

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

TUESDAY

● APRIL, 24, 2018
● 08 SHABAN 1439 AH
● ISSUE: 96
● VOLUME: 04
● PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	24.5	6.7
JAMMU	34.6	16.5
LEH	16.0	3.1
KARGIL	16.0	2.3

SUNSET TUESDAY: 07:10 PM
SUNRISE WEDNESDAY: 05:50 AM
LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 25°C & 07°C respectively.

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

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INDIA-PAKISTAN BILATERAL SERIES: BALL IS IN BCCI'S COURT, SAYS PCB CHIEF NAJAM SETHI

'Ministerial reshuffle; Amit Shah to meet JK BJP core group tomorrow'

To finalize 'who will be in, who will be out'

Srinagar, Apr 23: National President Amit Shah is meeting the top leaders of the Jammu and Kashmir Bhartiya Janta Party, in Delhi tomorrow to finalize the names of party leaders who would be inducted and those who would be dropped from the council of ministers.

While state leaders were tight-lipped about the meeting, top sources in the BJP told KNS that Deputy Chief Minister, Nirmal Singh, State president Sat Sharma, general secretary Ashok Koul reached Delhi on Monday to meet the party president and other top party functionaries. "Yes top leaders of the BJP from the Jammu and Kashmir reached here and are scheduled to meet BJP President Amit Shah, party's general secretary in charge of J&K Ram Madhav,



Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Jitendra Singh and Avinash Rai Khanna tomorrow," sources in the BJP from Delhi told KNS. Sources said that Party President

would discuss and finalize names for exclusion, inclusion, from the Council of Ministry. "If everything goes well, the reshuffle and oath taking ceremony for new faces would be carried out on 25 April," sources claimed.

The reshuffle was necessitated after two BJP ministers Chandra Prakash Ganga and Lal Singh were forced to resign from the council of ministers following outrage over their presence in "pro-rapist" rally in Kathua district on March 1.

The rally was organized by Hindu Ekta Manch, to support the accused in rape and murder of 8-year-old nomad girl in Rasana village of Kathua in January this year.

BJP's state general secretary, Ashok Koul when contacted confirmed from

Dulat asks Tasaduk Mufti to take Mirwaiz and Omar Abdullah on board and initiate dialogue with Gol

New Delhi, Apr 23: Spy master and former Chief of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) AS Dulat Monday asked Tasaduk Mufti, the brother of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to forge an alliance with double Omar of Kashmir Valley in the interest of suffering people of Val-



ley. "When Tasaduk Mufti feels that his party has ditched the

people of Kashmir and are partners in crime with BJP, then he should enter into a dialogue with Omar Abdullah and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq for sake of people of Kashmir. Mehbooba Mufti will have problems with this triple alliance but Tasaduk can do

See **Dulat**...Pg 02

'I respect Mirwaiz, Met him in personal capacity, Says PDP leader

Srinagar, Apr 23: APHC spokesman Monday strongly condemned the deceitful manner in which a certain Mr Nazir Yattoo who later turned out to be associated with PDP, came to meet Mirwaiz Umar Farooq at his residence.

"The said person had called Mirwaiz Sahib a few day back seeking to meet him in connection with his brothers enforced disappearance and in connection with re-opening of the Asiya Neelifar case," the spokesperson said adding that when the said person came to meet Mirwaiz today,



Mirwaiz was surprised to learn that he was a PDP member and had brought some

See **Mirwaiz**...Pg 02

Students continue to hit streets to protest Kathua incident in Kashmir



SRINAGAR, APR 23: Students protest continues across Kashmir valley against Kathua rape and murder case of little girl Asifa in several district and town.

In Sopore student of Jamia Kadeem High School took out a protest march against the brutal rape and murder of Kuthua minor.

Reports said that protesting students assembled near Jamia Kadeem shouting anti-governmental slogans and marched towards Bus stand demanding punishment for the accused.

Reports said that as soon as students reached near Bus Stand Sopore, the deployed forces did not allow them to move ahead, ensuing in clashes.

However, the situation soon turned normal after the

forces dispersed the protesting students.

In Pampore, the Students of Government Degree College both male and female staged a strong protest demonstration and raised slogans against the culprits of the Kathua rape and murder took out a protest rally in the saffron town.

Reports said that students including girl students of Government Degree College Pampore staged a strong protest at Khrew Chowk.

Later, the students dispersed peacefully after college management reached the spot.

Meanwhile, the Students of Government Boys Higher Secondary School Kangan of central Kashmir Ganderbal district hold a peaceful protest at main Market Kangan to demand justice for the eight-

year-old Kathua girl who was raped and murdered.

The students marched from the school to the main Market Kangan and staged for some time without disturbing traffic movement in the area.

The students were demanding strict action against the culprits involving in the Kathua rape and murder case. "We want an exemplary punishment to the culprits so that no one in future dares to commit such a heinous crime," said the protesting students.

In Lalchowk area of Anantnag clashes between protesting students and government forces. According to reports students from multiple institutions assembled at main town, Islamabad shouting anti-government

See **Students**...Pg 02

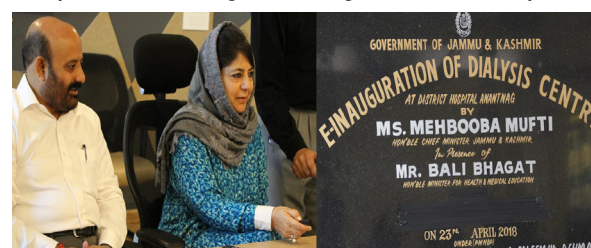
Chief Minister e-inaugurates Dialysis facility at Anantnag District Hospital

Asks Health Deptt to set up such facility at every District hospital

Srinagar, Apr 23: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti e-inaugurated a separate Dialysis facility for Anantnag District Hospital here today.

The state of the Art facility would benefit around five hundred patients of the South Kashmir region and directions for setting up of such a facility were issued by the Chief Minister during her Public Outreach programme at Anantnag on November 11, 2017.

Minister for Health &



Medical Education, Bali Bhagat was present on the occasion.

This is a step to provide highly specialized quality medicare facility to renal pa-

tients of far flung areas at their doorstep.

A similar facility is being set up at the JLN Hospital, Rainwari and Government

See **Chief**...Pg 02

CONGRESS DISCUSSES SOCIO POLITICAL SCENARIO IN STATE

Says so called secular forces trying to weaken Congress to strengthen BJP

Srinagar, Apr 23: Expressing serious concern over the prevailing situation in the State, the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) today held threadbare discussions over the socio-political scenario obtaining in the State in the backdrop of deteriorating situation and described it as fall out of wrong policies adopted by the PDP BJP Coalition.

The Party also cautioned the people about the designs of communal and divisive forces dividing people on religious and regional lines to serves their dirty political ends and urged upon the people to maintain unity and

See **Congress**...Pg 02

GEELANI CONDEMNS AUTHORITIES FOR CLOSING PRIVATE COACHING CENTRES

Says this illustrates their egoistic approach

Srinagar, Apr 23: Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman, Syed Ali Geelani on Monday strongly condemned the state authorities for closing private coaching centers, saying this illustrates their egoistic approach.

Blaming state administration for following RSS agenda and said that this dictatorial order is aimed at to ruin future of our students.

In a statement issued to KNS, Geelani accused authorities for hatching conspiracies and said they failed to deliver any good, saying their activities are aimed at to please their masters in New Delhi.

See **Geelani**...Pg 02

Coaching Centres to function normally from Tomorrow, Claims Association

Srinagar, Apr 23: Coaching Centres Association Monday declared that it will open their institutions at any cost. The Association while denouncing the government decision of closing coaching centres for 90 days said that Education Department itself is playing with the career of the students.

"The Association sees this step as a knee-jerk reaction on part of the Government in response to student protests."

While addressing a press conference here in Srinagar, Coaching Centres Association said that the usage of terms distraction, Human Rights Violations and money-minting hops' with relation to Coaching Institutes by



Education Minister and other government officials time and again is condemnable and unfortunate. Instead of recognizing the

See **Coaching**...Pg 02

COURT REJECTS BAIL TO FOUR ACCUSED IN ATM THEFT CASES

'Not even a single penny recovered so far, other co-accused still at large'

Srinagar, Apr 23: A court on Monday rejected the bail plea of four accused 'involved' in ATM theft cases.

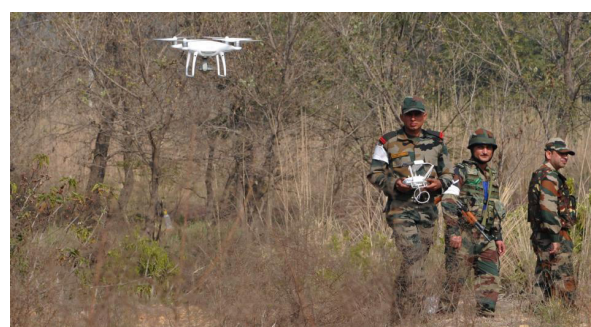
Court of Sub Judge, MR Chak while hearing the bail plea said that after hearing the arguments, pursued the application; report filed by the police and also considered the objections filed by the prosecution, perusal of the case diary reveals that not even a single penny has been recovered and other co-accused who are still at large have been

See **Court**...Pg 02

Army to train CISF men to identify drones of Pakistan, China origin

New Delhi: Holding foreign drones as potential threat to aviation security, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has tied up with the Indian army to train personnel in identifying drones of Pakistani and Chinese origin, an officer of the force said.

A six-day-long training session was conducted last month in Gopalpur, Odisha, with more sessions planned for the personnel posted at



59 airports across the country. The official cited above was part of the first batch. In Delhi, about 60-70

cases of unidentified flying objects being sighted have been reported but detection has not been done in any of those cases.

"The involvement with army will help us not only in detection and identification of the drone but also tell us how to neutralise it. They call it Remotely Piloted Aerial System and during training, various types of drones were

See **Army**...Pg 02

J&K HIGH COURT STAYS FIR PROCEEDINGS AGAINST TOI REPORTER SALEEM PANDIT

Court issues notices to state respondents

Srinagar, Apr 23: Jammu and Kashmir high court on Monday stayed the proceedings of the FIR registered against M Saleem Pandit, TOI Reporter in police station Kothi Bagh under section 505 (1) b RPC dated April 3, 2018, by ten local travel agencies for publishing, what they called as "fake news item" on April 1 and 2.

Justice M K Hanjura on Monday hearing the plea of the advocate Javid Iqbal on behalf of the petitioner entertained the main petition for quashing the FIR, while issuing notices to the state respondents, the justice Hanjura stayed the proceedings of the FIR and directed the

See **Pandit**...Pg 02

RANA FOR MASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF PILGRIM DESTINATIONS

Sthapana Diwas of Chandi Mata Mandir observed

Nagrota, Apr 23: National Conference Provincial President Devender Singh Rana on Monday called for massive infrastructural development of spiritual destinations, saying pilgrim tourism has opened up vistas of economic opportunities across the Jammu region.

"Like other pilgrim destinations, Chandi Mata also known as Machail Mata, has prominently emerged on the pilgrim tourism map of the Jammu region with number of devout thronging from various parts of the State and even outside Jammu and Kashmir to pay obeisance at highly revered temple surrounded by snow clad mountainous range of Paddar

in Kishtwar at an altitude of 9,500 feet increasing every year", Rana said while interacting with a large number of devotees at Chandi Mata Mandir Dhammi in Jagati on its Sthapana Diwas this afternoon.

The management of the Sarv Shakti Chandi Mata Mandir Committee presented memento to the Provincial President Rana, who represents Nagrota Constituency in Legislative Assembly. They included included Dr D.S.Jamwal, Chairman, Sanjay Gupta, Convenor, Sanjay Gandotra, President and Th Vikas Singh Jamwal, Senior Member.

Rana said religious tourism has



proved boon for Jammu economy and during most turbulent times for over a decade in nineties Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine sustained

the economy of the Jammu region, as tourism influx dropped drastically due to disturbed conditions in the Valley. He said 24x7 yatras has given new dimension to the pilgrim tourism in Jammu and this has further expanded with opening up of pilgrimages to Shiv Khori, Chota Amarnath and now Chandail Mata.

The Provincial President sought adequate development and creation of infrastructural facilities for the visiting pilgrims in a time bound manner.

Rana, while paying obeisance at the temple, prayed for well being of the people and tranquility in Jammu and Kashmir, hoping that

with the blessings of the Mata the state will steer to a new era of peace.

Dwelling upon the historic background of the temple, the various speakers of Sarv Shakti Chandi Mata Mandir referred to the legend, saying that Mata Chandi appeared in the form of Pindi, the same as it is in Mata Vaishno Devi. He said the pilgrims are getting spiritual bliss while embarking on the pilgrimage of Machail Wali Mata every year.

Prominent among those present on the occasion included Kuldeep Singh Jamwal, Sanjeev Singh, Kuldeep Singh, Rekha Langeh, Asa Ram, Balwan Singh, Vicky, Vikram, Tejpal Singh, Ashok Kumar and others.

BOPEE CONDUCTS CET FOR ADMISSION TO ENGINEERING COURSES

7753 candidates appear in entrance test

Jammu, Apr 23: The J&K Board of Professional Entrance Examination (BOPEE) conducted Common Entrance Test (CET) Engineering 2018 in various centres at Srinagar and Jammu. Out of total of 8840 applicants, 7753 candidates appeared and 1087 candidates remained absent in the entrance test.

The Board, while giving details of conduct of the test, informed that 6 centres were designated at Jammu and 8 centres were designated at Srinagar. Besides, the Board officials visited various centres located in both the divisions and supervised the whole exercise.

Nearly, fourteen observers deployed by the Government and Fourteen Member Monitoring Squads of the Rank of College principals / Professors appointed by the BOPEE respectively also monitored the entrance test activities at their respective allotted centres.

The board expressed gratitude to the principals and Staff of all the colleges / Polytechnics / Secondary institutions for their support in smooth conduct of the test. It also thanked to the Divisional and District administration besides law enforcing agencies for making elaborate arrangements.

Continue from Front Page.....

AMIT

New Delhi that the state BJP leaders are meeting Party top brass. "The party leaders including, Deputy Chief Minister Dr Nirmal Singh, Party president Sat Sharma have already reached here and that more leaders will reach to meet party high command tomorrow," Koul told KNS over phone, however did not divulge the agenda of the meeting.

Sources said that the leaders will brief the party high command about the performance of the state BJP leaders and the prevailing situation of the state.

After two Cabinet ministers resignation, the BJP is left with eight ministers, five in Cabinet and three Ministers of State. Sajjad Gani Lone, who holds the charge of the Social Welfare Department, is also a minister from the BJP quota.

