

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

FRIDAY

● APRIL, 27, 2018
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	25.7	8.7
JAMMU	39.1	23.1
LEH	21.5	5.2
KARGIL	21.0	2.2

SUNSET FRIDAY: 07:12 PM
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 05:46 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Partly cloudy Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 25°C & 09°C respectively.

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

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LT GEN BIPIN PURI TAKES OVER AS SENIOR COLONEL COMMANDANT OF AMC

13 CHILDREN KILLED AFTER SCHOOL VAN COLLIDES WITH TRAIN AT RAILWAY

FACEBOOK SHARES SURGE AFTER SENDING UPBEAT MESSAGE TO WALL STREET

'IPL CONTINUES TO REMAIN OUT OF BOUNDS FOR NATIONAL SELECTORS'

Our "real concern" is fair trial is conducted in Kathua case: SC

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court today said its "real concern" was to see that a fair trial was conducted in the Kathua case after the Bar Council of India said the lawyers' body in the district had neither obstructed the Crime Branch from filing the charge sheet nor the advocate representing the victim's family.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said that if it finds the slightest possibility of lack of fair trial, it will transfer the case out of Kathua.

The bench, also comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and DY Chandrachud, said the trial should be fair not only for the accused but also for the victim's family and the protection to them and their lawyers should be ensured.

The bench also considered the issue of alleged obstruction by lawyers in administration of justice in the case and said, "if the lawyers are at



fault, they would be dealt in accordance with law".

During the hearing, the apex court said the real issue in the matter was to have a fair trial in the case.

The matter will be next heard on July 30.

At the outset, the Bar Council of

India (BCI), filed in a sealed cover, its enquiry report related to the alleged obstruction by lawyers in the case at Kathua.

The BCI report has said that lawyers' body had neither obstructed the Crime Branch of Jammu and Kashmir

See SC...Pg 02

BCI rejects allegations against lawyers

New Delhi: The inquiry panel of the Bar Council of India (BCI) that is investigating the alleged rape and murder case in Kathua, on Thursday rejected claims that lawyers of the Jammu Bar had threatened the raped victim's lawyer Deepika Singh Rajawat.

The inquiry panel also rejected allegations that the police had been stopped from filing a charge-sheet in court.

Senior Supreme Court lawyer Vikas Singh, appearing on behalf of the Jammu and Kashmir Bar Association, told a three-judge Supreme

See BCI...Pg 02

Darbar Move: Sgr gets facelift as offices to reopen on May 7

All necessary arrangements to be put in place: Div Administration



Srinagar, Apr 26: A major face lift exercise has been launched by the Estates Department and the R&B authorities besides other agencies including Srinagar Municipal Corporation and SDA, ahead of Darbar move to the summer capital of the State.

The move offices to close in Jammu on April 27 and to reopen on May 7 here with traditional guard of honour by the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti.

Official sources told KNS that the Civil

Secretariat, the centre of power, besides other move offices, the roads of city and the residential colonies of the move employees besides the official bungalows of the VIPs have started getting white and colour wash and the much needed repair works.

"The roads around and leading to the civil secretariat are being renovated with labourers busy cleaning the pathways and painting the roadsides. We have started

See Darbar...Pg 02

INVESTIGATIONS OVER RIFLE SNATCHING, COP'S 'DESERTING' GOING ON IN FULL SWING: IGP

Says those involved will face the law

Srinagar, Apr 26: A day after the rifle snatching incident took place in Srinagar outskirts and a cop 'deserted' the force along with his service rifle, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Range, Swayam Prakash Pani on Thursday said that the investigations over both the cases are going on in full swing.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the workshop here at Police Headquarters complex in Humhama Srinagar, the IGP according to the KNS correspondent said that the investigations over both the incidents have been started and those involved in it will face the law.

Asked about identity of the militant group who decamped

See IGP...Pg 02

PDP hails Govt. for taking over Srinagar's Abhinanda Home

'Such measure to provide a promising podium for special children to prosper in life'

Srinagar, Apr 26: Hailing the government for taking the reins of the Abhinanda Home in its hands, Peoples Democratic Party on Thursday said such a measure would go a long way in establishing the institute as a centre of excellence for the specially-abled children for the state.

