

A budget is telling
your money where
to go instead of
wondering where it
went.

— Dave Ramsey



India defeated Australia by eight wickets to win the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup title for a record fourth time, at the Bay Oval in Mount Maunganui, Tauranga, on Saturday.

Kashmiri youth assault in Haryana: 3 arrested, more accused identified, say cops

SRINAGAR: The police arrested three persons in connection with the brutal assault of two Kashmiri youth in Haryana's Mahendragarh. Another three accused persons have been identified with the help of CCTV footage, said a senior police officer. "Three accused have been arrested, few identified. Will make sure proper investigation is done."



Medical help will also be provided to victims," said

Garima Mittal, Superintendent of Police Mahendragarh District Commissioner on Saturday. "Total six people are accused in the incident of assault on two Kashmiri youth in Mahendragarh out of which three people have been arrested and three others identified on the basis of a CCTV footage. An investigation is underway," said Mahendragarh

CONTD ON P-2

Mehbooba lays foundation of Silk Factory, Filatures at Bari Brahmana, inaugurates Joinery Mills

SILK REVIVAL PLAN IN STATE UNDER EXECUTION, TO TARGET 10 LAC METRES SILK PRODUCTION PER YEAR.

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 03: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today visited Bari Brahmana Industrial Estate and laid the foundation of a Silk Factory and Filature unit there. She also inaugurated the Government Joinery Mills and inspected the work at the EDI complex there.

To be built at a cost of Rs. 16.84 crore, the Government Silk Factory would be constructed in five months.

Mehbooba Mufti also



laid the foundation of Government Silk Filatures to be built at a cost of Rs. 6.64 crore which would be completed in the coming five months.

With the setting up of these units, first of its kind in Jammu province, the silk weaving facility from cocoon to yarn would be made available in Jammu province. The Chief Minister later inaugurated the new Government Joinery Mills and showroom and display centre which she had laid foundation of in July last year. She went around various sections of the Joinery Mills and appreciated the products being manufactured there.

CONTD ON P-2

NC, congress stages walk out against assault of Kashmiri students in Haryana

SRINAGAR, FEB 03: Opposition National Conference and Congress staged walkout as a protest against the assault of Kashmiri students in Haryana.

NC MLA Pahalgam Altaf Kaloo told the house during the zero hour that he received a text message from students studying in Haryana University who were apprehensive about their safety.

He said that students have sent a message that

beating us mercilessly," he reads.

He reads quoting students that "we are feeling insecure if we were not protected by the government, we all students will return".

When they asked the attackers why they were being thrashed, the students receive the only response they are from J&K, "They just kept thrashing us with bricks and helmets."

CONTD ON P-2

SF launch CASO in Kupwara, Omar urges Manan to surrender

SRINAGAR, FEB 03: Security forces launched Cordon and Search Operation (CASO) Saturday night in the frontier district of Kupwara, where PhD scholar turned militant Manan was reportedly trapped.

Meanwhile, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah urged Manan to surrender.

CONTD ON P-2

JK Bank dedicates ambulance to Central University of Jammu under CSR initiative

Vice chancellor appreciates chairman for taking academic excellence initiatives



JAMMU, FEB 03: Under its corporate social responsibility initiative, J&K Bank today dedicated an ambulance to the Central University, Jammu for the benefit of the students. The keys of the ambulance were handed over by the Chairman & CEO, Parvez Ahmed, to the University Vice Chancellor, Prof.

Ashok Aima in presence of Registrar, Dr Ravi Kumar, Dean, Dr Lokesh Verma, senior faculty members of the Central University and senior management of the bank. Earlier, an interactive session between the two heads of the institutions was held here in the office chambers of the chairman.

During the interactive session Prof Ashok Aima apprised J&K Bank Chairman about the various opportunities for industry academic collaboration for promoting research which he said was the backbone for sustainable growth in the region.

J&K Bank Chairman, Parvez Ahmed, said that J&K Bank valued the collaboration with Central University and aimed at providing innovative, state of the art customized products & services to the faculty and students of the University besides encouraging partnership with the academics for promotion of entrepreneurship culture in the state.

CONTD ON P-2

Governor's message on World Cancer Day

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 3: In his message on the World Cancer Day, Governor N.N. Vohra has observed that various initiatives need to be taken on a time-bound basis to reduce the impact of varied kinds of cancers which are spreading fast in our country and millions of new patients being registered every year.

Governor noted that the observance of the World Cancer Day is an opportunity to enhance awareness of the early signs and symptoms of this disease as timely detection and proper treatment can significantly improve the chances of survival.

CONTD ON P-2

Civilian Killings: Parts of Shopian continues to shut, Pulwama resume normal life

SRINAGAR, FEB 03: A complete shutdown was observed against the killing of local militants and 5 civilians for 11th consecutive day in Shopian district today.

All shops, business establishments, government and private offices were closed in Shopian town. However, reports added that in Pulwama and some adjoining areas of Shopian district the normal activities were resumed after remaining off for 20 days.

Business and other activities resumed

and traffic was plying on all routes normally in Pulwama and some areas of Shopian district.

Pertinently two local militants and a civilian were killed in an encounter in Chaigund village of South Kashmir's Shopian district on January 24.

These civilians were killed also when army opened fire on protesters in Ganowpora village of Shopian district on January 27. Notably On 1st February, a minor succumbed to his injuries after a

CONTD ON P-2

BUDGET SESSION 2018-19 - LA PROCEEDINGS

JK Assembly passes Rs 95666.97 Cr Budget for 2018-19

In a first, FinMin links Appropriation Bill with wide-ranging Expenditure Reforms to speed up spending

Valuable suggestions of Legislators will help streamline JK's fiscal framework, economic course: Dr Drabu

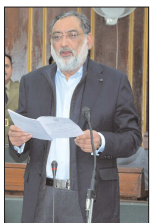
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 03: The Legislative Assembly Saturday passed Rs 95666.97 crore budget for J&K for the year 2018-19 with 20% step up over the last year's budget size of Rs 79472 crore.

The Jammu and Kashmir Appropriation Bill-2018 moved by the Finance Minister Dr Haseeb Drabu in the House in this regard was

passed with voice-vote.

Pertinently, for the first time in J&K's legislative history, the Finance Minister has linked the Appropriation Bill with wide-ranging expenditure reforms to ensure checks and balances for efficient fiscal management and speed up spending to make productive use of resources for the larger public good.

Earlier, Dr Drabu had,



on January 11 this year, presented the Budget proposals for 2018-19 in the House, comprising a revenue component of Rs 51244.72 crore and capital component of Rs 44422.24 crore. Enumerating the fiscal reforms factored in the Appropriation Bill this year, Dr Drabu said the Finance and the Planning, Development and Monitoring Developments

CONTD ON P-2

Four persons including two CRPF personnel injured in Tral grenade attack

SRINAGAR, FEB 03: Four persons, including two CRPF personnel, were injured on Saturday when militants hurled a grenade at a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) party in Tral town in south Kashmir.

"Four persons, including two civilians and two CRPF troopers, were injured in the explosion. The injured have been shifted to hospital and the area has been surrounded for searches," reports said.

HC quash appointment of Gram Rozgar Sewak, Block Thathri Panchayat Halaran

JAMMU, FEB. 03: Justice Alok Aradhe quashed the selection/appointment of Gram Rozgar Sewak, Block Thathri Panchayat Halaran.

This significant direction has been passed in a petition filed by Mayur Singh challenged the appointment of Gram Rozgar Sewak. Adv Rupak Ratta appearing for the petitioner submitted that the respondents issued Advertisement Notice inviting applications for filling up the post of Gram Rozgar Sewak, Block Thathri. Among others, the petitioner as well as respondent No. 5 had participated in the process of selection. The petitioner was shown to have secured 47.41 points, whereas respondent No. 5 secured 47.60 points. Accordingly, order of appointment was issued in favour of the private respondent No. 5. It is the case of the petitioner that as per the criteria laid down in the Advertisement Notice, 80 points were to be awarded for the academic qualification and 20 to be awarded for viva voce. However, 5 points have wrongly been awarded to the respondent No. 5 for having worked as a Facilitator under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. In this factual background, the petitioner has approached this Court.

CONTD ON P-2

Matter regarding wearing of headscarf during police training to be taken up with DGP

JAMMU, FEB 03: Minister for Revenue, Parliamentary Affairs, Hajj & Arafat, Abdul Rehman Veeri today informed the House that the matter regarding wearing of headscarf by girls during training in police will be taken up with the Director General of Police.

The Minister said this after the issue was raised by MLA Kargill Asgar Ali Karbalie during Zero Hour in Legislative

Assembly. Meanwhile, several members raised various public interest issues related to their respective areas in the Legislative Assembly during the Zero Hour.

MY Tarigami suggested for adopting a resolution to appeal the central government to ensure safety of Kashmiri students studying in educational institutions outside the state. Shamim Firdous asked

the government to conduct interviews for the posts advertised earlier for various positions in Srinagar Municipal Committee.

Mohammad Khalil Bandh demanded establishment of Dry Fruit Processing Industry in Pulwama Constituency. Shakti Raj Parihar demanded for expediting opening of Doda Campus of Jammu University and urged the government to launch PG classes in

Degree College Doda till the University Campus is made operational.

Bashir Ahmad Dar urged the government to repair and renovate all damaged transformers in his Constituency.

Vikar Rasool Wani demanded for proper maintenance of National Highway at Banhal. Mubarak Gul demanded for providing of Bullet proof vehicle to the legislators during their tours.

CONTD ON P-2

HC quash the order of SSRB whereby candidature of the petitioners from selection zone is withdrawn

JAMMU, FEB. 03: In a petition filed by Pimbar Lal & ors seeking quashment of Order No.21-SQB of 2011 dated 4.2.2011 issued by respondent No.3 by virtue of which, the candidature of the petitioners from selection zone is withdrawn/cancelled and also seeking direction to the respondents to allow the petitioners to serve as Physical Education Teachers in their respective place of postings, in view of their selection and appointment.

Justice Alok Aradhe of J&K High Court Jammu wing after hearing both the sides observed that the selection of the petitioners was cancelled by SSRB on the basis of representation made by one Mohd. Kabir. It is further submitted that neither any notice was served on the petitioners nor an opportunity of hearing was afforded to them before cancellation of their appointment. On the other hand, learned

CONTD ON P-2

FROM PAGE-1

Kashmiri youth...

"Me and my friend had gone to the mosque to offer namaz yesterday. After we came out of the mosque, we noticed some people following us. Just as we were leaving on my motorbike, a group of 15-20 people started to beat us," said Aftab, one of the victims.

"No one came forward to help us. Soon after police arrived at the spot. We went to the hospital for a check-up and returned to the university campus. We told faculty about the incident and lodged a complaint with University," added Aftab.

The incident sparked an outrage, with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti demanding an immediate probe into the incident.

Tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former J&K chief minister Omar Abdullah tweeted, "This is terrible & goes against the spirit of what @PMOIndia @narendramodi ji said from the ramparts of the Red Fort. I hope the authorities in Haryana act quickly against this violence."

The Haryana Police later registered a case in the incident under certain sections of the Indian Penal Code.

Mehbooba lays...

The Chief Minister was accompanied by Minister for Industries and Commerce, Chander Prakash Gangga; Minister for Finance, Labour & Employment, Dr. Haseeb Drabu and Minister of State for Industries & Commerce, Asia Naqash.

The Chief Minister, on the occasion, was also briefed about a Silk revival plan by Commissioner-Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Shailendra Kumar.

The plan envisages revival of Raj Bagh, Solina, Nowshera, Bari Brahmana and other silk rearing units in the coming years. As per the plan, the Government will be infusing adequate funds into the revival of these units to generate a final produce of 10 lac metres of silk per annum in the State.

On the occasion, a deputation of employees of J&K Industries Ltd. met the Chief Minister and thanked her for the steps taken for the revival of their corporation. These steps, they said, would secure their future and they vowed to work for the betterment of the Corporation.

During the visit, Mehbooba Mufti also inspected the on-going work at the Jammu campus of Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) at the Industrial Estate. The foundation of the campus was also laid by her on July 09, 2017. To be built over a cost of Rs. 82.89 crore, the Jammu campus of IKEDI is scheduled to be completed in three phases spread over a period of three years. It would have all the facilities like incubation centre, hostel, library and other interactive facilities for young entrepreneurs.

On the occasion, Director, EDI, Dr. M I Parry briefed the Chief Minister about the progress on the project. He informed her that the Institute will be made operational from the new campus soon.

Principal Secretary, Finance, Navin Choudhary; Commissioner-Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Shailendra Kumar; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Hemant Sharma; IGP, Jammu zone, SDS Jamwal; Deputy Commissioner, Samba, Sheetal Nanda and other senior officers accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.

NC, congress...

There were people around but they didn't say or do anything to help us," he reads. Kaloer urged the state government to take up the matter with concern authorities of other states and ensure the safety of the Kashmiri students.

Earlier speaking in the assembly, Ghulam Mohammad Saroori told the House that earlier a young man of 25 years of age was killed outside the state. He was a student, Saroori said, adding that he had aged parents and two sisters to take care of. Later entire opposition staged a walkout from the house.

SF launch...

to lay down weapon while authorities snapped internet mobile network in north Kashmir. Official sources told UNI that on a tip off about the presence of militants, security forces launched a CASO in Lolab area of frontier district of Kupwara tonight.

It is believed that scholar turned militant Manan Wani was holed up in the area. Abdullah in a tweet said "I hope better sense prevails on Manan & he lays down his weapons. Better the chance of rehabilitation than a violent end to this cordon".

He reacted to a report that "PhD scholar turned Hizbul terrorist Manan Wani trapped in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara, forces cordon off entire area". The authorities have snapped mobile internet in the north Kashmir, including Kupwara, to prevent rumours.

JK Bank...

He said that the ambulance facility to the University is a step towards Bank's commitment as a responsible corporate citizen of the state and reiterated the Bank's resolve to undertake such activities beyond the mandated Corporate Laws. While evincing keen interest in the outreach activities of the Central University of Jammu he added that the University had come up really fast and was playing an important role in promoting cross cultural student interaction especially under its Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat initiative across the country.

The Chairman proposed to set up a Digital Lounge and a full fledged Business Unit in the Central University Campus which was agreed to by the Vice Chancellor who directed the concerned for allocation of land to the Bank for construction of its own building. The Chairman announced a Preferred Customer status to the central university for providing its popular Phone Pe Loan facility for the faculty and staff of the Central University. Under the facility loan is applied through bank's mobile

application Mpay and is processed/sanctioned in two hours besides dispensing with any visit to the Business Unit for availing of loan.

The vice-chancellor in his statement appreciated the bank's gesture of concern and compassion while receiving the ambulance. He said, "Under its CSR Mission, J&K Bank is always at the forefront of such humanitarian interventions in the state besides being the flagship company of J&K. We feel grateful for the ambulance and wish the institution great successes in future."

The vice chancellor highly appreciated the role of the bank in socio-economic development, particularly in the area of creating a huge job market for the youth of the state. "Under the dynamic leadership of the chairman Parvez Ahmed, the bank has been successfully forging a useful partnership with leading academic institutions across the state through various initiatives, which is laudable. The bank is helping us (the lead academic institutions) to train our students for self employment ventures rather than looking at government jobs. The kind of schemes and financial assistance provided by the bank for the overall benefit of the students/youth is definitely going to address the unemployment issues in the state. I see a bright future as far as job market for our educated youth is concerned as the students we train will be future job providers instead of job seekers," said the vice chancellor.

He also appreciated the bank for agreeing to provide all facilities to the prospective entrepreneurs through single window.

Notably the Bank was instrumental in converting the Central University to Cashless Mode by introducing Easy Collect module/IPG services of the bank for front-line fee collections, besides providing Cash less facilities at canteen & hostel of the University by installing ATM/POS/e-Com machines. Remarkably, the chairman had earlier announced the ambulance facility for students during the launch of multi function Smart Campus card at the University.

Governor's...

Governor observed that in our fight against Cancer we can implement measures in the work place which will motivate and sustain healthy habits in the everyday life of the workers. Likewise, every school can encourage children to develop healthy habits and provide them attractive choices of nutritious foods and drinks, opportunity for sports and elementary education about the importance of proper food and regular physical activity.

Another very important step is for the State Health Department and NGOs in the field of health to organise Early Detection Campaigns all over the State.

Civilian Killings...

exploded shell went off near encounter site in Chaiagund Shopian.

Meanwhile 2G Internet service were restored in the twin districts of South Kashmir on Saturday afternoon after remaining snapped for last 10 days. However 3G/4G continue to remain snapped in Shopian and parts of Shopian for 11th consecutive day.

Valuable suggestions...

shall release both Revenue and Capital budget to all the administrative departments within two weeks of the passage of the Appropriation Bill.

He said the administrative departments shall, in turn, ensure release of funds to the subordinate offices within four weeks of their receipt, failing which these funds shall be deemed to have been transferred to the intended DDOs on the dates they ought to have been released by the administrative departments /Controlling Officers. "Planning Development and Monitoring Department shall ensure that all plan allocations to be made in the next fiscal year proper classification, indicating, name of the work/scheme against detailed Head-115 Works," he said and added that in the absence of the schematic classification, the relevant Capex release shall be deemed as invalid and not open to being operationalization.

The Finance Minister said there no payments shall be made by any Treasury/PAO from 1 April 2018, under any expenditure head, if the releases for the same have not been made and further received by the spending and bill passing Officers via BEAMS. "Treasury Officers/PAOs shall be personally liable for making payments on the funds released and received by spending the BEAMS application," he said.

