

# TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

**SATURDAY**

- APRIL, 21, 2018
- 05 SHABAN 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 94
- VOLUME: 04
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	11.0	8.6
JAMMU	24.8	18.3
LEH	18.5	5.1
KARGIL	16.9	2.6

**SUNSET SATURDAY: 07:07 PM**  
**SUNRISE SUNDAY: 05:53 AM**

**LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR**  
 Light Rains/Thundershower. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 16°C & 08°C respectively.

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

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ZULFKAR LAUNCHES EXTENDED PMUY SCHEME

TWO CHILDREN RAPED AND MURDERED DURING WEDDINGS IN UP, CHHATTISGARH

INDIA TURNS A BAD LOAN TRAGEDY INTO A BANKRUPTCY FARCE

CHRIS GAYLE HITS FIRST CENTURY OF IPL 2018, CREDITS YOGA FOR KNOCK

## INDIAN ARMY COMMANDERS DISCUSS CHALLENGES IN KASHMIR, BORDERS

New Delhi: Senior Indian Army commanders on Friday discussed the increase in ceasefire violations along the Line of Control, the volatile situation in Kashmir Valley, and the challenges faced by security forces, particularly along the borders with China and Pakistan.

During the Army Commanders Conference, which began on Monday and will conclude on Saturday, they also discussed the radicalisation of youth in the Valley, a senior Army official said.

The official said "considerable" time was devoted to "re-prioritising" existing requirements to ensure that resources allocated for force modernisation and capacity building were optimally utilised within the budgetary allocation.

The Army commanders will on Saturday discuss matters related exclusively to military operations.

Last month, the Army told a parliamentary panel it was reeling under



a severe fund crunch and struggling to even make emergency procurements when there was a real possibility of a two-front war and both China as well as Pakistan were carrying out rapid modernisation of their defence forces.

Discussions were also held on increasing indigenisation in force modernisation.

"The deliberations appraised the current situation along the LoC, the increase in the CFVs (ceasefire violations) and the adequacy of the response mechanisms," the Army official said.

The commanders discussed the situation in the Valley and also reviewed the developments affecting the modus operandi of the operations of the armed forces deployed in the

region.

Security forces have faced stiff opposition from Valley residents - who have resorted to stone pelting - while carrying out operations in the Valley.

"It was also felt that priority must be accorded towards ushering peace, by conducting counter-terrorist operations that minimise collateral damage," the official said.

"The radicalised youth must be brought into the mainstream by carrying out de-radicalisation and collective approach that focuses on convincing the youth to shun violence and gun culture," he added.

The commanders also deliberated on the prevailing situation along the northern borders, capacity building steps, including infrastructure development.

A major focus of the conference was on bolstering the Army's overall operational preparedness along the nearly 4,000-km-long border

▶ See **Army...**Pg 02

## Rains lash Kashmir, roads inundated



Srinagar, Apr 20: Rain lash Kashmir Valley yet again on Friday while some parts in upper reaches received fresh snowfall.

Reports said that Kashmir Valley on Friday received rainfall resulting in the dip in day temperatures. Besides, rainfall in plains, the upper reaches received snowfall. Snowfall was also recorded at tourist destinations including Gulmarg and Sonmarg.

The fresh snowfall at Mughal Road prompted authorities to close it down for vehicular movement. Srinagar-Leh road was also closed due to fresh snowfall at Zajila and Gumri.

A police official said that Jammu-Srinagar highway remained open throughout the day despite rains.

Majority roads were under one to two feet of rain water in the summer capital of Srinagar, where people remained confined to their homes.

A Met department official said the weather will improve from Saturday.

Majority roads in the city, including at Regal Chowk, historic Lal Chowk, Magarmal Bagh, Lal Ded Hospital Road, Karan Nagar, ▶ See **Rains...**Pg 02

### Police conducted nocturnal raids, arrest nine youth

Pulwama, Apr 20: Police arrested at least 9 youth during nocturnal raids in different area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Reports said that combined forces conducted nocturnal raids at four different areas including Koil, Prichoo, Sirnu and Malikpora arresting 9 youth on charges of alleged stone-pelting.

Sources said that three youth were arrested from Koil and two each from Prichoo, Sirnu and Malikpora. The family members of arrested youth said that they are innocent and have nothing to do with stone-pelting.

During his Friday address, Central Jamia Masjid Imam, Muhammad Akram Dar demanded immediate release of the arrested youth. He also asked police to stop conducting nocturnal raids. "The arrest spree will disturb the atmosphere in Pulwama town. It will have serious

▶ See **Police...**Pg 02

## Omar Abdullah calls 'heckling incident' a 'Tamasha'

Srinagar, Apr 20: A video has gone viral which shows some Kashmiri Americans heckle National Conference leader Omar Abdullah when he was coming out from the University of California in Berkeley after delivering a speech.

Omar Abdullah termed it a tamasha. "I had a great session at @UCBerkeley & don't let anyone tell you otherwise. FOUR hecklers (in an audience of 150+) who waited till the event concluded to make YouTube videos of themselves



can't take away from an excellent Q&A session there," Omar wrote on Twitter.

the entire session online so that the people who've seen

the short tamasha can see how much substantial stuff happened before that," he wrote on another tweet.

Omar further said: "And

lastly I've never claimed to be universally loved or even liked so if 4 people in such a large audience make their dislike known it's really not such a big deal at all. At least no one threw eggs or a shaving foam pie at me."

The protesters had accused Omar of being a "war criminal" along with his father and grandfather. There is a brief video clip being shared on the social media offering a brief view of the noisy scenes outside the main gate of a

▶ See **Omar...**Pg 02

### Property dealers go 'e' YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR MULLING TO SET UP KASHMIR SOCIETY IN NEW DELHI

Srinagar, Apr 20: Young property dealers from Valley are planning to establish 'Kashmir Society' in Indian capital New Delhi that will be exclusively reserved for the people of Kashmir.

A budding entrepreneur Rizwan Khan who is a property dealer as well as promoter has named his new enterprise as 'edraaal' and when asked how he decided to come up with such a name which doesn't give a good impression, Khan says he wants to restore the credibility of this business in Kashmir Valley.

"We have shown boldness by choosing the name 'edraaal' to restore the significance of this business. We have

▶ See **Young...**Pg 02

### Chief Secretary chairs 106th FAC Meeting Several developmental projects cleared



JAMMU, APRIL 20: The Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) headed by Chief Secretary, B B Vyas Friday in its 106th meeting cleared several proposals of urgent developmental and public importance, on the specified terms and conditions.

Financial Commissioner Revenue, Lokesh Dutt Jha, Commissioner Secretary Forest, Ecology and Environment, Saurabh Bhagat, Secretary PHE, I&FC, M Raju, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF) Ravi Kumar

▶ See **Secretary...**Pg 02

### POLICE RECOVERS KIDNAPPED MINOR GIRL, KIDNAPPER ARRESTED

Srinagar, Apr 20: After receiving a complaint from the parents of a minor girl (name withheld) that their minor daughter was kidnapped, Police station Nowgam acted swiftly and a team led by SHO Police Station Nowgam under the supervision of SDPO Pantha Chowk started investigation.

After strenuous efforts by the police, the said minor girl was recovered from the possession of the kidnapper & was handed over to her parents.

In this regard case FIR No. 34/2018 under section 363, 109 RPC stands registered in Police Station Nowgam. The accused kidnapper Bashir Ahmad Para was arrested and further investigation is in progress.

### 'Govt depts, face staff crunch, officers under heavy workload' Around 20 KAS officers retiring in 2018

Srinagar, Apr 20: With the recent retirement of nine JK cadre officers and dozens of other bureaucrats retiring ever year, The Jammu and Kashmir government is grappling with a huge shortage of officers.

Official sources told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that many officers are retiring in the current year including around 20 KAS officers which would affect the administration in the state.

An officer from the general administration department said that some of the officers with superb track records are retiring this year. "Generally, officers retire every year. But from last two years, the number was big," the of-

licer maintained. He said that retiring of such a big number every year would affect the administration in the state. "Government should make efforts to fill up all these vacancies," he added.

Sources said that around 2900 gazetted posts including IAS, IPS, KAS, KPS, Professors, and Lecturers are lying vacant in the state affecting the work of officers' assigned additional charge.

Nine JK cadre IAS officers retired in 2016 and 2017. Those included Gazzanfer Hussain, Vinod Koul, Arun Kumar, Mohd Ashraf Bhukhari, Zaffar Ahmed Bhat, Ashok Kumar ▶ See **Staff...**Pg 02

### KATHUA CASE: DOWNTOWN YOUTH TAKES LEAD TO HELP ADV RAJAWAT FOR DELIVERING JUSTICE

Announces 'a gift' of Rs 50,000, says will try to help her in future as well

Srinagar, Apr 20: At a time when the people across the globe raised their voice over the Kathua rape and murder case, the downtown youth has taken a lead by announcing 'a gift' of Rs fifty thousand to Advocate Deepika Singh Rajawat for taking the step forward by pleading the case to deliver justice to the minor victim.

A downtown youth namely Sajad Shah from Tankipora told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the people have raised their voice over the gruesome act to demand stern punishment against the culprits but at the same time people shouldn't forget that the lady (Advocate Deepika ▶ See **Youth...**Pg 02

## Mirwaiz pitches for reopening of Kunan-Poshpora, other rape cases

Demands exemplary punishment to guilty involved in Kathua case

Srinagar, Apr 20: Demanding exemplary punishment to the guilty involved in the gruesome rape and murder of minor girl of Kathua, Chairman of Hurriyat (M), Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Friday said all the rape cases that took place in Kashmir since past three decades should be reopened and reinvestigated including the mass rape of Kunan-Poshpora so that guilty who continue to remain scot free are brought to book.



Addressing the Friday congregational gathering at the historic Jamia Masjid, Mirwaiz according to the state-

ment issued to KNS urged world human rights bodies to raise their voice against the brutal rapes and murders of

Kashmiri women and to ensure justice is delivered as they did in the case of Asifa.

Mirwaiz who was allowed to address Friday gathering after two Friday prayers, said the rape and murder of eight year old girl child shook entire world and at the same time the incident has refreshed our old wounds and reminded Kashmiris of many similar brutal mass rape and murders committed here by the forces ▶ See **Mirwaiz...**Pg 02

### RDA GOVT. DENTAL COLLEGE, SRINAGAR AFFILIATES WITH DAK

Srinagar, Apr 20: Doctors Association Kashmir President, Dr Suhail Naik congratulated dental college scholars of Government Dental College (GDC), Srinagar for electing its Resident Doctors Association (RDA).

Expressing gratitude & satisfaction over democratically elected RDA Dr Naik said that "associations are part and parcel of a democratic setup which will play a significant role in addressing the genuine grievances and issues of the dental college students and residents which in turn will help in upgrading the overall health care."

Meanwhile RDA GDC has affiliated with DAK and the Executive Body welcomed them into their fold. Expressing ▶ See **RDA...**Pg 02

# CS REVIEWS PROGRESS UNDER SBM, FINANCIAL INCLUSION, GRAM SWARAJ ABHIYAN

## 72% target achieved in IHHL coverage

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Chief Secretary, B B Vyas today chaired a meeting to review the progress on construction of Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs), verification and geo-tagging of units under Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in the state.

Principal Secretary, Finance Navin K Choudhary, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rohit Kansal, Secretary, RDD Sheetal Nanda and Mission Director, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan Mohammad Nazir Sheikh were present in the meeting while as Deputy Commissioners from various districts of the state participated in the meeting through video-conferencing.

It was informed in the meeting that the state has achieved a target of 71.95% in IHHL coverage.

The Deputy Commissioners from

respective districts informed that 98.43 per cent target has been achieved in Anantnag, 67.44% in Bandipora, 67.59% in Baramulla, 62.99% in Budgam, 68.26% in Doda, 62.20% in Ganderbal, 63.93% in Jammu, 45.69% in Kathua, 57.23% in Kishtwar, 72.95% in Kulgam, 91.92% in Kupwara, 61.45% in Poonch, 98.64% in Pulwama, 84.53% in Rajouri, 66.74% in Ramban, 56.09% in Reasi, 64.21% in Samba and 48.41% in Udhampur.

It was noted with appreciation by Chief Secretary that Leh, Kargil, Shopian and Srinagar have already been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) and Anantnag and Pulwama are likely to achieve the status of ODF by the end of April.

The Chief Secretary lauded the efforts of the Deputy Commissioners in achieving targets to a large extent and asked

them to gear up their men and machinery for declaring the rest of the districts ODF in shortest possible time.

He asked the Deputy Commissioners of Ganderbal and Anantnag to identify the spots on the highway leading to the Amarant shrine and construct the toilets on these locations on war-footing. He was informed that the spots have been identified and the construction work has been started and that the work shall be completed by May 15, 2018.

The Chief Secretary further directed the Deputy Commissioners to complete verification of the units and lay stress on sustainability of these assets. He was informed that IEC activities have been taken up at large scale in all districts of the state to ensure proper utilization of these units.

Enquiring about the activities taken up under Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (GSA), the Chief Secretary was informed that Social Justice Day and Swachhta Divas have been observed while as preparations are underway to hold Gram Sabha meetings in every Gram Panchayat on Panchayati Raj Divas on April 24 for discussing important issues and programmes for social and economic empowerment of the weaker sections of the society.

Stressing that these reform-oriented schemes would definitely change the lives of people in rural areas, the Chief Secretary directed the officers to lay focus on organizing special camps for issuance of caste certificates, scholarships to SC/ST students and ensure these events get due publicity for building awareness among the people.

He directed the Manager of Lead Bank including SBI, J&K Bank and Punjab National Bank to depute representatives in 124 villages identified by DFS in nine districts of the state to achieve 100% target in terms of opening accounts under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), enrolment under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bhima Yojana (PMJJBY) and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bhima Yojana (PMSBY).