In a statement issued to KNS, the PDP's Srinagar District President and Upper House Member of the state

legislature, Mohammad Khurshid Alam said that the previous regimes had left the only school for Summer Capital's specially-abled children in shambles with no attention paid to its dilapidated condition and flood-wrecked infrastructure.

He added that the successive regimes in the state had failed to pay any attention towards the institute which led to its downfall and that it



was ironic to find that when the floods marooned such an important institute, there was not even a single official from

the government who took measures for the mitigation of its losses.

Alam added that he was demanding from the very beginning that the government should take the administration and day to day affairs of the Abhinanda Home in its own hands so that the children who strive to get a respectable place in the society could be facilitated for the same. He added

See PDP...Pg 02

CIVILIAN KILLED IN MILITANT ATTACK IN SOUTH KASHMIR

Srinagar: A civilian was killed during an attack by militants on security forces in south Kashmir' Anantnag district on Thursday afternoon, officials said.

Shakeeb Shabir was hit when militants, travelling in a car, fired upon a road opening party comprising police and Central Reserve Police Force or CRPF personnel.

A police official at the police control room in Shopian confirmed that Shabir, aged around 25 years, succumbed to his bullet injuries.

"Terrorists traveling in a Santro car fired upon the ROP of Police and 116 Bn of CRPF at Lazibal Chowk, Anantnag in which a civilian identified as Shakeeb Shabir of

See Civilian...Pg 02

Cong spreading "lies", dividing society: Modi

BENGALURU: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today accused the Congress of spreading "lies and false" propaganda, and dividing society along caste lines, as he sounded the bugle for the bitterly contested Karnataka Assembly polls.

He also asserted the development of the state was his party's only agenda.

"BJP has a three-pronged agenda for Karnataka—development, fast paced development, all round development," he told party leaders, office bearers and elected representatives through his mobile app.

"Our agenda is vikas, vikas, vikas (development, development and development)," he said.



Claiming that electors have resolved to usher in a change of government in the Congress-ruled state, he said those who wished that party well had started a debate about a

See PDP...Pg 02

ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION OF HOTELS CONTINUE IN MEADOWS OF SONAMARG, AUTHORITIES UNMOVED

Wahid Bhat

SRINAGAR, APR 26: In a violation of the prescribed norms and regulations, the unabated construction continues Sonamarg under the nose of the authorities who are unmoved.

Sources said that after Pahalgam and other place of the valley, it is Sonamarg which is the victim of unplanned and illegal constructions amid tall claims of government to safeguard "golden meadow" of Valley.

Reliable Sources confirmed PTK a huge area in Sonamarg which was declared 'green' under the Sonamarg Master Plan have been brazenly defiled by the unholy triangle of politicians, bureaucrats and businesses.

See Illegal...Pg 02

Indo-US ties saw ups and downs but never lost trajectory: V K Singh

NEW DELHI: The Indo-US ties may have witnessed a few ups and downs but the two countries have maintained a "stable trajectory" in their relationship through the years, Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh said today.

Singh, while speaking at the Annual General Meeting of Amcham India (American Chamber Of Commerce In India), said the two countries had convergence of views on issues such as freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific and those related to the borders.

However, he said it was only in the recent years, that the two countries have started sharing those views with each other.

Singh's remarks come amid China's mus-



cle-flexing in the South China Sea.

"Despite what has been written a lot of times, relations between the US and India have followed a stable trajectory. There

See Singh...Pg 02

'Pakistan always stood like a rock guarding our cause': Geelani

Srinagar, Apr 26: Stressing that the peace, stability, and development of whole South Asia are connected to the resolution of the Kashmir issue, Syed Ali Geelani said that for the peace and development of the region, the 15 million people of the whole of Jammu and Kashmir have to decide their future political

See Geelani...Pg 02

Police organises workshop at PHQ complex Srinagar Justice A M Magrey, Justice M K Hanjura present insightful thoughts about Criminal appeal

Srinagar, Apr 26: The state police on Thursday organized a day-long workshop on "Importance of criminal appeal in Higher Courts and role of prosecutors and investigators" here at Police Auditorium in Police Headquarters Complex in Humhama Srinagar.

