

We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools.

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

One more dies, total 30 due to swine flu, 146 cases reported in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: With the death of one more elderly person on Thursday, the death toll due to swine flu has reached to 30 in the Kashmir valley, where a total of 146 cases were reported this winter, a spokesperson of the S K Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) said here Thursday afternoon.

CONTD ON P-2

A minor boy strangulated to death himself in Kashmir

Srinagar, Feb 1 (UNI): A minor boy allegedly strangulated himself to death in south Kashmir district of Anantnag on Thursday, official sources said. They said a 5th standard student Manzoor Ahmad was found dead in his room in village Bemdoora, Kokernag, in Anantnag by family members this morning. He has allegedly strangulated himself in the room, they said adding police has registered a case and initiated proceedings.

Pak shells forward areas on LoC in Rajouri, 71 schools shut

JAMMU, FEB 1: Pakistan yet again violated the ceasefire on Thursday morning and fired heavily on forward areas along the Line of Control in Nowshera sector of Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir.

"Pakistani Army on Thursday morning fired unprovoked and targeted forward Indian posts and villages in Nowshera," official sources here said.

The sources said that Pak fired small arms and automatics. They said that own troops replied befittingly and strongly.

"No injury or damage was reported in the firing," they added.

Meanwhile, district administration has ordered closure of schools near LoC.

"We have ordered the closure of 71 schools near LoC"

CONTD ON P-2

Violence in January 2018 witness surge in Kashmir as compared to 2017

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: Killings, this January six civilians lost their lives in the violence, official sources told UNI.

They said nine security force and state police personnel were killed and eleven others were wounded in militant attacks in the first month of this year against nil last year.

Five CRPF personnel were killed in a fideyean attack on the first day of January in Pulwama in south Kashmir. Three

fideyean of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) were also killed in retaliatory firing inside the CRPF camp.

This was followed by the killing of four state police personnel in an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast at Sopore in north Kashmir district of Baramulla on January 6. Eight police personnel were injured in a grenade attack by militants at Pulwama while three policemen wounded

in two separate blasts.

There was no security force casualty during January last year. Former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is also working president of the main opposition National Conference (NC) in a tweet last in the week of January said "Our security forces have also paid a heavy price already this year. I don't think I'm wrong when I say this is the worst start to a year"

CONTD ON P-2

Troops foil infiltration bid near LoC in north Kashmir

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: Alert troops foiled an infiltration bid from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Tangdhar sector in the frontier Kashmir district of Kupwara.

Defence Ministry spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia told UNI that alert troops noticed a group of militants sneaking into this side from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) in general area of Kalban in

CONTD ON P-2

Lt Gen AK Bhatt takes charge as GOC 15 Corps

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: Lt Gen AK Bhatt on Thursday took charge as the new General Officer Commanding (GoC) of Srinagar-based Army's 15 Corps.

Defence Ministry spokesperson Colonel Rajesh Kalia told UNI Lt Gen AK Bhatt took over as the Corps Commander of Srinagar based 15 Corps, also called the Chinar Corps. Lt Gen Bhatt will be the 47th Corps

Commander of Army's 15 Corps and has succeeded Lt Gen JS Sandhu.

Before taking over as GOC 15 Corps, he has served as Director General Military Operations (DGMO) in Army Headquarters.

The appointment of Lt Gen AK Bhatt comes at a time troops foiled an infiltration bid in Tangdhar sector on Thursday.

However, there is also a controversy as police has

NC, BJP legislators spat over 'Azadi' issue in J&K Assy

JAMMU, FEB 1: The legislators of National Conference and BJP on Thursday exchanged heated words and created ruckus over 'Azadi' issue in the Legislative Assembly.

BJP MLA Sat Sharma raised the issue seeking apology from the NC MLA Javed Ahmed Rana for allegedly supporting and clapping on 'Azadi' slogans reportedly raised by some persons recently in Mendhar Constituency.

However, Mr Rana while replying to the allegations

said that people in the bordering belts, who are daily facing Ceasefire Violations by the Pakistan, are real nationalists.

"People of Rajouri and Poonch enthusiastically participate in every national programme but there are forces, who are trying to create communal wedge and disturb peace and harmony in the state," alleged the MLA.

He said that situation is being created to divide the nation, adding, "some people were protesting on Republic Day against the

government over discrimination issue but different colour was given to it."

"Where were you in 1947, 1965, 1971? The people of border belts stood for the nation at that time," he said.

However, NC MLA Altaf Kalloo in between interrupted and said, "we want 'Azadi' from BJP in J&K."

The BJP members also created uproar and leveled allegations on NC MLAs for being 'anti-nationals' following which the members were on their feet

amid shouts, "Desh Ke Gadaar ho aap."

"BJP has let down the people of Jammu and Kashmir especially of Jammu, who voted them to power to get their aspirations fulfilled," Devendra Singh Rana, NC MLA said.

He said that your (BJP) election slogans were hollow and you befooled people of Jammu in the name of votes.

"We are true Indians. You people are anti-nationals. We are the savior of the nation," he shouted.

Around 200 places of worship lie in dilapidated condition: J&K Govt

JAMMU, FEB 1: Jammu and Kashmir Government on Thursday said that as many as 195 religious places and temples in the Kashmir valley belonged to the Kashmiri migrants are in dilapidated condition.

In a written reply to the un-starred question raised by the BJP MLA Satpal Sharma seeking details of religious places, Minister in-charge Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Javed Mustafa Mir said, "there are 195 temples and other religious places are in dilapidated condition in the Kashmir Valley."

CONTD ON P-2

Preparation of DPRs in H&UDD a major racket Deendayal Upadhyay Scheme a non-starter in J&K: Rana

JAMMU FEBRUARY 01: MLA Nagrota Dewender Singh Rana on Thursday accused PDP-BJP government of wasting funds allocated for Smart City projects in the twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar and hinted a massive racket in formulation of Draft Project Reports in this regard.

"Who all are preparing

the DPRs under Smart City programme and what are their qualifications or standing," Rana asked while participating in the discussions on the grants of Power and Housing & Urban Development Department in the Legislative Assembly this evening.

He said the Housing and Urban Development Department has become a

hub of consultancies and there is something gravely wrong in preparation of DPRs. He also wanted to know as to which taxes are being levied to the residents of the twin capital cities under the pretext of the Smart City project, which has not taken on a right note.

Rana said the Housing & Urban Development

CONTD ON P-2

Fresh snowfall in upper reaches in Kashmir, night temp stays above freezing point

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: The upper reaches, including the world famous ski resort of Gulmarg and health resort of Pahalgam, received fresh snowfall, while some areas in plains received light rain in

Kashmir, where the minimum temperature stayed above freezing point.

Leh in Ladakh region was the coldest place in the region at minus 7.8 degree, followed by Gulmarg, which was colder than the

border town of Kargil, at minus 5 degree. A Met department spokesperson told UNI that light rain and snow would occur at isolated places during the next 24 hours in the state.

CONTD ON P-2

Kashmir highway through despite rain, fresh snow at Sadhna, Razdan tops

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: Despite rain the national highway, connecting the Kashmir valley with the rest of the country, was through for two-way light and one-way heavy vehicle traffic while Sadhna and Razdan passes remained closed as there was fresh snowfall during the past 24 hours.

The national highway linking Ladakh region with Kashmir and historic Mughal road, remained closed since last month due to accumulation of snow and slippery road

conditions.

Two-way Light Motor Vehicle (LMV) traffic continued on Srinagar-Jammu national highway while Heavy Motor Vehicle (HMV) traffic will only ply from Srinagar to Jammu on Thursday, a traffic police official told UNI.

However, he said Jammu bound LMV traffic will have to cross Qazigund, he said.

Meanwhile, dozens of villages, including those near the LoC, remained cut off from their respective district

CONTD ON P-2

A minor boy, injured in a blast in south Kashmir, succumbed

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: A minor boy, who was injured when an explosive device went off, in Shopian on January 25, where people were removing debris of a house damaged during an encounter in which two militants were killed by security forces on January 24, succumbed in a hospital on Thursday.

A youth was also killed and two girls injured when security forces opened fire to disperse demonstrators, who were trying to disrupt the Cordon and Search Operation (CASO) in Shopian on January 24. Official sources said that ten-year-old Musharraf Fayaz was critically wounded when an unexploded shells went off at village Chaigund in Shopian district on January 25. The device went off when people were removing a house which was damaged during the encounter between militants and security forces a day earlier. The boy was rushed to local hospital from where he was referred to S K Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS). After struggling for about a week, the body succumbed this morning.

CONTD ON P-2

BUDGET SESSION 2018-19 - LA PROCEEDINGS - DEMAND FOR GRANTS House Passes Grants of Housing & Urban Development Depts

Comprehensive policy framed to meet urban challenges: Dy CM

- Jammu, Srinagar to be developed under Smart City Mission; 58 projects worth Rs 593.05cr approved under AMRUT
- 10719 houses sanctioned under BLC, 19 clusters formed for scientific disposal of solid waste

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Kumar Singh today said that government has framed a comprehensive policy for effective implementation of flagship housing, sanitation and civic programmes to make Jammu and Kashmir a model state of the country.

Winding up the discus-

sion on Demands for Grants of the Housing and Urban Development Departments (HUDD) in the Legislative Assembly today, the Deputy Chief Minister said that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed massive surge in the urban population in recent past with twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar accounting for



60% of urban population. Development Department is fully

CONTD ON P-2

gave to meet the challenge. Revised Master Plan of Srinagar - 2035 has been placed on the public domain and is likely to be notified shortly, while as Revised Master Plan 2032 of Jammu City, Udhampur and Katra towns have been approved and an exercise for preparation of Zonal

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EXTRACT OF STANDALONE REVIEWED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER & NINE MONTHS ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 2017

(₹ in Lacs)						
S. No.	PARTICULARS	Quarter Ended 31.12.2017	Quarter Ended 31.12.2016	Nine Months Ended 31.12.2017	Nine Months Ended 31.12.2016	Year Ended 31.03.2017
		Reviewed	Reviewed	Reviewed	Reviewed	Audited
1	Total income from operations (Net)	179077	177020	535276	537592	717866
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) from ordinary activities after tax	7247	(49847)	41248	(107799)	(163229)
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary items)	7247	(49847)	17430	(107799)	(163229)
4	Equity Share Capital	5570	4849	5570	4849	5215
5	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)					498954
6	Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items) (₹ 1/- each)					
	Basic :	1.30	(10.28)	7.41	(22.24)	(33.59)
	Diluted :	1.30	(10.28)	7.41	(22.24)	(33.59)
7	Earnings Per Share (after extraordinary items) (₹ 1/- each)					
	Basic :	1.30	(10.28)	3.13	(22.24)	(33.59)
	Diluted :	1.30	(10.28)	3.13	(22.24)	(33.59)

Note:
The above is an extract of the detailed format of the standalone reviewed financial results for the Quarter & Nine Months ended December 31, 2017 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The above disclosure is made as per revised SEBI guidelines. The full format of the Quarter & Nine Months ended Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites, www.nseindia.com, www.bseindia.com and on Bank's website www.jkbank.net

For and on behalf of the Board
PARVEZ AHMED
Chairman & CEO

Place : Jammu
Dated : January 31, 2018
DIN : 03467232

NPP Supremo urges President of India for intervention in J&K, seeks imposition Governor Rule

JAMMU, FEB. 01: Prof. Bhim Singh, Chief Patron of National Panthers Party who is also a Sr. Advocate in the Supreme Court and a distinguished human rights activist in the country wrote a strong letter to Shri Ramnath Kovind, the President of India to invoke the letter and spirit of the Constitution of J&K and the Constitution of India to promulgate Governor Rule in J&K in the national interest as the present government in J&K has failed to protect the people of J&K from the wrath of foreign sponsored militants operating in J&K for the past three years under PDP-BJP (RSS) government in the state.

Prof. Bhim Singh wrote in his letter that Section 92 of J&K Constitution empowers President of India to appoint the Governor of J&K to impose Governor Rule whenever there is a failure of the State Government to protect the life and liberty of the citizens of India.

Prof. Bhim Singh urged the President of India in his letter that the Governor Rule is essential for the safety and security of the citizens of India (all residents of J&K are citizens of India). Prof. Bhim Singh said that Governor Rule was imposed in J&K during the time of Nehru, Shastri ji, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and others as Prime Ministers of India.

Prof. Bhim Singh urged the President of India that he may seek the opinion of the Supreme Court of India being head of the state in this matter, if he desires. He said that Governor Rule at the moment is the only way out to save the people of J&K from further death and destruction. He said this is only way to restore confidence of the people by restoring their confidence and trust in the Indian Constitution.

DDC pays surprise visit to JNV Jaganoo UDHAMPUR, FEBRUARY 01: District

Development Commissioner, Ravinder Kumar, who is also Chairman of Vidyalaya Management Committee JNV Rakh Jaganoo, paid a surprise visit to the institute here today.

The DDC inspected various units of the school including administrative block, class rooms, library, boys and girls hostels, mess etc and took stock of facilities being extended to the students there. He also interacted with the students and staff. He issued necessary instructions to the Principal to facilitate quality teaching with latest techniques besides encouraging sports and co-curricular activities in the school.

DDC further gave on spot directions to ACD for starting construction of boundary wall and community toilet complex in the girls hostel. He asked PHE to ensure provision of regular water supply to the Vidyalaya to avoid inconvenience to the students and others for want of water facility.

Chief Planning Officer, Ashok Khajuria, Assistant Commissioner Development, Angrez Singh, Executive Engineer PHE Division Ashok Sharma, Chief Education Officer, J.R Bhardwaj, Tehsil Head Quarter, Javed Iqbal, AD Planning, Darshan Kumar, Chairman Nominee, JNV Rakh Jaganoo accompanied the DDC during the visit.

DDC Anantnag inspects construction work of NTPHC Rambirpora

ANANTNAG, FEBRUARY 01: The District Development Commissioner, Anantnag Mohammad Younis Malik today visited the construction site of New Type Primary Health Centre (NTPHC) Rambirpora, Mattan.

As of now, the construction work of the health institution has been completed up to plinth level which is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs.1.85 Cr.

Meanwhile, the DDC directed the executing agency to speed up the pace of construction work and complete it within a fixed timeframe.

The DDC also visited Rampora where he also inspected the site for the construction of New Type PHC which is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs.1.85 crores. On the spot, the DDC resolved the land issue and directed the officers of Health and Sericulture to complete the requisite formalities.

The DDC was accompanied by CMO, Anantnag, Deputy Director Sericulture, District Floriculture Officer and Tehsilard Mattan and other officers.

Foot Ball Tournament concludes

DODA, FEBRUARY 01: A foot ball tournament played under Khelo India scheme organized by Department of Youth Services & Sports and sponsored by Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports concluded today at Government Higher Secondary School Ghat.

District Youth Service and Sports Officer, A.K Kotwal supervised the tournament in which 200 players of Ghat zone participated.

In the concluding ceremony, ZPEO Ghat, M.R. Ullam distributed trophies and medals among winners and runner up teams.

In Boys category, U/17 final match, LHS Bhatta defeated HSS Shiva by 5-3 goals, whereas in girls under 17 categories HSS Ghat defeated GMS Ghat.

In under 19 boys category, HSS Ghat defeated HS Hanch by 4-1.

Erring traders fined Rs 131000 in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 01: The court of Adjudicating officer (ADC Srinagar) imposed a fine of Rs 1,31,000 on eight erring food business operators for violating various provisions of Food Safety Act.

Meanwhile, Food safety wing of Drugs and food control organization presented twenty more cases before the court of Adjudicating Officer Srinagar.