Meanwhile sources said that while two new faces are certain in place of Ganga and Singh, some more could be inducted as axe is likely to fall on few incumbent ministers.

"Speaker Kavinder Gupta, State Party president Sat Sharma is in race to become cabinet ministers and Minister of State Sunil Sharma may be elevated as cabinet minister," sources claimed.

It is to mention here that the BJP National Vice President and Jammu and Kashmir High In-charge, Avinash Rai Khana had told KNS that a high level meeting will be held to decide the reshuffle in the BJP quota.

Khana in reply to a question on the anti-party activities of two sacked ministers Chowdhary Lal Singh and Chander Prakash Ganga, Khanna had said "Chander Prakash Ganga has not taken any rally. As far as the activities of Chowdhary Lal Singh are concerned the issue will be discussed in the meeting and action if needed will be initiated."

DULAT

if he really feels the pain of Valley people," Dulat told news agency CNS over phone.

"I am not telling it first time but in Pune during my address, I expressed the same opinion and appealed Tasaduk, Mirwaiz and Omar Abdullah to join hands. If they join hands, things will change. There will be a dialogue and that will be a fruitful one," Dulat said.

"When Double Farooq Accord became a reality, why can't Double Omar plus Tasaduk who is sincere in his dealings. Among the three, one has to take the initiative. These three young faces can do wonders for the people of Kashmir. Their alliance will strengthen the dialogue process. The dialogue they start will certainly bear positive results," Dulat added.

He also appealed separatist leadership to come forward and have a dialogue with Government of India. "Only dialogue can mitigate the sufferings of people. There should a dialogue in the interest of suffering people of Kashmir," he said.

MIRWAIZ

members of media along with him. "Mirwaiz reprimanded him for lying to him and politely asked him to leave."

Meanwhile, Nazir Ahmed Itoo told news agency CNS that he has a lot of respect for Mirwaiz and met him in personal capacity. "I never invited media as I have no control on it. I am thankful to Mirwaiz Sahab for talking to me for 15 minutes in a cordial manner," he said.

Itoo said that he had sought time from Mirwaiz a couple of days ago. I raised a couple of issues including re-opening of Asiya and Neelofar rape and murder case and student protests. I requested him to engage into a dialogue for sake of people of Kashmir who have been suffering day in and day out. I had no party agenda but met Mirwaiz Sahab in personal capacity," he said.

He refuted the allegations that he had invited the media. "How is it possible for media to enter into the room where we were present? Media was outside and in fact I didn't know about it," Itoo said adding that he requested Mirwaiz Umar Farooq to make an appeal to students to concentrate on studies.

STUDENTS

slogans demanded justice for Kathua victim. During the incident, one student identified as Wamiq Aijaz was injured in the clashes and was shifted to district hospital; the protests were going was when this report was filed.

In Pulwama Clashes broke out in south Kashmir's Pulwama district between youth and the government forces.

Reports said that the youth pelted a survey team of the army with stones in Murrana area of Pulwama which led to the clashes after forces resorted to tear gas smoke shelling.

In Shopian Army resorted to aerial firing to disperse youth at Pinjura in south Kashmir's Shopian district after their vehicle came under heavy stone pelting.

Reports said that youth hurled rocks at the army vehicle in the village. In retaliation, army men fired in the air to chase away the protesters.

In Bandipora students of the Govt High School Malpora Saderkoot also staged a massive protest demanding justice for eight-year-old Kathua rape and murder victim.

Reports said that the protesting students were seen hold-

ing placards in their hands, depicting different messages calling for justice in the case of Kathua rape and murder case.

Meanwhile, Students of Govt Girls High School Ajas in the same district also took out a protest march in solidarity with Kathua victim.

Witness said the Students took out a protest march raising slogans against the rapists.

They demanded that the culprits of the heinous crime be hanged till death besides demanded a fair investigation into the case.

Raising different slogans, the protesting students demanded stern punishment to culprits to the extent that in future no one dares to do such a shameful act.

Meanwhile Clashes between students and government forces in Government Boys Degree College Khanbal.

Sources said that students assembled in college premises and started shouting anti-government slogans while demanding justice for Kathua rape victim.

They said that some students pelted stones on government forces deployed near the college and in retaliation forces enter into the college premises, triggering clashes.

They added police fired tear gas smoke shells to disperse the protesting students.

However through Government direction about the closure of the College, the Students of Government Degree College Pampore managed to reach the College in large numbers only to stage a protest against the Kathua rape and murder. The College management later pacified the Students who dispersed peacefully.

The Students both male and female staged a strong protest demonstration and raised slogans against the culprits of the Kathua rape and murder took out a protest rally in the saffron town.

Eye witness said that students including girl students of Government of Government Degree College Pampore staged a strong protest at Khrew Chowk.

An eight year old Kathua girl was raped and murdered in Rasana village of Jammu's Kathua District in the month of January.

Later, the students dispersed peacefully after college management reached the spot.

Pertinently, District administrations had suspended class work in Higher Secondary Institutions and Colleges in the District Pulwama including Pampore, Tral, and Pulwama.

CHIEF

Hospital, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. Later the facility is planned to be extended to seven more District Hospitals in the State including Leh and Kargil.

Expressing satisfaction at the setting up of this facility at the Anantnag District Hospital, the Chief Minister directed the Health Services Department to set up such facility at every District Hospital in view of a large number of patients requiring this frequently.

The Chief Minister said upgradation and specialization of health facilities has been the thrust area of her Government particularly in rural areas. She said she has herself been monitoring the pace of work on the five upcoming Medical Colleges in the State and even the posts for the same have been created. This, she said, would take the healthcare facilities in the State to higher levels of quality and professionalism.

Principal Secretary, Health & Medical Education, Dr. Pawan Kotwal; Director, Health Services, Kashmir, Dr. Saleem ur Rehman; Director, NHM, Dr. Yashpaul Sharma were present on the occasion.

Several legislators of Anantnag district; Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, Muhammad Younis; prominent citizens, doctors and a large number of people were present at Anantnag on the occasion.

CONGRESS

communal harmony, for the fact, efforts are being made to vitiate the atmosphere of peace and harmony in the State.

Addressing the meeting of senior party functionaries in Srinagar today, the J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JK-PCC) President G.A. Mir blamed both PDP BJP for the current prevailing situation in the State, saying that the contradiction in the approach of PDP BJP will remain the cause behind deteriorating situation in the State, as a result, common masses are braving the brunt of utter failure and difference between coalition partners on certain issues.

Holding PDP BJP ruling dispensation responsible for the current mess G.A. Mir said that there is a deep alienation among the people due to the wrong policies adopted by the Coalition Partners, both PDP BJP have failed the people in all the three regions of the State, he described the unholy alliance as detrimental to peace and communal harmony in the State.

Cautioning the people about the so called Secular Forces in the State, who have earlier joined hands with BJP RSS for power, G.A. Mir said people are aware who is hobnobbing with BJP to secure their future and for that reason they are making all out efforts to malign the secular image of Congress Party in-order to strengthen BJP at Centre, but the people of Jammu and Kashmir being aware of their their nefarious

designs will defeat them.

Stating that people are aware as to who is hobnobbing with the BJP to secure their future. G. A. Mir urged upon the people to unmask those so called secular forces overtly and covertly strengthening BJP to secure their future, he added and said Congress is the only secular & unifying force in the State, which has never compromised for power, it will continue to remain committed to the cause of strengthening the communal harmony in the State, but the efforts are being made in both Jammu and Kashmir to weaken the Congress Party in-order to strengthen BJP at Centre, but at the same time, he felt confident that Congress Party will defeat their designs.

Among other who addressed the meeting included Former Minister Taj Mohi U Din, Vice President Mohd Anwar Bhat, Treasurer Krishan Amla, Spokesperson Farooq Andrabi, MLA Gulzar Ahmad Wani, General Secretaries Hilal Ahmad Shah, Shameema Iqbal, Abdul Gani Khan, Gulam Nabi Mir Lasjan, Shameema Raina Haji Farooq Mir, Imtiyaz Parray, Zahid Hussain Jan, Gulam Mohd Mir, Nissar Ahmad Mundayo, Mohd Sultan, Jasbir Kaur and others.

GEELANI

All orders are being issued from Nagpur, blamed Geelani and added that state authorities are pushing youth to wall. It is ridiculous and shameful for these stooges to blame students for stone throwing and the state directives carries no sense, Geelani said and added that state authorities while destroying all sectors including business, education and economical activities are fomenting trouble and making situations explosive.

Referring to private coaching centres Geelani said exceptions are everywhere and leaving aside a few drawbacks these institutions have contributed a lot in reforming the society while as corruption and nepotism is the hall mark for government sponsored institutions, saying these private coaching centers can contribute a lot if they follow sacred values instead of business interests.

Meanwhile, Syed Ali Geelani expressed deep grief over the demise of the wife of Convenor Hurriyat Conference (Azad Kashmir) Gh Mohammad Safi.

She was an epitome of simplicity, kindness, patience and honesty," Geelani said and hailed her contribution for Kashmir freedom movement, expressed heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the bereaved family of Gh Mohammad Safi and paid glowing tributes to departed soul. He also prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and forbearance to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

Syed Ali Geelani also condemned the arrest of Dukhtrane-Millat (DeM) chairperson Syeda Asiya Andrabi and her personal secretary, Fehmeeda Sofi and demanded their immediate release.

"The state government is at war with the pro-freedom people of the state and her detention was "an acceptance of defeat on part of those who were bragging about the slogans battle of ideas," he said in a statement.

Paying salute for her valour Geelani said that India and its agencies were frustrated by "the fact that Syeda Asiya Andrabi was a popular" and commands love and respect among the masses for her bold and clear stand and approach towards Kashmir issue," he said.

Terming Asiya's arrest as "unjustified", Geelani said that her husband, Dr Muhammad Qasim Faktoos is in jail for the past 30 years. "In such circumstances, arrest of Asiya is highly condemnable. In his appeal to ICRC, Amnesty International and international organization for human rights, Geelani impressed to take their cognizance and use influence for immediate release of all detainees.

COACHING

contributions of Coaching Institutes in providing quality education and preparing students for Competitive exams like NEET, JEE and Olympiads, such defamatory irresponsible statements made by Government does get disservice and discourages the genuine effort of young entrepreneurs.

"The first step to a consultative process is recognition of work done by various parties. The Government should make it a point that usage of generic sweeping statements in relation to Coaching Institutes should be stopped."

In response to distinction between 'Academic' and 'Professional' Coaching, we as an Association would like to convey that all programs run by Coaching Institutes are integrated Courses and cater to the demands of Competitive Examinations of different nature. An awareness drive about the same would be carried henceforth for the benefit of the parents and students.

The Association said that all coaching Institutes adhering to the Integrated Programs would start functioning normally from Tuesday tomorrow. "This step again is in the foremost interest of the students as we an Association would not like to see students suffer because of the high-handedness of Authorities. We would never encourage and in fact suggest the students not to take to roads to protest this decision. A students place is in the classroom and that is how it should be," they said.

COURT

apprehended so far.

Earlier, four accused identified as Aqib Sadiq Ganie, son of Mohd Sadiq Ganie, Uma Sidiq Ganaie, son of Mohd Sadiq Ganie Ahmad Lone, both residents of Matibugh, Yarpura, Kulgam, Junaid Bashir, son of bashir Ahmad Bhat, resident of Nunmai Yaripora, Kulgam and Bilal Ahmad Ganie, son of Mohd Yaqoob Ganie, resident of Check-i-Cholen, Shopian were arrested a few days ago for their 'involvement' in ATM theft cases under FIR number 07/2018 under section 457 and 380 RPC.

"The offence seems to have been committed in an organized manner by a gang of criminals and not only the ATM installed at Karanagar has been stolen but they seem to be involved in looting other four machines at public places," the court order reads, adding that these are economic offences where public money is involved and courts are also required to exercise utmost restraint in admitting accused to bail especially when money looted is yet to be recovered and co-accused are yet to be arrested.

"These are not ordinary offences where Court can over look and grant the bail to the accused pending investigation but these are very special and heinous offences which must be dealt with sternly to ensure recovery of stolen money ad arrest of the co-accused," the court order reads.

It further stated that in such cases public interest must be borne in mind while admitting or rejecting the bail applications. "Admission to bail in such type of offences at this stage will surely encourage the accused to repeat the same offence as has been done by them in recent past. I am aware of the fact that liberty of the accused has been curtailed and they are behind the bars v.e.f. 31.03.2018 but at the same time there being at large would definitely hamper recovery of stolen property and arrest of the co-accused and therefore individual interest of a person must yield before the larger interests of the society. Therefore, what has been briefly stated herein that the accuse do not deserve to be admitted to bail at this stage and application being devoid of any merit is dismissed," the court order added.

Prosecution Officer (PO), Anwar Rizvi raised the objections in the process of bail on the count that the instant applicant merits rejection on the ground that the offences committed by the accused persons are grave and heinous in nature apart from being non-bailable as such cannot claim as a matter of right.

ARMY

displayed. Those assembled in Indian and neighbouring countries are different and how to spot them was part of the training," the CISF officer said.

The ministry of civil aviation, which has come up with a draft regulation allowing the use of drones, but with some restrictions, has also formed a committee that would study the use of radar that can detect the drones.

"There is focus on neutralising the flying object but we must first be able to detect it. So far, it is detected through naked eye but never traced (to its origin nation). World over, there is separate radar for detection of drones or any other small flying objects, which should be the priority for us, too," said a CISF officer posted at the Delhi airport.

The ministry is also testing technologies to capture drones. "We have already tested technologies that can capture them or block the communication system. Another technology which will be displayed (at future training sessions) would be on how to trace the operator of the illegal drone," said a ministry official.

The draft is open for public consultation and the ministry is soon expected to finalise the rule.

PANDIT

respondents SHO and Investigating officer to file objections on next date of hearing on May 29, 2018.

Advocate Javid Iqbal said that no offence has been committed by the accused which is made out on plain reading of the complaint and the FIR. The petitioner's case is covered by the exemption appended to section 505 RPC, as such no offence is either made out or constituted. The court while agreeing with the submissions made by the counsel entertained the petition for the quashment of FIR and issued notices to the state respondents. The court while displaying indulgence stayed proceedings of the FIR.

Jammu and Kashmir police on April 2 had registered a first information report (FIR) against TOI's Srinagar correspondent M Saleem Pandit for his news report about stone-pelting attacks on tourist vehicles that left four women injured on Sunday, April 1, 2018.

The police filed an FIR on the basis of a complaint submitted by 10 local travel agencies who alleged that Pandit's report was "false and written with "malicious intention to disrupt the peaceful tourist season" in Kashmir.

Interestingly, the police had itself admitted that two tourists had been injured "because the vehicles came in the middle of an area where pelting was going on." The police denied that the tourists were targeted but came under stone pelting while they were traveling, leaving two tourists injured.