Meanwhile, Rohit Kansal asked the DCs to take Chief Minister's commitments on priority and complete the works within the stipulated time. He asked them to establish strong rooms in their respective districts for proper storage of electoral material.

In the meeting, Navin K Choudhary asked the Deputy Commissioners to work for achieving priority sector lending

targets and identification of beneficiaries should be done on priority, besides taking proper care in preparing list of identified beneficiaries before sending it to the banks.

The Chief Secretary directed to focus on Aadhaar seeding of bank accounts, DBT, doubling farmers' income by 2022, MUDRA, Stand Up India and grant of educational loans to children belonging to weaker sections of the society.

He asked them to review BAPD in terms of outcomes and new steps taken under the programme, besides not taking up any work under BAPD that cannot be completed in three years.

He directed DCs of Jammu and Reasi to visit migrant camps in Jagti and Talwara respectively for carrying out renovation works in these camps.

## Basharat Bukhari interacts with Expert Committee for State Horticulture Policy

Directs them to expedite policy formulation

JAMMU, APRIL 20 - Minister for Horticulture Syed Basharat Ahmad Bukhari today held interactions with the Expert Committee constituted for drafting/formulating comprehensive State Horticulture Policy here today.

The Committee comprising of VC, SKUAST Kashmir Prof Nazeer Ahmad, VC SKUAST Jammu Dr P.K Sharma, Secretary Horticulture Manzoor Ahmad Lone, Former VC Dr. Y.S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry Solan Dr RP Awasthi, Head Food Security and Agribusiness (Policies and Programs) UPL Group Vijay Sardana apprised the Minister on various inputs received by the Committee in its vari-



ous interactions with the stakeholders across the State. Pertinent suggestions received include zonalization, Nursery Raising, Identification and multiplication of unexplored species/varieties, intercropping in orchards, introduction of new species/varieties, promoting mecha-

nization, popularizing high density plantation, rejuvenation/revival of orchards who have completed their bearing capacity, creation of healthy irrigation infrastructure and conservation of moisture, micro irrigation, organic farming, utilization of walnut for timber purpose, creating

awareness and transfer of technology, structured weather based Crop Insurance scheme, proper packaging mechanisms, Integrated Pest Management, creation of infrastructure including testing laboratories, human resource development, marketing tie ups low cost storage chambers and post harvest management and food processing measures including setting up food processing parks, training of youth in food processing, among others.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the suggestions extended to streamline the horticulture

sector in the state. The Minister asked the Committee members to take a pragmatic view of the suggestions received and review the viability, feasibility of these inputs.

He asked them to expedite the formulation of State Horticulture Policy and submit the final draft of the policy at the earliest for further scrutiny and early implementation in the state.

Among others, Director Horticulture Jammu Anuradha Gupta, Director Research SKUAST-J.P Sharma, Head Division of Food Science, SKUAST-J Dr V.K Wali, Joint Director Horticulture Tarvinder Singh, CHOs were present in the meeting.

## DC Jammu reviews progress of Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Deputy Commissioner, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan today convened a meeting to review the progress made under Gram Swaraj Abhiyan.

Speaking on the occasion, DC Jammu directed the concerned officers to devise monitoring mechanism for quantifying the number of beneficiaries on daily basis. All the concerned were directed to ensure that maximum people are made aware of the government sponsored schemes during the programmes to be held as a part of Gram Swaraj Abhiyan in the district.

He stressed for close coordination and synergy among line departments for grand success of the Abhiyan. He directed the officers to conduct regular visits and hold awareness camps in the villages to

update the people about the benefits of the schemes launched by central government.

DC further directed the officers to identify the bottlenecks in the GSA and remove the same to ensure that the people are fully benefited of the welfare schemes. He said that the objective of this Abhiyan is to promote social harmony, reach out to poor rural households, obtain feedback on ongoing programmes, enrol in new initiatives, focus on doubling farmers' income, enhance livelihood opportunities and re-emphasize national priorities.

He also directed departments including Health, Education, RDD, FCS&CA, Agriculture and SRLM to ensure door to door outreach of schemes including free LPG connections, electricity sup-

ply, Jan Dhan accounts, two PM Insurance schemes and the immunization of children with objective to ensure total coverage and saturation in 58 identified villages within 21 days along with focus on all other villages of the district for generating awareness that will ensure success of this Abhiyan.

He said that Union Government has launched 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan' which is a high-intensity outreach programme to deliver welfare schemes to those villages which need particular attention.

It is pertinent to mention that this Abhiyan was launched on the occasion of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti aiming 100% coverage of seven schemes launched by central government for eligible beneficiaries in three-weeks from April 14 to 5 May 2018.

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### ARMY

with China. Indian and Chinese troops were locked in a 73-day standoff in Doklam in the Sikkim sector last year after the Indian side stopped the construction of a road in the disputed area by the Chinese Army. The faceoff ended on August 28.

The official said the Army commanders also deliberated upon cyber-security and security of military establishments.

### RAINS

Firdous Abad Batamalo, Exhibition and Samandar Bagh road were under twofold of rain water due to faulty drainage system. However, streets wore a deserted look while shopkeepers closed their shops before evening.

Due to heavy rains and windstorm some poplar trees at Uttersoo Achabal were uprooted on the interior link roads which had completely blocked the Shangus Chattergul road and other link roads.

Police parties from Police Station Achabal and Police Station Uttersoo swung into action and launched a massive road clearing operation under the supervision of SDPO Achabal Shri Tanveer Ahmed. The trees lying on the roads were cut and removed by using chain saw and axes. All the link roads were cleared and made through for traffic.

### POLICE

consequences and besides, the career of these educated youth will be at risk," he said.

When contacted, a police official told news agency that these youth have been arrested for disrupting peace in the town. He said that raids will continue and accused stone-pelters will be arrested.

### OMAR

building, the venue where Omar delivered the speech. The protesters threatened him that they will "drag him to the international criminal court". They also told him to stop trading Kashmiri lives, stop dirty politics and stop being an "Indian agent".

The protesting group accused Omar that he has "still blood of innocent Kashmiris on his hands".

Omar Abdullah had been invited by the University of California for a conversation on The Path Forward In Kashmir. The venue was the Great Hall in the Faculty Club.

### YOUNG

gone 'e' (electronic) because we want transparency in our business. We operate through our website www.edraa.com where anybody can upload their properties. Our involvement is least in the business and we do believe in transparency," says Rizwan Khan.

Khan who has done MBA and hails from Chattabal area of Srinagar city says that they want all property dealers to get connected with them. "We don't want to isolate other property dealers and want to work together. We have chosen 'e' format to make our business global. Any seller who uploads property on our portal can find buyers all across globe. There are thousands of people from Kashmir who live outside and it is a good platform for them," he says.

He says properties in Kashmir are bought or sold through conventional method that is 'word of mouth'. This conventional method doesn't bear good results as the reach is limited and besides, there is no transparency. Our method is a

transparent one where buyers and sellers can directly interact with each other and besides it has a global reach.

While talking about his future plans, Rizwan Khan says that they are exclusively affiliated with Delhi and Haryana based Arsh Group and Arya Real Tech. "We are mulling to create a Kashmir Society in New Delhi with the help of Arsh Group. That Colony will be exclusively reserved for the people of Kashmir where they will get all the required facilities including a mosque. If this plan materializes, the colony for the people of Kashmir will be established by 2020," Says Rizwan Khan.

### SECRETARY

Kesar, Director Environment and Remote Sensing, Om Prakash Sharma, Chief Conservator Forests Jammu, Syed FA Gillani, Chief Engineer PMGSY, SP Manhas, Chief Engineer PHE Kashmir, MK Najaf and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

The proposals cleared included the use of forest land for construction of PMGSY roads, railway tracks and bridges in various forest divisions of the state including construction of road from Banjian to Nokan in Billawar Forest Division, construction of operational track from Maidan Behak to Ringsar in Kamraj Forest Division, construction of foundation of AI-P3 of bridge No: 43 of USBRL Project under District Reasi in Reasi Forest Division, construction of Bridge No 85 and 87 in forest range of USBRL northern Railway in Mahore Forest Division, station yard Reasi on Katra-Reasi section of USBRL project by Northern Railway in Reasi Forest Division and construction of tunnels for railway on Katra-Reasi section of USBRL project, construction of 0.25 lac gallons capacity filtration Gallery at Chandanwari and Nunwan.

While reiterating the directions for ensuring minimum felling of trees and undertaking compensatory afforestation over alternate land in lieu of diversion of forest land, Chief Secretary called for strict supervision and monitoring of approved works in the forest areas. He said cutting of trees/saplings, which constitute a precious forest resource be avoided as far as possible and afforestation plans drawn up to fill up the gaps besides protection works be undertaken to prevent soil erosion.

Chief Secretary emphasized that during the conceptualization stage itself, the road alignments be worked out, ensuring minimum felling of trees.

### STAFF

Angurana, Tsering Angchok, Vineaeta Gupta.

While, Bharat Bhushan Vyas, who too was to get retired, has been given extension. Now more officers are retiring in 2018, which as per officials would further effect the administration in the state.

Among retiring bureaucrats, sources said that some are holding higher posts like secretaries and directors. "Government needs to fill up all these vacancies. Several IAS officers are also retiring in 2018 and would further affect the governance.

Sources within the government said that there is a severe shortage of IAS officers in the state. "The state is facing a severe shortage of IAS officers. As of now, the fixed strength of IAS officers in the state is 137 against availability of 84 officers. Out of in position 84 officers, 11, including Braj Raj Sharma, Suresh Kumar, P K Tripathi, Sudhanshu Panday, Atal Dulloo, Shantmanu, Bipul Pathak, Ashok Kumar Parmar,

Manoj Kumar Dwiwedi, Mandeep Kaur and Yasha Mudgal are serving in key departments of Modi Government," wishing anonymity, one of the top officials of the government had told KNS.

These officers according to sources are "unwilling" to serve in the state. "The J&K government has sought return of all IAS officers of JK cadre from the centre, but the central government has so far given a cold response," the GAD said.

Several JK cadre IAS officers posted on insignificant postings, while many are also unwilling to serve in the state, have sought central deputation.

Sources said that in Indian Police Service (IPS), the state is facing shortage of 90 IPS officers against the total strength of 147. Currently, 84 IPS officers are holding the State Cadre, 24 are on Central Deputation, which shrinks the number of IPS officers posted in the state to 60, officials said.

For the last six years, the official said that the state government has not sent any proposal to the Union Public Service Commission to fill the vacant IPS posts because of several litigations against the seniority list of KPS officers due to caderisation of KPS into IPS.

In June last year, the PDP-BJP coalition approved the caderisation of KPS after which many KPS officers started getting the grade pay of the IPS officers.

The government in May last year had asked the Chief Secretary of the State B B Vyas to constitute a committee for resolution of the litigations of KPS officers for induction into IPS.

Union Minister of State In-charge DoPT, Dr Jitendra Singh recently said that Centre was trying to persuade the cadre officers to return to their states. "Even if they are unwilling, we try to motivate them. We encourage the cadre officers to revert to their states and serve the people," he had said.

Interestingly citing a shortage of IAS bureaucrats at the middle-level, the Narendra Modi government has asked all states to spare more officers for central deputation.

In a letter to all states, including Jammu and Kashmir, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) said the movement of the officers from states to the Centre and back is crucial for building capabilities at the state-level and contributing towards developing national perspectives at the decision-making levels in the government of India.

"It would, therefore, be appropriate considering the fact that there is general shortage of IAS officers at Deputy Secretary/Director level, if a conscious attempt is made while forwarding the names of the officers, so as to share the shortage proportionately between the Centre and the states and also that every eligible officer has an opportunity to serve at the Centre at least once at the middle management level," reads official communiqué.

### YOUTH

Singh Rajawat) who belongs to Kashmiri Pandit family has exhibited Kashmiriyat by pleading the case to deliver Justice to Asifa.

"Though I am not affiliated with any political party but I know how much she has to spend to take the minor girl's case to the logical conclusion. Keeping in view of the money she has to spend, I took the step from my side to help her and announced a gift of my hard earned Rs fifty thousand to her so that she can plead the case easily and help in delivering justice to Asifa," he added.

He told KNS that he would like to help the Advocate in future as well in case she need more money to plead the case to deliver justice to the victim.

Saying that the way Advocate Rajawat took this step is appreciable, the downtown youth said that "by taking this step, she has got the support of every individual across the globe as she exhibited Kashmiriyat and humanity of Kashmir. I didn't know her before but from now onwards, she is my sister."

The downtown youth further prayed for the courage of the victim family and said that those who are behind the act should be dealt with strictly. "The Kathua episode was painful and has shaken the consciousness of every individual. Those who are seeking relief to the culprits should also be dealt with strictly," he added.

Asked about the plea seeking transfer of the case from Kathua court, Shah said that the case should not be transferred to outside Jammu and Kashmir as there are quite apprehensions that the authorities would hush up it by shifting the case to outside the state.

### MIRWAIZ

who continue to roam freely.

He said the incidents like Kunanposhpora, Chaksaidpora, Pazipora, Dooru, Shopian (Asiya-Neolofar) are the glaring examples of war crimes committed by the forces in Kashmir since 1990 in a bid to incite fear and intimidate freedom seeking people of Kashmir.

Mirwaiz said that the rape and murder of minor Asifa was pre meditated, it's aim was to push and evict bakerval community from the area by instilling fear among them the way Kunan poshpora act was committed to force entire Kashmir population into submission.

Mirwaiz said while on one hand people of JK are demanding stern punishment to the culprits of minor Kathua girl, at the same time we demand reopening of all rape and murder cases since 1990 and to bring culprits to book after investigations.

He also urged all the pro-justice people across the globe would rise to an occasion and ensure justice is delivered to all the victims of rape and murder in JK.

Mirwaiz also lambasted at the ruling regime for imposing frequent curbs and caging the resistance leadership in jails and homes. He questioned the rulers as to how long they would curb the freedom resistance leadership and people?

