

TIME AND US

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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	18.5	8.2
JAMMU	34.5	21.7
LEH	18.8	6.1
KARGIL	16.8	2.6

SUNSET FRIDAY: 07:07 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 05:54 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Light Rains/Thundershower. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 12°C & 08°C respectively.

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PAKISTAN CRICKET BOARD DELEGATION TO VISIT INDIA FOR ICC MEETING

167% increase in civilian deaths in Kashmir: Home ministry report

New Delhi: Civilian deaths in Jammu and Kashmir rose by a staggering 167% last year compared to 2015, official data released on Wednesday showed, underpinning the high price paid by the state while battling a surge in insurgency in recent years.

sonnel deaths over the previous year. The report comes amid growing allegations by human rights activists and groups over what they say was excessive use of force by security personnel while dealing

with civilian protests in the troubled Valley. The army and state police deny the charges and claim that most of the civilian deaths were due to their interference during counter-insurgency operations.

"The year 2017 witnessed an increase in incidents of terrorist violence and casualties of civilians as compared to the last year. However, casualties of security forces have decreased in comparison to the last year," said the report's 'Security Situation in J&K' section (see graphic).

"The year 2017 also witnessed a 6.21% increase... in the number of terrorist incidents... in comparison to the corresponding period of 2016," the report said, adding that the number of militants killed went up by 42%.

The death of civilians in Kashmir spiked after security forces gunned down Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in July 2015, triggering months-long street protests.

More than a 100 people were killed as security forces retaliated against stone-pelting protesters, most of them youngsters.

Hundreds of civilians were left with severe eye injuries by pellets fired by the forces.

Incidents of left wing extremism (LWE) — the official term used to describe Maoist violence — fell by 20%, from 1,136 in 2016 to 908 last

Police officer investigating Kathua has comeback for sexist remark

New Delhi: A police officer investigating the Kathua gangrape and murder has responded to a sexist remark against her. Ignore, she says.

Shwetambari Sharma, deputy superintendent of police, is the only woman in the six-member Jammu and Kashmir Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the death of an 8-year-old girl who was abducted, held captive in a

temple and assaulted for a week before being strangled in January in Kathua district of Jammu region. She belonged to the Muslim Bakarwal tribe and the six men on trial for her death are Hindus.

Ankur Sharma, a lawyer defending the accused, made a sexist remark against Sharma when trial started last week in Kathua. "She is a girl, how intelligent can she be?" he

said, according to NDTV. Sharma on Thursday said she didn't wish to comment. "It hurts when you are targeted and your intelligence is doubted just because you are a woman. What should I comment on such a chauvinist remark, the whole nation is there to comment on it," ANI quoted her as saying in Jammu on Wednesday.

▶ See **Police**...Pg 02

PAK REJECTS MODI'S REMARKS ON SURGICAL STRIKES AS 'FALSE AND BASELESS'

Islamabad: Pakistan on Thursday rejected as "false and baseless" Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks on 'surgical strikes' across the Line of Control in 2016, saying "repeating a lie doesn't turn it into the truth".

Speaking at the 'Bharat Ki Baat, Sabke Saath' event in London on Wednesday, Modi had said India waited to inform Pakistan about the operation before disclosing it to the media and the people.

"I said before India gets to know, we should call Pakistan and tell them. We were calling them since 11 am but they were scared to come on phone, at 12 we spoke to them and then told the Indian media," Modi had said.

Reacting to Modi's remarks, Pakistan foreign office

spokesperson Mohammad Faisal said on Thursday that India's claims about the "surgical strike were false and baseless".

"Repeating a lie doesn't turn it into the truth," the spokesperson was quoted as saying by Pakistan's Dawn newspaper.

In response to Modi's comments on Pakistan exporting terrorism, Faisal claimed it was the other way around and accused India of backing terrorists in Pakistan. "Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav is proof of Indian state-sponsored terrorism," he alleged.

Jadhav, 47, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism. ▶ See **Pak**...Pg 02

SC pulls up Jammu lawyers, calls for fair trial in Kathua rape-murder case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up Jammu lawyers for obstructing the filing of chargesheet in the Kathua rape and murder case even as they claimed they were protesting on a different issue.

Justice Dipak Misra, Justice AM Khanwilkar and Justice DY Chandrachud.

The lawyers insisted that they were protesting on a different issue that got mixed up with the filing of the chargesheet

"We are not concerned with anything, we are concerned with fair trial. You created a situation, police had

"Whatever may be the background See **SC**...Pg 02

PROTESTS AND PELTING FOR WHAT WHEN ACCUSED ARE IN JAIL, QUESTIONS PDP MINISTER

Srinagar, Apr 19: Works Minister and senior Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader Naeem Akhtar on Thursday said that there was no reason for the students in Kashmir to hold protests over Kathua rape-and-murder case when the accused were already behind bars.

"What is the occasion for protests, stone-pelting [over Kathua case] when case is solved, accused in jail and trial on? Shouldn't they be attending classes instead," Akhtar wrote in reply to a tweet of a journalist.

The student protests are refusing to die down despite the government suspending the class work in the colleges and higher secondary schools.

Over a dozen students were injured today in Shopian ▶ See **Minister**...Pg 02

Kathua case: Students continue to clash with forces

Situation remained under control: Police

Srinagar, Apr 19: The student protests continued for the third fourth consecutive day on Thursday during which the protesting students also clashed with the forces at scores of people, leaving scores of students as well as two photojournalists injured at different places.

Clashes erupted between students and forces in Jamiya Market of South Kashmir's Shopian district during which scores of people including two



photojournalists' sustained injuries.

The students according to the witnesses carried out a protest rally in Shopian to protest against the Kathua rape and murder incident. They said that during the protest, students pelted stone on forces who in retaliation used tear gas canisters to disperse them, triggering clashes in the area.

According to the KNS correspondent, Aijaz Rasheed, scores of people including ▶ See **Clash**...Pg 02

'CITY ROADS IN SHAMBLES, AUTHORITIES FAIL TO CARRY OUT NECESSARY REPAIRS'

Tenders already floated, Patch works to start next week: CE R&B

Srinagar, Apr 19: In absence of repairs, most of the roads in the city are dotted with potholes. Interestingly number of roads across the summer capital was macadamized last year, however could not withstand rains and developed potholes.

The R&B department had claimed that macadamisation met the international standards.

In Srinagar city, potholed roads are a common sight, even at critical spots like Jehangir Chowk, Ram Bagh, ▶ See **Roads**...Pg 02

Deputations of industrialists, Patwaries, dental surgeons, civil society meet Mehbooba

Put up demands, seek action; CM assures to look into



Jammu, Apr 19: Several deputations from different walks of life met the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today and appraised her of their problems and sought their resolution. A deputation from Ramsoo sought construction of a mini grid station at Neel. They also demanded carving out of an educational zone and opening of a health centre in the area. ▶ See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

HAKEEM FOR SPECIAL LEGISLATURE SESSION TO ENACT DETERRENT LAW AGAINST RAPES

Says moral education imperative to curb evils

Srinagar, Apr 19: Demanding fast track court trial and prosecution of the Asifa rape-murder case on daily basis, Chairman PDF and MLA Khansahib Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen has urged for convening a special session of the state legislature so that a deterrent Law is enacted for harshest punishment to the convicts of rape on minors.

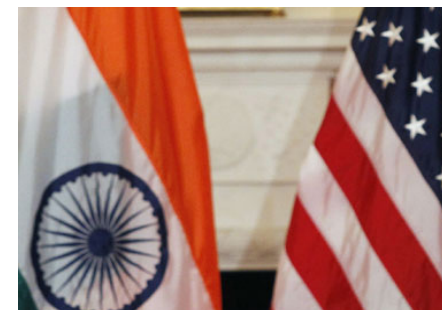
Addressing a large public gathering at Hard Panzoo in Khansahib constituency today Hakeem Yaseen urged for a deterrent Law for severe punishment to criminals convicted for rape and murder of a minor. He also urged for joint efforts to curb evils from the society adding that most of the crimes including rape and murders do occur ▶ See **Hakeem**...Pg 02

US wants to continue expanding defence, security ties with India, says official

Washington: The Trump Administration plans to continue to expand its defence and security cooperation with India and support New Delhi's growing relationships throughout South Asia, a top US official has said.

Speaking with PTI, principal deputy assistant secretary for South and Central Asian affairs Alice Wells said the US-India strategic partnership was based on a shared commitment to uphold the rule of law and free and fair trade among other things.

"The US-India strategic partnership stands firmly upon a shared commitment to uphold the rule of law, freedom of navigation, democratic values, and free and fair trade. We plan to continue to expand our defence and secu-



ity cooperation and support India's growing relationships throughout the region," Wells said.

Wells has been running the crucial ▶ See **US**...Pg 02

FISHERIES DEPTT CONFISCATES 1577 ILLEGAL NETS TO STOP NIGHT FISHING IN DAL LAKE

Srinagar, Apr 19: The Department of Fisheries has confiscated 1577 illegal nets for the last five months.

M.M Bazaz Chief Project Officer Fisheries Department told CNS that night fishing is not allowed along Dal Lake but some fishermen are involved in indiscriminate fishing by means of illegal gears or installation of illegal fixed gears such as gill nets during the night hours that result in the destruction of brooders and juveniles thereby resulting in the decline of the fish catch.

"To compensate such loss the Department of Fisheries adopts regular improvement of the fish stocks through stocking of fish seed in Dal Lake that was done last year by stocking of five lakh fingerlings procured from ▶ See **Dal**...Pg 02

Mirwaiz urges Imams to desist from promoting sectarian differences that create hate

'Kathua incident is blot upon all humanity, irrespective of what religion we follow'

Srinagar, Apr 19: President of Anjumane Nusrat Ul Islam and Hurriyat conference (M) chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Thursday urged Imams to desist from promoting sectarian differences that create divisions and hate.

Addressing a glittering Seerat conference organised by the Anjumane Nusrat Ul Islam at Islamia at Rajouri Kadal here, Mirwaiz laid stress on following the footsteps of

beloved prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a guide to every Muslims in every sphere of life.

Coming down heavily on some of the self-styled religious preachers in the state, Mirwaiz said that "these religious preachers are using the sacred pulpits of mosques to divide Muslims of the state by indulging in criticizing and demeaning each other on sectarian lines rather than working for



religious and social reform among the society and preaching the real message of unity in Islam."

Mirwaiz said what is worse is that they are using social media to promote their sectarian agenda which misguides and confuses people especially the youth. "These clerics don't speak about the killings and injustices that we face each day but when it comes to criticizing each other that exhibit such passion and eagerness," he said.

"The breach in our unity ▶ See **Mirwaiz**...Pg 02

JRL concerned over 'increasing' HR violations in state

Appeals people to maintain discipline, avoid confusion, disorder

Srinagar, Apr 19: Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik, Thursday expressed serious concern over increasing human rights violation in state, saying people pursuing right to self-determination are facing worst type of state sponsored terrorism.

Expressing their deep concern over human rights violations, torture in detention enterers, molestations, joint resistance leadership said that unabated killings and brutalities are worst form of state terrorism.

JRL in their appeal to UN General Secretary and international organizations for human rights, urged to take ▶ See **JRL**...Pg 02

PRESIDENT VISITS SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI SHRINE

Governor briefs him about initiatives taken by Shrine Board for facilitation of pilgrims

JAMMU, APRIL 19: The President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, today visited the Holy Cave Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Deviji and paid obeisance at the Sanctum Sanctorum.

Mr. Kovind prayed for the progress and prosperity of the people of the country. The President was accompanied by Mrs. Savita Kovind, First Lady; Governor N. N. Vohra; and Dr. Nirmal Kumar Singh, Deputy Chief Minister.

During his brief visit the President went around the Shrine complex, viewed the facilities and met the pilgrims.

Governor, who is Chairman of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, briefed the President about the continuing initiatives being taken for upgrading and expanding the infrastructure for facilitating the progressively increasing number of pilgrims to the Holy Shrine. He observed that a Master Plan has been got prepared for the Bhawan and

the extended Shrine Area to provide planned accommodation for pilgrims at Bhawan, Adhkuwari, Katra and Jammu and Durga Bhawan is being re-constructed to enhance accommodation facilities for pilgrims at Bhawan. Water supply is being augmented and all the lights along the tracks and in the Bhawan area have been replaced with LED lights; Health Care facilities for the pilgrims have been strengthened along the tracks and at Bhawan. Giving details about the various social support initiatives taken by the Board, especially in the education and health sectors, Governor referred to the establishment of Superspeciality Hospital, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University and College of Nursing at Kakryal and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Gurukul at Charanpaduka, involving an investment of nearly Rs. 1000 crores.

Regarding the upcoming major infrastructure projects, the Governor informed the President that



Passenger Ropeway between Bhawan and Bhairon Ghati and Material Ropeway between Siar Dabri and Bhawan are nearing completion. He

also informed the President about the ongoing Slope Stabilisation Project and installation of Shelter Sheds for ensuring safety of the pilgrims

against shooting stones and landslides and, besides, the upcoming Tarakote Marg which will cost about Rs 80 crore.

Governor observed that, under his direction, focus on environmental preservation continued to be accorded very high priority and, towards the furtherance of this objective, plantation of Trikuta Hills has been undertaken on a very large scale and green technologies are being utilised.

Earlier, on arrival at the Panchhi Helipad from Jammu, the President was received by Mr. Umang Narula, CEO of the Shrine Board.

Mr. A. G. Mir, ADGP, CID; Mr. Hemant Kumar Sharma, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Mr. Prasanna Ramaswamy G, Deputy Commissioner, Reasi; Mr. Anshul Garg, Additional CEO of the Shrine Board; and other senior Civil, Police and Shrine Board officers were present on the occasion.

CREATE CONDUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR ACADEMICS: DDC TO EDU OFFICERS

BANDIPORA, APRIL 19: District Development Commissioner Bandipora, Khurshid Ahmad Sanai today convened a meeting to review the education scenario in the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police Sheikh Zulfikar Azad, besides, Chief Education Officer, Deputy CEO, Principals of Degree Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools, ZEOs and Headmasters of various High schools of the district were present in the meeting.