Dr Drabu further said that the Planning, Development and Monitoring Department shall mandatorily upload on its website the department-wise "Name of the Schemes/Works/Projects", forming part of the Capex budget for the fiscal 2018-19, along with the respective allocations.

He said the expenditure reforms across the departments shall further be strengthened by initiating measures including bringing complete transparency in the financial and administrative processes through increased IT interventions, ensuring authorisation of such works for execution only which have prior administrative approval, technical sanction and appropriate financial back up and ensure expenditure monitoring on real-time basis through BEAMS and PFMS.

He said the procurement plans of the departments for the next fiscal shall be limited by an outermost cap of 60 days, starting 1st April. "From conceiving the nature and quantity of public goods and services to be procured to preparing tenders/RFOs/Eols to finally awarding the contract, the departments shall compulsorily finish the whole process by 30 May 2018," he said and added that any spill-over in timelines shall be automatically visited with the appropriate disciplinary actions.

The Finance Minister made it clear that the funds shall be spent only on the approved items of the expenditure and strictly for the purpose they have been released. "There shall be no re-appropriation of funds except where the departments have spent 55% of funds

received ending December 2017," he said and added that however, where their spending levels are below 55%, the remaining 70% funds shall lapse to the Government.

He said the expenditure during the last quarter shall be restricted to not more than 30% of the Revised Estimates. "Treasury officers shall have an added responsibility to ensure that the departments are held consistently to the above expenditure ceiling," he said.

Dr Drabu said the State Share of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes and the expenditure to be incurred on utility shifting, land compensation etc under PMDP projects shall be the first charge on the funds lapsing to the Government during the last quarter.

The Finance Minister made it clear that there shall be, henceforth, no engagement of casual workers, need-based workers etc by any department. "The Planning, Monitoring and Development Department shall, invariably, condition all developmental/plan releases to the departments to the unconditional vouchsafing by the latter that they shall refrain from making fresh engagements," he said. Dr Drabu said it is reassuring to note that a broader political consensus is emerging in Jammu and Kashmir to put in place a viable economic framework, a robust fiscal management structure and an achievable budgetary policy.

"I express gratitude to the members of this august house, from both the treasury and non-treasury benches for putting across valuable suggestions on how to further improve the expenditure policy and ensure productive use of the resources in the larger interest of the State and its people," he said and added that the fiscal reforms introduced over the past three years are aimed at bringing stabilization in JK's economy and reduce volatility for economic revival through enhanced investments, public expenditure and widening the net of socio-economic security.

The Legislators, cutting across the political divide, hailed the extraordinary expenditure reforms outlined by the Finance Minister in the Appropriation Bill to ensure fiscal discipline and speedy and productive use of resources for the larger public good.

HC quash...

counsel appearing on behalf of the respondents submitted that he is not aware about the fact as to whether any opportunity of hearing was ever afforded to the petitioners or any notice was issued to the petitioners before cancellation of their appointments.

Justice Alok Aradhe further observed that in view of the aforesaid submissions and in the facts of the case, the impugned order dated 04.02.2011 being in flagrant violation of the principle of natural justice is hereby quashed. High Court also directed SRRB to afford an opportunity of hearing to the petitioners as well as the complainant and thereafter to take a decision by a speaking order in accordance with law within a period of two months from the date of receipt of the order passed today.

HC quash...

Justice Alok Aradhe after hearing adv Rupak Ratta appearing for the petitioner whereas Deputy AG Ashish Singh Kotwal appearing for the state observed that as per the criteria prescribed in the Advertisement Notice, selection was required to be made by awarding the candidates 80 points in the academic qualification and 20 points for the viva voce. In the Advertisement Notice there is no mention of the Circular dated 14.12.2010 issued by the Secretary to Government Rural Development Department. The aforesaid Circular only provides weightage to be given to the candidate having previous experience. No reasons have been assigned for awarding 5 marks to the respondent No. 5 for previous experience. The official respondents cannot be allowed to depart from the criteria laid down by them in the Advertisement Notice. It is not in dispute that in case the 5 marks which have been awarded to the respondent No. 5 on account of previous experience and included in the total marks are deducted, the petitioner is more meritorious than respondent No. 5. Despite service, the respondent No. 5 has not chosen to file response to rebut the contentions raised in the writ petition and has been set exte.

Justice Alok Aradhe further observed that in view of the preceding analysis, selection/appointment of respondent No. 5 on the post of Gram Rozgar Sewak cannot be sustained in the eye of law. The same is hereby quashed. The official respondents shall consider the

case of the petitioner for his appointment on the post in question in the light of the observations made herein above within a period of three weeks.

Matter regarding...

Rajeev Sharma also participated during Zero Hour and raised various public importance issues pertaining to his Constituency.

Raja Manzoor Ahmad demanded for posting of Gynaecologist and other specialist doctors at District Hospital Karnah.

Choudhary Mohammad Akram urged the government to install additional hand pumps in his Constituency to resolve water shortages in the area.

Mohammad Akbar Lone asked the government to expedite release of compensation for the orchardists, houses damaged and families affected due to 2014 floods of his Constituency.

Pawan Kumar Gupta urged the government for establishment of Solid Waste Management at Udhampur and asked them to ensure adequate availability of drinking water facilities for the people of Udhampur constituency.

Dr Krishan Lal demanded for expediting pace of ongoing construction work on bridges in his Constituency.

Mohammad Yousuf Bhat advocated for providing adequate medical and paramedical staff in all health institutions in his Constituency.

Gulzar Ahmad Wani also took part in the Zero Hour and urged the government to resettle revenue halqas in his Constituency.

Abdul Majid Larmi also raised public importance issue pertaining to his Constituency and demanded for early redressal of concerns.

Abdul Majid Padder urged the government to ensure adequate drinking water facilities and for installation of additional tube well in Noorabad Constituency.

Neelam Kumar Langeh urged the government to ask the Executing Agencies of Baglihar Power Project to release 2 percent CSR for the development of parks and other developmental works as already committed by the Company.

Choudhary Qamar Hussain asked the government to provide adequate medical and para-medical staff in all health institutions of his Constituency.

Yawar Ahmad Mir and R S Pathania asked the government to provide authentic and articulated replies to the Questions raised by the legislators.

Mohammad Shafi Uri raised the issues pertaining to Home department besides bringing to the attention of the government the increasing incidences of theft in Uri market. He urged the government to take a serious note of the matter and take appropriate action.

Shah Mohammad Tantray demanded for conducting a survey in Poonch Constituency to identify the left out, remaining BPL families and asked the government to include them so that benefits of the social welfare schemes can be extended to them.

Ravinder Raina demanded for bringing various areas of his constituency under the new Administrative units.

Usman Abdul Majid asked the government to provide adequate drinking water facilities to the people of his Constituency especially Pathkot, Kralipor and Gureez Basti areas.

Javid Ahmad Rana demanded for early release of funds under different schemes including NABARD. He asked the government to expedite the pace of work on various ongoing construction works for roads in his Constituency.

Noor Mohammad urged the government for immediate repairs and renovation of Sheikh Parimpora-Qamarwari road. He asked the government that the directions issued by the Speaker should be circulated among the legislators for information and perusal.

Jeevan Lal demanded the government for expediting of construction work on all ongoing road projects in his Constituency.

Aijaz Ahmad Khan demanded for undertaking construction work on double-laning of the 15 Kms road stretch in Wachi at the earliest.

Dina Nath Bhagat demanded for strict action against Director, Health Services Jammu for non-seriousness approach of medical staff at Udhampur Hospital in providing ambulance to the pregnant women which lead to death of the baby.

Altaz Ahmad Wani asked the government to ensure availability of essential commodities to Kashmiri Pandits on the eve of Mahashivratri.

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Bhim Singh urged Parliament to act in accordance with command of Indian Constitution, save J&K

JAMMU, FEB. 03: Prof. Bhim Singh, Chief Patron of National Panthers Party who is also expert on the situation in J&K has appealed the Parliament of India to act in accordance with the command of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution read with Section 92 of J&K Constitution in order to save the Indian citizens in J&K as well as the commandment of the Indian Constitution which has not been applied to the State of J&K. The NPP Supremo functioned as a Legislator in J&K for nearly 15 years (was elected twice as MLA and worked as MLC once). Prof. Bhim Singh reminded the Parliament of India that J&K acceded to the Union of India on 26th October, 1947 when its Maharaja, Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession on the will of the people who were led by Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah for several years.

Prof. Bhim Singh said that it was the Constituent Assembly (India) which blundered when it introduced Article 370 in the Constitution of India against the will of the people and the Constituent Assembly kept the State of J&K away from the Accession List. J&K was never integrated with the rest of the country as was done in respect of 577 States including two states namely, Hyderabad and Junagarh whose rulers never signed the Instrument of Accession. The Constituent Assembly declared these two states as integral part of the Union of India also. It was a political blunder on the part of Constituent Assembly and the Indian leadership that J&K was never integrated. J&K has not been integrated till this date that is why no Indian Law is applicable to J&K.

Prof. Bhim Singh also accused BJP government which has betrayed its voters by not declaring the State of J&K as integral part of the Union of India during its 12/13 years' rule at the Centre.

Prof. Bhim Singh praised the secular and brave attitude as Indian who are being accused by Delhi Govt. every day.

Prof. Bhim Singh praised the Muslim brethren of the State for their total commitment to establish a secular state in J&K and support unity of all religions. He wondered why the Modi Govt. is forcing the people of J&K to be ruled by BJP-PDP governance when PDP and BJP stand totally exposed before the people of J&K and the rest of the country. The only way, he appealed to the Parliament, is to integrate J&K with the rest of the country as the Constituent Assembly did in respect of 577 (two non-signatory states). Why Fundamental Rights in the Indian Constitution (Chapter-III) have not been extended to J&K till date. Why the youth of J&K being smashed or beaten in the rest of the country? Why the spirit of nationalism carried out by Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah is not followed by the Indian leadership? Why the people of J&K are not provided the privileges and fundamental rights which are available to every citizen of India (except J&K)? The only way out is, if J&K Govt., administration and police have collapsed to look after the law and order in the state why not Governor Rule and then the Army can be given the responsibility. That is the only way out to save J&K from further death and destruction.

Distt. President Baldev Singh Boloria tour Kunjwani and adjoining areas

JAMMU, FEB. 03: Bharatiya Janata Party Jammu District President Baldev Singh Boloria has visited the stormy of many areas in view of the strength of the organization and the upcoming Local Bodies and Panchayat elections and heard the problems of people and activists. Boloria visited Ward number 50, Bandharukh, Langer and Kunjwani areas during his tour and on the spot he heard the problems of BJP activists and assured them to solve them. He told the activists that in the coming days, the present BJP coalition government in the state is going to conduct Local Bodies elections and Panchayat elections to strengthen democracy at the grassroots but only BJP can win this election when every BJP worker has a booth in ten youth together with a booth, ten people carry with them, that is ten booths on every booth and ten people will have to campaign for the people of BJP. They are influenced by whether or not they are the activists of BJP or not, but taking them together will have to do such a structure at the booth level that the BJP's grip on the booth should be fully strengthened. Work with youth activists in every booth with them so that there is no shortage from any angle. He examined the ongoing development projects in the Gandhi Nagar Constituency area on the spot and took stock of its progress while reporting its report to Speaker Kavinder Gupta. On the direction of the Speaker, Boloria heard the problems of the people and note them and brought them to the speaker's attention and assured them the solution. Besides, Boloria has prepared a list of new developmental works on the instructions of the speaker in many areas. They have to be started by the speaker. Boloria told people that their every problem will be resolved in a phased manner and people will be given better development on their behalf.

7 Gamblers arrested in Srinagar, stake money recovered

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 03: SHO Police Station Lal Bazar Shri Riyaz Ahmad Khan under the supervision of SDPO Hazratbal Shri Rameez Rashid Bad arrested a gaming site near Bus Stand Lal Bazar and raided seven gamblers Mehraj-ud-din son of Ab Karim Mundayo resident of Nowshara, Shabir Ahmad son of Gh Nabi resident of Soura, Bilal Ahmad Najar resident of Bandipora, Aijaz Ahmad rather son of Gh Mohammad Rather resident of Nowshara, Taufiq Ahmad Sofi son of Gh Ahmad Sofi resident of Bandipora, Mohammad Rafiq son of Bashir Ahmad Sofi resident of Soura and Shahid Ahmad Chota son of Bashir Ahmad resident of Lal Bazar. The stake money of Rs 15,160 and playing cards were seized from their possession. In this connection Case FIR No.04/2018 under section 13 Gambling Act was registered and investigation was taken up.

State BJYM felicitated newly appointed Prabhari of BJYM J&K

JAMMU, FEB. 03: Today State BJYM under the leadership of its State President Dr. Suresh Ajay Magotra organized an impressive felicitation programme for newly appointed Prabhari of BJYM Jammu & Kashmir Rohit Chahal at BJP headquarter Trikuta Nagar Jammu. BJP State General Secretary and Prabhari Jammu Province Harinder Gupta, BJP State Secretary and Prabhari Jammu Sanjay Baru graced the occasion. Rohit Chahal is presently BJYM National Media secretary and newly appointed Incharge (Prabhari) of Jammu & Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion, Harinder Gupta first congratulated Rohit Chahal for his appointment as Prabhari Jammu

and Kashmir and said that the organisational work of J&K is little different from the rest of country, as activists in the said state works with very high will power and against all the odds in day to day working conditions. Jammu and Kashmir is always remains a special state in the eyes of Delhi as it is the crown of India and a lot of things depends on this state. He further said, it becomes possible only because of the hard work of the ground level Youth worker that we have won both the two seats from Jammu Province and lone seat from Ladakh in Lok Sabha elections. He further added that in 2019 we are very much sure to open our account from Kashmir as the Youth brigade is doing



very good in Kashmir also. While felicitating Chahal, Dr. Magotra introduced him with all the key positions he holds in past in ABVP at State and National level and expresses his happiness over this appointment. He said that BJYM State team can learn a lot of organisational things from the newly appointed Prabhari as he has a vast knowledge and experience of organisation-

work. Dr. Magotra also elaborated a lot of organisational and public programmes done by BJYM in past and gave a detailed working of BJYM from State to Mandal level to newly appointed Prabhari. Dr. Magotra further added that all the activists of BJYM are doing good in all the organisational work but a lot need to be done to reach the last man in the queue who has high aspirations from BJP.

On the occasion Rohit Chahal thanked BJYM Jammu and Kashmir for this small but impressive welcome and said that you all will find me ready for any type of help to take the organisational work of BJYM at gross root level. Jammu and Kashmir always remains the centre of attraction of National and International politics, and to be a part of this state it is an amazing feeling with a lot of more responsibility. He appreciated all the activists of State BJYM for the fantastic work they are doing under the leadership of Dr. Magotra, he said the conditions in this state are very hard but despite of all the hardships Youth activists are giving their 100 percent without caring for their life as well.

Sanjay Baru also spoke on the occasion. Proceedings on the dais was done by General Secretary Vikas Choudhary. Prominent who were present on the occasion were General Secretary Tarun Sharma, Vice-Presidents Adv. Annu Behnal, Ajay Vaid, Munish Khajuria, Secretary Adv. Gurdev Thakur, Sunny Sanjotra, Office Secretary Abhishek Slathia, Social Media Incharge Rohit Verma, Media secretary Er. Lalit Raina, District Presidents Ashish Sharma, Manjeet Bhagat, Rohit Verma, Sukhdev Singh, Vikas Gupta, Akash Chopra, Happy Raina, Sanjay Bhat and many others.

Dismissal of PDP-BJP Govt. in J&K and Governor Rule is only way to restore peace in J&K: Neeraj

JAMMU, FEB. 03: Neeraj Gupta of National Panthers Party urged the Governor of J&K, N.N. Vohra to act urgently in the mandate provided in Section 92 of J&K Constitution, dismiss the unwanted, undesirable and unaccountable government of PDP & BJP without any delay. He held a protest demonstration along with his supporters and party workers at Transport Nagar, Narwal and burn the effigy of the J&K State Govt.

Neeraj Gupta appealed to the people of J&K particularly the youth in the Valley of Kashmir to make strong appeal to the President of India, Ramnath Kovind to act and advise the Governor

of J&K as he is bound under Section 92 of J&K Constitution in the interest of the safety, security of the people of J&K.

Neeraj Gupta appealed to the Legislators not to make present situation political issue, it is a grave issue which concerns the human rights and the justice has been denied to the people of J&K only because on one hand they are facing the threat from stone pelters and on the other hand facing the threat from boarder shelling by Pakistan. Even the security forces who ensure the safety of common man is harassed by the lodging of FIR against the army of the Govt. Ms. Mufti said that the FIR has been lodged with the due per-

mission of Defence Minister. The Defence Minister is of BJP which means that both BJP and PDP making fool of people and exploiting the people of J&K for lust of power. If this is the attitude of the Govt., then who will ensure the security of the common man. Gupta said that such kind of incidences will let down the moral of the Army. Neeraj Gupta said that the vision of the present Govt. is very clear that they only want to rule at any cost which is condemnable. The State. On this occasion Neeraj Gupta was accompanied by Jagdish Badyal Zonal Vice President, S. Joginder Singh Gen Secretary, Surat Lal, Sonu Tejinder Singh, Tanveer Singh, Parminder Singh, Choudhary, Sanjaneet Singh etc.

