers, whose thrilling stroke play can change the course of a match.



Kohli is India's most glamorous and best-performing batsman since Sachin Tendulkar while de Villiers has the rare distinction for a foreigner of having star appeal in India.

When South Africa toured India two seasons ago, crowds put aside their passionate support for the home side and chanted 'ABD, ABD' whenever de Villiers walked out to bat. It could even be argued that de Villiers contributed to South Africa's downfall in the Test matches which followed a one-day series dominated by his dazzling batting.

De Villiers slammed three centuries in five matches, leading South Africa to a series victory which had Ravi Shastri, India's team director (now coach), grumbling about

conditions which suited the visitors.

It seemed no coincidence that the four Test matches were played on spin-friendly dust bowls and were dominated by Indian spin bowlers Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

It brought de Villiers down to earth, although he was still South Africa's best batsman, scoring 258 runs at an average of 36.85. Even Kohli struggled in the conditions, restricted to 200 runs at 33.33.

Kohli has only played in two other Tests against South Africa, when India toured in 2013-14, but showed his ability to handle the pace and bounce of South African pitches by making 119 and 96 in the first Test in Johannesburg.

De Villiers has played 17 Tests against India and his average of 40.10 against them is modest compared to his career average of 50.47. But he has enjoyed some big successes — 217 not out in an innings win in Ahmedabad in 2007-08 and South Africa's fastest Test century, off 75 balls, in Centurion in 2010-11. Kohli is coming off a spectacular 2017, during which he hit three double centuries in compiling 1,059 Test runs at an average of 75.64, while because of injury followed by a break from Test cricket de Villiers has only played in one Test — scoring 53 in the two-day rout of Zimbabwe — since January 2016.

De Villiers professed his excitement about being back on the big stage.

Kohli, in speaking of the hunger in the Indian team, noted that he couldn't speak for the opposition and that "AB hasn't played much Test cricket since he played against us, and he's coming back after a while." What seems certain when the world's two top-ranked Test teams square up is that there will be extra excitement and anticipation every time Kohli and de Villiers walk out to bat.

Ederson's penalty save preserves City's unbeaten record but winning run ends in draw at Palace

LONDON: Ederson's last-gasp penalty heroics saved Manchester City from defeat but a 0-0 stalemate at Crystal Palace on Sunday brought the Premier League leaders' record-breaking 18-match winning run to an end.

Luka Milivojevic was presented with the chance to seal a memorable victory for Roy Hodgson's relegation-threatened side when Wilfried Zaha was brought down by Raheem Sterling in injury time at Selhurst Park.

But the Palace midfielder struck his spot-kick too close to Ederson, allowing the City goalkeeper to preserve his side's 21-game unbeaten start to the league campaign and leave Pep Guardiola's side 14 points clear heading into the new year.

City's failure to score in a league game for the first time since last April meant they fell short in their bid to equal Bayern Munich 19-game winning run of four years ago, the longest in Europe's five major leagues, set under their current boss Guardiola.

With Palace defending high and breaking fast, the closest that City came to a goal was when substitute striker Sergio Aguero's shot took a slight deflection off a defender and hit the post midway through the first half.

Aguero had come on for Gabriel Jesus, who was the second player to come off injured after Palace captain Scott Dann — and the third altogether with City playmaker Kevin De Bruyne



carried off in added time, meaning City finished the match with 10 men.

Despite being in a commanding position with 17 games remaining, City will be concerned in particular with the injury to Jesus, who limped off in tears with a left leg injury after falling awkwardly.

"Maybe one month or two months," Guardiola said of the likely length of absence of the Brazil striker.

De Bruyne was carried off on a stretcher in injury time, moments after Ederson's penalty save, and was helped along the touchline by two members of City's medical staff after the final whistle.

Guardiola said the midfielder was "lucky" it was not more serious but didn't give any more details.

"Protect all the players — that is all I ask," Guardiola said when asked if Jason Puncheon's tackle on De Bruyne

deserved a red card. "We could have dropped points before. Eighteen wins in a row is unreal."

Palace became only the second team to take points off City this season after Everton and showed no inferiority complex up against one of the best sides to ever play in the Premier League.

"I thought our discipline, defensively, throughout the game was very good," Palace manager Hodgson said. "Before we would have been jumping through hoops to get a point. But when you miss a penalty, there is always an element of sadness."