The meeting discussed threadbare various issues to safeguard the academic career of the students.

It was emphasized upon heads of educational institutions to take proactive measures for creating a conducive academic atmosphere in schools and ensure completion of syllabus designed for the session within the specified calendar. "Our children are our future", said the DDC, adding "it is our prime responsibility to keep our future generations on right track."

The DDC also directed CEO and ZEOs to undertake frequent field visits to respective educational institutions. He also asked them to ensure timely rationalization of staff so that no institute faces any inconvenience for want of subject specified teacher.

Continue from Front Page.....

DEATHS

year, the report said. Human casualties related to LWE also fell from 397 to 263, a decline of 33%.

In the Northeast, where several militant groups are active, the number of insurgency-related incidents in 2017 was the lowest since 1997, the report added.

The report listed 822 communal incidents in which 111 persons lost their lives and 2,384 were injured countrywide last year.

While the report did not provide a complete list of the incidents, it mentioned "one major communal incident" at Baduria-Basirat of North 25 Parganas district, West Bengal.

The annual report is more like a report card detailing the home ministry's endeavours, achievements, ongoing projects and activities throughout the year, besides providing comparative numbers.

PAK

India moved the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in May last year against the verdict. The ICJ halted his execution on India's appeal pending the final verdict by it.

POLICE

Sharma spoke about the "difficulties" the SIT faced in its work. "Agitation was going on and going among the provocative persons to collect the evidence and take statements was not easy," she said, referring to protests by a radical Hindu organisation and a group of lawyer in support of the accused in the Kathua case.

Sharma was confident that the murdered girl in Kathua will get justice.

"Our judiciary is capable enough to bring justice, don't doubt it," she said.

SC

(of the protest), the resultant action was wrong," Justice Misra said as the court was told that the protesting lawyers have retreated and assured that there would be no obstruction in the trial of the rape and murder of the eight-year-old victim from the Bakerwal community in Jammu's Hiranagar area.

Asking all the parties to file their response about their incidence and the conduct of protesting lawyers, the court directed the matter for further on April 26.

The Jammu High Court Bar Association told the Supreme Court that it did not support lawyers' protest in connection with the Kathua gangrape and murder case.

The Bar Council of India told the bench that they have constituted a team, headed by a former high court judge, which will visit Kathua to assess the situation relating to lawyers protest. Meanwhile, the Kathua District Bar Association said they had already withdrawn the strike on April 12.

The minor girl had disappeared from near her home in the forests next to Rasana village in Kathua, on January 10. Her body was found in the same area a week later.

The Crime Branch of police which probed the case filed a main charge sheet against seven persons and a separate charge sheet against a juvenile in a court in Kathua district earlier this week.

The charge sheet revealed chilling details about how the girl was allegedly kidnapped, drugged, raped inside a place of worship before being killed.

MINISTER

after they staged protests over Kathua case and clashed with the forces.

Yesterday also, around twenty students had suffered injuries in police action in Anantnag district.

CLASH

two photojournalists and four girl students sustained injuries.

"Two among the injured were shifted to Srinagar hospital for further treatment," reports said.

The two photojournalists who were injured during the clashes were identified as Ajaz Dar from Zee News and Firdous Lone from 4tv.

Notably, authorities had ordered closure of Degree College and Higher Secondary Schools in district Shopian as precautionary measure.

Meanwhile a senior police official from Shopian district wishing anonymity said that the clashes took place in the district today while as the situation was brought under control. "Situation is Shopian is peaceful and under control," he told KNS over phone.

In north Kashmir's Baramulla and Bandipora district, clashes erupted between students and forces in Delina and Ajas areas of the two districts respectively during which forces used tear gas canisters to disperse the agitating stu-

dents. Reports said that the students of Government Higher Secondary School Delina took to streets and blocked Srinagar-Baramulla highway to mark a protest against the Kathua incident.

The blockage on the road also resulted in traffic mess in the area following which police tried to disperse the youth who pelted stone on them, triggering clashes in the area.

Notably, the district administration had ordered suspension of class work in all boys and girls colleges and higher secondary schools of the town except Delina higher secondary school.

In Ajas area of Bandipora, clashes broke out between students and forces after the students carried out a rally against the Kathua incident.

Reports said that scores of people including a cop sustained injuries during the clashes in the area.

The students earlier boycotted their classes and held protest and demanded capital punishment to the culprits.

In Chadoora area of central Kashmir's Budgam district, clashes broke out at main chowk after the students pelted stone on forces.

Reports said that the forces used tear gas canisters to disperse the aggrieved students of different colleges.

A top police official said that barring few incidents of stone pelting, the situation across the Valley remained under control.

He also said that police exercised maximum restraint while chasing the protesters at a few places today.

ROADS

Batamalloo Ram Munshibagh. "What is the fun of macadamising when it (macadam) doesn't last long? The authorities should take into account the hardships suffered by the commuters," Mukhtar Ahmad commuter at Jehangir Chowk told this KNS correspondent.

The commuters said that in absence of repairs, most of the roads in the city are dotted with potholes. "The roads in Jehangir Chowk, Qamarwari Ram Bagh Flyover Road, Ram Munshi Bagh, Sonwar, Batwara, Rangreth, Rawalpora, Sanatnagar, Mehjoor Nagar, Padashaagh, are dotted with potholes," commuters claimed.

"The non-seriousness of the authorities in R&B can be gauged by the fact that road leading to SMHS hospital via Qamarwari is in shambles. This poses risk to lives of patients who are referred from other hospitals," said Habib-ullah a senior resident of Srinagar.

The road stretch from Batamalloo to Qamarwari is dotted with potholes. "The road link was repaired last year; however it could not sustain for more than one year. The Potholes have posing risk of accidents to the commuters," Shabir Ahmad a resident of Qamarwari said.

People in Shaher-e-Khaas also expressed resentment over dilapidated roads.

The road near SK Stadium, Sonawar has also developed potholes. "Last year the road was repaired, but the road has developed ditches. If this is a condition of a vital road used by

VIPs, one can imagine the condition of other roads," said Anwar Ahmed, a resident of Sonawar.

Last year, the then PDP-BJP government carried out macadamisation of some vital roads in the city. The state authorities had claimed that the black topping of the roads would last for at least three years.

During rains, the dilapidated roads turn into cesspools. "When water remains stagnant for a long time, it further damages roads," a shopkeeper in Qamarwari said pointing towards damaged stretch of road.

Chief Engineer Roads and Buildings Kashmir though admitted that the roads are in a bad condition said that the department will start the patch work next week "Yes it is true that some roads have developed the cracks in the city, but the department have already floated tenders and that the patch work will start in the next week," the CE told KNS over phone.

MEHBOOBA

A deputation of representatives of Bari Brahma Industrial Association sought taking of measures to give relief to local small and micro industrial entrepreneurs. They also requested grant of Central assistance to the local industry on the pattern of North Eastern region besides easing of formalities in tax remissions.

A deputation of J&K Patwar Association demanded creation of more Patwar halqas in the State, creation of staff and removal of pay anomaly of Patwar cadre. A deputation of dental surgeons demanded creation of more posts to provide job opportunities to them.

A deputation of members of civil society from Gujjar Nagar and Rajendra Bazar requested for keeping an eye on anti-social elements who intend to disturb peace and communal harmony in the province. They also sought creation of op-

portunities for youth to train them in various skills. A deputation of All India Backward Classes Union demanded strict implementation of various welfare schemes aimed at the upliftment of these classes.

Another deputation from Surinsar demanded upgradation of Middle School, Charala to a High School. They also demanded augmentation of drinking water facility and connectivity in the area and creation of a halt point for all the trains passing through on Jammu-Katra line. Another deputation from R S Pura demanded construction of a playfield and conservation of a local pond at Bagga Janna village of the constituency.

The Chief Minister listened to the demands of the deputations patiently. She assured to look into the same and take appropriate action at the earliest.

HAKHEEM

mainly due to degradation of moral values in the society. He said crimes against women are shameful in a civilized society adding that all religions teach us to respect a woman for which imparting religious and moral education was imperative.

On this occasion, Hakeem Yaseen laid foundation stone for construction of an additional block for NTPHC, Hardpanzoo, to be completed at a cost of Rs.1.80 crore. This building complex would be used for providing maternity and child care facilities to the patients of the area. He also inaugurated a diagnostic Laboratory block constructed at a cost of Rs 40 lakhs. He also inaugurated an x-ray plant costing

Rs.5 lakhs in the NTPHC, Hardpanzoo. "All these facilities would go a long way to provide better Medicare facilities to the patients in the area."

Hakeem Yaseen also demanded registration of FIRS against all those who in any way tries to obstruct investigation in the horrific rape-murder of 8 years old nomadic child. He asked the Government to take stringent action against all those lumpen elements who are trying to communalize and polarize the society on this tragic incident for their vested interest. He said nobody should be allowed to affect the ensuing tourist season in the state and also advised the students to concentrate on their studies as the investigation agencies and judiciary was doing a commendable job on the Asifa rape-murder case to the best satisfaction of all.

Hakeem Yaseen was accompanied by CMO, Budgam, concerned officers and engineers of various departments.

US

South and Central Asia Bureau of the State Department for more than a year now in the Trump Administration in the absence of an Assistant Secretary of State.

Responding to a question on her impression about the India-US relationship in more than a year of the Trump Administration, Wells quoted the US president and said the ties "had never been stronger, never been better".

"His words have rung true for me since taking this position last summer. The USA and India, as the world's oldest and largest democracies respectively, collaborate on a broad scope of issues to support the freedom, openness, and peace that have brought so much prosperity Indo-Pacific over recent decades," Wells said.

These issues were at the top of her agenda during her recent trip to India, Wells said.

She said she was "excited" about the first US-India 2+2 to be held in the coming months.

"We are working to identify mutually convenient dates. This engagement will further support our efforts to deepen diplomatic, security, and military cooperation to confront our most pressing global challenges, from Afghanistan and North Korea to the threat of terrorism," Wells said.

"We are also focused on strengthening economic ties, including increasing two-way trade, which has more than doubled over the last decade to roughly \$125 billion," she said.

The two countries are also working hard to strengthen their energy partnership, Wells said, adding that Energy Secretary Rick Perry's recent visit to New Delhi for the Strategic Energy Partnership "elevates the role of energy in advancing shared goals".

"Our collaboration in oil and gas, renewables, coal, and civil nuclear cooperation is helping to improve India's energy security and support its inclusive development while supporting thousands of US jobs and reducing our trade deficit," Wells said.

DAL

National Fish Seed Farm, Manasbal," he said and warned those fishermen of stringent action who resort to illegal night fishing.

He said there are about 939 bonafied registered fishers along Dal Lake those are promptly and regularly involved in fishing activities during day time from sunrise to sunset through operation of legal gears without causing any deple-

tion in the capture fisheries.

He added that the production of fish catch of the Dal Lake has increased from 467.11 tons to 509.86 tons and such development has been achieved through proper anti-poaching measures that has been carried out along Dal Lake by the staff posted there.

MIRWAIZ

as an Ummah if it starts from our mosques will be extremely unfortunate and cannot be allowed," he added.

Mirwaiz urged the Imams to desist from promoting sectarian differences that create divisions and hate and rather educate people about the core and universal message of Islam.

"Sectarian divide and hate among us only strengthens the hands of our oppressor. Those who use pulpit of mosques to do so will not be tolerated and people should publicly boycott them," he said.

He said "in the coming days a meeting of Religious organisations, preachers /imams from every sect and school of thought will be convened and we will discuss these issues so that our mosques will become reason for our unity and social reform rather than division."

Referring to the heinous Kathua incident, Mirwaiz said "it is blot upon all humanity, irrespective of what religion we follow that the most despicable act of pre meditated rape and then murder was used a tool against a community to evict them. It has to be condemned by one and all and justice has to be delivered on this most heinous crime."

During the Seerat conference, the students from various institutions from different districts shed light on the life and contributions of the holy prophet with lot of zest and zeal.

The function was followed by prize distribution ceremony in which prizes were distributed among the students from various schools who took part in the Seerat competition.

The first position was bagged by Soliha of RP School, second by Abeeba of Kashmir Harward Institute and Areza of Muslim Public school Rajbagh.

Mirwaiz distributed trophies and cash prizes among the winners. Professor M Sidiq Kuchay, Engineer Ras Masood and Gh Mohiudin were the judges.

JRL

cognizance of rights violations and added that people in state are worst sufferers.

Pro-freedom leaders ridiculed the statement of Director General Prisons before State Human Rights Commission and said that, we with substantial proof can produce sufficient evidences before international human rights organization that detainees caged in state and outside jails are physically tortured and subjected to worst inhuman treatment. The reports pouring in from different jails are horrific, saying that detainees are meted out with inhuman treatment, incarcerated students are not allowed to keep their text books, denied medical care, humiliated and intimidated on one pretext or the other, they added.

International community should take cognizance as situation in nook and corner of occupied state is quite appalling and deteriorating with every passing day, said JRL

No rule of law exists in state and while referring to rape and merciless killing of minor 8-year nomadic girl Asifa, the JRL said that it vindicates our claim that men in uniform are involved in heinous crimes and under draconian laws enjoy impunity. Demanding impartial probe by UNO sponsored agency, the JRL said that effected family in Kathua is being harassed and pressurized to withdraw case against accused and state machinery is being utilized to hush-up the case, added they. Joint resistance leadership strongly condemned the use of brute force against students and said that a situation in educational institutions is turning explosive.

Blaming police for manhandling students in Islamabad, Kulgam Shopian, Baramulla, Srinagar, Pulwama and other places, they said that students are our future and we are keeping close vigil over changing development.

Terming the police action as vandalism and absolute barbaric, JRL said that we will never tolerate this and won't leave innocent students at the mercy of authorities. The direct and unprovoked interference from police are infuriating students, said they.