He said today strong voices are emulating across India and Pakistan that war was not the solution and that Delhi must accept the ground reality and address the core issue of Kashmir.

### RDA

pleasure Dr Naik said that "we whole heartedly welcome the newly formed Resident Doctors body and will work in tandem to solve the long pending demands of dental college residents".

"It is a matter of grave shame that academics and administration of GDC, Srinagar is suffering due to a care taker Principal who is using all means at his disposal to get himself confirmed illegally. It is also pertinent to mention here that the GDC Principal has been charged with a criminal case in 2016 by vigilance dept. of Kashmir vide no. VOK-FIR-33/2012K.3094-95 who have further recommended his removal from the post but he still continues to be there, unless and until there isn't a deep seated unholy nexus it wouldn't have been possible that he is still continuing on that chair", Dr Naik further added. DAK fully supports the newly formed body of Residents doctors of GDC, Srinagar and is with them shoulder to shoulder for addressing their genuine issues.

## Zulfkar launches extended PMUY scheme

Govt distributes 18,600 new LPG connections in JK

JAMMU, APRIL 20 - Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumers Affairs (FCS&CA) & Tribal Affairs, Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today urged the people to come forward and avail benefit from welfare schemes launched by state and centre government for improving their socio-economic condition.

The Minister said this after launching second phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) to cover additional households in the state. "The extended phase of PMUY will now cover the households belonging to scheduled categories, beneficiaries of PMAY - Gramin, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, forest dwellers and others.

The beneficiaries to be covered, which are in addition to the existing households identified under Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC), will also be provided deposit free LPG connections," the Minister stated.

While addressing the gathering on Ujjwala Divas as part of 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan' held here at Kot Bhalwal today, the Minister said the overwhelming response to the PMUY initiative and its efficient implementation and monitoring have led the government to revise the initial target of releasing 5 crore connections to 8 crore by the year 2020 in the country.



On the occasion, Chowdhary Zulfkar distributed free LPG connections along with documents among eligible women beneficiaries from different panchayats of the block.

The Minister said the directions have already been passed to the all District Development Commissioners to hold Gram Sabhas in their respective districts to raise awareness among people regarding PMUY extended and other schemes to ensure that no eligible beneficiary be left out.

Enumerating the achievement of

PMUY in the state, Ch Zulfkar informed that J&K has been placed on first spot in the country for implementation of the scheme adding that around four lakh free LPG connections have been issued under PMUY to the beneficiaries against the 5.07 lakh beneficiaries whose KYC have been done.

The Minister informed the gathering that "Ujjwala Divas", is being observed at 186 places in the state and 18,600 new LPG connections are being distributed among the already identified beneficiaries. PMUY has been a

revolutionary initiative that has transformed the lives of crore of poor households spanning across the length and breadth of the country, he added.

Highlighting initiatives taken by the present dispensation, Zulfkar said the State and Union Governments have put in great efforts to ease out the life of people by providing amenities and services in fair and transparent manner. He said initiative like Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a step to provide a clean fuel to people living below poverty line (BPL) by providing them with free LPG connections.

He said availing the benefits under PMUY provides smoke-free, convenient and healthy environment which tunes in with the aim of the scheme to improve the health of women, especially belonging to BPL families.

Director FCS&CA Ch Rashid Azam Inqalabi, Controller Legal Metrology Department (LMD) Raj Kumar Katoch, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Jammu North Mohammad Alyas Khan, Joint Controller, LMD V.S Sambyal, Deputy Controller LMD Manoj Prabhakar, senior officers of district administration, representatives of public sector petroleum companies and a large number of people were present on the occasion.

## Tassaduq Mufti for upgrading Kashmir Golf Course

Reviews progress of developmental works

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Minister for Tourism, Tassaduq Hussain Mufti today convened a meeting regarding development and maintenance of Kashmir Golf Course.

Minister for Finance Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari and Minister for Revenue Abdul Rehman Veeri were also present in the meeting.

The Minister sought details regarding the development and maintenance operations of the Kashmir Golf Course.

The Minister was informed that measures are being taken to upgrade the Golf Course to meet the standards of the game, besides uplifting its infrastructure.

He was informed that the Course was taken up by the J&K Bank and is in the final stage of completion and is expected to be completed in June, 2018.

It was given out in the meeting that the finishing touches like plantation, dressing, de-weeding is being carried out.

Mufti stressed for the maintenance of landscape, plantation, and drainage and sanitation for the convenience of the golfers and the people visiting the place. He also directed for taking steps with regard to the club building and creation of other ancillary facilities in the Golf Course.

It was given out that the tourism department carries out the maintenance and operation of other golf courses, especially Royal Spring Golf Course (RSGC) and Jammu Tawi Golf Course (JTGC) and the process requires an estimated cost of Rupees 3 crores annually.

The Chairman and CEO, J&K Bank Parvez Ahmad informed the meeting that the bank has already invested Rs 30 crore on the development of Kashmir Golf Course and to complete and construct the club house along with all ancillary facilities will require another Rs 20 crore.

He asked for transfer of lease hold rights to free hold rights in respect of properties to the bank for strengthening the balance sheet of the bank by capital cushion.

It was given out the matter will be taken up with the concerned departments.

Seeking details regarding maintenance and future development of Kashmir Golf Course the Minister was informed that the J&K Bank will maintain and develop the Kashmir Golf Course, besides developing the club house in the Kashmir Golf Course along with all ancillary facilities.

The Minister emphasized that the work should be started immediately and the club house along with all ancillary facilities be completed at an earliest.

## Speaker distributes LPG connections under PMUY

Says Govt committed to provide clean and safe cooking fuel to identified household

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Speaker Legislative Assembly Kavinder Gupta today distributed LPG connections to BPL, SC, and ST families on the eve of Ujjwala Divas celebration in Gandhi Nagar constituency and adjoining areas here today.

Speaking to the gathering, Speaker said that the state government is fully implementing centre's Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) initiative with an aim to make every household smokeless.

"The government has launched the scheme across the state in which thousands of families have been given free LPG connections and by 2022 the same will continue to reach out its target," he said.

During the celebration, the Speaker distributed numerous LPG connections under the scheme in several areas including Bhour west, Qasim Nagar, Belicharana and Madal Phallian.

On the occasion, the Speaker said that it is endeavor of state and centre government to uplift the downtrodden section of society through several dedicated schemes and this Ujjwala measure will empower the women folk and protect their health by easing out their burden of conventional cooking on wood.

"This will reduce the time spent on cooking and can



generate employment in rural areas in the supply of cooking gas," Speaker said.

To avoid environmental, climatic and health hazards, Speaker directed officers to start capacity building among common masses to prepare them to shun the archaic practice of cooking on wood fuel and other smoke emission fuels and adopt the efficient, safe cooking fuel.

"The scheme will be extended to every household who are identified under Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) and so far seven thousand gas connections have been distributed in the Gandhi Nagar constituency," He added.

portance and benefits of using clean energy for cooking and briefed the beneficiaries about the safety precautions of LPG Stoves.

On the occasion, several beneficiaries also shared their experiences how this initiative has brought revolution their lives besides easing out their household chores and raised their socio-economic standard of living while it has improved health and better education opportunities among them.

Several deputations also met the speaker and apprised him of their issues being faced by them. He assured that all the genuine demands will be redressed within a stipulated timeframe and asked them, concerned officers, to start repairment work on internal link road of Belicharana.

Earlier, the Speaker also visited the Sanjay Nagar area to take stock of various developmental works being executed there, officers present on the spot apprised him that work is in pace and soon will be dedicated to the public.

The speaker directed the officers to work in synergy to complete all the projects within a time-bound manner to avoid inconvenience to general masses. He further exhorted officers to complete work on Sanjay Chowk to Digiana road and asked them to complete the same by July 2018.

## Chief Secretary reviews Durbar Move arrangements



JAMMU, APRIL 20: Chief Secretary, BB Vyas today reviewed the arrangements made in connection with the annual Durbar move from Jammu to Srinagar with the opening of offices scheduled on May 07 in the summer capital.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rohit Kansal, Principal Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr Pawan Kotwal, ADG Security Muneer Ahmad Khan, Commissioner Secretary GAD Khurshed Ahmad Shah, Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Hemant Kumar Sharma, Commissioner Secretary FCS&CA, M D Khan, IG Traffic, Basant Rath, IG Jammu SD Singh, various administrative secretaries, Director Estates, and various other senior officers.

The meeting was informed that secretariat offices will close in Jammu on April 27th and will open in Srinagar on May 7th.

Chief Secretary emphasized upon putting in place all necessary measures including security escort to ensure smooth movement of Durbar move vehicles upto their respective destinations. He instructed that extra buses and trucks be kept available during the move days besides adequate number of cranes, mobile workshops, recovery vans, medical mobile teams, ambulances/medical aid facilities be deployed en-route along with necessary equipment and staff to meet any exigency.

He asked the BEACON and NHAI authorities to ensure good condition of Srinagar-Jammu National Highway,

particularly during the move days. IGP Traffic/RTO, Srinagar was asked to ensure that taxi operators do not overcharge the move employees travelling from Jammu to Srinagar during the move days.

Administrative Secretaries were asked to brief the advance parties of their respective departments to ensure installation of computers, telephones, placement of files and proper custody of the trunks/furniture by 6th May so that work can be started smoothly from May 7th.

Chief Secretary also asked Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department to issue temporary ration cards and gas connections besides ensuring timely supply of rations, LPG to the move employees. He directed the Estates department and Srinagar Municipal Corporation to

inspect employee residential colonies and ensure that necessary facilities were in place including cleaning up water storage tanks and launching an intensive sanitation drive in all colonies. He directed the concerned officers to ensure complete sanitation, availability of electricity and potable drinking water in all residential colonies of the move employees.

Chief Secretary also directed the IT department to ensure that LAN/Internet connections and Biometric Attendance System in Srinagar Secretariat are fully functional by the time move offices reopen on 7th May, 2018. He also directed deployment of security in all residential colonies both in Srinagar and Jammu besides installation of CCTVs at hotels where the employees will be putting up.

## Sham Choudhary distributes LPG connections under PMUY

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Minister for PHE, Irrigation and Flood Control Sham Lal Chaudhary today distributed 35 new LPG connections among female beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in a function held at Chakroi to celebrate Ujjwala Divas.

Addressing the gathering after distribution of LPG connections among the eligible beneficiaries, the Minister said that Ujjwala Divas has been celebrated across the country and about 15000 panchayats have been organized to promote learning through interaction "Kuch seekhian, kuch sikhayein" under the drive.

Termining PMUY a reformative initiative taken by the Union Government to empower the women folk of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families by providing them free of cost LPG connections, the Minister said that smoke-free kitchen in household will help in maintaining healthy environ, besides protect the health of women and reduce the health hazards.

The Minister said that 3200 LPG connections have been provided in Suchetgarh Constituency under PMUY so far, adding that left out eligible beneficiaries of the Constituency would also be covered under the Yojana.

Listing-out welfare schemes launched by Centre & State Governments to ameliorate the socio-economic profile of people of the State, the Minister urged upon people to come forward and avail the benefits of these schemes. He also enjoined upon the concerned to organize camps to sensitize the people about the welfare schemes so that everyone can avail the benefits of these schemes.

It is worthwhile to mention here that the function was organized by the Shaheed Naik Dev Raj Gas Agency Chakroi to celebrate the Ujjwala Divas.

## Dy CM distributes free LPG connections among BPL women

KATHUA, APRIL 20 - With an aim of providing clean cooking fuel to BPL women and reducing the hazards of biomass cooking, Deputy Chief Minister, Dr. Nirmal Singh today distributed 150 free LPG connections among the beneficiaries at Phinter in Billawar to mark the celebrations of Ujjwala Divas under Government of India's massive outreach campaign 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan'.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister said that respect for women is the core foundation of Ujjwala Yojana and informed that 4000 LPG connections were distributed in Billawar among the beneficiaries and the left-out beneficiaries would soon get new connections after proper verification.

He also sensitized the Ujjwala beneficiaries about safety, utility and health benefits of using clean fuels.

Highlighting the importance of such campaigns, Dr Singh said that these campaigns provide an appropriate platform to highlight the work done by the government for the welfare the poor and weaker sections of the society.

He further said that holistic development of Billawar is top priority of the



government and all out efforts are being made to provide better educational, sports infra in the area along with superior medical facilities and state of the art tourist infra. He further stated that Degree College at Ramkote and indoor sports stadium at Billawar are two major achievements towards realizing this goal.

Earlier in the day, the Deputy CM

also inaugurated a Community Hall at Phinter, the work of which has been executed by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj at the cost of Rs. 9.90 lakh.

ADC Billawar, Joginder Singh Rai, SDPO, Tehsildars, BDOs, Engineers, TSO and other Sub Division level officers along with villagers in large numbers were present on the occasion.

## Awareness programmes on Ujjwala Divas held in Kargil

KARGIL, APRIL 20: - Chairman and Chief Executive Councilor (CEC) Kargil Kacho Ahmad Ali Khan was the chief guest at an awareness programme organized at an Auditorium Hall at Kargil. The programme organized by Indian Oil Corporation was a part of ongoing countrywide Gram Swaraj Abhiyan. Speaking at the programme, the CEC underlined the significance and utility of the Ujjwala scheme for the women living below poverty line. He exhorted upon women to take full benefit of the scheme keeping in view its health benefits, cost efficacy, economy, safety and environment benefits.

On the occasion, other speakers also sensitized the Ujjwala beneficiaries about safety and utility of LPG and health benefits of using clean fuel.

The CEC also distributed 196 PMUY connections among the women beneficiaries. Similar, kind of awareness programmes, were held across the district.

Meanwhile, a LPG Panchayat was organized by Hindustan Petroleum at Language Centre Kargil wherein use of LPG connections was demonstrated to first-time LPG users. Moreover, the safe and sustainable use of LPG, its benefits and the linkage between use of clean fuel for cooking and women empowerment was also discussed.