Many Youth from Jammu West join hands with BJYM

JAMMU, FEB. 01: Today a Youth joining programme was organised by BJYM Jammu west at Kachwari Chawni office Jammu. BJP State President and MLA Jammu west Sat Sharma CA presided over the function along with BJP State General Secretary (org) Ashok Koul, BJYM State President Dr. Suresh Ajay Magotra and BJP State Vice-President Rajni Sethi. BJYM general secretary Vikas Choudhary was also present on the occasion. BJYM District President Ashish Sharma managed the programme along with his team.

Welcoming the new entrants Sat Sharma said that BJP government across the nation have boosted the morale of Youth, Youth oriented schemes and packages have given them a reason



to believe in BJP, from the last four years since Modi led government have resumed the work a new and highly motivated wave can be seen in the entire country. Youth wants to become job providers not only job seekers. Make In India, Skill India and many other Youth oriented schemes started by BJP government

have given a big hope to the Youth of this nation and they have developed a faith to start their ventures on their own. Sat further said that, to achieve the target and dreams of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi every Youth activists has to work day and night so that we can achieve the target of New India.

Ashok Koul, while addressing the joining programme said, there is a reason to choose BJP over other political outfits, here anyone from any normal background can become the PM, CM or MLA. BJP have the clear vision of Country first, party second and self last. Our government is for all the sections

of the society, the schemes launched by Narendra Modi for the welfare of Youth, farmers and rural population itself speak that the BJP government at the Centre is concerned for the economic upliftment of each and every section and want to bridge the gap between Poor and Rich population of our country. He further added that our party have big hope from the Youth and Youth of the country have always chosen BJP above other political outfits because of the Pro-Youth policies of our organization.

Dr. Magotra, said that the Youth of our state have chosen BJP for the peace and development of the State, BJYM have a good strength of Yuva activists in every district of the State, our mandals

are already completed, now the next focus is to reach at booth level. He further said the way Hon'ble Prime Minister and high command of the party is working, it has boosted the morale of the Youth activists of our Party and our Youth activists are working very hard to laid the strong foundation of the organization in each and every corner of our State. Dr. Magotra also added that Panchayat and local bodies elections are coming, the youth brigade of the party is ready with all the energy to take again the party on winning note. Keshav Bali, Sawal Shah, Haroon Masi, Irsah Chowdhary, Saqib Chowdhary and Siras prominently joined BJYM along with their friends.

Ajit Kumar Sharma once again hold complete charge of CEO Kishtwar

KISHTWAR, FEB. 01: Today worthy CEO Kishtwar Ajit Kumar Sharma once again hold the complete charge of CEO Kishtwar.

After prolonged inquiry and clean chit given by vigilance organization, director of school education jammu would also felt proud to issue restoration order vid Govt. order No. 99-Edu pf 2018 dated 25/01/2018 in favour of CEO Kishtwar. To the honor of worthy CEO teachers fraternity affiliated to all jammu kashmir and ladakh teachers federation (Affil. Akhil Bhartiya Rashtriya Shikshak Mahasangh) of distt unit kishitwar, under the supervision of the convener Satya bushan sharma welcomed worthy CEO at CEO office kishitwar. At first Mr Neeraj Parihar teacher executive members of AJKLF introduced worthy CEO with other members of the forum and then the Convener Satya Bushan Sharma and other presented bouquet to Worthy CEO. In his speech satya bushan sharma welcome him and told "Today is the day of happiness, because restoration of power to CEO Kishtwar, once again restore faith and honor among us" for that he expressed his gratitude to Education Minister Aluf Bukhari and also hailed and felicitate worthy director Education Jammu, because they too

also played vital role to restore faith and dignity among us.

He expressed his gratitude to Honorable Minister Mr Sunil Sharma (Minister of State for Transport independent charge, Revenue, Public works Roads & Buildings, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Agriculture Production, YSS) because he is only a person who pursued the matter in right way to the higher authority and fights for truth without any discrimination, resulting victory of truths. Once again he thanked to the whole teaching community for their moral support and help and also advice to remain forefront and unite for their genuine demands in future also. Convener Satya Bushan sharma requested to the higher authority please don't involve politics to test the credibility of honest officer, and free them from this kind of slavery for the welfare and benefits of education department. Those who were present during welcome program are Mr. Daleep Badyal, Suresh Matoo Shakti Sen, Surjeet Parihar, Imtiaz Kichloo, Mohsin Mir Rajinder Sharma, Anoop Sharma and Viral Sharma Teacher Ravi Shan, Arvind Sen, Arvind Sharma, Pardeep Sen, Nansh Chowsami, Manesh Sharma, Sumit Sharma, Kuldeep Sharma etc.

Daiwa announces the launch of its latest Smart Android LED TV D325SCR priced at Rs. 15490/-

****Made in India, Suits Indian Power consumption patterns **Wide color Gamut with 16.7 million colors**



DDC committed to bringing the latest technology to India at budgeted prices, announces the launch of its newest 32inch Smart TV, D325SCR. It is sophisticated with a load of functionalities, remarkably user-friendly interface with the future slim technology at the most challenging prices of the Industry.

D325SCR is a perfect match for a living room which adds not just good looks with a unique space grey color and Chrome stands, but also turns your living room into a class zone. The smart TV comes with detailed picture Quality with an A+ Grade panel and 16.7M Display Colors which makes every picture real to real. With Delivering an incredibly vivid viewing experience, enhancing color and

contrast for the crystal-clear view. Operated with an Android support of power-packed version 4.4.4 and Dual Core 1.2GHz processors with 1GB RAM + 8GB internal memory, this smart LED TV is optimized to give you smooth experience and enhanced response stimulus. D325SCR gives you an inbuilt access to the internet using the Wi-Fi support and several pre-loaded apps such as Netflix, YouTube, and Google Chrome. Besides these technical boons, the TV automatically closes up the applications which are not in use while being active in the background, this not just result in optimizing your RAM but also extends TV efficiency. Promising Superior Audio Precision, the TV allows you to connect with the Sound Bar or AV receiver through HDMI

iBall launches Laptop 'CompBook Exempraire+', with optional Hard drive



JAMMU, FEB. 01: Riding high on the success of CompBook, iBall, a brand is known for its innovative and latest technology products, announced new addition to its popular Laptop Category with 'iBall CompBook Exempraire+'. Suiting the diversified needs with one singular performance, the everyday laptop 'Exempraire+' combines robust multimedia features with serious horsepower.

The 35.56 cm (14inch) Laptop is designed sleek and slim with unexpected power. It is effortlessly portable and designed with oblique edges for a slimmer look, and more premium metal surfaces for chic style that will go anywhere. Making your life easier, the Windows 10 OS brings you seemingly limitless options and possibilities in terms of applications and features making the device flexible yet productive. Packed with Intel Quad Core Processor that functions at the speed of up to 1.92 GHz and also multitasks with 4GB DDR3 RAM + 32GB storage, expandable up to 128GB via Micro SD Slot. With optional HDD inside the provision also rest easy with 1TB ample storage to expand your library of movies, apps, photos and more.

An epitome of clear display with 1366*768 HD Screen and flexible viewing angles with every detail in the pictorial frame, provides crisp picture quality. Allowing you to fiddle smartly is the Touch pad multi-functionality that gives your traditional mouse a makeover. It comes with several short cut gestures like pinching in and stretching two fingers to zoom in and out of your screen adding extra comfort to your work.

The massive power back-up of 10,000mAh allows you to stay uninterrupted from brunch to dawn with nonstop 8.5 hours while working and 19 days while standby. Keeping you connected, the device comes with inbuilt Wi-Fi and Bluetooth along with Mini HDMI and USB Ports.

Labour Department felicitates officers for outstanding services, bids farewell to retirees



JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: The Labour Department organized a felicitation ceremony for the officers of the department to acknowledge their outstanding performance. Labour Commissioner, Dr. Abdul Rashid, presided over the function and presented mementos for outstanding service and exemplary contribution to outgoing Deputy Labour Commissioner Ankur Mahajan, Krishan Lal, former Deputy Labour Commissioner (Central) and Labour Officer Seema Kharyal, for being awarded Sheri-Kashmir Outstanding Sports person.

Section Officer, Vijay Kumari was also given a warm send off by the department on her superannuation. The Vote of thanks was presented by Mohammad Ehsanul Haq, Deputy Provident Fund Commissioner Central.

NSF holds protest demonstration against PDP BJP Govt, demands withdrawal of FIR against Army

JAMMU, FEB. 01: Expressing solidarity with the country supporting action of Army to fire on stone pelters in the defence, National Secular Forum today strongly protest against the PDP-BJP government headed by Mehbooba Mufti for taking side with the separatists and anti national elements in the valley and lodging FIR against Indian Army.



While addressing a strong protest of National Secular Forum, Dr. Vikas Sharma, Chief, NSF criticized the PDP and BJP parties for moving in diametrically opposite directions with regard to defensive action of Army which had to fire upon the insane stone pelters who were hell bent to lynch the army officer and snatch his service weapon besides damaging army vehicles and seriously injuring other soldiers while on duty.

He said that though state government is by alliance of PDP and BJP, but on this issue of national importance, state government led by Mehbooba Mufti got the FIR lodged against Army with couple of BJP legislators opposing her action and majority of BJP

state and centre governments for joining hands together to demoralize the army personnel just to appease the separatists and other anti Indian forces operating in the valley, thus playing with the sentiments of nationalists who are unitedly standing like rock at the back of Indian Army. He vehemently lashed out at the dual standard of state and Centre governments for releasing thousands of stone pelters from jails few months ago thereby promoting the incidents of stone pelting manifold in the recent past with the latest scandal episode in Shopian District of Kashmir must serve as an eye opener for the BJP government in Delhi.

Calling upon the PM Modi to revisit his Kashmir policy in the overall interests of national minded citizens living in J&K state in particular and those in the country in general so that peaceful and congenial atmosphere is restored before it gets too late. Dr. Vikas demanded immediate withdrawal of FIR against the army and also urged the BJP government to withdraw support from the PDP party and impose Governor Rule to surmount the deteriorating security scenario in the state without further delay. Among those who were present in the Protest included, Dr. Sukhdev Singh, Papinder Singh, Manmohan Singh, Rahul Sharma, Pardeep Sharma, Ishfaq Naik, Anshu Sharma, Sachin, Deepak Khatrija, Mohit Singh, Vipul, Neeraj, and others.

Rail Budget: FM allocates Rs 1.48 lakh cr for railways, promises Wi-Fi, CCTVs in all trains

NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, in his Union Budget 2018 speech, announced a capital expenditure of Rs 1.48 lakh crore for the expansion and modernisation of the Indian Railways on Thursday. Addressing the lawmakers, FM Jaitley said that most of this money will be spent on capacity expansion, stating that this remains one of the most important priority for Indian Railways right now. The Finance Minister also set a target of doubling 18,000 km of lines and said that gauge conversion is currently underway to eliminate capacity constraints. Outlining the other



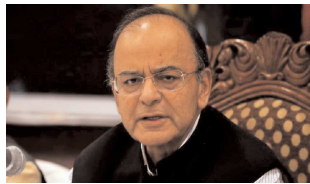
priorities of the Narendra Modi government for the improvement of Indian Railways, FM Jaitley highlighted that new world-class train sets are being manufactured, dedicated freight corridors are coming up and electrification is being

taken up as a priority task. Indian Railways is expected to explore other avenues to raise funding for its ambitious projects, such as conversion to broad gauge and signalling automation and electrification, FM Jaitley said as part of his Union Budget speech in Parliament. While stating that the safety of passengers remains a top priority for the government, Arun Jaitley said that all railways stations and trains will have Wi-Fi and CCTVs progressive-

ly. "Wi-Fi and CCTVs will be progressively provided in all trains and there will be escalators at stations with 25,000-plus footfall," the FM said. "From the focus on the modernisation of signalling, use of fog safety devices to focus on better passenger amenities and safety, Rail Budget 2018 has laid out a roadmap for Indian Railways of the future," the FM said. The minister also pointed out that 600 stations will be earmarked for modernisation by the railways. The focus will also be on a suburban rail network in Mumbai and Bangalore, he added.

Budget 2018: Modi govt launches world's largest health protection scheme

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced two new measures under the government's Ayushman Bharat scheme, which are expected to take healthcare to greater heights. The two measures are as below: 1. Rs 1,200 crore will be allocated towards setting up health and wellness centres in India, which will provide comprehensive healthcare, maternal and child care, free drugs and diagnostics to the poor. The government has also invited private sector contribution towards the same. 2. In a bid to increase the insurance cover for the poor, the government, under the flagship National Health Protection Scheme announced that a sum of upto Rs 5,00,000 will be provided to 10 crore poor fami-



lies in India per year, which is expected to reach around 50 crore beneficiaries, and will be used for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. Apart from the above, FM Jaitley announced that a sum of Rs 600 crore will be provided for nutritional support to tuberculosis patients at a rate of Rs 500 per month. Additionally, 24 new government medical colleges and hospitals will be set up by upgrading existing dis-

tributed hospitals, thereby moving towards achieving universal health coverage. These measures, Jaitley believes, will be crucial to building an efficient, productive New India, and would create additional jobs, especially for women. He further claimed that schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana will now expand to cover the lower strata of the society.

Udan expansion: Arun Jaitley wants everyone to fly, 'those in hawaii chappal must fly on hawai jahaj', he says

NEW DELHI: "Even those who wear 'hawaii chappal' can now travel by 'hawaii jahaj'," said finance minister Arun Jaitley today, as he announced a Budget 2018 plan to expand the capacity of airports for the common man to be able to take to the skies. This will be done under the government's air connectivity initiative, Udan, which stands for 'Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik', which means 'Let the country's common man fly'. Therefore Jaitley's reference to the cheap, humble 'hawaii chappal', or rubber flip-flops, that many in India wear, not just for leisure, but as daily footwear.

"We now plan to expand capacity of airports by five times to cater to one billion trips a year," said Jaitley as he talked about the expansion of Udan. The way the government plans to do that is increasing the number of Airport Authority of India airports from the current 124. "We will connect 56 unserved airports and 31 unserved helipads," said the finance minister. Operations at 16 such airports have already begun. Last April, PM Narendra Modi flagged off the first regional flights under Udan scheme. The three inaugural flights were

launched in the sectors of Shimla-Delhi, Kadapa-Hyderabad and Nanded-Hyderabad. Udan is a first-of-its-kind scheme globally to stimulate regional connectivity through a market-based mechanism, the PMO said in a tweet. It's key component of the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) which was released by the Ministry of Civil Aviation on June 15, 2016. "Airfare for a 1-hour journey of approximately 500 kilometres on a fixed wing aircraft or for 30-minute journey on a helicopter would be capped at Rs 2,500," the PMO said last April.

Rajasthan by-elections 2018 results: Congress starts early celebrations, say trends precursor to 2019 LS elections

JAIPUR: As by-election result trends reflected a lead for Congress, party members started early celebrations on Thursday afternoon. While counting is still underway, Congress members were quick to call their lead as the voter's voice. "This by-election is a vote against BJP's divisive politics," party leader and former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said even before Election Commission was to formally declare the results. He further added that the results are a precursor to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. In the initial rounds of counting, the



Congress established a lead Ajmer and Alwar Lok Sabha seats, while BJP maintained a lead on Mandalgarh Assembly seats. As the

day progressed, there were a few up and downs, with both the parties emerging on the forefront for a while. Currently, Congress

candidate Raghu Sharma is with 2,26,832 votes, and BJP candidate Ramswaroop Lamba trailing behind with 1,84,247. In Alwar,

Congress' Karan Singh Yadav is leading with 71,576 votes. In Mandalgarh, the Congress established a narrow lead of 3282 votes, party leader Vivek Dhakar securing 55,782 votes. Meanwhile in West Bengal, BJP did not manage to make a dent in the vote. Trinamool swept the Noapara polls and is steadily on the road to win Uluberia seat. The elections were necessitated by the deaths of Sanwarlal Jat (Ajmer), Mahant Chand Nath Yogi (Alwar) and Kirti Kumari (Mandalgarh). Rajasthan Assembly elections scheduled later this year.