The gruesome incident of Kathua is shocking and consequent reaction and resentment of all sections irrespective of their faith and religion is obvious and as use of brute force against those expressing their sympathy with effected family and demanding stringent action for criminals illustrates their concern and are extra conscious to contain these heart wrenching crimes.

Appealing people to maintain discipline and avoid confusion and disorder, JRL said during the campaign and protest demonstrations against Kathua incident, it is appropriate that we should maintain discipline as some mischievous elements are desperate to play foul and are hell-bent to deviate attention and give ugly turn to our peaceful demonstrations.

Shri J P Nadda gives away Kayakalp awards to felicitate

New Delhi, April 19: "Kayakalp has been instrumental in inculcating a sense of 'ownership' amongst all stakeholders. This sense of ownership has translated into 'commitment for Swachhata.'" This was stated by Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare during the national felicitation ceremony of Kayakalp awardees (2017-18) for their work in maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene in public health facilities, here today.

Smt Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Smt Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health), Shri Parmeshwaranlyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Dr. Promila Gupta, DGHS, were also present at the event. Shri Nadda congratulated the awardees and said that cleanliness is no more a one-time activity but is integrated in our day-to-day practices and has become a habit. Kayakalp has played a pivotal role in gaining trust

and confidence of community in public health facilities. He further added that the zest and zeal shown by the hospitals and their collective efforts in improving cleanliness, hygiene and infection control practices should continue unabated.

Referring to the ICT based application 'Mera Aspataal (My Hospital)' that captures patients' feedback about their experience in the health facilities on the services that they received or sought to receive, Shri Nadda said that about 1000 government hospitals are now connected and patients can now give their feedback on various aspects of healthcare services including cleanliness, house-keeping, behavior of the hospital staff, etc. "We are now making a paradigm shift by seeking their views on quality of experience in a public healthcare facility. This will help us improving the experience of people at a health facility and will also increase the accountability of the public health systems," Shri-

Nadda elaborated.

The Union Health Minister further stated that health is at the centre-stage with the launch of Ayushman Bharat. He said that National Health Protection Mission (NHPM) will protect around 50 crore people (from about 10 crore families) and at the same time Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) will deliver comprehensive primary health care. "The HWC would provide preventive, promotive, and curative care for non-communicable diseases, dental, mental, geriatric care, palliative care, etc. He further stated that the Government has initiated universal screening of common NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension and common cancers, which will eventually help in reducing the disease burden.

Speaking at the function, Smt Anupriya Patel stated that maintenance of the hygiene and cleanliness of health facilities is not only related to aesthetics and patient satisfaction, but it also re-

duces the incidence of Hospital Acquired Infections. She further stated that the Health Ministry is collaborating with other Ministries to ensure that the goals of sanitation and cleanliness are achieved.

The Health Ministers gave away the awards to the winners under various categories. Under the Central Government Hospitals Category, the first prize of Rs 2.5 Crore was given to the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi. Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh was judged as the runner-up in this category with Rs. 1.5 crore prize money. Commendation Award of Rs. 50 Lakh was given to JIPMER, Puducherry along with Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi. MGIMS, Wardha received the Certificate of Appreciation.

In the group B category, the winner was NEIGRIHMS, Shillong with Rs 1.50 Crore and the Runner-Up was AIIMS, Bhubaneswar with Rs 1.00 Crore. Com-

mendation Award of Rs 50 Lakh was given to NIMHANS, Bengaluru, AIIMS, Rishikesh, AIIMS, Raipur, NITRD, New Delhi and AIIMS, Bhopal. AIIMS, Jodhpur received the Certificate of Appreciation. Shri J P Nadda also felicitated the District Hospitals, PHCs and CHCs for winning the awards in their respective states and union territory.

At the function, Shri J P Nadda and Ms. Anupriya Patel released the Kayakalp Coffee Table book along with the Patient Safety Framework and Kayakalp Implementation Guidebook.

Shri Parmeshwaranlyer, Secretary, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, said that there is a sanitation revolution in India. Sanitation and cleanliness has become a 'Jan Andolan', closely connected with Health. Smt Preeti Sudan, Secretary (Health) added that sanitation, cleanliness and waste management in health facilities are prerequisites to all healthcare delivery

protocols.

This Kayakalp event also signifies the culmination of the Swachhata Pakhwada for year 2018 observed by the Ministry from 1st April to 15th April, 2018. Kayakalp - Award to Public Health Facilities" was instituted as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on 15th May 2015 as a National Initiative to give Awards to those public health facilities that demonstrate high levels of cleanliness, hygiene and infection control focuses on promoting cleanliness in public spaces. The initiative was started with District Hospitals and 10 Central Government Institutes in 2015. In 2016, CHC, SDH, PHC, and 6 new AIIMS were added. Last year, urban health facilities along with 21 Central Government Institutes also joined the mission of Swachhata.

Also present at the function were Shri Sanjeeva Kumar, AS (Health), Shri Manoj Jhalani, AS&MD and representatives from the states and union territories.

Vice President to inaugurate Civil Services Day function

New Delhi, April 19: The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is organizing a 2-day Civil Services Day function here on April 20-21, 2018. The Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu will be the Chief Guest at the inaugural function tomorrow (April 20, 2018). The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will confer the Awards for Excellence in Public Administration for effective implementation of identified Priority Programmes and Innovation to districts/ implementing units and other Central/State organisations on April 21, 2018.

PM Awards for Excellence in Public Administration have been instituted with a view to recognize the extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts & Organizations of the Central and State Governments for the welfare of common citizen.

Following four priority programmes have been identified for the awards to be

presented on Civil Services Day 2018:

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana,
- Promoting Digital Payments,
- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban & Rural, and
- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana.

In addition there are awards for Innovation for Central, State organisations including Districts.

11 awards for 4 identified Priority Programmes will be given this year while two awards shall be given to organizations of Central/State Government/Districts for innovations out of which one award will be given to an Aspirational District.

A new category of awards for Additional Secretary/ Joint Secretary level officers and Director/ Deputy Secretary serving in Government of India has also been introduced this year to recognize their contribution towards bringing about transformational improvements in processes/ systems through simplification and process re-engineering,

etc.

In the inaugural session, the Vice President will release a book titled: 'Emulating Excellence- Takeaways for Replication' and inaugurate an exhibition put up by DARPG on identified Priority Programmes and Innovations. The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh will preside over the function. The inaugural session will be followed by a Plenary Session on the topic 'Evolving Strategies for Transforming Aspirational Districts' chaired by Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog. Apart from this, four Breakaway Sessions will be organised on subjects related to Agriculture, Housing, Digital Payments and Skilling.

Shri Parshottam Rupala, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Panchayati Raj will chair the Session on Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana while Shri

Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Housing & Urban Affairs will chair the session on Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines will chair the session on Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramin Kaushalya Yojana and Ms. Aruna Sundararajan, Secretary Telecom will chair the session on Promoting Digital Payments.

During Awards event on April 21, 2018, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will release two books, namely 'New Pathways' comprising of Success stories on implementation of identified Priority Programmes & Innovations and 'Aspirational Districts: Unlocking Potentials' on evolving strategies for transforming Aspirational Districts. The Award ceremony will be preceded by the Plenary Session on 'Artificial Intelligence for Effective Governance' chaired by Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law & Justice, Electronics & Information Technology.

"Need to translate outcome of the deliberations on the ground": Dr. Mahesh Sharma

New Delhi, April 19: Emphasizing the need to translate the outcome of the deliberations, in the form of suggestions on the ground, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma has said that the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) is expected to play a crucial role in addressing the increasing air pollution across the country in a comprehensive manner. Inaugurating the two-day Stakeholder Consultation on NCAP here today, Dr. Sharma emphasised the impact of air pollution on health and general well-being of human, floral and faunal population. He said that stakeholders are and must act as "givers" to the society.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri C.K. Mishra said, "While as a nation, we need to be concerned at the quality of air, as a Government we need to have that commitment to ensure that there is a defined time-frame that we may set for ourselves after today's discussions". He added that all the states and stakeholders need to spread the campaign

for clean air across the country. The Secretary pointed out that technology is one of the critical elements of NCAP. "Let us together find solutions that are nationally acceptable, but more importantly, which are locally possible", Shri Mishra stated.

The Stakeholder Consultation involves all the State Governments, considering that NCAP is a pan-India programme and inputs from states will be useful in evolving an effective implementation strategy. The overall objective of the NCAP is comprehensive management plan for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution besides augmenting the air quality monitoring network across the country. The NCAP focuses on collaborative and participatory approach covering all sources of pollution and coordination between relevant Central Ministries, State Governments, local bodies and other stakeholders.

The focus is on intensive awareness, training and capacity-building drive, with specific impetus on augmentation of manpower and infrastructure facilities of CPCB and SPCB under the capacity

building component of NCAP. Separate components with emphasis on three tier mechanism for review of monitoring, assessment and inspection for effective implementation under NCAP. A credible, transparent and accountable data collection and monitoring system that is available for timely swift action is to be ensured.

Since air pollution mitigation necessitates collaborative efforts, the success of NCAP is expected to be determined by the participation and contribution of stakeholders. Accordingly, there is a need for consultation with various stakeholders viz. state governments, relevant ministries, institutes, academic institutions and industries. The approved NCAP has already been shared with state governments and has also been uploaded on the Ministry's website for inviting comments from the public.

The key components of NCAP include - city-specific air pollution abatement action plan for 100 polluting cities of the country similar to one for Delhi, increasing the number of monitoring stations, data dissemination, public

participation on planning and implementation, setting up of Air Information Centre for data analysis, resource apportionment studies, setting up of national inventory, guidelines for indoor air pollution and setting up of rural monitoring stations.

MoEF&CC has formalized the NCAP as a long-term time bound national level strategy to tackle the increasing air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner. The total tentative cost of NCAP is estimated at Rs 637 crore.

Representatives from World Bank and The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Shri Sushel Kumar, Secretary, DST, Prof Ashutosh Sharma, Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC, Shri A.K. Jain, Joint Secretary, MoEF&CC, Smt Manju Pandey, Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, Shri S.P.S. Parihar, Chairman, EPCA, Shri Bhure Lal and other officers of the Ministry were present at the inaugural session of the Consultation. In addition, officials from State Governments, including officials from SPCBs also participated in the Consultation.

All Police officers should be re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences

Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi writes to Chief Ministers of all States/UTs highlighting necessary steps for dealing with sexual offences

New Delhi, April 19: In a letter addressed to Chief Ministers of all the States/UTs, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Union Minister for Women and Child Development has outlined various steps to be taken by the States/UTs in preventing and curbing the crimes against women and children. Some of the steps mentioned in the letter are:

All police officers should be re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences particularly those related to collection and preservation

of evidence.

Instructions may be issued to all police officers that utmost priority is to be given to complete the investigation of cases of sexual offences against children strictly as per the timelines of Law.

State Governments must take strict action against those police officers who are found to be obstructing the investigation or colluding with the perpetrators of such cases.

A quick and timely professional investigation is the only method in

which a potential offender can be deterred but this can be done only by the states as the police department is the state subject. Forming a special cell only for sexual offences or specially for sexual offences on children, would be a significant step in this regard.

The Women and Child Development Minister offered help to State Governments in establishing Forensic Laboratories in states which can be used for forensic analysis of evidence in the investigation of

sexual offences.

The WCD Minister has requested the states to generate awareness among the children in using the e-box set up under POCSO with child-help line number 1098. The Minister also highlighted that till date 175 One stop centres for women affected by violence have been set up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. One Stop Centres are to help those women who have no access to either police or medical facilities or are not able to visit a

police station in times of distress.

The letter also stressed that Section 21 of the POCSO Act may be invoked in all cases wherever failure to report or record is noted. Section 21 states that any officer who fails to report or record the commission of an offence under section 19/20 of the Act is liable for punishment.

The WCD Minister called for suggestions from the state Governments on dealing with the crimes against women and children.

JK Universities to have Gojri subject at PG, UG level: Dr Samoon



JAMMU, APRIL 19: In a bid to give impetus to Gojri Language, the State Universities would start Gojri subject at Post Graduation (PG) and Under Graduate (UG) level in Jammu and Kashmir.

This decision was taken during a meeting held at civil Secretariat today under the Chairmanship of Principal Secretary Department of Higher Education, Asgar Hassan Samoon, to discuss introduction of local dialects, like like Dogri and Kashmiri, in the state Universities at different levels.

Prominent Gojri writers including Dr. Javid Rahi, Dr Rafiq Anjum, Dr Liqat Jafri, Ch Hassan Parvaz, Ch Sarwar Chouhan, Dr Arif Sajjad, Dr MK Waqar were the special invitees on the occasion.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on different issues pertaining to introduction of Gojri Subject at PG and UG level in various universities. Besides, several important directions were issued by the Principal Secretary to different universities including University of Jammu, University of Kashmir, Cluster University, Jammu/ Srinagar, BGSB University beside Islamic University.

Samoon said the Gujjars and Bakerwal constitute an important chunk of state's population and their tribal culture and language requires special attention of state universities. He said that the universities have a big role in preservation and promotion of age old oral-lore and primitive treats for all times to come.

The other decisions taken in the meeting included filling up of posts of Professor and Asstt Professor Gojri which have already been advertised by the University for Poonch Camps, constitute of a committee to formulate curriculum of Gojri for Under-Graduate courses, introduction of Gojri subject in the Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University Rajouri as more than 55% population of Poonch and Rajouri speak Gojri, Cluster University Jammu and Srinagar shall introduce Gojri in all its colleges besides PG courses, Kashmir University shall start "Open Choice Course" in Gojri at PG level on the prototype of University of Jammu Gojri PG Course.

Fiscal Needs of each state will be individually assessed keeping in view their special characteristics: N K Singh

New Delhi, April 19: A delegation led by Dy. Chief Minister and Finance Minister of Tamil Nadu Shri O. Pannarselvam met the 15th Finance Commission today. The delegation submitted a memorandum to the Commission and put forward their view points regarding the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Commission.