Chief Guest of the occasion was High Court Judge, Justice Ali Mohammed Magrey while as the guest of honour was High Court Judge, Justice M K Hanjura.



Both the Judges also addressed the gathering of officers present at the workshop.

Both the learned jurists presented their insightful

See Justice...Pg 02

AFSPA should go to remove atrocities on people: Hakeem Yaseen

SRINAGAR, APR 26: Peoples Democratic Front (PDF) chairman and MLA Khansahib, Hakeem Muhammad Yasin has flayed statement of the BJP General Secretary, Ashok Koul that AFSPA would not be revoked from the state. He has urged the need to revoke AFSPA from the state adding that this draconian law, which gives sweeping powers and immunity to the armed forces, is being misused by the black sheep.

In a statement issued to PTK, Hakeem Yaseen has said



that the government should revoke AFSPA so that the harassment and atrocities to the people of the state would end.

He said this step would help in improving the situation

in the troubled state especially in Kashmir valley where black sheep in armed forces misuse this law. He said the BJP statement that AFSPA would not be revoked from the state at this stage is another betrayal.

Termining the statement as very disgusting which has pained and anguished the people the state, he said the state govt. should take a cue from the decision of the center to withdraw AFSPA from Meghalaya and force the

See Yaseen...Pg 02

Crime Branch registers case in land fraud

JAMMU, APR 26: Crime Branch Kashmir has registered a case against Abdul Wahid Khan S/O Abdul Qayoom Khan R/O Bagahat Srinagar, Mohammad Yousuf Malik S/O late Mohammad Ramzan Malik R/O Nai Sarak Habakadal Srinagar A/P Nati-pora, Srinagar, Mohammad Ashraf Mir S/O Ghulam Nabi Mir R/O Hakhripora Pulwama, and Mohammad Maqbool Shah S/O late Shamasud-din Shah R/O Pir-Bagh

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SC

police from filing the charge sheet in the court concerned nor the lawyers had obstructed advocate Deepika Singh Rajawat, who is representing the victim's family, from appearing in the matter before the high court there.

The report also said that the demand of J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu and Kathua District Bar Association for a CBI probe in the matter appears to be justified.

Meanwhile, Advocate Shob Alam, appearing for the state, opposed the BCI's report and maintained that the police team was heckled allegedly by lawyers due to which they could not file the charge sheet in the trial court.

Alam told the bench that the report of BCI cannot be relied upon since no Crime branch officers, who were allegedly obstructed by agitating lawyers at Kathua, were heard.

He pointed out to the report of the high court and drew the attention to a separate report of a District Judge at Kathua and claimed that the report gives scathing finding of the "obstruction" of officers and justice administration system.

He pleaded the two petitions related to the alleged misconduct of lawyers and prayer of the father of victim seeking transfer of the case to Chandigarh be kept separate to ensure that the matter is not sensationalised.

However, the bench observed, "Let the main issue be not missed. Fair investigation, fair trial, appropriate legal guidance and representation of both the accused and the victim's family has to be there."

"Instead of getting into what the BCI report says and the lawyers say, let us not digress from the real issue. The real issue is that how can we achieve justice," the bench said.

Senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for the victim's father, told the bench that the case and its trial should be monitored by the apex court.

The bench, however, said that fast tracking the trial doesn't mean that proper opportunity was not granted in accordance with the procedure to the accused as well as the victim's family.

The child from a minority nomadic community had disappeared from near her home in a village near Kathua in Jammu region on January 10. Her body was found in the same area a week later.

The state police's Crime Branch, which probed the case, filed the main charge sheet against seven persons and a separate charge sheet against a juvenile in a court in Kathua district last week. The charge sheet revealed chilling details about how the girl was allegedly kidnapped, drugged and raped inside a place of worship before being killed.

BCI

Court bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra that no lawyer had threatened Rajawat or had stopped the police from filing a charge sheet against the accused.