Sarooi seeks ban on alcohol in JK

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 03: Senior Congress leader Gulam Mohammad Sarooi has sought a ban on alcohol in Jammu and Kashmir. Sarooi said that there should be complete ban on the sale of alcohol in the state. "Like Bihar government should impose ban on alcohol in JK too," Sarooi while speaking in the legislative assembly. Mr. Sarooi was supported by the opposition legislators along with few ruling party MLAs including Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation Javid Mustafa Mir. Sarooi had stood up from his chair and demanded a complete ban on liquor in the state. Legislators from NC and Congress and others supported Sarooi. As government remained unmoved over the demand from the opposition, Sarooi had urged speaker Kavinder Gupta's attention and asked those supporting him to stand up from their chair. Immediately all the legislators of NC, Congress and some independent MLAs stood up in support of the ban on liquor. As the government maintained silence over banning alcohol in JK, Sarooi staged a protest and walkout from the assembly while the other members followed him.

Sarooi while speaking in the Assembly lamented the government for failing to provide electricity to the consumers of the state especially to the erstwhile Doda district during the winter season. Sorting explanation from the Deputy CM who also happens to be the Power Minister, Sarooi asked as to why government has miserably failed in allotting work under RGGVY phase II project in Chenab Valley and the Rs. 100 crores project sanctioned for the electrification work by the efforts of Gulam Nabi Azad are hanging in balance due to lack-adical attitude of J&K government towards residents of Chenab Valley.

Why vigilance silent over irregularities, nepotism in JU: questions NSF Seeks Governor, CM's interventions to save varsity

JAMMU, FEB. 03: It has been nine months now when the National Secular Forum (NSF) filed complaint against financial irregularities, abuse of official position and nepotism in University of Jammu filed in office of Director Vigilance J&K, it was stated by Dr Vikas Sharma, state chief National Secular Forum (NSF), while addressing a press conference, here today.

Dr Vikas Sharma said that in the complaint it had argued that criminal nexus operating in the University of Jammu indulging in all sort of financial irregularities, abuse of official position, nepotism in connivance with few officials in the O/o Financial Advisor (Universities) and

Chancellor Secretariat who are keeping FA (Universities) and the octogenarian Chancellor in dark.

He had claimed in the complaint that apart from financial irregularities reaching its high during the tenure of present VC, the incumbent office bearers as a modus operandi makes Financial Advisor (Universities) and the octogenarian Chancellor to fall in their line in the University Syndicate and University Council overlooked and chaired by the Chancellor.

In pursue of their well orchestrated agenda, items are placed before both the above bodies with half truth, concealed facts and blatant ignorance of UGC

guidelines and above all, past decisions taken in the both bodies are ignored and sometimes hidden meaning thereby that officials in the O/o Financial Advisor (Universities) and Chancellor secretariat are taken in a loop by the Jammu University who either keep criminal silence or become part of such moves.

The decision taken in the 110 University Syndicate Meeting Resolution No. 110.65 dated 20.8.2016 for regularizing and absorption of Dr Sandeep Singh, a contractual employee in the university of Jammu is one such example in which decision of same Chancellor taken in a better positioned candidate was concealed from FA

(Universities), as well as from Chancellor.

This case is just a tip of an iceberg in which FA (Universities) and Chancellor were befooled by VC, University of Jammu in University Syndicate and JU Council Meets and JU Council Meets for which law demands immediate registration of FIR and sacking. NSF State President Dr. Vikas Sharma also said that, "JU is a premier institution of highest learning in Jammu region which was established for the benefit of people of Jammu. But the incumbent Vice-Chancellor Prof Ramji Dass Sharma has completely ruined this institution owing to mis-governance and vindictive attitude.

"Ignoring NET/Ph.D candidates to adjust blue-eyed, dissolution of the Resolution of Crime Branch probe in ARS interview cancellation under a well planned strategy by the Vice Chancellor, Evaluation scam in DDE was hushed up, three appointments were made fraudulently against two sanctioned posts, Embezzlement of CM relief Fund, Purchase of Medical Surgery books, Shut down of PG Course in DDE, Illegal order for printing of study material, Diversion of DCE Funds worth 1 crore for other purposes, Blue eyed pursuing PhD without fulfilling eligibility, Fudging of officials documents by DDE teacher, Contract of holding JUET awarded to favourite and etc", these main points highlighted in the complaint, but after lapse of ninth month the complaint is gathering dust in Vigilance Department. Dr Vikas Sharma appealed the Chief Minister as well as Governor of the State who are Pro-Chancellor and Chancellor of Jammu University to constitute a full fledged enquiry committee involving the investigating agencies of the State to look into and probe the irregularities took place during the three years tenure of Prof R.D Sharma VC to unearth the truth of issues raised by National Secular Forum.

BJP holds state core group meeting ahead of "All Party Meeting"

BJP will press for early Panchayat Elections in the state

JAMMU, FEB. 03: BJP J&K State held an important meeting of its State core Committee, just ahead of "All Party Meeting" at State Guest House, Jammu on Saturday which was chaired by State President & M.L.A, Sat Sharma and attended by Dy. Chief Minister Dr. Nirmal Singh, MLC Ashok Khajuria, MP Lok Sabha Jugal Kishore Sharma, State General Secretary (Org.) Ashok Koul, State General Secretaries Dr. Narinder Singh, Pawan Khajuria, Harinder Gupta and Health Minister Bali Bhagat. Sat Sharma greeting the

members of Core Group, said that the Core Group meeting forms an indispensable working within the party which serves of discussing all the essential issues from the top level to the ground level in hierarchy of party.

Sharma also led the discussions with the Core Committee members regarding the issue of "All Party Meeting" for holding Panchayat Elections in the State, which was called by the Chief Minister Ms. Mehbooba Mufti. It was decided that Party State President and State general Secretaries will represent the party in the "All Party Meeting" to put forth the

stand of party in the meeting to be attended by all the top leaders of leading political parties of the state.

It was unanimously decided in the core group meeting that the BJP holds a clear view regarding the holding of Panchayat elections in the state as working by the perspective of people's welfare, it is mandatory to hold the elections in a time bound manner which will eventually lead to the decentralisation of power. It was also said that "Panch" level provides the common masses an easy approachable level of administrative set up for addressing their issues and

Police public meeting held at Police Station Bandipora

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 03: Continuing its efforts to strengthen the police public relations, on the directions of SSP Bandipora Shri Shehrik Zulfikar Azad, a PCPG (Police Community Partnership Group) meeting was held at Police Station Bandipora.

The meeting was chaired by SHO Bandipora Inspector Gaganfar Syed. The respectable citizens of Bandipora town and its adjacent areas including civil society members, members of trade union and members of Police Community Partnership Group (PCPG) participated in this meeting.

During the meeting various social issues were raised by the participants. Referring to the issues highlighted by the participants, SHO Bandipora assured them that all issues will be solved on priority.

During the interaction, SHO Bandipora also asked participants to keep cooperating with police in order to make the society crime free.

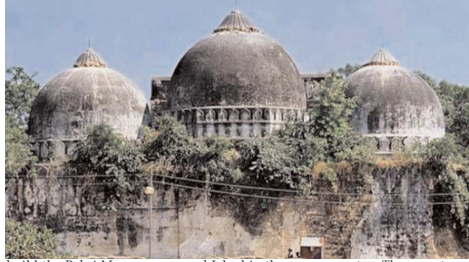
Muslims opposing Ram temple should go to Pakistan, says UP Shia Waqf board chief Waseem Rizvi

FAIZABAD (UP): Uttar Pradesh Shia Waqf Board Chairman Waseem Rizvi today suggested that Muslims who are against the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya "must go to Pakistan and Bangladesh".

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear the Babri Masjid/Ram Janambhoomi dispute from February 8.

Rizvi offered Friday prayers at the disputed site in Ayodhya and also met the chief priest of the Ram Janambhoomi, Acharya Satyendra Das.

On the occasion, he said, "Those who are opposing the Ram Janambhoomi temple in Ayodhya and want to



spread Jihad in the name of the mosque must go and join the forces of Abu Baqar Baghdadhi, the ISIS chief in Syria," Rizvi said. Fundamentalist Muslim clerics are trying to destroy the

atmosphere. Talking to PTL, President of Shia Ulema Council Maulana Iftikhar Hussain Inquilabi alleged, "Rizvi is a criminal involved in grabbing and illegal selling of Waqf properties."

"He has been charge-sheeted by the CB-CID and to save himself from the claws of the law he is enacting a big drama," he said.

"During the rule of the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh, he was patronised by Mulayam Singh Yadav and then minister Azam Khan. Now, during the BJP government, he will be spared," Inquilabi said.

Country. They must migrate to Pakistan and Afghanistan, he alleged.

Reacting to Rizvi's remarks, Shia clerics demanded that he be arrested for trying to communalise the

Shivraj Chouhan inducts 3 ministers in MP Cabinet, hints at another expansion



BHOPAL: Ahead of state Assembly elections due in the latter half of 2018, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan expanded his Council of Ministers on Saturday.

The three new ministers inducted in the Cabinet are Balkrishna Patidar, Narayan Singh Kushwaha and Jalam Singh Patel. The trio took the oath of office at Raj Bhawan in Bhopal on the Saturday morning.

The Chief Minister further hinted at another expansion in the Cabinet.

"It is a matter of happiness, will make the cabinet more balanced which will lead to better work & results. One expansion has taken place, another small one will also be done," said Chouhan.

Patidar, who belongs from the Nimar region, is an MLA from Khargone, while Kushwaha represents Gwalior South in the Assembly. Patel, an MLA from Narsinghpur, is the

younger brother of BJP MP and former Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel.

The Chouhan-led BJP government is eyeing a fourth term in the state.

Before the expansion, the Cabinet had 20 ministers, including the chief minister and nine ministers of state since December 2013. The number of ministers is up to 23 now. The state can have a maximum of 35 ministers as per the Constitutional provisions.

Meanwhile, state Congress president Arun Yadav submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission of India, stating that the expansion of Cabinet barely days ahead of MP by-polls goes against the Model Code of Conduct.

Bypolls to Mungaoli and Kolar are scheduled to be held on February 24.

Child sacrifice on lunar eclipse? Severed head of infant found atop roof



HYDERABAD: Was an infant killed in Hyderabad as part of some superstition on lunar eclipse in Hyderabad? Police are probing the angle of human sacrifice after the severed head of an infant was found dumped on the terrace of a house in Chiluka Nagar in Hyderabad on Thursday.

The incident came to

light after a woman resident of the rented house went to the terrace in the morning to dry clothes. On seeing the head, she shouted in horror after which neighbours came to the scene.

They alerted the police immediately. There is no clarity yet over whether the baby is two months or three-months-old.

The woman's son-in-law Rajasekhar, who is a cab driver has been detained for questioning. Two other neighbours - Narahari and his son Ranjith - were also taken into custody after sniffer dogs led them to a dustbin in their house. The duo reportedly often performed puja out of superstitious beliefs.

The terrace has no blood marks indicating the fact that the head was kept there after beheading. The police are also searching for the missing torso for the investigation.

In shock over the incident, Balakakshmi is in tears wondering why the terrace of their house was chosen for the beheading.

Shatrughan Sinha attacks BJP again, says Rajasthan first state to give triple talaq to party

PATNA: Seems like Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Shatrughan Sinha does not let go of any chance to taunt his party over any issue. This time, the actor-turned-politician trained guns at the party over its defeat in the Rajasthan bypolls, saying that the state had become the first to give the BJP 'triple talaq'.

"Breaking news with record-breaking disastrous results for ruling party - Rajasthan becomes first state to give BJP Triple Talaq. Ajmer, Talaj, Alwar," Talaj, Mandalgarh: Talaj, opponents winning the elections with record margins, giving our party a jolt," Sinha, BJP MP from Patna Saheb in Bihar, said in a tweet on Friday.

Sinha also warned the



party and asked members to take remedial measures. "Better late than never, otherwise the disastrous results could or would be soon reformed as Tata-Bye results. Wake up BJP, Jai Hind."

This is not the first time the BJP MP has embar-

assed the party by taking a different stand.

Just recently, he was present at the launch of the Rashtara Manch, a political action group launched by disgruntled BJP leader Yashwant Singh, to take on the Centre's policies and decisions.

Along with Shatrughan Sinha, Trinamool Congress MP Dinesh Trivedi, Congress MP Renuka Chowdhury, NCP MP Majeed Memon, Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh, former Gujarat chief minister Suresh

Mehta and JD(U) leader Pawan Varma were also present at the launch of the front.

In a massive jolt to Chief Minister Vasundhara Rajale-led BJP government ahead of the state polls later this year, the Congress, on Thursday swept all three bypolls in Rajasthan.

Defeating the BJP's Shakti Singh Hada, Congress candidate Vivek Dhakar won Mandalgarh Assembly seat by 12,976 votes.

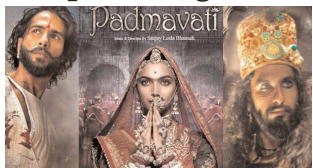
In Ajmer, Congress candidate Raghu Sharma defeated BJP's Ramwaroop Lamba, while in Alwar, Congress leader Dr Karan Singh Yadav established his victory, defeating the BJP's Jaswant Yadav by 196,496 votes.

Rajput Karni Sena announces withdrawal of protest against 'Padmaavat'

JAIPUR: The Shri Rajput Karni Sena on Friday announced that it has decided to withdraw its protest against director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's controversial film 'Padmaavat', which was released recently.

While announcing its decision, Shri Rajput Karni Sena said the movie glorifies the valour of the Rajputs.

Announcing the decision, Shri Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena's Mumbai leader Yogendra Singh Katar said that on the directions of organisation's national President Sukhdev Singh Gogarnadi, a few members watched the movie in Mumbai on Friday and found that that the movie



glorifies the valour and sacrifice of Rajput and every Rajput would feel proud after watching the film.

There is no such objectionable scene between Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khilji and Queen Padminti of Mewar which hurts the sentiments of Rajputs, he said in a letter, declaring that the Karni Sena takes back their

also lifted the ban on the movie imposed by several states and directed them to ensure its release.

The film was released in theatres across India on January 25 amidst tight security and protest from various groups, including Karni Sena. However, some cinema hall owners decided not to screen the film in the wake of protests being carried allegedly by Karni Sena members in Gujarat and Haryana. Since its release, maverick filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali's magnum opus 'Padmaavat' has been doing an incredible business at the Box Office and this shows how much the fans have liked this epic tale.

The film did not cause any damage to the sculptures inside the temple though many of it was covered in soot, police said.

Fortunately all the sculptures in the 1000-

Fire breaks out in Madurai Meenakshi temple, at least 40 shops gutted

MADURAI: A major fire broke out inside the premises of famous Meenakshi temple here in which at least 40 shops were gutted, police said.

Temple authorities ruled out any sabotage and said electrical short circuit in one of the shops selling puja articles caused the fire late last night.

The blaze did not cause any damage to the sculptures inside the temple though many of it was covered in soot, police said.

Fortunately all the sculptures in the 1000-



pillars hall were saved by the timely intervention of the temple officials, workers and the fire and rescue service personnel.

A team of fire extinguishers battled past mid night to put out the

including Hindu Baktha Jana Sabha, VHP and Hindu Munnani had been demanding to vacate the shops from the temple premises and keep the premises clean.

Meanwhile, devotees were allowed to offer worship in the temple this morning.

District Collector Veera Raghava Rao, who was at the temple told reporters that there was no need for panic, as devotees could offer worship as usual.

About 300 police personnel have been deployed in and around the temple for security.

Poojas would be held as per schedule, and cleaning up of the eastern side of the temple would be done in three days, officials said.

Various organisations

Bofors pay-off case: CBI moves SC against HC order quashing charges against accused

NEW DELHI: In a major development, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging a 2005 order of the Delhi High Court quashing all charges against those accused in the politically-sensitive Rs 64-crore Bofors pay-off case.

According to reports, the central probe agency today filed the appeal against the May 31, 2005, decision of the high court by which all the accused persons, including Europe-based industrialists Hinduja brothers, were discharged from the case.

The filing of the appeal assumes significance as



Attorney General K K Venugopal had advised against going for the petition after 12 years of delay.

However, the PTI quoted sources as saying that the law officers after consultation were in favour of the appeal as the CBI placed some important documents and evidence to challenge the high court order.

Venugopal had told the government that the CBI should not file a special leave petition (SLP) in the Bofors case against the 2005 Delhi High Court judgment discharging Hinduja brothers.

In a letter, Venugopal had suggested to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) that

the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) should not file SLP as it is likely to be dismissed.

In his letter addressed to the DoPT Secretary, Venugopal had said, "Now, more than 12 years have elapsed. Any SLP filed before the Supreme Court at this stage, in my view, is likely to be dismissed by the Court on account of the long delay itself."

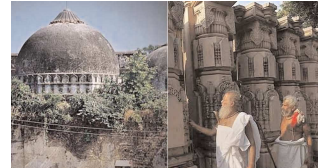
"CBI should present its stand in a similar case pending before the apex court in which the agency is also a party," Venugopal had written in the letter.

The DoPT had sought a legal opinion from the Attorney General on the CBI's request that it be

UP Home Guard Director vows to build Ram temple in Ayodhya, stokes controversy

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Home Guard Director General Surya Kumar Shukla has sparked a controversy by taking a pledge for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya. During an event at Lucknow University on Thursday, Shukla took the oath along with some Muslim leaders. The one who presided over the oath was Muslim Karyasewa Manch president Azam Khan, who has been vocal for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya since Yogi Adityanath-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government came to power in Uttar Pradesh. However, speaking to media persons later, Shukla changed his stance saying Ram temple should be constructed only with consensus.

"The Supreme Court has said that Ram temple should be constructed by peaceful means with consensus of members of



all religions. This should be followed for the construction," he said. Shukla is an Indian Police Service official of 1982 batch. He has also reportedly been in the race to become the Director General of Police in Uttar Pradesh. The Supreme Court began its final hearing in the centuries-old Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute on December 5, 2017.