MSMEs will play a key role in employment generation- Suresh Prabhu

New Delhi, April 23: The First International SME Convention – 2018 is being convened in New Delhi. Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu was the Chief Guest at the inaugural function held today. Speaking on this occasion, the Minister congratulated Minister Shri Giriraj Singh for taking leadership in holding this International SME Convention for the first time, in which more than 30 countries are participating. He said that the world is debating strategies to revive global growth, but there are challenges like the rising gap between rich and poor within a country and also between rich and poor countries along

with issues like climate change and jobless growth. He emphasised that Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) will play key roles in solving these problems. MSMEs will reduce gap between rich and poor as they are agents of inclusive growth. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises will help in reducing Green House Gas emissions as they are generally closer to markets, leading to reduced carbon footprints. MSMEs will play a key role in employment generation thus countering jobless growth. He further said that there is a complementary relationship between big enterprises and MSMEs. Only if

the small survive the big will prosper. Big enterprises and MNCs require global value and supply chain, which is not possible without MSMEs. Need of the hour is strengthening these linkages between big and small, and together both will propel the global economy. Stressing on role of MSMEs, the Minister said that new Industrial Policy, which will be announced soon, lays great stress on the role of Self Help Groups (SHGs). He also emphasised that MSMEs can take advantage of the Start-up India Program. The Minister suggested that network of MSMEs across countries in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America, may

be created to promote their ideas at the global level as MSMEs are the crucible of creation of new ideas in the world of business. The SME International Convention – 2018 is being organised by the Ministry of MSME and National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) along with KVVC and Coir Board. During the inaugural function MoS (IC), MSME, Giriraj Singh, MoS of External Affairs, M.J. Akbar, Secretary MSME, Dr. Arun Kumar Panda, Additional Secretary and Development Commissioner, MSME, Ram Mohan Mishra, Chairman of KVVC and Chairman of Coir Board were also present

Suresh Prabhu to Chair First Meeting of Think Tank on Framework for National Policy on E-Commerce

New Delhi, April 23: Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, will chair the first meeting of the think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce to be held on April 24th, 2018. Senior officers of the ministries/ departments of the Government of India involved in different aspects of e-commerce; high level representatives from the industry bodies, e-commerce companies, telecommunication companies and IT companies; Reserve Bank of India; and independent experts have been invited to participate in the meeting. The think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce has been established recently by the Department of Commerce. It will provide a credible forum for an inclusive and fact-based dialogue leading to recommendations for informed policy making, so that the country is adequately prepared to take advantage of the opportunities, and meet the challenges, that would arise from the next wave of advancements in digital economy. The think tank on the Framework for National Policy on E-commerce will seek to collectively deliberate on the challenges confronting India in the arena of digital economy with a view to developing recommendations for a comprehensive and overarching national policy on e-commerce. Some of the issues that will be discussed by the think tank include the following aspects of e-commerce and digital economy: physical and digital infrastructure, regulatory regime, taxation policy, data flows, server localisation, intellectual property rights protection

DoNER Minister Dr Jitendra Singh speaks on 'Act East' policy in the context of India-Myanmar

New Delhi, April 23: The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy & Space, Dr Jitendra Singh has said that India's "Act East" policy is crucial to the entire South East Asia. Speaking at a conference on "India-Myanmar Trade and Connectivity" organized by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations here today, Dr Jitendra Singh said, Myanmar is one of the key pillars of India's "Act East" policy, since through the land borders it connects India via the North Eastern States with the South East Asian countries. A significant fact to note is that

many North Eastern States share a common border with Myanmar, he said. Emphasizing that to "Act East" effectively beyond the eastern borders, it is essential to first act east effectively proximal to the borders by promoting the potential of the region on this side of the border, Dr Jitendra Singh said, for example, Myanmar is not only geographically a proximate country with strong historical and economic linkages, but, in addition, the people on two sides of the border share common lifestyle, common food habits and common cultural traits. Therefore, he said, any meaningful trade or business engagement with Myanmar can be done primarily through the products and goods inherent to the North

Eastern States bordering this country. In the last four years under the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Dr Jitendra Singh referred to a paradigm shift in the Government's approach towards the Northeast, particularly with regard to its development. The "Act East" policy also includes the endeavour to open new avenues of job generation and entrepreneurship which would also make the Northeast the focus of India's economic and diplomatic engagement across the eastern borders, he said. Referring to the constraints of connectivity and transport as important impediments to the growth of trade and investment in the region, Dr Jitendra Singh said, in the last four years, a fast-

track progress has been made to address these issues. He said, new airports have come up, rail tracks have been set up in the States which had never seen a train before and new Inland Waterways are also being developed. As an evidence of the Central Government's high priority to the region, Dr Jitendra Singh referred to the recently framed exclusive Northeast Industrial Development Policy, the amendment to the Indian Forest Act of 1927 and setting up of an exclusive NITI Aayog Forum for North-East. With respect to Myanmar, he also referred to an MoU finalized recently between the Mandalay Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the business groups from North Eastern India.

Javaid Mir chairs Ganderbal DDB meet Rs 99.29 cr annual plan approved

GANDERBAL, MARCH 23: Minister for Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction and Floriculture, Javaid Mustafa Mir today chaired District Development Board (DDB) meeting of Ganderbal district during which a CAPEX budget of Rs 99.29 crore for the year 2018-19 was approved unanimously. Legislators Mian Altaf, Mohammad Akbar Lone, Ishfaq Jabbar, Yasir Reshi, DC Ganderbal Dr Piyush Singla, heads of various Departments, District and sectoral officers and other concerned attended the meeting. While reviewing the physical and financial achievements made under different sectors during the last financial year, the Minister who is also Chairman DDB Gander-

bal, directed the officers and executing agencies to make concerted efforts to accomplish the set targets. He asked them to adopt a pro-active approach for executing the works on various on-going developmental projects in a time-bound manner. During the meeting, the legislators highlighted the issues concerning their constituencies like upgradation of roads, augmentation of PHE, Education and PDD schemes, construction of community assets. Earlier, the meeting was briefed by the DDC about developmental activities carried out during the last fiscal. He said that out of available plan outlay of Rs 65.68 crore as many as Rs 64.04 crore was spent on various developmental and welfare schemes,

thereby marking 97.5% as expenditure. The board also reviewed the status of various mega ongoing projects which include Rs 52 crore District Hospital, Rs 13 crore polytechnic College at Hatbura, construction of DIET building at Nunnar, besides Bus yard at Ganderbal, footbridge at Bamloora Ghat and Shalabugh ghat bridge. The board also took various decisions to resolve public utility issues and fixed timeline for completion of various works, which include shifting of district hospital to its new building by the end of next month. The Chairman directed DDC Ganderbal to make sure that bus yard is made operational at an earliest so that commuters do not feel any inconvenience. He also di-

rected to prepare DPR for deep drain project for Ganderbal town. The Minister also took stock of the progress of various works taken under CM commitments which she had made during her visit last year in a public outreach programme. Speaking on the occasion Javaid Mustafa Mir asked DDC and concerned officers to always take concerned legislators on board while having plan formation. He urged upon the engineers and executing agencies to speed up the development tempo in the district and ensure the quality of works. He also directed the concerned officers to make efforts to clear the pending liabilities. The Minister also directed the concerned officers to ensure smooth conduct of ensuing Amarnath Yatra.

Diu Smart City becomes first to run on 100% Renewable Energy during Daytime

New Delhi, April 23: Diu Smart City has become the first city in India, that runs on 100% renewable energy during daytime setting a new benchmark for other cities to become clean and green. Diu had been importing 73% of its power from Gujarat until last year. It has now adopted a two-pronged approach whereby a 9 MW solar park spread over 50 hectares rocky barren land has been developed besides installing solar panels on the rooftops on 79 government buildings thereby generating 1.3 MW annually. To further enhance its solar capacity, Diu offers its residents a subsidy of Rs 10, 000-50,000 for installing 1-5KW roof top solar panels. Diu is saving about 13,000 tonnes of carbon emissions every year. Due to low-cost solar energy, power tariffs have been cut in residential category by 10% last year and 15% this year. To improve traffic management in Bengaluru Smart City, a prototype of an intelligent traffic management solution is currently being tested in collaboration with the Electronics City Township Authority (ELCITA). It will provide traffic information that is currently unavailable, and help improve management of commuter traffic. It involves capturing video streams from several cameras and processing them using artificial intelligence so that typical traffic management tasks such as vehicle detection, traffic density estimation and control of traffic lights can be automated for real-time performance. To revitalise urban public spaces and socially activating the area besides generating economic activity, Jaipur Smart City Ltd (JSC) has planned to develop night bazaar at Chaura Rasta, in the heart of Pink city. The JSC would register up to 700 vendors who will be allowed to set up stalls, including eateries, between 9pm and 1am. The project will provide entertainment, culture and shopping to citizens after office hours.

J&K Bank Chairman inaugurates 2 Business Units, 4 ATMs in Pulwama Our operations investment in prosperity of J&K: Parvez Ahmed

Srinagar, Apr 23: J&K Bank Chairman and CEO Parvez Ahmed e-inaugurated two Business Units and three offsite ATMs today amid a huge round of applause at Pulwama in presence of Deputy Commissioner Ghulam Mohammad Dar, Bank's Executive President Vagesh Chander and a large gathering of valuable customers, senior citizens, representatives of various trade bodies and local residents. The bank's Presidents Abdul Rashid Sheigan, P K Tickoo, Zonal Head Kashmir South I Tasaduq Husain, Vice-Presidents besides other bank officials also attended the inaugural ceremony in the lush green lawn of Zonal office Kashmir south-I. The number of business units increased to 67 with a total of 87 ATMs in the district that falls within the jurisdiction of Zonal Office. The two business units e-inaugurated are at Samboroa and Wahibug. And the four ATMs installed are at DC Office Pulwama, Achhen, Karimabad and Pehoo in the district. Speaking on the occasion Parvez Ahmed said, "J&K Bank not only envisages its expanding operations as means of financial empowerment of the people but foresees these as investment in economic prosperity of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Our JK-centric strategy focusses upon the need to energize the sectors of J&K economy with enormous

growth potential." "Accordingly, we shall be extending the credit to those capable of taking lead in the transformation of such sectors besides the skilled youth who haven't availed the loans so far. For that to happen effectively we expect the youth to equip themselves with right education and required skill-set. That is the only way to negotiate better deals not only for themselves but the organizations they will work for. To all the youth I assure total support and services of J&K Bank", he added. Chairman while deliberating on his Idea and belief of Bank's Business In J&K State explained in detail why he aspires for quality education to State youth who with their sheer talent which they are bestowed with can transform the socio economic landscape of the State. The proper education, training and direction through a conducive environment will develop the State youth for global challenges of handling Businesses and under such a perfectly evolved scenario, huge Business and profits for the Bank shall arrive as a secondary benefit. Quoting instance of huge daily consumption of dairy, meat and poultry items in the State, Chairman elaborated as to how its home production in the potentially capable twin districts of Pulwama and Shopian can generate huge employment and in turn pros-



perity to the area. Advising the staff of the bank present on the occasion to work towards the empowerment of the people especially youth, Chairman emphasized the need to reorient the customer service of the Bank towards inspiring the people for working jointly with us for home delivering the blended prosperity to every Subject of the State. He also directed Zonal Head to felicitate the students who have excelled in different fields of education. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Pulwama Ghulam Mohammad Dar remarked, "J&K Bank is more than a financial institution for us. It has become a part of our identity outside the state. This institution has fundamentally changed the economic landscape of the state and has the potential to shape our collective future as well." "If we talk of development issues we have an annual plan of Rs 200 -300 Cr. However when we discuss the District Credit Plan it is more than Rs 1000 crores which is quite a large sum for the economic development of a district. Therefore people need to come forward and avail different schemes of the bank. For example the bank's High Den-

sity Apple scheme promises a huge growth potential for apple economy. Besides, there are many sectors like milk production, poultry, and saffron which need a special focus through marketing and branding", he added. Earlier, Zonal Head Kashmir-I Tasaduq Husain Dar welcomed and thanked the Chairman and other dignitaries for sparing their valuable time for the event. "The presence of Chairman in any function is always encouraging not only for the staff but also for the people of the area we serve. Today we reiterate our commitment to serve the people of this zone with dedication and discipline." During the function customers raised queries and also put forward their suggestions. Local trade bodies and civil society members thanked J&K Bank for its world class products and services besides handholding the youth entrepreneurs. They were happy with the customer services provided by the bank staff. Meanwhile, the District Commissioner Pulwama Ghulam Mohammad Dar inaugurated the ATM at DC Office Pulwama complex in presence of Chairman Parvez Ahmed amid a large gathering of customers. Cluster Head Muzaffar Ahmad Qadiri Kashmir South-I concluded the function by presenting the vote of thanks.

CS for timely completion of sewerage projects in Jammu, Srinagar Reviews progress of work on Jammu-Akhnoor National Highway

JAMMU, APRIL 23: Chief Secretary, B.B Vyas, today chaired a meeting of the State Level High Power Steering Committee (SHP-SC) on Sewerage Projects approved under erstwhile JNNURM here. Financial Commissioner, Housing and Urban Development Department, K B Agarwal, Chief Engineer UEED, Commissioner Jammu Municipal Corporation, Joint Director (P&S) H&UDD, General Managers of NBCC Ltd besides other senior officers of concerned departments attended the meeting. Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Abid Rasheed and Commis-

sioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation participated in the meeting through video-conferencing. It was informed in the meeting that the Sewerage Projects for Srinagar and Jammu were sanctioned by the Centre at the cost of Rs 132.92 crore and Rs 129.23 crore respectively for integrated development of infrastructure services in the cities. Besides, Rs 108.85 crore have been released for Srinagar, out of these Rs 96.70 crore have been utilized whereas for Jammu, Rs 66.06 crore have been utilized against the release of Rs 70.21 crore by ending March 2018. The meeting was informed that

comprehensive Sewerage Plan for Greater Srinagar including 60 MLD Capacity STP, trunk sewer lines, lateral sewer lines and house connections would be completed by the end of this year while as the comprehensive Sewerage Scheme for Greater Jammu including 27 MLD capacity STP and trunk sewer lines have been completed while as the work on lateral sewer lines would be completed by the end of this year and house connections would be installed by the end of October, 2019. Taking serious note of the inordinate delay in tendering of work for pumping stations of sewerage

projects in twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar, the Chief Secretary further directed GM, NBCC that tender be invited by April 27, 2018 for installation of pumping stations for making the project functional. The Chief Secretary also directed that DDC Srinagar shall hold a review meeting of NBCC and other concerned departments for removal of hindrances in the implementation of the project under the overall supervision of Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir. He further directed for release Rs 45 lakh for shifting of underground PHE pipes in KZP Road,

Alamgari Bazart to Gasiyara Chowk for proper implementation of sewerage project. The Chief Secretary asked the concerned Chief Engineer, UEED, Municipal Commissioners to constitute a team of officers to monitor the progress of work on the sewerage schemes in Srinagar and Jammu on weekly basis and address bottlenecks, if any and complete the project on fast track basis. He directed the executing agency to mobilize resources to ensure completion of both the projects at the earliest. Later, the Chief Secretary also chaired a meeting of officers to

review the status of widening of Jammu-Akhnoor road. The meeting reviewed various issues pertaining to construction of 30.7 km long four lane road from Jammu to Akhnoor. The Chief Secretary directed the concerned departments to strictly adhere to the timelines fixed for project execution and hence completion. He directed the concerned to expedite the work regarding land clearances and removal of encroachments and asked the officers to work in synchronization so as to remove all the hindrances for commencement of the project.