"Nobody or no lawyer has threatened the victim's lawyer, Deepika Singh Rajawat, and or stopped the police from filing the charge sheet against the accused persons in the alleged Kathua rape and murder case," Singh told the court.

The apex court observed, "We are only concerned with the victim's families getting justice expeditiously, or, about how the investigation and trial would go on."

"Let us be clear and focus on investigation and about the trial of the case," it added.

Meanwhile, Chandan Sharma, the lawyer of two of the accused-Sanji Ram and Vishal Jangotra - told the court that the investigation must be fair, transparent and judicious as it is the minimum requirement of the rule of law.

The investigating agency could not be permitted to conduct an investigation in a tainted and biased manner.

The apex court said that it would resume hearing the main matter tomorrow.

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that it had not obstructed the police from filing a charge sheet in the connecting case. It said there was a need for a fair and impartial Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the rape case.

On filing an affidavit before the top court, the association denied that its President, and senior advocate B.S. Salathia, and other office bearers had threatened a woman lawyer from appearing for the family of a rape victim, terming the allegation as false and baseless.

On April 19, the apex court asked the High Court Bar Association at Jammu and the Kathua District Court Bar Association to file a response about the incident.

On April 13, the apex court had taken suo motu notice of lawyers preventing the victim's lawyer from appearing in the case.

In Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, a minor girl belonging to the Sunni-Muslim nomadic Bakerwal Tribe was allegedly abducted, drugged, gang-raped, tortured and killed in January.

DARBAR

the process. It is an old practice which happens annually,' one of the top officials of the R&B department told KNS.

Sources told KNS that the authorities have decided that the footpaths, especially in Lal Chowk and adjoining areas, to be cleared of encroachments before the opening of the civil secretariat. Sources said that in the wake of recent spurt in militant activities, authorities have also chalked out a plan to ensure security around vital installations including the civil secretariat and residential quarters of move employees.

Sources said that apart from the streets, ministers' official bungalows and employees' quarters are also getting facelift for the bi-annual event.

Sources said that renovation and other repair works had also been started in government and private accommodations, where the darbar move offices will stay for next six months.

Sources said that State Road Transport Corporation authorities have been directed to make adequate number of buses available for the employees moving to Srinagar, while it has been asked to make trucks available for carrying official records to the summer Capital.

"The protection wall of fly over is being painted and senior officers of the concerned agencies are continuously monitoring the progress on the day today basis," one of the top officials of the government said.

Sources said that on the other hand, the renovation and repair work in the bungalows of the VIPs including Ministers and bureaucrats has started. "Huge amount are being spent every year by the Estates Department for the renovation, repair and over all face lift of secretariat," sources said.

Darbar Move in J&K is a 138-year-old tradition started by Dogra rajahs. But the practice continued after 1947.

The practice of Darbar Move was started in 1872 by the

then ruler of J&K, Maharaja Gulab Singh. In May, Darbar opens in Srinagar and closes on October 31 to open in Jammu on November 10.

The state government annually spends crores for moving the offices, records and employees to Jammu in November and then back to Srinagar in May.

More than 40 offices and their sub-departments move in full after functioning for six winter months in Jammu while 45 departments move in camp. The latter carry 33 per cent of their staff strength.

All the move offices, apart from the manpower and other office paraphernalia, shift truck-loads of official records every six months.

"For around 7000 move employees-including secretariat employees, police, judiciary and corporations-the TA alone runs to the tune of Rs 3.5 crore. Around 3000-3500 employees also avail facility of government accommodation," sources claimed.

Meanwhile official sources said that Divisional administration and police has made arrangements on the eve of the Darbar Move. "All necessary arrangements to be put in place for the smooth functioning of Civil Secretariat and other move offices" said one of the top officials of the Divisional administration preferred not to be named.

IGP

with four rifles in Srinagar outskirts on Wednesday night, Pani said that it is too early to comment over the issue. "We have started investigation into the case, which is in full swing. We have also apprehended three persons in Awantipora Pampore yesterday; one among them was caught with a weapon. Their intention was to carry out rifle snatching incidents," he said.

