

TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

THURSDAY

● APRIL, 26, 2018
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	25.1	9.0
JAMMU	38.2	20.9
LEH	19.6	3.3
KARGIL	21.0	1.8

SUNSET THURSDAY: 07:11 PM
 SUNRISE FRIDAY: 05:47 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
 Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 25°C & 10°C respectively.

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

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KAS OFFICERS MEET MEHBOOBA, THANK HER FOR TIME-BOUND GRADE PROMOTION, PAY

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA SAYS ACTIVITIES IN INDIA, OTHER NATIONS WILL BE PROBED

ED SET TO CONFISCATE RS 15K CR ASSETS INCLUDING OF NIRAV, MALLYA UNDER NEW

GAUTAM GAMBHIR STEPS DOWN AS DELHI DAREDEVILS IPL 2018 CAPTAIN, SHREYAS IYER

Right time to revoke AFSPA as Govt claim normalcy in JK: Oppn

'PDP betrayed people as it failed to fulfill its promises'

'Revoking AFSPA in time of militancy not possible' says BJP

Govt will take decision at appropriate time: Ashok Koul

Srinagar, Apr 25: The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) Wednesday made it clear that unless the militancy and stone pelting doesn't stop in the valley, the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), should not be revoked from the Jammu and Kashmir.

"Our stand is very clear that AFSPA cannot be revoked unless and until peace and normalcy is restored in Jammu and Kashmir," BJP State General Secretary Ashok Koul told KNS over phone.

He said that the BJP government in the centre is closely monitoring the situation in Kashmir and will take the decision on AFSPA revocation at the right and appropriate time.

Interestingly in the Agenda of Alliance (Aoa), the PDP and BJP had agreed that while both parties have historically held a different view on AFSPA and the need for it in the State, as part of the agenda for governance of this alliance, the coalition government will examine the need for de-notifying 'disturbed areas'.

Koul further said, "Our Jawans are being killed. Today a PDP leader See **BJP**...Pg 02

Srinagar, Apr 25: Following the revocation of Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) in Meghalaya and partially in Arunachal Pradesh, the opposition political parties here said that the government should take measures to revoke AFSPA from the state as it claim normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir.

National Conference (NC) Provincial president, Nasir Aslam Wani told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the government is claiming that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir not too bad and things are under their control then they should take steps to revoke AFSPA from the state.

"Besides, revocation of AFSPA was in the agenda of alliance of the current regime but they have failed to fulfill their every single promise," he said.

He said that when they were in rule they always pitched for revocation of AFSPA from those areas where the

situation remained peaceful. "If the government claim normalcy in the state then they should take the call to revoke the law in the state," he added.

Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) president, G A Mir while talking to Kashmir News Service (KNS) said that the PDP has forged an alliance with BJP on the ground that they will take several steps including removal of AFSPA but from last three years, the BJP is categorically rejecting the issue, saying that there is no question of removal of AFSPA.

He said that the people were betrayed by the PDP by

promising several things and doing nothing on the ground. "It is upto to Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti now to take an initiative in this regard to ensure removal of AFSPA in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

See **Oppn**...Pg 02

Gunmen fired upon political worker in Pulwama, killed

SRINAGAR, APR 25: A political worker Ghulam Nabi Patel was shot dead by suspected militants in Pulwama district of South Kashmir today.

Patel was killed when militants fired at his escort at Rajpora Chowk. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he passed away.

His two police guards suffered injuries in the attack. They have been identified as Imtiyaz Ahmad of Handwara and Bilal Ahmad Dar of Kan-gon Pulwama.

SSP Pulwama Mohammad Aslam Chaudhary confirmed Press Trust of Kashmir the killing of Patel. He said that a case has been registered.

Patel, who is a resident of Dangerpora Shadimarg, was coming to Pulwama from Yader when the incident happened. Reports inform that Patel, who was earlier also associated with Congress, was shot at three times from a close range with an AK assault rifle. While two bullets hit him

See **Killed**...Pg 02

Jaish militants killed in Tral Gunfight laid to rest

SRINAGAR, APR 25: The two Jaish Muhammad militants killed in a gunfight at Tral, on Tuesday were laid to rest amid pro-freedom and anti-India slogans as thousands of people on Wednesday attended their funeral.

People gather for the funeral prayers of slain militant Abid Ahmed in Khangund Tral area of South Kashmir.

Four Jaish Muhammad militants, policeman and army man were killed in an encounter between militants and government forces in Tral yesterday. Despite the ban on internet and amid



restrictions, several thousand people poured onto streets as the bodies of slain militants, were lifted the scenes were poignant

See **Tral**...Pg 02

PDP terms implementation of 7th Pay Commission Historic measure CONFRONTATIONAL APPROACH WITH EMPLOYEES NOW A THING OF PAST: MANSOOR HUSSAIN

Srinagar, Apr 25: The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday termed the implementation of the 7th pay commission in Jammu and Kashmir a historic measure, stating that for the first time in state's history, the employees were accorded the due rights sans any chaos or confrontation.

In a statement issued to KNS, the PDP General Secretary Mansoor Hussain Soharwardy said the fact has been hailed and endorsed by one and all that Jammu and Kashmir has become the first state in entire India which has implemented the pay hike - a decision that would benefit around five lakh employees and pensioners in the state.

Mansoor said that despite the financial constraints

See **Mansoor**...Pg 02

Chilli bombs to tear gas, CRPF looks at alternatives to pellet guns in Kashmir

New Delhi: Paramilitary forces engaged in battling stone-pelting protesters across Kashmir will shun pellet guns in favour of "soft-nosed" tear gas shells and chilli bombs, officials familiar with development have said.

The tear gas shells, which have undergone successful trials, will have a softer plastic head aimed at reducing chances of inflicting grievous injuries on protesters. Chilli shells are already being used in the Valley.

However, the Srinagar



directorate of the Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF) seemed wary of being made to use less lethal weaponry.

Indications to this effect came to light soon after several CRPF units in south and central Kashmir were trained in crowd-handling tactics by instructors from the Rapid Action Force (RAF) - the country's premier agency for handling mobs in mainland India - last October.

A few weeks later, the CRPF's Srinagar directorate informed its Delhi headquarters that the new tactics were not effective in the Valley because the mobs there

See **Chilli**...Pg 02

LEGISLATORS BEING SIDELINED TO FAVOUR PDP LEADERS: NC

'The essence of democracy is being violated'

Srinagar, Apr 25: National Conference on Wednesday expressed serious concern and disappointment over repeated attempts to undermine and sideline elected representatives in an effort to allow the defeated candidates of the ruling dispensation to wield an unconstitutional influence in administrative decisions. In a statement issued from NC Headquarters in Srinagar, NC State Spokesperson Junaid Mattu and MLA Pahalgam Altaf Kaloo have said the Government should understand the grave risks of undermining the representative character of the system as this would have disastrous consequences on democracy and its prospects in the State.

"The essence of democracy is sacrosanct and needs to be respected and nurtured above and beyond partisan lines. Repeated attempts have been made across the State

See **NC**...Pg 02

Salman Khursheed's statement welcome, introspection the way forward: Dr. Farooq

'Injustices of the past need to be acknowledged, can't be repeated'

Srinagar, Apr 25: National Conference President and Member of Parliament for Srinagar, Dr. Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday while welcoming the remarks for Senior Congress Leader Salman Khursheed made at the Aligarh Muslim University, said introspection at a national level was important to initiate reconciliation between various communities in the country.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah said injustices of the past needed to be acknowledged and cannot be repeated. "Muslims in India have contributed vastly and selflessly towards the progress and the integrity of the country but the past is replete with various instances where they



have been at the receiving end of injustice, inequality and prejudice at the policy

See **Farooq**...Pg 02

SRINAGAR'S PRATAP PARK TURNS INTO HANGOUT SPOT FOR STUDENTS BUNKING CLASSES

Wahid Bhat

SRINAGAR, APR 25: The Pratap Park in city center Lalchowk has turned into hangout spot for scores of students studying in different educational institutions in the vicinity who are seen bunking classes under the very nose of school authorities.

Passer byes and eyewitness working at different shops around the park said that the students studying at women's college, SP Higher Secondary School, SP College, Girls Higher Secondary School Kotibagh, Girls Higher Secondary School Amirakadil could be seen skipping classes, roaming around, sitting in groups and having fun

See **Park**...Pg 02

Honest probe will send 80% Govt. employees to jail: Er. Rasheed

SRINAGAR, APR 25: Urging the need for breaking nexus between politicians and bureaucrats to eradicate corruption, AIP Supremo and MLA Langate Er. Rasheed has said that most of the state and central sponsored schemes have become like money making machines for a huge section of Govt. employees.

While addressing public meetings at Waisa, Teerina, Bicherwara and Khaipora today Er. Rasheed said "Despite availability of funds in PHE, Public Works, Rural Dev. and other departments common men is feeling deprived of basic immunities.

While ministers are busy with finding unique ways to build their empires, officers



and bureaucrats with their full patronage seem busy in looting the public money. If an honest investigation is carried out 60% to 80% employees of engineering wings,

See **Rasheed**...Pg 02

Lingering Kashmir Conflict: Women Bearing Worst Brunt

Srinagar, April 25: Women have bore the worst brunt of Kashmir Conflict especially since past thirty years of turmoil. With escalating death toll women as Mother, sister and wife have taken the ultimate hit by losing their near and dear ones in the violent conflict.

With the result stress related disease have been rising among the women in Kashmir. The Médecins Sans

See **Brunt**...Pg 02

Govt seriously looking into demands of clerical cadre: Altaf Bukhari

Asks striking employees to resume work

Jammu, Apr 25: Minister for Finance, Education, Labour and Employment Syed Mohammad Altaf Bukhari today said that the state government is seriously looking into the demands of clerical cadre employees and a decision will be taken soon in their favour.

"We have conceded to all major demands of the employees - the foremost being the implementation of 7th pay commission recommendations. The pending issues, including the demand of re-



moval of pay anomaly in the clerical cadre is under active consideration of the government" the Minister assured here today.

He said a high-level com-

mittee has been constituted to thoroughly review the issue of the pay anomaly and make recommendations to resolve this long pending matter. "The Committee has been asked to submit detailed recommendations within three-month period," he said assuring that the government will take no time to act once the panel submits its report.

Reiterating the commitment of the government to reach out all sections of

See **Altaf**...Pg 02

Education alone provides purpose to life, don't undermine it: Madni

Srinagar, Apr 25: Feeling disturbed at the frequent closure of Educational institutions in few districts of Kashmir Valley, PDP Vice President Mohammad Sartaj Madni has said that such a situation if allowed to continue will render us shallow and we will be committing a sin which claims no pardon.

He said education is not about a career alone, it is essence of human race, a cognition and consciousness, the virtues which provide the



purpose to live as a cultured and civilized community or nation. This is a trust every race owes it to posterity.

Madni said the whole concept of life loses meaning if

education is undermined or ignored. The beauty of lifelines in making it splendid through pursuit of knowledge and learning and to cause or remain ignorant is a vice against very existence.

Madni said as a proud and responsible cultural entity we have been known as heritors of decent behavior and lovers of education. Our children as such have a right to grow, to live upto their reputation and avail best of the opportunities

See **Madni**...Pg 02

Godman Asaram Bapu convicted in minor girl rape case

New Delhi, April 25: In a very important development, a special Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe court on Wednesday convicted self-styled godman Asaram Bapu in a 2013 minor girl rape case.

According to police sources, co-accused Shiva and Shilpi have been convicted and Sharad and Prakash have been acquitted.

Strict security was in

See **Bapu**...Pg 02

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OPPN

Mir further stated that the Congress won't object in case the government would take call in this regard.

Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) chairman and MLA Khansahib, Hakeem Muhammad Yasin also echoed the similar views, saying that the government should revoke the law if they feel their situation is normal in the State. "The government should revoke that law so that the harassment to the people and other atrocities would end," he said, adding that the decision would help in improving the situation further.

Earlier, reports quoting officials in Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that AFSPA was withdrawn from Meghalaya and its area of operation in Arunachal Pradesh has been restricted to eight police stations bordering Assam and three districts adjoining Myanmar.

Among the eight Northeast states, AFSPA is now applicable only in Nagaland, Manipur (excluding Imphal), Assam and parts of Arunachal Pradesh. Mizoram and Tripura reported no incidents of insurgency in 2017, the officials said.

BJP

was shot dead. The stone pelting has not stopped. How can we expect the revocation of act in these circumstances? BJP leader questioned.

The statement comes a day after BJP's collation partner People's Democratic Party (PDP) said that the act must go from the Jammu and Kashmir.

"From day one we wanted peace in Kashmir. We too want that AFSPA should end," Maternal uncle of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti and PDP Vice President Sartaj Madni had told KNS over phone.

He had said that the PDP is keen that law like AFSPA is withdrawn and that the revocation of AFSPA is part of Agenda of Alliance between the two parties.

It is to mention here that while addressing a conference in New Delhi chief minister, Mehbooba had said AFSPA should be revoked from some areas of the State.

She had said that PDP and BJP had come together to form coalition government in the State on an Agenda of Alliance which included revocation of AFSPA.

"We should not shy away from revocation of AFSPA. When things improve, why not?" she had said added "We don't shy away when situation goes bad. We don't shy away from calling more forces. We ask army to be more proactive, but when the situation improves, we should not shy away from the fact we need to start revocation of AFSPA from some places and see what the impact is".

During 2014 assembly campaign in the state the PDP leaders has promised that if voted to power, the party will ensure that AFSPA is withdrawn from the state. The BJP on the other hand, had opposed any withdrawal of the act.

Mehbooba's predecessor and Opposition National conference leader, Omar Abdullah had in 2012 expressed confident that "the day was not for" when AFSPA will be withdrawn from the state during his governments tenure.

However after failing in his attempt, Omar blamed the collation partner congress and opposition PDP for not supporting him in his endeavour to get AFSPA revoked.