Financial Commissioner, Housing and Urban Development Department, K B Agarwal, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Rohit Kansal, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Hemant Kumar Sharma, Commissioner Secretary Public Works (R&B) Department Sanjeev Verma, CEO ERA Farooq Ahmad Lone, Director Urban Local Bodies Sushma Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner Jammu Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Engineers of ERA, Public Works and other executing agencies, representatives of NHAI besides other senior officers of concerned departments were present in the meeting.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

Mission impossible: On simultaneous elections

The idea of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies appears to have caught the imagination of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been talking about this for some time now. It is not too much of a leap to surmise that he believes that voters are likely to back the same party in both elections, and that in the absence of a national alternative to his candidature at the Centre, such a voting pattern may help the BJP across States too. The Law Commission's move to seek the opinion of the public, political parties, academicians and other stakeholders, on the proposal appears to be aimed at giving concrete shape to this political viewpoint. The Commission has released a three-page summary of its draft working paper, setting out the amendments that may be required in the Constitution and electoral laws. It proposes to put together a report to forward to the Centre after getting the views of the public. Among its "possible recommendations" is a "constructive vote of no-confidence": while expressing lack of confidence in one government, members of the legislature will have to repose trust in an alternative. It also suggests that premature dissolution of the House could be avoided if all members sit together and elect a leader. This would entail a temporary waiver of the anti-defection law so that members could help form a stable government without the fear of disqualification. However, these are reforms that can be adopted even if simultaneous elections are not held.

In principle, simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies have the benefits of saving poll expenditure and helping ruling parties focus on governance instead of being constantly in election mode. The flip side is that it is nearly impossible to implement, as it would mean arbitrarily curtailing or extending the term of existing legislatures to bring their election dates in line with the due date for the rest of the country. This would be the most difficult change to execute, as such a measure would undermine federalism as well as representative democracy. The Commission has suggested an alternative: categorise States based on proximity to the next general election, and have one round of State Assembly polls with the next Lok Sabha election, and another round for the remaining States 30 months later. This would mean that India would have a set of elections every two and a half years. But governments have been brought down or have collapsed on their own, leading to mid-term polls in different States and even at the Centre in different years. Given the difficulties involved in shifting to simultaneous elections, we may have to live with the reality that some part of the country will go to polls every few months.

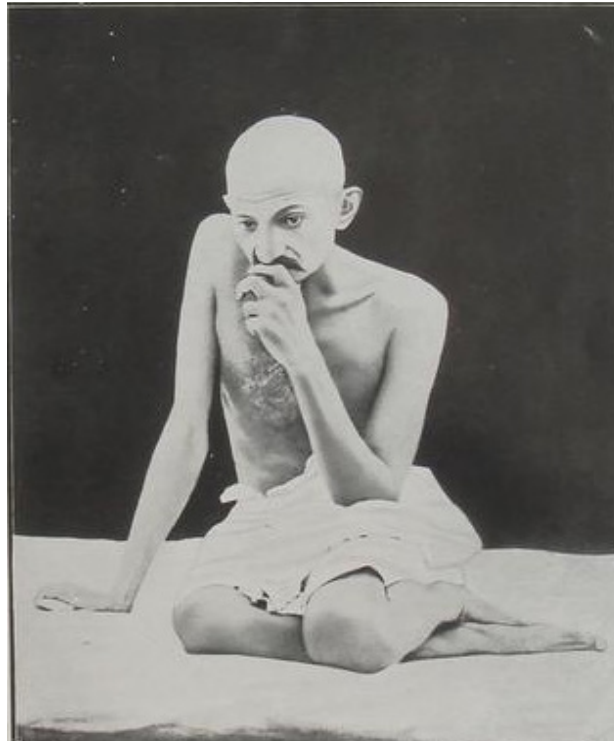
GANDHI IN NATIONALIST PRINTS

By VINAY LAL

M OHANDAS Karamchand Gandhi was the pre-eminent public face of India to the rest of the world for more than three decades after his return to India from South Africa in January 1915. But just how did his name and teachings circulate in India, and to what effect? The burden of the recent scholarship on Gandhi, which shows little signs of diminishing even as it has taken new turns in recent years, has been to critique, complicate and indeed defang the hagiographic readings of "the Mahatma" and to suggest that there were multiple Gandhis. One of the intellectually more engaging attempts to move away from the received view is encountered in the historian Shahid Amin's complex reading, to put it simply, of Gandhi from below.¹ Drawing upon local newspapers, pamphlets and other forms of what we may call little literatures, he argued that common people did not always subscribe to the authorised image of Gandhi; sometimes they even committed violence in his name. Large as the archive is that Amin drew upon, there are still larger bodies of material shaped around Gandhi that have received relatively little scrutiny. Gandhi appeared in thousands of prints, oil paintings, watercolours, sculptures, cartoons and advertisements: this extraordinarily rich and varied archive suggests that the representational apparatus played a significant role in generating a public persona of Gandhi and transforming him into the Mahatma, a world historical figure, the "prophet of ahimsa", and much else. I shall turn my attention here to a small set of nationalist prints produced in black and white.

Christopher Pinney has on several occasions characterised, though on what grounds is far from clear, S.S. Brijbasi & Sons, based in Karachi, as the most important printmaker in pre-Independence India. Printmakers were active in many of the larger cities, among them Karachi, Lahore, Delhi, Allahabad, Bombay (now Mumbai) and Calcutta (now Kolkata). But the most important centre of nationalist printmaking may yet have been Cawnpore (Kanpur), however surprising this may appear to someone whose impression of Kanpur is that of a city that has none of the attractions of a metropolis and all of its drawbacks, from extraordinarily poor urban management to unspeakable levels of filth and pollution.

Kanpur was, of course, one of the principal sites of the rebellion of 1857-58: it is here that the rebel leader Nana Saheb was alleged to have committed atrocities against the British, thus invoking the full force of British vengeance and cruelty. But, what is possibly more germane to understanding the place of Kanpur in the history of nationalist printmaking are the following: the non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhi was received with much enthusiasm in Kanpur; the 40th annual session of the Congress in 1925 was convened in Kanpur under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu; moreover, over the course of the decade, most of the principal stalwarts of the nationalist movement, among them Lala Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Malaviya, visited the city to drum up support for the Congress. In 1913, the promising young journalist Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi founded the journal Pratap, which would become a vehicle for nationalist opinion as much as a voice for the working class. By the



early 1920s, Vidyarthi had assumed a place in the local leadership of the Congress; and in 1929 he was elected president of the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee.

The city had a large Muslim population and many of its Muslims stood behind Gandhi's Khilafat campaign, even if by around 1930 some had become alienated from the Congress movement. But Kanpur's singularity lay perhaps in something else, as a city which was hospitable to both the mainstream nationalist movement and the armed revolutionaries whose exploits made them household names in much of north India. It is in Kanpur that the Communist Party of India had its inaugural meeting in December 1925. In the British view, its industrial character gave birth to "a large number of persons of very desperate character—a factor not to be found in any other city of U.P."; communist activists, on the other hand, saw in Kanpur a fertile field for trade union activity.² In a few years, Kanpur would emerge, alongside Delhi and Lucknow, as one of the three principal sites for the organisational activities of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA).³ The young Bhagat Singh even served a short stint as a journalist for Vidyarthi's Pratap.⁴

The 'picture merchant'
Thus, it is in Kanpur that Shyam Sundar Lal came to be established as a "Picture Merchant" with an office at the Chowk.⁵ Although a few scholars have over the course of the last decade or two drawn attention to popular prints, little, if anything, is known about Shyam Sundar Lal and how his business originated, and much the same can be said for most other major publishers of prints from the 1920s to the 1940s.⁶ According to his grandson, who still manages the business, Sundar Lal opened his shop and publishing venture in 1923.⁷ We similarly have very little idea how these prints were used or circulated. Just how many copies of each design were printed? Were they put up in the marketplace or affixed to walls in other public spaces to goad, inspire and provoke people into political action before they were torn down by orders of the police? Were these prints framed and prominently displayed in homes where nationalist feelings ran high?

No mention of them is found in any memoir or autobiography of those days, as far as I am aware. Is it possible that they were passed from one hand to another at political meetings?

Writing on the images of armed revolutionaries, one scholar avers that many can be traced to Kanpur, "and of these, a disproportionately large number appears to have been published by one press: Shyam Sundar Lal".⁸ Radhe Lal Agarwal, most likely a member of the family, is mentioned on some prints as the "sole agent" in U.P. Shyam Sundar Lal could apparently rely upon several printers in Kanpur—among them Job Press, Coronation Press, Misra Press, National Press, Ramdass Press, and the Central Press—as well as printers in Allahabad, primarily Krishna Press and Bhargava Press. Just how many artists were commissioned or employed at his workshop, provided he had one, is also uncertain; in the nationalist prints, at least, the names of Roop Kishore Kapur, on whom Pinney has lavished some attention, and Prabhu Dayal predominate among the artists. The images were copyrighted, suggesting that Sundar Lal was not averse to acquiring profits. Indeed, as other prints, such as those of wrestling champions,⁹ from his publishing company suggest, he was not inspired solely by nationalist sentiments.

Nevertheless, Sundar Lal must have been aware that in publishing material that was in some cases, as shall be presently seen, in open defiance of press regulations and other measures taken by the government to check seditious activity, he ran the risk of having his business shuttered and himself being hauled into jail. On April 13, 1940, the police finally pounced upon him: descending upon his shop with a search warrant, they found "in his shop a number of pictures for sale, publication or distribution, such pictures coming under the category of unauthorised news sheet"—the latter a term defined in the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931.¹⁰ The martyrs featured in such prohibited posters, postcards, and calendars included Chandrasekar Azad, Bhagat Singh and Jatin Das. The case came to trial on June 6, 1940, in the court of Rama Kant, Magistrate of Kanpur, who declared himself convinced that the "objectionable" material found in Sundar Lal's shop fell well within the definition of "unauthorised", and that the defendant therefore was guilty as charged.

It is Gandhi, however, rather than armed revolutionaries who was by far the most common subject for printmakers, and whose life and work generated an extraordinarily diverse array of narratives. The enterprise of putting into question the received teleology of Indian nationalism, in which Gandhi figures as the high priest, commenced neither with Subaltern Studies nor with Dalit scholars. The first generation of Marxist commentators, such as M.N. Roy and the young Soumyendranath Tagore, were by the 1920s already writing about Gandhi and the Congress in a

highly critical vein; and we may say that later the historians of the Subaltern School brought a certain sophistication to their critique of not only imperialist but, more significantly, the nationalist school of historiography, seeing them as joined at the hip with their emphasis on elites and the uncritical adulation of the idea of the nation. Pinney, quite possibly the most engaging scholar to have launched forays into the vast visual archive of Indian popular culture, has extended the critique yet further. He has argued, putting it rather plainly, that Bhagat Singh and his cohorts loomed much larger in the political imaginary of what is termed "the freedom struggle" than the sanctioned official historiography will allow. If his argument had gone thus far, it would scarcely be exceptional; after all, Nehru had admitted as much in Gandhi's own lifetime. "Jatin Das's death," wrote Nehru of the revolutionary who died of a prolonged hunger strike in protest against prison conditions, "created a sensation all over the country." The "popularity that the man achieved", he wrote in similarly effusive language about Bhagat Singh, "was something amazing"; at one point, Nehru was to add in his autobiography of 1941, Bhagat Singh had eclipsed Gandhi in popularity.¹¹ Indeed, the historian Manmath Nath Gupta, who over several decades vigorously championed the "revolutionaries" as the true if unheralded architects of Indian Independence, was as early as 1939 calling into question what he took to be the hegemonic nationalist narrative.¹²

Gandhi and Bhagat Singh
Pinney's claim is rather more striking, namely, that popular culture is much less observant of the pieties of official nationalism and can barely be contained. Thus, in his reading, even Gandhi, however loath he may have been to allow revolutionaries who had resorted to violence a place in the emerging history of the nation, perforce had to concede that the nation stood in deep debt to the patriotism of martyred young men and women. His piece de resistance for this argument is a print from around 1931 where "Gandhi reveals his true allegiance to B.K. [Bakuteshwar] Dutt": "Just as Hanuman, the monkey-god tears open his chest to reveal his allegiance to his master, the god Ram, so here Gandhi tears open his [inferior] peaceful existence to reveal his faith in revolutionary struggle", a reference to the print's representation of Gandhi baring open his chest to reveal an image of the holy trio of the martyred Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru.¹³ Popular opinion impels Gandhi towards the truth; his secret self triumphs over the self shaped by manufactured consent.

To bolster Pinney's argument, it may be said that we do not have a similar image of Bhagat Singh tearing open his chest to reveal an image of Gandhi. However, this image lends itself to a great many more interpretations and questions than Pinney, who seems a bit too eager to join those contemporary commentators who have thought it fit to diminish Gandhi's role in the struggle for Independence and also take the shine off him, is willing to allow. As Pinney recognises, viewers of the print would at once have thought of Ram and Hanuman. Should we then simply affirm that Hanuman is to Ram as Gandhi is to Bhagat Singh? Could such a view have had any traction at all to the viewers? That hardly seems possible:

Marginalised from school

Shashi Tharoor

Although the recent Budget session of Parliament was appallingly disrupted by the ruling party's surrogates and Question Hour did not function most of the time, some things did work, almost on autopilot. Written questions submitted by MPs were indeed answered in writing—I got 26 of my questions admitted and answered—and while the more prestigious "starred questions" could not get asked, these "unstarred" ones have given us an instructive insight into some crucial aspects of government policy.

On education
My questions to the Minister of Human Resource Development in the Lok Sabha on the implementation of the Right to Education Act (RTE), almost a decade after its enactment, are a case in point. The answers I received are alarming, and definitely warrant an emergency review of the implementation of the Act.