He further told reporters that "once the investigation will be over, then we will be able to comment over the issues."

PDP

that the measure of the government to take control of the Abhinanda Home is a welcome measure and that the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has to be appreciated for such an earnest action by one and all in the state. "What no government did for such special children was done by the present regime. It has become evident now that the government led by the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is for the welfare and well being of every citizen of the state and such a pro-people regime wasn't ever witnessed or heard of in the state," Alam said.

The PDP leader also appreciated the efforts put forth by the Chief Secretary of the state, Secretary General Administration Department (GAD) and chairman of the Abhinanda Home, Ghulam Nabi Boodha. Alam said that he is also thankful to PDP Vice President Mohammad Sartaj Madni and General Secretary Mansoor Hussain Soharwardhy for lending their support to the demand that the special school be administered and controlled by the state government.

He maintained that the Abhinanda Home is an important institution of learning as same was established in 1941, and it has been imparting education to specially-abled children for decades now.

He said that at present there are hundreds special children enrolled in the institution with only a few teachers to teach them. "I am sure that as the government has taken control of the institution, the quality education will be ensured and the children will achieve new heights and prosper in their lives," Alam said.

CIVILIAN

Shopian was injured," a police spokesperson earlier said. He added that a high alert was sounded and a massive manhunt was launched to trace the car and the attackers.

Further details are awaited. The incident comes a day after a political worker of the Bharatiya Janata Party, and formerly with the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress, was shot dead in south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

MODI

lung Assembly. He said such "false" propaganda was spread even before the last Lok Sabha poll which the BJP won with an absolute majority.

"A government with absolute majority is needed to change Karnataka's destiny. India is shining in the world today only because we have a government which has a complete majority at the Centre after 30 years," he said, and asked BJP workers to endeavour to achieve that goal in the only big state the Congress still rules apart from Punjab.

Apparently referring to pre-poll surveys, the prime minister said "false propaganda" about a fractured mandate, with BJP as the single largest party, was being spread as part of a "conspiracy".

These surveys have projected a cliffhanger of a contest in the only southern state where the BJP had its government once. They said the JD(S) of former prime minister H D Deve Gowda would play the role of a kingmaker after the polls.

Rattling off figures about development work undertaken by the Centre in the state, he accused the Siddaramaiah government of stalling its progress, and spreading "falsehood".

"So, you will have to fight against lies, false propaganda. As part of a conspiracy, efforts will be made to mislead you by hiring foreign agencies. Karyakartas (party workers) should not be shaken, their trust should not be shaken," he said.

Modi was apparently referring to the Cambridge Analytica controversy over alleged attempts by the Congress to use the data firm to influence the outcome of elections in India.

"The Congress, after repeated defeat in elections, is spreading lies. Earlier, out of 50 things they said there were 5-10 lies. Now, out of the 50 things they say, 40-45 are lies and the rest five would also lack clarity," he said.

The prime minister said there was a need to cleanse Indian politics of Congress culture.

"The mainstream of India's political culture is associated with Congress' misdeeds. Unless we liberate this mainstream from Congress culture, we cannot cleanse Indian politics," he said.

Without naming the Lingayats, the prime minister accused the Congress government of doing caste politics.

"When elections come, these clever people (the Congress) offer lollipops to a caste group so they get busy with it and vote on emotion.

"When the next election comes, they leave that community and get hold of another caste group or community and

give them a new lollipop. They keep changing and giving new lollipops every time and run their politics without any accountability," he said.

The Siddaramaiah government recently recommended religious minority status for the Lingayat and its sub-group Veershaiva Lingayat community. The move is seen as an attempt to divide the Lingayats, the bedrock of the BJP's voter base in the state.

Seeking to strike a chord with BJP workers on the ground, Modi said, like them, he was also a "karyakarta".

"Like you, I am also a karyakarta (worker) from Karnataka. Believe this and move ahead. I am also a Kannadiga. Believe this and move ahead. I will work with you shoulder to shoulder," he said.