The act has remained the bone of contention between the regional parties, PDP, NC and National parties BJP and the congress. While the regional parties in favour of revoking the act, the National parties want the AFSPA to remain to provide legal cover to the security forces operating in anti-militancy operations in the state.

The voices have got lowder for the revocation of AFSPA after it was removed completely from Meghalaya and restricted to eight police stations bordering Assam and three districts neighboring Myanmar.

While Hurriyat Conference (M) chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq Monday asked New Delhi to withdraw controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from Kashmir saying the "draconian" act has played havoc with "our lives" the number of legal luminaries including Senior lawyer, Zafar Shah, Noted human rights defender and lawyer, Parvez Imroz, had said that the Armed forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is draconian and should be revoked.

KILLED

in the chest, one hit his shoulder.

Meanwhile Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti has condemned the killing of. The Chief Minister has expressed sympathies with the bereaved family and prayed for peace to the departed soul.

Meanwhile Omar Abdullah also condoled the killing of political worker. "What terrible news to start the day with here. My heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased & prayers for the injured. Allah Jannat naseeb karay," Omar wrote on Twitter.

Congress also strongly condemning the killing of Patel. The J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) spokesperson expressed profound grief and sorrow over the killing and described it as highly shameful and dastardly act.

TRAL

amid the chanting of pro-freedom slogans.

Reports said four rounds of funeral prayers each were held for both slain militants in Handura and Khargund villages.

Abid's relatives, who were waiting for his body to arrive, were holding a pot full of candies in their hands. Women showered the bodies with candies.

Reports said that some armed militants appeared at the funeral of Ishfaq Ahmad Khan and offered a gun salute to Ishfaq and raised pro-freedom, pro-Islam and pro-Pakistan slogans.

The slain militants were identified as Omar Khalid, Ishfaq Ahmad Khan of Handoora, Yasir a foreigner who was the 'area commander' of Tral and Abid Maqbool of Khargund and all of them belonged to Jaish-e-Muhammad militant group.

The local sources informed Kashmir Life that Ishfaq Ahmad Khan belonged to Handoora Tral, who was first arrested in March 2014 after he tried to snatch a service rifle of a SOG man on duty in Pampore. That time police issued a statement suggesting Khan was an OGW with Hizbul Mujahideen militant group. He was jailed for one year and later released. But after his release, he joined JeM.

Abid Maqbool, another local militant, is the son of a policeman and belongs to Khargund in Tral. He was a student of the second year when he joined JeM in the month of February 2018.

Meanwhile, Tral and its peripheries observed complete shutdown Wednesday to mourn the death of the three local militants.

MANSOOR

being witnessed in Jammu and Kashmir and the plethora of liabilities left behind by the previous government as its trademark, the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti battled all odds to accord the employees their due rights. "It reflects the pro-people governance, selflessness and assiduousness in the system of functioning and invincible will to get the state out of the crises and ensure the system of fair play and justice prevails all across," Mansoor said.

He added that despite the fact that financial implications for the implementations of 7th pay commission recommendations would be Rs 4201 crore annually while financial implications on account of one-time arrears would be Rs 7477 crores, the state government went ahead with the decision as it had promised with the employees that there wouldn't be this time any need to hit the streets for the fulfillment of the demands. "Everyone in the state is witness to the fact that during the tenure of the past regime, the employees in hordes had to hit the streets, spend time in police detentions and lock offices for months for the implementation of the 5th and 6th pay commission. That anarchy has now become history and thing of a past. Mehbooba Mufti is being widely hailed for her courage and invincible will to get the state out of times of chaos and confrontation," said the PDP General Secretary.

Mansoor said the pay hike hasn't only benefited the five lakh employees and pensioners alone but has only come as a major relief for their families as well. "The government since inception has remained at the very forefront to shun the path of comfort and not to substitute words for actions. There is no resting for any of us till we redeem our pledge in full and realise the dream of late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed who strived for the prosperous future of the state," said PDP General Secretary.

Mansoor reiterated further that besides striving for the financial and political stability of the state, the government led by the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has been tirelessly working to put lid over the menace of unemployment taking toll among the educated youth of the state.

The PDP General Secretary appealed the Chief Minister to take measures so that the new avenues of employment are provided to the youth of the state at the earliest. "The government is already committed to accord dignified and honorable life to the youth of the state and provide them the platform so that their talent could get channeled in a proper direction. We are sure that the new horizons of prosperity and growth are in the offing," Mansoor said in a statement.

CHILLI

were "more aggressive" when compared to protesters in other parts of the country.

Nevertheless, the authorities remain firm in their resolve to cut collateral losses. "Civilian casualties are definitely a concern, and we intend to address the same through the use of chilli and soft-nosed tear gas shells even if the situation deteriorates this summer," said a senior paramilitary officer on the condition of anonymity.

He said the government introduced soft-nosed shells after several rounds of trials aimed at identifying weaponry that wouldn't cause grievous injuries to Kashmiri protesters. Scores of local residents had suffered grave injuries, mostly those affecting their eyesight, during protests that broke out in the Valley following the encounter death of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in 2016.

"The plastic of the soft-nosed shells melts very easily, releasing a gas that helps disperse the crowds. So the shells cannot be fatal in themselves. Secondly, we have made advancements in tear smoke munitions (TSM) that can be used more prominently than other crowd-control weapons," said another officer.

While violent street protests are a common occurrence in the Valley, there have been multiple incidents where crowds have broken through security reinforcements at encounter sites in attempts to help trapped militants escape. "This has further complicated the Kashmir situation," said a paramilitary officer, adding that attempts to sabotage counter-insurgency operations have been taken up in discussions with the ministry of home affairs.

CRPF director general RR Bhatnagar said the force follows a multi-step mechanism for handling hostile crowds. "The first weapon used to disperse the crowds, be it near an encounter site or anywhere else, is the TSM. The next in the list are chilli bombs, followed by pump action guns. Preventing collateral damage is our priority. We do not want civilians getting injured during counter-insurgency operations," he added.

When asked to comment on the Srinagar directorate's view on RAF training, Bhatnagar said: "The training was not rejected. The force's strategy is dynamic, and we keep discussing alternative and innovative methods to deal with crowds."

NC

and especially in Pahalgam Constituency to undermine elected representatives and negate the constitutional roles of legislators in key planning and policy decisions. This is a dangerous trend and needs to be nipped in the bud before democracy in the State is discredited resulting in indifference at the grassroots level. The recent example is of the demand for the establishment of a Degree College in Pahalgam – assurance for which had been given both in the District Development Board Meeting and on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Despite assurances that the local MLA would be taken on board in the process of establishing the college, it has been tragic that the Government is allowing the local PDP leader to influence the process. This has yet again sent out a wrong signal that democratic institutions in the State are being rendered dysfunctional and redundant and it is time that the Chief Minister realizes this and taken prompt action", the NC leaders said in the statement.

NC Leader and MLA Pahalgam Altaf Kaloo said there were serious apprehensions that the local PDP leader was interfering into the process of the establishment of a Degree College in Pahalgam and said this was unacceptable and a clear violation of constitutional and administrative propriety. "The entire process should be transparent and objective. Neutrality in such affairs that concern the future of our students and children is paramount. Playing politics over such important issues is unfortunate and doesn't behove senior

political representatives. Any efforts to undermine the people's aspirations and demands would be opposed tooth and nail", NC Leader and MLA Pahalgam, Altaf Kaloo said.

"I have spoken to the Chief Minister and apprised her of this matter and demanded that this process should not be hijacked in the din of partisan politics. She has assured that she will look into this matter and I hope objectivity is upheld. Any move to the contrary will be unfortunate and tragic", the NC MLA Pahalgam added.

FAROOQ

level. Salman Khurshheed Sahab's statement is introspective and should be welcomed and other political parties at the national level should also acknowledge the injustices of the past so that such mistakes are not repeated in the future", Dr. Farooq Abdullah said in a statement to KNS.

The National Conference President said inclusivity, respect and dignity should form the cornerstones of a policy outreach towards Muslims in India as also other minorities. "A sense of dignity and inclusivity needs to be restored, especially in the face of divisive rhetoric and communal ploys as a result of which Muslims are faced with a new challenge of political and economic disempowerment. At regular intervals various committees were formed to formally analyse the systemic socio-economic disempowerment of minorities in the country but despite credible and conclusive reports, no significant movement was made towards the path of affirmative action, redressal and closure in the context of various injustices of the past", Dr. Farooq Abdullah added.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah said, similarly, the national political leadership – cutting across political and partisan lines – should introspect about the injustices meted out in Jammu and Kashmir and accept the mistakes of the past in order to rectify them. "There needs to be a consensus at the national level to rise above partisan politics and do justice with Jammu and Kashmir so that the State can be ushered into a corrective era of peace and stability", Dr. Farooq Abdullah further stated.

PARK

in Pratap Park for whole day.

The boys and girls seen inside Partap Park in schools uniforms are hardly checked by the concern officials, especially school authorities, if they are really bunking the classes and wondering around for hangout.

Many pedestrians told PTK that the administration is paying no heed to curb this practice by the young student. Adding that this has led to immoral activities in the area too.

When asked, a group of students from SP higher secondary told PTK, "In the month of March we have attended only 3 classes and in April not a single class so far, because we attend classes in tuition centers so why we need to attend school".

Ironically they added that they don't need to attend school. One of the teachers while talking to Press Trust of Kashmir said that the students should follow the rules and regulation of an institution. He added that tuition centers are the main reason that students take classes in school easy.

When contacted principle of Khotibagh Girls higher secondary school Romana Qazi she said, "We always treat these students as our own children. We have constituted a team every year to have check on students. We will call parents of students who skip classes and find out the reason why they are not attending their classes."

She added that parents also should support school staff to restrict students from wrong practices.

When contact Station House officer (SHO) police station Maisuma, Sajad Ahmad, said they always act against such cases if found and call their parents.

RASHEED

Rural Dev., Revenue and social welfare will find their place in Jails. The huge nexus between lower rank to higher rank officials works in a manner that common man just keeps on crying without being able to make an redressal of his issues."

Er. Rasheed appealed state Govt. employees and their bosses to re-fix their goals and ambitions and feel some sense of responsibility so that the state gets at least some governance. He said "The frequent strikes, law and order problem and political instability can never be accepted as an excuse to resolve day today burning issues of common man.

Govt. employees being part of the society should realize that by serving in far-flung areas and being busy with executing developmental works is not a favour to common masses, but they are all public servant and must never take common masses far-granted. It is high time for Kashmiris as a society to decide that if the huge majority takes a moral ground while seeking resolution to Kashmir dispute, what is the justification to loot public funds".

BRUNT

Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) survey on Kashmir notes these hard statistics: 50 percent of women and 37 percent of men are likely to suffer from depression; 36 percent of women and 21 percent of men have a probable anxiety disorder; and 22 percent of women and 18 percent of men suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

We meet some who have seen from a very close angle the impacts of violence and conflict in Kashmir.

Zoona Begum, Rohama Rafiabad, mother of slain policeman Gulam Nabi Ahangar (who was killed in militant attack when blast was triggered at Sopore, along with him three other policeman died on 6 January 2018.) is ruined after the death of her son. "The death of my beloved son has shattered me and as you know it takes decades of hard work, affection to raise children and then the monster of violence eats them in no moment. The whole family remembers him as he was a noble soul and hardworking human. He has left behind her besides us a handicapped daughter and grief-struck wife. We appeal to the governments of India and Pakistan to make a compromise over the situation as this bloodbath is not in anyone's interest. Violence is destroying us and we the women happen to be its ultimate sufferers often on account of loss or disappearance of near and dear ones. Women as mother or wife is bearing the worst brunt of this never ending conflict and time has come when all steps taken to weed out bloodshed from Kashmir should be taken so that glory returns."

In another case, Muhammad Shafi Rah, 35, and Mushtaq Ahmad Rah, 30, from Downtown area of Mahraj Gunj Srinagar were working in Samokshi Nepal in Lather Sector and they

stand disappeared since 18 years, after what their families state their arrest by Indian security agencies in year 2000 from Nepal.

Khadijah Rah, the mother of these two disappeared sons, while talking to the Kashmir News Bureau stated – "I have lived every day like hell since my sons have been disappeared. We have visited every corner to seek whereabouts but returned only with fake promises and nothing concrete. Me and my husband are awake till late night talking about our sons and in these years we have got impacted by mental stress and many diseases due to disappearance of our sons. These 18 years have inflicted eighteen million stabs on our heart. We did not get justice anywhere. Our pain is beyond measure as we don't know what happened to our sons. We appeal to humane voices to get conscious about our pain and ensure return of our disappeared sons."

On ground zero, be it rising mental stress or killings, disappearance of dear ones the women of Kashmir is evidently at the receiving end of the Kashmir conflict.

ALTAF

the society, he said government has implemented the 7th pay commission to benefit its employees despite immense financial constraints.

Meanwhile, the Finance Minister asked the clerical cadre employees to have faith in the government and call off their strike.

"There is no need to panic as government is already in the process of resolving the long pending issue of removal of pay anomaly. I appeal all employees to resume work to avoid inconvenience to the people", the Minister said.

Earlier, various employees' unions including the representatives of civil secretariat employees' union representatives met the Finance Minister and welcomed the decision of the government to extend benefits of 7th pay commission to employees.

They hoped that the government would meet other demands of the employees as well, while assuring that each official will work with added dedication to meet the objective of good governance in the state.

MADNI

for harmonious development. I, as a parent, wish there is no distraction in achieving this goal through smooth and uninterrupted learning process. Unfortunately, at present, we see contrary is happening. He said it is shocking to be a witness to loss of precious days of personality building and peaceful orientation. Our heads bow in repentance and many parents like me should be suffering from anxiety. Let us not express helplessness as loss of education is not reparable, he added.