It emerges from the Minister's replies to me that five States (Goa, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim and Telangana) have not even issued notifications regarding

admissions under the RTE. As readers will recall, Section 12(1)(c) of the Act mandates private unaided schools to reserve 25% of seats for children from economically weaker sections (EWS), in the age bracket of six to 14 years. This enabled economically marginalised communities to access high quality private schools, at the expense of the State. While Telangana may be excused due to its recent formation, it is unjustifiable that the other States have failed to undertake the most basic steps to implement Section 12(1)(c) of an Act passed eight years ago.

States have to notify per-child costs to pay the private schools, on behalf of the children admitted under this provision. However, out of 29 States and seven Union Territories, only 14 have notified their per-child costs. The provision does not apply to Jammu and Kashmir and there are no private schools in Lakshadweep; therefore, as per the data provided, a shocking 20 States/UTs have still not notified the per-child costs, a blatant violation of the letter and spirit of the RTE.

It is also shocking to note that in



2017-18, of the 15 States which submitted their reimbursement claims to the Central government, only six were approved. Many of the claims of the States were not provided funds by the Centre, as they had not notified the per-child costs. In response to my query regarding the number of children admitted, per State, under the Section 12(1)(c) in the last three years, 18 States have claimed that the question is not applicable to them, without giving any reason for this response. This could mean that in 18 States, poor children are not even benefiting under this Act. If there are no data to record the number of students being admitted, it begs the question as to how States are reimbursing private

schools. The respective State governments and the Centre should clarify this specific point.

Many gaps to fill
According to Indus Action, an organisation which works in 10 States specifically on this provision, while there are higher order issues like the methodology used by States to calculate the per-child cost and lack of coverage of ancillary costs in the reimbursements, the absence of a streamlined disbursement framework both at the Central and State levels is one of the biggest reasons that reimbursements are not processed. If the States are not provided sufficient funds, private schools would be forced to bear the costs of the children. Civil

society activists have informed me of instances of schools refusing to admit children under the RTE provision, citing non-payment of dues by State governments.

The data regarding the number of children admitted under Section 12(1)(c) of the Act, in States which provided the figures, are also distressing. The number of children studying under this provision increased by 6,12,053 from 2014-2015 to 2015-16, but by 5,02,880 from 2015-16 to 2016-17. The State of the Nation 2015 report by IIM Ahmedabad, based on official data obtained from the District Information System for Education, puts the total number of seats under this provision as 1.6 crore over the next eight years. This means that 20 lakh seats should be available annually for EWS children in private schools under the Act; however, according to the answer of the Minister, only 5-6 lakh seats are being filled on an annual basis.

The Preamble to the Constitution states that the democratic Republic of India shall secure social, economic and political justice. Education is undoubt-

edly the most important element in the movement to secure this end. Although the Directive Principles of State Policy mandate the state to provide children the right to access education, and the 86th constitutional amendment and the RTE dictate its implementation, it will only be fulfilled if sincere efforts are made by the States under the guidance and prodding of a committed Centre.

The executive is responsible for the implementation of RTE and the legislature has the duty to hold the executive accountable. Neither—judging by the evidence—has done its job properly.

As the malaise regarding the non-implementation of the RTE is spread across the country, the Central government should immediately convene a meeting with all the State education ministers and review the implementation of the law. The RTE aimed to provide a framework for private schools to supplement the efforts of the state to uplift disadvantaged sections of society through the means of education. We need to act immediately to address the gaps in the implementation of the law. The future of our children depends on it.

Venkaiah Naidu rejects Opposition notice for CJI's impeachment, says it lacks merit

Rajya Sabha chairman Venkaiah Naidu on Monday rejected a notice by the Congress and six other opposition parties seeking the removal of Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, saying it lacked substantial merit and that the allegations were neither "tenable nor admissible".

Naidu held that the allegations emerging from the case had a serious tendency of "undermining" the independence of the judiciary.

Naidu, in his 10-page order, said, "... it would be inappropriate and irresponsible act to accept statements which have little empirical basis. As heir to an illustrious democratic tradition and custodian of present and future of democratic polity, we should, in my view, collectively strengthen and not erode the foundation of the grand edifice bequeathed to us by the Constitution makers."

The Congress said the move had triggered a battle between forces 'rejecting' and 'rescuing' democracy.

Randeep Surjewala, the chief of the party's communication department, said, "RS Chairman can't adjudicate the motion, for he has no mandate to decide the merits of the motion."

The Rajya Sabha chairman's order maintains that it is "imperative" that one should have "extraordinary, important and substantial grounds for the removal of a judge." The initiation of

such proceedings tends to undermine the faith of the common person in the judicial system, the order said.

"We cannot allow any of our pillars of governance to be weakened by any thought, word, or action," the order added.

Naidu based his decision on the opinion of top legal and constitutional experts, including former secretary generals of Lok Sabha and other legal luminaries with whom he held extensive consultations.

He also held the views of top legal and constitutional experts, including former chief justices and judges, before taking the decision, sources said.

Congress sources said the party is likely to move the Supreme Court against the order of the Rajya Sabha chairman in the matter.

The notice On April 20, seven opposition parties led by the Congress had submitted a notice for the removal of the CJI on five grounds of "misbehaviour" and "misuse of authority." The motion had been signed by 61 serving RS MPs and seven retired MPs. A motion to remove the CJI has to have signatures of 50 Rajya Sabha members or 100 Lok Sabha members.

Besides the Congress, current and former RS MPs from Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Communist Party of India, Nationalist Congress Party and Indian Union Muslim League had



signed the motion. The Trinamool Congress, DMK and RJD have stayed away from the motion.

The ground for rejecting the motion was set in motion late last week when RS Secretariat officials had said that the opposition members had violated the provisions of the "Handbook for Members of Rajya Sabha" which bars the members moving the motion from giving advance "publicity."

Opposition leaders had addressed a press conference on April 20, soon after submitting the notice to the RS chairman for a motion to remove the CJI.

Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday started the consultation process with legal and parliamentary experts on the notice submitted by Congress and six other opposition parties, two Parliament of-

officials familiar with the development said.

This was the first time in the history of India that such a motion had been initiated against the country's top judge. No CJI has ever been impeached in India.

Controversy erupts The five charges levelled against the CJI in the notice included "conspiracy to pay illegal gratification" in the Prasad Education Trust case and denial of permission to proceed against a retired high court judge in the same matter.

The Prasad Education Trust case surfaced last year when the CBI arrested a retired judge of the Orissa high court and five others in a bribery case. A petition for an independent inquiry into the case was admitted by a bench

headed by justice J Chelameswar and it passed an order to set up a constitution bench of five senior most judges of the Supreme Court to hear the petition. CJI Misra set up a five-judge bench to hear the order; the bench annulled the order.

Another charge listed by the opposition parties pertains to a piece of land which the CJI had acquired as an advocate by giving a "false affidavit". The opposition also alleged that sensitive cases were assigned to handpicked judges.

Some of these allegations were also raised by four top Supreme Court judges at a news conference on January 12 this year.

"We were hoping that the anguish of the judges as reflected in their statements would be addressed by the Chief Justice and that he will set his house in order. More than three months have passed. Nothing has changed," Congress leader Sibal claimed on the day the notice was submitted.

Government's response Finance minister Arun Jaitley later 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 last Friday the move was 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".

Union minister Piyush Goyal too hit out at opposition parties on the same day, alleging depths of politicking had been reached and that judicial independence in the country was being attacked for political interests.

"The highest judicial forum of the country is being attacked. I don't know if you are looking at going back to the Emergency days when there was a talk of a committed judiciary."

Experts speak The unprecedented move by the Opposition "smacked of political overtones" rather than any "misbehaviour" and "misuse" of authority, constitutional experts told PTI.

Eminent jurist Soli Sorabjee, who was the attorney general during the NDA government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, made a scathing attack on the opposition's decision to go for impeachment of the CJI, saying, "This is the worst that could happen to the independence of the judiciary."

Sorabjee's view was shared by Justice SN Dhingra, who said it is an attempt to gain political mileage.

"The impeachment notice is motivated and the MPs want political mileage knowing that they do not have the numbers to impeach the chief justice. Discontentment among judges does not mean you initiate the process of impeachment. Discontentment is a part of life," the former judge said.

Congress criticises Venkaiah Naidu's move to reject notice seeking CJI removal

Rajya Sabha chairperson and vice president M Venkaiah Naidu's decision to reject the notices seeking the removal of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra has triggered a battle between forces "rejecting" and "rescuing" democracy, the Congress party said on Monday.

"RS chairman can't adjudicate the motion, for he has no mandate to decide the merits of the motion," Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said.

The Congress leader also said Naidu cannot decide on the merits in absence of a quasi-judicial or administrative power.

"If all charges were to be proved before inquiry as RS Chairman suggests, Constitution & Judges (Inquiry) Act will have no relevance," Surjewala said.

He also linked the decision to Union finance minister Arun Jaitley's critique of the notice.

"Within hours of 64 MP's submitting the impeachment motion, Leader of Rajya Sabha (FM) had expressed



naked prejudice by calling it a 'revenge petition' virtually dictating the verdict to Rajya Sabha Chairman on that day. Has 'Revenge Petition' now become 'Rescue Order'?"

The opposition party indicated on Sunday that if the notice was rejected, the party would go to court. It is scheduled to hold a press conference on Monday afternoon to outline its next steps. The Congress and six

other opposition parties on Friday submitted the notice for the removal of CJI Misra on five grounds of "misbehaviour," the first time in the history of India that such a motion has been initiated against the country's top judge.

The move against stirred a massive controversy as the Congress accused the CJI of "misbehaviour" and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party said the main opposition

party was politicising the issue.

Jaitley accused it of trivialising the power of impeachment and using it as a political tool.

The senior BJP leader said last Friday that the move was 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" in a scathing Facebook post.

All three Modis looting the country, says Sitaram Yechury

Launching a sharp attack on the Prime Minister, CPI-M general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Sunday claimed that Narendra Modi, fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi and former IPL Chairman Lalit Modi were looting the country.

The Left leader said people never knew that the country had so many Modis, but what is common among them is that "all were looting".

Yechury -- re-elected as the Communist Party of India-Marxist general secretary -- said the loot increased after the Modi government came to power in May 2014.

He said though Modi had promised to waive loans of farmers, he waived loans of about Rs 3 lakh crore of big investors and industrialists.

"People's money kept in banks was looted. Those who did it escaped from the country and the government is not able to bring them back," he said.

Yechury was addressing a public meeting organised by the CPI-M on Sunday eve-



ning to mark the end of five-day party national conclave. Yechury compared Narendra Modi and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah to epic Mahabharata's 'Duryodhana' and 'Dushasana'.

The Marxist leader said there were 100 Kaurava brothers in Mahabharat but most people know of only two -- Duryodhana and Dushasana.

"Similarly, people know only two in BJP -- Narendra Modi and Amit Shah," he remarked.

Yechury vowed to defeat the BJP-RSS combine and said the CPI-M was determined to defeat the communal forces and restore harmony in the

country.

Voicing concern over increasing sexual assaults on children, he alleged that all those involved belonged to the BJP and RSS and no action was taken against them. "Instead of registering cases against them, victims are being booked. The women and children never faced this grave threat before this government came to power," he said.

On the third alternative proposed by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao against both the BJP and the Congress, Yechury said the CPI-M would take a decision after seeing its policies. Revealing that the Telan-

gana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) chief spoke to him a few days ago about the proposed front, Yechury said a front for the sake of power would be of no help.

He recalled that an effort was made for the third alternative 20 years ago, leading to the formation of United Front government in 1996.

Yechury said that while their priority was to defeat the communal forces and appropriate strategy would be adopted at the time of 2019 general elections, the electoral alliances alone will not help. He underlined the need to build a mass movement to achieve the goal.

Hepointed out that during Telangana's armed struggle, "the Communists protected 5,000 villages for three years from Nizam's 'razakars', the Congress government and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's Army". Referring to the march of hundreds of red-shirt volunteers at the public meeting, he said such 'people's army' alone could give a befitting reply to the communalists.

Clashes mar Bengal rural poll nominations; Opposition considers moving court

In a repeat of the violence earlier this month, clashes marred the last day of filing of nomination papers for the panchayat polls in West Bengal on Monday, with the opposition blaming the ruling Trinamool Congress for unleashing terror.

Supporters of the TMC and other political parties clashed in different parts of the state with crude bombs and firearms. Following the clashes, the BJP and the CPI(M) decided to move the Calcutta high court once again to bring to its notice the widespread violence.

Following the violence, the BJP state unit chief Dilip Ghosh warned that the party would be forced to demand President's rule in West Bengal. "The situation in Bengal is fast approaching a state where we will be forced to demand imposition of President's rule in the state," Ghosh said. He also claimed five of their party's supporters have died so far this month while trying to file nominations.

Around midday, the body of an unidentified person was found in Suri of Birbhum district during clashes between TMC and BJP supporters. TMC leader and minister Firhad Hakim claimed that the person was their supporter.

A few thatched houses went up in flames after crude bombs were

thrown at them. Men carrying firearms and crude bombs roamed around the area freely and used them to attack rival supporters.

Ironically, Monday's violence took place despite state election commissioner A K Singh writing to the director general of police (DGP) on Sunday where he pointed out Rampurhat, Nalhati I and II of Birbhum district, Bishnupur in Bankura district, East Burdwan, Raghunathganj, Kandi, Raninagar in Murshidabad district, Haringhata in Nadia district, Haldia in East Midnapore and Diamond Harbour in South 24 Parganas district as sensitive areas.

Following a Calcutta high court order, the poll panel chief had announced on Saturday that nomination can be filed on Monday between 11 am and 3 pm.

But the violence has prompted the opposition to knock on the court's doors once again.

"We are moving Calcutta high court once again to bring to its notice the widespread violence seen in different parts of Bengal," said Pratap Banerjee, general secretary of Bengal unit of BJP on Monday afternoon.

CPI(M) state secretariat member Rabin Deb also said they would be moving the court again.

The run-up to rural polls in Ben-



gal has been violent, with half a dozen deaths between April 2 and 9, the days of nomination according to the original schedule. The opposition had then claimed that TMC supporters in connivance with the police did not allow their candidates to file nominations. They levelled the same charge on Monday.

In Dubrajpur of Birbhum district, TMC workers allegedly attacked BJP candidates when they were going to the SDO's office to file nominations. In Murarui of the same district, bombs were used in a clash between TMC and CPI(M) workers.

In Katwa of East Burdwan, a CPI(M) office was vandalised allegedly by TMC supporters. A candidate of the party was attacked and injured. "The design of the ruling party

is clear: use muscle power and the police to prevent opposition candidates from submitting nominations," alleged Pradip Bhattacharya, Rajya Sabha member and former president of state Congress.