The case, which was back in the news recently after Art of Living founder Ravi Shankar's mediation, has the history that

dates back to the 15th century. In November, last year, the Shia Waqf Board proposed that Ram Masjid be built in Ayodhya while the mosque can come up in Lucknow.

The mosque originally dates back to 1528. It was built in Ayodhya by Mir Baqi - a commander of Mughal emperor Babur - from where it gets the name Babri Masjid. However, a report by the Archaeological Survey of India suggested the existence of a 10th-century temple at the site.

BUDGET SESSION 2018-19 LA PROCEEDINGS - QUESTION HOUR



Farmers being provided subsidized equipment by JKSAIDC: Hanjura

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 03: Minister for Agriculture, Gulam Nabi Lone Hanjura today informed the Legislative Assembly that the farmers are being provided farm machinery, implements/equipment involving subsidy under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes through J&K State Agro Industries Development Corporation Ltd on approved rates.

The Minister was replying to a question of legislator Sukhmandan Choudhary.

The Minister informed the House that farmers of the state are not forced to buy agriculture equipment of any particular brand comparatively on higher rates.

99 CRF projects worth Rs 1306.47 Cr taken up in Kashmir Province: Naeem Akhtar

Minister for Public Works, Naeem Akhtar informed the house that 99 CRF projects at an estimated cost of Rs 1306.47 crore have been sanctioned for Kashmir Province since the inception of the scheme.

Replying to a question of legislator Mohammad Yousuf Bhat, the Minister informed that Rs 378.18 crore has been expended on these projects till date.

The Minister further informed that 27 projects have been completed and work on remaining 72 projects is at various stages of completion.

Responding to another part of the question, the Minister said that out of 99 projects under CRF scheme in Kashmir province, 2 projects including widening/upgradation of Bijbehara-Shopin road and up-gradation of Naghal-Turkawangam road, Wasohallan-Hajipora road and Baskushan-Kawhara road have been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs 51.39 crore in Shopian district.

He further informed that Rs 3.18 crore has been spent to date and the construction works is in progress on both the projects.

'DPR for Khawaja Sahab-Chanapal Chattibanday road being formulated'

The Works Minister informed the House that DPR for up-gradation of 5.50 KM Khawaja Sahab to Chanapal Chattibanday road is under formulation at a cost of Rs 4.08 crore.

Replying to a question by Mr Usman Abdul Majid, the Minister said that in view of the poor condition of the road, Chief Minister during her public outreach programme to Bandipora on Dec 3, 2017 issued directions for taking up this road for improvement/up-gradation by R&B Department. He said pursuant to the direction of the Chief Minister the process for the formulation of DPR was started for the Chattibanday to Gujarpatti road under new nomenclature namely 'Khawaja Sahab to Chanpal Chattibanday road'.

Meanwhile, he informed that the road was sanctioned under PMGSY Phase-II and taken up for execution by



Rural Development Department at a cost of Rs 1.59 crore of which Rs.1.22 crore has been utilized.

'43 CRF projects worth Rs 599.20 Cr approved in 2016-17'

Replying to a clubbed question of Hakeem Mohammad Yasin, the Minister for Works said the Government has received approval of 43 CRF projects worth Rs 599.20 crore during 2016-17, on which work is at different levels of construction.

He, however, said that state government submitted 148 connectivity projects worth Rs 2275.75 crore to Union Government for approval under the scheme in last two years adding that the left out projects proposed during 2017-18 are under its active consideration.

Responding to another part of the clubbed question, the Minister said that 174 NABARD road projects worth Rs 643.25 crore were taken up in the state during the last two years. He said the cumulative expenditure of Rs 268.41 crore was incurred on these projects and 16 roads were completed so far while work on others is in progress. Similarly, under CRF scheme during the last two years, 49 works worth Rs 840.55 crore were taken up, out of which Rs.51.66 crore was incurred till date.

About Khanshab constituency, the Minister said that during 2016-17 up-gradation of the road from Randak Daji Jawalpora Waterhail Gaffarabad via Samsen upto Yarikah was sanctioned under CRF at a cost of Rs 15 crore. He said the work on the road is in progress and an amount of Rs 20.83 lakh has been utilized on the scheme.

The Minister further said that under NABARD up-gradation of two road projects including Kremshore Shogpora (Tilampora link road) and Khanshab Balpora, Raithan Yarikah and Gurwait Pahar road at an estimated cost of Rs 8.87 crore was taken up in 2016-17 and an amount of Rs 6.60 crore has been spent on these till date.

G. M. Saroori raised supplementary to the main question.

17 new GDCs approved for uncovered areas: Altaf Bukhari

The Minister for Education, Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari informed the House that the government has sanctioned opening up of 17 new colleges which shall be established in the uncovered areas of the state. The location details for setting up of the newly sanctioned colleges are being worked out by the Education Department, he added.

Replying to a question of legislator Choudhary Qamar Hussain in the Legislative Assembly today, the Minister said that the department's endeavour is to commence the academic activities soon in these colleges. He, however, said the opening up of new colleges at a particular place/area shall be the subject to the availability of requisite land and feasibility of demand which includes the sufficient number of feeding Higher Secondary Schools.

"The priority will be given to uncovered Assembly segments which are presently devoid of such facility", he



added.

With regard to another part of the main question, the Minister informed that presently 6 Government Degree Colleges are functional in the district Rajouri and there is no proposal to establish a new Degree College in the district.

Responding to another query of the Legislator, the Minister informed that at present there is no proposal to establish Cluster University in Pir Panchal and Chenab regions.

"Cluster Universities are sanctioned by MHRD, Govt under RUSA by pooling the existing infrastructure of 3 to 5 Degree colleges within a radius of 15 KM and the government is focusing on strengthening the existing Cluster Universities in Srinagar and Jammu", he added.

He further informed the House that Government Degree College Rajouri cannot be included in existing Cluster Universities.

With regard to the introduction of Arabic and Persian department in Jammu University, the Minister said that the University of Jammu intends to introduce both these departments in the Main Campus/Offsite Campuses and the proposal for the creation of teaching and non-teaching positions is being taken up.

He added that as and when the posts are created and grants for development of adequate infrastructure are available, the process for establishment of new departments in the main campus would be started.

Upgradation of 400 schools approved: Altaf Bukhari

The Education Minister informed the House that the state cabinet has approved up-gradation of 200 middle schools (100 in each division) to the level of High School and 200 High schools (100 in each division) to Higher Secondary level.

Replying to a question by Mr Rajiv Jasrotia, the Minister said the identification of the schools is being made by the School Education Department in consultation with Legislators as per norms/feasibility for up-gradation, he added and said that however, the up-gradation of schools shall be subject to availability of funds for creation of requisite staff and infrastructure.

Regarding transfer of teachers, the Minister said that the engagement of ReTs is school specific and their transfer is not covered under the Transfer Policy of the Department, as such no transfer of ReTs has been made in contravention of the basic spirit of the transfer policy. He, however, said in Jammu Division, some transfers of ReTs have been issued by the Chief Education Officers in contravention of the basic spirit of the transfer policy, for which an inquiry has already been initiated by the Department and the inquiry report is yet to be received, he added.

Elaborating on another part of the question, the Minister said that attachments/deployments of some teachers have been effected on the approval of the Administrative Department/Head of Departments concerned.

"Premature transfers, wherever unavoidable, were ordered with the prior approval of the competent



authority, keeping in view the administrative exigency", he said and added that in certain cases, premature transfers have been effected on health/security/marriage grounds. However, he said while ordering such transfers efforts are made to provide substitutes, enabling the smooth functioning of the department, he added.

Minister for Rural Development, Mr Haq Khan informed the House that government has approved 11653 dwelling units under Prime Minister Awas Yojna (PMAY) during 2016-17 and 2017-18.

Replying to a question by Shakti Raj Parihar, the Minister said that the first instalment was released to 9830, second instalment released to 1277 beneficiaries while as the third instalment was released to 56. He said 13 houses were completed so far.

He asserted that there was no disparity in allotment of financial assistance at the divisional level.

Responding to another part of the question, the Minister said that the technical staff including Work Supervisors, Junior Engineers, Assistant Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers and Executive Engineers are already working in Blocks, Divisions and Sub-divisions for making effective execution of works including Centrally Sponsored Schemes he added. He further told the House that the department has taken revolutionary steps including, implementation of e-FMS under MGNREGA through which the department directly transfers wages electronically under MGNREGA to the already linked bank accounts of the beneficiaries and makes it paperless besides eliminating delays in wage payment.

He said that measures ensure the much-needed transparency and funds will reach to the real beneficiaries on the ground.

Responding to the supplementary to the main question, the Minister informed that supporting staff of MGNREGA is doing good and has contributed a lot for the successful implementation of the programme in the State. He said that the government has increased their wages and consider to further enhancement.

Construction of Mini-Secretariat proposed at Batamaloo: Ajay Nanda

The Minister of State for Planning and Development, Ajay Nanda informed the House that government has proposed to construct mini-secretariat at Batamaloo.

Replying to a question of Mr Noor Mehamood Sheikh, he said the Chief Minister directed for the establishment of Mini Secretariat Complex at Batamaloo Srinagar at Srinagar District Development Board review meeting held on Oct 4, 2017.

The Minister said that a DPR, amounting to Rs 49.93 crore for the proposed Mini Secretariat Complex Phase-I, has been prepared and the tenders for the said works are being floated.

"Once the tenders for the purpose are finalized, the work shall be started accordingly", he said.

Responding to the supplementary, the Minister said that the government will work out a plan for rehabilitation of the shopkeepers likely to be affected by the shifting of Bus Stand from Batamaloo.

KAS Officers Association condoles with M.A.Qadri

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 3 Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Services Officers Association today condoled the demise of sister-in-law of Mr. Manzoor Ahmed Qadri Director Planning and Marketing, Horticulture Department.

A condolence meeting chaired by President Tassaduq Hussain Mir was convened in which participants expressed solidarity with the bereaved family and prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul.

DIET Rajouri holds Science exhibition

10 models selected for provincial level exhibition RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 03: The two day District level science exhibition organized by District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) under RMSA concluded here today with ten of the presented models selected for provincial level exhibition.

The exhibition was inaugurated yesterday by Principal DIET Rajouri, Pardeep K Sharma. A total number of one hundred two educational institutions of the district participated in this exhibition in which students of these schools presented their models based on scientific inventions and principles.

A team of judges including Prof. Iqbal Raina, Prof. Mangat Ram Sharma and Dr. Naseem Ahmed from Post Graduate College Rajouri, screened these models and selected ten of these representations for provincial level exhibition. The felicitation ceremony of the exhibition was held in DIET Rajouri in which Chief Education Officer, Lal Hussain was the chief guest. The team of students selected for provincial level exhibition included Boys Higher Secondary School Thanamandi, Government Girls Higher Secondary School Rajouri, High School Hathal, High School Renthal, Higher Secondary School Dhangri, Girls Higher Secondary School Sunderbani, High School Thandikassi, Higher Secondary School Lamber, Boys Higher Secondary School Rajouri and Higher Secondary School Kandi Koteranka.

DSEK chairs B'la principals, headmasters meet 'All academic arrangement will be in place within next 15 days'

BARAMULLA, FEBRUARY 03: Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK) Dr. G.N. Itoo today chaired a meeting of Principals and Headmasters of various educational institutions of district Baramulla at Dak Bangaloo to review academic arrangements for the coming academic session and to take an assessment of previous academic session.

The Director expressed appreciation for overwhelming performance by the students of the district in the recently declared class 12th results in which Girls HSS Baramulla bagged the first position in Arts stream.

He further said that teachers are architects of the nation and it becomes our ethical and moral responsibility to provide them quality education.

The meeting was informed that the Department has prepared an Educational Calendar in consultation with all stakeholders for ensuring uniformity of standards in all educational institutions of the valley. He said it will ensure that the collective efforts yield better results.

The Director said that the department will ensure that any loss of academic hours due to any reason shall be compensated by transforming holidays into working days and for that the department requires dedication and cooperation of teachers.

He informed that the co-curricular activities have been given priority in the Calendar for nurturing talent and for containing any untalented practices among students.

The Director said that efforts are on to fill all teach-

Caving in of embankment at Lasjan DC visits spot for inquiry proceedings

Srinagar, FEBRUARY 03: As part of the inquiry in the matter of caving in of embankment at Lasjan Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Saturday visited the spot and took firsthand appraisal of the incident. During the visit, the DC, who headed the inspection team of officers from I&FC, Geology & Mining, PHE, R&B and Revenue departments, inspected the entire stretch of the caved-in embankment as well as the adjacent area, seeking detailed information and assessment of the extent of damage to the embankment and possible reasons for the same. The officers while making deposition about the matter before him informed the DC of their evaluations about the incident and details of ongoing work for reconstruction of the damaged stretch of the embankment. Locals of the area also made depositions before the DC on the occasion, sharing information about the incident and possible reasons for the same. The DC was informed that there has been continuous seepage from underneath the damaged embankment since the incident occurred and that the same appears to be a major reason for the incident.

Dr Shah instructed for immediate sampling of the seepage water to ascertain its source, saying that it was extremely important that a thorough assessment and understanding of the reasons was made in order to ensure incidents like this do not recur.

JINDRAH IMAGES

No parleys be held till Pak stops needling India

Now when the world has known the real face of Pakistan, India should go a step further by deciding not to hold any parleys with it till it stops needling India. Given its continued support to terrorism, it has gained notoriety for providing safe sanctuaries to terrorists, running training camps for them, arranging funds for them and then pushing them into India, Afghanistan and other countries to indulge in violence and disturb peace. The two sides also exchange sweets on important occasions, including Diwali and eid. This is undoubtedly a good gesture for the strengthening of ties between the two countries but New Delhi should refuse to accept sweets from Islamabad till the latter mends its ways and stops infiltrating terrorists into India. Such 'friendship' gestures hold no value under the situation prevailing on the borders which continue to boom with unprovoked Pak guns. Apart from targeting forward posts, the enemy troops have been shelling the residential areas too, forcing thousands of people to flee homes and take shelter at safer places. Many of them have lost their cattle while a few of them have suffered severe injuries in the continued enemy firing and shelling in the past few days. Dozens others have lost their lives. While the Pak firing is almost a routine affair, the government is yet to take steps to provide the border residents either 5 marla plots or make some other arrangements for them. Firing began on the onset of winters is done by Islamabad with the specific purpose of infiltrating terrorists into the Indian territory. To keep the Kashmir pot boiling, Islamabad tries to infiltrate as much terrorists as possible before the mountain passes in Kashmir, Rajouri and Poonch get covered with snow. However, to foil any intrusion bid, border troops have as usual been maintaining a high alert. The day before yesterday, alert BSF troops foiled an infiltration bid from the Samba sub-sector of Jammu. Taking the river Basantar route, terrorists earlier used to enter Ramnagar woods of Udhamapur via nullahs and other river bodies. Since Pakistan has been making all out efforts to infiltrate terrorists into J&K, it becomes all the more important for the border forces to maintain extra vigil all along the LoC and the IB. While scores of terrorists are said to be waiting on the launch pads across the borders for an opportune moment to sneak into the Indian territory, Pak has been brazenly denying its involvement in any terror activity. India can never afford to lower its guard on the borders. So that Pak-based terrorists can't enter India, we need to develop a fool-proof system on the borders. As a first step towards it, the field officers must further strengthen the anti-infiltration and anti-militancy grids. The focus, however, must remain on plugging all the infiltration routes and activate sources in the border villages. It is these sources who play a formidable role in helping troops to detect infiltration attempts. Their role has all along remained commendable. To foil an infiltration bid, there, however, is a need of greater coordination among different security and intelligence agencies.

Baffling Budget: Public health for private wealth?

ANJARA DEV SEN

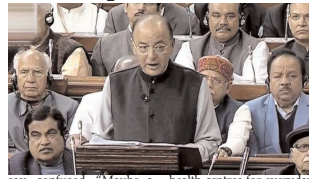
Picture this. You have to go up and down a rickety old staircase every day and ask that the stairs be repaired and have railings to keep you safe. "Don't worry!" smiles the owner of the staircase expansively. "You won't fall! I'll employ a catcher to catch you. I'll pay him to look after you while you are in his catching net, recovering from the tumble. It's my dream to see you happy!"

Mystified, you mumble your thanks, but point out that all you need is the railing, and some repairs. Then the catcher on the pry would not be necessary. He waves your suggestions aside. "Don't worry - I'll fix a sum for every catch!" he says magnanimously. "Just make sure that you tumble within that amount. And that only one person in your family tumbles in a year."

You return to the rickety staircase. Now it is surrounded by enthusiastic catchers brandishing their nets and waiting for you to fall. "He's mine!" hisses one. "No, I'll get him..." snarls another. Unsettled by such sudden, intense attention, you trip. Thankfully, it's only the second step - you land on your feet. But the catchers are upon you. Quick as a flash one throws a net on you and drags you down.

"Oh look, you're hurt!" says the Catcher. "No, no, I'm fine," you say. "I'll just get back on the stairs..." "But you mustn't!" says the Catcher. "Here, lie down and rest while we get you some hot carrot and parsley soup and a nice grilled chicken sandwich to get your strength back."

"I'm not hungry," you



say, confused. "Maybe a glass of water?" "No water. How about California orange juice?" "I must get back to work..." "Quiet! You've had a great fall. You are traumatised. You need care. Lie still. You may have broken a bone. Or had a head injury. We must do some tests. Can you sign? Never mind, give me your right thumb..."

You lie crumpled in the catcher's net and realise that you have just ruined the chances of everyone in your family of getting any assistance from the rest of the year. Now there would be nobody to catch your old mother if she stumbles on these shabby stairs, or if your toddler topples off them. Nobody except you. As always.