SC to examine fixing deadline for trial completion in POCSO cases

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked for details of cases under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act pending in courts in order to examine whether a deadline can be fixed for the completion of trials in such cases. The apex court asked lawyer and petitioner Alkh Alok Srivastava, who had approached the court for the treatment of an eight-month-old victim of sexual assault, to furnish the information. A team of three doctors, who on Wednesday

visited the months-old girl who was raped in Delhi by her cousin, filed a status report before the SC today, a day after the court directed AAIMS to immediately assign two competent doctors for her treatment. The court was also informed that the child was moved to AAIMS for post-operative care, and that her parents had received Rs 75,000 as interim compensation. Meanwhile, the Centre told the SC that it was not in favour of the death penalty to those found guilty of child sexual assault or infant

rape. "Death penalty is not an answer for everything," additional solicitor general PS Narasimha told the three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra. Narasimha added that the POCSO Act provides graded punishment for different degrees of brutality in sexual offences against children. The SC had on Wednesday said it was "very much concerned" about the child, who had to undergo a three-hour surgery due to severe injuries to her private parts. In his petition, Srivastava has sought the urgent framing of guidelines on the investigation and trial of cases of rape of children between 0-12 years of age, to ensure they are completed within six months from the date of filing of FIR. "As of now, POCSO Act only provides maximum punishment of life imprisonment. So I have said that rape cases in which there is victim of 0-12 years of age, maximum punishment should be death penalty," Srivastava had earlier told ANI.

Don't interfere, let govt handle Rohingya case, Centre tells SC

NEW DELHI: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that Rohingya immigrants had a right to demand basic amenities including education and health-care. The rights body, through senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, told a bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud that the Rohingya, who are already in India, had the right to approach the SC to assert their rights to basic amenities.

"Refugees all over the world have got this right and the Indian Supreme Court has been sensitive enough not to apply a lower standard for refugees," Subramaniam said. The NHRC had earlier opposed the Centre's August 8 circular for identification and deportation of illegal Rohingya immigrants. On October 13, the court had told the government that it would like to examine the Rohingya's plea for refuge in India while not undermining the Centre's concern about the security threat posed by some

among the illegal migrants from Rakhine province of Myanmar. Appearing for some refugees, advocate Prashant Bhushan said though the Centre had not deported Rohingya, it was stopping entry of more refugees despite knowing that they faced persecution by Myanmar forces. The BSF must be ordered to stop pushing back Rohingya refugees and allow them to enter India," he said. However, Additional Solicitor General Tusar Mehta took objection and said, "We do not want

India to become the refugee capital of the world. I am not sure if it is time to throw our gates open to each and every refugee to come and stay in India. There are security concerns and let the matter be handled by the executive." He said, "Is it judicially manageable? Can the SC test the government's policy decision? The executive is attempting to solve this issue through diplomatic efforts. Let the executive be allowed to discharge its constitutional duties without judicial interference."

Virbhadra Singh, wife among accused in disproportionate assets case

NEW DELHI: Former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadra Singh and his wife Pratibha have been named among the accused in a disproportionate assets case, news agency ANI has reported. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed the supplementary charge-sheet in the matter at Delhi's Patiala House court, after special judge Santosh Snehi Mann's January 22 direction. The ED had earlier filed a charge sheet against Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) agent Anand Chauhan in the case. It had informed the court that the investigation against the other accused was ongoing. Chauhan, who was arrested on July 9, 2016, under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, was granted bail on January 2 this year. The CBI had claimed that Singh had amassed assets worth around Rs 10 crore, which were disproportionate to his total income during his tenure as a Union minister.

Senior IAF officer detained for leaking info from HQ

NEW DELHI: The IAF's counter-intelligence wing has detained a senior officer posted at the Air Headquarters here for allegedly leaking classified documents to a woman among other persons, in what is suspected to be an espionage ring being run from Pakistan. The officer, a Group Captain (equivalent to a Colonel in the Army), was allegedly using his smart phone to click pictures of classified documents at the Air Headquarters and then using the popular messaging platform "WhatsApp" to transmit them to the woman, whose identity is not yet clear, said sources. The officer, who had accessed a certain level of



secret documents and plans due to his posting at the Air Headquarters, had apparently got to know the woman initially through the social networking website "Facebook". There is suspicion that the officer could have been "honey-trapped and compromised" by the woman at some stage during their relationship, and could have been in touch with his "handlers" for the last few months. "The Group Captain, who is a para-jumping instructor but not from the flying branch, is being interrogated after being taken into custody from the Race Course Road area. It is being ascertained whether he is part of some larger espionage

ring," said a source. But the IAF, on being contacted, refused to say anything on the matter. Sources, on their part, said it was during "routine counter intelligence surveillance" being conducted by the IAF's Central Security and Investigation Team that it was discovered that the Group Captain "was indulging in certain unwanted activities through unauthorized electronic devices which is against existing orders". There are strict instructions in place in the armed forces to ensure classified information and data is not compromised through the improper use of Internet or social networking websites like Facebook, Orkut and Twitter. But there have been several such cases in recent years.

Several military officers have also been caught in honey-traps - basically an intelligence operation for first seducing and then blackmailing a person into divulging confidential information - over the last several years. In 2011, for instance, the Navy had sacked Commodore Sukhjinder Singh after his sexually explicit pictures with a Russian woman had surfaced. Singh was posted in Moscow as part of the Indian negotiating team for the acquisition of aircraft carrier, Admiral Gorshkov (now rechristened INS Vikramaditya), for which India finally agreed to pay \$2.3 billion after protracted and bitter negotiations with Russia. In another major commercial espionage case, in which three Navy and one IAF officer were arrested, a staggering 7,000 pages of classified information were 'compromised' from the naval war-room in South Block and the air defence directorate in Air Headquarters in what came to be known as the Navy war-room leak case in May 2005. The IAF, of course, was also stunned by the arrest of Air Vice-Marshal K H Larkins and his brother Major General FD Larkins, along with two others, for passing classified military documents to US intelligence agents in 1983. They were sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in 1985, but were granted bail after some years for good conduct.

Discussion on Demands for Grants for PDD, H&UDD

MEMBERS FOR IMPROVING URBAN INFRA, EXPEDITING SMART CITY PROJECTS, AUGMENTING POWER SECTOR

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 01: Several members took part in the Discussion on Demands for Grants of Power, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) departments in Legislative Assembly today. The legislators gave their valuable suggestion for improving the functioning of Power, H&UD departments. They urged for efforts to improve urban infrastructure, expediting working on smart city projects, maintenance of sanitation in municipal wards, implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission on PPP Model, strengthening of Sub-Transmission network in order to reduce Aggregate Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses, creation of receiving stations, augmentation of transformers and for 100% coverage of un-electrified villages and hamlets of the State. The members also demanded for increased allocations in the budget proposals under Power, H&UD Departments for the year 2018-2019.

Mian Altaf urged the government to make a comprehensive plan to ensure efficient utilization of State's water resources for electricity production. He said that the state has ample resources for hydropower production and focus on this sector can not only resolve the power crisis but also generate opportunities for providing employment to State's youth.

Nawang Riginji Jora urged the government to demand compensation for Indus Water Treaty from the central government. He demanded for proper implementation of various power development schemes in Leh district including R-APDRP, RGGVY-II and DDULJ. He urged for early completion of Srinagar-Leh transmission line and early commissioning of the Solar Power Project sanctioned under PMDP for Leh district, besides demanding new hydropower projects for Ladakh. He also urged the government to expedite implementation of various housing and urban development schemes including Housing for All and Swachh Bharat Mission and ensuring completion of annual targets in the state.

Yawar Mir urged the government to expedite implementation of centrally sponsored schemes for up-gradation of power sector to eradicate power crisis in the state besides electrifying the un-electrified areas. He also urged government to ensure transparency and accountability in the department and in the implementation of the schemes.

Satpal Sharma appreciated the government for extending the power coverage to un-electrified areas by proper implementation of R-APDRP in the state. He appreciated the government for a record number of receiving stations and transformers that have been installed in his constituency, however he urged for expediting the pace of work on left out works to prepare for upcoming summer. He also urged for liberal funding for maintenance works on drains and for maintaining sanitation besides asking for upgrading the drainage system in Jammu city to meet the growing demands of the city by constructing parking spaces in populated areas including Bakshi Nagar, High Court road Janipur and Talab Tillo.

Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen demanded early electrification of remaining areas of Khan Sahib Constituency besides setting up of receiving stations at Arizal Waterhall and Raithan under RGGVY schemes. He urged the government to fill up field staff vacancies including linemen in Khan Sahib Constituency. He also urged the government to expedite work on implementation of centrally sponsored schemes so power infra can be upgraded in the state.

MY Tarigami urged the government to construct mini hydropower projects as small scale industries in villages so that local power demand can be met. He demanded for construction of shopping complex at General bus stand Laroo, additional floor to town hall, Kulgam, construction of marriage hall, completion of works on community centre at Chawalgam, construction of public utility services besides urging the government to take necessary measures to ensure availability of necessary machinery required at municipal committee Kulgam. He also demanded early completion of Solid Waste Management plant at Kulgam.

Shamim Firdous drew government's attention towards deteriorating condition of Srinagar city especially the conditions of roads, sanitation, drainage etc. She demanded construction of a housing colony for Srinagar. She urged the government to take beautification efforts on the banks of River Jhelum. She also urged government to take concrete steps for conservation of Dal and Niggen lakes besides efforts for preservation of Hokersar, Koshal Sar and Anchar Sar in district Srinagar. She also demanded rehabilitation of dislocated residents of Chount Koul and Jhelum.

Sukhmandan Kumar demanded for up-gradation of drainage system, flood channels, allied infra in his constituency and demanded liberal funding for the same. He urged the government to bring the power use for agro purposes under the same tariff as applicable to industries.

Vikar Rasool demanded for upgradation of receiving stations at Banihal, Ramsoo and Ramban to meet the increasing demands of the areas, besides early completion of works on ongoing receiving station at Khariakarhell. He urged the government to electrify left out un-electrified areas under RAYVY-II and asked the government to judiciously utilize available funds for upgrading the power supply infra in the area. He also demanded to expedite work on all under construction mini hydropower projects in state especially Nachalania Banihal project. He demanded for adequate measures to ensure safety of the linemen besides providing compensation to those who lost their lives in the line of duty.

Mohammad Khalil Bhandi called for focused efforts towards effective and efficient utilization of state natural water resources to minimize power crisis in the State. He demanded for working on reducing power distribution losses, setting up of receiving station at Pinglena village in Pulwama, construction of Grid Station at Pulwama headquarter, releasing of adequate funds for construction of general bus stand and shopping complex, engagement of sweepers on need basis in

municipal committee Pulwama and implementation of decisions taken in DDB meetings in letter and spirit. He appreciated for releasing of Rs 1 crore for each constituency for up-gradation and improvement of power sector.

He also advocated for formulating of comprehensive plan for beautification of Pulwama Town and inclusion of Litter Pulwama town under Municipal limits.

Pawan Kumar Gupta demanded for initiating construction work on Grid Station Udhampur besides calling for expediting execution of works on projects under DDUUGY and PMDP, covering of all left out un-electrified hamlets in Udhampur constituency and plugging distribution losses. He also asked the government to stop un-necessary transfers & postings of officials as it hampers the pace of works.

He demanded for release of adequate funding under Housing and Urban Development sector. He urged for proper implementation of Solid Waste Management in Udhampur district, improvement in bus stand Udhampur, release of adequate funds for municipal town Udhampur and early execution of development of Devika River for which DPR is already prepared.

Kamal Verma demanded for construction of receiving station and installation of more transformers in Bishnah constituency. He asked the government to provide necessary equipments to linemen working in the PDD so that they can undertake timely maintenance works. He also urged for timely releasing of wages to the need based workers. He advocated for allocating sufficient funds for Bishnah area under power sector.

Bashir Ahmed Dar appreciated the government for streamlining of power sector in the State, however, he demanded for improvement in HT/LT transmission system. He demanded for inclusion of Kralpora and Trehgam villages of Kupwara district under municipal limits to ensure improvement in civic facilities of these areas.

Rajesh Gupta congratulated Deputy Chief Minister for undertaking various successful developmental works in Jammu especially multi-storey parking projects including the one at Bus Stand, construction of various Nallahs in Jammu, development and beautification of banks of River Tawi.

He demanded for regularization of all housing colonies of Jammu. He also appreciated the government for bringing improvement in the power generation, power distribution and for reducing power distribution losses in the State.

Haji Abdul Rashid Dar demanded for expediting construction work on up-gradation of Watalab and Dooru receiving station from 6.3 to 12 MVA, construction of receiving station at Bomai and Sidiq Colony Sopore under DDUUGY and Tujar Sharief under State Sector. He also advocated for providing adequate funds for power sector augmentation in his constituency. He asked the government for proper solid waste management and urged for better civic facilities for the people of Sopore Town.

Mohammad Yousef Bhat said despite having healthy potential of power generation, the state is facing power crisis. He said a proper plan needs to be formulated so that State's resources are used judiciously to resolve state's power crises. He urged for expediting implementation of centrally sponsored schemes so that power supply systems can be upgraded including transmission infra. He also urged government to construct a housing colony in Shopian besides demanded for upgradation of drainage system and construction of a slaughter house. He also requested for recruitment of sweepers in Municipal Committee Shopian.

All Mohammad Sagar urged the government to take up the matter of State's power shortages with central government so that power projects can be returned to the state at earliest. He asked the government to take concrete measures to ensure regular power supply to the people of the state. He demanded for early completion of works on various grid stations and receiving stations including Alasteng Talbal, Budgam Grid Stations and receiving stations to end power crisis in the state. He also demanded proper sanitation, drainage, street lights and proper housing colonies.

Mohammad Amin Bhat urged the government to establish additional transformer repair workshops especially in Kulgam district so that necessary fault repairs can be undertaken in short amount of time. He also urged the government for liberal funding for municipal committees so that effective sanitation and drainage mechanism can be put in place.

Abdul Rahim Rather urged the government to provide regular power supply to the rural, far-off hamlets of Kokernag besides early establishment of Grid Station in two villages of Kokernag. He also urged the government to ensure transparency and accountability in the department.

Devender Singh Rana urged the government to get stays vacated on various power projects, grid stations, transmission lines and receiving stations so that the projects can be executed at the earliest. He also urged the government to take measures for return of power projects to the state besides taking measures to complete Rattle, Lower Kalnai, Parni, Sawalakote, Kiru, Pakal Dul, Kawar and Dulhasti II hydro electric power projects. He demanded for strict implementation of schemes including DDUUGY and PMSBHG in the state especially in Nagrota constituency, strengthening of HT/LT network and electrification of un-electrified habitations besides completion of Grid Station of 220/33kVA in Nagrota.

Rajeev Jasrotia also took part in discussion and appreciated the government for effort to streamline generation, transmission and distribution of power besides for implementation of schemes including DDUUGY, RAP-DRP and AMRUT during the last three years. He also appreciated the government for initiatives being undertaken for development of Srinagar and Jammu as smart cities. He, however, urged the government for immediate initiation of construction of water projects approved as part of this project. He called for establish-

ment of multi parking facilities in Kathua constituency and advocated for stringent efforts to reduce decongestion in the State.

Deldan Namgyal urged the government to release funds to initiate works on approved projects for transmission line from Leh to Nobra and two sanctioned projects (25MW) each in Nobra constituency. He also urged the government to utilize sanctioned funds under DDUUGY besides engaging A-class contractors executing these works. He demanded for distribution of electric poles besides replacing wooden poles in Nobra constituency.