"In Katwa, police and RAF are preventing candidates from filing nomination papers. In Diamond Harbour, people are waiting on either side of the road to obstruct those trying to reach offices for filing nomination," he claimed, adding that the election commissioner refused to meet him due to preoccupations. Police arrested two BJP workers in Sonamukhi in Bankura district when they allegedly attacked the police after they tried to clear a blockade by the party supporters. BJP workers blocked the road al-

leging they were being prevented by TMC workers from filing nomination papers.

The party also alleged their party office at Natunganj in the same district was attacked and ransacked by the ruling party members.

Union minister of state for heavy industry, Babul Supriyo, too, alleged that ruling party supporters were preventing BJP candidates and beating them up in and around Asansol, the Lok Sabha constituency from where he was elected in 2014.

Bombs were hurled in front of the BDO office at Chhatna in Bankura and Paikar in Birbhum district.

Clashes took place in Khagram of Murshidabad district, where four Congress supporters were injured. Ruling party supporters there accused Congress workers of ransacking their party office.

In Berhampore, ruling party workers allegedly manhandled Congress MLA Manoj Chakraborty and threw him to the ground and manhandled. The MLA's supporters protested with a blockade of national highway 34 that connects Kolkata with north Bengal.

On Sunday, Ajit Deb Nath, a TMC worker in Gopalnagar of North 24 Parganas, succumbed to bullet injuries he sustained on April 19 at his home.

Yeddyurappa says son won't contest from Varuna, BJP workers protest

BJP Karnataka president BS Yeddyurappa announced on Monday that his son BY Vijayendra would not be contesting from Varuna assembly constituency in Mysuru against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yatindra.

Yeddyurappa's announcement at a meeting organised by the party at Nanjanagudi, near Mysuru, led to large-scale protests by BJP workers, following which police resorted to lathicharge to bring the situation under control.

"Vijayendra is not filing nomination today, a common man (party worker) will be fielded and he will be filing the nomination," Yeddyurappa said.

"With folded hands I request all of you to support and bless that candidate and make him win," he said.

Battle for Varuna assembly constituency in Mysuru was projected as a fight between the sons of former and current chief ministers.

The BJP has not so far officially announced any candidate for Varuna.

Vijayendra, Yeddyurappa's second son, was projected as the candidate, despite the party not announcing any candidate.

He has been campaigning in the constituency for over a fortnight now, and even had rented a house there.

According to party sources, Vijayendra was to file his nomination from Varuna on Monday.

As Yeddyurappa left the stage after making the announcement, angry workers got on to the dais and damage furniture. They even tried to stop Vijayendra and other party leaders' cars to know the reason why he was denied the ticket.

WHY YOU MIGHT NEED A VACCINE TO GO TO THE KENTUCKY DERBY

The Indiana State Department of Health is recommending that its residents get vaccinated against hepatitis A and take other steps to protect themselves from the illness before traveling to Kentucky or Michigan, both of which are experiencing large outbreaks of the viral infection.

Kentucky has reported more than 300 cases of hepatitis A since November 2017, with 39 new cases reported in the first week of April, according to the Kentucky Department for Public Health. Most cases in the state have occurred around Louisville — the city where the Kentucky Derby is held. The famous horse race, which draws more than 150,000 people each year, takes place on the first Saturday in May.

"With popular tourist events coming up in other states, we know many Hoosiers will be traveling to areas impacted by hepatitis A, and we want them to be safe," Pam Pontones, the Indiana deputy state health commissioner, said in a statement. "Getting vaccinated and thoroughly washing your hands before and after preparing food and eating and after using the restroom are simple, safe and effective ways to prevent the spread of hepatitis A." But do you really need to get a hepatitis A vaccine if you're going to the Kentucky Derby? Dr. Amesh Adalja, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, said the Indiana recommendation is an interesting step to take, and it's not a bad idea. "I can see why they would advise it," Adalja said. "It's



something that's an easy measure that can minimize risk." [27 Devastating Infectious Diseases] At the same time, Adalja told Live Science that the risk of hepatitis A probably isn't very high for the average visitor to the Derby. A number of recent U.S. hepatitis A outbreaks, including the one in Kentucky, have occurred primarily among the homeless population and illicit-drug users — a group that may have limited access to clean toilets and handwashing facilities, which are important in preventing the spread of hepatitis A.

But hepatitis A outbreaks can also occur through contaminated food, Adalja noted — for instance, if food workers contract the illness and handle food without properly washing their hands. (The Kentucky hepatitis A outbreak has not been linked with contaminated food, although it was

recently reported that a McDonald's employee in Berea, Kentucky, south of Lexington, had the infection and could have potentially spread it to customers.) If Kentucky Derby-goers want to minimize their risk of getting the illness, "the vaccine is one way to do that," Adalja said.

Hepatitis A is a contagious liver infection caused by the hepatitis A virus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The virus is spread through the "fecal-oral" route — that is, when small amounts of stool from an ill person contaminate objects, food or drinks that are then touched and ingested by another person, the CDC says. For this reason, thorough handwashing — particularly after using the bathroom or changing a child's diaper, or before eating — can help reduce a person's risk of getting hepatitis A, according

to the Mayo Clinic. It's important to note that the Indiana announcement is not a nationwide recommendation. In general, the CDC recommends the hepatitis vaccine for children at age 1, as well as adults who may be at higher risk for hepatitis A or for complications from the illness. These include travelers to countries where hepatitis A is common, people who use recreational drugs, people with chronic liver disease, men who have sexual contact with other men, and people who have direct contact with others who have hepatitis A.

The CDC says that ideally, a person should get the hepatitis vaccine two weeks or more before departing for their trip, but getting the vaccine any time before travel will provide some protection.

Adalja noted that a number of Americans are already vaccinated against hepatitis A. The vaccine was first licensed in 1995 and was recommended for all U.S. children starting in 2006. But that would still leave many adults today unvaccinated, unless they already got the vaccine for travel or because they fall into a group that's at higher risk for contracting the illness.

Symptoms of hepatitis A infection usually don't appear until two to six weeks after a person has been infected, and include fever, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, dark-yellow urine, joint pain and jaundice (a yellowing of the skin and eyes), according to the CDC.

A Single Concussion May Increase Parkinson's Risk

Having a single concussion may increase a person's risk for Parkinson's disease, a new study suggests — but the overall risk of developing the disease still remains low. The study, which analyzed information from more than 320,000 U.S. veterans, found that those who'd experienced a mild traumatic brain injury (TBI), often called a concussion, were 56 percent more likely to be diagnosed with Parkinson's than those who'd never had a concussion.



Know About the Brain]

However, it's important to note that, even if participants experienced a concussion, their risk of Parkinson's was still very low. Overall, 360 out of 76,297 participants with a concussion, or 0.47 percent, developed Parkinson's; and 543 out of 72,592 participants with moderate to severe TBIs, or 0.75 percent, developed the disease.

The researchers analyzed health information from 325,870 veterans, ages 31 to 65, using three U.S. databases from the Veterans Health Administration. About half of the participants had been diagnosed with either a concussion or a more serious moderate to severe TBI at some point in their lives. Participants were then

followed for an average of 4.6 years. During the follow-up time, 1,462 participants were diagnosed with Parkinson's. Of these, 949 participants with any TBI, or 0.58 percent, developed the disease, compared with 513 participants with no TBI, or 0.31 percent. The risk of Parkinson's was higher for those who'd had a moderate to severe TBI. These participants were 83 percent more likely to develop the condition than those who'd never had a TBI. It's not clear exactly why head injuries are linked with an increased risk of Parkinson's. But generally, head injuries can cause inflammation in the brain, which may lead to changes in cells and brain structures that contribute.

Quinoa: Health Benefits & Nutrition Facts

Quinoa, often described as a "superfood" or a "supergrain," has become popular among the health conscious, with good reason. Quinoa (pronounced KEEN-wah or ke-NO-ah) is packed with protein, fiber and various vitamins and minerals. It is also gluten-free and is recommended for people who are on a gluten-free diet.

Often used as a substitute for rice, quinoa is commonly considered to be a grain and is usually referred to as such, but it is actually a seed. "The yellowish pods are the seed of a plant called Chenopodium quinoa, native to Peru and related to beets, chard and spinach," wrote Nicole Spiridakis in a story for NPR. When cooked, quinoa is soft and fluffy, with a slightly nutty taste. It can also be made into flour, flakes and various foods like pasta and bread, according to the Grains and Legumes Nutrition Council.

Quinoa comes from Peru, Bolivia and Chile. It grows in the Andes Mountains, and for millennia it has been a food staple for the native people there. According to a field crops article by the University of Wisconsin and the University of Minnesota, quinoa means "mother grain" in the Incan language.

Recently, the surge in quinoa demand has pushed production beyond South America to more than 70 countries, according to the Food

and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Today, large-scale quinoa crops grow in China, North America, France and India. Quinoa production is picking up in Africa and the Middle East, according to a 2016 assessment in *Frontiers in Plant Science*.

According to Spiridakis, there are 1,800 types of quinoa. Quinoa seeds can be black, red, white, purple, pink, yellow, gray, orange, green or yellow. In the United States, white (traditional) and red (Incan) quinoa are commonly available. While the white variety is more flavorful, the red contains more nutrients.

"Quinoa is a good source of protein, fiber, iron, copper, thiamin and vitamin B6," said Kelly Toups, a registered dietician with the Whole Grains Council. It's also "an excellent source of magnesium, phosphorus, manganese and folate." Toups emphasized that a "good source" means that one serving provides at least 10 percent of the daily value of that nutrient, while "excellent source" means that one serving provides at least 20 percent of the daily value of that nutrient. "A 2009 article in the *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* stated that quinoa's "unusual composition and exceptional balance" of protein, oil and fat, as well as its minerals, fatty acids, antioxidants and vitamins, make it a highly nutritious food.

No, Having a Little Extra Fat Won't Make You Live Longer

If you dig through medical data on people's weight and risk of dying, you may spot something curious: People who are overweight or obese appear to have a lower risk of death (during a specific time period, that is) than people with a "normal" weight.

This is the so-called "obesity paradox," a finding that seems to fly in the face of other research that has shown that a body mass index (BMI) in the normal range is linked with the lowest risk of death during a study period, meaning it is a survival advantage.

But a new study suggests that the obesity paradox might be explained, in part, by something rather simple: how much muscle mass a person has. When researchers in the new study looked at a person's BMI and also took muscle mass into account, they found that the risk of death from any cause was greater at nearly every level of BMI for people with low muscle mass, compared with people with more muscle mass and the same BMI level, according to the study findings, which were published April 11 in the journal *PLOS One*. [The Science of Weight Loss]

It's not clear why low muscle mass is linked with a greater risk of death at nearly every BMI level. But it's possible that having more muscle mass may protect against chronic disease or age-related disabilities, the researchers said. BMI is calculated based on a person's weight and height, and the number obtained provides an indication of body fatness



that allows researchers to compare the relative weights of people across populations. A BMI below 18.5 is considered underweight, from 18.5 to 24.9 is "normal weight," from 25 to 29.9 is overweight, and 30 and above is considered obese. The calculation, however, doesn't take muscle mass into account.

When you factor in the differences in muscle mass among individuals, any protective effects associated with being overweight disappear, and the risk of death associated with obesity is in fact magnified, said study co-author Dr. Matthew Abramowitz, an associate professor of medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York. In other words, the obesity paradox goes away.

For example, the study found that people with a low muscle mass and a BMI of between 22 and 24.9 had a 26 percent higher risk of death during the study period than people in the same BMI category who had more muscle mass. Similarly, people with a low muscle mass and a BMI of 25 to 29.9 were 49 percent more likely to die during the study period than people in the same BMI category who had more muscle mass.

These results show that you do not find a protective benefit from extra body fat when muscle mass is factored into the analyses, Abramowitz told Live Science. The study looked at data collected from more than 11,500 adults who participated in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) between

the years 1999 and 2004. (NHANES is a federal survey done annually to evaluate Americans' diets and health.) All participants in that survey had their BMI calculated from their height and weight, and their muscle mass was measured by a body scan.

The results suggest that prior research using BMI has likely underestimated the risk associated with excess body fat, Abramowitz said. That's because when BMI is used as an index, it doesn't distinguish between a person's fat mass and muscle mass, so having more muscle will raise BMI as much as having more body fat; this masks the risks of increased body fat, he said.

The new study's findings show that by accounting for muscle mass in the analysis, the "obesity paradox" goes away, Abramowitz said. In other words, when people with low muscle mass are excluded from the analysis or when differences in muscle mass are taken into consideration, the risks associated with high BMI are magnified and the level of BMI linked with the greatest chance of living longer shifts downward toward a normal weight, he explained. BMI can be a useful measurement for health professionals, but some of its limitations should be recognized, Abramowitz said. One of the new study's own limitations is that the findings are based on a single measure of body composition, so the study did not show why a person may have had low muscle mass at that time, the researchers noted.

Is Sparkling Water As Healthy As Regular Water

Have you ever picked up a can of sparkling water, looked at the nutrition facts and marveled at all the nothing? Zero calories, zero sugar, zero added ingredients — how can so much nothing taste so refreshing, and why does it spark so much controversy?

When it comes to the nutritional perks and perils of sparkling water, health myths abound. Does carbonated water erode your teeth? How about your bones? And is it as hydrating for you as regular, run-of-the-mill tap water?

Although there's not a huge amount of research on this yet, several studies have shown that, yes, sparkling water hydrates you just as well as still water (and nutritionists tend to agree). This makes sense, considering that carbonated water is just regular water infused with bubbly carbon gas. [How Much Water Do You Really Need To Drink?]

These bubbles might make you feel fuller or give you some indigestion if consumed too quickly — and that could impact how much water you drink. One



sports medicine study found that people were less likely to hydrate after exercising if all they had on hand was carbonated water; however, a different study found that kids who had access to a home carbonation machine (like a SodaStream) were better hydrated than kids who didn't. Whether you end up hydrating more or less when reaching for a glass of sparkling water might ultimately be a matter of whether you have the stomach for it. The good news is, there's absolutely no evidence that

drinking carbonated water has any effect on your calcium levels. This myth may have sprung from a 2006 study that found that older women who drank sugary sodas every day had slightly lower bone mineral density than women who didn't. Women who drank plain carbonated water did not show any such dips in density. On the other hand, there is some truth to the claim that carbonated water can erode your tooth enamel. (Tooth enamel is the hard, outer surface of your

teeth.) This is due to the carbonic acid — a byproduct of water and carbon gas — that gives sparkling water its bright, slightly tangy taste. Studies have found that carbonic acid can indeed have a mild erosive effect on your teeth over a long time. Carbonated drinks flavored with citrus — like lime, lemon and grapefruit — contain small amounts of citric acid on top of that, and are slightly more erosive as a result.