Madni said it is humane that any family gets hope and joy at the birth of a child. His or her step from parent's lap to the school corridors doubles this feeling. Alas, it is like a garden perishing if this feeling vanishes in an undesirable activity or is marred by violence and street protests, even for valid reason. Such an experience is dreaded and horrendous for anyone even for one doesn't have a child to nourish. In this kind of a scenario nothing but haunting memories are left behind which give pain and remorse. He said for a parent there can be no big a trauma than seeing the movements of joy and learning blowing into smoke or anger or wasted in callousness. Who can compensate the accruing loss? And who will ever consciously contribute to such a waste? Madni asks ruing at the silence of conscientious over this sordid story of persisting protests spoiling race and a future.

Madni said it is unfortunate that instability has perpetuated in the state which has been claiming a huge cost in terms of lives and property. But the loss of time to learn and grow is something which renders us bereft of strength to survive and turns us devoid of knowledge and skill. It is not our destiny to remain ignorant, for whatever the circumstances.

Madni said people of the state have been groaning under adversities yet the collective conscience has never failed in its duty to disallow deterioration beyond repairs. That is how our young boys and girls have kept pace with the times to preserve the reputation of a morally strong society with a distinct ethos. We should not become insensitive to this tradition. He said once the signs of this responsible behavior starts disappearing we will loose the strength to sustain and will have no valuable dream to cherish. He said it is our ardent desire that situation does not reach that pass.

Madni made a fervent appeal to parents, the grown up students and to the community leaders to rise to the occasion and express themselves against the disruption in education. He said it is need of the hour that teaching community joins vocally in the effort to keep the academic centres functional so that learning process is not hampered to pave way for anarchy and a fruitless existence.

BAPU

place outside Jodhpur Central Jail where the verdict was pronounced. The road leading to the jail is out of bounds for people.

A supported of Asaram was detained when he reached near the jail and tried to put a garland on his poster, but the policemen nabbed him. The poster was put on a wall of a corridor outside the jail boundary where the family members of prisoners wait. The supporter managed to reach there despite high-security arrangements.

The case against Asaram pertains to allegations of rape levelled by a minor girl in 2013. The victim, belonging to Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, was staying at Asaram's ashram in Manai village near Jodhpur.

The district administration has stepped up security near the house of the victim. "Five policemen have been deployed at the house and a strict vigil is being maintained," SP (City) Dinesh Tripathi has said.

On the otherhand, The Jodhpur police had enforced prohibitory orders under Section 144 of Criminal Procedure Code in the city till April 30, stopped entry of Asaram's followers and evacuated his ashram at Palgaon on the outskirts of the town to prevent any untoward incident.

The Home Ministry had asked Rajasthan, Gujarat and Haryana to tighten security and deploy additional forces ahead of the verdict. The Ministry told the three States to beef up security, and ensure that no violence takes place after the verdict. They were also told to deploy additional forces in sensitive places. These States have a large number of Asaram followers.

UGC releases list of 24 fake universities

New Delhi, April 25: In the interest of students and public at large, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has released the list of 24 fake Universities. UGC has said that these 24 self-styled, unrecognized institutions functioning in contravention of the UGC Act have been declared as fake and are not entitled to confer any degrees.

State-wise List of fake Universities

Bihar
Maithili University / Vishwavidyalaya, Darbhanga, Bihar.
Delhi
Commercial University Ltd., Daryaganj, Delhi.
United Nations University, Delhi.
Vocational University, Delhi.
ADR-Centric Juridical Univer-

sity, ADR House, 8J, Gopala Tower, 25 Rajendra Place, New Delhi - 110 008.
Indian Institute of Science and Engineering, New Delhi.
Viswakarma Open University for Self-Employment, Rozgar Sewasadan, 672, Sanjay Enclave, Opp. GTK Depot, Delhi-110033.
Adhyatmik Vishwavidyalaya (Spiritual University), 351-352, Phase-I, Block-A, Vijay Vihar, Rithala, Rohini, Delhi-110085
Karnataka
Badaganvi Sarkar World Open University Education Society, Gokak, Belgaum, Karnataka.
Kerala
St. John's University, Kishanattam, Kerala.
Maharashtra

Raja Arabic University, Nagpur, Maharashtra.
West Bengal
Indian Institute of Alternative Medicine, Kolkata.
Institute of Alternative Medicine and Research, 8-A, Diamond Harbour Road, Builtech inn, 2nd Floor, Thakurpurkur, Kolkatta - 700063
Uttar Pradesh
Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi (UP) Jagatpuri, Delhi.
Mahila Gram Vidyapith / Vishwavidyalaya, (Women's University) Prayag, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.
Gandhi Hindi Vidyapith, Prayag, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh.
National University of Electro Complex Homeopathy, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose University (Open University), Aachal, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.
Uttar Pradesh Vishwavidyalaya, Kosi Kalan, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.
Maharana Pratap Shiksha Niketan Vishwavidyalaya, Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh.
Indraprastha Shiksha Parishad, Institutional Area, Khoda, Maknapur, Noida Phase-II, Uttar Pradesh.
Odisha
Nababharat Shiksha Parishad, Anupurna Bhawan, Plot No. 242, Pani Tanki Road, Shaktinagar, Rourkela-769014.
North Orissa University of Agriculture & Technology, Odisha.
Puducherry
Sree Bodhi Academy of Higher

Education, No. 186, Thilaspeth, Vazhuthavoor Road, Puducherry-605009
* Bhartiya Shiksha Parishad, Lucknow, UP - the matter is subjudice before the District Judge - Lucknow
The University Grants Commission Act, 1956 under Section 22(1) provides that only a University established by a Central, State/Provincial Act or an institution deemed to be university under section 3 or an institution especially empowered by an Act of Parliament to confer UGC specified degrees under section 22(3) of the Act. Sub.- Public Notice on Fake Universities Further, section 23 of the UGC Act prohibits the use of word "University" by any institutions other than a university established as stated above.

Cabinet apprised of the Memorandum of Agreement between India and World Health Organisation

New Delhi, April 25: The Union Cabinet Chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between India and World Health Organisation represented by its Regional Office for South-East Asia acting through its Country Office in India. The MoU was signed on 13th March, 2018 at New Delhi. The bilateral MoA shall encourage cooperation between India and WHO. This will facilitate in improving the public health status of the people in India.

GSAT-11 Launch Rescheduled

New Delhi, April 25: The launch of GSAT-11 scheduled during May 2018 from Kourou, French Guyana is rescheduled. The revised launch date will be communicated subsequently.

India signs loan agreement with World Bank for US\$ 125 million for "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project"

New Delhi, April 25: A Loan Agreement for IBRD credit of US\$ 125 million (equivalent) for the "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project" was signed with the World Bank on 24th April, 2018 in New Delhi. The Loan Agreement was signed by Mr. Sameer Kumar Khare, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs on behalf of Government of India and Mr. Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank (India) on behalf of the World Bank.

The Objectives of the project is to nurture indigenous innovation, foster local product development and accelerate commercialization process by bridging critical skill and infrastructure gaps to promote affordable and innovative healthcare products generation for inclusive development and increasing competitiveness in India. The project would support consortia of public, private, and the academic institutions to overcome the key market failures currently holding back the development of an innovative biopharmaceutical and medical devices industry in India.

The project consists of the following parts:
(i) Strengthening of pilot-to-market innovation ecosystem
(ii) Acceleration of the pilot -to-market process for specific products and
(iii) Project Management and monitoring & Evaluation.
The closing date of Innovate in India for Inclusiveness project is 30 June, 2023.

NITI Aayog to Open Applications for Atal New India Challenge

New Delhi, April 25: Grants of upto Rs One Crore, mentorship to be given to the winning ideas
The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under the NITI Aayog shall be launching the Atal New India Challenge on Thursday, 26th April 2018. The event will see presence of Shri Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge), Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri SS Ahluwalia, Minister of State, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation, Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog and Shri Ramanathan Ramanan, Mission Director, AIM.

Under the Atal New India Challenge, which shall be run in collaboration with five ministries, AIM will invite prospective innovators/MSMEs/start-ups to design market-ready products, using cutting edge technologies or prototypes across 17 identified focus areas such as Climate Smart Agriculture, Smart Mobility, Predictive Maintenance of Rolling Stock, Waste Management etc.

Applicants showing capability, intent and potential to productize technologies will be awarded grants up to Rs. One crore. This grant will be further supplemented by mentoring, handholding, incubating and other support as needed at various stages of commercialisation, while generating wider deployment for the product.

KAS officers meet Mehbooba, thank her for time-bound grade promotion, pay revision

Hopeful these steps would improve governance efficiency, lead to better service delivery: CM



JAMMU, APRIL 25: A delegation of representatives of Kashmir Administrative Service (KAS) Officers Association called on the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today and thanked her for yesterday's historic decision of granting time bound promotions to the members of KAS service.

The delegation was led by President, KAS Officers Association, Tassaduq Hussain Mir.

The State Cabinet, it may be recalled, with Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti in chair,

had yesterday decided to grant time bound grade promotions to the KAS officers to further enhance their motivation and dedication besides ending their years' long stagnation.

The cabinet had also decided to implement the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission report in the State retrospectively from 2016.

The officers' delegation also thanked the Chief Minister for extending the benefits of pay revision to its employees.

These decisions, the del-

egation informed the Chief Minister, would further induce motivation and dedication among the officers besides ending stagnation among various cadres. They termed the decision as historic while assuring the Chief Minister of continued support in administering efficient governance in the State.

The Chief Minister said that she is hopeful that these steps would improve efficiency in the governance system in the State leading to better service delivery to people.

Digitization key to corruption-free, speedy delivery of services: Imran Ansari

Stresses on making rural population digitally literate

JAMMU, APRIL 25 - Minister for Information Technology Imran Raza Ansari today said digitization plays a key role in ensuring corruption-free and speedy delivery of services to the people.

"The growth of the country can only be increased by moving towards digitization," the Minister said, adding that the digital penetration in the country is around 75-80% but there is a need to bring rural areas at par with the cities in terms of digitization for the overall growth of the country.

The Minister was addressing a gathering of VLEs and digitally literate candidates from various districts of Jammu during Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) celebrations at Panchayat Bhawan here.

Secretary to Government,

Information Technology Department Saugat Biswas, COO, CSCSPV Rishiraj Singh, State Head, CSC Farooq Renzu, General Manager, CSC Shahinawaz Rashid, VLEs, trainers and beneficiaries were present on the occasion.

Terming VLEs in the state as 'change agents' of Digital India, the Minister said these rural entrepreneurs have the power to revolutionize India by empowering rural citizens and providing them job opportunities.

The Minister said the Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working with a vision to elevate the rural population and ensure that over a billion people become digitally literate by 2020. PMGDISHA has brought a revolution in the country and everybody associated with this programme is learning and earning, he

added.

He further said that ensuring the presence of women at the forefront of "Digital India" would result in new social order where CSC VLEs would play the role of change agents in building a society free of any discrimination. Digitally empowered communities can bring a paradigm shift in encouraging and empowering rural India, he stressed.

Meanwhile, the Minister distributed five PMGDISHA certificates and ten mobile phones to the deserving beneficiaries. An MoU of PMGDISHA was also exchanged between CSC and Jammu and Kashmir e-Governance Agency (JAKEGA) on the occasion.

The Minister asked the VLEs to deliver all services to the citizens through CSC so that their turnover can be enhanced significantly.

Amitabh Mattoo for adopting joyful learning methods in schools



JAMMU, APRIL 25: Emphasizing the importance of making education system more process driven, Advisor to Chief Minister Prof Amitabh Mattoo today said that learning outcomes and rankings should not be the only parameters to judge the quality of education and stressed on adopting innovative methods for developing joyful learning and creativity in students.

He said this while interacting with students and teachers at Jodhamal Public School after distributing Rai Bahadur Jodhamal Kuthiala scholarship among the meritorious students.

The scholarships of Rs 10,000 each were given to meritorious Class XI girl students studying in government schools in border areas of Jammu province. Eight girls each from the border areas of Jammu, Samba, Poonch, Kathua and Rajouri were given the scholarships.

Stressing on reviving the philanthropic traditions of the state for augmenting the education sector, Prof Mattoo said that it is important that we all contribute our bit to bring about a positive impact in the education sector by providing our children the best of education and facilities.

He appreciated the gesture of providing scholarships to the girls from remote border areas.

Prof Mattoo said that we have to come up with a system where schooling and learning is a pleasant experience for a child which nurtures his creativity and leads to holistic development.

In this regard, citing the contributions of Haji Public School situated in remote village of Breswana in Doda, Prof Mattoo said that the institution is a positive example that how a small step can bring about a big impact in lives of children.

While hailing Sabbah Haji for serving the community by giving them quality education in a remote village in Doda, Prof Mattoo called upon the officers, educationists, volunteers to contribute their bit for growth and development of the Sabbah Haji's school in terms of education, ideas and infrastructural.

He announced that he shall personally provide Rs 1 lakh to any teacher who volunteers to work and contribute in Haji Public School which he said shall be a learning experience for teachers also.

The Jodhamal School has also adopted three government schools viz. Government High School Deli, Government Primary School Sainik Colony and Government Primary School Prithvipur. The Jodhamal School has donated books for libraries and furniture to these schools for the welfare of the students.

On the occasion, scintillating cultural programmes were presented by the students of government schools and Jodhamal Public School.

Zulfkar inaugurates renovated FCS&CA building

'90-year-old building to become heritage tourism site'

SRINAGAR, APRIL 25: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali today inaugurated the renovated building of Directorate of FCS&CA here at Shaheed Gunj.

Representatives from executing agency J&K Housing Board informed the Minister that in the first phase of the renovation, the old roof, which had water leakage at many places, was replaced with new colored tin.

It was revealed that to maintain the traditional facade of the building, Lime-Surkhi Pointing, which is the combination of traditional lime and broken brick material, was used. Besides, the agency has also changed the soffit and eaves-boarding of the building. The Minister expressed pleasure while noticing that the porch of the building was reconstructed with traditional Deviri stones.