Assistant Director FCS&CA Haji Nissar Hussain, Medical Superintendent Kacho Sikander Ali Khan, Headquarter Assistant to Deputy Commissioner Kargil Muhammad Shabir, Dr Amina Khatoun, a number of officers from the District administration, besides a large number of beneficiaries were present on the occasion. The LPG Panchayats were also held at various LPG distributor locations at Chiktan, Padum and Tai Suru where apart from imparting awareness about Ujjwala Yojana, the beneficiaries and the new LPG users were given a refresher about some of the ongoing schemes.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

Cash is still king: On ATMs running dry

Nearly 18 months after the government's decision to scrap currency notes of 500 and 1,000, which accounted for over 86% of the currency in circulation at the time, large parts of India are in the throes of a severe cash crunch again. The government started acting belatedly on Tuesday in response to reports of cash shortages from States including Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh over a fortnight. Terming the shortage a manifestation of an 'unusual spurt in currency demand' over three months, the Finance Ministry has emphasised that the first 13 days of April recorded an increase in currency supply of 45,000 crore. Yet, thousands of automated teller machines are either not functioning or not dispensing adequate cash as banks are reluctant to divert cash to them at the cost of customers visiting branches for withdrawals. The Ministry has asserted that over 1.75 lakh crore of cash lies in reserves, which may now be deployed to meet the demand. On its part, the Reserve Bank of India has claimed there is enough cash in its vaults, but it has ramped up the printing of all notes. At the same time, it blamed the shortages on logistical issues of replenishing ATMs and said it is moving more cash to regions that witnessed high cash withdrawals.

Theories abound on how upcoming elections, starting with Karnataka and possibly ending with the Lok Sabha polls in 2019, have prompted a large-scale cash management exercise among political parties. Part of the retail love for cash is also being attributed to depositor fears about the impending Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill that makes it possible to deploy investor savings to bail out stressed banks and financial institutions. There could be some truth in these explanations, but the genesis of the current cash crisis is firmly rooted in the lack of system-wide thinking that went into the Centre's big-bang note ban gambit. The government may have chosen to go for 2,000 notes post-demonetisation to remonetise the economy faster, but with lower denomination notes taking longer to flow freely, circulation wasn't efficient and the big note has become a preferred mode for hoarding capital. That a plan to re-introduce 1,000 notes was later junked didn't help; nor did the difference in the sizes of the new notes. As the RBI noted on Tuesday, recalibration of ATMs is still under way for the 200 note. Demonetisation may have been aimed at weeding out black money, but perpetuating dependency on the 2,000 note ignores an age-old heuristic for currency management that every denomination should be 2 to 2.5 times its preceding denomination. The current cash crunch shows how the consequences of the overnight demonetisation of November 8-9, 2016 continue to haunt us.

NEW EQUATIONS

EUROPEAN POWER JOINS THE EFFORTS OF COUNTRIES SUCH AS THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN TO CONVERT INDIA INTO A REGIONAL MILITARY COUNTERWEIGHT TO CHINA. BY JOHN CHERIAN

That India now is firmly in the military ambit of the Western powers has been further illustrated by the latest slew of defence agreements it has signed with France. During the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India in the middle of March, the most important agreement inked was the "Reciprocal Logistics Support Agreement". The two countries have now officially agreed to open up their bases for use by their militaries. Indian warships will now be allowed to dock in French ports that dot the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

France still has many colonial enclaves scattered all over the world. In the Indian Ocean, the Reunion Islands near Mauritius is a French colony. The Indian Navy trains the Mauritian Navy and has a foothold in the country. According to Indian officials, the agreement with France will help the Indian Navy expand its footprint considerably in the Indian Ocean region.

France has military bases in the United Arab Emirates and Djibouti too. It will now have access to basing facilities for its ships in the ports that dot India's long coastline and also in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which lie close to the crucial Malacca Straits. Much of China's maritime trade passes through the Malacca Straits. China has also recently acquired a military base in Djibouti. The small country in the Horn of Africa has the dubious distinction of hosting two other foreign military bases, that of the United States and Japan.

India, too, is in the race to acquire permanent military bases in the Indian Ocean region and elsewhere. The Indian government was on the verge of clinching a military basing agreement with the Republic of Seychelles, but it came unstuck in March this year after the draft agreement of the deal was published in a local newspaper. The agreement was signed when Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit there in 2015. According to reports, India and France were to jointly develop a military base in Seychelles. The opposition in the Indian Ocean island republic has raised strong objections to some of the clauses in the agreement which allegedly infringe on the country's sovereignty. The opposition has a majority in the country's parliament, and its leader announced in late March that the basing deal was no longer valid.

The basing agreement signed between India and France is similar to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed between India and the U.S. in 2016. The previous United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, despite the close ties that existed between Washington and New Delhi at the time, refused to sign the LEMOA, which for all practical purposes is a "basing" agreement that would allow the U.S. military to access Indian military bases.

So far, India has signed LEMOA-like agreements only with the U.S. and France, two leading members of the powerful North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) military alliance that have shared geostrategic interests. France and Germany, the two leading European powers, are engaged in building a strong military alliance of their own. At the recent Munich Security Conference, senior German and French officials conveyed their strong support to the Asian Quad, a military grouping comprising the U.S., Japan, India and Australia, which was reactivated last year.



Military front against China

The Quad was created at Washington's instance to present a united military front against China in the Indian Ocean region. In an obvious attempt to massage the ego of India's ruling establishment, the Donald Trump administration even started describing the Asia Pacific region as the Indo-Pacific. Admiral Harry Harris, the head of the U.S. Pacific Command who was recently on a visit to Delhi, said that it was "crystal clear" that Beijing wanted to dominate the South China Sea. "The reality is that China is a disruptive transitional force in the Indo-Pacific. They are the owners of the trust deficit," he said.

China is of the view that the Quad was specifically created to disrupt its grandiose Belt Road project and stymie its economy. The Japanese government, another all-weather ally of the U.S., has also called for a "free and open Indo-Pacific strategy". The Japanese say that their policy envisages the building of "high quality" infrastructure in the region. Tokyo has earmarked \$200 billion for infrastructure projects in the region to take on China's Belt Road initiative.

In a White Paper published in 2013, the French government also noted that the rise of China had an impact on the established "equilibrium in East Asia". The paper emphasised the importance of securing European (read NATO) access to the Indian Ocean. The White Paper also pointed out that France "plays a particular role in the Indian Ocean reinforced by the development of privileged relations with India". The UPA government had found it prudent to stay away from military alliances with Western powers. In 2006, during the first UPA government, India did participate in a quadrilateral military exercise involving the U.S., Japan and Australia. But better sense prevailed and India withdrew from the Quad. Australia, under a Labour government, had also opted out of the original Quad.

But with right-wing governments in power in India and Australia, the quadrilateral military alliance against China has been revived. The U.S. State Department has announced that in the next meeting of the Quad, the Maldives issue will be discussed. Both Washington and New Delhi claim that the Maldives is now in Beijing's political and

economic ambit and that the Chinese have plans to eventually build a military base there. No objections have been raised against Saudi Arabia leasing one of the islands in the Maldives or to the spread there of Wahhabi fundamentalism originating from the Arabian peninsula.

The alleged threat to the freedom of navigation posed by China and its growing economic and strategic footprint in the Indian Ocean region is used as a pretext to build up new military alliances. Most countries in the region have preferred to stay out of the military alliances being promoted by the West, India being a prominent exception. However, India has not sent its warships to the disputed areas of South China Sea so far. The French have said that they would be happy to join the Americans in military exercises in the South China Sea to protect "freedom of navigation".

The French government's Defence and National Security Strategic Review of 2017 identifies China as a military and strategic threat after it acquired a base in Djibouti and a "support facility" in the Pakistani port of Gwadar. "This trend reflects China's strategic ambition to develop a long term naval influence in a maritime area extending from the South China Sea to the whole Indian Ocean," the Review noted. Sections of the Indian establishment are also urging that the Indian military involve itself in the South China Sea. The Chinese government has strongly signalled that it considers the Quad as a military grouping specifically formed to counter Beijing in the Indo-Pacific region.

U.S. role in Africa  
India's signing of the LEMOA-like agreement with France signals an intensification of defence relationships in many areas, including deeper military to military exchanges, strategic and regional cooperation and expanded collaboration in and sharing of defence technology, and cooperation on trade issues. NATO these days is busy hyping up tensions with Russia while the U.S. is working overtime to stitch up a military alliance against China in the Asia Pacific region. France, along with the U.S., is playing the role of the gendarme on the African continent. France has military bases in its former colonies such as Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The U.S. is busy pulling more and more sub-Saharan

African countries into its military alliance. The latest country to agree to U.S. military presence on its soil is Ghana. The opposition parties in Ghana had objected to the government's move and boycotted the parliament in protest. The opposition said that the agreement gave unlimited access for U.S. forces to Ghana's military facilities. Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, along with Jawaharlal Nehru, was vociferous in his opposition to foreign military bases. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) remains opposed to the establishment of foreign bases. One of its longest standing demands was for the removal of the U.S. military base in Diego Garcia. The island legally belongs to Mauritius. India is now silent on this demand.

Since the end of the Cold War, the anti-imperialist world view of leaders who led the anti-colonial struggle has no longer been visible in many developing countries. India has been no exception. Since the beginning of the 1990s it has been slowly but inexorably moving into the Western camp. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party has only accelerated the move.

A rising China has rattled not only the West but also Asian countries such as India and Japan. The Indian leadership has chosen to view China as a strategic rival though both countries are members of important international groupings such as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The Indian government has been surprised by the rapid diplomatic and economic strides the Chinese have made in the South Asian region, especially in areas which it considers its backyard. But it is also a fact that China continues to be India's biggest trading partner. The Chinese Communist Party has always stressed that its eventual rise to superpower status will be through "peaceful means" unlike the country that today enjoys the sole superpower status.

Macron told the media in New Delhi that his country's increasing involvement in the region was motivated by the growing tensions and rivalries between the major powers. "A strong part of our security and the world's stability is at stake in the Indian Ocean. The Indian Ocean, like the Pacific Ocean, cannot become a place of hegemony," he pronounced. Both the French and Indian leaderships have accused China of having hegemonic designs. A "Strategic Vision" document that was released during Macron's visit pledged "to increase the exchange of information on the maritime situation in the Indian Ocean" and to jointly develop "a maritime surveillance satellite focused on the Indian Ocean". The main task of this satellite is no doubt to track the movement of Chinese ships in the Indian Ocean. The French have also now joined the efforts of countries like the U.S. and Japan in the ongoing efforts of converting India into a regional military counterweight to China.

In this endeavour there is also plenty of money to be made. The U.S. and France have sold billions of dollars of weaponry to India in the last couple of years. India had signed a controversial deal with France for the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter planes for \$8 billion. During Macron's recent visit, France and India signed deals worth more than \$16 billion. India will be buying additional nuclear-capable Scorpene submarines and Rafale jets from France.

SHAKEN TO THE CORE IN KATHUA

► Zoya Hasan

The tragic and gruesome rape and killing of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua, Jammu, with a blatantly communal agenda (as suggested by the details that have come to light in the charge sheet filed by the Jammu and Kashmir police), and the events following it, demonstrate a descent into the deepest levels of depravity. This is shocking even for India where a swiftly accumulating record of lynchings, rape and brutalisation on the grounds of caste and religion is being allowed to happen not only with impunity but also, and often, with support and protection from members of the political establishment.

Overcoming obstacles  
In this case, a minor belonging to a marginalised community of Bakherwals, a nomadic tribe based in the Pir Panjal and Himalayan mountains, was abducted, raped and murdered in January this year. An investigation was launched and completed with the efforts of several courageous members of the legal community and law-enforcing agencies against heavy odds, and threats by and

interference from ministers of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); the People's Democratic Party (PDP)-BJP combine is in power in the State. Even as the charge sheet detailing the pre-meditated crime was to be submitted before the chief judicial magistrate, lawyers of the State called a strike in defence of the accused. Members of the Bar Associations of Kathua and Jammu prevented the State police from filing the charge sheet and it could only be handed to the judicial magistrate at his home. Lawyers, actively helped by the right-wing Hindu Ekta Manch, carried out protests in support of special police officer Deepak Khajuria, one of the accused in the case. These protests, which went on for a month, in fact defied the tricolour by using it to defend the men accused of rape and murder. Finally, eight people, including two special police officers, were arrested in connection with the crime.

Worse still, several members of the PDP-BJP coalition supported their conduct and sought to protect those responsible for this horrendous crime. They included two BJP Ministers who joined rallies in support of the Kathua accused, but who resigned in the wake of public

outrage expressed through social media and street protests. Their resignation rather than dismissal or expulsion from the party leaves the door open for them to come back to the government.

A generic assurance  
Last week, almost three months after the incident, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, broke his silence amid widespread national and international outrage, and assured the country that no culprit would be spared and that justice would be done. But this statement has little meaning and even less conviction as it was a generic statement of assurance blanketing out the specifics of the Kathua or Unnao cases (in the latter, a BJP MLA is accused of rape). Contrast this with Mr. Modi's statement in 2013, in the aftermath of the ghastly Nirbhaya rape case, when, as the prime ministerial candidate, he exhorted the people of Delhi not to forget her while casting their vote for the Delhi Assembly polls on December 4.

The response of the Prime Minister has been wholly inadequate and as always a case of too little too late. Nevertheless, the mainstream media applauded his belated intervention by giving him full



credit for silencing his critics with the resignation of the two Ministers even though there has been little evidence, over nearly three months, of government action to prosecute the perpetrators or their supporters of violence. What is more, PDP legislators and senior party leaders in Srinagar "praised the role played by the BJP in the Kathua case". Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti thanked the Prime Minister for "defusing the situation" and claimed that the "unfortunate incident had united the nation". Having taken no responsibility for the deplorable series of events herself, she now proclaims that the Kathua case has united the nation. Both responses should worry us for what it means for a democratic, just and

egalitarian order.