Balance the need for fiscal transfers to less developed states with the growing aspirations of better performing states: Pannarselvam

Over 40 members delegation of Members of Parliament from AIADMK including Shri M. Thambi Durai, Dy. Speaker of the Lok Sabha put forward the efforts made and resources mobilized by Tamil Nadu towards the upliftment of the people in the state, in a meeting which went around 35 minutes. They urged the Commission to balance the need for fiscal transfers to less developed states while simultaneously meeting the growing aspirations and expectations of the people of the better performing states.

A progressive state like Tamil Nadu which has contributed greatly to India's prosperity would certainly receive the Commission's careful consideration: N. K. Singh

Chairman Shri N. K. Singh welcomed the delegation and appreciated them. He assured them that the fiscal needs of each state will be individually assessed and their special characteristics will be kept in view. A progressive state like Tamil Nadu which has contributed greatly to India's prosperity would certainly receive the Commission's careful consideration. Commission's visit for the state of Tamil Nadu was finalized for end of September.

Div Com reviews status of major road, bridge projects in Srinagar

New Mahjoor Nagar Bridge to be commissioned on May 05

SRINAGAR, APRIL 19: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan today visited Rajbagh and Mahjoor Nagar localities here to review the status of mega road and bridge projects under construction in these areas.

The Div Com directed the officials of various departments to work in tandem so that the pace of development projects is expedited. District Development Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Syed Abid Rashid Shah and other concerned officers from line departments accompanied the Div Com.

The Div Com directed the SMC officials to undertake massive demolition drive starting from old Zero Bridge against the illegal encroachments that are hampering the progress of the work. He said that the road will go a long way in decongest-



ing the intra-city and inter-district traffic. He said that the 10.5 km road widening project will start from Zero Bridge and reach IG road via Bund and government is keen to complete it within shortest possible time.

He directed the police to provide the required support to make the demolition drive successful and complete it in three days. He asked the DDC Srinagar to monitor the

demolition drive on daily basis.

Later, the Div Com also visited the under construction Mahjoor Nagar bridge where he was informed that majority of works on the bridge has been completed. The Div Com said that the bridge is slated to be thrown open to traffic by May 05 and directed the constructing agency to finish the final works on time.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

Clamour for death: On hanging rapists of minors

Each time a horrific sexual crime hits the headlines, there is a clamour for prescribing the death penalty for such offences. Given this, it is perhaps no surprise that the gang-rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Jammu and Kashmir has evoked a similar response. Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi has said her ministry will seek an amendment to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, to provide for death as the maximum punishment for the rape of those below 12. The anger is understandable but legislation ought to be a well-considered exercise and not a response based on a sense of outrage over particular incidents. The last time a ghastly crime led to legislative change was in 2013, following a national outcry over the gang rape and murder of a woman in Delhi in December 2012. That set of amendments to criminal law was a structured response, largely based on the recommendations of a committee of eminent jurists. In its January 2013 report, the committee, headed by former Chief Justice of India J.S. Verma, decided against recommending the death penalty for rape, despite demands. It rightly took into account the possibility of awarding life sentences without remission for aggravated sexual assault, as well as "the current thinking in favour of the abolition of the death penalty". However, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, set the death penalty for rape in the event of it causing the victim's death or a persistent vegetative state, and for repeat offenders.

In recent months, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh have sought to amend the law to prescribe the death penalty for the rape of a minor below the age of 12. There is a clear dichotomy of views on the desirability of prescribing a death penalty. Enlightened public opinion would not approve of a vengeful state response to individual brutality, even if outraged public opinion clamoured for it. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that the death penalty has never been a deterrent against any sort of crime. There is little empirical evidence to show that those about to commit a capital offence would stop themselves merely out of the fear of being hanged. Further, there is a legitimate concern that the country's judicial system has not been consistent in awarding the death penalty. The Law Commission, while recommending abolition of the death penalty, except in terrorism-related cases, observed that it is difficult to operate the 'rarest of rare cases' principle without a hint of arbitrariness. It will be especially wrong to force judges to compare the relative 'merits' of rape victims based on their age and choose between death sentence and life. Lengthy prison sentences, constituting both well-deserved consequences for grave crimes and a life-long opportunity for penitence, will adequately meet the ends of justice.

SHEIKH UL ALAM AND HIS MESSAGE OF HARMONY

► Mushtaq Ul Haq Ahmad Sikander

The Valley of Kashmir has been fortunate enough to entertain both Semitic and Non Semitic religions and traditions. The inhabitants of the Valley were receptive to the religions founded in Indian subcontinent that included both Hinduism and Buddhism. Islam that was an alien religion was also received with open arms. Islam in Kashmir did not spread through the proselytizing efforts of a Muslim zealot king, but the peaceful missionary efforts of Sufis and Rishis resulted in the spread of the new faith that led to the conversion of Kashmiris to the new creed. The adherents of the previous faiths including Hindus and Buddhists both survive in different parts of the present state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Sufis who belonged to different orders including Suharwardi and Kubrawi who visited Kashmir bringing forth the message of Islam weren't able to reach to the common masses due to linguistic and other barriers. Their message of Islam and its influence remained confined to certain sections of the society. Their brief visits and stays did restrict the proselytization process. Sufism as a path to global peace and its role in promoting peace in pain and violence hit areas like Kashmir is well recognized fact.

Islam in Kashmir could not escape the influence of its predecessors, particularly the Islam as expounded and propagated by Sufis. Sufism or more appropriately Tasawuff had been influenced by other traditions and faiths before it entered the Valley. In the Valley the Sufism developed an indigenous trait, tradition and order known as Rishism. This indigenous Kashmiri order of Sufism, i.e. Rishism assimilated, got influenced and carried forward some principles and practices of Hinduism and Buddhism while all these Rishis were Muslims. Other Rishis existed before coming of Islam too, but the credit for consolidating, evolving and propagating it as an order goes to Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani or Nundrishi better known as Sheikh ul Alam to Kashmiris. He is considered to be founder of the Rishi order of saints which deeply influenced many great mystics like Hamza Makhdoom, Resh Mir Saheb, Shamas Faqir till present day.

The different facets of Sheikh ul Alam's multi dimensional personality come to the fore and are manifested by his poetic verses. He used his poetry as tool to spread the knowledge of absolute. His poetry is commonly known as Shruks. Nundrishi deals with issues that relate to God, transcendental truth, Prophet, rishis, social justice, human relations, women, Kashmir, communal harmony, human nature, rituals, exploitation in the name of religion, the hypocrisy of Brahmin and Mullah. These Rishis always stood for Communal harmony, love for all humanity and Social Justice. Thus said Nuruddin Noorani about Communal Harmony

Children of the same parents,
When will Hindus and Muslims cut down the tree of dualism?

When will God be pleased with them and grant them his Grace?

We all came into this world as brethren
One lives in a palace, another in a hut
Still as brothers we came here all,
But now we are strangers and foes to each other

O God! When will this ever cease?
He further says



We belong to same parents,
Then why this difference?
Let Hindus and Muslims worship God alone.

We came into this world like partners.
We should have shared our joys and sorrows together.

Though the Rishis were concerned more about union with transcendental divine reality and Hereafter but they were not unconcerned, escapist monastics. They did undertake welfare activities and social reform. Sheikh ul Alam doesn't turn a blind eye to the factual realities and injustices happening around. He launches a crusade and tirade against abuse of religion, discrimination, casteism, inequality and poverty. He calls people towards following the path laid down by Islam whose egalitarian values of Justice, Equality, welfare, love, Care for the poor, he tries to inculcate among the people, through the medium of his poetry

Koul Mo Lagie Rangan Tey Sangan
Koul Mo Hangan lagnay Aaw
Thou Art not born to frame factions and federations

Thou art not born to boast racial superiorities

While speaking against casteism he states
Yeth Dunyaehs Zaat Haweeth Kya Miley
Ghasi Chak Adijan Yeli Khaakh Miley
Earn not thou anything in boasting thy rank and file

Thy complex configuration will be absorbed in soil and dust
Sheikh ul Alam seems to be brutally honest in his vehement criticism against those

who exploit religion and befool people particularly the clergy class among Hindus and Muslims

Malay Chey Khushaal Hadeyes Tey Saalas
Sheikh Gayey Maalas tey Maachas Mat-ey

Priests art pleased with favors and banquets
Sheikhs do amock after wealth and self indulgence

Alastu Buzith Hatukh Pathey
Kaaloo Balaa Tatey Dopukh Ney
Shaman Khewan Maaz Keho Baatey
Brahmin laagith Baatin Ney Kehney
Tympanic art the signals of Lord but tail turned remained they

Verly did not they surrender to his omnipotence

Engaged art they in appetitive trails of broiled rice thus
Apparently Brahmin figured but intently cipher they art (P-107)

The exploitation and abuse of religion still continues at the hands of ignorant Mullah and greedy Brahmin, about whom Sheikh ul Alam has explained in his verses centuries ago. The only need for us is to rediscover his message that now has been hijacked by the same Mullah to safeguard his petty interests. Sheikh ul Alam doesn't criticize only Mullahs but Rishis too who have adorned the false garb of being a Rishi without controlling their basic animal instincts.

The subjects, issues and problems that Sheikh ul Alam deals with remain the same that present day mankind is baffling with,

whether be it in our individual lives or collective societies. The manner in which he tackles the problem and the solutions that he offers are a living testimony of the relevance of his thought and message. His verses are full of advises and solutions that a man faces in his day to day life, and his message offers practical roadmap for the salvation of soul. His verses don't deal solitarily with mundane activities of life, but they do certainly explain the longing for meeting with Divine Creator, the love, ecstasy, Gnostic and mystic experience that a lover faces and the trials and tribulations that he encounters in this path, that are worth daring because of the eternal bliss and reward that awaits such a seeker

Aashiq Suey Yuss Ashiqey Seetey Dazey
Sunn Zan Pazles Punuy Paan
Asheqey Dood Yess Wanijey Sazey
Suey Adey Watey La Makan
Aye! A lover true wilt fume in love and amour

Glittering wilt he be like gold in fusion and suspension
He who be pierced with darts of love and passion

Wilt find himself in abodes among visionary destination.

Sheikh Nur-ud-din's life has impressed the Kashmiri people and his message of universal brotherhood, inner peace is so relevant in present painful era and all times.

Kashmiriyat ethos of tolerance brotherhood is also derived from Sufism and to end the sufferings and pain we need to revive both to end dark era.

India's Commonwealth

► C. Raja Mohan

Whether or not the Commonwealth Summit this week in London makes major moves towards renewal and reform, the Indian debate on the future of the forum has certainly changed. After decades of ignoring it, Delhi now believes that a rejuvenated Commonwealth could lend greater depth to India's global outreach. When Jawaharlal Nehru decided to join the Commonwealth after Independence, voices on the left, right and centre expressed deep discomfort with what they saw as a needless affiliation with the former colonial power. Nehru, however, stood steadfast in his commitment to the Commonwealth. For him, it was a valuable political and economic link to a major Western power during the Cold War.

While both Indira and Rajiv saw some utility in India's membership of the Commonwealth, the fact remains that India's growing divergence with Britain and the West during the Cold War and an inward economic orientation severely limited Delhi's possibilities with the forum. In any case, as Britain itself turned to Europe, the Commonwealth began

to lose much of its lustre in London. When India opened up to the world, politically and economically, after the Cold War, Delhi could have made something out of the Commonwealth. But with its focus on the US and China on the one hand and South Asia on the other, the Commonwealth simply fell off India's mental map.

Delhi's renewed interest in the Commonwealth has been long overdue. It is based on common sense. At a moment when its global interests are expanding, the pragmatists in Delhi argue, India must make the best use of all available multilateral forums, including the Commonwealth. Pointing to India's current temptation to join any forum that has its doors open, realists point out the bird in hand is worth two in the bush. In moving towards greater engagement with the Commonwealth, Delhi must, however, steer clear of four pitfalls.

The first is the fallacy of a reformed Commonwealth as "Empire 2.0". Many British intellectuals are deriding London's new enthusiasm for the Commonwealth as mere nostalgia for the colonial era. They warn against the illusion that the Commonwealth can be a substitute for the European Union. There is no reason



for India to be drawn into that internal argument in Britain. What Delhi does know is that Britain is repositioning itself in the world after Brexit.

What matters for India is not London's motivation, but the terms of engagement that are on offer for a new British relationship with India and the Commonwealth in the changed domestic and international context. Negotiating favourable terms is far more important for Delhi than proclaiming that the Commonwealth is a colonial relic. The debate on the Commonwealth can't be about its past. It must be about its future, especially the value of the 53-nation forum for India's international relations.

In the present, India is poised to overtake Britain's aggregate GDP in the next year or two. The International Monetary Fund puts Britain's GDP in 2017 at \$2.56 trillion and India's at \$2.43 trillion. It's about time India got over the defensive mindset in relation to a former colonial power. Here, the contrast between India and China is sharp. Beijing is not arguing with London about the opium wars or Britain's leading role in China's "hundred year humiliation". Instead, they are trying to seduce Britain, especially the city of London, into China's commercial and financial orbit.

The second pitfall is the pretence that reform and renewal of the Com-

monwealth are only about tinkering with the status quo. With London barely acquiescing in its existence, the Commonwealth has settled on roles that are of little strategic consequence today. One role is that of a tutor of moral science. After the end of the Cold War, the Commonwealth jumped on the bandwagon of good governance and humanitarianism. But the heyday of the attempts at external engineering of internal social and political order in the developing world is now well past us. The Commonwealth can offer advice and assistance when asked. It should avoid pushing democracy and human rights down the throats of other states. Thanks to a newly rich China, the regimes in many developing states have alternatives that did not exist earlier.

What the Commonwealth needs today is not a "prescriptive approach" on rights, but a focus on bringing greater economic prosperity for the peoples of the forum through an enhanced trade and investment relationship. The Commonwealth could devote considerable energies towards the promotion of sustainable development and maritime security, which pose existential challenges to the many small and island states

in the forum. The Commonwealth can become more valuable to its member states if it directs its aid and assistance to a few major priority areas rather than spreading its resources on a range of issues.