It was revealed that the work on the second phase of the project which includes the tiling work around the building is going on in full swing. Besides, a park would also be developed within the directorate premises to give it an aesthetic look. The fire safety measures, including fire detecting system, fire alarm along with complete electrification as



per modern guidelines will be undertaken in the second phase.

The renovation work in the first phase was carried out at an estimated cost of Rs 61 lakh, while as works under the second phase would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 85 lakh.

Expressing satisfaction over the work done so far, the Minister said the purpose of the conserving and renovating FCS&CA building was to preserve cultural heritage. He explained that the building constructed in 1930's deserves preservation for future generation to admire State's archaic heritage.

Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali said that given the central location of the building and its rich history, it has a potential to become a major heritage tourism site.

Later, the Minister had a meeting with various union leaders of employees working in the department. The leaders expressed their gratitude to the Minister for fulfilling all the promises he had made with them regarding the welfare of the employees of the department.

Director FCS&CA Nisar Ahmad Wani, Deputy Director FCS&CA Mohammed Aslam, along with other concerned officers were accompanying the Minister.

Hanjura releases 'Farmers Friendly Handbook' in Urdu & Dogri

Says such efforts essential to plug communication gaps in information dispensation to farmers

JAMMU, APRIL 25: Minister for Agriculture Ghulam Nabi Lone Hanjura released the 'Farmers Friendly Handbook' for schemes and programmes at a function organised by Agriculture Department here today.

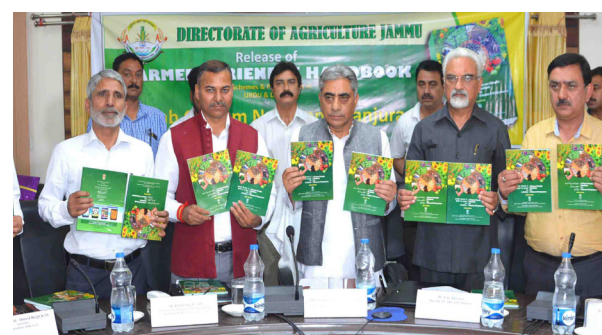
Vice Chairman Kisan Advisory Board Daljit Singh Chib, VC SKUAST Jammu Dr P.K Sharma, Secretary Agriculture Showkat Ahmad Beigh, Director Agriculture HK Razdan, Director Command Area Development, President Dogri Sanstha Jammu Prof. Lalit Mangotra, HoD Urdu, Jammu Dr Liaqat Zafri, Dr Javed Rahi and Professor Nirmal Vinod besides other officers from allied departments and progressive farmers were present on the occasion.

The Handbook has been

released in two languages - Urdu and Dogri for better dissemination of agro information to farmers.

Pertinently, the publication of booklet of programmes and schemes in native languages will facilitate handy information and awareness among farmers about the guidelines, norms and pattern of assistance under Centrally Sponsored Flagship Schemes namely Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and Soil Health Cards Scheme (SHC) etc.

The handbook will also provide information regarding marketing schemes, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Cultivation of Fruits, Vegetables, Mush-



rooms, Flowers and bee-keeping to increase farmer's income, Seed Production Technology, Agriculture Mechanisation, Agriculture Extension and Training, Agriculture Credit, Plant Protection etc.

Hanjura commending the department on launching these handbooks in Dogri and Urdu said that this initiative has been long awaited and comes

at an opportune time to give impetus to efforts towards doubling the farmers' income by 2022.

"Reaching out to farmers in their respective mother/regional languages shall have far reaching implications and shall benefit the farmers by increasing their understanding of various schemes of central and state government for welfare of farming com-

munity of our state" the Minister said. Understanding of the schemes both by the farmers and implementing agencies shall also help in maintaining check and balances, he added.

The Minister congratulated the team responsible for successfully executing this task and asked the department to organize mega awareness camps and ensure that the books and the relevant information reach every Panchayat and every farmer.

Vice Chairman Kisan Advisory Board, appreciating this initiative, said that these Handbooks in native languages will increase the reach of information dispensation besides lead to wider penetration of scheme details at ground level. He also appreciated Minister for his vision-

ary approach towards development of this sector in the state.

VC SKUAST-J said that these Handbooks will help farmers better understand and take benefits from various centrally and state sponsored schemes launched for their development. He stressed for putting special efforts towards further developing irrigation facilities, especially in far off areas besides extensive marketing efforts for achieving the goal of doubling farmers' income by 2022.

The progressive farmers also shared their experiences and gave valuable suggestions for further development of farmers at ground level. They expressed appreciation for releasing the farmers' Handbook in local languages.

DAILY Editorial
Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

Back to the court: on the impeachment controversy

With the Rajya Sabha Chairman rejecting the notice given by 64 Opposition members for the impeachment of the Chief Justice of India, the focus has shifted to the presiding officer's power to admit or reject a motion. The Congress, spearheading the move, is planning to approach the Supreme Court. Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, says the presiding officer may admit or refuse to admit the motion after holding consultations with such persons as he thinks fit, and considering the material before him. The law is open to interpretation on whether he can reject the motion on merits without sending the charges to a committee for investigation. A common sense view suggests the Chairman has to apply his mind to the nature of the charge. To argue that he should merely satisfy himself on the number of signatures appended to the motion and straightaway constitute a probe committee is unlikely to find judicial favour. However, it needs a court to delineate the contours of such an interpretation. Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu held there is little merit in any of the five charges. He has considered the implications for judicial independence if an investigation were ordered into charges that he says are based on mere suspicion and conjecture. He has picked holes in the motion's wording, saying the signatories themselves are unsure of the veracity of the charges.

As for the legal foundation of his order, Mr. Naidu has cited the Supreme Court ruling in *M. Krishna Swami v. Union of India* (1992), which directed the Speaker (or Chairman) to act with utmost care, circumspection and responsibility and to keep equally in mind "the seriousness of the imputations, nature and quality of the record before him, and the indelible chilling effect on the public administration of justice and the independence of the judiciary in the estimate of the general public". He has also gone by Mehar Singh Saini (2010) to elaborate on the phrase "proved misbehaviour or incapacity", used in Article 124(4) of the Constitution, the ground for impeachment of a Supreme Court judge. What is possibly the main charge – that Justice Misra misused his control over the roster to assign cases selectively with a view to influencing their outcome – is indeed a serious one. But the question is whether impeachment is an option in the absence of concrete material to establish this charge. The Opposition is divided on initiating impeachment proceedings and there are two views within the Congress itself. Taking the matter to court may result in a judicial resolution, but it is unlikely to end the controversy over the functioning of the Supreme Court, an issue that has unfortunately assumed a very political and polarised character.

ASSAULT ON REASON

MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL, one of Bangladesh's best-known science fiction writers and an outspoken educationist, was stabbed multiple times by a young man on March 3 when he was attending a function on the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology campus in north-eastern Sylhet, where he teaches.

The assailant, aged about 25 and identified as Foyzur Rahman, attacked the professor from behind with a sharp weapon, causing multiple injuries on his head and other parts of the body. A writer revered by students across the country, Prof. Iqbal was flown to Dhaka, the capital, by an air ambulance and admitted to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on the directives of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He was out of danger, said Major General Munshi Md Mojibur Rahman, chief cardiac surgeon and consultant surgeon general of Bangladesh Armed Forces, on March 4.

The lone attacker, who was caught red-handed by students and teachers attending the function, later told the Rapid Action Battalion on interrogation that he considered Zafar Iqbal "an enemy of Islam". The suspect claimed he acted alone. Law enforcers, however, do not buy his claim and believe that he must be involved with a radical group. An investigation has been launched. A number of freethinkers, professors, bloggers and publishers have been attacked and killed in recent years for speaking up against fanaticism and fundamentalism.

Zafar Iqbal was a critic of the Jamat-e-Islami, which had opposed Bangladesh's breaking away from Pakistan. The party was linked to mass killings and rapes during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. Zafar Iqbal, who frequently received death threats over his outspoken views against militancy, extremism and communalism, was under police protection from 2015.

Militant link
 Foyzur Rahman, was a madrasa student who did not continue his studies after passing the Dakhil exam. His father, Atiqur Rahman, a madrasa teacher, and mother, Minara Begum, surrendered to the police, who later detained his uncle for interrogation.

According to counterterrorism officers, Foyzur appears to be a trained operative, most possibly linked to the banned militant outfit Ansar al Islam. The attack matched the pattern seen earlier in the group's missions, they said. The weapon used for the attack was a commando knife. Similar knives were seized earlier from the outfit's dens, said an officer who is part of the investigations.

Previously known as Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT), Ansar al Islam began gaining strength in 2013-14 and started selecting targets by monitoring social media and hacking its chosen targets to death. The government banned the outfit in 2015, but the radical group claimed responsibility for 13 attacks in which 11 individuals, including writers and bloggers, a publisher and two LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) activists, were killed. Iqbal was among the 15 eminent persons mentioned in Ansar al Islam's hit list recovered by law enforcers in 2017. Another hit list recovered by the police



in 2016 from a JMB den in Bogra also contained his name.

Ansar al Islam was active mostly in cyberspace, attracting potential radicals, the police said.

Militancy in the name of religion is not new in Bangladesh. From the stabbing and eventual death of the writer and teacher Humayun Azad to a slew of killings of bloggers, journalists, professors, authors and activists, there have been many attacks on free speech, and the space for freethinking has been shrinking at a terrifying rate. Ever since a hit list of secularists was published in 2013, fringe Islamist groups have made it known that bloggers and secular activists who speak out in favour of atheism will be under threat. Avijit Roy, a Bangladeshi-American blogger, was killed in Dhaka in 2015 by a group of assailants wielding cleavers. His wife was also grievously injured in the attack. Washiqur Rahman, a 27-year-old blogger, was murdered outside his Dhaka home weeks after Roy's death. Ananta Bijoy Das, another popular blogger, was murdered in Sylhet. Niloy Neel, also a blogger, was murdered in his apartment. Nazimuddin Samad, a freethinking university student, was killed by suspected Islamist militants. Five secular bloggers were killed in separate attacks in 2015.

The seed of militancy was planted by the Pakistani authorities in 1971. While fighting a losing war, the Pakistani military command formed a number of armed gangs called Razakar, Al Badr and Al Shams, which recruited young men to fight the freedom fighters. After the emergence of Bangladesh in December 1971, as many as 93,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendered in Dhaka, but the gangs they had formed did not. In the changed political environment following the 1975 assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the country's founding father, these auxiliary

forces of the Pakistan Army got a new lease of life.

Bangladesh saw a planned rehabilitation of anti-liberation forces in the post-1975 era. The period also saw the rise of total antipathy towards secular Bengali nationhood, which was the basis on which the liberation war of 1971 was fought. Even people responsible for the worst war crimes in 1971 were rehabilitated in politics by military rulers such as General Ziaur Rahman and General H.M. Ershad, and Begum Khaleda Zia. These "deafened forces of 1971", according to many social thinkers, worked out a strategy to fight a longer war against the Bangladesh state by creating Islamist militant groups who were blessed by their external mentors. They began acting with a vengeance against secular intellectuals and freethinkers whom they considered to be "enemies of Islam". It may be noted that scores of prominent secular intellectuals – philosophers, educationists, journalists and doctors – were slaughtered by the Pakistani military in collusion with their local fundamentalist operatives at the fag end of the nine-month-long war. Bangladesh's most renowned poet, Shamsur Rehman, whose poems are fondly recited at every Bengali function, was attacked by fanatics in his Dhaka home in 1999. The case remained unsolved because of the absence of witnesses.

Humayun Azad was critically injured in an attack on the Dhaka University campus in 2004. Faisal Arefin Dipon, a progressive publisher, was among the many victims in recent years. In all these cases, there has been no substantial progress in bringing the attackers to book.

Bangladesh has also seen a series of attacks on Westerners and minority religious leaders in recent years in the northern and western regions of the country. The gravest

one was the Holi Artisan bakery siege in Dhaka in July 2016, when militants killed more than 22 people including Italians, a Japanese and an Indian. The incident proved that even youngsters from wealthy families with a Western education, and not just madrasa students, were susceptible to jihadi propaganda. The Sheikh Hasina government is firm about stopping militancy and terrorism. Militant hideouts are raided regularly and militant operatives have died in encounters. But as the attack on Iqbal shows, militancy exists.

As after every previous attack, civil society protested after the attack on Iqbal. The love and respect he commands was evident in the condemnation of the attack by intellectuals, writers, professors, students and readers. They expressed the view that Iqbal was attacked by fundamentalist forces because his writings and thoughts harmed their interests. They urged the government to bring the attackers to book. Editorials in leading newspapers called Iqbal a "voice of reason". However, hatred for the professor and the views he stands for was also evident on social media.

It is crucial to understand that the attack on Iqbal and others are not only attacks against the freedom of expression and thought but also part of a coordinated attempt to cripple Bangladesh's secular intelligentsia, which plays a crucial role in preserving and strengthening the secular polity of the nation. The war on militancy in Bangladesh cannot be won easily: its roots are both local and external. Strict vigilance by both law enforcers and civil society as well as effective preventive measures are needed to combat such terror. Bangladeshi society needs effective steps of deradicalisation, promotion of tolerance and acceptance of multiplicity of opinions.

THE KUKEL

In memory of my lost Bird Kukel of our colony



Ab. Hameed Dar

Dy. General Manager (RTD)
 JKTDC Srinagar

All Birds are lord's Gift and are with gifted throats and voices having so many modulations tuning notes in their voice or in simpler words they are gifted with the fine musical fire bands of LORD conveying that they all are born musicians, all are sweet,

all with soothing melodious effect making us breathless. This all is coming out of their beaks of different sizes and curvatures. Each voice or BOLI has a mark of distinction and we the "Adamzad" at once can make out as to which bird is in melody, sinning or is in chirping moods being in possession of nature's Adhaar Card.