Part of a pattern  
Mr. Modi's non-specific and banal avowal of justice for the victims appears to be an attempt to brush aside the communal nature of the crime which is writ large in the charge sheet of the Kathua case. Rape was part of a plan to scare and dislodge the Bakherwal community from the Rasana area in Jammu, by sections of the Hindu community. This becomes apparent when interests based on community or religion are invoked to support the perpetrators and intimidate the family of the victim to drop the case. It is not a coincidence that this pattern of communal violence, its valorisation and the total lack of justice for the victims was established in Gujarat in 2002. The Kathua case replicates the Gujarat model of using rape as a weapon of communal hate and ethnic cleansing to threaten and drive out, in this case, a Muslim tribal community.

The chilling details of the Kathua rape are important but the politics behind it is no less so. It is communal politics and the environment of impunity allowed by the ruling party and the public support they have garnered that should

concern us. The culture of majoritarian hostility and incessant propaganda let loose by the Sangh Parivar has emboldened communal elements to pursue their politics of hate. Those involved in such crimes knew that their actions and behaviour would be condoned by the political leadership which has indeed let them off the hook by stating that the two leaders who joined the rallies in support of the accused were "misled and misguided" by a few people.

The most disturbing aspect is the fact that the perpetrators and their supporters passed off such reprehensible acts as 'nationalism' by packaging their immorality in the tiranga. It is not only the BJP's rationalisations and what-aboutery which has been evident from the responses of party leaders but also the climate of hate that provides the social sanction and legitimacy for such unspeakable crimes. The Prime Minister's feeble response in the aftermath of these events does nothing to reassure communities that are repeatedly targeted under this government. It only reveals the disdain that BJP cadres have adopted for constitutional values and which the leadership seems to condone.

# Two children raped and murdered during weddings in UP, Chhattisgarh

Two girls were raped and murdered during wedding ceremonies in Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, police said on Friday, adding to a number of brutal sexual assaults reported across India this week.

The incident in Uttar Pradesh took place in Etah district on Thursday night, just three days after another minor girl was sexually assaulted and murdered about 50km away, also while attending a wedding.

Police said the accused, 25-year-old Pintu Kumar, has been arrested and booked for murder, rape and concealing evidence after the nine-year-old girl's father filed a complaint. He was also charged under the stringent Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, they added.

"The girl was found missing by her family members at about 10pm on Thursday while they were attending a 'tilak' function in a nearby house in Keltha village of Aliganj area in Etah district," additional superintendent of police (ASP) Sanjay Kumar said.

"Her body was found at about 3am on Friday in a farm, 100 metres from the house after a search," Kumar said.

The police officer added that the body of the girl has been sent for a post-mortem at the district hospital in Etah.

Police found during their investigation that Kumar, a part of the team of cooks hired to prepare food for the guests, asked for a glass of water from the girl as he was preparing to drink during the ceremony.

One of the girl's friends also told the police that the Class 2 student was



last seen with Kumar, who allegedly lured her to a shop in the village.

This is the latest in a string of incidents of rape and murder of minor girls across the country, including that of the eight-year-old girl in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district and Uttar Pradesh's Unnao, that have sparked nationwide outrage and criticism of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

On Tuesday, a seven-year-old girl was taken away by a 19-year-old man when her family members were busy during a wedding ceremony in Galla Mandi of Etah city to an under-construction house. He then raped and later killed her to avoid being identified.

In Kabirdham district of neighbouring Chhattisgarh, a ten-year-old girl was similarly raped and killed during a wedding function by the friend of the bridegroom. Uttam Sahu, 25, admitted to raping and killing the girl by hitting her head with a stone in Bagharra village on Wednesday night.

Public anger at the crimes has led to protests in cities across India over the past few days amid allegations that the accused were initially shielded by the government.

Though the Kathua gangrape and murder was in the news for months, the backlash erupted after the chargesheet filed by the crime branch of the Jammu and Kashmir police gave gruesome details of the crime.

Police said the girl from the Bakarwal tribe, a nomadic community of Muslim cattle grazers, was abducted while grazing her family's horses near her home in Rasana village of Kathua district in January. She was held captive in a temple, sedated and raped repeatedly for a week before being bludgeoned to death.

A retired revenue department official planned the crimes against her, says the chargesheet, to create fear among her community and get them to leave Rasana. Eight people, including two special police officers (SPOs), a head constable and a sub-inspector, have been arrested in the case. All of

them have pleaded not guilty.

People have also protested against Yogi Adityanath's government over the handling of the Unnao rape case, in which Bharatiya Janata Party lawmaker Kuldeep Singh Sengar was charged with raping a teenage girl in last year. He was arrested last week after the alleged crime grabbed headlines following the girl's attempt to self-immolate outside the chief minister's Lucknow residence.

The body of an identified minor girl with 86 injury marks was found in Surat in Prime Minister Narendra Modi home state of Gujarat almost a fortnight ago and police said she may have been tortured and raped before being killed. The girl believed to be between nine and 11 years old was strangled, they said.

Prime Minister Modi assured the country on Friday that the guilty would not be shielded and on Wednesday said on Wednesday that "rape is rape" and should not be politicised. The recent sexual assaults were a matter of worry and shame for India.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi has been attacking the Prime Minister and his party for not speaking up against the Kathua and Unnao rape cases. Government figures show that a child is sexually abused every 15 minutes in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau report for 2016, there was a sharp spike in cases of rape against children with an increase of such incidents by over 82% as compared to 2015.

The data also shows that Uttar Pradesh tops the list in crime against children, with around 15% share of all such crimes in the country.

# Sushma Swaraj plays matchmaker, seeks groom for Pakistan-returned Geeta

External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj is playing matchmaker for Geeta, the hearing- and speech-impaired woman who was brought to India in 2015 after having stayed in Pakistan for almost 15 years.

Geeta had drifted to Pakistan when she was a child and was under the care of the Edhi Foundation, a Pakistani charity. Since her return to India, efforts to reunite her with her family have proved futile. Several families had come to claim Geeta as their own, but she did not recognise any of them.

"Sushma Swaraj, after a meeting with Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in October 2017, had announced plans for Geeta's marriage. On April 8, civil society members took a prospective speech- and hearing-impaired groom with them to meet Sushma Swaraj and Geeta, at Swaraj's residence in Delhi," an official at Swaraj's office, who is not authorised to talk to the media, said.

"Geeta rejected the proposal. Swaraj maam then asked them to widen their search and bring more prospective grooms to choose from, assuring her total support for the cause."

Geeta, who is known by only one name, apparently entered the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore on a train from India. She was found by the police and sent to a state-run shelter, then moved from one shelter to another — because she often tried to escape and quarrelled with staff — before she arrived at the Karachi-based Edhi Foundation.

"In a recent meeting with civil society members who helped Geeta to come back to India, Swaraj had invited applications through Facebook and also announced Geeta's bi-data in the Parichay Sammelan (introductory meeting) for speech- and hearing-impaired people," said Gyanendra Purohit, convener



of non-governmental organisation Anand Service Society, who is coordinating the match-making efforts.

So far they have received 25 biodatas of potential grooms, and they include an army officer, an astrologer, novelist, engineers and farmers, among others.

"We have shortlisted 15 suitable matches by asking them in detail why they were interested in marrying Geeta. These matches are going to be screened by Swaraj's PA (personal assistant) and then Geeta will see whether she likes the chosen guy or not and then Swaraj will have the final say," said Purohit.

A spokesperson for the ministry of external affairs, who is in London for the Commonwealth meetings, said he was not aware of developments.

The groom is being promised a house and a government job, according to Purohit, who added: "Some of the prospective grooms were rejected when they said they wanted to marry Geeta in the hope of getting a government job."

Geeta's tutor Monica Punjabi said, "The purpose of this process is to give her a family, to give a space to her to live her life in her own way and to make her feel happy. We are doing our best to get the best man for the marriage."

# With a 'very heavy heart', Congress, others submit impeachment notice against CJI Dipak Misra

Seven opposition parties led by the Congress on Friday submitted to vice president and Rajya Sabha chairman M Venkaiah Naidu a notice seeking the impeachment of Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra.

At a press conference, Congress leaders said the parties had to move the notice with a "very heavy heart" since Justice Misra had not "asserted the independence of judiciary in the face of interference by the executive". They said they had the support of more than 60 Rajya Sabha members. Such notices require the signatures of at least 50 members of a House.

The MPs who signed the notice are from the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, CPI(M), CPI, Samajwadi Party, Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the Bahujan Samaj Party, according to news agency PTI. Their leaders earlier met in Parliament to finalise the impeachment notice.

Among those who attended the meeting in Parliament were Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Kapil Sibal and Randeep Surjewala, besides CPI's D Raja and NCP's Vandana Chavan.



Azad said the notice was moved under five grounds of misbehaviour. "We have submitted a motion signed by 71 people. It also includes seven members who are retired. That should not be counted," news agency ANI quoted him as saying. Congress leader Kapil Sibal said: "We wish this day had never come."

"The constitution allows only one recourse to remedy the situation. Since there is no other way to protect the institution expect to move an impeachment motion, we, members of the Rajya Sabha, do so with a heavy heart," a Congress statement said.

The notice comes a day after the Supreme Court rejected a bunch of petitions seeking an independent probe into the death of Judge BH

Loya, who was hearing the Sohrabuddin Sheikh encounter case. The SC judgment was delivered by a bench headed by the Chief Justice of India.

Loya, who was presiding over the Sohrabuddin Shah encounter case in which BJP president Amit Shah was one of those named, died of a heart attack in Nagpur in December 2014. Shah was discharged from the case soon after.

Sources said West Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress and Tamil Nadu's opposition DMK, which were initially in favour of the impeachment against the CJI, are no longer part of it.

The removal motion can be moved even when Parliament is not in session, and requires the signature of 50 Rajya Sabha MPs. Once the

motion is moved, the Chair of the House may or may not admit it. If it is admitted, a three-member committee is set up to enquire into charges. If it concludes that there is enough reason to remove the CJI, the House in which the motion was first moved takes it up for discussion and a vote. Once it is passed with a special majority (two-thirds of the members present and voting) in the house, it goes to the second house. If it is passed in both houses, then the address is presented to the President for the removal of the judge, who then passed an order in this regard.

There has been a clear division within the Congress on the issue.

One section believed that the motion was necessary in the wake of the comments made by four Supreme Court judges at an unprecedented press conference in January about the Chief Justice's exercise of power as master of the roster and it would serve as a 'deterrent'. Another section argued that moving such a motion may portray the Congress as 'anti-judiciary' and would yield little since they did not have the numbers to see it through in any case.

# Calcutta HC extends Bengal panchayat poll nomination deadline by a day

Calcutta high court on Friday extended the deadline for submission of nominations in the Bengal panchayat polls by a day, which will be decided by the state election commission in consultation with the state government.

Since there has to be a gap of 21 days between the last date of nomination and the first day of polling, the dates of voting are likely to change if the court's order is not challenged. Bengal was set to vote on May 1, 3 and 5.

"It's a historic verdict. The court has come forward to help the democratic process that is in peril in Bengal. It is a victory for the people who did not get any help from the police to file nomination," said Pratap Banerjee, general secretary of the Bengal unit of BJP.

Trinamool advocate Kalyan Banerjee, however, said the court did not allow the BJP plea to remove the election commissioner and deploy central forces.

Congress welcomed the court order, but said "it does not mean the end of violence." "A new date will be announced and a new chapter violence will be unleashed by the ruling party," said state



Congress president Adhir Chowdhury.

The ruling comes as a relief for opposition parties that have alleged violence by the Trinamool Congress since nominations started on April 2. They claimed that supporters of the ruling party tried to prevent their candidates from filing nominations. At least six persons were killed in poll-related clashes.

The rural polls are crucial as they will provide the only pan-Bengal indicator of the popularity of political parties before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The Trinamool Congress, which wants a larger role in national politics, wants to retain its hold over the state's grassroots-level politics, while the BJP, fast emerging as

Bengal's main Opposition party, is keen to expand its footprint.

The past 10 days have seen intense legal wrangling with the BJP and the Trinamool Congress moving Calcutta high court and Supreme Court over the question of nomination deadline.

On the night of April 9, the state election commission issued a notification extending the filing of nomination by a day (till 3 pm on April 10). But barely 12 hours later, state election commissioner AK Singh issued another notification withdrawing the extension order. He cited two letters — one by the state government and the other by Trinamool Congress vice-president Kalyan Banerjee

— that pointed out legal infirmities in the previous notification.

The BJP immediately moved the apex court that ordered the matters be heard by the Calcutta high court on April 12. At the high court, Justice Subrata Talukdar suspended all processes of the Bengal rural polls till April 16.

The matter since then has moved to a division bench of the high court, which shifted the case back to the single-judge bench of Justice Talukdar. The CPM had also moved the Supreme Court on April 11 with an appeal to postpone the panchayat elections till the question of the filing of nominations by opposition candidates was settled.

# Karnataka polls not about water or road, but Hindus and Muslims: BJP MLA

A Karnataka BJP lawmaker and candidate in next month's state elections has said the polls are "not about roads and drinking water but Hindu and Muslim religions".

Sanjay Patil, the Belagavi (Rural) MLA, is seen making the remarks in a video shot in his constituency amid loud cheers by a crowd of his supporters. It was not immediately known when the video was shot.

News agency ANI reported that an FIR was registered against Patil on the charges of delivering a provocative speech in Belagavi. "This election is not about road, drainage or drinking water. This election is about Hindu and Muslim religions," Patil told the crowd.

"Keeping a hand on my chest I say loudly, this is Bharat, this is the country of Hindus, and this is the country where (Lord) Ram was born. We are prepared to do anything to construct Ram mandir in Ayodhya," Patil is heard saying in the video.