The health insurance scheme for the poorest Indians in this year's Budget is a bit like this. It is unlikely to be of substantial benefit to the 100 million poor and vulnerable families that it professes to help. Instead, it will benefit private hospitals and insurance companies. And specially since we have no proper regulation of health providers. The catchers on the pry.

In any case, there is no alternative to strengthening our public healthcare system. Most of the poor and vulnerable people do not even have physical access to bigger urban hospitals. They need good primary

offers Rs 30,000 insurance cover to those below the poverty line - and may be replaced by this new National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) offering Rs 5 lakhs per family - has triggered several health tragedies among the unlettered poor. For example, thousands of unsuspecting young women across India, particularly in Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, have had their uteruses removed by unskilled medical practitioners seeking to maximise insurance claims. So very often the insurance increases the patient's suffering and the money she pays. Because instead of treating, say, a small stomach infection that she had come for, she is now paying for an unnecessary hysterectomy and her paraphernalia and her bill exceeds the insurance amount.

Also, private caregivers pick and choose more profitable cases, which does nothing to improve general healthcare. Studies have shown that the RSBY has not increased access to healthcare for the poor, nor significantly reduced their out-of-pocket spending. Rather, it has somewhat increased it.

And, of course, this grand talk of introducing the "world's largest healthcare programme" is doubtful. First, this NHPS was announced in the 2016 Budget offering Rs 1 lakh per family, then quickly vanished from sight. Second, it will not reach the 500 million people per year as it implies - it can only reach 100 million each year, one person per family. Even this would be a big step, but it has constraints. Third, the insurance is only for secondary and tertiary inpatient care.

We have seen how our sarkari insurance schemes do more harm than good to the poor and vulnerable. The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), which

A step toward evolution

EVOLUTION is the process by which something develops. It is synonymous with advancement, growth, rise, progress, extension or even unfolding. The rosebud evolves into a gorgeous full-blown flower. Within cultures 'dialect' (spoken language) evolve into language when a written script comes into being. Caterpillars spin cocoons around themselves and evolve over a period of time into striking moths or butterflies.

In the fortnight that went by, the word evolution has been the subject of discussion. Darwin's theory of evolution came under scrutiny, although India was not on the threshold of a scientific breakthrough. At the end of a 'self-attested proclamations' (voicing unverified opinions on a public platform) by a minister of state, Darwin's theory was declared invalid since nobody had seen an ape turn into a man. Darwin's theory was not based upon visible evidence provided by dead forefathers but upon extensive study and analysis of different kinds of living organisms over hundreds and thousands of years.

Systems of checks and balances fine-tune and further evolution. The onslaught of unscientific approaches to knowledge systems continues. India cannot be declared the home-ground of plastic surgery or aeronautical engineering even though our poets and storytellers offer us magical narratives. A diploma course in MBBS cannot become the criterion for practitioners of alternative medical systems to qualify as allopathic doctors. Standing logic and rationality on its head will ensure a 'devolution' (descent into a worse state) from scientific understanding to superstitious beliefs and malpractices.

The noun evolution also indicates the transfer or delegation of power to a lower level, for instance from the central to local bodies. Historically, devolution of power has enabled both redistribution and 'revolution' (Latin, turn around) to bring about the rise of modern democracies.

The devolution of factually incorrect information is unlikely to have a transformative impact. False proclamations by ministers of state will contribute to the devolution (dispersal, transfer) of truth in favour of imagined fictions or lies. This will not revolutionise lives or minds. Instead false ideas will continue to evolve (move in a cyclical manner) through the psyches of impressionable minds and psyches.

False ideas or untruths cause irreversible damage. False spins of narrative must be critically examined.

The rampage and violence orchestrated by the Karni Sena over Padmaavat, heinous killings unleashed by gau-rakshaks and violent flareups leading to the death of an ordinary Indian on Republic Day, prove that power and control have devolved from the state to 'erstwhile' (former) fringe groups.

We need ideas that will transform lives. In the heavens, planets make long revolutions around the sun, while 'rotating' (spinning) on their axis at the same time. The momentum of this measured cosmic movement continues to enable harmonious coexistence and optimal possibility. Must we not evolve while we revolve?

How some schools in Britain are busy radicalising young minds

FARRUKH DHONDY

"Narcissus was a bloody fool

He saw his face in the rippling pool
And fell for it as lovers do

With selfies and on Snapchat too
Imagery on phones has turned

A generation to unlearned
Self regard like Narcissus
Hai Bhagwan, deliver us..."

From The Case of the Ashamed Vahu
by Bachchoo

Amanda Spielman, England's chief inspector of schools, has issued a strong warning against schools being used to radicalise young minds. Her team of inspectors reported overt and subtle forms of Islamist indoctrination in schools across England. This is not to say that mad mullahs are entering schools and recruiting suicide bombers but that some practices under the guise of religion are alienating youngsters from integrating into the society in which they live.

She chose the moment to speak in order to support the head teacher of St Stephens, a state-owned school in the East End of London. St Stephens, whose head is Neena Lall and whose chair of governors was Arif Qawi, was named by the Sunday Times as the best primary school in England.

The school is almost 100 per cent ethnic, with the pupils from the ages of 4+ to 11 mostly from third or even fourth-generation Bangladeshi and Mirpuri immigrant families. With the support of Mr Qawi



and the governing body of St Stephens, Ms Lall ruled that girls should not wear hijabs in the classroom and that children under eight should not keep the Ramadan fast during school times to prevent them feeling unwell.

Her ruling stimulated a severe backlash. Fundamentalist activists began preaching in the mosques and community gatherings against it and 20,000 people from the largely Bangladeshi community signed a petition against these school rules.

The issue was taken up on social media and Ms Lall was portrayed, absurdly, as Hitler and Mr Qawi as a satanic Stalin. The victimisation of these two reached such a pitch that Mr Qawi offered his resignation from the governors and Ms Lall was compelled by the protesters, who had put in place a new governing body, to retract the rule. Girls would wear hijabs in class and children under eight

would, if their parents wanted them to, observe religious fasts during school hours.

The attack against Ms Lall and Mr Qawi was led by five Muslim councillors, the elected local government officials of Newham.

It is yet to be seen whether this week's intervention in support of Ms Lall by the chief inspector of schools results in any action by any higher authority - the education minister or even the freshly created Commission for Countering Extremism.

This new body has as its first chief officer Sara Khan, who is a renowned activist and the founder in 2008 of Inspire, an organisation to counter extremism and promote female equality, both noble aims which led to her appointment. She hasn't had time to get her feet under the table yet but it is hoped that Ms Khan will use her publicly proclaimed ambition to inculcate proper

integration into the society in which Britain's three million Muslims live. She could even recommend legislation to support the liberal perspectives of Ms Lall and Mr Qawi for all schools.

Ms Khan's appointment has already drawn, even before announcing any policy, the antagonism of the Labour Party. Labour MP Naz Shah, elected from Bradford, a constituency with an electorally-determining Mirpuri population, is the vice-chair of the British Muslims all-party group. She has expressed her disapproval of Ms Khan's appointment. She claims that Ms Khan "does not accept the concerns in the community".

I choose to read between the lines of this objection. What Ms Shah means is an anti-Israeli stance such as herself have been elected on a pro-Islamist ticket by a substantial section of Pakistani or Bangladeshi immigrants who retain the rural prejudices of their

are safe Conservative seats, which inevitably vote for professionals, of whatever race or colour, who profess ideological leanings towards capitalist values.

In a sense this distinction between Labour and Conservative constituencies, which elect Muslim MPs, is a reflection of the history of immigrants to this country. All 13 MPs are the progeny of immigrant families, eight of them women. All of them have, through education and the determination to rise above the station of their parents, gone into the professions, almost all through the law.

Most of the three million Muslims in Britain live in relatively enclosed communities and remain a class within the working class. They elect the likes of Ms Shah who dare not support the appointment of Ms Khan or the attempt by Ms Lall and Mr Qawi to preserve secularism and express concern for the health of their very young pupils. No doubt the Labour leadership will court, not its ambivalent blessings, but its Muslim votes and back Ms Shah in her attack on the new counter-terror commissioner and the Muslim councillors who initiated the attack on Ms Lall.

So, regrettably, one has to perhaps look to the three Conservative Muslim MPs to initiate practical even legislated support for the perspectives of Ms Lall and Ms Khan represent. God knows Theresa May's government needs some popular dividend initiatives, and propositions by Muslim MPs along these lines would be one.

The Top MPs are elected from constituencies that don't have significant numbers of Muslims but



Parineeti Chopra looking stylish in Black & White shoot

Akshay Kumar's Balbir Singh biopic will be released on February 5

NEW DELHI: Days after Akshay Kumar unveiled his look in upcoming biographical sports drama 'Gold', the makers have announced the release date of film's teaser.

The first teaser of the highly anticipated sports drama will be out on Monday. Directed by Reema Kagti, 'Gold' is a biopic based on the life of hockey player Balbir Singh Sr., who was in the team that won the first Olympic medal for India as an independent nation in 1948.

The film also features Mouni Roy, Amit Sahl and Kunal Kapoor in key roles. As per reports, Mouni will be seen romancing Akshay in the film. The film will release



on August 15 this year, during the Independence day weekend.

Earlier, Akshay shared his look from the film on his Instagram handle.

Set out on a brand new journey, aiming for nothing less than #GOLD! Day 1 of Gold, need your love and best wishes as always

"Set out on a brand new journey, aiming for nothing less than #GOLD! Day 1 of Gold, need your love and best wishes as always," he tweeted.

At present, Akshay is gearing for his upcoming release 'PadMan'. The film is co-produced by his wife Twinkle Khanna and directed by R Balki and also stars Sonam Kapoor and Radhika Apte.

The film is inspired by the life of Arunachalam Muruganatham, a social activist from Tamil Nadu. Initially set to release on January 25, 'PadMan' is now scheduled to be released on February 9. It will clash with Sidharth Malhotra's 'Aiyaary' starring Sidharth Malhotra and Manoj Bajpayee.

Sanjay Dutt remembers Mahatma Gandhi on Martyr's Day

Marking Martyr's day Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt Gave a shout out to the father of the nation MG

The actor who is synonymous with the term Gandhigiri courtesy his blockbuster hit Lage Raho Munnabhai, remembered MG on the occasion of MD that is celebrated every year on 30th January. Sanjay created a frenzy as he revisited Gandhiji's philosophy's with his 2006's release Lage Raho Munnabhai.

Reprising the philosophy and the ideology of MG Sanjay Dutt's LRMB struck chords with the audience and became hugely popular amongst the masses. The Raj Kumar Hirani



directorial is stouted to be a classic and is regarded as one of the most recalled performances of Sanjay Dutt. Giving a shoutout to Babu la Munnabhai Sanjay Dutt wrote, "Bole toh... Bande mai tha dum.. Vande Mataram! Remembering our very own Father of the Nation on Martyr's Day. His thoughts and ideologies

will stay with us forever. #MahatmaGandhi"

In Lage Raho Munnabhai Dutt's character follows footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and takes to Gandhigiri.

On the work front, Sanjay is shooting for Tigmanshu Dhulia's Sahib Bivi and Gangster 3. While Sanjay's biopic will be releasing on 29th June 2018.

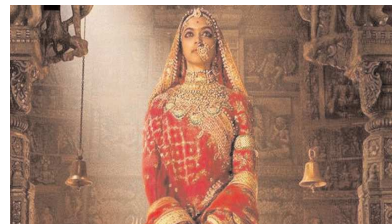
Whoa! Padmaavat creates a history

IMAX Corporation (NYSE:IMAX) and Viacom18 Motion Pictures today

announced that Padmaavat set a new opening weekend record for IMAX in India, grossing approximately \$461,000 across 12 IMAX® theatres for a stellar \$38,400 per-screen average. Directed by celebrated filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Padmaavat is the first Indian local-language title released globally in the IMAX® 3D format.

Padmaavat was also distributed to an additional 42 IMAX theatres in 10 markets outside of India including North America, Australia, the Middle East, Africa and the UK. Globally, the film grossed \$1.3 million across a total of 54 IMAX theatres in its opening weekend run for a \$24,000 per-screen average.

Padmaavat marks the fourth Indian local-language production to be released in IMAX globally. The film is based on the Sufi poet



Malik Muhammad Jayasi's epic poem Padmaavat. Starring Deepika Padukone, Shahid Kapoor and Ranveer Singh, the film showcases the valor of Rani Padmavati, Maharawal Ratan Singh and the famed Rajput ethos of honor, bravery and sacrifice. "We would like to congratulate acclaimed director Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Viacom18 on this phenomenal

achievement. Padmaavat's record-breaking IMAX box office in India underscores the growing demand among local audiences for India's biggest and boldest titles to be presented in our ultra-immersive format," said Greg Foster, CEO of IMAX Entertainment and Senior Executive Vice President, IMAX Corp. "We look forward to the film's continued success in India

and across our global network." Ajit Andhare, COO, Viacom18 Motion Pictures, said, "We are delighted to be associated with IMAX for the release of our magnum opus, Padmaavat. As producers of Padmaavat, we wanted to give our audience a larger than life cinematic experience and take them through of the journey of the characters. Our association with IMAX has provided us the right platform to achieve what we had set out to do." The IMAX release of Padmaavat was digitally re-mastered into the image and sound quality of An IMAX 3D Experience® with proprietary IMAX DMR® (Digital Re-mastering) technology. The crystal-clear images, coupled with IMAX's customized theatre geometry and powerful digital audio, create a unique environment that will make audience feel as if they are in the movie.

Unseen images of Shah Rukh Khan from Davos

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan received an award for his leadership in championing children's and women's right in India.

It was the 24th Annual Crystal Award at the world economic forum in Davos. He received the award along with Cate Blanchett and singer Elton John

The actor extensively spoke about his social initiative Meer Foundation, which he names after his Father's name.

"To disfigure a woman by throwing acid on her face, to me, is one of the basest, crudest acts of subjugation imaginable. At the source of it lies the view that a woman does not have the right to assert her choice, say no to the advances of a man or



a group of people," Khan said.

He went on to say how the victims taught him how courage can catalyse victimhood into heroism, how "solidarity -- rather than charity - enables the human will to overcome, how equality is not a concept but a truth that encompasses all living beings, how service of others is not a choice anymore for any of us but it is a duty that all of us must fulfill in the name of humankind".

The actor received the award for showing an exemplary commitment to uphold human dignity through his non-profitable Meer Foundation.

His speech about women and child rights had the world's top policymakers and executives cheering for the actor.

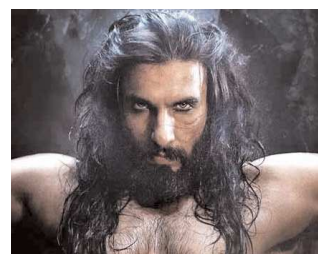
Here's what Ranveer has gotten as his first award for 'Padmaavat'!

Ranveer Singh, who is being widely praised for his portrayal of Alauddin Khilji in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Padmaavat', feels delighted after receiving a letter of appreciation from megastar Amitabh Bachchan.

Calling the letter his "award", an overwhelmed Ranveer took to Twitter to share the picture of the note and a bouquet Bachchan sent him after watching Bhansali's magnum opus.

He captioned the photo, "I have got my award @SrBachchan."

Ranveer also received a handwritten note in 2015, after Bachchan had watched 'Bajirao Mastani'. Featuring Deepika



Padukone in the lead, 'Padmaavat' also stars Shahid Kapoor, Jim Sarbh, Aditi Rao Hydari and Raza Murad.

The film is going strong at the box office. Till now,

the movie has officially crossed the Rs. 100 crore mark at the box-office in four days, despite not releasing in some states and acts of vandalism across the country.

Steamier than ever: Urvashi Rautela is here to seduce you with 'Aashiq Banaya Aapne'!

After treating the audience with the trailer of most anticipated film of the year Hate Story IV, the makers have now released the first song from the film.

The sizzling romantic song is titled as 'Aashiq Banaya Aapne', it is a new version of Himesh Reshammiya's super hit track from the movie 'Aashiq Banaya Aapne' which was released in 2005.

The first video song is in the soulful voice of Himesh Reshammiya and Neha Kakkar. The song has been recreated by Tanishk Bagchi and the lyrics of this new song are penned by Manoj Muntashir.

The song is a visual delight for the fans of



Urvashi Rautela as the beautiful diva can be seen seducing with her charm and sexy moves. Hate Story IV is an

upcoming Indian drama film directed by Vishal Pandya. The film has Urvashi Rautela, Vivan Bhatena, Karan Wahi in

the lead role alongside Ihana Dhillon & Gulshan Grover.

Hate Story IV is slated to release on 9th March 2018.

Shahid Kapoor reacts to Swara Bhaskar's open letter!

While critics and audiences are praising Sanjay Leela Bhansali's historical drama 'Padmaavat', actress Swara Bhaskar slammed the director for the 'glorification' of Sati and Jauhar in his recently-released epic period drama.

Shahid Kapoor, who essays the role of Maharawal Ratan Singh in the movie, has finally commented on the open letter and said that it feels odd that someone said something on a personal level.

When asked to comment on the matter, Shahid said, "I haven't read it yet. We have been busy with other things, but I think this isn't the right time. 'Padmaavat' is representing the film industry and it's freedom of



expression." He added, "It has been a tough battle for us to be able to bring forth the film to the audience. It feels great to receive support from the entire industry but it feels odd that someone said something on a personal level. That's OK though as everyone has the right to say what they want but I haven't read it yet."