Two decades back this new residential place of ours was having lot of Greenery surrounded by the smiling hill hocks of the Zabbarwan Range fortified by tall mountainous ranges of the vale. Simply to say that it was quiet a nice place to live in, being cool-calm-quiet and peaceful place surrounded by Green paddy fields, orchards, vegetable belt, Milk in abundance with cattle, sheep all around as part of this rich and fertile habitat of ours.

There were lots of tall local trees of different species in this habitat wherefrom birds of all sorts used to watch our activities with bird's eye view. They never knew that we humans are going

to make it a desert very soon and they will be robbed off nests, fun and pleasure. Although there was already a govt. colony in place very near to main city but people from all walks/shades/Money strengths/ back grounds purchased the Pvt. land surrounding the colony. So what is left now for us and posterity? It makes one to cry and hearts bleed because now the land around us stands sold out as it has given the owners huge amount of money and the new masters their new dwellings of any dimensions and shape. But they have bulldozed everything which belonged to the nature and its glory.

Today we have different colonies with different names, fames, lanes and by lanes known by their titles. Now we have huge, big or small buildings housing MALLS for the "MALLDAAR S" under roof of one blue cover of the lord with rainbow shaded roofs of the masters of present day making it look awful and also keeping the evil spirits of the colony away. It is sad that money gives you

an ego which at times makes us mad otherwise what right we have to encroach the environment, natural habitats and its rightful claimers. In this mad race we have lost our Kukel the Dove and its melodious 'koo koo' Its habitat, its stake natural climate. I am reminded of a couplet of some poetry which my mother used to narrate me in context of KUKEL in Rhythmic notes like

**"HAA-BARR-SAHIBOO,
 SATH KORI CHAM,
 NAKHE WALTUM,
 SOI BRAANTH CHUM
 KOO-KOO-KOOEE".**

Meaning "OH Lord I have seven daughters, Oh lord ensure their wed lock, which I expect surely from YOU, Koo-Koo-Kooee".

All these little birds are under prayer and submission asking help and assistance from the Khaliq and Razaq -THE

CREATOR. On the contrary we humans send our would be mothers for sex determination tests and in case she is found carrying a female fetus in her womb in the embryonic stage we just abort or kill it. Our heads should bow in shame as we do not trust in our creator - the sustainer.

To my surprise, the other day I heard the melodious and rhythmic notes of the KUKEL I rushed out and looked around I found a pair of Doves singing in unison. Suddenly one KUKEL or DOVE came very near and sat on a nearby tree but she was not singing at all. I looked confused but in a flash of a second she flew pass my chair fluttering her wings as if telling me in a whisper and complaining to me that from her senior and parents she was told that she would get her food in and around this area being known for versatile peach to plum to Apricot AppletoPaddy, Maize seeds, mustard seeds, wild chestnuts / wild berries/ wild tulips/ walnuts or other dried fruits/ Mushrooms, straw barriers,

the medicinal herbs and other herbs rich in medicinal value with curing qualities like Handd, Vupal Haakh, Sochel, Chokee Ledder, krech etc.

I put my head in shame as I had no courage to tell her that we have buried them forever as soon as we laid the concrete foundation stones of our houses and like buildings. How could tell her that we are cruel to our nature, to its natural resources and bounties it had in store for us for many many years to come under the direct orders of the ALLAH the CREATOR.

I was sweating in the face of reality, repentance and of course shame on the guilt that how can we face our LORD or to our Mouj Kashheer or to these birds of ours or to our future generations as these birds used to make our predawn and the evenings melodious. Oh dear KUKEL Please return to us and do visit us again and again so that we protect the remaining habitats for you and other creatures comfortable. Thanks for your visit.

Cambridge Analytica says activities in India, other nations will be probed

Cambridge Analytica (CA), the data consultancy firm at the heart of a fake news investigation in the United Kingdom, has said that all its activities around the world, including in India, will be investigated and reported on.

A spokesperson for the company said on Tuesday that while CA was focussed purely on the US market, its global arm SCL Elections handled other regions.

"All national issues and national associations are part and parcel of independent investigation. Rest assured, India, Kenya, Nigeria, all other countries that SCL has been working in historically, will be investigated and reported on as part of the independent investigation," he told reporters during a press conference in London on Wednesday.

The press conference came soon after an academic associated with the company, Aleksandr Kogan, gave his evidence to the UK Parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee on its ongoing investigation into fake news.

Kogan's company, Global Science



Research (GSR), developed a Facebook app that reportedly collected data from people who signed up to use the app as well as information from their Facebook friends, without the explicit approval of all involved.

He accused CA's now-suspended CEO Alexander Nix of "total fabrication" when it came to denying the links between Cambridge Analytica and GSR's data.

DCMS Committee chair Damian Collins said that Nix had told the committee in February that CA never

received data from Kogan's company GSR, which did not have "much credibility any more" given his own testimony today.

Last month, Christopher Wylie, a former employee of CA turned whistleblower, had told MPs during his evidence before the committee that the company had worked "extensively" in India and named the Congress as one of its clients.

In a post on Twitter later, the 28-year-old also named the Janata Dal (United) as a client during the

2010 Bihar elections and revealed some caste surveys carried out in Uttar Pradesh by SCL India — the parent company of CA.

"I've been getting a lot of requests from Indian journalists, so here are some of SCL's past projects in India. To the most frequently asked question — yes SCL/CA works in India and has offices there. This is what modern colonialism looks like," Wylie had tweeted.

His message included documents which indicate that SCL India boasted a database of "over 600 districts and 7 lakh villages, which is constantly being updated". Its reach in India is said to include a head office in Ghaziabad, with nine regional offices in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Cuttack, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kolkata, Patna and Pune.

"I don't remember a national project but I know regionally. India's so big that one state can be as big as Britain. But they do have offices there, they do have staff there," he had said, offering to provide more "documentation" to the committee on CA's India links.

Supreme Court judges urge CJI for full court on issues plaguing judiciary

Two senior judges of the Supreme Court, Justices Ranjan Gogoi and MB Lokur, have urged the Chief Justice of India to hold a full court to discuss institutional issues plaguing the higher judiciary.

The letter was written a day before Rajya Sabha chairman Venkaiah Naidu rejected the opposition impeachment notice against Chief Justice Dipak Misra.

The issue raised in the letter is understood to have come up on Monday morning at the tea meeting attended by all the judges, which had delayed the start of the day's court proceedings by about 15 minutes.

Sources said Justices Gogoi and Lokur signed the joint two-line letter on April 22 in which they spoke about holding of a "full court". The same issue was for the first time raised by Justice J Chelameswar on March 21, which was followed by a similar missive on April 9 by Justice Kurian Joseph who had sought the setting up of a bench of seven senior-most judges to deal with the issues plaguing the top court.

The short letter by Justices Gogoi and Lokur urged the CJI convene a full court on the judicial side to discuss institutional issues and the "future" of the top court, they said.

As per convention, a full court meeting of the Supreme Court, involving all judges, is usually convened by the CJI when a matter of public importance relating to the judiciary



comes up. The Monday morning tea meeting of all the judges was held just after Naidu had announced rejection of the impeachment notice. The sources said the CJI did not say anything about the outcome of the meeting, especially relating to the full court.

However, Justices Gogoi and Lokur were of the view of leaving behind the issue of impeachment and moving forward by holding a discussion among the judges to overcome the issues plaguing the highest judiciary. Justice Gogoi is the next in line to take over the mantle of the CJI from Chief Justice Misra who retires on October 2.

Irked over the government's delay in clearing the Collegium's recommendation to elevate a judge and a senior woman advocate to the apex court, Justice Joseph had also written to the CJI contending that the "very life and existence" of the institution was "under threat" and a "surgical intervention" is required.

The fall of self-styled spiritual gurus, from Gurmeet Ram Rahim to Asaram

An special court in Jodhpur on Wednesday found self-styled godman Asaram guilty of raping a minor girl at his ashram in 2013.

Apart from this case, Asaram and his son Narayan Sai, who is a senior functionary in his spiritual empire, are also accused of rape and sexual assault by two Surat-based sisters.

Asaram is not the only 'spiritual guru' or godman to be accused of rape and sexual assault and yet have a large, dedicated following. Here is a look at other "godmen" who have been charged with sexual assault:

Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh

In August 2017, self-styled godman Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh was convicted of rape and was sentenced to 10 years in jail in Rohtak. After the guilty verdict, angry supporters of Ram Rahim went on a rampage and the ensuing violence left 36 people dead.

Singh's conviction has led to newspaper editorials and social media debate on why people have cult-like faith in godmen accused of rape and sexual harassment.



Narayan Sai
Asaram's son Narayan Sai is in jail for allegedly raping a Surat-based woman disciple of his father between 2002 and 2005. She was allegedly raped when she was living at Asaram's ashram in Surat. Sai, 40, is also accused of having physical relations with eight other girls.

Gangananda Theerthapatha
Theerthapatha, a self-styled godman of an ashram in Kollam, was allegedly sexually exploiting a law student for five years on the pretext of conducting pooja (rituals). The woman took revenge on him by chopping off his penis, says this report in May. Theerthapatha allegedly exploited the woman for

five years during visits to her family's home in Thiruvananthapuram. Theerthapatha says he cut off his own penis as penance.

Mehndi Kasim

A Mumbai court in April 2016 convicted the 43-year-old self-styled godman for raping seven girls and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Kasim knew four sisters who had mentally challenged sons and healthy daughters. He promised to cure the boys and asked their mothers to send to him their daughters to him as well for 'treatment' that would ensure they don't give birth to mentally challenged children.

Santhosh Madhavan, alias Swami Amritha Chaitanya
A Kerala court in May 2009

found Madhavan guilty of raping three minor girls. He lured the minor girls hailing from poor families, confined them and assaulted them. He was sentenced to 16 years of rigorous imprisonment and a penalty of Rs 2,10,000 in 2009. Madhavan is also accused of cheating a Dubai-based Indian woman of Rs. 40 lakh.

Swami Premananda
Premananda left war-ravaged Sri Lanka and moved to India in 1984 to set up an ashram in Tiruchirappalli. But in 1994, a young girl from the ashram alleged that she was pregnant after being raped by Premananda. In August 1997, Premananda and six of his accomplices were convicted of raping 13 minor girls.

Gnyanachaitanya
He spent 14 years in jail for three murders. After his release, he met a British family and convinced them that their daughter was his 'wife' in a previous birth. He then sexually abused and tortured the woman for years. After she escaped and complained to her parents and the police, Gnyanachaitanya was arrested again.

Maoists had called Gadchiroli meeting to lift drooping morale

The Maoists had called Sunday's secret meeting in the Rela-Kasnasur jungle in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra to discuss raising the target for collection of protection money from tendu leaf (beedi) contractors and lift the drooping morale of the cadre following the surrender and killing of several activists in recent months.

An special commando unit of Maharashtra police stormed the site of the meeting, sparking a gun battle in which 16 were killed; the bodies of 15 more Maoists have since been found, taking the death toll in the encounter to 31.

People familiar with the matter say the Maoists collect over Rs 30 crore from Gadchiroli, Gondia and Chandrapur districts of Maharashtra every year during the tendu leaf plucking season that begins in April and ends by the first week of June. They also collect a sizeable amount from forest and road contractors.

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) was expecting to collect around Rs 50 crore from tendu leaf contractors this year. Most of the amount is spent on buying arms and



ammunition, including AK-47 assault rifles.

It is a difficult task for rebels to keep such a huge amount in cash and they usually store it in aluminium containers and burying these deep in the forests. There have been reports that several Maoist members had gone missing after stealing some of the money.

Rebels of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) have been active in Gadchiroli since 1980 and later spread to Chandrapur, Gondia, Bhandara and some areas of Yavatmal district, bordering Andhra Pradesh. Gadchiroli district, particularly south Gadchiroli, bordering Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, is now the main centre for the Mao-

ists of Maharashtra because of its logistical importance. The district borders Chandrapur to the west, Gondia to the north, Bastar, in Chhattisgarh, to the east, and Adilabad district of Andhra Pradesh to the south and south-east. The forested tribal district is also among the most backward in Maharashtra.

The Maoists of the former Peoples' War Group (PWG) cleverly exploited the backwardness of the area to strengthen the organisation, using the low wages paid to tendu leaf collectors (Rs 4 for 100 bundles of the leaf used to roll beedis). Contractors were compelled to hike it to Rs 200-Rs 250 per 100 bundles.

The Maoists often organise so-called people's courts to hand out punishment to village money lenders, "corrupt" forest personnel, school teachers and employees of government-run hospitals on the complaints of locals, in the process, cultivating the image of go-gooders.

The CPI (Maoist) has divided Gadchiroli district into three operational divisions: North Gadchiroli-Gondia-Rajnandgaon division, North Gadchiroli, and South Gadchiroli. Of them, North Gadchiroli and South Gadchiroli come under the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee while North Gadchiroli-Gondia-Rajnandgaon falls under the Maharashtra unit.

Mamata Banerjee has turned into 'Surpanakha', Congress to Ravana: BJP MLA

Just days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice to party members to refrain from making controversial statements, Surendra Singh, a BJP MLA from Uttar Pradesh, targeted West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee calling her 'Surpanakha' while comparing opposition Congress to 'Ravana'.

Surpanakha is the sister of demon king Ravana in Hindu epic 'Ramayana'. The first-time MLA from Bairia, made the controversial remarks against Banerjee while raising questions over the law and order situation in West Bengal.

"All the terrorists belonging to BJP-ruled states have fled to West

Bengal and if such a situation continues to prevail, Bengal will also turn into a Jammu and Kashmir one day...Mamata Banerjee has turned into Surpanakha and the Congress (into) Ravana," the MLA said at a zila panchayat programme in Ballia on Tuesday.

He also made some comments about the safety of Hindus in the state and said terrorists from Bangladesh were infiltrating West Bengal.