Belagavi (Belgaum) on the Karnataka-Maharashtra border is a communally sensitive area with significant presence of Muslims and Marathi speaking Hindus.

Karnataka votes on May 12 and counting will be held three days later.

# Arun Jaitley accuses Congress of using CJI removal motion as political tool

Finance minister Arun Jaitley on Friday accused the Congress party of trivialising the power of impeachment and using it as a political tool.

In a scathing Facebook post, the senior BJP leader said the 114 page judgement in the Judge Loya death case authored by justice DY Chandrachud on behalf of the three judge bench of the Supreme Court "exposes every fact of the conspiracy" to generate falsehood as propaganda in the public and political space. He further said Amit Shah (now BJP President) had no role in Sohrabuddin Case and it was an alleged encounter executed by some central agencies through the State Police.

Referring to the move of Congress and six other opposition parties to impeach Chief Justice of India Deepak Misra, Jaitley said, "The Congress Party and its friends have started using impeachment as a political tool." Stressing that trivialising the use of



power of impeachment is a "dangerous event", he said the move is an attempt to "intimidate" a judge and send a message to other judges, "that if you don't agree with us, fifty MP's are enough for a revenge action". Referring to the judgement in Loya

death case, Jaitley said never ever so blatantly in the past have national political parties, a few retired judges and some senior lawyers "so closely identified themselves with the generation of falsehood that they almost come out as conspirators".

# Supreme Court dismisses Dawood family's plea on attachment of properties

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea by fugitive don Dawood Ibrahim's mother Ameena Bi Kaskar and sister Hasena Parkar challenging the attachment of their properties in Mumbai by the government. A bench of justices RK Agrawal and AM Sapre dismissed the plea, saying the properties belonged to Dawood. His mother Amina Bi and sister Hasina (both dead now) had challenged the attachment order of their residential properties in Mumbai.

They had a total of seven residential properties in their names. Of these, two are in the mother's name and five in the sister's name. The properties worth crores of rupees have allegedly been acquired with Dawood's ill-gotten wealth.

The two women had approached the apex court challenging the order of the Delhi high court, which had turned down their plea against the order for seizure of their properties in Mumbai under the Smugglers And Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture Of Property) Act (SAFEMA).

The Act provides for forfeiture of "illegally acquired properties" of smugglers and foreign exchange manipulators and their relatives. The petitioners had pleaded that they were not duly served forfeiture notices and so the subsequent proceedings to attach their properties at Nagpada in south Mumbai were illegal.

# Are you sleeping clean?

When does call it sleep hygiene, it's a yawn; when Gwyneth Paltrow sells it as sleeping clean, the world sits up and pays attention. Which is a good thing, because Paltrow can mainstream a boring-sounding concept (even if not the details: we don't really need a skin-rejuvenating pillowcase set; sold out on Nordstrom, incidentally). What does it mean to sleep clean?

Long after we've gone to bed, our bodies work tirelessly to heal and repair cells from oxidation and stress-related damage. We don't even have to think about it, because it all happens while we're sleeping. You've heard it too many times before, but sleep is crucial for longevity, repair and recovery.

Have you ever heard someone say, "I'll sleep when I'm dead"? That's how a lot of us approach sleep these days. With deadlines at work, appealing clients and social commitments, most of us struggle to get 6-7 hours of solid, uninterrupted sleep. It's no surprise that we wake up feeling tired and need copious amounts

of caffeine to get through the day. In this frantic, always-connected, dog-eat-dog world, our need for sleep has never been more pronounced.

Sleep deprivation has very frightening and serious long-term consequences. It doesn't just affect your mood and waistline, but also impacts blood sugar levels, slows metabolism and predisposes you to a plethora of problems like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and stroke, says Dr Manvir Bhatia, Director of Sleep Medicine at Neurology & Sleep Centre, Delhi. Symptoms of chronic sleep deprivation can cause people to become angry, irritable, depressed, with a tendency for frequent infections, due to lowered immunity.

That's where sleep hygiene or sleeping clean comes in. It's important to take corrective measures to establish a nightly ritual to get better quality and quantity sleep. Here are ways to promote deep and restful sleep, with inputs from Dr Sandeep Sindhu, a Delhi-based ENT surgeon and sleep specialist; and Dr



Alok Sarin, Consultant Psychiatrist at Sitararam Bhartia.

Through the day  
Cut out caffeine after noon.  
Avoid going to bed either hungry or on a full tummy. About half an hour before, try a warm elixir of almond milk,

honey, turmeric and ginger. Not more than 60 ml, because you don't want to be awoken with a full bladder halfway through the night, interrupting sleep.

Do a little restorative yoga and yoga nidra before bedtime; a 15-minute practice will help you ease those frayed nerves.

Keep exercise to the morning or to the earlier hours of the evening.

Do resolve conflict before you head to bed.

Keep protein-rich foods to earlier in the day, as these take time (and energy) to digest.

In the bedroom  
Dim the lights at a particular time each night and 'retire' to your rooms.

Establish a cut-off time for electronic devices. So no scrolling on Instagram and no responding to your colleagues post 9 pm. The blue light these devices emit blocks the production of melatonin.

Curl up with a cup of caffeine-free herbal tea (chamomile, for instance) and a calming book (not a spy thriller, preferably).

Ensure that the temperature in the room is comfortable, so as to allow sleep induction and relaxation. A room too cold will have you running to the bathroom and a room too warm will leave you tossing and turning.

Keep out mosquitoes by burning some lemon grass oil: you don't want to be disturbed with bites!

When buying a mattress, lie down on it to check for comfort; don't just sit on it. Test pillows in the same way. And if your existing mattress is sagging, consider buying a new one.

Sun out mattresses and pillows every few months, to prevent bed bugs crawling in.

Always use cotton covers; they're healthier for the skin.

Avoid alcohol before you sleep — it may seem like it lulls you into relaxation, but it actually interferes with it, and you may wake up not-so-fresh.

Avoid popping a sleep-inducing pill (even if you're jet-lagged) unless advised by a doctor.

Lavender has been shown to decrease heart rate and blood pressure, putting you in a stage of relaxation, says the National Sleep Foundation, US. But if you have allergic rhinitis, you may want to avoid this one.

## For a healthy heart, add fatty fish, olive oil to your diet



Good news if you love eating fish. According to a new study, consuming fatty fish up to four times a week may help increase the amount of good cholesterol and prevent risk of heart disease. To keep your heart healthy, you need to be very careful about your diet.

The findings showed that fatty fish increases the size and lipid composition of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) particles, also known as good cholesterol, in people with impaired glucose metabolism. Moreover, using daily 30 ml of camelina oil — rich in alpha-linolenic acid, which is an essential omega-3 fatty acid — was also found to decrease the number of harmful Intermediate-density lipoprotein (IDL) particles.

The IDL lipoprotein is the precursor of (low-density lipoprotein) LDL, which is also known as bad cholesterol. Previous studies have shown that long-chain omega-3 fatty acids found in fish have a beneficial effect on lipoprotein size and composition. Both of these changes can reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, said researchers from the University of Eastern Finland.

For the study, published in the journal Molecular Nutrition & Food Research, the team involved nearly 100 Finnish men and women aged between 40 and 72, with impaired glucose metabolism. Study participants were randomly divided into four groups for a 12-week intervention: the camelina oil group, the fatty fish group, the lean fish group, and the control group.

While people in the camelina oil group, fatty fish group, showed potentially higher HDL and lower IDL cholesterol level, eating lean fish, was not associated with changes in the number, size or composition of lipoprotein particles, the researchers said.

Some of the other healthy foods that increase good cholesterol include olive oil, whole grains, legumes, flaxseeds, nuts and avocado.

## Ayurveda can make menopause easier for women, here's your perfect diet

Menopause could be a tricky phase in a woman's life, and ayurveda could help them sail through the years without complications. The key is to ensure you stick to your weight loss plans and overall fitness, and in this your diet plays the most important role. What you eat, without doubt, affects every phase of your life — from puberty to menopause. As women hit their late 40s and early 50s, menopause brings with it symptoms like loss of scalp hair, vaginal dryness, fatigue, and many more complications. To ensure your life isn't interrupted by menopause, make a few changes to make in your meal choices. You could take help from ayurveda.

"You find a lot of people

saying that menopausal women should eat heat-inducing foods but Ayurveda doesn't believe in that. In fact, Ayurveda recommends quite the opposite," says Anjali Peswani, a Mumbai-based nutritionist and food consultant.

Here, she breaks down the type of foods that menopausal women should eat, according to Ayurvedic wisdom:

What to avoid  
As a rule of thumb, cut down on spicy chillis, pepper, and spices like garam masala. Reduce your intake of packaged and processed foods. They are high on salt and sugar content, and are not a good idea for any age group. Ayurveda also asks you to focus on plant-based nutrition



-- it doesn't recommend any kind of meat as they produce more toxins and free-radicals in the body.

What to include in your diet

Say yes to cooling foods as the body is transitioning from vatta to kapha. Increase your intake of foods that produce more estrogen -- like soy milk, soy beans and prunes.

Fresh fruits and vegetables help eliminate toxins and clear your system. Begin your day with cooked apples, prunes or figs (high on iron). They will help reduce mood swings and make menopause easier for you. Throughout the day, munch on a variety of fruits -- pick your favourites because there's no restriction on any fruit. Even sour fruits like

kiwi, orange and sweet lime are okay.

Load up on veggies as well. Feel free to favour your most liked vegetables but make sure you consume lots of green leafy vegetables. For instance, you can start including plenty of spinach, radish leaves, drumstick leaves (moringa), colocasia leaves (patra), and coriander in your meals. You can also whip up shepu/ suwa ki sabji (dill leaves), which is high on iron.

Ayurveda emphasises on the importance of spices. Cardamom, cumin, cinnamon and ajwain are generally beneficial in dealing with stomach issues. Also recommended are fenugreek seeds (methi), amaranth, nachni/ragi (finger millet) and black sesame (high

on calcium and iron).

Another vital food group you should focus on are lentils. Once again, there are no restrictions so consume everything from whole green moong to red lentils to chana dal.

Eating healthy doesn't need to be a boring affair. Be creative in the way you include all of these various healthy ingredients in your diet. For instance, you can add some lentils to your spinach soup -- it transforms into a super healthy and filling meal. Mix some cumin and coriander in nachni bhakris and reap the benefits of spices as well as millet. And, if you're not a fan of drumstick leaves, you also get moringa in powdered form. Mix it with water and drink it up.

## Lose weight faster, follow these 5 easy ways to boost metabolism

Thanks to our modern day lifestyle, a sluggish metabolism is increasingly common. When your metabolism levels are low, you feel fatigued all the time, have trouble concentrating and are lacking in vigour. Having decreased levels of metabolism also puts you on the fast track to diabetes, high cholesterol and cardiovascular diseases. Surely, you want to avoid that.

Dr Abhishek Subhash, General Physician, Bhatia Hospital, Mumbai shares tips on how to boost metabolism:

Examine your diet  
Consuming protein-rich foods steps up your metabolism. Protein helps you build muscles. Go for lean meats like fish and chicken, pulses, almonds and walnuts. Vegetarians and vegans can include more of legumes, pulses, whole

grains, soy bean and soy milk, and tofu in their diet.

Sip on beverages  
Green tea is said to increase your metabolism by 4%. A couple of cups a day should be enough to reap the benefits. The caffeine in your coffee is also a good source to increase your metabolism rate.

Exercise is not optional

A high-intensity workout in a short period of time will do wonders for you. Cross fit is the best form of exercise here but you can also opt for functional training or calisthenics. You will feel super energized and your Basal Metabolic Rate will soar. BMR basically affects the rate that a person burns calories. Along with exercise, it's mandatory that you also spend some time weight training. That's

how you'll really build muscles and amp up your metabolism.

Use coconut oil to cook  
Previously coconut oil was thought to be evil but now people have realised that it's good for you. Even Western chefs are incorporating it in their dishes. Coconut oil contains medium trans fat, and fatty chains help you build your metabolism rate.

Change your lifestyle

Get at least six to seven hours of sleep. Find a way to relieve personal and professional stress -- be it through seeing a therapist, doing yoga or practicing meditation. If you lead a sedentary lifestyle, make sure you walk more, or at least take the stairs. All of this is essential to up your metabolism.

## EAT MORE AND STILL LOSE WEIGHT WITH THESE 9 EASY DIET SWAPS

When you think of losing weight, the biggest mistake most fitness enthusiasts make is to restrict certain foods and eat less. But a new study by Penn State University suggests that the most potent weight loss trick is to eat more of your favourite healthy foods, instead of reducing portion sizes. A previous study had also shown that people often overeat processed, junk food, such as biscuits and snacks, and end up suffering from malnutrition and obesity.

The study done on 100 women experimented with meals consisting of seven foods with different calorie loads, and varied portion sizes each week. The researchers found that people usually ate more when their plates contained more food, irrespective of the type of food, said lead study author Faris Zurairat,

a graduate student in Penn State's department of nutritional sciences, to Men's Health.

"Research finds that people have a tendency to eat a very consistent weight or volume of food, more so than managing calorie intake. It's really hard to recognise subtle differences in portion sizes," says Barbara Rolls, study co-author of the study and author of The Ultimate Volumetrics Diet.

Usha Kiran Sisodia, Head dietician and nutritionist, Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital, Mumbai, agrees with the study findings. "By eating more of lower-calorie dense foods and less of higher-calorie dense foods, you can lose weight," she says, adding, "Our mind is smart in taking commands. When we say 'I



need to eat less than before', our brain automatically gives the command and goes into reserve mode by adjusting the expenditure of calories. As a result, Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) slows down."

Nutritionist Karishma Chawla of Eat Rite 24x7 finds the 'eat more' message itself to be enticing for people as it doesn't make you feel deprived. "The trick lies in eating more of low-calorie foods along with

a controlled portion of moderate-calorie foods," she says.