The third pitfall is the allure of leadership. India can and must do a lot of things in re-energising the Commonwealth, but claiming leadership should be the last thing. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphasis, instead, must be on strengthening India's contribution to the Commonwealth. As the soon-to-be largest economy in the forum, India can significantly increase its levels of economic assistance, give more to the maintenance of the Secretariat, boost the current efforts on capacity building, and above all, open its economy to facilitate trade liberalisation across the Commonwealth. Fourth, reviving the Commonwealth is not about India taking over from Britain. It is about reordering the relationship between Delhi and London. Although the relations between India and Britain have significantly improved, Britain is yet to do what most other Western powers have done. It is to recognise that India's rise is in their own national interests.

Identity of Surat rape victim found dead with 86 injuries still a mystery

Just a day after her twelfth birthday, a girl in Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district went missing while walking from her school to hostel on October 11 last year.

Her father is confident that a body found hundreds of miles away in Gujarat's Surat is that of his daughter.

But investigators are not so sure as they continue efforts to confirm the identity of the girl who was allegedly raped and murdered and dumped in an industrial neighbourhood of Surat on April 6.

The Surat Police have not found a large mole on the dead girl's right hand, a distinct mark the Andhra Pradesh man insists was present on his daughter's limb. So, on Wednesday, efforts to identify the murdered girl continued even as the police awaited results of a DNA test.

The body of the girl, estimated to be aged between nine and 11 years, was found dumped next to a cricket field along the Jiva-Budhiya Road in Surat's Pandesara neighbourhood.

The autopsy report pointed to 86 injuries on her body, including in her private parts. The injuries suggested she had been tortured and sexually assaulted in captivity for at least eight days before she was strangled and dumped.



As the police put up posters of the girl and shared her photos on social media, a woman claiming to be the girl's mother contacted NJ Panchal, a Pandesara police sub-inspector whose mobile phone number was shared in the posters on Saturday.

"She was wailing and speaking in Telugu. She sounded as if she was convinced the girl was her daughter. I asked her to give the phone to someone who spoke Hindi or English," said Panchal.

Around the same time, another police team was searching the database of thousands of missing children in India. They were focusing on states like Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra

Pradesh as their probe suggested the child could be belonging to one of those states.

"We shortlisted a total of 37 missing children whose age, gender and facial features matched the dead girl's. We were calling their parents or the local police to confirm. One such call was made to the Andhra couple," said RR Sarvaiva, assistant commissioner of police, Surat Crime Branch.

When images were exchanged on WhatsApp with the Andhra couple, they were convinced the girl was their missing child. They contacted the local police and tried to book a train ticket, but weren't able to find a seat. So, two Andhra policemen drove the

father down to Surat. The man had brought along his daughter's Aadhaar card.

"When we took the man to the mortuary and showed him the girl, he immediately broke down. He did not want to believe the dead girl was his daughter, but insisted it was his girl. But when he checked the girl's arm for the mole, he couldn't find it. He brought it to our notice," said an investigator.

Though both the girls sported short hair, there was considerable difference in their physical height. "The dead girl is taller despite shrinking. Her face too has shrunk since her death and the cheekbones of the two children are different. It is possible that the man is emotionally swayed and believed it was his daughter. But we aren't trusting him and are awaiting the DNA test results before confirming," said the investigator. The DNA results could take at least four days, the officer said.

The man was the seventh parent called to Surat for identification so far. Three of them had returned home without even checking the girl's body while the three others - two from Rajasthan and one from Andhra Pradesh - had denied after taking a look at the dead child.

Maneka Gandhi wants special police cells to deal with sexual offences

Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi on Thursday told the states and Union Territories to create special police cells for dealing with sexual offences against women and children.

In a letter, Gandhi urged all Chief Ministers to make sure that investigations in such cases are completed "as per the timelines of law" for speedy justice to the victims and their families.

"A quick and timely professional investigation is the only method in which a potential offender can be deterred but this can be done only by the states as the police department is a state subject," she wrote.

"Forming a special cell only for sexual offences or specially for sexual offences on children would be a significant step in this regard."

The minister also suggested that police officers be "re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences" particularly those related to collection and preservation of evidence.

"Instructions may be issued to all police

officers that utmost priority is to be given to complete the investigation of cases of sexual offences against children. State governments must take strict action against the police officers found to be obstructing the investigation or colluding with the perpetrators of such cases."

The minister requested the states to generate awareness among children in using the e-box with child helpline number 1098. Under the initiative, children can report crimes directly to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

She also offered help to states in establishing forensic laboratories to be used for forensic analysis of evidence in sexual offences.



Mayawati's BSP in demand as parties seek alliance after UP bypolls win

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) is much in demand this poll season, with several leaders making a beeline for an electoral understanding with Mayawati's party.

The rush is triggered by the stunning victory of the Samajwadi Party (SP)-BSP coalition in last month's by-elections in Gorakhpur and Phulpur, the constituencies represented by Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath and his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya respectively.

On Wednesday, the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) announced its alliance with the BSP for next year's assembly elections in Haryana. The two parties will also have a tie-up in Rajasthan, where elections are due in November this year.

In the 2014 assembly elections in Haryana, the BSP had secured a vote share of 4.37%, winning one of the 87 seats it contested. On the other hand, the INLD had won 19 of the total 90 seats and bagged a vote share of 24.11%. According to the 2011 census, Dalits constitute roughly 20% of Haryana's total 25 million population.

Prior to this, the BSP and the Janata Dal (Secular) of former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda joined hands for the May 12 assembly elections in Karnataka.



The BSP had unsuccessfully contested on 175 seats in Karnataka in the 2013 assembly elections and got a vote share of just 0.91%. For its part, the JD(S) had won 40 seats and secured a vote share of 20.19%.

In Karnataka, Dalits make up 19.5% of the total population of 65 million.

Though the Congress did not join the SP-BSP alliance in Uttar Pradesh bypolls, the grand old party is keen on a tie-up with Mayawati in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh that are going to polls along with Rajasthan later this year.

BSP leaders too have expressed their willingness to strike an understanding with the Congress to oust the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from power in Chhattisgarh.

The BJP is ruling the state uninterrupted since 2003.

Senior BSP leader and Chhattisgarh in-charge ML Bharti had announced in state

capital Raipur last month that his party was ready for an alliance with the Congress.

However, he said much would depend on the Congress party's readiness to give a respectable deal to the BSP in seat-sharing.

State Congress chief Bhupesh Baghel had also publicly expressed his willingness to join hands with the BSP on some seats for the upcoming assembly elections. But the support of lone BSP legislator Keshav Chandraro to BJP's Saroj Pandey in last month's Rajya Sabha elections might have come as a setback for the Congress.

In the 2013 assembly elections, the BSP had fought on all the 90 seats, winning one and accounting for a vote share of 4.27%. Dalits constitute 11.6% of the tribal-dominated state's 26 million population.

In Madhya Pradesh too, Congress leaders, including

state chief Arun Yadav, have not ruled out a tie-up with the BSP for the upcoming elections.

Leader of the Opposition in the Madhya Pradesh assembly, Ajay Singh, and senior Congress leader Chandrika Prasad Dwivedi had recently stated that the grand old party should talk to the BSP and try to dethrone the saffron party after ruling the state for 15 years.

The BSP had contested on 227 out of the total 230 seats in the 2013 assembly elections.

Having considerable presence in northern Madhya Pradesh, especially in Morena, it won four seats and bagged a vote share of 6.29%. The BSP had supported Congress candidate Vivek Tankha in the 2016 Rajya Sabha elections from the state.

Dalits account for more than 15% of Madhya Pradesh's 75 million population.

Political analysts attribute the trend to the attempt by various political parties to "woo and motivate" the Dalit votes.

"It is just symbolic. Mayawati has no direct contact and control with Dalits across the country but she is a symbolic attraction for them," said professor Badri Narayan of the Allahabad-based Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute.

Indian flag torn as protests against PM Modi in London turn aggressive

Some groups protesting against atrocities in India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit here have turned violent after a tricolour was torn down from one of the official flagpoles set up for all 53 Commonwealth countries.

Modi, who is in the UK for bilateral talks and the multi-lateral Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), was greeted by protesters as he met his British counterpart Theresa May.

Some of the protesters at Parliament Square on Wednesday turned aggressive after the Indian tricolour was torn down from the flagpole.

A senior broadcast journalist from one of the leading Indian media channels covering the protests was caught in a violent scum with some of the more aggressive pro-Khalistani protesters and Scotland Yard officers on duty had to step in to the rescue. The group is planning to file a complaint with the Metropolitan Police on the incident.

"We have expressed our concerns with the British authorities and they have apologised for the incident. We have been warning against some of these elements out to make trouble and they have assured us of action. The Indian flag has now been replaced," a senior Indian official associated with the PM's visit said.



The pro-Khalistani demonstrators from Sikh Federation UK and demonstrators from the so-called "Minorities Against Modi" group, led by Pakistani-origin peer Lord Ahmed, were among nearly 500 protesters who descended upon Parliament Square. These included groups led by some Kashmiri separatist groups and at one point, some of them had surrounded the Mahatma Gandhi statue at the square with their banners and flags.

Officials involved with the prime ministerial visit to the UK had said that protests and demonstrations are "part and parcel of any democratic society" as long as they remain peaceful. There are now concerns that some of the more aggressive elements hijacked the tone of the protests.

Earlier on Wednesday,

flash mob of sari-clad women with dhols set the tone for the pro-Modi crowds opposite 10 Downing Street as the Indian PM arrived for his breakfast meeting with British Prime Minister Theresa May. They were joined by the Friends of India Society International (FISI) group, which spearheaded a crowd of Indian diaspora from across the UK waving banners such as "Chak De India" and "Jai Hind" outside Downing Street and nearby Parliament Square.

"We want to welcome the Indian PM to the UK and show him the diaspora support he enjoys," said one of the members of the gathering.

On the other side, the anti-Modi protesters from Caste Watch UK and South Asia Solidarity group waved banners such as 'Modi, you have blood on your hands' and

'Modi Not Welcome'. "Hindu nationalism must be curtailed to avert India sliding towards wholesale dictatorship threatening democratic fabric, rule of law and the unity of India," a Caste Watch UK spokesperson said.

They were joined by other protesters carrying images of the eight-year-old rape victim from Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir, and Gauri Lankesh, the Indian journalist who was shot at her doorstep last year.

The group also included representatives of several Indian women's groups in the UK, wearing white as part of their silent protest against "atrocities that are taking place in India".

"I am Hindustan, I am ashamed," read their placards alongside banners such as 'Beti Bachao' and 'Politics minus rape'.

Invisible hand behind Loya death probe pleads in SC is of Rahul Gandhi: BJP

The BJP on Thursday mounted an attack on the opposition Congress after the Supreme Court rejected pleas to probe the death of judge BH Loya, alleging that the "invisible" hand behind the petitions was that of Rahul Gandhi who tried to use the judiciary for "character assassination" of Amit Shah. The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled that judge Loya died of natural causes and that the petitions were a serious attempt to scandalise and obstruct the course of justice.

Addressing a press conference, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra described the public interest litigations seeking the probe into the death of Judge Loya as "political interest litigation," and charged that Gandhi and his party were behind it.

Noting that the Congress had held press conferences and Gandhi had led a delegation of opposition parties to the President seeking a probe, Patra said he should "apologise" and be "ashamed" for his conspiracy to target Amit Shah, and Indian judiciary



and democracy.

The Congress engages in all sorts of conspiracies after its ruling family loses power, he alleged and added the attempt to use judiciary for political purposes was a "new low" in Indian politics. The "invisible hand" behind these petitions in the apex court belonged to Gandhi and the Congress, Patra alleged.

He alleged that they were filed to settle political scores as the opposition party is incapable of taking on Shah

and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the electoral field.

Reacting to the SC ruling, Union home minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh said that an attempt to malign senior leaders has failed. He said it is clear that judiciary cannot be made a field for political battles.

"Rahul does not want that any person other than someone from the Gandhi family should run the country. The Congress stands exposed," Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi

Adityanath tweeted.

Talking to reporters later, Yogi said, "The verdict in judge Loya case has exposed the Congress once again. Rahul Gandhi should apologise to the people of the country. They have tried to create such an environment that develops negative emotions in the people for the government."

Another Union minister, Dr Jitendra Singh, demanded that Rahul Gandhi should apologise to Amit Shah. He also said if you are doubting the credentials of the judiciary, then you are also doubting the credentials of all the investigations and evidences.

The issue of Loya's death had come under the spotlight in November last year after media reports quoting his sister had fuelled suspicion about circumstances surrounding it and its link to the Sohrabuddin case, which he was hearing before he died.

Shah was an accused in the case but was later discharged. Several activists and opposition parties had alleged a foul play in his death.

Centre launches Study in India to attract more foreign students

India has launched the Study in India programme to draw more foreign students in about 160 premier universities and institutions across the country, including IITs and IIMs, with 15,000 seats in the 2018-19 academic year.

External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on Wednesday launched a portal to help prospective students get information about the institutions and also register and apply to the programmes of their choice through it.

"The quest for knowledge has always been fundamental to India's culture and civilisation. We can rightly say that India is one of the very few places in the world where ancient traditions and modernity coexist in harmony," Swaraj said stressing on the need to make India a knowledge hub once again.

"India has been home to knowledge seekers from ancient times when scholars used to visit universities such as Nalanda and Takshila," she added.

Minister of state for human resource development Satyapal Singh and diplomats from 30 countries were also present during the launch. Study in India has a sanctioned budget of Rs 150 crore for two years and will

promote India as a top destination for higher education and funnel demand in the direction of the supernumerary seats.

The government aims at attracting 2,00,000 international students through the programme from the current 45,000 or 1% of the global student mobility.

"We observed that the number of students coming to India for higher studies had become stagnant and more students were going to countries like Singapore and Australia. That is when we decided to make a single spot information gateway to attract more students, make our visa process hassle free and also offer fee waiver to students," human resource development (HRD) minister Prakash Javadekar said in a video message.