Abdul Majeed Padder said there are many un-electrified hamlets in his constituency and urged the government to take immediate measures to electrify these hamlets. He urged government for early establishment of transformer workshop in Damhal-Hanjipora. He said 92 percent of ST population of Kulgam district resides in Noorabad constituency. He brought government's attention towards the concerns of ST community where in they stay only in Noorabad for a few months but have to pay a power fee for 12 months. He urged the government to look into the matter and take considerate action to redress their concern.

Mubarak Gul asked the government to provide financial assistance to urban homeless families especially those in old city Srinagar, so that they can construct housing for themselves. He urged the government to revive the beauty of Dal Lake and Wullar Lake besides rehabilitating Dal dwellers to make it encroachment free. He also urged the government to upgrade drainage and sanitation systems in Srinagar city besides early implementation of works under smart city project. He called for ensuring transparency and accountability in LAWDA besides demanding completion of community hall at Gassi Mohalla Eidgah, separate development authority for Khushal Sar and Hokersar. He also called for measures to check the power theft instances so as to ensure regular power supply to population.

R S Pathania said the government should be swift in implementation of 'Power for All' policy in the state. He called for upgrading the transmission network in the state besides for setting up additional transformer workshops so that defunct transformers can be repaired at the earliest. He demanded for establishment of Solid Waste Management plant and a municipal committee in his constituency. He also demanded for establishment of Lakes Development Authority for maintenance, preservation and conservation of lakes including Mansar Lake and other lakes of Jammu.

G M Saroori demanded early completion of Rattle Hydropower Project at Drabshaal, augmentation of existing power lines/infrastructure by releasing liberal funding in this regard in Chenab valley. He also suggested the government to identify reasons for poor response to the tender notices by the department. He also demanded compensation, relief for the persons who died or injured by power shocks in district Kishtwar and Doda in the last three years.

Shah Mohammad Tantray demanded liberal funding to complete ongoing projects in his constituency on time and also demanded for distribution of solar lights in un-electrified areas besides installing meters in his constituency.

Mohammad Akbar Lone appreciated the officers working in the departments but urged the government to ensure equitable distribution of funds in the state. He pointed out the non compliance of CM's directions issued during public meet held at Sonawari and demanded for implementation of the same in letter and spirit. He demanded for construction of receiving stations at various coases in Sonawari constituency including Hakbar and urged for up-gradation of existing receiving stations.

He appreciated the government for providing of Rs 1 crore for development of power infra in every constituency; however he requested for enhancing allocation in this regard. He called for comprehensive policy for those who are killed due to power short-circuits, including SRO cases for their kith and kin's. He also advocated for providing employment to land owners who donated their lands for construction, installation of towers required for Kishen Ganga Hydro Power Project in his Constituency.

Shakti Raj Parihar also took part in the discussion and demanded for expediting pace of construction work on various power projects viz., transmission line from Ramban to Khabeni in his Constituency including Pakal Dul. He demanded for providing adequate funds for execution of various ongoing developmental projects including strengthening of HT/LT under PDD sector in his constituency.

Raja Manzoor urged the government to develop an improved drainage system for Jammu and Srinagar city. He appreciated the government for taking up works on up-gradation of 2 MW power project and urged the government to start work on hydel project in Karamah constituency. He informed that the required land for transformer repair workshop in Karamah has been identified and urged the government to release funds in this regard, so that necessary action can be undertaken, equipments purchased, to make the workshop operational.

Chandhary Mohammad Akram demanded restoration of 12 KV transmission line damaged in 2012 from Buziluz to Chandak and for construction of grid station in the area. He also demanded electrification of un-electrified areas besides providing more transformers to his constituency.

Altaf Ahmad Wani urged the government to construct sewerage treatment plant besides identifying garbage dumping sites for his constituency. He urged the government for early de-notification of Municipal Committee Seer Hamdan as per the court directions. He also demanded for early completion of all ongoing projects taken up for upgradation of transmission network and power supply systems in the State. He urged the government to start work on Smart City Project at the earliest for Jammu and Srinagar.

Devinder Kumar Manyal appreciated the government for taking up various power infra development projects and urged for expediting pace of work for timely completion of these projects. He asked the government to

establish a receiving station at Parmandal for the benefit of several villages of his constituency and also urged for construction of a marriage hall as committed by the government earlier. He demanded for necessary works to be undertaken in Sainik Colony and Greater Kailash areas including up-gradation of drainage system, installation of street lights in these areas.

Asgar Ali Karballe also took part in discussion and asked the government to expedite pace of work on execution of works sanctioned under DDUUGY and various micro Hydro Projects for Kargil district. He called for early execution of BEAMA-Garkon Hydro Project of 240 MW and Lato Karkitchoo Hydro Project of Beam 80 MW and also demanded for providing of adequate funds for these projects. He urged for formulating a master plan for Kargil Town and also asked the government for establishment of a Multi Storey parking in the area.

Javid Hassan Beigh said that good governance is only possible if government is held accountable in the House. He stressed for adopting a good work culture in all sectors including PDD. He stressed for judicious use of electricity and also advocated for adopting latest techniques to improve the power infra in the State. He urged for expediting pace of work on construction of all ongoing power projects sanctioned under different centrally sponsored schemes. He called for adopting latest techniques to effectively tap water resources of the State which he said will help to generate more electricity.

He demanded for providing adequate funds under H&UD sectors in Baramulla and Sopore.

Daleep Singh Parihar appreciated the government for upgrading the transmission network in his constituency. He urged the government to take measures to vacate stay on various projects including that on construction of grid station in his constituency besides urging government for sanctioning additional Grid Station for the area.

Javed Rana urged the government to take measures for return of power projects to the state government and demanded for upgrading the power supply system of Pir Panchal region besides called for establishment of a transformer repair workshop in his constituency.

Gulzar Ahmad Wani requested for beautification and rejuvenation efforts for Achabal area keeping in view the historical aspect of the town. He called for additional efforts to improve power supply by way of installation of transformers and electric network in far flung areas of Shanganu constituency under DDUUGY.

Choudhary Qamar Hussain thanked the government for efforts undertaken to augment power supply by way of works on two receiving stations in his constituency. He also brought forth the matter of compensation for linemen who suffered injuries, lost their lives in line of duty besides asking for establishing an insurance cover for these ground level workers.

Dinanath Bhatnagar urged the government to expedite work on construction of receiving station in Chenani to ensure timely completion. He demanded for up-gradation of transmission network besides electrifying un-electrified areas. He called for liberal funding to complete various pending works.

Abdul Majeed Larmi demanded de-notification of Frisal, Hum, Yaripora, and Homshalbhug villages from Municipal Committee to Rural Development. He also demanded installation of streetlights in Yaripora and Frisal towns besides for releasing of liberal funding for construction and development of lanes and drains in Yaripora and Frisal towns. He demanded establishment of transformer repairing workshop for his constituency.

Usman Abdul Majeed demanded for releasing restriction so that legislators can spend part of CDF allocations on providing transformers for ease of the public. He also demanded for establishment of new receiving stations at Arin and up-gradation and augmentation of receiving station Aloosa and Ajas in Bandipora Constituency.

He called for early commissioning of Patushai Grid Station in Bandipora besides providing pending compensation to the persons who have donated land for the Kishenganga Hydroelectric power project. He also demanded for improvement of HT/LT network, replacement of decayed poles along with the stock position of transformers in Bandipora constituency.

Noor Mohammad Sheikh appreciated the government for providing special assistance to each constituency for laying transmission lines and electric poles to augment power infra across the state. He demanded for regularization of various colonies including a colony of Batamalo constituency and for up-gradation of drainage system in his constituency under AMRUT besides for installation of streetlights in various areas and repairing defunct streetlights.

Rajeev Sharma demanded for initiating works on various projects under RAPDRP, DDUUGY and various other schemes in his constituency besides early completion of other ongoing projects. He urged the government to distribute solar lights in un-electrified areas and demanded for up-gradation of transmission network in his constituency. He called for providing compensation to the linemen who die in the line of duty. He also demanded for expediting work on identifying land for early establishment of Solid Waste Management plant in his constituency. He urged the government to take appropriate measures to decongest the traffic in his constituency.

Ravinder Raina said that many transformers and electric poles were damaged in cross border shelling and appreciated the government for taking immediate measure to restore the transmission system. He also appreciated government for starting work on bypass road in Sunderbani constituency. He demanded for establishing PDD Division in Sunderbani as committed by previous government. He also demanded for early completion of various ongoing projects under various schemes in his constituency besides establishment of new grid station in the area. He urged the government to fill various vacancies that are lying vacant in the department.

JINDRAH IMAGES

Banquet halls contributing to traffic mess

Barring a few, most of the banquet halls in Jammu and its peripheral areas don't have ample parking space because of which guests park their vehicles by the roadsides, often leading to massive traffic jams during the marriage season. But there is none in the district administration to take a suo moto notice of the inconvenience being caused to people by these banquet halls. One such banquet hall is in the heart of city at Kachi Chawni and a few others are on the lower Akhnoor road, especially at Paloura and in Muthi and Domana areas. There are illegal banquet halls also which are mostly operational in Jammu and Samba areas under the otherwise 'watchful' eyes of the agencies concerned. If sources are to be believed, no permission has been granted for the construction at least three banquet halls in Vijaypur area of Samba. Though notices were served on their managements from time to time by the agencies concerned, there was no follow up action. As per the notices, they were asked to remove the illegal constructions within five days. In case they fail to do so, the authority concerned had warned that the enforcement wing would do it on its own and the cost of removal shall be recovered from the managements as arrears of land revenue. A lot of time has passed since then but no legal action has so far been taken. One banquet hall was alleged to have come up in violation of norms at Udheywala on the Jammu city outskirts. Notices have been served on its management too but of no use. The delay in taking action against them gives strength to the allegations that the authorities concerned first allow the illegal constructions to come up with impunity from law and then issue notices for formality sake only. These notices are normally issued after the construction is complete in all respects. It has been alleged that these banquet halls were raised illegally in connivance with those who were then at the helm of affairs. That is why no action is being taken against them. So deep rooted is the nexus between the officials concerned and the banquet hall owners that despite the issuance of notices and sealing orders, the banquet halls are still operational. Since the constructions are illegal, development charges were also not deposited in the government exchequer. This way, the government has suffered a loss of revenue. Not only this, most of the banquet halls in the twin districts don't have parking space as a result of big traffic jams are witnessed outside them during marriage season, causing inconvenience to general public. This is highly condemnable and regrettable too as the authorities concerned have so far not bothered to act against their managements or order their closure. Exerting their authority, the officials concerned can at least ask them to keep their business activity suspended till they arrange ample parking space for the visiting guests. There should be no further delay in this regard.

The great Chinese (fire)wall: What India needs to do now

ABHIJIT BHATTACHARYYA

At the cost of being misunderstood by some fellow countrymen who may prefer to pursue a soft line on China, seeking unrestricted imports and investments from that country, preferring to facilitate Beijing's entities' unchecked entry and exit across the length and breadth of India, I shall question their "love for China and all things Chinese". What is being done today is exactly what a tottering Shah Alam II did in the last days of the Mughal durbar by granting British the diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (now Odisha), upgrading the status of the foreign traders to virtual rulers in almost one stroke.

How does one react to the Financial Times report "Beijing's censors make it tougher for global groups to scale Great Firewall" (Jan. 17, 2018)? Beijing is reportedly "plugging the last holes" in its "great firewall" Internet censorship, thereby severely disrupting the ability of global multinationals to efficiently operate in and from China.

Does it appear surprising or unexpected? That depends on who are talking to. Undoubtedly, it's all about one's self-interest at an individual level, which turns institutional at the national level. Multinationals and other big corporations are known for their strategic interest in profit, markets, consolidation and expansion, but seen from the point of view of a Westphalian sovereign state like China, can these corporations overlook a country's "legitimate national interest" which could be linked to not only economics and profits, but also to an overarching arch of internal polity, security, integrity, sov-

ereignty, macro-economics, indigenous industry protection, employment and social stability. From that viewpoint, China may have something drastically different to state. Yes, prima facie, China does reserve the sovereign right to determine what it considers to be in its national interest. There's nothing wrong with that, except by the same logic, can one support China for doing the exact opposite?

Understandably, then the complaint list given by several international companies operating from Beijing, raises "issues". Chinese telecom providers regularly block crucial software used by foreign companies in China. Although MNCs use Virtual Private Network (VPN) software to avoid censorship and save their sensitive commercial communications from being hacked, Chinese regulators are pressuring them to buy expensive state-approved VPNs. This will be disadvantageous to them as it could expose their communications to Beijing.

The partner of a prominent Western legal firm in Beijing, Wilmer Hale, says: "China's intention is to control the flow of information entirely, making people use only government-approved VPNs by making it difficult, if not impossible, to use alternatives." You may recall how state-engineered disruptions

forced Google to move out of China. According to Consultancy Control Risks, Shanghai: "The Xi administration has prioritised control over all information flows within China and in and out of its borders." But then, what China is doing is done by the West too.

Yet today the crux of the matter is "in and out of its (China's) border". India stands just across the "border", a border to be recognised only if "demarcated, delineated and decided" by China! Hence, all information emanating from India too must be controlled, captured and censored because India is an "irritant foreign country". So China takes full advantage of the "divided" Indians, both inside and outside the establishment. There was a strong "China lobby" in the 1960s too — which came into existence after the 1962 Chinese invasion of India. How did those who were cursing the Chinese in 1962 for its unprovoked invasion become its ardent fans and staunch supporters within five years (like Naxalites in 1967), resorting to rabid anti-national slogans like "China's Chairman (Mao Zedong) is our chairman"?

One still remembers those turbulent college days in Kolkata (then Calcutta), being bashed up by fellow countrymen for opposing them and refusing to raise pro-Mao and rabid anti-India slogans.



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Age Debate: A sensible idea, or partisan

PANKAJ SHARMA

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pitched for holding simultaneous elections to Parliament and the state Assemblies, President Ram Nath Kovind is now calling for it too. Mr Modi has been preparing a plan for the merger of elections for a long time and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)-backed think tanks have been working overtime to create an atmosphere so that the PM gets support on this.

Mr Modi calls it "electoral cycle reforms" which he argues will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering. He wants politicians to have more time for people-oriented programme rather than wasting most of their time on elections. But the real intention behind it is to consolidate the position of the BJP across the nation.

At an all-party meet two years back, Mr Modi spoke about merging forthcoming elections. The proposal was then raised again at a meeting of the BJP's national executive. This was a plan in motion even before the last general election. The BJP's manifesto for the 2014 election had underlined: "Evolve method of holding Assembly and Lok Sabha Elections simultaneously."

Then, in December 2015 the Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law, and Justice tabled a report in Parliament on the "Feasibility of Holding Simultaneous Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies". The report said, "This is important for India if it is to compete with other nations in developmental agenda on real time basis as a robust, democratic country."

The President has the power to extend the period



of Assemblies by up to one year to bring about uniformity in holding the elections at the same time. It'll be interesting to see how far our new President would like to stretch his powers to fulfill the desire of a particular political party as it is bound to raise many questions.

Moreover, to conduct elections across the country on the same day, about 4,000 companies of paramilitary forces will be required. The country is able to make available only around 1,000 at the moment. Purchasing Electronic Voting Machines and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail machines would cost around 10,000 crores if elections are to be held together. State and national elections are often fought on different sets of issues. In simultaneous polls, voters may end up privileging one set of issues over the other. National issues could be ignored or local issues could be swept away by a national "wave". The proposal is entirely against the basic principles of

a federal system. Every year one state or the other state is geared up for an election. The tiring process of campaigning and the cost incurred in the midst of all this is an ideal example on why this country needs the policy of "One nation, one election". Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always been calling for holding state and national elections together to reduce the expenses that go into holding these, as also the chaos associated with it. The BJP has always promoted work culture, and proven itself through its work, not fake promises and schemes. Issues like expenditure; diversion of security and civil staff from primary duties; impact on governance due to the model code of conduct and disruption to normal public life stand among the key reasons as to why India needs this policy.