"Mamata Banerjee is playing the role of Surpanakha. People are being killed and even though she is the chief minister, she is doing nothing," Surendra Singh said.



"Just as Hindus were thrown out of Jammu and Kashmir, they will be forced out of West Bengal...terrorists from Bangladesh have infil-

trated into West Bengal and are troubling Hindus, but it is our good fortune that we have a leader like Narendra Modi...we will be able to remove foreign powers from West Bengal," Singh claimed, adding that 'Surpanakha' will be defeated by Modi and Amit Shah.

The BJP MLA also attacked Congress president Rahul Gandhi, saying he will have to face Narendra Modi in the coming Lok Sabha polls.

In the past too, Surendra Singh had invited controversy by defying Unnao rape accused BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar and also when he claimed that India will become a Hindu Rashtra by 2022.

15 MPs, 43 MLAs have declared cases related to hate speech against themselves: ADR

A total of 58 current MPs and MLAs have declared cases related to hate speech, with BJP having the maximum number of such politicians, a report said on Wednesday.

"15 sitting Lok Sabha MPs have declared cases related to hate speech against themselves. None of the Rajya Sabha MPs have declared cases related to hate speech," a report by Delhi-based think-tank Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) said.

Ten sitting Lok Sabha MPs with such declared cases are from the BJP, and one each from AIUDF (All India United Democratic Front), TRS (Telangana Rashtra Samithi), PMK (Paattali Makkal Katchi), AIMIM and SHS (Shiv Sena), it said.

BJP has 27 MPs, MLAs with such cases, All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) has 6, TRS (6), TDP (3), SHS (3), AITC (2), INC (2), IND (2), JD(U) (2), AIUDF (1), BSP (1), DMK (1), PMK (1) and SP (1), the ADR report added.

"Political party leaders such as Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM) and Badruddin Ajmal (AIUDF) have declared cases related to hate speech against themselves," ADR said.

Also, Uma Bharti, Union Cabinet Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation has declared such cases as also eight state ministers, the report added.

There are 43 sitting MLAs who have declared hate speech cases.

Among party-wise distribution of MLAs, 17 sitting MLAs with such declared cases are from BJP, five each are from TRS and AIMIM, three from TDP, two each from INC, AITC, JD(U) and SHS, one each from DMK, BSP, SP and two Independent MLAs, the report added.

ADR and National Election Watch (NEW) have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all sitting MPs and MLAs. The analysis reveals that many of them have declared cases related to hate speech.

India and Mongolia to jointly combat terror, boost trade

External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on Wednesday discussed terrorism with her Mongolian counterpart Damdin Tsogetbaatar and the two agreed to collaborate to confront those who design and support terror outfits.

Sushma Swaraj, who arrived in the Mongolian capital here on Tuesday after wrapping up her China visit, also called upon the country's

business community to seize economic opportunities from India's growth.

She is here to co-chair the sixth round of the India-Mongolia Joint Consultative Committee (IMJCC), focusing on a range of issues including economic, energy, political, strategic, educational and cultural ties.

She is the first Indian foreign minister to visit Mongo-

lia in 42 years.

In 2015, Narendra Modi was the first Indian Prime Minister to visit this landlocked Asian country. It had ruffled China's feathers.

Addressing a press conference here after holding talks with Tsogetbaatar, Sushma Swaraj said: "We discussed global challenges affecting humanity, particularly terrorism, and agreed to col-

laborate bilaterally in the international arena to root out this evil. She said India sees Mongolia as a factor of stability in East Asia, adding that the country's social and economic development is the key to peace and prosperity in the region.

India is currently helping Mongolia build its first oil refinery with a \$1 billion line of credit, to reduce its depen-

dence of neighbouring nations.

Sushma Swaraj said that she had reviewed the oil refinery project and other ongoing projects.

"India has emerged as the fastest growing economy in the world. With its rich natural resources and strong aspiration for development, Mongolia can be an important partner in India's growth story," she said.

She said both the nations have identified new areas of cooperation that include IT, infrastructure, energy and services. Both the countries agreed to remove institutional and logistical obstructions to boost trade and tourism. She also announced new scholarships for Mongolian students visiting India and enrolling in fields like Buddhist studies.

Do you suffer from Urinary Tract Infection Beware, it may affect your fertility

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) is a common issue among women which is caused due to the unwanted growth of bacteria (generally E. Coli) in the urine. When the bacteria move up to the urinary tract, it may result in serious infection which is characterised by symptoms such as fever, nausea, chills, discomfort and burning sensation while passing urine. Earlier research also indicated certain habits that make you prone to UTIs.

In case, you are experiencing symptoms of UTI, consult your doctor immediately and take antibiotics to control the infection. Do not ignore the signs as ignorance can lead to health complications. Quite often, other infections such as Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) may be the actual cause of con-

ception issues which may get confused with UTIs as their symptoms are similar.

The issue of urinary tract infections affects both men and women, but women are more vulnerable to UTIs as the female urinary tract is smaller as compared to men. Therefore, women have to take extra care to prevent UTIs. Urinary tract infection affects organs such as the kidney, liver, uterus and fallopian tubes, it might affect your ability to conceive.

This condition is also called as pelvic inflammatory disease which can damage the fallopian



tubes severely. Chronic kidney disease can affect other parts of the body and may affect your health and ovulation process

which may affect chances of conception.

UTI in males can also lead to infertility. Infections of genito-

urinary tract may account for male infertility. The bacteria spreads across the prostate gland and other reproductive structures

which may result in decreased sperm count and motility.

The infection can affect sites such as the testis, epididymis and male sex glands. Sometimes, other health conditions such as diabetes may result in UTIs and may lead to infertility. However, this issue can be treated with medication. Dr Priti Gupta, consultant fertility and IVF, First Step IVF Clinic, New Delhi, suggests simple precautions that can help you prevent UTI:

Fluids are your best friend: Drink lots of water and take fluids that flush out toxins. Water dilutes the urine and makes it less acidic and lighter in colour. This way, the person will not experience abdominal pain or irritation while urinating.

Maintain hygiene: Avoid using public washrooms as the

infection spreads frequently in common utilities. You should wipe from front to back to prevent bacteria around the anus from entering the vagina or urethra.

Frequent urination: Do not hold urine. Use washrooms whenever you feel the urge to go. This will not only release toxins but also eliminate heaviness of the bladder and give you relief from abdominal pain.

Comfortable underwear: Do not wear tight underwear as the bacteria dwells in moist and warm environment. Change your undergarments regularly and maintain personal hygiene.

Avoid using strong soaps, antiseptic creams, feminine hygiene sprays and powders.

Increase the intake of Vitamin C and zinc to reduce bacterial growth in urine.

New way to tackle stress is here



If you are under stress and want to get rid of it, try the new blue light therapy.

Blue lighting accelerates the relaxation process after acute psychosocial stress in comparison with the conventional white lighting, new research says.

Psychosocial stress or the 'said stress' is a kind of short-term stress (acute stress) that

occurs during social or interpersonal relationships, for example while arguing with a friend or when someone pressures you to finish a certain task as soon as possible.

Psychosocial stress produces physiological responses or the physical response to a stimulus that can be measured by means of bio-signals, mentioned in the research led by Francisco Pelayo, professor at the University of Granada, Spain.

The researchers asked the volunteers to be under high stress for the study and then evaluated them over a relaxation session within a multisensory stimulation room. The participants were divided into two groups, the first group lied down under blue light and the second group lied down under white light. Diverse bio-signals, such as heart rate and brain activity, were measured throughout the whole session by means of an electrocardiogram and an electroencephalogram respectively. The research, published in the journal Plos One, stated that any form of stress was very common and negatively affected people's health and quality of life. The results found that participants who lied down under blue light relaxed more quickly than those who were under white light.

Treatment to cut brain injury in newborns identified

A team of researchers has identified a treatment to reduce brain injury in newborns who have suffered hypoxia-ischemia, a serious complication in which restricted blood flow deprives the brain of oxygen. Consequences of brain injury resulting from oxygen deprivation affect the entire lifespan and range from mild (learning disabilities) to severe (inability to breathe, walk, talk or see).

This complication can occur during or before birth due to maternal/placental problems, such as placental abruption or cord prolapse, or due to fetal/newborn issues, such as asphyxia due to labor difficulties, infection, fetal-maternal bleeding or twin-to-twin transfusion. The study by research clinicians at Children's National Health System evaluated newborn experimental models exposed to hypoxia-ischemia. The experimental models were given standard cooling therapy (therapeutic hypothermia) alone and in combination with a selective Src kinase inhibitor, PP2, that blocks a regulatory enzyme of apoptosis (cell death), which intensifies as a result of hypoxia-ischemia.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved a Src kinase inhibitor as an oncology treatment. This study is the first to test the benefits of blocking this enzyme in reducing the neurological



damage caused by brain hypoxia-ischemia.

"In hypoxia-ischemia, CaM kinase is over-activated, but hypothermia has been shown to decrease this enzyme's activation. We theorized that a Src kinase inhibitor, in addition to hypothermia, would further attenuate the activation of CaM kinase IV and that the result might be less brain damage," explained lead author Panagiotis Kratimenos.

"From this study, we were pleased that this seems to be the case." The authors concluded that hypothermia alone attenuated the over-activation of CaM kinase IV and improved neuropathology after hypoxia.

However, the combination of hypothermia with Src kinase inhibition following hypoxia further attenuated the increased activation of CaM kinase IV, compared with hypothermia alone in the newborn experimental model brain.

Corneal donor tissue can be stored for 11 days, says study

Corneal donor tissue can be safely stored for 11 days without negatively impacting the success of a transplant, a clinical trial has shown.

Currently, donor corneas, the eye's clear outer covering are generally not used for surgery if they have been preserved for longer than seven days.

Expanding the window in which donor tissues can be considered suitable "by even just a few days" should help safeguard quality donor tissue and access to vision-saving transplan-

tation procedures, the researchers said. "The current practice of surgeons to use corneas preserved for no longer than seven days is not evidence-based.

"Rather that practice is based on opinion, which hopefully will change with this new evidence," said lead investigator Jonathan Lass, from the Case Western Reserve University.

For the study, appearing in the journal JAMA Ophthalmology, the team looked at three-year graft success rates among a total of 1,090 indi-

viduals (1,330 eyes) who underwent cornea transplant via Descemet's stripping automated endothelial keratoplasty by 70 surgeons at 40 surgical sites. Overall, the three-year success rates were the same for corneas preserved for eight-to-14 days compared with up to seven days (92.1 per cent versus 95.3 per cent).

In a separate analysis, the team analysed the extent of endothelial cell loss (ECL) - the loss of cells in the corneal endothelium that continued

to occur as a normal part of ageing in the grafted donor cornea three years after it had been transplanted.

They non-invasively measured ECL in the 945 eyes with successful grafts and found that corneas preserved up to seven days had a 37 per cent loss of cells versus a 40 per cent loss in corneas preserved for eight-to-14 days.

Taken together, the separate analyses looked at graft success rates and ECL support that used corneas stored up to 11 days, the researchers said.

Excess alcohol intake may lead to insomnia in adolescents

As per a new study, excess alcohol use among early adolescents may lead to insomnia.

"These findings indicate that insomnia may be a unique risk marker for alcohol use among young adolescents," said Naomi Marmorstein, professor at Rutgers University-Camden in the US.

The researcher examined the associations between alcohol use and sleep-related issues on seventh and eighth-grade students.

When sleep problems were found to be associated with frequency of alcohol use, the researcher examined whether symptoms of mental health problems or levels of parental monitoring accounted for these associations.

The study, published in the Journal Addictive Behaviours, examined the development of mental health problems and resilience among at-risk youth.

The participants of the study completed questionnaires that asked how long it took for them to fall asleep, what times they usually went to bed on a weekday and on the weekend or vacation night, how often they experienced sleep disturbances and whether they ever fell asleep in class or had trouble staying awake after school.

They were also asked the frequency of any alcohol use in the previous four months.

The researcher determined that symptoms of mental health problems and parental monitoring did not account for the link between insomnia and alcohol use.

Overall, there were associations between alcohol and both insomnia and daytime sleepiness.

"Parents, educators and therapists should consider insomnia to be a risk marker for alcohol use and alcohol use a risk marker for insomnia, among early adolescents," said Marmorstein.

Suffering from depression? Regular exercise may help you cope: Study

Previously conducted numerous studies have shown solid evidence of how regular exercise in any form can contribute towards treating a plethora of health issues.

Adding to the list, a new study has suggested that more physical activities and workouts may help to uplift the mood and improve your mental health problems.

The study by Michigan State University found that exercises can quickly elevate a depressed mood, and the patients should create a comprehensive exercise plan and work regularly to achieve the specific goal.

"Physical activity has been shown to be effective in alleviating mild to moderate depression and anxiety," Carol Janney, Assistant Professor at Michigan State University in the US, said. "Current physical activity guidelines advise at least 30 minutes of exercise in five days a week to promote mental and physical health," Janney added.

The researchers studied over 295 mental health

patients and asked if the patients wanted their therapists to help them become more physically active.

The results showed over 80 percent of the patients believed that the exercises recommended by the researchers helped them in improving their moods and anxiety in less time. The study, published in the journal General Hospital Psychiatry, noted the statements of more than half of the participants who claimed that their depressed mood limited their ability to exercise. "Offering physical activity programs inside the mental health clinics may be one of many patient-centered approaches that can improve the mental and physical health of patients," Janney said. Mental health experts such as psychiatrists and therapists may not have the necessary



training to prescribe physical activity as part of their mental health practice, but by teaming up with the certified personal trainers or other exercise programmes may help in prescribing more physical activity in the clinic setting, the researchers added.

ED set to confiscate Rs 15k cr assets including of Nirav, Mallya under new economic ordinance

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is set to "confiscate" assets worth over Rs 15,000 crore as part of its first action against absconders such as liquor baron Vijay Mallya and diamondaire Nirav Modi under the recently promulgated Fugitive Economic Offenders Ordinance.