Shahid surprised his fans by visiting Chandan theatre in Mumbai. The actor paid a visit to find out audience reaction to 'Padmaavat'. Meanwhile, the film is roaring at the box-office as Ranveer-Deepika starrer entered the Rs. 100 crore club in its fourth day, making it Deepika's seventh film to cross Rs. 100 cr mark.

Falling IQ level in childhood may up schizophrenia risk later

LONDON, FEB 3: Children as young as four, who show a continuous decline in their intelligent quotient (IQ) levels could be at higher risk of developing psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and other mental illnesses in adulthood, finds a study.

The researchers found that those who developed psychotic disorders as adults had normal IQ scores in infancy, but by age of four, their IQ levels had started to decline.

It continued to drop throughout childhood, adolescence and early adulthood until they were an average of 15 points lower than their healthy peers.

Besides low IQ level,



these kids also lag behind their peers in cognitive abilities such as working memory, processing speed and attention along with abnormalities in perception and thinking.

"For individuals with psychotic disorders, cognitive decline does not just begin in adulthood, when

"Our results suggest that among adults with a psychotic disorder, the first signs of cognitive decline are apparent as early as age four," Mollon added.

However, not all children struggling at school are at risk of developing serious psychiatric disorders, the researchers said in a paper, published in the journal JAMA Psychiatry.

Early interventions to improve cognitive abilities may potentially help stave off psychotic symptoms from developing in later life.

"There are early interventions offered to adolescents and young adults with psychosis," said Abraham Reichenberg, Professor at the varsity.

Migraines could increase risk of cardiovascular diseases: Study

NEW DELHI, FEB 3: Headaches are a huge nuisance. They occur at the most inappropriate times, reduce concentration and happen due to various reasons.

However, there is one headache disorder that surpasses most of them and that is migraine.

Migraines are super intense and give you a splitting headache that takes hours to subside and the associated dizziness and sensitivity to light don't exactly help matters.

The disease can be debilitating and although a number of interventions exist, many only work for a certain time before they fail to prevent or relieve pain.

Now, researchers have associated migraines with

cardiovascular health saying that people who suffer from migraine may be at an increased risk of heart attacks, stroke, blood clot and an irregular heart rate.

Around one billion people worldwide are affected by migraine. It has a considerable impact on quality of life and imposes a substantial burden on society.

Although the absolute risks were low, the findings suggest that "migraine should be considered a potent and persistent risk factor for most cardiovascular diseases in both men and women", said researchers from Aarhus University Hospital, Denmark and Stanford University, US.

Migraine's association with cardiovascular disease risk can be attributed to the increased use of anti-inflammatory drugs, by the patients suffering from the headache disorder.

Anti-inflammatory drugs are associated with increased risks of heart problems, while immobilisation related to migraine attacks may be behind the increase in the risk of blood clot.

Current guidelines do not recommend the use of anti-clotting drugs such as aspirin to treat migraine, but clinicians need to "consider whether patients at particularly high risk of heart disease would benefit from anticoagulant treatment", the researchers said, in a paper published in the journal The BMJ.

For the study, the team

Scientists develop world's first blood test to detect Alzheimer's

SYDNEY, FEB 3: Australian scientists in collaboration with researchers from Japan on Thursday announced the world's first accurate blood test for Alzheimer's disease which can detect the illness up to 20 years before any symptoms occur.

The test, which spots the illness at an accuracy of over 90 percent, identifies the build-up of a protein called amyloid-beta, which is an early indicator of the disease, Xinhua news agency reported.

Up until now, the only way to determine if a patient had Alzheimer's was by highly invasive and expensive methods, includ-

ing brain scans and lumbar punctures.

But the breakthrough by the University of Melbourne's Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health will mean diagnosing the disease will become far easier.

"In the first instance, it will be an invaluable tool in increasing the speed of screening potential patients for new drug trials," said Colin Masters, Professor at Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health.

"Progress in developing new therapeutic strategies for Alzheimer's disease has been disappointingly slow," Masters said.

Relatives of Zika virus may cause birth defects

WASHINGTON, FEB 3: Relatives of the Zika virus, especially West Nile, can spread from an infected pregnant mouse to her fetuses, causing brain damage and fetal death, researchers said on Wednesday.

The findings, published in the US journal Science Translational Medicine, suggested that Zika may not be unique in its ability to cause birth defects, such as microcephaly, or abnormally small heads, Xinhua reported.

"We only studied mice and human tissues, so we can't say for sure what happens when pregnant women are infected with these viruses," Jonathan Miner, Assistant Professor at the Washington University.

"But our findings suggest that it is possible that viruses related to Zika, such as West Nile, pose the same risk to developing fetuses that Zika does," Miner said.

Although Zika was first identi-



three viruses in the placentas, and 3,000- to 16,000-fold higher in the heads of the fetal mice.

In addition, brain tissue from West Nile-infected fetuses showed severe damage under the microscope, while brain tissue from chikungunya-infected fetuses appeared healthy.

Overall, about half of the fetuses whose mothers were infected with West Nile or Powassan virus died within 12 days of infection, whereas no fetuses from mothers infected with chikungunya or Mayaro died.

The researchers then infected human placentas with one of the four viruses and found that West Nile and Powassan multiplied in human placentas while chikungunya and Mayaro did not.

The researchers said it's difficult to prove a link between West Nile and birth defects because the number of cases is smaller and infections are more sporadic.

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Realty stocks rise on dedicated affordable housing fund

BENGALURU, FEB 3: Shares of a majority property developers rose after the government proposed setting up an affordable housing fund under the National Housing Bank (NHB). The 2017 budget had proposed to assign infrastructure status to affordable housing projects and facilitate higher investments.

"My government will also establish a dedicated Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) in National Housing Bank, funded from priority sector lending shortfall and fully serviced bonds authorized by the Government of India," finance minister Arun Jaitley said during his

budget speech on Thursday. Brigade and Puravankara stocks were up about 1.6% and 4.25% respectively while Phoenix Mills, run by Atul Ruia and Godrej were up 3.35% and 1.5% as well. In comparison, the Sensex pared gains made during the course of the budget and lost 58.3 points to close at 35,906, down 0.16%. The S&P BSE Realty Index was down about 1% at the end of the trade.

"We see some strengthening of the affordable housing sector in the form creation of Affordable Housing Fund under the National Housing Board.

This will allow better access to capital for related developments in urban and semi-urban areas," Ramesh Nair, CEO and country head, JLL India said.

To boost the supply of rural housing and augmenting the supply of affordable housing in urban areas, the finance minister said 3.7 million homes will be built in urban areas in 2018-19 and 5.1 million homes in rural areas.

Besides this, industry executives said they were left disappointed as there was no acceptance of the long-standing demand of getting an 'industry status' for the sector. "The real

estate sector held significant expectations from the Union Budget 2018, hoping for alleviating measures post a testing period of reforms," Shrinivas Rao, CEO-APAC of independent property consultancy Vestian, said. Aspects like single window clearances, uniform stamp duty or reduction in GST rates on real estate were not mentioned either. "Other than some minor mention about a fund for affordable housing and increased allocation for smart cities there isn't really anything for real estate or home buyers," Century Estates MD Ravindra Pai said.

Govt mops up Rs 1 lakh crore via divestment this fiscal; aims Rs 80,000 crore in FY19

NEW DELHI, FEB 3: The government expects to raise Rs 80,000 crore from PSU disinvestment in the next fiscal, lower than Rs 1 lakh crore raised this financial year. In the Budget for 2018-19, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) will move forward to bring in more Exchange Traded Fund (ETF), including launching a debt fund. Also three insurance companies - National Insurance, United Assurance and Oriental Insurance will be merged to create a single entity, which would be listed on the bourses, he said.



"We had set a Rs 72,500 crore disinvestment target for 2017-18. We have already exceeded the target and achieved Rs 1 lakh crore... I am setting the disinvestment target of Rs 80,000 crore for 2018-19," Jaitley said. He said 40 CPSEs and 24 strategic dis-

vestment of CPSEs, Rs 15,000 crore from strategic disinvestment and Rs 11,000 crore from listing of insurance companies. The government reduced stake in several PSUs this fiscal, including EIL, NTPC, NALCO and OIL. Two state-owned insurance companies, GIC and New India Assurance, as well as Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd (HUDCO) were listed on stock exchanges this fiscal. The government had launched a new Exchange Traded Fund (Bharat-22 ETF) comprising stocks of 22 companies this fiscal, thereby raising Rs 14,500 crore.

Airport infra to grow five times to handle 100 crore flyers annually in 15-20 years: Govt

NEW DELHI, FEB 3: India, the world's fastest growing aviation market globally, is expected to have a billion (100 crore) air travellers annually in the next 15 to 20 years. FM Arun Jaitley said air travel will continue growing with the affordable regional connectivity scheme (RCS), in which fares are capped at Rs 2,500 for an hour of flying, and that will see people wearing 'hawai chappals in hawai jhaanz'.

The Budget says airport capacity will be expanded by five times to cater to this requirement. At the moment, India is woefully short of airport infrastructure. Last year it saw 18 crore air travellers, amid a crippling shortage of infra at its most important air-

ports like Delhi and Mumbai that has made flight delays endemic due to endless hovering and wait for taking off from these choked hubs.

"In the last three years, domestic air passenger traffic grew at 18% per annum and our airlines have ordered more than 900 aircrafts. RCS of UDAN (ude desh ka aam nagrik) initiated by the government last year shall connect 56 unserved airports and 31 unserved helipads across the country. Operations have already started at 16 such airports," the FM said.

Aviation minister Jayant Sinha air traffic in India (domestic and international combined) is expected to touch 100 crore in 15 to 20 years, up from an expected

20 crore in the fiscal 2017-18. "We want to be ahead of requirement and for that plan to increase airport capacity by five times under a new initiative - NABH (NextGen Airports for Bharat!) Nirman. This will cost about Rs 4 lakh crore. The viable airports will be run by private players and unviable ones by Airports Authority of India (AAI). The balance sheet of AAI shall be leveraged to raise more resources for funding this expansion and we will strengthen the authority," Sinha said.

Amber Dubey, partner and head of KPMG India (aerospace and defence) feels India could become the largest aviation market by 2030. "It's fantastic to see that the government is

shifting from short term planning to a long term vision. The focus should now shift to the execution of this challenging yet achievable vision," Dubey said.

The government also plans to make necessary framework for encouraging investment in sea plane activities for tourism and emergency medical care.

The infra push comes at a time when alarm bells are ringing due to lack of airport infra in major cities. Amitabh Khosla, International Air Transport Association India head, said: "IATA anticipates India will become the third largest aviation market by 2024. But this is by no means guaranteed. To make this a reality, airport capaci-

ty in India needs to be augmented and expanded quickly, a critical area of concern continues to be Mumbai airport. Navi Mumbai airport is still a distant dream." The government's belated focus on aviation infra has brought relief to airlines that have ordered hundreds of planes and don't know where they will be parked. SpiceJet chairman Ajay Singh said: "India has about 125 airports today. This number can go up to 700. (NABH) will help to connect smaller towns and cities and increase tourism and economic activity like never before... the FM has recognized our experiment with seaplanes and its viability in promoting tourism and emergency medical care.

Arun Jaitley doubles spends for 'Digital'

NEW DELHI, FEB 3: In a further push to the Digital India initiative, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his budget speech doubled the allocation towards the programme to Rs 3,073 crore in 2018-19. He added that the government has also proposed to set up 5 lakh wi-fi hotspots in rural areas.

"The task of connecting 1 lakh gram panchayats with high speed optic fibre network has been completed under Phase 1 of Bharat Net program. This has enabled broadband access to cover... rural Indians in about 2.5 lakh villages. The government also proposed to set up 5 lakh wifi hotspots which will provide broadband access to 5 crore rural citizens," Jaitley said.

The finance minister also stated that the initiatives



such as Digital India, Start Up India, Make in India would help the country to establish itself as a knowledge and digital society.

"To invest in research training, and skilling in robotics, AI, digital manufacturing, big data intelligence, quantum communications and art of the things, the Department of Science and Technology

will launch a mission on cyber space in support of establishment of centre of excellence. I have doubled their allocation on the Digital India programme to Rs 3,073 crore in 2018-19," Jaitley added.

He also announced Rs 10,000-crore outlay for the 2018-19 fiscal on expansion of telecom infrastructure.

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Release of Republican memo fuels Trump, FBI distrust

WASHINGTON: The bitterness between Donald Trump and the FBI has intensified after the release of a controversial Republican memo, with the president calling it a "disgrace" while the agency's chief pleading to defend his agents.

The memo, which was released yesterday, accuses senior law enforcement officials of misleading a court in order to conduct surveillance on a former Trump campaign adviser during its probe into the alleged Russian collusion in the 2016 election.

"The memorandum raises serious concerns about the integrity of decisions made at the highest levels of the Department of Justice and the FBI to use the government's most intrusive surveillance tools against

American citizens." White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement.

The memo, written by House Intelligence Chairman Devin Nunes, alleges that the FBI used the opposition research dossier on Trump and Russia written by ex-British intelligence agent Christopher Steele to secure a FISA surveillance warrant on former Trump foreign policy adviser Carter Page without disclosing that the dossier was funded in part by Democratic sources.

Sanders said the decision to release the memo was made with input from the president's national security team - including law enforcement officials and members of the intelligence community.

"...for whom the president

has great respect. He is especially grateful to the hardworking rank-and-file public servants who work every day to keep America safe and uphold our laws while protecting the constitutional rights of all Americans," Sanders said.

Noting that minority members of the Committee have reportedly drafted a separate memorandum, Sanders said the administration stands ready to work with Congress to accommodate oversight requests consistent with applicable standards, including the need to protect intelligence sources and methods.

Trump called the memo's contents "a disgrace".

"A lot of people should be ashamed of themselves," he said following the memo's declassification.

Coming out in Trump's

defence, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher said the memo "highlights a truth".

"The integrity of even our law enforcement and intelligence agencies can be politicised and compromised. From time-to-time, we all must be reminded of that vulnerability. That is why we must insist on congressional oversight of all federal agencies, especially of our foreign and domestic intelligence services," he said.

Rohrabacher commended Trump for "standing up for transparency" and alleged that the Democrats tried to thwart the inquiry.

"This was nothing less than an attempted cover-up of wrongdoing by the last administration. This whole episode makes Watergate pale in comparison," he said.

Publicly, the FBI said

nothing, but Director Christopher Wray sent out a video and written statement to employees, urging them not to get distracted by the debate raging about them.

"The American people read the papers, and they hear lots of talk on cable TV and social media. But they see and experience the actual work you do - keeping our communities safe and our nation secure, often dealing with sensitive matters and making decisions under difficult circumstances," Wray said. "And that work will always matter more. Talk is cheap, but the work you do is what will endure."

It is unclear whether Trump will use the memo to fire people involved in the Russia probe, including Deputy Attorney General Rod J. Rosenstein, who oversees it.

Democrats warned against any dismissals at the Justice Department, saying such moves would trigger a constitutional crisis. Former FBI Director James Comey, who was abruptly fired by Trump last year for his handling of the Russia inquiry, criticised the memo.

"That's it?" Comey said on Twitter. "Dishonest and misleading memo wrecked the House intel committee, destroyed trust with Intelligence Community, damaged relationship with FISA court, and inexcusably exposed classified investigation of an American citizen. For what? Comey wrote, adding 'DOJ & FBI must keep doing their jobs.' Since he was fired, Comey has increasingly taken to Twitter to support the FBI and other intelligence agencies.

Gay marriage ruling boosts evangelical in Costa Rica vote

SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA: An international court ruling saying Costa Rica should allow same-sex marriage upended the Central American nation's presidential race, turning an evangelical candidate who opposes it from an also-ran with just 2 percent in the polls into the leading contender in Sunday's vote.

Following last month's decision by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Fabricio Alvarado, a 43-year-old journalist with a prominent career as a preacher and Christian singer, vaulted to 16.6 percent in a survey published Jan. 31 by the University of Costa Rica's Center for Research in Political Sciences, or CIEP.

Alvarado's nearest rivals were Antonio Alvarez of the National Liberation Party with 12.4 percent, and Carlos Alvarado - no relation - of the governing Citizens' Action Party with 10.6 percent. If no candidate tops 40 percent in the vote, the first two finishers advance to a runoff scheduled for April 1.

The same poll showed that just over two-thirds of Costa Ricans oppose the court's ruling, which also tells the country to grant same-sex couples rights such as the ability to adopt children and receive inheritances and other benefits from their partners.

For deeply Roman Catholic Costa Rica, the gay marriage ruling came as an external shock to the campaign, political analyst Francisco Barahona told The Associated Press.

"Fabricio is a young candidate, well-spoken with a good on-camera presence, but he was also the only one who reacted in radical opposition to what the Inter-American Court proposed," Barahona said. "That put him on the radar for a good portion of the conservative electorate."

Alvarado has called the ruling a "sovereign violation" and an "external imposition" and even floated the idea of withdrawing from the OAS-sponsored rights court, which is hosted in Costa Rica's own capital, San Jose.

That won't take approval from evangelical and Catholic leaders who, while prohibited from explicitly participating in elections in the country, have called on voters to back candidates with "Christian values."

About 76 percent of Costa Ricans identify as Roman Catholic and 14 percent as evangelical, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Ana Cecilia Sanchez, a 53-year-old office administrator, is one of many who say they are undecided but would not vote for a candidate who supports gay marriage.

"For me the issue of values and principles is very important for all of society, because family is the basis of society. ... You ask yourself what will happen to Costa Rica if Christian values are lost," Sanchez said.

Adrian Pignataro, a political scientist at the University of Costa Rica, said the country has seen a marked erosion in party loyalty and this election has exposed a social divide between secular and religious values.