We talk about India being the world's biggest democracy, and the Opposition is asking how one election could justify the right to vote of

Forever 'left' out

BORN a southpaw, I often feel like an odd man in the world of right-handed people. A left-handed person faces bias, though it may not be blatantly obvious. Having been born and brought up in predominantly Muslim countries, I was often at the receiving end of sarcastic comments for using the left hand, even while eating. The whole Muslim world looks down upon those who eat with their left hands, despite the fact that many revered characters in Islam have been left-handers. Hazrat Ali was a left-hander. So, was Hussain, who wielded the sword with his left hand.

Arabs use the term ibn-ul-blees (son of Satan) for a left-hander, particularly for one who eats with his/her left hand. It's believed in all three Semitic faiths — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — that Satan is a southpaw. Bush and Tony Blair wrote in 'The Early History of Christianity' that till the 4th century, left-handers used to be persecuted by the church and early Christians saw them as 'ominous freaks'.

In Iran, where I studied till the age of 15, being a left-hander was tantamount to being left out. My friends called me azqeel (archaic Persian word for a robber). Many Christians still believe that Martin Luther Sr, who founded the Protestant sect, dared challenge the authority of the Catholic church because being a left-hander, he'd extra power of Satan!

All European and Semitic languages, as well as oriental tongues, have negative words for left-handers. The word 'sinister' is associated with a southpaw and the Satan. It comes from a Latin word meaning "on the left side, inauspicious and unlucky".

Even the word 'adroit' has this bias. It came from the French word 'adroit' ('to the right'). Greek and Portuguese words feros and blonges, respectively, for a left-handed person also have the same prejudice. Even Sanskrit word vaamshat for a left-handed person n't have a complimentary connotation. 'Vaam' (left) is seen as something furtive and sinister. Hinduism still doesn't allow a priest to conduct puja with his left hand. There's a Hindi word in North India for a left-hander — khabboo. It comes from khabees, meaning 'an eccentric person or even abnormal'.

Though I kept eating with my left hand in Iran, in spite of the taunts, I had to give up when I went to Malaysia to teach Arabic and Hadis at Kuala Lumpur University for nearly a year. The predominantly Muslim people of Malaysia consider eating with a left hand as an insult to the host. Knowing my left-hand preference, I was hardly invited by people. I began to eat with my right, with great difficulty initially. Today, I am ambidextrous. I still prefer to eat with my left hand and when I write languages like Persian, Arabic, Hebrew and Urdu, which are written from right to left and erroneously called ulhi bhaashaen.

bank. We've witnessed parties working only when the elections are round the corner; if simultaneous elections are held all the parties would be forced to work for development at all times, and not just before elections, which in turn would take our country further on the path of progress. Those who wish to see the country rising shouldn't see a policy like this through the narrow prism of elections.

Simultaneous elections is not something new; this was the practice before 1967 as well but was discontinued due to the premature dissolution of Assemblies. The Niti Aayog has also listed the benefits of holding simultaneous elections in its discussion paper. A combined election procedure would give the policymakers enough time to concentrate on policymaking. I feel such a practice would also reduce casteism, communalism and corruption.

If elections are held simultaneously, the odds of gaining or losing prevails just once. The rest of their term, a politician can work for the job he/she been elected to. Further, India won't be the only country to hold simultaneous elections as an when that happens; countries like the United States, South Africa and Sweden also hold national and provincial elections simultaneously. The issue should not be negated just because Mr Modi is bringing it to the platform, the issue should be considered for its innate merits.

There have been suggestions coming from various political parties. For such a drastic step, we must rise above party politics. All politicians must leave their egos aside and support this issue for the national cause.

There is no denying that this could also affect a party's fortunes, as a common election would affect the vote

Amitabh Bachchan threatens to quit Twitter- Deets inside

Mumbai: Legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan, who is an avid blogger and social media user, threatened to quit Twitter on Wednesday. The megastar seemed miffed with the micro-blogging site for reducing his number of followers.

He tweeted: "T 2599 - TWITTER ..!!!!?? you reduced my number of followers .. !???HAHAHAHAHAHAHA .. !! that's a joke .. time to get off from you .. thank you for the ride .. there are many other fish in the sea - and a lot more exciting!! (sic).

He posted the tweet with a still from one his super-hit films - Hum. In the still, one can see



Bachchan grabbing the villain (in the film) by his neck.

According to ANI, Big B has been dethroned by Shah Rukh Khan, the 'Badshah' of Bollywood, as the most followed Indian actor

on Twitter.

And this has irked the 'angry young man' of Indian cinema.

Though the number of followers of SRK has remained the same at 32, 944, 338, Bachchan lost a good chunk of his own followers, bringing him to the second most followed person on Twitter with 32, 902,353 followers.

Before tweeting the angry post, he shared stills from the same film, marking the 27

years of the movie."T 2599 - 27 YEARS of 'HUM' .. BAADDU-UMBBAAAAA !! Amazing times and most importantly the creation of the song 'Jumma Chumma' by me .. Rajni with me and Govinda .. and of course the Filmfare award !! good times .. good vibrations .. good all along (sic)," he tweeted. Big B uses Twitter as a platform to share latest information pertaining to his personal and professional lives. He keeps his fans updated by sharing info about his upcoming films or personal endeavours. He also shares photographs of his family regularly and keeps posting heart-felt notes every now and then.

Kriti has a new member in the family!

Mr. Rahul Ansari, Head Audi India officially hands over the Audi Q7 45 TDI to Kriti Sanon.

"We are delighted to welcome Kriti Sanon as part of the Audi family. Audi is a brand for 'young minded achievers', people who are energetic and creative, well-heeled and contemporary in every way. The Audi Q7 is a perfect choice for Kriti as both represent style with a great personality and the drive to set trends. The Audi brand embodies sportiness, aggressiveness and sophistication and Kriti truly personifies these attributes whether it is on or off the screen. Being a popular choice of Bollywood celebrities, big industrialists and opinion leaders of our country the Audi Q7 continues to lead the way for the luxury SUV segment in India," said Mr. Rahul



Ansari, Head, Audi India.

"I am very excited to own this beautiful machine and I love taking it out for a spin. I am an admirer of the Audi Q7 and love its comfort, space and drivability. This definitely ticks off one of the items in my wishlist," said Kriti Sanon.

The powerful 3.0 TDI engine churns out 183kW (249hp) and 600 Nm of torque effectively accelerating 0 to 100 km/h in just 7.1 seconds. The Audi Q7 also packs in a lightning-fast power redistribution through quattro permanent all-wheel drive, segment first Audi Virtual Cockpit and a smart Audi Smartphone Interface. The adaptive suspension and the lightweight body make the new Audi Q7 a dynamic car among the large SUVs.

Raazi: New still from Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal starrer out



MUMBAI: The makers of Meghna Gulzar's Raazi have unveiled a new still featuring Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal. The film jointly produced by Karan Johar's Dharma Productions and Jungle Pictures is reportedly based on a true story.

Alia has been paired with Vicky for the first time in the film.

Vicky is best known for

his performance in Neeraj Ghaywan's Masaan. He is also an integral part of Sanju, an upcoming film on Sanjay Dutt's life starring Ranbir Kapoor in the lead role.

Alia, on the other hand has proved her versatility a number of times. She began her career with Johar's Student of the Year and played the quintessential Bollywood heroine. But

it was Imtiaz Ali's Highway that displayed the depth of her acting prowess. Since then, the young girl has pulled off awe-inspiring performances and we are sure Raazi will be equally good too.

Raazi is an adaptation of Harinder Sikka's Calling Sehmat, a novel inspired by the almost-unbelievable real-life story of a woman who Sikka named Sehmat, to protect her identity.

Alia is playing Sehmat, a Kashmiri woman who marries a Pakistani officer with the intention to source out intelligence details and pass it off to Indian forces. Vicky Kaushal is essaying the role of the Pakistani officer.

The film is slated to release on May 11, 2018.

Katrina Kaif wants BFF Alia Bhatt to get married first?

NEW DELHI: Gone are those days when two leading ladies couldn't see eye-to-eye in Bollywood. It's the age of flaunting your BFFs in B-Town! From Kareena Kapoor-Amrita Arora, Sonam Kapoor-Jacqueline Fernandez to Alia Bhatt and Katrina Kaif -actresses in Hindi film industry are bonding big time.



Celebrity chat show 'BFFs With Vogue' is back with season two and this time Neha Dhupia is hosting it. After Deepika Padukone made some interesting revelations on the show along with her sister Anisha, the second episode had Katrina and Alia gracing the couch.

Both Alia and Katrina are fitness freaks and we have seen the girls sweat it out in the gym together. Several

videos have gone viral where the two can be seen pumping up the iron.

According to

BombayTimes.com, Neha asked the two lovely ladies to give each other a love advice. Reportedly, Alia

told Katrina, "Leave the gym and focus on men instead." While Katrina quipped back, "I am waiting for Alia to get married first." Meanwhile, Neha shared a sneak-peek video on her Twitter handle. Also, the host asked them to mention one thing which they find annoying about the other. Alia said, "One thing I find super annoying about Katrina is that she never sticks to plans."

Katrina added, "She could possibly be a little more generous and pass some of the critics my way rather than taking it all and all the awards."

After this, we really can't wait for the show to go on air!

Padmaavat row: We had to be politically correct, says Shahid Kapoor

MUMBAI: Actor Shahid Kapoor today said the cast and crew of Padmaavat had to be "politically correct" as the film was embroiled in a prolonged controversy and that they had to keep a lot of "emotions" in check.

The actor, who played Maha Rawal Ratan Singh in the Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed period drama, said the team had to endure a lot in "these past one-and-a-half years".

"We missed out on a lot of things. We had to make lots of sacrifices. We had to learn to keep a lot of emotions in our hearts for one-and-a-half years in check."

"We had to be politically correct. The film had to go through a lot. But, today we feel vindicated," Shahid told reporters on the sidelines of the Lakme Fashion Week Summer/Resort



2018.

The actor's appearance as the showstopper, along with wife Mira Rajput who walked the ramp for the first time, for designer Anita Dongre's collection 'Songs of Summer' was a well-kept surprise.

Shahid also quipped that the controversy surrounding the film had assumed

such large proportions in the media that they did not need to promote the movie.

The film, which is based on 16th Century poet Malik Muhammad Jayasi's Padmaavat, got mired in controversy after various Rajput groups, including the Karni Sena, alleged that it distorts history, a claim repeatedly denied by

modifications, including title change from Padmaavati to Padmaavat.

Shahid rued the film was not released in some parts of the country such as Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Goa, but he was glad that it was being loved wherever it had released.

"We are very, very happy and grateful. This country has always supported good films and that's what has happened. The love and result has been more than what I expected," he said.

Mira said Padmaavat is one of Shahid's career-best performances.

"To play a character that does not have the support of many words is when your acting talent must really shine through. Shahid did just that with so much ease and you can see it onscreen," she said.

Will Priyanka Chopra be Meghan Markle's bridesmaid?

Los Angeles: Indian actress Priyanka Chopra, who has been rumoured to be one of the bridesmaid at actress Meghan Markle's royal wedding with Prince Harry, kept the speculation live by saying "people will know if they see me".

The actress stayed tight-lipped about the ceremony on May 19 but was vocal about her belief that Markle will help modernise the British monarchy, reports usmagazine.com. "I don't think anybody else would be able to do it the way she will. She's just right for it."

"She's an icon, truly, that girls can look up to, that women can look up to. She's normal, she's sweet, she's nice, she thinks about the world, wants to change it and this was even before



any of this happened," Priyanka told Harper's Bazaar Arabia magazine.

"So, I do think Meghan being a part of the royal family is a big step in the direction of so many things; of women, of feminism, of diversity, of race, of the monarchy versus everyone else. It's a beautiful step in the right direction," added the "Quantico" star.

On her being the brides-

maid, Priyanka said: "If you see me there, you'll know."

Prince Harry and Markle had been dating since July 2016 and made their first public appearance as a couple in September 2017.

The couple will live in Nottingham Cottage on the grounds of London's Kensington Palace, the official residence of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.



Curvy Sanja Stojanovic scorching in red bikini

Deepika Padukone's reaction to Swara Bhasker's Padmaavat letter is epic

Mumbai: After Shahid Kapoor and Ranveer Singh, Deepika Padukone has reacted to Swara Bhasker's letter on Padmaavat slamming Sanjay Leela Bhansali for 'glorifying' the act of Jauhar in the film.

When Shahid (who essayed Maharawal Ratan Singh) was quizzed about Bhasker's letter, the actor reportedly said that the film underwent tremendous scrutiny and opposition for months and it had released amid massive protests. Despite resistance, the film put up a good show at the Box Office and hence it wasn't the right time to talk about such things.

Ranveer (who essayed Alauddin Khilji) however, chose to evade the question but Deepika (who played Rani Padmaavati) had the best answer.

According to a report in India.com, Deepika during an interview with a news channel last night said, "She (Swara) probably missed the disclaimer at the beginning of the film. You probably went out to buy some popcorn and missed the initial disclaimers that come out. I think, secondly, the fact that it is important to view a film in totality and to see in which period it was set in. Third of all, I was for me this film is not just about the act



(jauhar) that they all committed, but it stood for so much more. For

me, it's a celebration of women and their strength, power and

dignity."

Swara's letter drew mixed response. While a number of women came out in support of the Raanjhanaa actress, many criticised her being unreasonable.

The film industry stood united to show solidarity with Bhansali during those testing times. The release of the film Padmaavat (initially titled Padmaavati) was celebrated by the entire industry and special screenings were held for fraternity members. It was previously slated to hit the screen on December 1 last year but was deferred following nationwide protests. Also starring Aditi Rao Hydari, Raza Murad and Him Sarbh, Padmaavat has minted over Rs 140 crores so far.

Vitamin D3 May Heal Or Prevent Damage To Your Heart

Are you suffering from heart disease? A treatment with Vitamin D3 might help restore damage to your cardiovascular system, finds a study. Vitamin D3 is produced naturally when skin is exposed to the sun or through over-the-counter pills. Several diseases, including high blood pressure, build-up of fats, cholesterol in and on the artery walls, and diabetes, can cause damage to the cardiovascular system thus increasing the risk of heart attack.

However, taking Vitamin D3 -- associated with the bones -- at doses higher than those currently used for the treatment of bone diseases may be highly beneficial for the treatment of the dysfunctional cardiovascular system, the study showed.



"Generally, Vitamin D3 is associated with the bones. However, in recent years, in clinical settings, people recognise that many patients who have a heart attack will have a deficiency of D3. It doesn't mean that the deficiency

caused the heart attack, but it increased the risk of heart attack," said Tadeusz Malinski, a graduate student at Ohio University.

The team, in a paper published in the International Journal of Nanomedicine, used

nanosensors, which are about 1,000 times smaller in diameter than a human hair, to track the impact of Vitamin D3 on single endothelial cells -- a vital regulatory component of the cardiovascular system.

The dysfunction of

endothelium is a common denominator of several cardiovascular diseases, particularly those associated with ischemic events, the researchers said.

"There are not many, if any, known systems which can be used to restore cardiovascular endothelial cells which are already damaged, and Vitamin D3 can do it," Malinski said.

"This is a very inexpensive solution to repair the cardiovascular system. We don't have to develop a new drug. We already have it." Vitamin D3 may also be of clinical importance in the restoration of dysfunctional cardiac endothelium after heart attack, capillary endothelium after brain ischemia (stroke), hypovolemia, vasculopathy, diabetes and atherosclerosis.