Officials said the agency has begun the work to bring together the existing cases of high-value fugitives and bank loan defaulters and it will soon approach various special anti-money laundering courts in the country to get orders issued against them under the new ordinance.

They said the money laundering cases against Vijay Mallya, who is now based in London, Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi, Winsome Diamond company promoter Jatin Mehta and others are expected to be picked up first for action.

The ED is the empowered agency to enforce the new ordinance.

Under the new ordinance, the officials said, all the assets of such an absconder, both in India and abroad, which have or have not been attached by the Enforcement Directorate under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), will be confiscated immediately.

The case of Modi and Choksi will be processed under the new ordinance, once the CBI and the ED file their respective charge sheets against them, they said.

While Rs 9,890 crore worth of assets have been attached by the ED



in the Mallya case, properties worth Rs 7,664 have been attached in the Nirav Modi-Mehul Choksi case.

In the first go, they said, it is estimated that over Rs 15,000 crore worth of assets could be confiscated by the ED under the provisions of the ordinance, aimed at those who flee the country after defaulting on multi-crore bank loans and similar instances of fraud.

The other such cases will be taken up gradually, they added.

Under the PMLA, the ED could only confiscate the assets once the trial in a case finishes which usually takes a long time, they said.

President Ram Nath Kovind, last Sunday, had given assent to promulgation of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Ordinance, 2018, giving authorities powers to attach and confiscate the proceeds of crime and properties of economic offenders.

The ordinance is aimed at deterring economic offenders from evading the process of law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.

The government brought the ordinance as "there have been instances of economic offenders fleeing the jurisdiction of Indian courts, anticipating the commencement, or during the pendency, of criminal proceedings," the government said.

The rationale behind the law, the government said, was the absence of such offenders from Indian courts which hampers investigation and wastes court time and undermines the rule of law.

"The existing civil and criminal provisions in law are not entirely adequate to deal with the severity of the problem," it said.

The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 12 but couldn't be

taken up due to logjam in Parliament over different issues.

With Parliament being adjourned sine die, an ordinance was proposed.

The Union Cabinet on April 21 approved the ordinance and the President gave his assent to promulgation of the same day later.

The ordinance makes provisions for special courts under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 to declare a person as a fugitive economic offender.

"A Fugitive Economic Offender is a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued in respect of a scheduled offence and who has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution, or being abroad, refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution," the government statement said.

However, only cases of frauds, cheque dishonour or loan default of over Rs 200 crore would come under this ordinance.

The ordinance provides for all necessary constitutional safeguards in terms of providing hearing to the person through counsel, allowing him time to file a reply, serving notice of summons to him, whether in India or abroad and appeal before the High Court.

The government had said the new law would help banks and other financial institutions to achieve higher recovery from financial defaults committed by fugitive economic offenders, improving the financial health of such institutions.

Bharti Airtel Q4 profit slumps 78% at Rs 82.9 crore, lowest in 15 years



Bharti Airtel Ltd posted its lowest quarterly profit in nearly 15 years on Tuesday, as a price war in the telecoms sector continued to hurt, while revenue was hit by a regulatory cut in international termination charges.

The entry of Reliance Jio, the telecoms arm of Reliance Industries Ltd, into India's telecoms sector has set off a brutal price war among operators as they drastically cut prices to compete with Jio's bottomed out plans.

Compounding to the industry's woes, India's telecoms regulator had also cut international termination charges (ITC) - paid by global long-distance operators to local carriers - to 30 paise from 53 paise, effective from February.

The company posted a 78% drop in its consolidated net profit at Rs 83 crore for the quarter ending March 2018, hurt by fierce tariff war and cut in international termination charges.

The Sunil Bharti Mittal-led telecom firm had registered a net profit of Rs 373 crore in

the same period a year ago.

Total revenue dropped by 10.5% to Rs 19,634 crore in the fourth quarter of 2017-18 compared to Rs 21,935 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, according to a company statement.

"The telecom industry continues to witness below cost, artificially suppressed pricing. Industry revenues were further adversely impacted this quarter due to the reduction in international termination rates," Gopal Vittal, MD and CEO - India & South Asia, Bharti Airtel said in a statement.

For the full financial year that ended in March 2018, Airtel's net profit came in at Rs 1,099 crore, over 71% lower than Rs 3,800 crore logged in FY2016-17.

Total revenue for FY2017-18 stood at Rs 83,688 crore, down by 12.3% than the previous financial year, said the company which competes with operators like Vodafone, Idea Cellular and newcomer Reliance Jio in the highly-competitive telecom market in India.

Bankruptcy cases boom in India, but just 26 judges to hear them

India's revamped bankruptcy process is in full swing and investors from Blackstone Group LP to Oaktree Capital Group LLC are salivating over an estimated \$210 billion of stressed assets that are up for grabs. But the courtrooms handling the thousands of bankruptcies are lacking a key component: Judges.

Ten benches with a combined 26 judges and technical staff are hearing more than 2,500 insolvency cases, the latest official data show. Based on the workload a year ago, researchers estimated India needs about 80 benches over five years. That estimate is starting to look conservative, as tighter rules introduced by the banking regulator in February are poised to tip borders of additional deadbeat borrowers into bankruptcy.

A streamlined bankruptcy process is crucial for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attempts to come to grips with a simmering banking crisis that's sucking energy out of India's economy. Any failure to resolve the shortage of judges also has implications for large global investors who are lining up to chase bargains



across industries ranging from steel to cement.

"The National Company Law Tribunal appears to be understaffed and ill-equipped to deal with the increasing volume," said Punit Dutt Tyagi, Delhi-based executive partner at Lakshmi Kumar & Sridharan Attorneys, referring to the court system set up to handle bankruptcies. "This situation is unlikely to get better with time."

Oaktree is following India's insolvency process and says may open a local office "under the right circumstances"

The NCLT was set up in June 2016 and gained full powers in January 2017, when India's new bankruptcy laws took effect. Electrosteel Steels Ltd. last week became the first large defaulter to complete

the revamped bankruptcy process, missing the initial 180-day deadline for resolution but just about meeting the 270-day outer limit.

On February 12, the banking regulator ordered banks to take defaulters straight to the NCLT if they can't come up with a repayment plan within six months. That will likely accelerate the buildup of cases in court, which stood at 9,073 on January 31, including 2,511 instances of insolvency, 1,630 cases of merger and amalgamation, and 4,932 cases under other sections of the Companies Act, lawmakers were told last month.

Moreover, the bankruptcy process risks getting complicated by challenges to the court's orders. Renaissance Steel, one of the companies

that bid to buy Electrosteel under the bankruptcy process, plans to appeal the decision to award Electrosteel to Vedanta Ltd., the Economic Times reported this week, citing an official it didn't identify.

The government is aware of the shortage of judges and is in the process of appointing more though numbers can't be confirmed immediately, said a person with knowledge of the matter, asking not to be identified as the information isn't public. Three new benches of the NCLT will also be set up, the person said.

The accumulation of bankruptcy cases means that it sometimes takes about six months just to get a new insolvency case admitted to court, said Shardul S Shroff, executive chairman of Delhi-based law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co.

"These courts don't have time to hear company law related matters as they say the insolvency cases are taking up all their time," Shroff added. "In the absence of more judges it will be difficult for them to deal with the workload."

Google overhauls Gmail to lure businesses away from Microsoft

Alphabet Inc's Google unveiled on Wednesday its first Gmail redesign since 2013, capping what the company says was an expensive overhaul two years in the making to adopt security and offline functionality and better resemble Microsoft Outlook.

It is Google's most extensive update to software in its G Suite workplace bundle since accelerating efforts to steal business from Microsoft Corp's dominant Office workplace software suite. Previously, G Suite added instant-messaging and spreadsheet features.

With Gmail, Google said it restructured email storage databases, unified three dueling systems for syncing messages across devices and upgraded computers underpinning the service. That shift to Google's self-developed Tensor processing chips enables smart-assistant features such as "suggested replies" to messages and "nudges" to respond to forgotten emails.

"This is an entire re-write of our flagship, most-used product," said Jacob Bank, product manager lead for Gmail, which 1.4 billion people use each month.



Unreliable offline access to email has long discouraged would-be customers, while recent high-profile corporate data breaches have increased their desire to lock down email. Analysts estimate G Suite generated about \$2 billion in revenue last year, 10 times behind Office.

Google declined to specify costs associated with the redesign. But parent Alphabet reported Monday that first-quarter capital expenditures nearly tripled year-over-year to \$7.3 billion.

Chief Financial Officer Ruth Porat told analysts that half of the spending resulted from hardware purchases to support expanding use of

machine learning, which describes automated programs that can, among other things, identify spam and predict which emails users would find most important.

Google's Bank said the overhaul was required primarily to provide offline access to up to 90 days of emails for users who turn on the feature. The changes also fulfill another top demand of business executives - message expiration.

Users who enable a "confidential" option when sending an email can time-limit its access to recipients and also require they enter a one-time passcode sent to their phones to read it.

The new setting does not override corporate email retention policies or present new obstacles to law enforcement.

"Nudges" and a higher bar for new-mail notifications round out Google's revised sales pitch. The company estimated that nudges will lead 8 percent of business users each week to remember to follow-up on something important. Cosmetic changes bring Gmail's website in line with Office by placing Google's calendar, tasks and note-taking services within the same page as emails.

Bank said testers have advanced from "neutral to positive to very positive" on the new look.

Indus Towers, Bharti Infratel merging to become largest tower company outside China

Indus Towers and Bharti Infratel Ltd agreed to combine operations in a deal that will create the world's second-largest mobile masts company measured by numbers of towers.

The combined company, which will lag only China Tower, will remain listed on Indian bourses. It will have a nationwide presence with more than 163,000 towers, the owners of both companies said in a joint statement on Wednesday.

Top Indian telecoms carrier Bharti Airtel, the majority owner of Bharti Infratel, will end up with a stake of 33.8 percent to 37.2 percent in the combined entity, which will be called Indus Towers.

Bharti Airtel separately said it plans to engage with potential investors to evaluate a stake sale in the combined mobile masts entity, which will have an equity value of Rs 965 billion (\$14.5 billion), sending the carrier's stock up as much as 5.2 percent.

The tower deal comes ahead of an announced merger of Vodafone Group



Plc's Indian unit and Idea Cellular which could potentially overtake Bharti Airtel as India's biggest phone carrier. That deal is set to close in the first half of this year.

Vodafone and Idea, which both own stakes in Indus Towers, had said they would look at selling their stakes in Indus, and also dispose of other tower assets they separately own to help cut debt in the merged telecoms carrier.

While mobile masts operators in India have benefited from growing demand from carriers that have rolled out high-speed 4G services, they have also lost tenants in some areas as several money-losing carriers shut down operations.

According to terms of the deal, shareholders of Indus - Bharti Infratel, Vodafone, Idea and private equity firm Providence - will receive 1,565 shares of Bharti Infratel

every share held.

In return for its 42 percent stake in Indus Towers, Vodafone will get between 26.7 percent and 29.4 percent of the Indus-Bharti Infratel combine depending on the options two other shareholders in Indus - Idea and private equity Providence - exercise.

Idea has an option to sell its 11.2 percent stake in Indus for about \$1 billion or receive new shares in the combined masts company. Providence has the option to receive cash or shares for 3.35 percent of its 4.85 percent holding in Indus, with the remainder exchanged for shares in the combined tower firm.

The deal is expected to close before end-March next year.

The new Indus Towers board will have 11 members - three each from Bharti Airtel and Vodafone, one from KKR or Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and four independent members, the companies said.

KKR and CPPIB last year bought more than 10 percent of Bharti Infratel.

India's rupee woe continues, analysts rush to cut forecasts

India's widening current-account deficit is coming back to haunt the rupee, with analysts clamouring to lower forecasts on Asia's second-worst performing currency.

Standard Chartered Plc, Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Ltd., TD Securities and Malayan Bank have pared their targets for the currency. Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. has gone so far as to say that the rupee could fall past its 2016 record low of 68.89 per dollar if global and local risks play out.

"Hit by a combination of higher oil prices, rising external vulnerabilities and a sharp slowdown in portfolio flows, the rupee is likely to remain prone to further depreciation pressures," Mitul Kotecha, senior emerging markets strategist at TD Securities wrote in a note Wednesday. India imports two-thirds of its crude requirements and the spurt in oil prices has coincided with the slowdown in capital inflows. Foreigners have turned net sellers of Indian equities in April and have pulled \$1.1 billion from its bonds this year amid hardening global yields - and more recently after the Reserve Bank of India surprised the market with hawkish minutes.

"While the sharp sell-off in equity markets

globally prompted funds to pull away from the region, domestic factors like fiscal slippage, bank scandals and a more hawkish RBI have affected flows to India," Khoon Goh and Rini Sen, strategists at ANZ wrote in a note Tuesday. The bank cut its end-2018 rupee forecast to 67 to a dollar from 66 previously.

Indian rupee is no longer in the sweet spot it was in last year as the surge in oil prices is a game changer, Malayan Bank analysts led by Saktiandi Supaat in Singapore wrote in note. It sees the rupee at 66 per dollar by end-2018 from its previous forecast of 63.5.

One of the sharpest revisions has come from Standard Chartered Bank. The lender reduced its second-quarter forecast to 66 per dollar from 62, and expects the rupee to end the year at 65.50 versus 61.50 previously. The currency traded down 0.3 percent to 66.61 at 9:37 a.m. in Mumbai.

India's current-account deficit widened to \$13.5 billion in the three months ended December from \$7.21 billion in the previous quarter, as the trade gap widened. The rupee is expected to trade at 64.88 by the end of this year, according to the median forecast of analysts surveyed by Bloomberg.

Gautam Gambhir steps down as Delhi Daredevils IPL 2018 captain, Shreyas Iyer new boss

Following a poor start to this season's Indian Premier League, Gautam Gambhir stepped down from Delhi Daredevils (DD) captaincy. Shreyas Iyer will lead the side for the rest of the 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL 2018) season.