"It's not that this division is new, they are values that were there before, but in this campaign they were activated by an event and one party strategically came out in favor," Pignataro said.

Pignataro sees a parallel to the 2006 election, when voters were polarized by opposing visions on the economy: one that favored opening to the world amid trade negotiations with the United States, and another more protectionist approach.

Carlos Alvarado, who is not related to Fabricio, is also a young candidate at just 38, a journalist by profession who began his political career as communications director for the Citizens' Action Party and served as labor minister under current President Luis Guillermo Solis.

His candidacy has been marred by corruption scandals involving people close to Solis' government and a lingering deficit problem.

But as the only major candidate openly backing same-sex marriage, Carlos Alvarado also saw his poll numbers rise about 5 percent recently as he attracted socialist liberal voters who oppose Fabricio Alvarado's anti-gay marriage stance. Alvarez, a 59-year-old agricultural businessman, two-time president of the Legislative Assembly and former Cabinet minister under the first presidency of Oscar Arias in 1986-1990, is running on promises to create 150,000 jobs, decrease the deficit and modernize public transportation. Alvarez has also opposed same-sex marriage, while supporting the idea of recognizing certain other rights for gays and lesbians.

Lawyer and former Security Minister Juan Diego Castro was a front-runner as recently as December as a tough-on-crime candidate. But he fell to fourth in polls as some voters were turned off by his direct attacks during debates and after the gay marriage ruling in January.

Sunday's outcome is very much up in the air with more than two-thirds of likely voters undecided, according to the CIEP poll.

"None of them really grabs my attention," said Berthio Hidalgo, a 35-year-old cleaning worker who has not yet fixed on any candidate. "In this country it's only fights, corruption, you don't know where the money goes, lots of poor children."

Imran Khan under NAB scanner over use of govt choppers

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has taken action against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan for allegedly misusing official helicopters for private visits.

NAB Chairman Javed Iqbal has directed the bureau's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) director general (DG) to conduct an inquiry into Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's reported use of the KP chief minister's official helicopters, reported the Dawn.

According to Pakistan's apex anti-corruption organisation communico, Imran Khan used government helicopters for private visits for 74 hours on cheap rates, adding that Imran used the Mi-17 for 22 hours and Ecureuil 52 hours.

However, the PTI rejected the allegation and urged NAB to investigate misuse of official choppers by other provinces and political parties.

According to the circular, KP Chief Minister Pervez Khattak allegedly misused his authority by unofficially letting the PTI chief use a state-owned helicopter.

According to Geo News, the PTI chief, whose party governs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, used the helicopters to fly to and from Banigala, Islamabad, Mardan, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swat, Nathiagali, Kohat, Battagram and Chakdara, among other places.

Islam scholar Tariq Ramadan charged with rape

Islam scholar Tariq Ramadan charged with rape: legal source PARIS: Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan was charged with rape on Friday, a judicial source said, following claims by two women that he assaulted them in French hotel rooms in 2009 and 2012.

Ramadan, who was arrested by French police on Wednesday, has now been charged with connected charges of rape and rape of a vulnerable person, the source said.

The accused is a Swiss citizen whose grandfather founded Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood movement.

After two days of questioning by investigators, the 55-year-old Oxford professor was brought before three magistrates who have been assigned to the case, suggesting that he is facing an extensive investigation, judicial sources said.

Women who have testified anonymously during three months of preliminary investigations might now also file rape complaints, one of the sources said. The claims against the prominent scholar, which emerged in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal in the United States, have divided many Muslims, with his legions of fans, as well as his lawyers, saying he is the victim of a smear campaign.

But critics have long suggested that despite Ramadan's moderate tone as a familiar face on television programmes, he preaches a more radical line when addressing Muslims in Arabic. Ramadan is the most high-profile figure to be held in France over the sexual assault and harassment

claims that have rippled around the world as a result of the "Me Too" campaign. The married father of four has denied the separate accusations from the two women.

The first was made by Henda Ayari, a feminist activist who previously practised a conservative strain of Islam. She had described being raped in a book published in 2016, without naming her attacker. But in October, she said she had decided to name Ramadan publicly as the alleged perpetrator as a result of the "Me Too" campaign, using the French hashtag "#Balance Ton Porc" (Expose your pig).

She said Ramadan raped her in his hotel room, telling Le Parisien newspaper: "He choked me so hard that I thought I was going to die." She lodged a rape complaint against Ramadan on October

20. Several days later an unidentified disabled woman, a Muslim convert, also accused the academic of violently raping her in a hotel room in the southeastern city of Lyon in 2009. Vanity Fair magazine, which met the woman, said her lawsuit against Ramadan described "blows to the face and body, forced sodomy, rape with an object and various humiliations, including being dragged by the hair to the bathtub and urinated on".

During three hours of testimony in Paris on Thursday, the woman - using the pseudonym "Christelle" - recounted her allegations to the judge in Ramadan's presence. She also revealed that Ramadan had a small scar on his groin that would not have been noticed except in the case of close contact, a source said.

Preserved in time: WWII bunker hidden under Paris train station

PARIS: It lies hidden deep beneath Paris's bustling Gare de l'Est railway station, its sprawling subterranean rooms and sparse furniture pristinely preserved if a little dusty.

Originally built a few years before World War II for luggage storage, the underground bunker was repurposed after war broke out.

French railway historian Clive Lamming said its 1939 overhaul was to provide "a place to retreat in case of an air attack" so staff could keep the trains running east towards Germany.

Leading this AFP reporter through a concrete air lock and heavy door to the shelter, he said: "The concern was gas."

"We remembered World War I - a perfect air-raid place was needed," he added.

With its three-metre (10-foot) thick concrete ceiling, it was designed for about 70 people to be able to take refuge in the small rooms of the 120-square-metre (1,300-square-foot) shelter.

But, in the end, the bunker never really saw any action - Paris was largely spared from air

attacks during WWII, and there was little danger of poison gas.

After France's defeat in 1940 and Nazi occupation, the bunker was requisitioned by the Germans and traces of their presence remain, including a sign that reads "Notausgang" (emergency exit).

"In my opinion, it hasn't been finished," said Lamming, as a high-speed TGV train loudly rumbled overhead.

Today, few of the thousands of travellers passing through the busy central Paris station will likely have any inkling of the time

capsule under their feet.

Just a discreet trapdoor on the platform opens up to reveal a staircase leading down to the bunker, which is not publicly accessible except on certain occasions.

"For 80 years, it has been 'Sleeping Beauty,'" Lamming said.

"Everything is in mint condition from 1939." Entering the machine room is like stepping back into the 1930s, with the old contraptions, dials, copper piping and Bakelite handles only in need of a good polish.

The room also has two bicycles. If the power went out, ventilation would have been provided by batteries - if they failed, anyone sheltering in the bunker was to hop on the bikes and pedal to circulate fresh air.

Other rooms also feel frozen in time, like the telephone exchange with its tangle of wires, but most are more spartan, furnished with a few period tables and chairs where staff could have directed the train traffic above.

The shelter was designed to host 72 workstations, and some

yellowing documents remain. There is even a bed.

Post-war, with its purpose now passed, it gradually took on an almost mythic status among employees of SNCF, France's national train operator.

"The aim is to preserve it," especially as the shelters built in other stations at the time have all disappeared, said the SNCF branch in charge of stations. Chances to visit are rare as the bunker was not built for large crowds but it does open up for annual Heritage Days events.

What the Republican memo says, and doesn't say

WASHINGTON: After more than a week of partisan bickering and social media-fueled buildup, the (hash)releasethememo crowd got their wish.

President Donald Trump declassified it. The GOP majority of the House intelligence committee released it. And the public dissection of the four-page, GOP-authored document began.

The memo makes a series of allegations of misconduct on the part of the FBI and the Justice Department in obtaining a warrant under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA, to monitor former Trump campaign foreign policy adviser Carter Page.

Specifically, it takes aim at the FBI's use of information from a former British spy, Christopher Steele, who compiled a collection of memos containing several

allegations of ties between Trump, his associates and Russia.

The memo says the FBI and the Justice Department didn't tell the FISA court enough about Steele's role in an opposition research effort. The research was funded by Democrat Hillary Clinton through a Washington law firm.

The document also takes aim at several senior FBI and Justice Department officials. Among them is former Associate Deputy Attorney General Brett Ober, who it says knew of Steele's anti-Trump leanings and whose work helped at the firm behind the opposition research effort.

What's new?

The memo provides the first formal government confirmation of the secret FISA warrant and that Page was the person being moni-

itored.

Information like that is ordinarily considered among the most tightly held national security information, and it almost never gets released to the public.

Though the memo takes issue with the FBI's methods, it also confirms that the FBI and Justice Department believed there was probable cause that Page was acting as an agent of a foreign power and a judge agreed - four times over.

The memo fills in the timeline of the Russia investigation, showing that Page was under surveillance for months.

According to the memo, the Justice Department and FBI obtained the FISA warrant on Page on Oct. 21, 2016, and then had it reauthorized three additional times.

Given that FISA warrants

must be renewed every 90 days, the memo indicates that the government monitored Page's communications for nearly a year.

The whole Russia investigation, that is.

According to the memo, information about former Trump campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos "triggered the opening of an FBI counterintelligence investigation in late July 2016."

That's significant because Trump and his allies in the GOP have tried to undermine the Russia investigation by saying it all stems from the Steele dossier.

The memo doesn't provide further details about the information the FBI received about Papadopoulos. But it appears to confirm in part reporting by The New York Times late last year that FBI

concerns about Papadopoulos started the investigation.

Papadopoulos pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI last year. Court papers show he had several contacts with people representing themselves as being tied to the Russian government starting in the spring of 2016.

Court papers show that Papadopoulos learned the Russians had "dirt" on Hillary Clinton in the form of "thousands of emails" prior to that information becoming public.

The FBI did use information from Steele, though the memo says Steele's collection of reports "formed an essential part" of the FISA application for Page, but it doesn't specify exactly what information was used or how much.

It also says that the FBI application relied on a

September 2016 Yahoo News article, and claims that the information in the article also came from Steele.

The document quotes former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe as telling the House intelligence committee in December that "no surveillance warrant would have been sought" without the Steele dossier information.

According to the memo, the application also included "Steele's past record of credible reporting on other unrelated matters."

No underlying information released.

The accuracy of the memo is hard to assess because the majority of the underlying contents are classified or confidential.

The memo cites an initial FISA warrant application - a document which usually has dozens of pages - as

well as three additional renewals of the court orders of those documents are public. The same is true of the transcripts of the committee's closed-door interviews with McCabe and other senior FBI officials who had contact with Steele.

On Friday, the committee's ranking Democrat, Rep. Adam Schiff of California, took issue with the memo's characterization of McCabe's comments, saying the former FBI deputy director was speaking generally about how any FISA application relies on "each and every component" included.

But the committee's chairman, Rep. Devin Nunes of California, said late Friday on Fox News the description of McCabe's comments is "a summation of a long interview and that's definitely what he said." He noted that

other witnesses have said "similar things" to the committee of those documents are public.

It's been a burning question ever since the dossier was published by BuzzFeed News last year. How much did the FBI corroborate?

According to the memo, not much at the time the FBI obtained the FISA warrant on Page. The memo cites FBI Assistant Director Bill Priestap as saying FBI corroboration of the dossier was in its "infancy" when the court authorized the first FISA warrant.

It also says an "independent unit" in the FBI conducted a "source validation report" on Steele's reporting and found it "only minimally corroborated."

But without the underlying documents or transcripts of McCabe's testimony, it's hard to judge the accuracy of the memo's description.

Manjot Kalra leads India Under-19 to World Cup glory

India Under-19 217 for 2 (Kalra 101*, Desai 47*, Gill 31) beat Australia Under-19 216 all out (Merlo 76, Uppal 34, Anukul 2-32, Shiva Singh 2-36) by eight wickets. India sundered to a record fourth Under-19 World Cup title in front of a partisan crowd of 4000 odd at Bay Oval, to finish an unbeaten campaign that had begun against Australia at the same venue three weeks ago. The margin of victory then was 100 runs, and it was comprehensive in the grand final as well - eight wickets.

To win the tournament, India pulled off their second highest successful chase in U-19 World Cups, after the 226 to beat Australia in Townsville in 2012. Unmukt Chand had led that chase with a sublime century, and on Saturday another Delhi

boy, Manjot Kalra, reprised the feat. In the tournament opener against Australia, Kalra had missed his century by 14 runs in an effort to hit out; he was unbeaten on 101 off 102 balls in the final. Kalra, driven by instinct and hand-eye coordination, powered India along with fellow opener Prithvi Shaw, after a short run delay four overs into the chase. It began with a free-hit which he biffed for six, and the high notes came when he took Jack Edwards for three boundaries in the 11th over. When Will Sutherland got one to move away and bowl Shaw for 29, India were 71 for 1.

Australia's relief was short lived, as they watched the in-form Shubman Gill - averaging over 100 in Youth ODIs and having made six successive 50-plus scores -

play three exquisite cover drives within five minutes of his arrival at the crease. Kalra went on to bring up a 47-ball half-century. The signs were ominous for Australia there on and Kalra finished with a strike rate of nearly 100, having struck eight fours and three sixes. Wicketkeeper-batsman Harvik Desai chipped in with a spunky 47 and it was his sliced four over backward point that triggered manic celebrations in the Indian camp.

However, to say India's win was down to just their batting would not do justice to left-arm spinner Shiva Singh. Despite not having taken a wicket in the tournament, Shiva had kept his spot because of his economy and ability to maintain pressure in the middle overs. In the final, he made a telling



contribution - 104-36-2

Nathan McSweeney's dismissal for 23 was particularly significant because Australia were just starting to accelerate going into the last 10 overs of their innings.

Looking to nudge ball on the leg side, McSweeney was deceived in flight and lobbed a simple return catch. In his next over, Shiva removed Will Sutherland with an arm ball that held its line to flick the inside edge to the wicketkeeper. The catch was the start of a turnaround for Desai, who had earlier missed two half-chances off Australia's openers.

Australia having raised their fifty in the 10th over and the pitch holding no demons, Edwards and Jason Sangha had an opportunity to press on. That wasn't to be, as Porel claimed his second wicket when Edwards punched a short delivery straight to Kamlesh Nagarkoti at cover. It should have been 53 for 3 almost immediately, but for Desai's reprieve of Jonathan Merlo on 0 as he attempted a cut off Shiva in the 11th over.

Desai found redemption in the next over, when he dived full length to his right to snaffle Sangha. Australia were in trouble at 59 for 3. Param Uppal, Australia's top scorer in the domestic Under-19 tournament in the lead-up to the World Cup, brought a sense of calm to proceedings. He exhibited a strong back-foot game

against pace and equal adeptness against spin to milk runs through conventional means. Uppal's confidence rubbed off on Merlo, who wasn't afraid to experiment. He played reverse-sweeps and delicate paddles and they raised a half-century stand in 112.0 overs.

As Merlo grew in confidence, he wasn't afraid to get across the stumps and sweep left-arm spinner Anukul Roy against the turn. Australia looked to shift gears, but lost Uppal for 34 when he chipped a leading edge ball to Roy. The two deliveries leading up the wicket had played their part: Roy had then shortened his length, and then fired the next one full. Off the third, he deceived Uppal in flight as the batsman looked to work the ball

against the turn. McSweeney then came in and played some sublime shots, but the pattern of batsmen wasting starts just when Australia looked to take off continued. From 183 for 4, Australia collapsed, losing their last six wickets for 33 runs to leave 16 deliveries unused in their innings. India started their chase aggressively, with Shaw unflinching three exquisite cover drives. Then his bigger movement of having his back foot move towards the leg side worked against him. Gill had the opportunity to move past Alik Athanaze as the leading run-getter in the tournament. His 30-ball 31 was attractive, but he was out charging the offspinner Uppal. By then, India had powered to 131 for 12, and Kalra took charge and led his team to Under-19 World Cup glory.

When Sourav Ganguly disguised as a Sardar to attend Durga Puja

Cricketers are treated like gods in India, it's no hidden fact. Consequently, it's not easy for them to go out in public as the inundating love of fans, if recognised, can overwhelm them to the point of annoyance. Cricketers, like film stars, thus are forced to come up with ingenious ideas in order to avoid being recognised, so that they can enjoy their times-out in public places. Wearing disguises has proved to be one heck of a solution to their quandary over the years.

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly has now revealed that he too once disguised as a Sardar to attend Durga Puja in

Kolkata after his wife Dona arranged a make-up artist to transform him into a Sikh. Ganguly has described the incident in his upcoming book "A Century Is Not Enough". The former player posted a few excerpts from the incident on publisher Juggernaut's page.

"I decided to go as one of Harbajan's tribe. Yes, disguised as a Sardar. Now I could have been mobbed big time. The situation could have gone out of control. But the thrill of accompanying the para boys and family members on the truck carrying the deity was just too irresistible," Ganguly writes.

He continues: "My

cousins all mocked me, saying I would be recognised. I gave as good as I got and took up the challenge. They turned out to be right. I was not allowed on the truck by the police and had to follow it in our car with my daughter, Sana.

"As the car reached the Baughat area the police inspector peered in through the window, looked closely at me and smiled gently in recognition. I was embarrassed but asked him to keep my secret. The escape was worth it. The immersion scene around the river is just indescribable. You have to see it to understand it. Durga Ma after all comes only once a year."

Mary Kom, Basumatary, Borgohain claim gold in India Open boxing

MC Mary Kom claimed gold but the Indian men's juggernaut was denied a complete sweep by traditional powerhouse Cuba and Uzbekistan on an exciting final day of the India Open international boxing tournament in New Delhi on Thursday.