High Blood Pressure Rates Among India's Young Adults 'Unexpectedly' More

Hypertension Among Young Adults In India Is Higher Than Previously Estimated And More Than In Central And Eastern Europe, The Region Previously Estimated To Have The Highest Rates. For This Group, Says A Study Led By Researchers At Harvard University

Hypertension among young adults in India is higher than previously estimated and more than in Central and Eastern Europe, the region previously estimated to have the highest rates for this group, says a study led by researchers at Harvard University. The researchers wanted to find out how the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension in India varied by state, rural vs. urban location, and by sociodemographic characteristics such as education and household wealth.

Rates of diabetes and hypertension are high among middle-aged and elderly people across all geographic measures and sociodemographic groups in India, said the study published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine.

Overall, the prevalence of diabetes was 6.1 per cent among women and 6.5 per cent among men. The prevalence of hypertension was 20 per cent among women and

24.5 per cent among men, the research showed.

The study also found unexpectedly high rates of hypertension among young adults. The prevalence of hypertension in the age group 18-25 years was 12.1 per cent, according to the study.

"Understanding how diabetes and hypertension prevalence varies within a country as large as India is essential for targeting of prevention, screening, and treatment services," said lead author Pascal Gedeleser, a doctoral student at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston, Massachusetts.

The researchers used health data collected from 1.3 million adults across India between 2012 and 2014, which included plasma glucose and blood pressure measurements. The findings showed the rates of diabetes and hypertension varied widely among states.

Household wealth and urban location were positively associated with both conditions, and the prevalence of diabetes and hypertension among middle-aged adults in the poorest households in rural areas was also high -- 5.9 per cent had diabetes and 30 per cent had hypertension.

Researchers Develop Brain Pacemaker To Help Alzheimer's Patients

In a first, US researchers have developed a brain pacemaker that could slow down the decline in problem-solving and decision-making skills in patients with Alzheimer's disease. The brain pacemaker, similar to a cardiac pacemaker device, consists of thin electrical wires that can be surgically implanted into the patients' frontal lobes of the brains via deep brain stimulation.

The findings, published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, showed that patients who underwent the deep brain stimulation, had improvement in their cognitive, behavioural and functional abilities.

"We have many memory aides, tools and pharmaceutical treatments to help Alzheimer's patients with

memory, but we don't have anything to help with improving their judgments, making good decisions, or increasing their ability to selectively focus attention on the task at hand and avoid distractions," said Douglas Scharre, neurologist at the Ohio State University.

The study found that targeting frontal brain regions can reduce the overall performance decline typically seen in people with mild or early stage Alzheimer's.

"The frontal lobes are responsible for our abilities to solve problems, organise and plan, and utilise good judgments. By stimulating this region of the brain, the Alzheimer's patients' cognitive and daily functional abilities as a whole declined more slowly," Scharre

added. The same technology was successfully used to treat more than 1,35,000 patients worldwide with Parkinson's disease, the researchers said.

"Our findings suggest that frontal network modulation to improve executive and behavioural deficits should be further studied in patients with Alzheimer's disease," said Ali Rezaei, neurosurgeon at the West Virginia University.

According to the World Health Organisation, globally around 50 million people have dementia, and there are nearly 10 million new cases every year.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia and may contribute to 60-70 per cent of cases.

Traumatic Brain Injury Linked To Dementia Risk Even After 30 Years

People Who Suffer A Traumatic Brain Injury -- Occurring When An External Force Injures The Brain -- May Be At Increased Risk Of Developing Dementia Even After 30 Years, Says A Study

People who suffer a traumatic brain injury -- occurring when an external force injures the brain -- may be at increased risk of developing dementia even after 30 years, says a study. A traumatic brain injury, also known as

intracranial injury, is the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, especially in younger individuals and has also been associated with the risk of dementia in older age.

The researchers found that the risk of a dementia diagnosis was highest



during the first year after the injury. During the first year people who had suffered a traumatic brain injury were four to six times as likely to get a dementia diagnosis as those without it.

While the risk decreased over time, it was still sig-

nificant after over 30 years.

However, after a period of 15 years, the risk of dementia diagnosis was found increased by about 80 per cent in those who had at least one traumatic brain injury compared to those who did not have

The findings of this study suggest an existence of a time- and dose-dependent risk of developing dementia more than 30 years after traumatic brain injury," said researchers including Anna Nordstrom from the

Umea University in Sweden.

The risk of dementia was higher for those with a severe traumatic brain injury or multiple injuries on the brain and was similar in men and women.

In the study, published in the journal PLOS Medicine, the team matched 1,64,334 individuals with traumatic brain injury with control participants who did not have the injury.

In a case-control cohort, 1,36,233 individuals diagnosed with dementia at follow-up were matched with control participants who did not develop dementia, and in a third cohort, the researchers studied 46,970 sibling pairs with one individual having a traumatic brain injury.

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Union Budget 2018: Stock markets jittery, Sensex drops 400 points in 7 minutes before recovering as Arun Jaitley concludes

NEW DELHI: Hours of cautious trading on the stock markets gave way to a freefall. As Finance Minister Arun Jaitley revealed in his Union Budget 2018 more details of changes to the capital gains tax regime, the 30-stock benchmark Sensex dropped 400 points in a space of just eight minutes. However, the Sensex rebounded within minutes into just as steep a climb to recover lost ground.

Both the BSE Sensex and the NSE Nifty had opened on a cautious note, and traded



within a tight band of ± 1 percent. However, Jaitley's announcement of changes to the capital gains tax regulations triggered a steep fall in the markets that had already shown signs of jitters earlier.

Between 12:39 and 12:47, the BSE Sensex

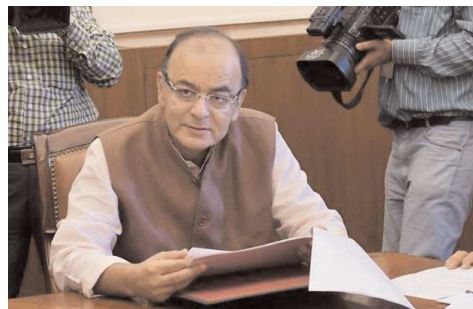
Budget 2018 - Modi govt's big bet in education: Rs 1 lakh cr for infrastructure, 24 new medical colleges, Ekalavya schools

NEW DELHI: In a welcome move, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced a series of new moves in the education sector aimed at satisfying several sectors. The government will allocate Rs 1 lakh crore to update the current education infrastructure and technology across the country, over the next four years.

The Centre will set up 24 new medical colleges which will be set up and existing district hospitals will be upgraded.

The government will also relaunch the RISE or Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education by 2022.

Jaitley further added that the Centre will work on training teachers and



increasing the number of schools for tribal children. Every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal

people will have 'Ekalavya' school, which will be par with Navodaya Vidyalayas. "Technology will be the biggest driver in improving

quality of education. We propose to increase the digital intensity in education and move gradually from blackboard to digital board," said Jaitley.

Jaitley had earlier stressed that this year's Union Budget would focus on four aspects namely strengthening of agriculture, education, healthcare benefits and improving infrastructure. Addressing the Budget Session of Parliament, Jaitley said the Budget aims to create an honest, clean and transparent government of a strong confident New India, on the backdrop of the economic reforms taken in the recent past. India's USD 2.5 trillion economy is on course to achieve a growth of 8 percent, following the 7.2-7.5 percent growth it achieved in the second half of 2018-19, said Jaitley at the beginning of the Budget speech.

Union Budget 2018: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley focuses on agriculture, allocates Rs 14.34 trillion for rural infrastructure

Farmers, especially the small and marginal ones, have much to cheer about, in Finance Minister's Arun Jaitley's Union Budget. The government seems to have taken note of the signs of distress in the rural economy and the budget has a slew of measures to address some pressing concerns.

As Arun Jaitley rose for his budget speech to thumping desks from the treasury benches in the Lok Sabha, he espoused the key achievements of his government but soon hit his straps as he rolled out the benefits for the rural and agriculture sectors.

Reiterating the government's commitment to



farmers, the finance minister said minimum support prices for Kharif crops will be one and a half times of the cost of production. "If prices are lower than MSP then the

government has to ensure there are ways to make sure the farmers receive necessary MSP or an apt price for their products. It is not important to increase the minimum

support prices on crops, the farmers should get the benefits of that MSP." The prime minister has repeatedly stressed on his government's focus on doubling farmers'

incomes by 2020, and the finance minister announced measures that will help achieve that target. The government will spend 14,34,000 crore rupees (14.34 trillion) in 2018-19 on creating rural infrastructure.

The government plans to set up an agricultural market fund with corpus of Rs 2,000 crore.

Allocation in food processing sector is being doubled from 750 crore last year to 1400 crore in 2018-19.

Government proposes to launch Operation Green for which a sum of Rs 500 crore will be allocated.

State of art facility will be set up in 42 food parks

for agri exports. Extending kisan credit card to fisheries and animal husbandry farmers and allocate Rs 10,000 crore for fisheries & aquaculture, animal husbandry funds.

The Finance minister also said: "Ground water irrigation scheme under Krishi Sinchayi Yojana will be taken up in regions where less than 30% land gets assured irrigation currently. Our focus will be get more and more land under irrigation facilities."

The measures announce indicate that the government has clearly aimed at putting a smile on farmers' faces while aiming for faster growth.

GST e-way bill for interstate goods movement to be mandatory from today

NEW DELHI: The e-way bill, to be generated under the GST for all interstate movement of goods valued at over Rs 50,000, will become mandatory from Thursday, on the day of the presentation of the Union Budget 2018-19 in Parliament.

The implementation of this electronic documentation system, to track the movement of goods and designed to prevent tax evasion, was put on hold until after the Goods and Services Tax (GST) stabilised following the rollout of the new indirect tax regime from July 1 last year.

All states and union territories, except Lakshadweep, have joined the e-way bill system, according to the GST Network (GSTN) officials here, while 13 states have signed up for the intra-state part of the system.

The e-way bill will also become mandatory for all movement of goods within a state from June 1.

The officials said that during the 14 day trial period starting from January 17, transporters have generated 28.4 lakh e-way bills, with 3.4 lakh of these being generated on January 30 alone. During this period, 11,581 transporters registered themselves under the system.

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Trump lets protected Syrians stay longer but caps enrollment

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration said Wednesday that it would allow nearly 7,000 Syrians to remain in the United States for another 18 months but won't let more Syrian citizens apply for the special protection programme.

The decision was a partial relief for aid organisations and advocates for displaced Syrians who had feared President Donald Trump might end the programme entirely, forcing those in the US to leave or face deportation. Yet those same groups blasted the president for excluding more recent arrivals to the US, pointing out that Syria remains devoid of any notion of stability or normalcy.

Under a humanitarian program known as "Temporary Protected Status," thousands of Syrians have been allowed to avoid returning to their war-torn country of origin. The current program has been set to expire on March 31, forcing Trump to decide whether to extend. Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said "ongoing armed conflict and extraordinary conditions" justified giving those in the programme another year and a half to remain in the US. "After carefully considering conditions on the ground, I have determined that it is necessary to extend," Nielsen said. Only those who have

been in the United States since August 1, 2016, are eligible for that extension, disqualifying newer arrivals. Still, Nielsen said those who come to the US more recently "may be eligible to seek other forms of immigration relief." Syria remains entangled in a bloody civil war with no signs of near-term resolution. Although the Islamic State group has been squeezed from almost all of its former territory, armed opposition groups continue to fight with each other, with Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces and with extremist groups that still pose a threat across Syria. US military forces are active both on the ground and in the skies. In areas

liberated from IS, the US has said much work is needed to restore basic services like water, sewage and electricity. "We made a commitment to offer safety to these people in a time of crisis," said Lia Lindsey of the aid group Oxfam. "Syria, without a doubt, continues to be unsafe and unstable." Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-NJ, who had urged Trump to both extend the protections and let new arrivals apply, called the move a "missed opportunity." He added that the decision was "just another cruel way to leave people in need of assistance out in the cold." The decision will be felt hardest in California,

Michigan and Texas, top destinations for the roughly 86,000 Syrians living in the United States. It follows a contentious debate within the Trump administration about whether to cut off the programme, with immigration hardliners in the White House urging a total halt to the program while the State Department and many lawmakers argued for continuing it. Yet Trump has expressed frustration with the fact that under previous administrations, the United States has let foreigners stay long past when the natural disasters or other emergencies that necessitated the special protections were resolved.

FBI clashes with Trump, has 'grave concerns' on Russia memo

WASHINGTON: In a remarkably public clash of wills with the White House, the FBI declared Wednesday it has "grave concerns" about the accuracy of a classified memo on the Russia election investigation that President Donald Trump wants released.

The FBI's short and sharp statement, its first on the issue, laid bare a Trump administration conflict that had previously played out mostly behind closed doors in meetings between top Justice Department and White House officials.

"As expressed during our initial review, we have grave concerns about material omissions of fact that fundamentally impact the memo's accuracy," the FBI said. The agency's stance on the memo, conveyed in a two-paragraph statement, escalates the dispute and means that Trump would be openly defying his hand-picked FBI director by continuing to push for the memo's disclosure. It also suggests a clear willingness by FBI Director Christopher Wray, who in the early stretch of his tenure has been notably low-key, to challenge a president who just months ago fired his predecessor, James Comey.

The FBI statement came the day after Trump was overheard telling a congressman that he "100 percent" supported release of the four-page memo, which was drafted by Republicans on the House intelligence committee. The Republicans have said the memo reveals surveillance abuses by the FBI and the Justice Department in the early stages of the investigation into potential ties between Russia and the 2016 Trump presidential campaign.

Democrats have called the memo a "cherry-picked" list of GOP talking points that attempts to distract from the committee's own investigation into Russian meddling in the election that sent Trump to the White House.

The drama comes as special counsel Robert Mueller also is investigating whether the Trump campaign improperly coordinated with Russia during the campaign and whether Trump sought to obstruct the inquiry by, among other actions, firing Comey.

Under the House committee's rules, the president has five days to object to the memo's release, which the panel voted to authorize on Monday. But Trump himself already has urged the release, and it could come sooner. By late Wednesday, it had not yet been settled whether the White House or the committee would handle the actual release.

Earlier this week, Wray and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein made a direct appeal to White House chief of staff John Kelly not to release the memo, warning that it could set a dangerous precedent.

The president has been undeterred. But television cameras captured Trump, on the House floor after the State of the Union address, telling South Carolina Rep. Jeff Duncan that he backed the release. When Duncan implored him to "release the memo," Trump said: "Oh yeah, don't worry, 100 percent."

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders told CNN Wednesday that a legal and national security review of the document was continuing. Trump had not read the memo as "as of last night prior to and immediately after the State of the Union," she said.

White House Chief of Staff Kelly said Wednesday on Fox News Radio that he expected the memo to be released "pretty quick."

Trump has been telling confidants in recent days that he believes the memo will validate his concerns that the FBI and Justice Department had conspired against him, according to one outside adviser familiar with those conversations but not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions.

The president also has told allies that he believes the memo bolsters his belief that accusations of collusion between his campaign and Russian officials are false and part of a conspiracy to discredit his election.

On Wednesday afternoon, Rep. Devin Nunes, the House intelligence chairman and a close ally of the president, fired back at the law enforcement agencies, calling the FBI and Justice Department objections "spurious."

"It's clear that top officials used unverified information in a court document to fuel a counter-intelligence investigation during an American political campaign," Nunes said. "Once the truth gets out, we can begin taking steps to ensure our intelligence agencies and courts are never misused like this again."

Nunes stepped aside from leading the committee's investigation last April amid an ethics investigation into whether he had improperly disclosed classified information. He was later cleared and resumed his leadership role.

The White House counsel's office has been in possession of the memo, officials say. The National Security Council is leading a review, which will also involve the White House legal team.