R Subrahmanyam, HRD ministry's secretary (higher education), said the endeavour is a major step forward in freeing the Indian education market for foreign students.

The government will initially target 30 friendly countries, including Nepal, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Thailand, Malaysia, Egypt, Kuwait, Iran, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Rwanda, among others.

5 fat-burning exercises you can do under 20 minutes, anywhere, anytime

Human bodies have been designed to move and in order to move better one needs to be physically fit. But before we talk about the importance of physical fitness, let's understand what is fitness. It is the ability of the body to perform functional movements without any hindrances; it's the work capacity of the human body. And to perform the tasks that life throws at you on a daily basis, you need to have enough strength, muscle endurance, stamina, balance and flexibility; these are the pillars of physical fitness. In order to be fit, the body needs to score well on each of the parameters mentioned above.

It's important to stay fit because if you are not, it affects the ability of the human body to move, to perform daily tasks such as walking, climbing, running and lifting and leads to a lot of discomfort. No movement or less movement leads to lifestyle diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol and high triglycerides, to name a few. Being physically fit and active reduces the chances of such diseases and ensures that your health parameters stay in control.

The good news is that you don't have to spend hours exercising to achieve good levels of fitness, here are few exercises that can be done at home to make sure you get a good workout in just 15-20 minutes.

Air squats
Squats are the most fundamental movement that can be performed by the human body and end up becoming the base for almost every other movement. You start by placing your feet in line with your shoulders and start pushing your hips back and down at the same time, lower down keeping your back straight and feet flat until the hips reach lower than the knee. Get back up to full extension of your hip and knee.

Squats are predominantly a lower body movement, strengthens your glutes, hamstrings and quad muscles while engaging your core at the same time. 15 repetitions of air squats repeated 4-5 times will get you an effective work for these big muscles.

Side plank leg raise
Some work for the obliques is needed to ensure a strong lower back. You start this movement by going down



sideways on the ground, weight on the elbows and raising the hips up so that you make a single line between head to toe. Lift one leg off the ground as much as you can to make it more challenging. The movement ensures strong core muscles, help in cutting down stubborn belly fat and builds stability in the arms and legs.

Hold this for 30 seconds on each side in between over exercises and repeat for 4-5 rounds till you feel the burn in your mid section.

Crab reach
You start this movement by keeping your feet flat on the ground and hands close to the hips. Raise your hips up as much as possible, getting the right hand

close to the face and looking down to the left hand. Keep alternating between right and left. This movement will make sure you build strong glutes and hamstrings, which happens to be the most powerful set of muscles in the human body. Strong posterior chain ensures better performance at more complex movements and better balance. Crab reach also helps to build strong arms and ensures more stability as you shift the entire weight on one hand.

Include this movement to balance between anterior and posterior exercises and 10 reps each side repeated for 4-5 rounds will give you a good workout.

Cossack squat
Cossack squat is a very powerful movement which challenges the flexibility of the hip and ensures right alignment of the spine. You start this movement by placing your feet wider than your shoulders, bending to one side, extending the other leg straight and toe facing up. Make sure that the foot of the leg which is bent remains flat on the ground, spine remains neutral and chest upright. Alternate between left and right to finish the movement. Its a full body move-

ment which improves mobility of the hip, strength in lower body, spine alignment and a strong core.

Perform this for 5 reps each side repeated 4-5 times for an effective workout.

Side kickthrough:
It's not always about building just the abdominal muscle, the obliques also happen to be very important - which are muscles which help in stabilising other muscle groups such as lower back. Side kickthrough helps in building strong and chiseled obliques along with improving single leg balance and improved cardiovascular capacity. You start this movement by getting on all fours, arms in line with shoulders, quadriceps in line with the hips and knees just a little off the ground, lift your right leg off and kick out towards the left lifting the left hand up close to the face at the same time. Make sure you open up your anterior obliques and keep your foot flat on the ground. Alternate between right and left. This movement ensures improved stamina and you should do 10 kicks each side repeated over 4-5 rounds for a good workout.

Air pollution is one of the leading cause of deaths, ahead of alcohol abuse and BP



Think you're breathing clean air? Now digest this: more than 95% of the world's population is breathing unhealthy air, with India and China together contributing to over 50% of global deaths attributed to pollution, a new report found. According to the second edition of the annual State of Global Air Report, published on Tuesday by the Boston-based Health Effects Institute (HEI), long-term exposure to air pollution contributed to an estimated 6.1 million deaths across the globe in 2016.

Fine particle air pollution is the largest environmental risk factor worldwide, responsible for a substantially larger number of attributable deaths than other more well-known behavioural risk factors such as alcohol use, physical inactivity, or high sodium intake.

Air pollution is a complex mixture of gases and particles whose sources and composition vary spatially and temporally. While hundreds of different chemical compounds can be measured in air, governments typically measure only a small subset of gases and particles as indicators of the different types of air pollution and the different types of major sources contributing to the pollution.

According to the report, India topped China for early deaths caused by pollution by 1.1 million in 2016. These figures are scary, to say the least. While China has been making efforts to cut down on air pollution, the situation in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is worse as pollution levels continue to rise since 2010.

"Air pollution takes a huge personal toll worldwide, making it difficult to breathe for those with respiratory disease, sending the young and old to hospital, missing school and work, and contributing to early death," CNN quoted Bob O'Keefe, vice president of HEI, as saying in a statement on Tuesday. "The trends we report show real progress in some parts of the world -- but serious challenges remain to eliminate this avoidable affliction," he added. The report also took into account those exposed to the burning of solid fuels in their homes, typically used for cooking or heating their houses, resulting in indoor air pollution. In 2016, a total of 2.5 billion people -- one in three of global citizens -- were exposed to air pollution from solid fuels such as wood or charcoal. Tuesday's report is the latest in a string of studies investigating the effects of air pollution on global populations, CNN reported.

In April 2017, the World Health Organization said that environmental pollutants cost an estimated 1.7 million lives among children under the age of five. In 2015, nearly one in six deaths, an estimated nine million worldwide,

Paleo, Keto or raw food? All you need to know which diet suits you the most

Do terms like keto, paleo and other diet fads confuse you? Hollywood star Halle Berry swears by keto, Blake Lively loves her juice cleanses. But you have no idea what would be good for your weight loss plans. The thing about fad diets is that they all come with tall claims (promise of quick weight loss), but do they help you lose weight or stay fit? We quiz two nutritionists to find out the pros and cons behind four popular fad diets.

Paleo diet: This diet urges followers to go back to the way our ancestors used to eat during the Paleolithic era. It involves eating lean meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, basically food that people used to hunt for.

Pros: Focus on whole foods, lean proteins, vegetables and fruits can be considered a clean diet. "Adopting a clean diet can keep your gut healthy. It also has anti-inflammatory benefits," says Kejal Sheth, nutritionist and founder of

Nutrivity.in, an online healthy lifestyle and weight-loss consultancy.

Apart from that, people who are intolerant to grains feel better when on this diet. "Paleo diet doesn't contain any processed foods, very less saturated fats and sodium, so it's a good choice for cardiovascular diseases and even for diabetics due to lower glycemic index foods," says Parshant Wadhawan, consulting nutritionist, Viiking Trance fitness by Sachin Joshi. Paleo diet is also good for fat loss and it helps increase insulin sensitivity, he adds.

Cons: Paleo diet can be an expensive affair since it focusses on consumption of lean meats, fish, among other things. The diet also leaves out an important food group - legumes or grains, which are a good source of soluble fiber. "It can also be a very restrictive diet for vegetarians," adds Wadhawan.

Ketogenic diet: Often re-



ferred to as the keto diet, this diet involves drastically reducing the consumption of carbs and replacing it with fats.

Pros: The diet induces weight loss as it works harder to turn fat into energy. "It helps tackle skin issues such as acne, as it limits intake of refined carbs," says Sheth. According to Wadhawan, the diet is a good option for those suffering from diabetes as it contains very little carbs. "It has also shown promising results for neurodegenerative

disorders like Alzheimer's diseases, Parkinson, epilepsy, autism, bipolar and schizophrenia," he adds.

Cons: The high fat content of this diet can lead to higher levels of LDL (low-density lipoprotein) aka bad cholesterol in the body. This also means that a well-informed dietician needs to monitor this diet. "People may end up picking the wrong kinds of fats, which may not be healthy," says Sheth.

Juice Cleanse: A popular

diet with many Hollywood celebrities like Salma Hayek and Gwyneth Paltrow, juice cleanse involves drinking only cold-pressed juices through the day for a certain period of time.

Pros: A juice cleanse can greatly benefit the health of your skin as your body is taking in a lot of vitamins and minerals (with antioxidant benefits) all at once. "A juice cleanse when followed strictly can give good rest to the digestive tract and helps detox by flushing out toxins," says Wadhawan.

Cons: "Fruits are high in fructose, which can increase blood sugar levels rapidly. If followed over extended periods, a juice cleanse can cause protein and mineral deficiency," says Sheth.

Apart from these missing nutrients, juice lacks fiber. This may cause digestive problems, gas and other gastric issues like inflammation. "This diet is the classic ex-

ample of yo-yo diet. The weight loss experienced is not permanent," adds Sheth.

Raw food diet: In this diet, people are encouraged to eat raw forms of foods such as fruits and vegetables.

Pros: Naturally this diet has high content of fiber, which helps improve the lipid profile. "It also helps lower inflammation in the body and improves digestion," Sheth says. Following this diet could also result in clearer skin.

Cons: Be prepared for higher number of bathroom visits, bloating and gas. "This diet also lacks zinc, B12, deficiencies of which can lead to serious health conditions in the long run," says Wadhawan.

So, what's the best diet to lose weight you ask? A diet that is sustainable for a lifetime is the ideal one. Everything consumed in moderation, clean eating and exercise to keep you fit are tried and tested ways to lose weight.

If your husband hates cooking, show him this study. He will start loving it

I grew up believing that cooking is an important life skill and should be hygiene for everyone. Now, according to a study conducted by Elsevier, developing cooking and food preparation skills is important for health and nutrition, even decades down the line. But this begs the question, why is cooking not taught in schools?

We spend a lot of our time every day thinking about our food and nutrition. And the best way to make our food intake count towards good health is by cooking your own food. According to the lead author of the study, the impact of developing cooking skills early in life is more visible in adulthood.

Why should one learn to cook? Apart from being convenient, making your meals can also help with weight management. You are more likely to use

less fats, sodium as you have more control over what is being made.

In the study, most participants perceived their cooking skills to be adequate at age 18 - 23, with approximately one quarter of adults reporting their cooking skills to be very adequate. There were no differences in perceived cooking skills by sex, race or ethnicity, educational attainment, or age. Perceived adequacy of cooking skills predicted multiple indicators of nutrition outcomes later in adulthood including greater odds of preparing a meal with vegetables most days and less frequent consumption of fast food.

If those who perceived their cooking skills as adequate had families, they ate more frequent family meals, less frequent fast food meals, and had fewer barriers to food preparation. "Opportunities to

develop cooking skills by adolescents may result in long-term benefits for nutritional well-being," said Utter.

"Families, health and nutrition professionals, educators, community agencies, and funders can continue to invest in home economics and cooking education knowing that the benefits may not be fully realized until young adults develop more autonomy and live independently," concluded Utter.

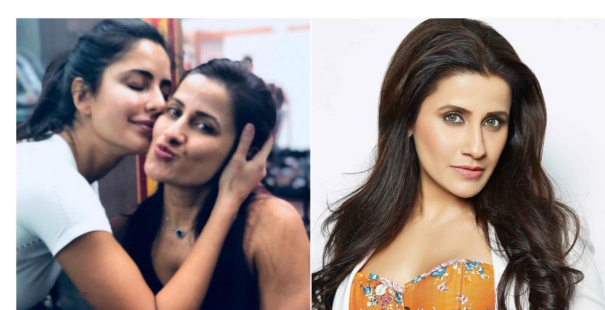
Cooking as therapy
Apart from the health aspect, learning to cook makes you independent and most importantly helps you save tonnes of money. Cooking is known to have therapeutic value too. Activities such as chopping and slicing can be meditative. In fact, culinary therapy is offered as part of treatment at various mental health clinics.

DEEPIKA PADUKONE, ALIA BHATT OWE THEIR SUPER FITNESS TO THIS PILATE GURU

In the past two decades, Yasmin Karachiwala has carved a niche for herself in the fitness industry. Her celebrity clientele includes A list actors like Katrina Kaif, Deepika Padukone, Alia Bhatt, Kareena Kapoor and Sonam Kapoor. The fitness expert says being skinny may have been a trend once upon a time in showbiz, but people are now

focussed on becoming fit and strong.

Actors who are open to experimenting with looks have certain deadlines when they have to achieve a certain get-up and body frame for their projects. Does that pressure fall on a fitness expert like her too? "Like any job, there is always pressure, especially when my



clients need to look a certain way for a role in a movie or a

song. But we always plan in advance. And luckily, they are all in great shape," Karachiwala told IANS in an email interaction. However, dismissing the skinny look, Karachiwala said: "Celebrities don't just want to be skinny but be fit, strong and live a healthy life."

Karachiwala is certified to teach on the mat, reformer,

cadillac, wunda chair, and step barre equipment. She is also an ACE certified group and personal trainer, and a Balance Body certified trainer for the Core-Align, BB Barre and Motr routines. On the Bollywood front, she helped Katrina get the perfect look in Dhoom 3 and has also worked on Deepika's toned look in Cocktail.

Parents, your diet and fitness before conception affect child's health

While women usually take great care of their health and nutrition intake during pregnancy, new research has found that doing so isn't enough. To ensure your kid turns out to be healthy in the long run, it's crucial for parents to be fit prior to pregnancy as well. And not just the mothers, even the father's lifestyle habits can affect children.

A series of studies published in the journal Lancet found that a number of factors can have "profound implications" on the growth, development and long-term health of their children before their conception. Namely, smoking, drinking alcohol, parents' health including obesity and poor diet. The findings showed that smoking, high alcohol and caffeine intake, diet, obesity and malnutrition in either or both parents, potentially increases a child's lifelong risk of heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, immune and neurological diseases.