Mary Kom won against Josie Gabuco of the Philippines 4-1, en route to her gold in the 48kg class. Pwilao Basumatary (64kg) was the first among the Indian women to fetch a gold. The former world and Asian bronze medalist claimed a 3-2 win over Thailand's Sudaporn Seesondee. The Assam boxer is a regular in the national camp and had claimed a gold medal at the 2015 Nation's Cup in Serbia.

She hails from a small village in Kokrajhar where



several families were displaced during the 2012 riots. Her family was among those displaced by the violence but has since moved on.

Another Assam boxer, Lovlina Borgohain claimed the welterweight (69kg) gold among women, getting the better of compatriot Pooja.

L. Sarita Devi (60kg) settled for a silver medal after losing to Finland's Olympic bronze-medallist Mira Potkenon.

National champion Manish Kaushik (60kg), who stunned world and Asian medallist Shiva Thapa yesterday, didn't have to step inside the ring to collect his gold.

Manish was given a walkover by his Mongolian rival Battumur Misheel, who pulled out owing to a cut sustained on his forehead during his semifinal bout.

Asian Games bronze-medallist Satish Kumar (59kg), however, settled for a silver, outwitted by Uzbekistan's Bakhdior Jalolov in a split 4-1 decision.

Dinesh Dagar took the welterweight (69kg) silver after going down to Uzbekistan's Bobo-Usonov Baturov. In perhaps the most entertaining bout of the day, the Uzbek turned

on the style against the gritty Indian.

With a smile on his face throughout and a mostly non-existent guard, Baturov was every bit a showman as he craftily got the better of Dinesh in a unanimous verdict.

To his credit, Dinesh connected a few lusty jabs of his own but Baturov was never really troubled.

Later, Devanshu Jaiswal (81kg) was up against Cuba's David Gutierrez.

Although the crowd favourite gave a good account of himself in defensive tactics, the Cuban connected enough with his jabs to score a split 4-1 victory.

Former world silver medallist Saweety Boora (75kg) also had to be content with a second-place finish against Cameroon's Essaine Clotilde.

Paes and Salisbury in semis of Dallas Tennis Championships



NEW DELHI: Leander Paes and Joe Salisbury yet again emerged triumphant in a tense Super Tie-breaker to progress to the semifinals of the USD 125,000 RBC Tennis Championships of Dallas.

The top-seed Indo-American team overcame a spirited challenge from Ruben Gonzales and Hunter Reese 6-3 2-6 17-15 in the quarter-finals of the ATP Challenger event. In the last match also, Paes and Salisbury had won a long Super tiebreak with an 18-16 scoreline.

In the one-hour 31 minutes match, Paes and Salisbury won 67 points to 60 of their rivals. They next face third seed Americans Austin Krajcek and Jackson Withrow. Last week, 44-year-old Paes had won his 25th ATP doubles Challenger titles at Newport Beach event with James Cerretani.

Luis Suarez gives Barcelona edge in Copa del Rey semi-finals

MADRID: Luis Suarez headed in the only goal as defending champions Barcelona edged Valencia 1-0 in their Copa del Rey semi-final first leg at a half-full Camp Nou.

Barcelona, the record 29-time winners of the tournament, are attempting to become the first team to lift the cup four years in a row since Athletic Bilbao in the 1930s.

But on Thursday they were forced to labour against a Valencia team missing a key of key players - Goncalo Guedes, Geoffrey Kondogbia and Ezequiel Garay - through injury.

Barcelona dominated possession but had to wait until the 67th minute for the breakthrough.

Not surprisingly, Lionel Messi was the man who



unlocked the Valencia defence before setting up Suarez.

The Argentine danced his way into the penalty area before a deft left-footed chip left three defenders out of position and allowed Suarez to score from the edge of six-yard box with a diving header.

Thursday's tight affair was dramatically different to the last time these two teams met at the same stage

two years ago - Barcelona won 8-1 on aggregate following a 7-0 win in the first leg.

"We have a small advantage but there's still 90 minutes to play and it'll be a long 90 minutes as Valencia are a very strong when they play at home," said Suarez who has now scored 13 times in the last 11 games.

In Wednesday's first semi-final, little Leganes, who stunned mighty Real Madrid in the quarter-finals, battled back from a goal down to draw 1-1 with Sevilla in the opening leg.

Colombian international Luis Muriel gave Sevilla the lead after 21 minutes, scoring with the aid of a deflection off the post. But Leganes levelled on the night when Sevilla goalkeeper Sergio Rico blundered trying to keep out a header from Greek defender Dimitrios Siovas.

Leganes, who were playing in the third division five years ago and are in the Copa del Rey semi-finals for the first time in their 90-year history, remain the outsiders against Sevilla, at least on financial terms.

Their annual budget of 45 million euros is four times less than that of Sevilla.

Virat Kohli's indifference turns to love for Ajinkya Rahane



Love or hate, everything is a question of time. No long ago, Ajinkya Rahane appeared an outcast in the Indian team. It looked like the team management wouldn't touch him with a ten-foot pole. It's not making up stories, as some would say. Or why else would you drop a batsman of proven overseas record from the starting XI ahead of a very important Test series?

Clearly, Rahane wasn't on the good side of Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri when they sat down to pick the team for the first Test against South Africa in Cape Town. India before long had egg all over their face as they suffered a humiliating defeat having failed to chase down 208. Fans and experts intensified their questioning as to why Rahane wasn't playing and why Rohit Sharma was being preferred over him.

Kohli's brazen reply was that Rahane was out of the team for a lack of runs in the last few matches, which wasn't the case as far as Kohli was concerned. Basically, he was implying that by scoring piles of runs against a third-rate Sri Lankan bowling unit on largely benign wickets in both Tests and ODIs Kohli had proved he was a better option than Rahane. The Indian captain refused to back down and admit a mistake indicated that Rahane was set to miss another match as proved the starting XI for the next game at Centurion's SuperSport Park.

Another embarrassing defeat followed, and Kohli this time was under pressure and was left with no alternative but to bring Rahane back in the team for the third and final Test at Johannesburg. His inclusion brought good tidings to the tourists as India won the Test with Rahane scoring a very important 48 in the second innings to help lay the foundations. And how things changed after that!

In the lead-up to the ODI series opener on Thursday, Kohli praised Rahane not a little and even went on to say he was India's likely No.4 in the World Cup next year in England. And when Rahane scored 79 and featured in a three-wicket 189-run stand at Durban that helped India register their first-ever win at the venue, Kohli appeared to take on the role of a Rahane hagiographer. "Very happy for Jinx [Ajinkya Rahane]. Jinx is a top-class player. We understood fast bowling was going to be a big factor on this tour. He was superb, he took on the fast bowlers." Kohli waxed lyrical in his opposition to his previous line of thinking regarding Rahane.

The best thing to come out of this episode is that Rahane will now know that he will have to perform consistently to stay in the team as Kohli appears to be a little fickle in his case, which is actually a very good thing. If a batsman of Rahane's talent puts his head down and keeps complacency at bay, the sky is the limit and eventually it will be the Indian team getting benefited.

PV Sindhu advances to India Open semis

NEW DELHI: PV Sindhu took another step closer to retaining her title as she reached the women's singles semi-finals in the USD 350,000 India Open Super 500 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Sindhu dished out an attacking game to beat Spain's World No. 36 Beatriz Corrales 21-12 19-21 21-11 in the 35-minute quarterfinal match.

The Olympic silver medallist will face 2013 World champion Ratchanon Intanon of Thailand in the semi-finals.

Sindhu dished out an attacking game to walk away with the opening game without much ado but Corrales came back in the second to lead 19-

11. Sindhu, however, reeled off seven points to draw parity at 18-18 but a lucky net chord kept the Spaniard alive in the match.

Back to the winning side of the court, Sindhu once again showed class as she zoomed to an 11-6 advantage at the lemon break. Corrales tried to make a comeback but the Indian ensured there are no hiccup as she used her disguised returns to bamboozle the Spaniard.

A jump smash gave Sindhu 10 match points. Corrales won a long rally before she hit long to hand over the match to Sindhu.

However, it turned out to be a disappointing day for Parupalli Kashyap



and B Sai Praneeth as they suffered straight game defeats to their respective opponents to bow out of the tournament.

Commonwealth Games champion Kashyap seemed a bit tired and could not match China's Qiao Bin, losing 16-21 18-21 in the men's singles quarterfinals.

Kashyap blew a 7-2 lead early on in the open-

ing game, while in the second, he erased 4-11 and 8-16 deficit to claw his way back to 18-18 before Bin surged to close out the match.

"I was struggling to continue the long rallies. Maybe I was tired after the last match. I had a chance in the second game but somehow I was not able to read, come forward and kill the rallies. Some part of my

defence I am not happy with. I perhaps should have prepared better," Kashyap said.

Eight seed Praneeth too failed to negotiate the fast-paced game of third seed Taiwanese Chou Tien Chen and went down 15-21 13-21. Praneeth was 6-11 behind at the break and though he levelled par at 14-14, Chen quickly changed gears to pocket the first game.

Nothing changed in the second game as the Indian trailed 4-9 before making it 10-11 at the interval. But Chen stepped up and walked away with the match.

"He was hitting really hard. It was long rallies and suddenly he was changing the pace and

hitting hard. I was rushing but I should have been more patient on court," Praneeth said.

Among others, top seeded Indonesian Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo shut out the fighting Indian men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B Sumesh Reddy 21-19 21-19, while sixth seeded women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy lost 17-21 21-23 to Chinese pair of Du Yue and Li Yinhui.

Seventh seeded Indian pair of Jakkampudi Meghana and Poojisha S Ram lost 10-21 15-21 to second seeded Thai pair of Jongkolphan Kittharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai.

CONGRESS PROTESTS OVER BORDER SITUATION

Congress never shirked from any electoral exercise-Mir

ALL IS NOT WELL IN PDP-BJP COALITION

JAMMU, FEB. 03: A strong protest demonstration was held at Suchetgarh by the Congress leaders, activists and border residents of R.S.Pura-Suchetgarh areas. The protestors raised slogans against Pakistan and for the worst ceasefire violations on the borders and LOC and accused Modi led BJP government for following a weak policy to deal with Pakistan as a result there is record number of shelling on borders leading to increased toll of civilians and Jawsans left martyred.



President JKCC G.A. Mir led the protest and senior leaders Sham Lal Sharma (Senior Vice President), Raman Bhalla (Vice President), Madan Lal Sharma (Ex-Minister), R.S. Chib (Ex-Minister), S. Manjit Singh (General Secretary), Ch. Gharu Ram, Prof. Gharu Ram Bhagat, Pranav Shagotra (PVC), Pawan Raina, Soba Singh, Ch. Mohan Singh, Ch. Sukhdev Singh, Bhupinder Singh, Sushma Choudhary, Gurdarshan Singh, S. Gagan Singh and several other prominent leaders of the area accompanied.

Addressing a gathering PCC Chief G.A. Mir has lashed out at Modi government for its total failure to deal with the situations all along borders and LOC. He said that Modi led government raised questions on the issue of the some rare incidents on the borders with Pakistan but now when this has become a routine affair and the people all along borders are suffering a lot besides large number of Jawsans martyred, he should explain BJP government's policy and road

Map to deal with the situation. The escalated tensions on the borders and LOC and causalities of the civilians and Jawsans cannot be forgotten by just statements in the media by the centre government and Mehbooba Government in the State in this regard, when around 4 years out of 5 years tenure of Modi Government is almost over.

G.A. Mir said the approach of the both coalition partners (PDP-BJP) is totally contradictory on all sensitive issues, but despite that they want to remain in power at the cost of overall interests and wishes of the people of state, and they can go to any extent to remain in power.

On Pachayat elections, PCC Chief said that Congress never shirked from any electoral exercise and always favoured for strengthening democratic institutions. We strengthened Pachayat Raj System by implementing and incorporating to 73rd amendment in the

State Panchayat Raj Act. Raman Bhalla said that the worsening situation on the border and LOC has arisen, which is a cause of serious concern. The hollowness of policies of present government on this front which is evident from the facts that more and more cease fire violations have taken place during the past three and half years, since the Modi government taken over. He accused BJP of following a weak policy towards Pakistan which has frequently resorted to heavy border shellings and mischief during Modi regime.

He said that there is no policy to provide adequate relief and compensation and rehabilitation plan for the people residing near borders. All their commitments have proved to be false and election 'Jumlas'. He also referred to the plight of refugees/ DPs of 1947, 1965, 1971 who have been offered very meager financial assistance as against promise of 30 lacs per family by BJP. He also

wrong policies. Raman Bhalla said that the worsening situation on the border and LOC has arisen, which is a cause of serious concern. The hollowness of policies of present government on this front which is evident from the facts that more and more cease fire violations have taken place during the past three and half years, since the Modi government taken over. He accused BJP of following a weak policy towards Pakistan which has frequently resorted to heavy border shellings and mischief during Modi regime.

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demanding the adequate compensation to the loss of properties, crops, cattle during the shelling, besides the government should compensate the farmers whose land is aside the fencing which they are not cultivating for the last over one year due to border disturbance.

Madan Lal Sharma, R.S. Chib, S. Manjit Singh, Ch. Gharu Ram, Prof. Gharu Ram in their speeches demanded compensation to the victims to the tune of rupees 20 lakhs to those who lose their lives, rupees 10 lakhs to permanent disable persons and 5 lakhs to injured persons. They also demanded the government to immediately fulfill the promise of allotting of 5 marla plots to the identified population of IB & LOC as per promise in order to accommodate them in safer zones so that the innocent lives are saved from Pak firing.

A Memorandum of demands was later submitted to Hon'ble Government through District Administration.

Prominent leaders who participated includes, Capt. Roop Lal, Sham Mehra, Ch. Sarwan, Paras Ram, Ch. Mohinder, Rajinder Singh, Badri Nath, Ch. Kalbir, Rashpal Singh, Ch. Dwarka, Jatinder Bhagat, Gurmit Singh, Harman Singh, Ch. Banta Ram, Ashok Sharma, Jai Singh, Ch. Kala, Hitesh Qureshi, Smt. Vandana Sharma, Smt. Vijay Chib, Sonu Dogra, S. Natti Singh, Sahil Langeh, Bachan Lal, Des Raj, Waryam Chand, Kiran Singh, Amna Kalyan, Darshna Devi, Sat Pal, Banarsi Lal Sham Mehra, Sunny Mahajan, Depu Singh and others.

J&K KVIB organizes awareness programm



JAMMU, FEB. 03: In order to educate the masses about the Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) scheme being implemented by the J&K Khadi Village Industries Board (KVIB) a one day awareness camp was organized at ITI, Jammu by the KVIB today. The awareness camp was presided over by the Vice Principal ITI College, Armin Deep Singh as a Chief Guest and attended by LDM, Bhupinder Singh, District Coordinator PNB, Sat Paul Sharma, AGM Govt. sponsored schemes J&K Bank, S.T.P. Singh, FLC SBI, R. L. Lochan, Investigator MSME, Venu Ji Kaul and ISETI faculty SBI, Smt. Deepu Thapa and a large number of ITI students. Besides, some entrepreneurs also spoke on the occasion narrating their journey from a struggler to a successful entrepreneur, which was a vital source of inspiration for the outgoing students of ITI College.

Giving a detailed resume of the PMEGP, District Officer - KVIB, Pawan Kumar Gupta, informed that KVIB in the current financial year against the target of 79 units have released the subsidy in favour of 68 units in Jammu District and only 6 claims are pending with the Banks. Besides 135 Bank sanctions of loan cases in favour of the unemployed youth have been facilitated. The students were informed about the online process of submission of loan application forms under PMEGP scheme and also that it provides Margin money (subsidy) between 25 to 35% of the Project Cost depending upon the category of the entrepreneur, with the remaining amount being covered by the Banks. He said that the scheme has received very encouraging response from all the stakeholders of the state and is well received by the unemployed youth.

S. Aman Deep Singh, Vice-Principal ITI while appreciating efforts of the KVIB for organizing such awareness camps requested the officers of the KVIB to frequently organize such more programmes in the future so that the outgoing students of the college replication are successful entrepreneurs in establishing their own income generating units.

Mufti Syeed's contribution towards JK is admirable: Prof Mattoo

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 03: Advisor to the Chief Minister, Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, today said that Late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's contribution towards peace and overall development of the state is admirable which would be remembered for ages.

Prof Mattoo stated this while interacting with prominent social workers and members of civil society here today.

Prof Mattoo said that Late Mufti was not just the face of PDP but a reflection of the sentiments of the people besides being one of the most visionary politicians and statesman who was respected across the party lines. "He was a firm believer of non-violence who always advocated peace and motivated the people to live in harmony and shun all forms of violence", he added. He said that Mufti believed in a simple philosophy of promoting a vibrant democracy which would percolate to the grass root and ensure the empowerment of the political and democratic institutions in the state.

Prof Mattoo said the former CM always believed and advocated the medium of dialogue for resolving the long pending issues and stressed for making it inclusive and broad based. He said that we should all work collectively for propagating and promoting the late statesman's vision which would ultimately lead to the lasting peace in the sub-continent.

Chief Minister hosts J&K NCC contingent

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 03: The J&K NCC Republic Day Contingent called on the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today. The contingent, comprising 109 cadets, was led by Major General Nienendra Kumar, Additional Director General, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Jammu and Kashmir Directorate. The Chief Minister complimented the contingent for their performance during the Republic Day parade and wished the Contingent high success in the various competitions in which it would be participating in future. She also complimented the officers at the Directorate for training the cadets drawn from different areas of the State. On the occasion, Major General Kumar presented the performance report of J&K Directorate of NCC during the previous year.