Polish lawmakers back draft Holocaust law, US voices concern

WARSAW/WASHINGTON: Polish lawmakers approved draft legislation on Thursday penalising suggestions of any complicity by Poland in the Nazi Holocaust on its soil during World War II, defying criticism by Israel and the United States.

The proposal has triggered a diplomatic spat between Israel and Warsaw's conservative government since its initial approval in the lower house of parliament last week, with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu comparing it to an effort to change history.

The US State Department urged Poland on Wednesday to re-evaluate the draft law, expressing concern about consequences on Warsaw's relations with the United States and Israel if the draft becomes law.

Under the proposed legislation, violators would face three years in prison for a mention of "Polish death camps", although scientific research into World War Two would not be constrained. Poland has fought against the use of the phrase in some Western media for years, arguing it suggested the Polish state was at least partly responsible for the camps, where millions of people, mostly Jews, were killed by Nazi Germany. The camps were built and operated by the Nazis after the 1939 invasion of Poland, home to Europe's largest Jewish community at the time. "We have to send a clear signal to the world that we won't allow for Poland to continue being insulted," Patryk Jaki, a deputy justice minister, told reporters in parliament.

Taiwan says China air route dispute will determine future ties

TAIPEI: A dispute with China over its opening of new air routes near Taiwan will determine future relations between Taipei and Beijing, Taiwan's government said amid a deepening disagreement that could strand thousands over an important holiday.

The spat has become increasingly bitter, with both sides trading accusations after two Chinese airlines cancelled extra flights to Taiwan over the Lunar New Year, the most important holiday in the Chinese calendar, potentially leaving thousands of Taiwanese without tickets to go home.



"The people's eyes are sharp. Whether this disputed issue can be resolved is an important indicator of how Taiwan people will view the future direction of relations between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait," Taiwan's China

policy making Mainland Affairs Council said in a statement late Wednesday.

"We again call on the Chinese side to treasure the hard won peace and stability of relations between the two sides. China needs to carry out

measures to make up for this deficiency, in order to avoid this issue continuing to grow and ferment."

Taiwan says the new routes, which run near two groups of Taiwan-controlled islands which sit close to China, are a threat to aviation safety and were opened by China without Taiwan's approval, contravening previous agreements.

China considers Taiwan a wayward province, and relations have cooled dramatically since Tsai Ing-wen of the Independent-lean-ing Democratic Progressive Party took office as Taiwan's president in 2016.

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For Saudi tycoons freed from detention, cheers and a business challenge

RIYADH: Cheering supporters greeted Saudi Arabian billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal when he arrived at his skyscraper offices in Riyadh after his release from detention in an anti-corruption crackdown.

But he and other tycoons freed from a luxury hotel in the Saudi capital face a challenge to get back into the swing of running their financial empires in the uncertainty hanging over the business community since their detention in early November.

The ability to do so could impact Saudi Arabia's attempts to lure investors to big projects, an important part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's grand vision to transform the kingdom and reduce its dependence

on oil. "It will need another six to nine months without disruption or another witch hunt before anyone would be willing to move on anything major," a regional banker said of the business climate. "This is not the right time to bring anything to market."

Online footage showed Prince Alwaleed waving from a luxury car in a convoy trailed by police as he arrived this week at the Kingdom Center skyscraper one day after his release, and then walking inside with his private physician.

A source familiar with the matter said the prince received an operational update on his global portfolio, which includes stakes in Twitter, ride-hailing firm Lyft and

French hotel operator Accor (ACCPA). In the first few days after his detention, the share price of his investment firm Kingdom Holding 4280.SE plunged 23 percent, erasing \$2.2 billion of his personal fortune on paper.

After a jump this week, the stock has regained almost all that it lost, but the overall stock market rose 10 percent.

Kingdom shares do not reflect that gain, indicating investors are still applying a discount to his company because of the uncertainty.

Prince Alwaleed's predicament suggests Saudi tycoons who have long been content to focus on amassing huge profits must now consider whether the government's

anti-corruption drive could stop them in their tracks.

Saudi Arabia's attorney general said on Tuesday that settlement deals had secured just over \$100 billion from members of the elite. He did not provide a breakdown, and Reuters could not verify that figure.

BACK IN THE DRIVING SEAT In another video, property mogul Mohammed Aboud al-Amoudi sits in a black office chair at his home in Jeddah receiving kisses on the hand and forehead from a procession of well-wishers who utter thanksgiving for his safe return after nearly three months in the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Riyadh.

A company representative reached by phone said Amoudi was in good health. "It is as if he was traveling and returned, nothing more," said the person who declined to be named, adding it was not clear if he would run the company again.

Associates of other released detainees, including media magnate Waleed al-Ibrahim and retail billionaire Fawaz al-Hokair, told Reuters they were at home catching up with family and close friends.

An email to MBC employees seen by Reuters described Ibrahim as "fit and eager to get back". It said he would travel to Dubai in a couple of weeks to get "back in the driving seat".

Hokair, meanwhile, is hosting dinners for guests,

After Mugabe, Zimbabwe opposition stumbles before vote

HARARE: With Zimbabwe holding elections this year, the opposition had been feeling cautiously optimistic - until its arch-enemy, Robert Mugabe, was ousted from power.

The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Zimbabwe's main opposition party, now faces the threat of a revived ZANU-PF party at polls that look set to further cement one-party rule.

Morgan Tsvangirai, veteran leader of the MDC, was among the most prominent critics of Mugabe and the ruling ZANU-PF, but he has been forced out of the action by colon cancer.

The party's history of splits has also returned, despite an agreement last

year enabling the MDC to lead an united opposition into the elections.

"It is going to be an uphill task for the MDC facing ZANU-PF which is being transformed under its new leadership," Harare-based political analyst Alexander Rusero told AFP.

"Without Tsvangirai, there is no figure who can make a meaningful impact in terms of challenging the ruling party."

Mugabe's downfall in November - and former deputy president Emmerson Mnangagwa's rise to succeed him - gave many Zimbabweans some hope of change after decades of authoritarian rule.

Mnangagwa is a long-time Mugabe ally and a ZANU-PF veteran hardlin-



er. But he has vowed to fight corruption, revive the moribund economy and hold fair elections - messages that may be popular for many voters fearful of abrupt change.

The London-based Africa Research Institute said in a briefing paper that Mnangagwa would be able to "count on a great deal of goodwill" before the elections.

The new president appears keen to take advantage as soon as possible, saying last week that elections would be held before July, earlier than expected.

The vote - previously expected in late July or August - will choose the president and both houses of parliament. Under Mugabe, who

resolved some of the economic hardships affecting Zimbabweans."

Mnangagwa - who can also rely on the discreet support of the military - has sounded confident since coming to power, declaring "I have no doubt I will sweep the elections."

The MDC once posed a formidable challenge to ZANU-PF, even winning the first round of a presidential election in 2008 vote. Tsvangirai then pulled out of the run-off after a wave of deadly violence unleashed by Mugabe supporters, and the MDC entered into a troubled coalition government.

In the 2013 elections, Mugabe won the presidential vote 62 percent to Tsvangirai's 34 percent, with a similar result in the

national assembly result.

Bickering among the three MDC deputies Nelson Chamisa, Elias Muzdurri and Thokozani Khuphe could now tear the party apart for the third time since its formation in 1999. The tensions have undermined efforts to have a "united opposition" for the elections formed by Tsvangirai, his former allies Tendai Biti and Welshman Ncube and a host of small opposition parties.

MDC spokesman Obert Gutu even plans to stand for the same constituency seat in Harare as Biti, the respected finance minister in the 2009-2013 coalition government.

"With the confusion in the MDC, Mnangagwa's main opposition is from the economy."

through many Zimbabweans with the long years of Mugabe's rule.

"Of course the party is greatly affected by the health of president Tsvangirai. We hope he recovers soon," MDC secretary-general Douglas Mwonozwa told AFP.

"He left vice-president Elias Muzdurri in charge and we are giving him as much support as we can. We are preparing for elections." But, without the ousted Mugabe as its prime target, the MDC must adapt to Zimbabwe's new politics.

"Time is running out for the party," said independent political analyst Maxwell Saungwena.

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Du Plessis 120 powers South Africa to 269

With an innings of immense determination, Faf du Plessis ushered South Africa to 269, a total of outstanding proportions on a slow pitch in Durban. His 120 ended up looking like an aberration on the scorecard, the next best contribution was 37 and no one who faced more than 20 balls managed a strike-rate anywhere near his 107.14.

Much of that was down to the work of India's wristspinners, playing in tandem for the first time outside the subcontinent. Figures of 5 for 79 in 20 overs are impressive enough but the inference gained from those numbers would please the team management more. The introduction of Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep Yadav brought the scoring rate down. Their control spurred second thoughts in the batsman's mind. And their googlies were downright nuisances. South Africa were 79/7 in 14 overs when India turned to spin. They had sunk to 134 for 5 by the time the stranglehold relaxed. Then Dr. Du Plessis took over.

He knew the recovery would take time, and that he had to be present every step of the way. The job required patience and diligence and skill and the South African captain was not found wanting. Even when that had back of his kept flaring up, Du Plessis was 91 not out in his last ODI when he had to retire hurt because of it. This time he simply wouldn't let it - or the Indian bowlers - win without a fight. He came in with a flurry of fours - there were three in an over against Bhuvneshwar Kumar - and he left the field after striking a couple of towering sixes straight down the ground. The essence of the innings though lay in the shots he played in between. The nudges and nurludes square of the wicket on both sides.

As hard as he applied himself, Du Plessis looked every bit as awkward as anyone facing the wrist-spinners; his strike-rate against Kuldeep was 63.63. And he could have been lbw on 18 if India had chosen to double-check an appeal from Chahal in the 13th over.

Given that slice of luck, he worked hard not to need another, forced to do so because the South African middle order simply fell wrong. JP Duminy tried cutting a wrong 'un and was bowled. David Miller played away from his body and was caught at short cover. All they needed was survive the spinners and India would be forced to bring back their quicks, who were far easier to handle considering there was no sideways movement. Du Plessis collected 82 runs off 60 balls from the seamers, and was particularly brutal on Bhuvneshwar, at a strike-rate of 189 shows.

Chris Morris, playing his first ODI since June 2017, showed promise and strung a partnership of 74 runs for the sixth wicket with his captain. He was ever so decisive with his footwork, which meant he never needed to hold back his hitting power. Case in point: an inside-out six over cover, played against the turn, to dent the figures of the best bowler on show, Kuldeep. There was instant retribution for the bowler though,

knocking the stumps over with a full toss no less. Andie Phehlukwayo then gave Du Plessis the support he needed to put a competitive score on the board, as a 56-run partnership for the seventh wicket took South Africa past 250. India have established a habit of winning ODIs batting second, nine of their last 10 chases have been successful. But they could have made the job a lot easier on themselves. The leader of their attack, Bhuvneshwar, struggled to pose a threat with no movement on offer. Even Jasprit Bumrah couldn't muster pace off this pitch. India's three fast bowlers, including Hardik Pandya, leaked 168 runs at 6.2 per over, adding to Virat Kohli's problems, which began early in the day when he got his knee stuck in the outfield while trying to stop a boundary and was forced off the field on more than one occasion to tend to it. Hell want to personally make sure the mistakes India made in the final 20 overs of the innings become a footnote and not the headline.

Yuvi-inspired Keya Roy hits cancer for six

KOLKATA: Known for her aggressive batting, Keya Roy won many a match with sparkling knocks studded with cracking square cuts and towering sixes. Almost 25 years after quitting first-class cricket, the former India opener played just as aggressively to hit cancer for a six.

After battling with the dreaded disease for a year, the 56-year was declared cancer free by doctors at the Tata Medical Centre, Mumbai, on January 26. "I was diagnosed with Endometrial carcinoma (cancer in the lining of the uterus) in February 2017. A frozen biopsy was done and it was confirmed to be a grade 2 stage 1 cancer," Keya recalled.



Rather than letting the scary news weigh her down, the brave Keya took up the 'challenge' by drawing inspiration from Yuvraj Singh - the braveheart who made a comeback to the Indian team after conquering cancer. "I knew I would fight this out. We all read about how Yuvraj had battled cancer... that gave me a lot of strength. I decided to undergo the surgery

despite knowing it was critical," Keya said. The surgery was a success, with the doctors removing five of her organs. But then post-operative depression hit Keya. "It was tough for me to face the changes in my body," said Keya, currently a Bengal selector and the first to score a century in the National Women's Cricket Championship (in Gorakhpur, 1977).

Confusion over Rahul, Rahane's ODI roles: Gavaskar

India's magnificent win in the third and final Test of the series will put the team in good heart for the one-day series that starts today. That South Africa will not have the services of AB de Villiers for the first three matches is a further boost to India's chances of winning the one-day games.

The batting on a most difficult and unpredictable pitch was tremendous to watch and should dispel once and for ever the myth that Indians can't play pace. The fact of the matter is nobody can play good sustained fast bowling. Even the Don had his problems in the bodyline series and no batsman in the world can put his hand on his heart and say he enjoys playing good fast bowling. At best one can cope with it to the best of one's ability and that's what the Indians showed at the bulging Wanderers. They showed the gumption, the guts and the determination to take the blows and hang in there. South Africa's batsmen succumbed so can we jump to conclusion and say they can't play pace?

This is what the Indian team selection has to guard against, jumping to conclusions and selecting or leaving out players based on one performance. Theories about pitches and who can bat or bowl on particular surfaces also should be thrown out of the window and the best team selected.

Devote time to sports, urges PM Modi

FLAG-BEARER: Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives the ceremonial torch from an athlete while kicking off the Khelo India School Games (KISG) in the Capital on Wednesday. Union sports minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore looks on.

INDIA'S GANDHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives the ceremonial torch from an athlete while kicking off the ... Read More

Urging the country's youth to give sports a "central place" in their lives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the inaugural edition of the Khelo India School Games (KISG) open at the Indira Gandhi Indoor (IGI) stadium here on Wednesday.

Amidst thunderous applause from wellknown Indian sportspersons and the KISG participants, Modi said the Khelo India movement was not only about winning medals, but an effort to give strength to a mass movement for playing more.

"India does not lack sporting talent. We are a youthful nation and we can do even better in sports. In your busy schedules, devote time to games and give priority to playing. Sports is an important means of personality development. We want to focus on every aspect that would make sports more popular across the nation," Modi said.

The Prime Minister told the gathering that if India wishes to grow on the world stage, sportspersons will also have an important role to play. "When we say India has to



grow on the world stage, it does not only mean having a strong army and powerful economy. It includes the growth of youngsters from rural India and smaller cities excelling as sportspersons. "These are also youngsters who need support,

NCC band girls setting the tone with their dazzling performance. The legendary Indian tradition of 'teacher-and-student',

LET'S PLAY, INDIA...

Level (with number of units)	Indicative number of talents identified per unit	Indicative total number of talents identified	Quantum of monthly scholarship per person (in ₹)	Quantum of annual scholarship per person (in ₹)	Total Financial Implication (in ₹ cr)
District: 651	15	9,765	500	6,000	58.59
States/UTs: 36	55	1,980	1,000	12,000	23.76
National: 1	400	400	2,000	24,000	9.60
Total		12,145			91.95

distinguishing themselves as scientists, artists and sportspersons. Today, we have in our midst eminent sportspersons. I am sure they would have faced many obstacles but they did not give up and went on to distinguish themselves. I am confident that India will scale these heights. I trust our youth," he added.

Modi, reaching out to the youth, said it was heartening to see the

which we want to provide. Those who love sports, play for passion and not for monetary rewards. This is why athletes are special. When an Indian sportsman wins and when he or she gets to hold the Tricolour, it's an extremely special feeling. It energises the entire nation."