Healthy diet cheats Sisodia and Chawla suggest simple diet swaps for weight-conscious people: \*Swap lassi with curd.

\*Opt for boiled or steamed vegetables instead of mayonnaise-doused vegetables or deep-fried foods.

\* Have dates instead of traditional sweets.

\* Try a bowl of sprouts bhel (rich in fibre and more satiating) rather than a bowl of puffed rice bhel (low in fibre which is easily absorbed and digested).

\* Opt for skimmed milk/paneer over whole milk/paneer, grilled chicken/fish over fried chicken/fish.

\* Try salads with low-fat yogurt, lime, vinegar, spices, leaves and fruits as dressing, over dressing made of oil and mayonnaise.

\* Try whole-wheat pasta over refined flour pasta.

\* Swap white rice with dalia and white rice poha with red rice poha.

## Obsessed with the UK royal wedding? It can lead to mental health issues



If you are a fan of the British royal family, like us, then you will be super-excited about the upcoming nuptials of Prince Harry and American actor Meghan Markle (on May 19, at Windsor Castle).

As new details emerge about the wedding preparations -- the official wedding cake will be a lemon elderflower cake baked by chef Claire Ptak of Violet Cakes in London, there will be lots of peonies (Markle's favourite) supplied by London-based florist Philippa Craddock, but there is no consensus on which tiara Markle will wear at the wedding -- you may be forgiven for thinking that you are a part of the royal entourage, or even an esteemed guest.

After all, the fairytale love story of a prince and his Hollywood bride has drawn the attention of millions. But counsellors warn that there is a dark side to this fantasy: it may become an extreme and potentially dangerous obsession, and eventually damage your mental health. Such concerns were raised by mental health professionals since Harry and Meghan announced their engagement in December 2017, when royal fans' avid fascination with the UK royal family reached an all-time high.

Mental health experts warn such an obsession could lead fans to lose touch with reality. Sue Varma, a psychiatrist and clinical assistant professor at New York University Langone Medical Center, says that fandom can intensify into a mild obsession, but when it deepens, it can raise red flags. "I absolutely don't have a problem with somebody having an obsession with the royal family. I don't think that's the problem in and of itself," Varma told Reuters.

"It's the lack of other activities, the lack of flexibility, the fact that you're taking away time from something else. Is this time that you could have been spending with your kids? Is this time you could be talking with your partner?" Varma said, adding, "When you start socialising with people that you don't know, when you don't have a reciprocal relationship, this is called parasocial. It's one-sided. This is a problem when you're living in a fantasy world at the expense of creating real relationships," she said.

Varma also warned that celebrity obsessions can lead to body image issues, such as body dysmorphic disorder. "People become obsessed with celebrities and, a lot of times, they start having body image issues, they start feeling like they need to get plastic surgery," she said.

# India turns a bad loan tragedy into a bankruptcy farce

Want to screw up a good law? Just try to make it a great one.

That's what India did last November when it added a number of restrictions on who could bid for assets in a bankruptcy. The idea of the new regulations was to make it hard for errant owners to regain control of businesses without first settling their dues.

But the morality was legal overkill; and that's now evident in the farce that the insolvency of Essar Steel India Ltd. has become.

Rival investor groups led by VTB Capital and ArcelorMittal were the two contestants in the first round. But the creditors' committee deemed both buyers to be ineligible, and went for a second round of bids. However, in a surprising twist, the National Company Law Tribunal on Thursday held the second round, in which Vedanta Group and JSW Steel Ltd. had also jumped into the fray, to be invalid. Creditors now have to reconsider the VTB and ArcelorMittal proposals.

Blame the confusion -- and crucial time wasted in litigation -- on 29A. The section, which the government slipped into the bankruptcy code in November, introduced four layers of ineligibility for potential bidders. That's a delight for losing sides' lawyers trying to trip up the winner, but a frustrating outcome for lenders whose



only wish is for a big check quickly from a new owner who knows the steel business.

Now that they're back to reconsidering the original offers, creditors will have to cast a fresh glance at the VTB bid, which is problematic for two reasons. One, the consortium has a minority participation by the billionaire Ruia family, the original controlling shareholder of Essar. Preventing previous owners from making last-ditch attempts to hold on to their prized assets was supposedly the main intention of the government in introducing 29A.

Ruia's bidding buddy also comes with its own baggage. There's no convincing answer as to how a unit of VTB Bank PJSC, a Russian lender whose

chairman made it to a US sanctions list this month for worldwide malign activity, could be considered fit to own a major Indian steel business.

So what has Section 29A really achieved? Well, for one thing, it's become an instrument of virtue signaling. Take Indian steel tycoon Sajjan Jindal's JSW, which stepped in as VTB's second-round partner, replacing the Ruias, just in case the latter were deemed unfit. Rather than telling creditors what they could do for Essar that the other party couldn't, Jindal and ArcelorMittal had a public showdown about their relative piety.

Whether ArcelorMittal's sale of shares in another nonperforming asset has cured it of ineligibility to bid

for Indian stressed assets, or whether Jindal's sister's previous involvement in another bankrupt steel firm makes him less than pure somehow, ought to be irrelevant to resolving Essar's insolvency.

Yet these were precisely the points in a Twitter fight between Jindal and ArcelorMittal. It would provide some comic relief from India's \$200 billion bad-loan problem... if New Delhi's bankruptcy law didn't turn the tragedy into such a farce.

The 270-day deadline for resolving Essar's insolvency is set to expire at the end of the month. The tribunal judges on Thursday added another month to the process to compensate for time lost in litigation.

That's of little consolation to creditors. India's banks have waited for more than a decade for a modern bankruptcy code. Now that it's finally there, an overdose of morality is crippling it.

Essar looks like it's headed for a lengthy day in the courts; in smaller bankruptcies, where there isn't much value left, the lenders aren't even bothering to accept offers lest government agencies accuse them of corruption later. Those businesses, like ABG Shipyard Ltd., may be heading for liquidation. An unnecessary culling in a country that doesn't have enough jobs for its young workforce, and all in the name of purity.

# Fortis in five-way battle for control as KKR-backed Radiant Life makes offer

The battle for control of Fortis Healthcare Ltd intensified after KKR-backed Radiant Life Care Private Ltd entered the fray with an offer to buy more than a quarter of the cash-strapped company's hospital business.

In its non-binding offer, Radiant, the fifth suitor for Fortis, proposed on Thursday to make an investment and re-structure the company, Fortis said in a filing that had Radiant's offer letter attached to it.

"I think now, we will have revised offers coming," said Gaurang Shah, head investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

Fortis also said on Thursday that it set up an advisory committee to evaluate binding bids. The committee is expected to give its recommendation to the board on April 26.

The company has become the target of a takeover battle that includes offers from China's Fosun International and Malaysia's IHH Healthcare. Both offers, however, are non-binding.

The other two offers - from local rival Manipal Health Enterprises and a consortium of two prominent Indian business families, Hero Enterprise and the Burman Family Office - are both binding.

All the offers value Fortis within a tight range of \$1.2-\$1.4 billion.

Latest suitor Radiant has proposed to spin off the hospital business from the larger company to form a new company, which will exclude Fortis' stake in Indian diagnostics chain SRL



Ltd. The all-cash offer to shareholders of the proposed new company is Rs126 per share, Radiant said. This offer values the whole of Fortis at Rs165 per share, or Rs 85.58 billion (\$1.30 billion), including the SRL stake.

The offer is contingent on, among others, Radiant being able to buy 26% or more shares of the proposed new company.

Fortis shares were up 1% on Friday afternoon at Rs 150 rupees, in a broader market that was down 0.3%.

The keen interest in Fortis, which runs about 30 hospitals in India, comes as companies and investors look to tap soaring demand for private healthcare in the South Asian nation against the backdrop of a stretched public healthcare system.

Private hospitals could also be boosted from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plans to implement a healthcare programme aimed at providing insurance cover to about half of India's population.

KKR & Co owns a 49% stake in Radiant with its \$200 million investment in 2017, Radiant said.

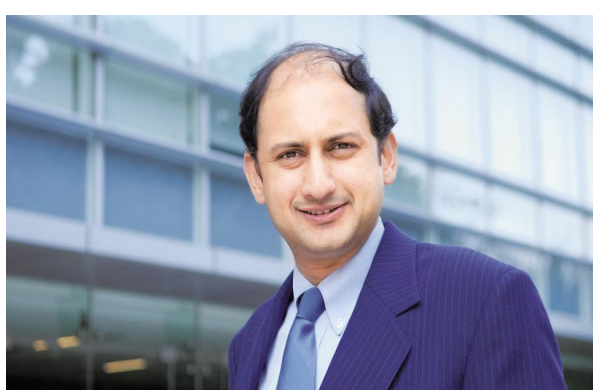
# RBI deputy governor suggests monetary policy may turn hawkish, hike rates

The most hawkish member of the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy panel is likely to get support from an influential colleague, signalling an interest rate increase is more probable than a cut.

At the April 4-5 policy meeting, Deputy Governor Viral Acharya said there was a revival in investment activity and an improvement in capacity utilisation, which boded well for the economy. As a result, he was switching from a neutral stance to shift "decisively to vote for a beginning of 'withdrawal of accommodation' in the next monetary policy meeting in June."

Minutes of the policy meeting this month showed most members of the monetary policy committee (MPC) are optimistic that Asia's third-largest economy will rebound this year with the output gap closing, a factor that is likely to boost inflation in coming months.

A majority of the six-member panel flagged upside risks to inflation earlier in April when the central bank retained the benchmark repo rate at 6 percent as expected. Five of the six members voted for the decision, while one, Michael Patra, who is an executive director heading the research department, sought an increase. The



panel also kept its neutral policy stance.

Preparing for hike "He might be preparing markets for a rate hike in the coming months," said Rohan Chinchwadkar, assistant professor of finance at the Indian Institute of Management at Tiruchirappalli in southern India, referring to the statement of Acharya, who is in charge of monetary policy. "But it still seems unlikely to happen in June."

Governor Urjit Patel said there are clear signs of revival with the manufacturing sector strengthening, adding that input cost pressures were rising and companies were gradually regaining some pricing power.

All of which indicate that the current easing in inflation is likely to prove temporary, with firm fuel prices, an expansionary budget, higher food procurement prices for

farmers and a recovery in vegetable prices in coming months set to fuel price pressures.

Just two weeks ago, Patel and his monetary policy committee lowered inflation projections, raising expectations that interest rates will be on hold for sometime to come.

But the tone of the minutes show the debate was veering toward a possible interest rate increase and the next meeting could see the split deepening.

More hawkish "The minutes look more hawkish than the policy statement," said Indranil Pan, chief economist at IDFC Bank Ltd. "From here on, the probability of a rate hike has increased."

The RBI is forecasting inflation for April to September at 4.7-5.1%, slower than 5.1-5.6% made just two months back. It expects the second half inflation to ease to 4.4%, having earlier estimated it at

4.5-4.6%. The bank's goal is to keep headline inflation close to 4% over the medium term.

The flip-flops on inflation projections plus the surprise in the minutes caught many bond investors on the wrong foot. The benchmark 10-year bond yield jumped 15 basis points to 7.79% on Friday, undoing most of the rally seen in March.

"Minutes of the Reserve Bank of India's April policy review sounded a surprisingly hawkish tone. This was in contrast to the perception that the monetary policy committee had backed away from its hawkish bias, given the inflation downtrend of the past few months", Abhishek Gupta of Bloomberg Economics said.

The central bank forecasts the economy will expand 7.4% in the financial year to March 2019, up from an estimated 6.6% in 2018. That's faster than a 6.5% expansion projected for China in 2018 in a Bloomberg survey.

"RBI in all probability is on the cusp of raising rates," said Teresa John, an economist at Nirmal Bang Equities Pvt Ltd. in Mumbai, adding that the expectation is for a 25 basis point increase in the second half of the calendar year of 2018 with inflation likely to average 5% in the financial year to March 31.

# India pitches for independent BRICS credit rating agency

India has pressed the BRICS nations to set up an independent rating agency of the five-member group.

The first meeting of the BRICS finance ministers and central bank governors was held on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings on Thursday.

Representing India in the meeting of the 5 nation bloc, Economic Affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg sought the support of the Presidency in building consensus amongst the BRICS membership on the BRICS Rating Agency proposal.

"He requested the Presidency to receive and take forward the report to be submitted by expert group set up under the aegis of BRICS Business Council to study the feasibility of the BRICS Rating Agency," the finance ministry said in statement.

India had first mooted the idea of having such an agency for the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping, which could solve impediments for the emerging market economies posed by the present credit rating agency market dominated by S&P, Moody's and Fitch.

These three western rating agencies hold over 90% of the sovereign ratings market. The



other issues discussed during the meeting related to enhancing the project pipelines of New Development Bank (NDB) evenly across member countries, expansion of NDB's membership.

The BRICS countries have already set up New Development Bank, which became operational in 2015, to meet funding requirements of the members.

It also deliberated on the proposal of the South African Presidency for setting up a working group on illicit finan-

cial flows and a BRICS Task Force on Public Private Partnership.

Issues related to BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) as well as BRICS Bond Fund were also discussed, the ministry said.

In his interventions, Garg emphasised that India has been a constructive participant to the discussions on NDB's membership expansion.

He expressed that a more careful and cautious approach on the value and addition/benefits new member will

bring to the Bank would be desirable rather than setting deadlines which are practically difficult to achieve.

On the issue of expansion of NDB's project pipeline across member nations evenly, Garg said the objective has to be balanced with member country's requirement for infrastructure financing.

Garg also suggested that since NDB already has a project preparation fund hence a separate similar preparation fund for PPP will not be desirable.

# OPEC, Russia want to continue output curbs on oil to boost investment

The oil stockpile surplus that's weighed on prices for three years is all but gone, but instead of celebrating victory some of the world's largest producers are finding reasons to continue cutting output.