Past research has well established the negative effect a-to-be mother's obesity can have on her child. For instance, earlier this month, a team from the University of Michigan found that being overweight or obese during pregnancy raises cerebral palsy risk in kids. Moreover, mother's obesity can up risk for major birth defects.

The new research emphasises a need for greater awareness of preconception health and improved guidance, with greater focus on diet and nutrition to improve the health of future generations. "Research is now showing that our gametes and early embryos are sensitive to a variety of environmental conditions including poor parental diet. These effects can change the process of development, affecting growth, metabolism and health of offspring, so makes the case for both parents to have a healthy lifestyle well before conception and pregnancy," said Tom Fleming, professor at the University of Southampton.

Maternal obesity contributes to increased levels of inflammation and hormones, which can directly alter the development of the egg and embryo. This, in turn, boosts the odds of chronic disease later in life. Men's obesity plays a role too. It can lead to poor sperm quality, quantity.

Pakistan's only female private bank CEO doesn't want to be a 'token' woman leader

The 61-year-old chief executive officer walks into a 21st-floor meeting room at United Bank Ltd.'s headquarters in Karachi and right away says she doesn't want to be viewed as a "token" woman and would prefer to discuss the bank's strategy. Yet she recognizes that as the only woman heading a private sector lender in Pakistan -- and one of the very few women leading companies in the country -- she has a responsibility that goes beyond her job.

"It's a privilege and a burden at the same time," she says in an interview in a building overlooking the sandstone school her father attended, amid the urban sprawl of the nation's largest city. "They roll you out. I've tried to avoid that and it's not always easy; some people feel I should do it because it's part of my duty, so there's a balance to be struck."

Kamil's rise through the ranks of Pakistan's intensely male-dominated banking industry in the conservative Islamic republic is nothing short of extraordinary. Her appointment last year was a further milestone in a country that became the first Muslim-majority nation to elect a female premier, yet where about one-fifth of all women marry before they turn 18 and many still face routine domestic violence and repression.

Women from Pakistan's elite have long held high political office. The most

prominent was former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who hailed from a dynastic feudal family and was assassinated in 2007. From a less privileged background, Kamil's path to the top came with considerable family support.

Karachi, the sleepy port city where Kamil grew up

Kamil's father grew up in Karachi when it was a sleepy port city before Pakistan's violent partition with India in 1947. Her mother's side of the family was uprooted during the tumultuous separation. They travelled from Eastern Punjab to Lahore by train -- a mode of transport that routinely led to some of the worst ethnic violence during the period.

Surviving the move, her maternal family intently focused on education. Kamil's mother studied philosophy at college and her father met his future wife at a poetry reading in Lahore. Her mother continued to enjoy and compose Urdu poetry and demanded the best schooling for her son and daughter. "She was the driving force," Kamil says.

Kamil enrolled at Karachi Grammar School, one of the city's most prestigious establishments. Listing Margaret Atwood and Graham Greene as authors she enjoys, she became a keen student of literature and history.

"If I had my wish those are what I



would have studied and that is still what I read; I never read books on economics," she says. Her family wasn't wealthy and "didn't have the luxury to send me off" to study arts or humanities.

Kamil moved to London and acquired an MBA from City University. Though she won a place to study development economics at Oxford her family couldn't afford it. Instead, she returned to Pakistan to work for American Express Co. in Karachi.

About three years later Kamil landed a job at ANZ Grindlays Bank first in Karachi and then Lahore. The move to the other city upset her parents as it's

rare even today for women in Pakistan to live alone. Most reside with their family until they are married and even then many continue to live at home or move in with their in-laws.

Kamil's ascent is all the more remarkable given the slow pace of progress for women in Pakistan. Just 22 percent of the nation's female population is employed. That's up only slightly from 20 percent in 2008, according to World Bank data; it compares with 24 percent in India and a 43 percent average rate in East Asia and the Pacific. Violence against women is common and human rights organizations estimate about 1,000

so-called "honor killings" occur annually in Pakistan, though legislation was passed in recent years to protect women.

"To pass a bill is nothing," says Khush Bakht Shujat, a 69-year-old senator from Karachi and one of Pakistan's first female TV anchors. In many households men aren't educated and "sometimes they are hiding behind religion, sometimes they are hiding behind rituals."

Nonetheless, Kamil was ambitious and rose through the ranks at ANZ Grindlays, spending two years in the mid-1990s in Melbourne. She moved again to Pakistan to become head of credit and then corporate regional executive before the lender's takeover by Standard Chartered Plc in 2000. In 2001 it was as Habib Bank Ltd., the nation's largest lender, that she found her mentor, Rafiuddin Zakir Mahmood, who was CEO until 2012. She was hired to run a regional corporate banking unit and was promoted to head the division in 2004.

Managing a bank "unheard of for a woman"

Kamil's education gave her a reputation as an upper-class, English-speaking Pakistani. So in bank branches Mahmood sought to see if Kamil could connect with the workforce and had her converse with staff who spoke only Urdu and

Punjabi. After Kamil passed those tests, Mahmood promoted her to head the lender's branch network in 2011. In that role she managed thousands of employees, which was "unheard of for a woman," Kamil says. "It shocked everybody in the bank because they thought I couldn't do it."

She brought about the highest annual average current account deposit growth in the industry, placing it first among Pakistan's banks. With her eye on the top job, Kamil was appointed CEO last year at the lender's main rival UBL -- whose headquarters is a stone's throw away. "It's always an ambition for anyone who is in senior management at a bank," she says.

She acknowledges obstacles yet says she wasn't treated in a sexist way.

"Sexism is you can't do this because you're a woman, I have not encountered that," she says. "But, yes, as a woman when you go in a new role you get tested and people take a bit of time if they are not used to working with women to relate to you."

Success came from Kamil's abilities to galvanize her troops, according to three former colleagues, who asked not to be identified so they could speak freely about Kamil. She wasn't authoritarian and gained respect through her focus and drive, they said.

SEBI scans Facebook 'likes', finds evidence in insider trading case

To catch manipulators, markets regulator SEBI has started looking at Facebook accounts of suspected persons, with 'friends' and 'likes' for posts being scanned in insider trading cases.

The watchdog checked the Facebook profiles of suspected persons to ascertain whether they were 'connected' in a case related to violation of insider trading norms.

After going through Facebook profiles in the case related to Deep Industries, SEBI found that the entities involved in insider trading were 'friends' on the social networking site and that they 'liked' each other's photos posted on the platform.

"The profiles of these persons were having restricted access and the photos posted by them can be 'liked' only by select persons whom they have added as their 'friends' on Facebook," the regulator said in an order dated April 16.

After gathering evidence,



also through scanning of Facebook posts, about the violations, SEBI has ordered impounding of unlawful gains worth over Rs 2.4 crore from three entities involved in the case.

The three entities -- Rupeshbhai Kantilal Savla, Sujay Ajitkumar Hamlai and V Techweb India Pvt Ltd -- were allegedly 'connected entities' and had traded in Deep Industries Ltd (DIL) shares while possessing price-sensitive information. They had details pertaining to the company bagging three con-

tracts from ONGC and using it the entities made illegal gains, as per SEBI.

According to SEBI, DIL's managing director Rupeshbhai Kantilal Savla and his wife Sheetal Rupesh Savla -- also one of the promoters -- were acquainted to the two directors of V Techweb -- Ajay Ajitkumar Hamlai and Sujay Ajitkumar Hamlai -- through Facebook. The Savla couple were also friends with Radhika Hamlai, wife of Ajay Hamlai through the platform.

The regulator found that Ajay and Sujay are associated

with DIL by virtue of frequent communication with Rupeshbhai Kantilal Savla.

By virtue of this association and frequent communications, they are reasonably expected to have access to the unpublished price sensitive information related to DIL in July-October 2015 period.

"... they had a social relationship which also can confer access to UPSI as envisaged in SEBI's PIT (Prohibition of Insider Trading) regulations," the order said.

Under SEBI norms, a person or an entity is considered an insider on the basis of various aspects, including by way of their association in any capacity with the company concerned and has access to unpublished price sensitive information. Even those who are involved in frequent communication with officers, including through "likes on social media", of the company concerned can also be considered as insiders.

Oil nears over 3-year highs as Saudi backs higher prices, US stockpiles drop

Oil prices rose on Thursday to their highest in over three years as US crude inventories declined and as top exporter Saudi Arabia pushes for higher prices by continuing to withhold supplies.

Brent crude oil futures rallied as high as \$74.02 a barrel, the strongest since November 27, 2014, and were at \$73.87 per barrel at 0645 GMT, up 39 cents, or 0.5%, from their last close.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures added 28 cents, or 0.4%, to \$68.75 a barrel. WTI had earlier scaled to \$68.95, its best level since December 2, 2014.

"The rally is due to the stock data last night and risk premiums from geopolitical tensions in the Middle East over the last few weeks, but these risk premiums are quite short-lived and investors will likely be normalizing prices lower again as the tensions ease," said OCBC analyst Barnabas Gan.

"I think oil prices are a



little elevated in the short-term and we would need to have clear signs for improvement in fundamentals," Gan said, adding the market will be looking for cues from a meeting of oil producers on Friday.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and its partners in a supply reduction pact will meet in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on April 20. OPEC will then meet on June 22 to review its oil production policy.

oil for their fiscal positions and the Kingdom on a bold -- and costly -- reform programme. So they might continue to squeeze the lemon while they have the chance," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at futures brokerage AxiTrader.

Since the start of the supply cuts, crude inventories have gradually declined from record levels towards long-term average levels.

In the United States, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) said on Wednesday that commercial crude stocks fell by 1.1 million barrels in the week to April 13, to 427.57 million barrels, close to the five-year average level of around 420 million barrels.

Further supporting oil prices is an expectation that the United States will re-introduce sanctions against Iran, OPEC's third-largest producer, which could result in further supply reductions from the Middle East.

INDIA TO INVEST MORE THAN £1 BILLION IN UK

India will invest more than 1 billion pounds in the UK, which will help create or safeguard 5,750 British jobs, as part of a new partnership forged during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit as the two sides signed a wide range of MoUs, agreements and initiatives across technology, trade and investment.

The British government on Wednesday announced a new India-UK trade partnership after Prime Minister Modi held talks with his British counterpart Theresa May.

The UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) said a range of new Indian investments worth more than £1 billion will create or safeguard 5,750 British jobs for the economy as part of the new partnership, which builds on the recommendations of the Joint Trade Review (JTR) between the two countries which concluded earlier this year.

"Removing barriers to trade is a key way in which the UK can capitalise on the predicted growth in world markets and so I'm delighted we have come to this new trade partnership with India," said Liam Fox, UK international trade secretary.

"It is clear that the opportunities for growth in trade with India are plenty, and as an international economic department we will continue to use tools such as trade missions not only to boost UK exports, but also to help businesses of all sizes forge ties and build cultivate relationships with potential buyers and

investors," he said.

According to DIT figures, total trade in goods and services between the UK and India was 18 billion pounds in 2017, a 15 per cent increase from 2016.

UK exports to India, led by innovative machinery and mechanical appliances, form a large part of this trade basket, increasing significantly by 14.9%

The new partnership will seek to improve the accessibility of trade for businesses in both countries, as the UK gets ready to leave the European Union (EU).

Focusing on the three key sectors of life sciences, information technology (IT) and food and drink, the partnership will seek to reduce barriers to trade with an eye on Brexit. The UK also intends to recruit a British cyber security industry expert to be based at the high commission in New Delhi, with a remit to share British expertise and connecting Indian private and public sector organisations with cutting-edge UK companies who can supply their specific requirements.

"The visit of Prime Minister Modi will see the launch of a package of technical assistance to help India climb further up the rankings for ease of doing business, benefitting UK companies and the Indian economy alike. Additionally, the two countries have also agreed to strengthen ties between their respective agriculture industries," the DIT statement said.



Meanwhile, the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) and techUK have set up the UK - India Tech Alliance, which will facilitate collaboration on building future skills in new technologies by nurturing a solid skills base in the UK and India, with the support of both the governments.

The UK and India also announced the Technology Summit II, which will be held in autumn 2018 to bring together the greatest UK and Indian tech innovators, scientists, entrepreneurs and policy makers to work together to scope and design solutions to challenges including the governance of future tech.

India and the UK have also agreed to an overarching cyber-relationship framework that among others enables the development of a common and

shared understanding of international cyber activity and discuss and share strategies to promote user confidence in the security of information and communication technology (ICT) products and services.

On rejuvenation of River Ganga, an MoU has been signed between National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC), UK. In the area of regulation of safe nuclear energy use for peaceful purposes, an arrangement has been arrived at between Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India (AERB) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation of Great Britain (ONR).

Recognising the increased threat posed by international criminality because of its increasingly complex nature and the threat posed by organised crime, an MoU on 'Exchange

of Information for the Purposes of Combating International Criminality and Tackling Serious Organised Crime' has been signed.

The UK has announced setting up a Fast Track Mechanism to identify and resolve specific issues faced by Indian companies who are either in the UK or looking to establish operations in the UK.

The UK announced the creation of a UK-India Tech Hub based in the British High Commission in New Delhi. The Tech Hub will include a network of people and programmes designed to facilitate ideas, investment and prosperity for India and the UK.

The UK and India will take forward a dialogue under the Joint Working Group on Trade, which will support a shared commitment to the global rules-based system and to the WTO's role in underpinning it.

The UK and India announced a mechanism to support Indian investments into the UK.

The two nations said that this commitment will ensure continued application to the UK of EU-India Agreements during the Implementation Period following the UK's departure from the EU, and put in place arrangements to replicate relevant EU-India agreements beyond this period.

The UK signed the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance and became the 62nd signatory member country.

Air India bids open to all with enough resources: Finance ministry



Any entity having adequate finances and ability to run Air India can bid for 76 per cent stake in the national carrier, department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM) secretary Neeraj Gupta said on Thursday. The government had last month floated a preliminary information memorandum inviting bidders to buy 76 per cent stake in loss-making Air India along with transfer of management control.