The opening ceremony saw some breathtaking performances by various artiste groups, with the

referred to as the 'Guru-Shishya Parampara' was celebrated in grand style. Depictions of numerous coach-athlete combinations in sports ranging from archery to wrestling, from across the country, were part of the spectacle. All through this ceremony, PM Modi was seen standing in appreciation and respect for some of India's biggest sports achievers. The Khelo India pro-

It's a killing calendar: Saina Nehwal



NEW DELHI: Saina Nehwal has expressed her unwillingness to play in the Asian Badminton Championship. Her letter to Badminton Association of India (BAI) is a fallout of the world governing body's (BWF) new 15-tournament rule per year, out of which players must play 12.

Stingingly forthright, Saina termed it as a "killing schedule" on Wednesday after she breezed past her first round opponent in the India Open at the Siri Fort Complex. "It is not easy for people to understand what we go through. I am not 20 anymore. I have to keep myself fit to be able to play for long and you see the calendar. It is a killing calendar and we don't know when and how and which tournaments we will play and what happens next."

"I know people want me to play and want me to be there but what is the point when people speak 'Saina lost' and say 'Saina is out of form'. Then I have to face it, nobody else. It is a funny thing but I feel bad. I cry sometime because it is not easy to take."

As Saina was speaking her mind, fifth-seed HS Prannoy, struggling with corns, had to go through the motions in his first round match. He spent exactly 13 minutes on court to make up the numbers. When the world No. 12 was appraised of Prannoy's plight, she said, "I tell you the sport is killing. It is a tough calendar for players. Just feel that it should be reduced. I understand the point of sponsorship and money. But it should not lead to the cost of players' fitness. It should not lead to a condition where players are not going to play well and not give their best. Then we will not have a champion, we will only have tournaments." Opting out of Asian Badminton Championships may raise a lot of nationalistic eyebrows. Keeping that in mind, Saina clarified, "You have to understand that I still need time. It is not that I haven't played for India. I have played enough Uber Cup and every time I played, I have won all my matches. I have planned it in such a way that I have got good results in team events and big events." Get Flat 25% off on Movie Tickets. Apply Times Card now! For this year, she is looking at the Commonwealth Games in April and Asian Games in August. "I am focused on these two tournaments."

As for Prannoy, he said he had already missed the Indonesian and Malaysian Open because of injury.

Mahindra Scorpio TOISA 2018 Nominees: Team of the Year

NEW DELHI: The third Mahindra Scorpio Times of India Sports Awards (TOISA) powered by All-Out, is India's first and largest multi-discipline people's choice awards awards. TOISA is a platform created by the Times Group to recognise and reward Indian sporting talent and achievements on a global scale and will be held soon to honour the lion hearts who have done the country proud.

Ahead of the 2018 TOISA to be held on February 26, here's a look at the nominees for Team of the Year for 2017. **Mahindra Scorpio TOISA 2018 Nominees: Cricket** **INDIAN MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM** Beat Malaysia 2-1 to secure the Asia Cup title after ten years. Claimed bronze at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup and



at the HWL Final in Bhubaneswar. Finished second in Pool B at the World Hockey League semi-finals in London, beat Pakistan by 7-1 and 6-1 to reach the quarter-finals. **Mahindra Scorpio TOISA 2018 Nominees: Badminton** **INDIAN WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM** Won the Asia Cup by beating higher-ranked China in the final, 5-4 in the penalty shootouts. In the process, qualified for the 2018 World Cup. Remained unbeaten throughout the tournament in Japan, scoring 28 goals while conceding just five.



TEAM Unbeaten in 13 games on the tour since the AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers Playoff Round 1 match against Laos on June 2, 2016. Beat Myanmar 1-0 thanks to Sunil Chhetri's late goal in a historic AFC Asian Cup 2019 Qualifier match in Yangon.



INDIAN WOMEN'S CRICKET TEAM Reached the final of the Women's World Cup in England, losing to the hosts by nine runs. Beat England, West Indies, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and New Zealand in the league stage to reach the semi-finals, where six-time World Cup winners Australia were defeated by 36 runs. Won the final of the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier in Colombo with a thrilling one-wicket win over



INDIAN MEN'S CRICKET TEAM The most successful year for any Indian team ever, with 37 wins, surpassing the record of 31 set in 2016. Maintained No. 1 spot in ICC Test Championship with series wins over Bangladesh, Australia, Sri Lanka (twice), Reached final of the ICC Champions Trophy. Won ODI series over England, Australia, New Zealand, West Indies and Sri Lanka (twice). Won T20I series over England, Sri Lanka (twice) and New Zealand.



INDIAN MEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM Became the first team from the north east to win the I-League, ending the season on 37 points - one more than heavyweights Mohun Bagan. This stunning and unprecedented title triumph came in the club's second season of top-flight football.

DB set-aside life-imprisonment and acquit accused in murder case

JAMMU, FEB. 01: While deciding Criminal appeal against life-imprisonment in the year, A Division Bench of State High Court comprising Chief Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed and Justice Sanjeev Kumar after hearing Deputy AG Ehsan Mirza for the State whereas Adv AK Shan for the accused person, allowed the appeal and set-aside the conviction and also ordered that appellant, who is under incarceration in Central Jail, Kot Bhalwal, Jammu, is directed to be released forthwith by the Superintendent of the concerned Jail.

Prosecution case is that on 15.11.2008, the complainant, Giridhari Lal, filed a written complaint in Police Station, Bari Brahmana, to the effect that he had taken a shop on rent near SIDCO office where he does the work of Motor Winding and that, he has kept a servant, namely, Mohd Hamid. It is further the case of the prosecution that on

14.11.2008, the said Giridhari Lal, as usual, gave money to Mohd Hamid on closure of the shop. The room on the top of this shop had been taken on rent by the appellant, Wasim Ahmed where he resided. It is further the case of the prosecution that Wasim Ahmed works as a labourer in a factory. As per the prosecution, Giridhari Lal in his complaint stated that in the morning, that is on 15.11.2008, the appellant Wasim Ahmed came to him and informed him that he was working at night in the factory and that he had gone to the factory after closing his room. However, when he returned at 7.30 a.m., he saw that the door of his room was closed but the lock had been broken. On opening the door, he saw Mohd Hamid lying dead in the room and his body was drenched in blood. On receiving such information, the said complainant, Giridhari Lal, is said to have gone to the spot and noted that Mohd Hamid had been murdered

by some unknown person. On receipt of the said written complaint of Giridhari Lal, the said FIR No. 140/2008 for the offence under Section 302 IPC was registered at the above Police Station, that is, Bari Brahmana and after completion of the case, Trial Court awarded life-imprisonment to Wasim Ahmed against which present appeal is filed.

Division Bench after hearing both the sides in length observed that there was so much within the power of the investigation/prosecution which could have been done, and, which it did not do. For instance, no motive has been alleged, and, therefore, there is no question of it being proved, Jagan Nath has not been produced, though he is a prominent person in the prosecution story. Finger prints were not lifted from the handle of the alleged weapon of offence (tawa). It has not even been established that the 'tawa' was recovered

at the instance of the accused and pursuant to an alleged disclosure statement. In fact, the Trial Court itself held the alleged recovery and disclosure statement to be doubtful and unreliable. The matching of hair and the reports in respect thereof have not been produced by the investigating officer or the prosecution. What happened to those reports, if any? Why were the ISL reports, exhibit MR and exhibit MR/1 introduced in this case and proved by PW-14, when they pertained to entirely different case(s). Even the alleged murder weapon (tawa) was not shown to the doctor who conducted the postmortem examination to indicate whether it could have been the murder weapon. There are many 'unanswered questions in this case. The investigation has been conducted in a very shoddy manner and the prosecution has been completely remiss in its duty in proving its case.

Human Shield Case: NC questions govt's silence on compensation to Farooq Dar

JAMMU, FEB 1: National Conference Legislator Ali Mohammad Sagar on Thursday questioned the PDP-BJP coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir for not paying compensation to Farooq Ahmed Dar in Human Shield Case.

On a question by the MLA seeking details about the recommended compensation, the Government said that SHRC had recommended Rs 10 lakh as compensation in favour of Dar.

The government further replied that the recommendations were considered by the Empowered Committee in its 28th meeting and it was observed that the recommendations made cannot be accepted because no allegations as regard to human violation of human rights of the applicant have been levelled against the State Government or any of its functionary.

"The pending completion of the investigation in the matter, the recommendation with regard to payment of compensation to the complainant, shall tantamount to establish the guilt of the accused, without

affording him an opportunity of being heard," said the Government.

"The SHRC in its recommendations has inter-alia, observed that the Commission is handicapped to go into the conduct of the Army, who are allegedly responsible for the incident," it said, adding that the Commission lacks jurisdiction to entertain and adjudicate upon the present matter.

The government, however, said that on April 13, 2017, police station Beerwah received an information through sources that a video/audio clip was uploaded on local and national news channels, depicting therein that on April 9 (polling day), one Farooq Ahmad Dar, resident of Chill Khanshab, was tied with ropes on the bonnet of an Army vehicle, followed by a Casper under threat, keeping him under wrongful confinement and making him a human shield.

An FIR under Sections 342, 367, 506 of IPC was registered and investigation taken up, which was yet to be concluded, replied the government.

HC directs filling up of GMC Principal on permanent basis

JAMMU, FEB. 01: While deciding a petition, Justice Alok Aradhe observed that the State Government shall be entitled to fill up the post of Principal Government Medical College, Jammu on substantive basis in terms of Rule 8 of the 1979 Rules.

In a petition filed by Dr. Anice Choudhary seeking direction to respondents to strictly adhere to the recruitment rules coupled with the procedure prescribed in the Government Order No. 1139-GAD of 2004 as well as guidelines framed by the Medical Council of India for selection to the post of Principal Government Medical College, Jammu. The petitioner also seeks writ of mandamus commanding the respondents to finalize the selection of the petitioner to the post in question taking into account Rule 8 of the Jammu and Kashmir Medical Education (Gazetted) Service Recruitment Rules, 1979 (hereinafter referred to as the 1979 Rules). During the pendency of the writ petition, the petitioner has superannuated as Incharge Principal Government Medical College, Jammu on 30.4.2013. Therefore, the petitioner has modified the relief claimed in the petition and has sought a direction to the respondents to release the grade of Rs. 37400-67000 + Grade pay of Rs. 10,000/- attached to the post in question for the period from 01.07.2012 till 30.04.2013 and to grant ex post facto sanction to regularization of the petitioner on the post of Principal Government Medical College and to settle the case of the petitioner for pension accordingly.

Justice Alok Aradhe after hearing both the sides disposed of the petition the competent authority is directed to consider the case of the petitioner for regularization for appointment on the post of Principal Government Medical College, Jammu for the period from 01.07.2012 till 30.04.2013 by taking into account the APR of the petitioner for the year, 2009-2010 to be very good and in the light of the criteria laid down in Rule 8 of the 1979 Rules. Let the aforesaid exercise be carried out by the respondents within a period of three months from today. Needless to state that in case the petitioner is found entitled for regularization of his services on the post of Principal Government Medical College, Jammu, all consequential benefits shall be awarded to him and his pension shall be fixed accordingly within a further period of two months. It is reiterated that the State Government shall be entitled to fill up the post of Principal Government Medical College, Jammu on substantive basis in terms of Rule 8 of the 1979 Rules.

JKNPP PROTESTS SEEKING REVOCATION OF FIRS SLAPPED ON ARMY

Withdraw FIRs filed against the brave hearts or quit government: Harsh to BJP

JAMMU, FEB. 01: Aggrieved over the callous attitude of the State government towards the Indian Army for registering FIRs against the officers and the valiant soldiers despite their humiliation by the stone pelters and other anti-nationals in the valley, scores of Panther activists led by Harsh Dev Singh Chairman JKNPP staged a strong protest demonstration at Exhibition Ground Jammu today.

The infuriated protesters sought the withdrawal of all charges slapped on the Army and other security personnel in Kashmir. Meanwhile, they burnt the effigy of the BJP and accused the Saffron party of being hand in glove with the PDP to demoralize the brave hearts serving the Motherland.

Addressing the media, Harsh Dev Singh condemned the bizarre situation in Kashmir had led to disparagement of the Indian Army bringing disgrace to the entire nation. He divulged that



the incumbent government had been resorting to appeasement policy towards the frenzied secessionists, anti-nationals and stone pelters which had emboldened them enough to assault and manhandle the security personnel on duty. He said that Indian soldier had always volunteered himself to sacrifice his today for our better tomorrow while fighting the enemy but assault on his self respect by the berserk and maniacal felons was intolerable and disheartening. He said that every nationalist Indian was eagerly looking towards PM Modi to

pellet stones on the convoy and tried to snatch a weapon of a JCO with the intention to lynch him. He regretted that instead of standing in self defence, the BJP partnered government despicably slapped FIR on Major Aditya and his unit with the charges of murder, attempt to murder and endangering life of the civilians. He also wondered over the criminal silence of the Saffron party when the State police filed the FIRs against the Army's 53 RR unit for countering the stone pelters during the by polls in Srinagar on April 9 last year. Major Leetul Gogoi devised a 'human shield' strategy to successfully rescue the security personnel and civil officials trapped by a frenzied mob of 500 protesters at a polling booth but the FIRs registered against the decorated officer and his associates by the State police had only proved BJP's impotence and its treacherous character, Harsh regretted.

Harsh Dev Singh said that it was utterly shocking to note the BJP leadership making the Armed forces defensive and apologetic merely to keep its coalition partner in good humour and its alliance intact. Regretting the cowardly surrenders of BJP on varied issues before its coalition partner for the sake of power, he observed that the saffron party was a clan of pseudo nationalists which vigorously trumpeted the jingoistic slogans for its vested political interests. He demanded the withdrawal of all such absurd and frivolous FIRs against the defence personnel and cautioned BJP to quit the government if it failed to do so. He said that Panthers party would gherao its Ministers if they declined to seek unconditional apology from the Indian Army and other security forces for disparaging them and the nation.

Pak juvenile who escaped from police custody in Jammu, re-arrested from Punjab

JAMMU, FEB 1: A Pakistani juvenile who had escaped from the police custody from Ranbir Singh Pura here has been re-arrested from Punjab, police said on Thursday. A juvenile named Ashfaq Ali, son of Malik Hussain, resident of Dunga-Pahel, Tehsil Samani, District Bhandera, Pakistan wanted in case FIR Number 4/18, under sections 223, 224 IPC Police Station RS Pura was apprehended by police from Tharmal Bathinda area of Punjab," said the police. They said that he has been brought by a team deputed to Punjab and lodged in observation Home at R S Pura.

Life remains crippled in parts of south Kashmir

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: Life remained crippled for the eighth successive day on Thursday in south Kashmir districts of Pulwama and Shopian, where a boy, who was injured when an unexploded

shell, went off on January 24, succumbed in the hospital this morning. Meanwhile, mobile internet remained suspended for the ninth successive day in the twin districts of Pulwama and Shopian.

Business and other activities remained paralysed and traffic was off the roads in Shopian for the eighth successive day on Thursday.

The situation was no different in Pulwama, where all shops and business establishments and traffic was off the roads for the eighth day against killing of four civilians security force firing in two separate incidents in Shopian since January 24.

A youth, Rayees Ahmad Ganie, who was injured in Army firing during demonstrations on January 27 in Shopian, died at S K Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) here on Wednesday.

Apple township of Sopore returns to normal

SRINAGAR, FEB 1: Life returned to normal on Thursday in apple township of Sopore in north Kashmir district of Baramulla, where a strike was observed yesterday against the murder of a goldsmith whose body was fished out from river Jehlum on Tuesday after more than a month. Shops and business establishments reopened and traffic was plying normally on all routes.

Tariq Ahmad Malik, a goldsmith, resident of village Kalarosee in Kupwara, was allegedly murdered by four goldsmiths with the motive to loot cash and jewellery from his shop on December 26 in Sopore. Malik's body was later thrown in river Jehlum.

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