"It was absolutely my decision," said Gambhir at a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday.

"I haven't contributed enough. So I owe that responsibility considering where we are in the points table."

Ricky Ponting, coach of Daredevils, praised Gambhir for taking such a decision keeping the best interest of the team in mind.

"Gautam deserves a lot of credit for taking the decision," said Ponting when asked whether he was surprised an Indian captain has taken a an



Aussie-like decision. "Something that may have been unheard of in Indian cricket. Really, the media should give him some credit for his decision. It

shows great character as a leader to stand up and say that."

The Daredevils are languishing at the eighth spot in points table with

just one win in six matches. They are lying just below the Mumbai Indians.

The two-time IPL champion captain had shifted to the Delhi franchise this season after seven years of successful run with the Kolkata Knight Riders.

He has however, failed to produce the results and has also failed with the bat putting a question mark on his place in the eleven. Gambhir has aggregated just 85 in six matches, averaging just 17.

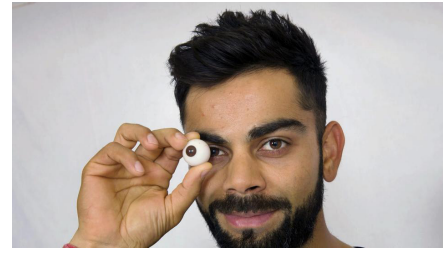
Meanwhile, new skipper Shreyas Iyer said he was confident the team would bounce back with eight games in hand. "I thank the management, coach and gauti bhai (Gambhir), we have the potential to bounce back with eight games in hand. I really love the responsibility," said Iyer.

Virat Kohli's new love: India captain adds dream supercar to his collection

It is a well-known fact among Virat Kohli fans that the India cricket team captain is a huge admirer of German car manufacturer Audi. Kohli is currently the owner of an Audi R8 LMX Limited Edition, Audi R8 V10, Audi A8L W12 Quattro, Audi S6, Audi Q7 4.2 TDI, Toyota Fortuner and a Renault Duster, and he has added a Bentley Continental GT to his collection.

According to a Cartoq report, Virat Kohli's new Bentley Continental GT is apparently registered in his brother's name, Vikas Kohli, and Virat - who happens to be a brand ambassador for Audi -- is the second owner. Other Bentley owners in the Indian team include Virender Sehwag and Yuvraj Singh.

Kohli, who tied the knot with Bollywood actor Anushka Sharma last December, recently cancelled a Rs 34 crore luxury apartment he booked in the Omkar 1973 tower located in the tony Worli area of the megapoli-



lis. In June 2016, the cricketer had bought the 7,171-sqft sea-view apartment on the 35th floor of the under construction tower C of this super-luxury project for Rs 34 crore. The project is being developed by Omkar Realtors & Developers.

A source close to the development confirmed the cancellation of the transaction saying Kohli recently leased out a sea-view apartment in the skyscraper by the Raheja group in the nearby Dr Annie Besant Road for a monthly rental of Rs 15 lakh.

Saina Nehwal, Kidambi Srikanth reach Asia Badminton Championship second round



After stupendous success at the recently-concluded Commonwealth Games, top Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal, P V Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth made positive starts to their campaign at the Asia Badminton Championship in Wuhan on Wednesday.

While Saina and Sindhu registered straight game victories over their respective rivals to enter the second round, Srikanth had to fight it out in his men's singles opener.

Saina, who had clinched a gold medal at Gold Coast, continued her good run as she brushed aside Singapore's Ye Jia Min 21-12 21-9 while Sindhu, who had lost to Saina in the CWG final to settle for the silver, defeated Chinese Taipei's Pai Yu Po 21-14 21-19 in women's singles competition.

Former world no 1 Saina will meet China's Gao Fangjie, while Olympic and world championship silver medallist Sindhu, seeded third, faces another Chinese Chen Xiaoxin next.

Top seed and CWG silver medallist Srikanth eked out a come-from-behind 13-21 21-16 21-16 win over Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in men's singles to set up a clash with Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki Vincent.

However, Sameer Verma's fight against seventh seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei ended with a 21-23 17-21 loss.

The men's doubles pair of Arjun MR and Ramchandran Shlok and women's combo of Meghana Jakkampudi and Poorvisha S Ram too joined the singles stars in the second round after pulling off thrilling wins in the opening round.

Arjun and Ramchandran had to dig deep into their reservoir before seeing off World championship quarter-finalists Chung Eui Seok and Kim Dukyoung of Korea 25-23 23-21, while Meghana and Poorvisha held their nerves in pressure situations to beat Singapore's Ong Ren-Ne and Wong Jia Ying Crystal 14-21 22-20 21-17 in a women's doubles encounter.

However, mixed doubles pair of Saurabh Sharma and Anoushka Parikh lost 17-21 14-21 to Korean combo of Kim Won Ho and Shin Seung Chan.

Another Indian pair of Venkat Gaurav Prasad and Juhi Dewangan also crashed out after losing 11-21 13-21 to Hong Kong's Lee Chun Hei Reginald and Chau Hoi Wah.

Hardik Pandya needs to work hard, talent not enough: Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene

The 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL 2018) is turning out to be a nightmare for Mumbai Indians (MI). Out of their first five games, they have suffered four last-over defeats. But, on Tuesday night at the Wankhede Stadium, things just got more difficult. Their 31-run loss against Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) while chasing 118 runs is the kind of performance which breaks any team's resolve.

Their coach Mahela Jayawardene did admit their abject surrender is difficult to digest. Mumbai Indians were bowled out for 87 and Jayawardene didn't mince words describing the woeful show. "We have put ourselves in this situation, there is no one else to blame. Today I am disappointed, some of the matches we lost, I thought we played good cricket, they could have gone either way, it is T20 cricket," said Jayawardene.

"(But) today was very disappointing. We just probably played the wicket thinking there is going to be demons out there and nothing much and we have just have to knock it around, did not take any responsibility, so that part quite disappointing, the dew came in as we expected after 10 overs, so no one took responsibility that is quite sad," added Jayawardene.

It was not a typical Wankhede wicket and batting was a struggle on the slow surface. But, the Mumbai coach said his batsmen were aware of the nature of the turf after bowling first and with some sensible play they should have been home.

"Against the off-spinner (Mohammad Nabi), we batted really well, tactically, but after that... what was needed was a bit more sensible batting, that which we did not get," said Jayawardene.



"Even at the last bit, we were looking at 6-7 runs an over, so taken it to last 4-5 overs with couple of recognised batsman, we should have got through, that we did not do. And the tactic was, (with) Rashid (Khan) that we need to make sure (we) knock it around, that we didn't have to take any risk against him,

knock it around, which he gave us couple of boundaries to us as well. We didn't play with our heads today."

Underperforming players Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya have come under fire after another listless showing. Pollard has been a shadow of himself and failed to touch double digits on Tuesday.

"With your question with Kieron, he is struggling a little bit, but we trusted with the system, you need to trust your players, you can't chop and change, just because you don't fire, you have to go with that structure and yes eventually like a coach I will have to make some calls which I have to think about it is too early

for me, I need 24 hours to think about what happened today and not be emotional about it," Jayawardene said analysing Pollard.

In the case of Hardik Pandya, who scrapped for three runs off 19 balls, it seems the opposition bowlers have found better bowling plans against Pandya. Jayawardene advised the all-rounder to work harder and keep evolving to be successful.

"Every year you can't bat the same way, (if) people don't evolve and improve, there is no progress. Young guys like Hardik will learn that and need to work harder. The talent alone will not get you (success). That's the part they need to keep learning and specially with international good bowlers coming and doing various things you have to evolve otherwise you won't be able to be consistent," added the coach.

Afghanistan not to play Tests against India in proposed Future Tours Programme

Afghanistan are set to make their Test debut against India in June this year, but after the historic one-off match the two teams will not face each other in the longer format as per the new proposed Future Tours Programme (FTP) set for 2019-2022.

Having earned its Test status alongside Ireland in June last year, Afghanistan is set to take on India in its historic debut in Bengaluru from June 14.

Even though Afghanistan will play all top nations, including Australia and England in the new FTP, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) has failed to secure any other series against India.

"India are a tough team to get hold of because they are very busy. Since we are not in Test Championship, the inaugural Test match is good enough for us. We are playing 14-18 Tests in new FTP cycle," ACB CEO Shafiq Stanikzai said



here today on the penultimate day of the five-day ICC quarterly meeting.

"Against India we will be playing only one Test in Bengaluru as per earlier FTP. The new FTP is from 2019 to March 2022," he added.

He further said Afghanistan will play bilateral home and away series against England, Australia, West Indies, Zim-

badwe, Ireland and Bangladesh in the next FTP.

"These series does not come under the Test Championship, these will be all bilateral series -- home and away."

Stanikzai said Afghanistan is also considering day-night matches.

"As of now it's not yet decided. But there will be, we are deliberating."

The ICC Chief Executives' committee has already drawn up the fixtures, but it will have to be passed by the ICC Board before it is made public.

Afghanistan and Ireland were made full members of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in June this year, becoming the sport's 11th and 12th Test-playing nations.

England were 'curious' about potential Australia ball-tampering: Alastair Cook

Alastair Cook has revealed England's players were "curious" about Australia potentially engaging in ball-tampering during the recent Ashes series.

Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft were hit with long suspensions by Cricket Australia after they plotted to use sandpaper on the ball in their third Test with South Africa last month.

The shamed trio claimed that was their first instance of ball-tampering.

But the spotlight has now been put on the Ashes, with television footage since emerging of Bancroft putting sugar in his pocket.

Australia's consistent ability to get reverse swing had England's bowlers scratching their heads during their 4-0 series defeat.

Cook was part of the England side and he admitted on Tuesday that there were questions among his squad about the third Test in Perth.

Asked at a Chance to Shine event in Tunbridge Wells whether England suspected Australia of ball-tampering during the Ashes, he said: "Yes a little bit, certainly in Perth when the outfield was wet with rain they got the ball reversing.

"I didn't see anything. We have been pretty good at managing the ball to see if we can get it to reverse swing but then there's the thing with the quicker you bowl the ball it reverse swings more.

"That was the thing in 2005, we had Simon Jones and Freddie (Andrew Flintoff) who were quicker than the Australian bowlers.

"We have to be very careful, we were curious at certain moments but then we couldn't get the ball up to 90mph where they consistently could."

Australia's actions in Cape Town were widely criticised, with Smith and Warner both receiving year-long suspensions. Cook insisted that should be a timely reminder for the game to be played in the right way.

"It's not for me to comment on punishment, but the whole thing is a reminder that people want to see," he said.

"It's the same with cycling, that whoever is playing that people play in a fair way. If you try your hardest and there's no external things that you win or lose that way.

"It's amazing the public outcry for that. Sometimes with the pressure of playing, and it is so important to you and it's your livelihood, sometimes winning or losing can overtake things.

"It's wrong for everyone to sit in the cold light of day and criticise because people do make mistakes."

Mohamed Salah threatens Cristiano Ronaldo-Lionel Messi grip on Ballon d'Or

Liverpool FC forward Mohamed Salah's virtuoso display in the 5-2 win over AS Roma on Tuesday brought his side to the brink of the Champions League final and posed a serious threat to Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo's grip on the Ballon d'Or award.

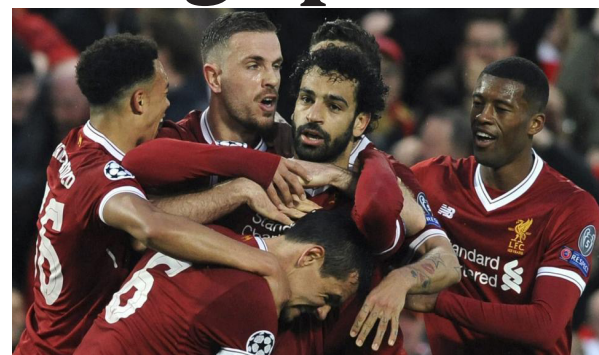
The Egyptian scored two brilliant goals in the first half against his former club to set Jurgen Klopp's side on their way to victory in the semi-final first leg at Anfield. He set up two more in the second half to cap a thrilling evening.

Salah's importance was further demonstrated by the fact Roma scored the two goals

that give them a slither of hope of turning the tie around after he had been substituted.

The Egyptian's strikes brought him to a remarkable 43 goals in all competitions this season, keeping him at the front of the list of top scorers in Europe, one ahead of Real Madrid's talisman Ronaldo and two ahead of Barcelona's Messi.

The Spain-based duo have had a stranglehold on the prestigious Ballon d'Or award since 2008, each winning the trophy for the world's best player five times. But Salah's decisive performances are threatening to break that he-



gemony.

Since signing from Roma last season, the 25-year-old has already equalled the Premier League record for goals in a 38-game season with 31. He also recently pipped Kev-

in de Bruyne, Leroy Sane and David Silva of runaway champions Manchester City to the PFA Player of the Year award.

WORLD CLASS His manager Klopp encouraged reporters to stake

Salah's claim as the best in the world while admitting he faces serious competition.

"If you think he's the best in the world, write it or say it," said Klopp.

"He is in outstandingly good shape, in world-class shape, 100 percent. To be the best in the world you need to do that over a longer period, I think. There are a few others who are not too bad."

The Ballon d'Or has gone to a winner of the Champions League for the last four years and Liverpool may have to lift a sixth European Cup in Kiev if Salah is to usurp double holder Ronaldo, whose

Real side face Bayern Munich in the other semi-final.

Messi could also stake his claim to win the award for a sixth time with an influential performance for Argentina at the World Cup.

But Salah will also be in Russia, the leading light of an Egypt team making their first appearance in the tournament for 28 years.

If Salah leads Egypt out of Group A and steers them towards the quarter-finals, he will be able to make an even stronger case to prise the highly coveted individual award from the two greats of the game.