An official in the finance ministry said there has been good response from entities in the airline industry as well as corporates for buying stake in the debt-ridden national carrier. "We are not looking for only an airline to take over Air India... Anybody who has (required) net worth and funds can bid for Air India," Gupta said at an ASSOCHAM event in New Delhi.

The DIPAM secretary said the government has kept financial capacity of the bidder as the main criteria for disinvestment of Air India. The bidder should also have the ability to run the national carrier.

As per the bid document, bidders would be required to have a minimum net worth of Rs 5,000 crore and should have posted profit after tax (PAT) in three of the previous five financial years from the Expression of Interest (EOI) deadline. The last date for submission of the bids is May 14. The entity acquiring the domestic carrier will have to retain the 'Air India' brand for AI's business operations for a minimum specified number of years on terms to be detailed at request for proposal (RFP) stage.

Shahid Afridi, Shoaib Malik confirm participation for T20 fundraiser at Lord's

Shahid Afridi, Shoaib Malik and Thisara Perera will be part of the World XI in the T20 International against West Indies to be played at Lord's on May 31, the ICC announced on Thursday.

The match is being staged to raise funds to rebuild and restore five major cricket venues at the heart of Caribbean communities that were damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria last year.

Afridi and Malik were part of the Pakistan squad that won the ICC World T20 World Cup in 2009, while Perera was a member of the Sri Lanka side that lifted the silverware in Dhaka in 2014.

"I am humbled to have been selected for such a noble cause. Cricket is one big family and no matter how hard and tough we play against each other, there is tremendous comradery within the group. As such, it is our moral and professional obligation to stand up and support whenever and



wherever we can, to assist our members, colleagues and cricket fans," Afridi said.

The three World T20 winners will lend a lot of weight to the ICC World XI side which will see more names being added in what is expected to be a star-studded line-up led by England's white-ball captain Eoin Morgan, who has already been confirmed to lead the side.

"As much as the chance of figuring in such a select group, I also see this as an opportunity to contribute in a meaningful cause. We have all heard of the damage caused by the two hurricanes in the West Indies last year and it is really good to see so many cricketers come together for the objective of raising funds to repair the damage to cricket venues," Malik said.

Perera, who was also a part of the

World XI team that played a three-match T20 series against Pakistan in 2017, said, "I am privileged to have made the World XI side for a second time after having also played in the series against Pakistan in Lahore last year.

"I'm also very happy because I have been given the opportunity to contribute in what I think is a very good cause. It is heartening to note that players have come together for helping rebuild stadia in the West Indies. The West Indies have contributed a lot to world cricket over the years and they deserve all support from our generation of players," he added.

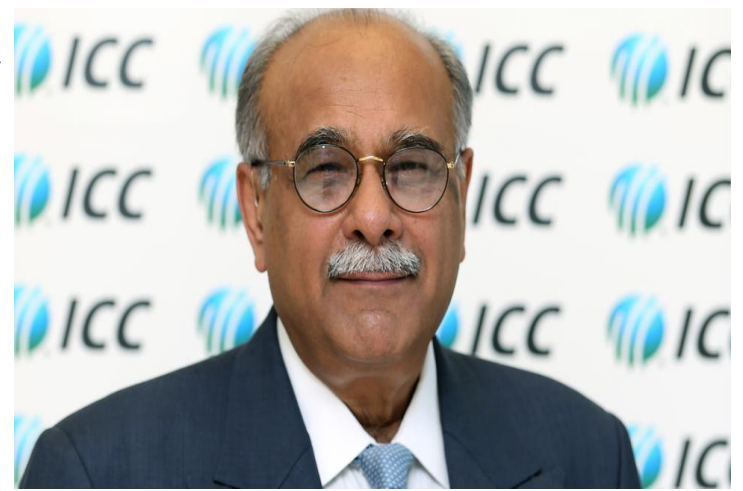
The Carlos Brathwaite-led Windies are also a strong side boasting big names like Chris Gayle, Marlon Samuels, Samuel Badree and Andre Russell. They will be looking to give their best and show the might that helped them win the ICC World Twenty20 title two years ago.

Pakistan Cricket Board delegation to visit India for ICC meeting

For the first time in more than two and a half years, a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) delegation will travel to India to attend an International Cricket Council (ICC) meeting.

PCB chairman Najam Sethi and Chief Operating Officer (COO) Subhan Ahmad will attend the meeting, which is slated to be held in Kolkata on April 21, the Dawn reported.

It will be the first time that a PCB delegation will visit India since Sethi and former chairman of the board, Shaharyar Khan, were flown to Mumbai in 2015 to hold talks with their Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) counterparts regarding the resumption of bilateral cricketing ties between the



famous arch-rivals.

The meeting was, however, disrupted after Shiv Sena activists stormed into the BCCI headquarters to protest against the same.

It is learnt that the ICC has played a pivotal role to ensure that the PCB delegation faces no issue in getting visas amid the ongoing political tensions between the two countries.

Raheem Sterling hungry for more after Manchester City's Premier League title win



Manchester City forward Raheem Sterling says he is hungry to win the Premier League again, warning the champions against complacency as they chase more glory.

Pep Guardiola's men were confirmed as champions with five matches still to play on Sunday when Manchester United were beaten by West Brom.

"This is my first Premier League title so who cares how you win it, whether it was on the pitch or on my sofa, I'm just delighted to win the title," said the England international.

"It's been a dream ever since I was a kid growing up playing football with my mates and winning it means everything.

"It's important we don't get complacent though. It's amazing to win it, but now it's about the next one."

The England international, who joined City from Liverpool in 2015, has progressed rapidly this season and Guardiola said at the weekend the 23-year-old could become one of the best players in the world.

Sterling, who has scored 22 goals, 17 in the Premier League, is relishing the opportunity to work with the former Barcelona and Bayern Munich boss.

"It's all about the basics with him. He pushes you to be better at the small things and that improves your performance," said Sterling.

"It's been great for me to learn in this environment and improve as a player under him. He's one of the best managers in the world. It's special to be part of."

Guardiola's transfer policy addressed the need to bring down the average age of the squad, with Leroy Sané one of those bought in the summer of 2016 to do just that.

The Germany international has provided a cutting edge on the opposite flank to Sterling while also chipping in with 13 goals.

With his first title now in the bag the 22-year-old is looking forward to a period of sustained success.

Indian Premier League fever grips nation, but business as usual elsewhere

In summer, the cricket world spins around the IPL axis. But while India is immersed in the annual cricket carnival much is happening in the cricket world.

Australia, scarred by controversy, is a patient recovering from surgery, taking unsteady steps to healthy life after the ball tampering nightmare. When Steve Smith's team fiddled with the ball, it sandpapered the nation's reputation and plunged Australia into its biggest cricket black hole.

The worst, however, is past and the new media deal has dispelled fears about public outrage triggering a commercial backlash. The deal brought in significant changes: ODI's and T20 cricket went behind a paywall and Channel 9 lost

a property they owned for 40 years.

Australia announced its annual central contracts, equally rewarding Tests and 'white ball' experts. One major beneficiary in this, understandably, was captain Tim Paine. With Smith and Warner suspended, Paine finds himself in the box seat — muqaddar ka siqandar — considering not long ago he lost his place in home state Tasmania.

England too has issues, but only annoying niggles compared to Australia's major challenges. Disapproving voices in boardrooms are growing louder about the new T20 tournament starting in 2020 and other governance matters. Counties are seeking a greater share of IPL and demanding clarity about play-



ers dashing off to India at the last minute.

The counties, meanwhile, have attracted top overseas talent. For a change, India is sending a strong contingent to England: Virat at Surrey, Pujara at Yorkshire, Ishant at Sussex, Axar Patel at Durham and Varun Aaron at Leicestershire. The South

Africans are also present in full force with Morne Morkel, Aiden Markram and Dean Elgar heading en masse to counties, joining Kolpak colleagues Kylie Abbott and Simon Harmer.

Closer home, Pakistan took the PSL final to Karachi and hosted three matches with a West Indies side so weak it

would struggle against a Division 2 county side. Pakistan also announced its squad for England. Missing: Mishbah and Younus Khan, both retired. Axed: veteran Wahab Riaz, for non-performance. Injured: Yasir Shah. Included: Fakhar Zaman (left-handed dasher) and Shadab Khan (the mystery leggie).

In Sri Lanka, simmering discontent between the cricket board and the 'interim' government-appointed body threatens to blow up into war. Despite the looming uncertainty Sri Lanka announced ambitious plans for a T20 league, rebooted the domestic structure and is about to appoint (Asanka Gurusinha) a new coach.

But this turmoil is nothing compared to the continuing

bizarre drama in Zimbabwe. Stung by the team's failure to qualify for the World Cup, the cricket body sacked captain (Graeme Cremer) coach (Heath Streak/Lance Klusener) selector (Tatenda Taibu) with immediate effect through an email. Then, realising this wouldn't stand legal scrutiny, all were reinstated — only to be sacked again the same day, this time after factoring in a three-month notice period!

India, once done with IPL, Afghanistan will play Bangladesh in an ODI series in Dehradun. After that India will host Afghanistan's inaugural Test in June in Bangalore and then fly to Ireland to play the new Test team.

After that it's serious business — the three-month tour to England.

CSA wants interim agreement amid contract negotiations with South Africa cricketers

Cricket South Africa (CSA) has proposed that an interim agreement be put in place with the South African Cricketers' Association (SACA) as they negotiate over a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The current MoU expires on April 30 and no contract extension with the Proteas players has been agreed so far.

But in order to alleviate fears over the players' futures, CSA wants to fix a temporary solution until negotiations are completed.

"While we will be seeking to clarify our relationship with SACA, I would like to stress that there will be no fundamen-



tal change in the underlying relationships between CSA and SACA," said acting CSA chief executive Thabang Moroe.

"It is rather the intention to restructure these relationships that cover the employer/employee relationship, the collective bargaining relationship and the commercial relationship so that all

of these relationships are regulated under separate agreements.

"In the interim, while the new MoU is being negotiated, CSA gives an irrevocable undertaking that an interim agreement is being proposed to allay any anxiety on the part of our cricketers concerning their futures.

"In conclusion, I would like to thank the SACA senior executives for the good spirit in which negotiations have been conducted to date and I am confident that this matter will be brought to finality within a reasonable time frame."

CSA has said its intention is to agree a new deal that will run until 2023.

Australian cricket team will have to 'tweak' on-field behaviour, says skipper Tim Paine



New captain Tim Paine says the Australian cricket team needs to make "a few tweaks" to its on-field behaviour to win back the support of the Australian public.

Paine admitted that in recent times the team "got carried away" in the way it conducted itself on the field and that came to a head with the ball-tampering incident in South Africa which resulted in the suspension of Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft.

But he revealed former captain Smith had already raised the issue of the team's behaviour and set in motion a plan to improve it months before he participated in the attempted ball-tampering at Cape Town.

Cricket Australia has now appointed former test opener Rick McCosker to head a panel which will review the culture of the Australian team. Paine insisted Thursday that major change isn't needed.

"Obviously we've had this incident which has brought everything to a head," Paine said. "But during the Ashes there wasn't a lot said about our culture."

"Looking back it's just a few little things that we can tweak and do a little bit better as a team. If we do that I think the Australia public will jump back on board pretty quickly."

Paine said Australia would definitely tone down the verbal abuse of opponents which has been an integral part of its team conduct.

"In the last couple of years at times as a team we've probably been a touch too emotional and got carried away," he said. "There's always a time and a place to talk to your opposition. But what's said and how it's said will be very different going forward."

Paine said Smith had already been determined to change the approach of the Australian team before he and Warner received 12 months bans and Bancroft a nine-month suspension.

Few checks and balances, BCCI pushed for transparency

After years of dodging attempts to bring it under the ambit of the Right To Information Act (RTI Act), the Indian cricket board appears close to being opened up to public scrutiny.

The Law Commission of India has recommended that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) be treated as a public body and brought under the Act because it performs "state-like" functions and receives public funding.

The Commission studied the issue after the Supreme Court in 2016 sought its advice on an issue that is seen as critical to reform of India's richest sporting body.

The issue isn't new. Whether the BCCI can be considered a public body was the crux of the arguments a five-judge bench headed by justice San-

tosh Hegde heard when Zee Telefilms Ltd took the board to court in 2005 for cancelling media rights it had won for telecasting cricket matches played in India.

Zee contended that BCCI should be considered a public body or 'state'. And if the court found in the broadcaster's favour, a writ petition could be filed to contest the board's decision. As senior advocate Harish Salve put forth his arguments, justice Hegde at one point inquired whether, if the court upheld Zee's argument, a player can approach the court even against an umpire's decision.

Without batting an eyelid, Salve narrated a joke. A batsman, given out on a Friday afternoon, gets a stay and goes on to amass runs at the weekend until the fielding side petitions the court on Monday



and gets the stay vacated for status quo to be restored!

The Supreme Court's final ruling said BCCI was not a public body or 'state' under Article 12. This barred Zee from filing a writ petition against the board.

Cricket board officials have for years opposed bringing BCCI under the RTI Act, arguing it was a private body. This argument was accepted until the Supreme Court heard a conflict of interest petition against then BCCI president

N Srinivasan and the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal rocked the image of one of the world's wealthiest sports federations.

In 2015, the court said that although the Supreme Court's 2005 ruling was in place, it could be subject to judicial

review under Art 226.

The argument that BCCI will end up facing frivolous RTI pleas has some merit, especially with the cricket board having commercial interests running into millions of dollars. A surge in the price of media broadcasting rights and the rise of new aspirants, especially after the launch of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in 2008, has left interested parties looking to find out at least on what grounds various decisions are arrived at in BCCI.

One will have to wait for the final word to be said on BCCI coming under the RTI Act. If it does come under the purview of the Act, cricket officials must bear most of the blame for not setting up checks and balances in its functioning and forcing the courts to step in.