Still, the acids in non-sugary sparkling drinks are weak, and so is the damage to your teeth. For comparison, soda was found to be about 100 times more damaging to teeth than simple sparkling water. At the end of the day, plain sparkling water is about as benign an H₂O substitute as you can find. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highly recommends drinking it instead of sugary sodas. So, when you reach for that can of delicious nothing, make sure it truly is nothing but carbonated water. Added sugar, salt or extra ingredients come with all sorts of added problems.

Why More Vitamin D May Not Always Be a Good Thing

A new study from Denmark finds that high levels of vitamin D in the blood are linked with an increased risk of some cancers — but a decreased risk of others.

Specifically, the researchers found that high vitamin D levels were linked with an increased risk of skin, prostate and blood cancers, and a decreased risk of lung cancer. The study found only an association; it cannot prove that high vitamin D levels cause or prevent certain cancers. Nor can the study determine the precise reason for these seemingly contradictory effects on cancer risk.

But the researchers hope the findings draw attention to the possibility that high vitamin D levels aren't always a good thing. Until now, much of the research on vitamin D and cancer has been focused on the effects of low vitamin D levels, said study lead author Dr. Fie Juhl Vojdeman, of the Department of Clinical Biochemistry at Bispebjerg Frederiksberg Hospital in Copenhagen, Denmark. [10 Do's and Don'ts to Reduce Your Risk of Cancer] People "have the impression that they can eat all

the [vitamin D supplements] they want without any concerns," Vojdeman told Live Science. "However, we actually don't know whether it could be harmful in the long run to use heavy doses of [vitamin D supplements] if you do not have a critically low level in the blood." The findings were presented Monday (April 16) at the American Association for Cancer Research meeting in Chicago and have not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

For the study, the researchers analyzed data from more than 200,000 people living in the Capital Region of Denmark (a region in eastern Denmark) who had their blood vitamin D levels measured between April 2004 and January 2010. (Specifically, the researchers looked at the levels of 25OH vitamin D, or 25-hydroxyvitamin D, a metabolite of the vitamin that's used as a measure of its levels in the body.) None of the participants had been diagnosed with cancer prior to their vitamin D test. The participants were followed for up to 10 years. The average vitamin D measure-

ment was about 50 nanomoles per liter (nmol/L). Normal levels are between 50 and 125 nmol/L (or 20 to 50 nanograms/milliliter), according to the National Institutes of Health's Office of Dietary Supplements. During the study follow-up period, more than 18,000 people in the study were diagnosed with cancer. The study found that every 10 nmol/L increase in blood vitamin D was associated with a 9-percent increase in the risk of non-melanoma skin cancer, a 10-percent increase in the risk of melanoma, a 5-percent increase in the risk of prostate cancer and a 3-percent increase in the risk of blood cancers. But every 10 nmol/L increase in blood vitamin D was also linked with a 5-percent decrease in the risk of lung cancer. The study was not designed to examine the mechanism behind these links, Vojdeman noted. One possibility, however, is that the higher risk of skin cancer is related to people's sun exposure. (People's bodies make vitamin D when exposed to sunlight, but too much sun exposure can lead to skin cancer.)

GDP expected to reach \$5 trillion by 2025, says economic affairs secretary

India is poised to remain the fastest growing large economy in the world and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to reach \$5 trillion by 2025 as the economic reforms adopted in the last few years have started to bear fruit, a top Indian official has told the World Bank.

Giving an overview of the South Asian countries - Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka - economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said India continued to be a beacon of growth in the region.

"India is poised to remain as the fastest growing large economy in the world. In 2018, we expect India to grow at over 7.4%," Garg told the 97th meeting of the Development Committee of the World Bank here yesterday. Transformational reforms such as Goods and Services Tax (GST) and initiatives such as Insolvency and Bankruptcy code, recapitalisation of banks, and unlogging of infrastructure investments will support such elevated growth, he told the World Bank.

"In the last few years, India has undertaken massive structural reforms toward formalisation of the economy and fostering digital financial inclusion," he said, adding that the country had grown at an average of 7.2 per cent per annum in the last four years and was continuing on the trajectory of sustained growth.

"India's GDP is expected to reach a volume of \$5 trillion by FY2025 by leveraging on digitalisation, globalisation, favourable demographics and structural reforms," Garg added.



In the absence of Union finance minister Arun Jaitley, Garg is leading the Indian delegation for the annual Spring Meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

India, he said, has accorded top priority to addressing its infrastructure deficit to sustain economic growth. Steps have been taken to mobilise funds from various sources for development of infrastructure which includes, inter alia, launching of innovative financial vehicles, he added.

India has begun undertaking a major programme of monetising brown field assets of Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) as a separate asset class for infrastructure investments, Garg said.

"In the field of digitisation, India has completed the ambitious task of connecting 100,000 gram panchayats through high speed optical fibre network under phase-I of the Bharat Net project," he said, adding that it

has enabled broadband access to over 200 million Indians living in about 250,000 villages.

The government also proposes to setup 500,000 wi-fi hotspots which will provide broadband access to 50 million rural citizens, Garg said.

Around 470 Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) have been connected to the electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) network providing a unified national market for agricultural commodities, he added.

Garg told the World Bank that one of the key features of India's economic performance in recent years has been the speed and scale of implementation of reforms.

"Recent upgrade of the sovereign rating reflects India's strength, speed and scale of these ongoing reforms," he said.

Noting that India rolled out the GST in July 2017, Garg said within a

short span of eight months, monthly earnings from GST have crossed \$12.7 billion. The number of dealers registered in the GST database increased by about four million in the fiscal year of the roll-out which is about 60% higher than unique assesses registered earlier in the VAT network in the country.

India's massive leap in the Ease of Doing Business rankings from 142 in 2014 to 100 in 2017 is testimony to India's commitment to long-term reforms for an open and vibrant economy. This is also reflected in strong FDI inflows which have grown from \$34.3 billion in 2012-13 to \$60.1 billion in 2016-17, he added.

In the arena of financial inclusion, the Jan-Dhan Yojana, launched in August, 2014, has rapidly expanded banking services for the hitherto deprived sections, he said. Till date, over 313 million bank accounts have been opened and savings of about \$11.510 billion has been mobilised under the scheme, Garg said.

For providing access to financial facilities by small businesses, India rolled out the Mudra Yojana in April 2015 and had supported over 115 million small businesses by sanctioning loans of \$77.66 billion so far, he claimed.

Noting that India is pursuing a path of clean and climate responsible growth, Garg said the country aimed to achieve about 40 per cent cumulative installed power capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030 with the help of transfer of technology and low cost international finance.

Rajan named by FT as possible candidate for Bank of England governor



Raghuram Rajan, former governor of the Reserve Bank of India, has been named as one of the possible contenders for the top job at the Bank of England (BoE), according to a report by UK-based Financial Times.

"Attracting Raghuram Rajan, the highly respected Chicago-based economist and former Reserve Bank of India governor, would be a coup, as would securing Agustín Carstens, Mexico's central bank chief and the new general manager of the Bank of International Settlements," stated the article on Sunday.

It said that UK Chancellor and Exchequer Philip Hammond is starting the process to select the next Governor of the Bank of England to replace Mark Carney in 2019.

Hammond, according to the article, said he had already begun looking for candidates in forums such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) spring meetings in Washington.

"The formal process has not yet started but I, and many other people I am sure, may have cast their eye around various rooms to see if any likely looking candidates have into view," Hammond said on the sidelines of the meetings.

The article said that Hammond's comments showed his willingness to look abroad for

Carney's successor and that he was seeking a figure who can make an impact on the global stage as the UK prepares for Brexit.

Rajan, who is currently a Professor of Finance with the University of Chicago at the Booth School of Business, was the RBI Governor between September 2013 and September 2016. He was the first non-westerner and the youngest Chief Economist and Director of Research at the IMF.

He also served as the Vice-Chairman at the Bank for International Settlements.

Another person that could be a candidate for the post is Indian-origin Baroness Shriti Vadera. "If Hammond follows his predecessor's instincts and wants a lively hard-hitter at the BoE, Shriti Vadera, the chair of Santander UK and a former business minister under Gordon Brown fits the bill," the report said.

According to the article, others in the running were: Chief executive of the UK's Financial Conduct Authority Andrew Bailey; Deputy Governor for Monetary Policy at the BoE, Ben Broadbent; BoE Chief Economist Andy Haldane; Director of the London School of Economics Minouche Shafik and Chief Executive of Britain's communications regulator Ofcom Sharon White.

Walmart close to \$12 billion deal for majority stake in Flipkart

Walmart Inc. is close to finalizing a deal to buy a majority stake in India's leading e-commerce company for at least \$12 billion and may complete the agreement in the next two weeks, according to people familiar with the matter.

All the major investors in Flipkart Online Services Pvt are now on board with the Walmart purchase, after an earlier debate over an Amazon.com Inc. acquisition, said the people, asking not to be named because the matter is private. Tiger Global Management will sell nearly all its 20 per cent stake in Flipkart, while SoftBank Group Corp. will offload a substantial part of its 20 per cent-plus holding, the people said. Walmart will likely end up with 60 per cent to 80 per cent of Flipkart, valued at about \$20 billion, they said.

Among the issues still to be resolved are whether Flipkart's founders will lead the business after the purchase, how much each existing investor sells and what Walmart's final stake will be. It's also possible that terms will change or the talks will fall apart.

The deal, if completed, will give Walmart a substantial foothold in an emerging market of 1.3 billion people. The



Bentonville, Arkansas-based company is the world's largest retailer, but it has struggled against Amazon as consumers migrate to online commerce. India is the next big potential prize after the US and China, where foreign retailers have made little progress against Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.

"There isn't another country with this kind of an opportunity," said Satish Meena, a New Delhi-based senior forecast analyst at Forrester Research Inc. "India may not be a big deal now, but it's the future opportunity that Walmart and Amazon are eyeing."

Walmart declined to comment, while Flipkart didn't respond to requests for comment.

Flipkart's board had seriously considered Walmart and

Amazon as potential partners, but ultimately decided Walmart could close a deal more easily. Walmart likely faces fewer regulatory hurdles because it has no online retail presence in the country now, while Amazon is the second-largest e-commerce player and Flipkart's primary rival. Flipkart founders Sachin and Binny Bansal are also said to have favoured Walmart. The US retailer has been courting the Indian company since at least last year.

Amazon has already been aggressively expanding in India on its own. Founder Jeff Bezos has committed \$5.5 billion to the country and his local chief, Amit Agarwal, has made progress by adapting the site to local conditions.

After Losing China, Jeff Bezos Really Wants to Win in India

Amazon has been gaining ground quickly on Flipkart and it tried to derail the Walmart transaction at least in part because it will fortify the Indian rival. Walmart can aid Flipkart with deep pockets and decades of retailing expertise in skills from logistics to marketing.

"What Flipkart took a decade to do, Amazon has achieved in half that time," said Meena. "Now Amazon will get ready for the battle ahead, and pump more into investments, particularly in food retailing and fashion."

The \$20 billion pricetag would be substantially higher than Flipkart's valuation of about \$12 billion last year. It is already the most valuable startup in India.

SoftBank stands to make a tidy profit on a deal it cut last year. The Japanese company invested \$2.5 billion at the earlier valuation, people familiar said at the time. That stake could be worth more than \$4 billion at the Walmart deal's valuation.

SoftBank and Tiger Global are currently the startup's largest shareholders, followed by South Africa's Naspers Ltd. If the deal goes through, it would be the biggest in the nascent history of Indian e-commerce.

Amazon to double down on groceries, foray deeper into fresh produce in India

Amazon.com Inc expects groceries and household products to account for over half of its business in India in the next five years, as it moves to broaden offerings in the segment and foray into areas such as fresh produce.

Amit Agarwal, the India head of Amazon, said in an interview on Friday that groceries and goods such as creams, soaps and cleaning products, were already the largest product category on Amazon in terms of number of units sold in India.

"I would not speculate on when we would launch Amazon Fresh but, absolutely, if you ask me the next five years of vision - from your avocados to your potatoes, and your meat to your ice cream - we'll deliver everything to you in two hours," he said.

Amazon Fresh, which launched more than a decade ago in the US market, is the company's flagship fresh grocery delivery service. In India, Amazon currently offers some groceries via a service named Pantry. It has also tied up with local vendors in four cities for Amazon Now, which promises two-hour deliveries.

"Probably in the next five years groceries and consumables would be more than half of our business," he told Reuters. Agarwal said Amazon had already started experi-



menting with a few fresh groceries in India, already home to its largest active customer base outside of the United States.

India's e-commerce market is tipped to grow to \$200 billion in a decade, according to Morgan Stanley, as cheap mobile data makes online shopping increasingly accessible. And Amazon, which already has over 100 million registered users in India, is looking to cash-in on the opportunity.

"We want to get the next hundred million customers shopping with us," said Agarwal, adding that Amazon plans to woo new clients with product exchange and staggered payment offerings. With almost 500 million

Indians using the Internet in 2018, India, Asia's No 3 economy, is a huge e-commerce battleground.

Retail giant Walmart is inching closer to buying a controlling stake into home-grown e-commerce player Flipkart, which is already backed by big name investors like SoftBank, Tencent and Microsoft.

"I feel extremely excited that e-commerce is attracting so much funding," Agarwal said. "Otherwise, we'd have been wrong in going about it in such a big way."

Amazon's founder Jeff Bezos told shareholders in a letter last week that Amazon India is the fastest growing marketplace in the country. He said Amazon added more

members to its Prime loyalty programme in India in its first year, than any previous geography in Amazon's history.

Still profitability in India is years away for Amazon, admits Agarwal, as logistics, payments and other infrastructure needed to address the long-term opportunity are still being built.

He said the \$5 billion Bezos had committed to investing in India was just a signal of intent, and the company was ready to invest significantly more to achieve its goals.

"Our ambition is so big it would be futile for us to think about anything other than to ensure we keep investing to bring the next 100 million customers online," Agarwal said.

At Rs 74.40, petrol price hits highest level in BJP rule, diesel at record Rs 65.65

Petrol price hit on Sunday Rs 74.40 a litre — the highest under the BJP-led government — and diesel rate touched a record high of Rs 65.65, triggering renewed calls for a cut in excise duty to ease burden on consumers.

State-owned oil firms, which have been since June last year revising auto fuel prices daily, raised petrol and diesel rates by 19 paise per litre each in Delhi on Sunday, according to a price notification.

The hike, necessitated due to firming international oil prices, comes on back of a 13 paise increase in rates of petrol effected Saturday and a 15 paise hike in diesel, it said.