OPEC and Russia's historic agreement has achieved impressive results, wiping out 97% of the targeted inventory surplus. Still, the curbs should continue because another important goal -- boosting investment in oil and gas production -- remains far out of reach, said Saudi energy minister Khalid Al-Falih. There's nothing to fear from prices rising even further from their current three-year high, he said.

His most important ally, Russian counterpart Alexander Novak, agreed there's no obligation to stop just because the pact's initial goal -- stockpiles back in line with the five-year average -- is at hand.

"We have our targets, but there's no strict formula under which we would decide: 'Well, we've reached zero, so we are done,'" Novak told reporters at the opening session of the group's meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on Friday.

Crude has surged to a three-year high and the glut that triggered the deepest oil-industry downturn in a generation is all but gone. Yet OPEC's choke-hold on its own production is only getting tighter. As oil ministers gathered in the Saudi city that neighbors Mecca for the meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee, the \$80 a barrel the kingdom desires was inching closer.

Energy ministers didn't make any new recommendations or adjust their targets in Jeddah, according to people familiar with the matter. Still, they did give a strong signal of their intentions after more than a year of



production cuts and rising prices. Based on recent market data, they would have some justification in declaring victory and phasing out their supply deal, but all indications were that they'll keep on going at least until the end of 2018.

While soaring US shale production remains a nagging concern, the key players appear to be more fixated on the immediate benefits of high crude prices. Saudi Arabia needs to cover weighty domestic spending and attract investors to a partial sale of its state

oil company, Aramco. Russia is relishing its new role as a major Middle East power broker, while also enjoying bigger financial gains than anyone from the accord.

"Russia is keeping all options open and Saudi Arabia is talking about a 2019 extension," UBS Group AG analyst Giovanni Staunovo said by email. "Status quo for the time being is still the best choice," although the outcome of the group's next meeting in June will depend on inventory and production levels.

Russian Minister Novak wouldn't rule out some easing of the production cuts this year, but said it would depend entirely on the situation in the market. For now, the group is cutting ever deeper, and Saudi Arabia's Al-Falih chided nations that haven't been implementing their fair share of the curbs at the opening session of the Jeddah talks.

# Mandatory for Pension scheme subscribers to give bank details, mobile number: Govt

Pension fund regulator PFRDA has made bank account details and mobile number mandatory for subscribers of national pension scheme (NPS), the finance ministry said on Friday.

Further, in compliance with the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) guidelines, the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has also made Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and Central Registry of Securitization Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest (CERSAI) mandatory for new and existing subscribers.

PFRDA takes various initiatives from time to time in order to simplify and improve the operational issues in National Pension System (NPS), like new functionality development under NPS architecture, simplification of account opening, withdrawal and grievance management.

"It has been decided by the authority to make bank account details and mobile number mandatory to provide ease of operation



for the benefit of subscribers and make the process of exit from NPS hassle-free," the ministry said in a statement.

The requirements have been made mandatory in the new common subscriber registration form (CSRFF) that are required to be filled in by the new subscribers.

The existing subscribers have been provided the facility to submit online FATCA Self-Certification in their login (www.cransdl.com or https://enps.karvy.com/Login/Login), the ministry said.

"It is to be ensured by the subscribers to fill the mandatory fields correctly and not leave them blank in order to avoid rejection of their forms," it added.

# Chris Gayle hits first century of IPL 2018, credits yoga for knock

Chris Gayle took off from where he left in the last game against Chennai Super Kings in Mohali, as the West Indian opener pummeled Sunrisers Hyderabad bowlers to score a 63-ball unbeaten knock of 104 runs, propelling Kings XI Punjab to a total of 193/3 in their 20 overs, an eventually a 15-run win.

The century against Sunrisers Hyderabad turned out to be Gayle's sixth in the Indian Premier League. His innings included just one four and eleven sixes in 98 minutes. As Gayle walked off the ground to the dressing room, he received a standing ovation from the crowd and was applauded by the Sunrisers Hyderabad team as well.

Speaking after his innings, Gayle



said, "A lot of people thought I'm too old. After this innings, I have nothing to prove. This hundred is dedicated to my daughter. It is her birthday to-

morrow. This is a good wicket to bat on, just have to go out and defend it. I'm very dedicated. Since joining Kings XI Punjab, Sehwag told me to stick

with the yoga guy and a massage guy; that's the secret, I guess. In a week's time, I will be able to touch my toes," said a happy Gayle, who scored at a strike rate of 165.07.

With this total, Kings XI Punjab surpassed the highest total of 147 runs scored against Sunrisers Hyderabad by Mumbai Indians in the ongoing IPL 2018 season.

The 38-year-old batsman from the Caribbean showed off his mettle and clobbered the Sunrisers Hyderabad bowlers all over the ground, entertaining the crowd with massive sixes.

Gayle's innings removed the invincibility cloak from the Sunrisers Hyderabad bowling attack, which has been highly effective this season so far.

# Kane Williamson's half-century goes in vain for Sunrisers Hyderabad

After Chris Gayle's onslaught for Kings XI Punjab, skipper Kane Williamson led Sunrisers Hyderabad's reply with a sedate fifty off 39 balls inclusive of two fours and two sixes. With 194 needed off 20 overs, Williamson came in at a tricky time after Shikhar Dhawan retired hurt after suffering blow on elbow off Barinder Sran and Wriddhiman Saha was cleaned bowled by Mohit Sharma for individual score of six.

After a small partnership with Yusuf Pathan, Williamson found an able partner in Manish Pandey as the duo tried to get the chase back on track. But with KXIP bowlers, especially spinners led by R Ashwin keeping things tight, Williamson had to resort to taking singles and doubles with occasional boundary.

But duo, and most importantly Williamson



hung in there as they gathered 76 runs off 56 balls for the third wicket. The SRH skipper started off with a four off Mohit Sharma and initially let Pathan take on the scoring mantle. With Mujeeb Ur Rehman prying tricky to read, he targeted Ashwin whenever a loose ball was offered. Both his sixes came off Ashwin as he kept SRH in hunt despite a soaring run rate. He was eventually caught by Aaron Finch off Andrew Tye off a knuckleball for 54 off 41. SRH ultimately fell short by 15 runs.

## Australian cricket team in no hurry to appoint head coach, team leadership

Cricket Australia (CA) will not be hurried into making a decision on their new head coach, captain and vice-captain for their one-day side until the team for their tour of England is named, board chairman David Peever said on Friday. CA are looking for a new coach for the men's team after Darren Lehmann stepped down in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa, while captain Steve Smith and vice-captain David Warner were both suspended for 12 months. Wicketkeeper Tim Paine replaced Smith for the final match of the series against South Africa but was named as captain for the test side only.

"The board has asked management to provide recommendations regarding candidates for the men's head coach, ODI (one-day international) captain and ODI vice-captain," Peever said in a statement after a board meeting on Friday.

"The board is anticipating receiving these recommendations in the coming weeks, with a view to making appointments ahead of the ODI Tour to the UK.

"Once these appointments have been endorsed and finalised, announcements can then be made."

Australia tour England in June for five one-day internationals and a one-off Twenty20 fixture.

CA were forced to issue a statement earlier this week denying media reports that former opening batsman Justin Langer had already been appointed as coach.

Top-order batsman Aaron Finch, who led the Twenty20 side before giving way to Smith after CA consolidated the role for all three formats, has already said he would happily take on the captaincy of the limited overs side if asked.

## Virat Kohli believes county stint will help him improve as a batsman

Indian captain Virat Kohli feels that playing county cricket in England ahead of their tour later this summer will help improve his game.

It was confirmed last month that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had granted permission for him to seek a deal. "Playing county cricket will help me improve my game," Kohli told NDTV.

"I think it makes things more challenging and more competitive and there are no guarantees whether you are going to do well even if you go in advance.

"It's just about giving yourself more opportunity to get used to the conditions that you are not used to."

Kohli does not have a good record in England in Tests, managing just 134 runs in five Tests at 13.40 during the 2014 tour. The 29-year-old batsman, currently skippering Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League (IPL), has been strongly linked to Surrey but a deal has not been confirmed.

# IPL 2018: MS Dhoni feels better ahead of Rajasthan Royals game

It has been quite a roller-coaster journey for Chennai Super Kings so far. Although they have two wins and one loss under their belt, they're well aware that all three results could have tilted either way. All the three games have dragged on to the last over with CSK being unlucky only in the last match against Kings XI Punjab.

And according to Mike Hussey, the batting coach of Chennai Super Kings, while all three have been thrilling encounters, the rise in the par score with every passing game is a factor why things are not

smooth while chasing down tall totals.

"Strategically speaking, if you are chasing a big score, you still have to get off to a relatively fast start but you will kill yourself if you lose too many wickets early and probably through those middle overs, so the plan has always been to get to a positive start but keep wickets in hands as well for the last sort of onslaught," he said. "All the games have been pretty exciting so far and I feel that the par score just seems to be raising a little bit, it's making it challenging for the chasers for



sure."

Skipper MS Dhoni had hit a cracking 44-ball 79 in their last game against Kings XI Punjab but it went in vain as CSK fell short by four runs. He's a concern for Friday's

game though, given that he's nursing a back injury but did bat at the nets for a while. Also present at the nets was Suresh Raina, who could be seen working with the physio near the boundary. Raina

had injured his calf during CSK's match against Kolkata Knight Riders and subsequently ruled out for two games.

"I spoke to MS quickly on the bus; I asked him how he's feeling and he said he is feeling better. So we are optimistic. He is at the training today. Much of the same with Raina, (we're) confident. But he will have to go through training today, and then see how he is feeling," Hussey said of the experienced duo. "We are feeling pretty confident with both of them, but we will have to see how to them through

training."

It's a new beginning for CSK given their home games have been shifted to Pune but the former Australian batsman stated that it wasn't too much of a concern for his side. "We have just tried to come here with a positive attitude, positive mentality. I guess the bonus and positive for us is that quite a few members of the squad were part of the team that played here for the last two years. So they understand the conditions reasonably well and have a good rapport with people working here," he added.

## Half a billion pounds: Report reveals record Premier League club profits

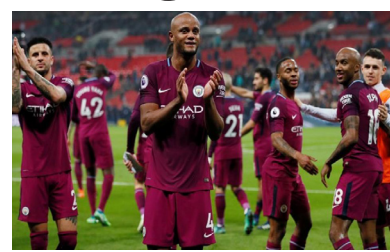
Premier League clubs enjoyed record profits last season, according to a report published on Friday by financial consultants Deloitte.

The report said the Premier League made a collective pre-tax profit of £0.5 billion (\$0.7 billion, 0.57 billion euros) almost three times the previous record of £0.2 billion in 2013/14.

With strong broadcast revenues and Financial Fair Play rules keeping wages in check to a degree, England's top-flight clubs also posted a record operating profit -- total revenues minus wages and other costs, apart from transfer fees, -- of £1 billion, double the figure for the previous season.

Wages, however, did rise across the league by nine percent to a new record of £2.5 billion but overall revenue rose 25 percent.

Dan Jones, the head of Deloitte's Sports Business Group, said the revenue increase was a result of last season being the first of a three-year domestic broadcasting deal with BT and Sky worth more than £5.1 billion.



Jones added the increase in wages was "nowhere near the level of revenue growth" and this "reflects both the extent of (the Premier League's) financial advantage over other leagues and the impact of domestic and European cost control measures".

Although the league has had difficulties in selling the next set of domestic broadcast rights this year, Jones forecast that clubs, who have made collective pre-tax profits in three of the last four years, would continue to record impressive financial figures.

"Despite the lack of growth in domestic broadcast deals announced to date, we still expect to see overall revenue growth in the coming seasons, and

if this is complemented with prudent cost control, we expect that pre-tax profits will be achieved for the foreseeable future," he explained.

The above figures do not include transfer costs, which for accounting purposes are spread over the length of a player's contract.

Transfer fees are continuing to rise worldwide but Deloitte are confident the Premier League is well-placed to continue to compete with the likes of Italy's Serie A and Spain's La Liga for leading players, with a number of top footballers likely to be looking for new clubs after the World Cup in Russia in June and July.

"We have already seen some clubs utilising their significant revenue increases, with a record £1.9 billion spent on transfers in the 2017/18 season," said Tim Bridge, a senior Deloitte consultant.

"We may again see similar levels of spending in the coming season, with the World Cup providing the perfect shop window for talent, but expenditure remains well within the means of clubs."

# Employees' kids playing for U-19 Railways, BCCI set to bring stringent rules

The BCCI is all set to issue a diktat for Indian Railways, sating that only permanent employees will be allowed to play in the Board's U-19 tournament - Cooch Behar Trophy.

There is a distinct possibility that Indian sports' biggest recruiters will have to disband their U-19 team if the BCCI technical committee recommendation is ratified by the general body.

During a recent technical committee meeting in Kolkata, its members found that Railways is the only BCCI unit whose junior team (U-19) comprised children of employees.

"The technical committee has recommended that from now on, any institutional unit taking part in any BCCI tournament (age-group

to senior level tournament) can only select employees," a senior BCCI official and technical committee member told PTI.

"We have received complaints that Railways' employees' kids are playing U-19 Nationals. This was not the idea," the senior official said.

When Railways Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) secretary Rekha Yadav was contacted, she explained the prevailing problem.

"Yes, at the U-19 level, we have children of employees playing but there is a genuine reason. We are a government organisation and we can't pick outsiders like state teams do. But even those kids are selected after trials," Yadav said.

She expressed her helplessness that it's not possible to recruit 20



U-19 cricketers every year.

"First things first. We are ready to recruit talented U-19s but we are not getting enough players. Secondly, it is not possible to recruit 15 to 20 age group cricketers every year.

We have a recruitment policy that we adhere to. We can't just recruit cricketers and ignore other Olympic sports," she explained.

"The second reason is that if there are some really good talent, they