Chelsea thrashed Stoke City 5-0 at Stamford Bridge on Saturday to climb to second place, a point above Manchester United after Jose Mourinho's men were held to their third successive draw following a 0-0 stalemate against Southampton at

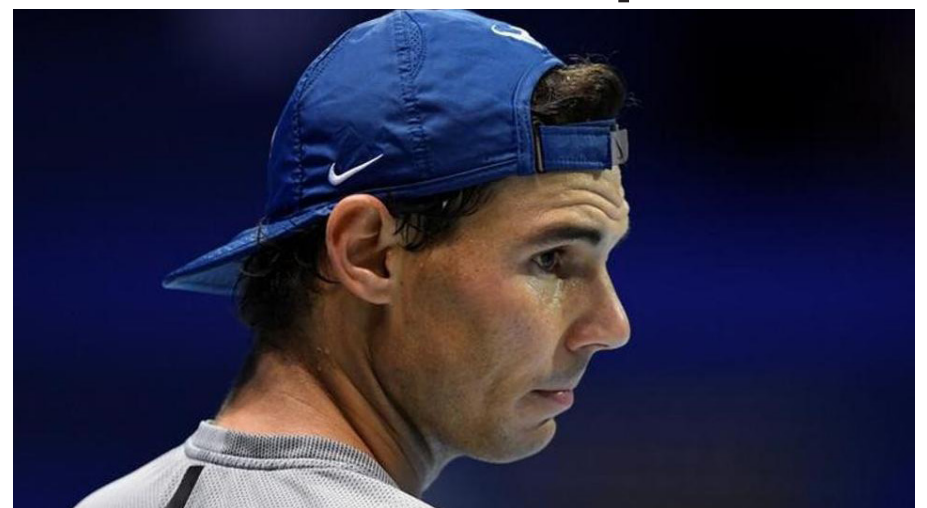
Old Trafford. Romelu Lukaku was carried off on a stretcher in the first half and United looked toothless in attack in the Belgium international's absence, mustering just three shots on target. Liverpool, are fourth place, only three points behind United, after Mohamed Salah took his goal tally to 23 in all competitions with a second-half double to help his side come from behind to beat Leicester City 2-1 at Anfield.

Chelsea were out of sight after 23 minutes against Stoke with goals from Antonio Rudiger, Danny Drinkwater and Pedro before further goals by Willian from the penalty spot and substitute Davide Zappacosta put the seal on a fourth win in five league games for Antonio Conte's men.

"Every win is important for us, today it was important to get three points to continue our positive run," Conte said. Salah responded to Jamie Vardy's third-minute opener at Anfield to score in the 52nd and 76th minutes and seal the victory that sees Liverpool move to 12 unbeaten in the league and open up a four-point gap over Tottenham Hotspur in fifth.

"It is a maximum satisfaction to win like this. Today was pretty much perfect," Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said. There was plenty of movement down at the bottom of the table, with Swansea City no longer propping up the division as Carlos Carvalho made the perfect start as manager with a dramatic 2-1 win at Watford.

Rafael Nadal to make tennis return in exhibition event ahead of Australian Open



Rafael Nadal, who is struggling to get any match practice before the Australian Open, will play an exhibition event at Melbourne Park in the week leading up to the season opening grand slam, organisers said on Monday. The 31-year-old Spaniard has not played since he withdrew from the season-ending World Tour Finals in London in November with a knee injury. He had already withdrawn from an exhibition tournament in Abu Dhabi, this week's Brisbane International and another event in Sydney, citing a lack of time to properly prepare.

However, the 16-times grand slam winner will be part of the winner-takes all Tie Break Tens event at Melbourne Park on Jan. 10, five days before the Australian Open begins.

"Tie Break Tens is a great concept and we will see and play some exciting matches," Nadal said in a statement. "The field is fantastic and I expect some tough competition which will be great for the Aussie fans."

The eight-man field includes Novak Djokovic, three-time grand slam winner Stan Wawrinka, Australia's Nick Kyrgios, and former world number one Lleyton Hewitt.

Each match is comprised solely of super tie breaks to 10 points. The knockout tournament provides a winner take-all purse of \$250,000. "It really will be an intriguing contest," Australian Open Tournament Director Craig Tiley said. "These guys are all coming in at different stages of their preparation, but once their competitive instincts kick in,