Petrol in the national capital now costs Rs 74.40 a litre, the highest since September 14, 2013 when rates had hit Rs 76.06. Diesel is priced at Rs 65.65, the highest ever.

The oil ministry had earlier this year

sought a reduction in excise duty on petrol and diesel to cushion the impact arising out of international oil rates but finance minister Arun Jaitley in his Budget presented on February 1 made no concessions.

India has the highest retail prices of petrol and diesel among South Asian nations as taxes account for half of the pump rates.

The government had raised excise duty nine times between November 2014 and January 2016 to shore up finances as global oil prices fell, but then cut the tax just once in October last year by Rs 2 a litre.

Subsequent to that excise duty reduction, the Centre had asked states to also lower VAT but just four of them — Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh — reduced rates while others, including BJP-ruled ones, ignored the call.



The central government had cut excise duty by Rs 2 per litre in October 2017, when petrol price reached Rs 70.88 per litre in Delhi and diesel price Rs. 59.14 per litre. Because of the reduction

in excise duty, diesel price had on October 4, 2017 came down to Rs 56.89 per litre and petrol price to Rs 68.38 per litre. However, a global rally in crude prices pushed domestic fuel prices far

higher than those levels.

The October 2017 excise duty cut cost the government Rs 26,000 crore in annual revenue and about Rs 13,000 crore during the remaining part of the

current fiscal year.

The government had between November 2014 and January 2016 raised excise duty on petrol and diesel on nine occasions to take away gains arising from plummeting global oil prices.

In all, duty on petrol rate was hiked by Rs 11.77 per litre and that on diesel by 13.47 a litre in those 15 months that helped government's excise mop up more than double to Rs 242,000 crore in 2016-17 from Rs 99,000 crore in 2014-15.

State-owned oil companies — Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation — in June last year dumped the 15-year-old practice of revising rates on the 1st and 16th of every month. Instead, they adopted a daily price revision system to instantly reflect changes in cost. Since then prices are revised on a daily basis.

India-Pakistan bilateral series: Ball is in BCCI's court, says PCB chief Najam Sethi

Pakistan Cricket Board chief Najam Sethi feels that resumption of bilateral Indo-Pak cricketing ties is solely dependant on India's will.

The prevailing socio-political relations between the two neighbouring nations and security situations has brought bilateral series to a grinding halt.

The BCCI can only go ahead and play a bilateral series only if the Central government permits. Right now, the two countries only play in multi-team events like 50-over World Cup, Champions Trophy, World T20 or Asia Cup.

"Firstly, the two sides need to play each other for the sake of the people of the sub-continent. Secondly, the ball is in the BCCI's court. That's it. We hope sooner than later better sense will prevail and the two sides can get back to playing good cricket again," Sethi told PTI during an interaction.

"My sense is that all this is a melting pot and at some stage or the other, we will have to have a good resolution."

The PCB has sought USD 70 million in compensation claim against India for refusing to play a bilateral series, violating a 2014 memorandum of understand-

ing under which the two were to play six bilateral series between 2015 and 2023. A three-member ICC panel will hear the claim in October.

"I'm not at liberty to discuss the issue as per orders of the tribunal. There's going to be no comments on that issue. Those are the orders of the tribunal."

As per the newly drafted FTP, India have slots for Pakistan series, but it won't happen till the clearance comes from the Indian government.

"Our position is that we are okay with what's been allocated right now but this is subject to the decision of the tribunal. Because, obviously it's a case that's still pending and our currently is subject to whatever resolution that finally finds."

"See, right now India has not slotted Pakistan into any of the matches. Our position is that whatever we sign right now is going to be subject to the decision of the tribunal. If the tribunal holds in our favour then the FTP will have to be changed to accordingly."

The PCB chairman also felt that media should play a proactive role in resumption of cricket between the two countries as there has been just one



bilateral tour since 2008, when Pakistan visited India to play two Twenty20s and three ODIs in December 2012 and January 2013.

"I'm just surprised that there's not sufficient media pressure here in India for resumption of cricketing ties between India and Pakistan. I am sure the people of the two countries want to see cricket between the two countries. There's a lot

of goodwill on both sides so let's hope that the issue can be resolved in the interest of the fans. There's no rough weather between the two Boards. There's no problem at all," Sethi said in an assuring tone.

Pakistan star all-rounder Shahid Afridi recently has predicted that the hugely popular Pakistan Super League would become bigger leaving "behind"

the cash-rich Indian Premier League.

Sethi did not wish to comment on Afridi's statement but said they are trying their best to bring PSL back home.

"It's unfortunate that given a situation -- a hangover from the past (2009 terrorist attack) we are still unable to play all our matches. But we are taking (small steps) to bring PSL back to Pakistan, as we are hoping that bilateral cricket will also come back to Pakistan."

"PSL is very popular at home. It receives the highest possible ratings ever in the history of Pakistan TV and broadcast medium. Our effort is to bring PSL to Pakistan so that we can play all our matches at home."

Sethi, who is also the chairman of the Asian Cricket Council, said there's a ray of hope as the 2018 Emerging Teams' Asia Cup will be co-hosted by Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

"Another important step in this direction is that the ACC has just agreed that the Emerging Asia Cup will be played partly in Pakistan and partly in Sri Lanka. Absolutely, we are just hoping that everything returns to normalcy between India and Pakistan," he said.

Players behaviour will be one of the agenda in the five-day ICC meeting that got underway yesterday.

Sethi said PCB takes a very dim view of cheating of any form -- ball tampering or match fixing -- and ICC should take stringent measures.

"Cheating of any sort should be looked down upon. Strict measures should be taken to punish those indulging in cheating. Match-fixing, spot-fixing, ball-tampering are all instances of cheating. We should have very strict punishments for these. Therefore now the ICC should be taking strong measures against it."

"The current PCB takes a very very dim view of any cheating, match-fixing and spot-fixing. We have already punished two or three players very severely. We take a very strong view. I hope and expect all other Boards will also strong view of such instances."

Shashank Manohar's extension as the chairman will be one of the key points of discussion as the member nations of the ICC.

Asked whether he would be the unanimous choice, he said they will cross the bridge when it comes.

Mentoring key to IPL, Ajinkya Rahane must don role at Rajasthan Royals

It's a very likeable team, the Rajasthan Royals. When it got embroiled in the illegal betting and spot-fixing scandal and was penalised with a two-year ban, the face of the franchise Rahul Dravid fronted up. RR took ownership of their mistakes and are back.

They, led by Ajinkya Rahane, have played six matches so far and won just three, so it's not been a happy comeback. They had some serious setbacks even before the IPL season began, losing Steve Smith, their designated captain and in a way mentor, being one.

Captaining an IPL team is a bit like an international player captaining his Ranji team. He does what a captain is generally expected to do, but more is expected from him.

Like with state associations, IPL team owners expect their captains to mentor the wide-eyed, young, domestic Indian players in the squad, so also the emerging overseas players.

Ruthless format
T20 as a concept is ruthless. It mandates your best performance all the time. A bowler cannot be bowling only 80% of his ability and hope to survive; he will be taken to the cleaners if he does that.

So also the batsmen. "I am not quite feeling 100% today so maybe I will take it a little easy tonight," Boom! You have signed your death warrant as a batsman.

Form can be up and down but your commitment can never be. And to be in good form in T20s what's needed is high confidence. This is an imperative because you are trying to achieve results all the time.

In the longer formats you can take some time out in trying to get your confidence up through the course of the match. But in T20s, you have to be mentally upbeat from ball one whether you are a batsman or bowler. That is why I believe mentoring becomes a key activity in any IPL side.

Some are confident individuals and it takes a lot for their confidence levels to sink, but these are rare players. However, most are vulnerable to mood and confidence swings dependant on their performance on the night.

A team that keeps its players' confidence up no matter what is one that will have continued success in T20s.

Ajinkya Rahane must become that mentor for Rajasthan Royals.

Rashid Khan, Tamim Iqbal and Shakib Al Hasan to play for World XI vs West Indies at Lord's

Top-ranked bowler Rashid Khan of Afghanistan along with Bangladesh stars Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal have confirmed their participation for the ICC World XI, which will take on the West Indies in a charity T20 game at Lord's on May 31.

The match is being organised to raise funds for stadia in the Caribbean, which were damaged due to hurricanes last year.

The trio joins three other Asians who have already confirmed for the match - Pakistan's Shahid Afridi and Shoaib Malik and Thisara Perera of Sri Lanka.

More big names are likely to be confirmed in the coming days for the ICC World XI side, which is being led by England's limited overs captain Eoin Morgan.

"It is a matter of great honour and pride for me and my country that I have been chosen to support one of cricket's oldest and most loyal members," Rashid said.

"I don't think it will be incorrect to say that a number of cricketers from this and previous generations were inspired and attracted to cricket due to the heroics of the West Indies sides of the 70s, 80s and 90s. And if the



West Indies are now looking upon us for help, then there shouldn't be any hesitation."

Tamim Iqbal said: "I am delighted to have been chosen to once again represent the ICC World XI for a cause which will only make cricket a big-

ger and better sport.

"The West Indies' contribution to the global game is unmatched and unparalleled, and if the cricket fraternity can get together to play a small role in the rebuilding of their damaged venues following

last year's hurricanes, then this is a very small price with hugely positive results," Tamim added.

"Playing at Lord's is itself a great honour for any cricketer. My only international appearance there was in 2010, so I look forward to reliving those memories. Playing with and against some of the best cricketers of this era will only make this occasion better and more memorable," the flamboyant opener further said.

The West Indies are reigning ICC World Twenty20 champions and will be led by Carlos Brathwaite and the side includes other top names like

Chris Gayle, Marlon Samuels, Samuel Badree and Andre Russell.

The proceeds from this match will be donated towards rebuilding and renovating five major venues as well as other community cricket facilities that were damaged by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

The venues that will benefit include the Ronald Webster Park in Anguilla, the Sir Viv Richards Stadium in Antigua, the Windsor Park Stadium in Dominica, the A.O. Shirley Recreation Ground in the British Virgin Islands and the Carib Lumber Ball Park in St. Maarten.

Andrew Strauss explains logic behind 100-ball format

Former England skipper Andrew Strauss has stated that the format of the 100-ball match, which the England Cricket Board has decided to bring in since 2020, won't be aimed at the generic cricketing crowd but a lot less 'casual' ones.

Reiterating that the league aims to promote the game amongst fans who are not 'traditional' in nature, the former England batsman told BBC Radio Five Live's Sportsweek programme: "What we're trying to do is appeal to a new audience, people that aren't traditional cricket fans. We want to make the game as simple as possible for them to understand."



Under what should be the shortest format of the game then, matches will consist of 15 six-ball overs and another 10-ball over. The matches will be played across seven locations in summer.

Strauss further went on to state that the T20 format still runs pretty long and must be curbed in order to incorporate new fans. "T20 has been unbelievably

successful and it has established a very strong audience now. We want that audience but a different audience as well, who perhaps would like things slightly different. That's the driver behind this idea," he said.

It's yet to be seen what impact the new league would have on the existing NatWest T20 challenge, the domestic T20 tournament of England. "T20 has become a longer and longer format of the game. It is more than four hours in a lot of parts of the world," Strauss said. "We want kids to be able to go to bed earlier and it is worth saying it is going to be on terrestrial TV. We want the more casual audience."

Yuvraj Singh to decide on career after 2019 Cricket World Cup

Yuvraj Singh, who played his last One Day International (ODI) for India in June 2017, has said that he will take a call on his career after the 2019 Cricket World Cup in England and Wales.

"I am going to look to play till 2019, whatever cricket I get to play. I will take a call when that year is over," Singh told ANI.

The 36-year-old all-rounder added that he has been playing for the country for nearly two decades and will have to retire someday.

"Everybody has to take a decision after a while. I have been playing international

cricket since 2000, it has been almost 17-18 years on and off. So, I will definitely take a call after 2019," he added.

Singh also spoke about his Indian Premier League (IPL) team Kings XI Punjab (KXIP), adding that their immediate goal is to qualify for the semi-finals.

"We are looking ahead to first qualify in the last four and I think we have got a great team this year. We have got a very powerful batting attack, smart bowling attack, and hopefully we look to qualify and then see if we can win the finals," he said.

The batsman was all



praises for his teammate and star batsman Chris Gayle, who recently scored a century

against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on April 19. He also added that their main com-

petition this season is Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR).

"Oh, I am loving it. Chris has always been a friend off the field. He has been a great batsman, probably one of the most dangerous batsmen in the world and performing like a boss on the field. I am really happy for him and the way he is batting," he said.

"T20 cricket is unpredictable. Anybody can win on any day. But Chennai has always been a very consistent team and KKR has been playing really well. I think these are two really good teams in the IPL," he concluded.

KXIP currently rank second on the points table with four victories and one loss.

Madison Keys sets up USA's Fed Cup tennis final with Czech Republic

Madison Keys saw off France's Pauline Parmentier to fire the United States into the Fed Cup final where the Czech Republic lie in wait for the defending champions.

Keys, 13th in the world, defeated the 122nd-ranked Parmentier 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 to earn the US a 3-1 win in Aix-en-Provence.

Sloane Stephens had put the US on the verge of the final after brushing aside Kristina Mladenovic 6-2, 6-0 in Sunday's first rubber.

It was world number 20 Mladenovic who had given France a fighting chance when ending Coco Vandeweghe's 13-match Fed Cup win streak to pull France level at 1-1 on Saturday.

But she was unable to repeat those heroics against the US Open champion who had given the Americans their first point when defeating Parmentier 7-6 (7/3), 7-5 in Saturday's opening match.

Earlier, Petra Kvitova put the Czech Republic into a sixth Fed Cup final in eight years following her win against Angelique Kerber in the other semi-final in Stuttgart.

Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon champion, needed just 58 minutes to power her way to a 6-2, 6-2 win over Kerber and give the Czechs an unassailable 3-1 lead over Germany.

After the Czechs had gone 2-0 up on Saturday, Julia Goerges had given hosts Germany a brief lifeline by beating Karolina Pliskova before Kvitova's decisive win.

"I am very relieved. I was getting nervous before this game," admitted Kvitova.

"We had a great position from yesterday, I think Julia played a really good match."

"I knew we still needed one point from our last two games and I just did my best."

In Sunday's concluding dead doubles, Barbora Strycova and Katerina Siniakova took the first set 7-5 before being awarded the match when Goerges, playing alongside Anna-Lena Groenefeld, retired hurt.

It was a bitter end to the day for Goerges.

She had pulled the Germans back into the tie with a determined 6-4, 6-2 win over Pliskova only for Kerber to fail to maintain the momentum against Kvitova.

"It will take a while to get over it," admitted Kerber.

"We all know that was a great opportunity for us," she added, as the Germans missed out on a first appearance in the Fed Cup final since 2014.