Modi began the interaction with opening remarks in Kannada where he welcomed the BJP leaders and workers. He was apologetic about not being able to learn Kannada language despite wanting so. "I'm sorry, despite having interest I could not learn Kannada," he said.

ILLEGAL

Sources further added that the insensitivity of the Government has led to the fragile ecology and environment has wreaked havoc on Sonamarg and its peripheries.

They said that only 14 structures (hotels) existed in Sonamarg before 2013 and now almost 47 new hotels with multiple blocks are coming up in the area that too in blatant violation of norms laid down in Master Plan.

Sources told PTK that there are influential people who are involved in this destruction of gold meadows. Official sources said that as per official records, big hoteliers who have their properties in Srinagar, and other places of the valley have now moved to Sonamarg to construct hotels adding that even they have managed permissions from the top authorities.

Meanwhile eyewitnesses said that the waste generated by tourists, visitors and hoteliers is thrown around in the meadows of Sonmarg without any treatment or scientific management.

However locals from the area told PTK that the Government is silent over the issue as the people involved in Vandalisation and construction are powerful. "These people are can do anything. We are not able to speak against them. These people are either part of the Government or are very close to the Ministers and top bureaucrats", they lamented.

When contact Shabir Raina Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Sonamarg Development Authority told PTK that he has joined the office last year in September adding that since then no illegal construction has begun.

"There were illegal constructions before I joined here. This is up to government to see if these constructions are to be stopped or illegally constructed has to be removed. If we receive an order to dismantle these illegal constructions, we are ready to dismantle", he added.

He further added that whatever will be the decision of government they at ground level are bound to act upon the directions.

Pertinently after Gulmarg and Pahalgam, Sonamarg is the most popular tourist destination in J&K.

SINGH

are always few ups and downs in any relationship, be it between husband and wife or between nations.

"But this does not mean that the trajectory is lost. Despite change in governments, parties, the relations have endured," Singh said.

Indo-US ties were affected during the Cold war years and it was only in the first decade of the 21st century that bilateral relations started witnessing an upswing with a significant milestone being the 2008 Indo-US nuclear deal.

Singh said the Indian and US businesses have to look what is mutually beneficial to enhance cooperation.

He said US President Donald Trump's America first policy was similar to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship 'Make in India' programme.

The US companies can make use of the growing Indian market, he said.

"India is a huge market which is going to grow and somebody has to make use of it. Our production levels are never going to meet the aspirations of the market," Singh said.

He made a strong pitch for 'Make in India' and urged the US companies to explore ways to be a part of it.

Singh also sought to assuage the concern of US companies over Intellectual Property Rights and asserted that India has a strong commitment towards it.

GEELANI

destination. Hailing the statement of Pak President Mamoon Hussain, wherein he sought the implementation of Security Council resolutions to resolve the Kashmir dispute, Syed Ali Geelani in a statement issued to KNS said Pakistan always stood like a rock guarding our cause.

Geelani expressing gratitude to Pakistan and its government headed by President Mamoon Hussain for "once again pleading the just political cause" of the people of J&K, stressed upon the world body to fulfil its commitments made to the people through the implementation of its security council resolutions and once again reiterated that until Kashmir issue is resolved, the dance of death and destruction will have no end."

Geelani said that Indian authorities are denying the historical aspects of Kashmir issue and despite India's haughty, stubborn attitude and arrogance, the issue lists at top in UN agenda.

He urged UN General Secretary to use his good offices "to take steps for its peaceful resolution and for putting an end to bloodshed at the hands of Indian forces in the occupied state". He also expressed hope that world leadership will play a positive role vis-à-vis Kashmir dispute by taking practical steps towards finding its solution.

Kashmir issue is the bone of contention and since past seven decades six lakh people were brutally massacred, properties worth billions razed to ground, Geelani said and expressed hope that both OIC and other world bodies will cooperate with each other to "end the miseries of the inhabitants of this unfortunate region" and impress India to solve this long pending issue as per aspirations of people of Jammu and Kashmir, Geelani said.

The list of crimes committed by the Indian occupational forces is very long," saying "Indian forces have waged war against unarmed and innocent people in occupied state". Geelani said that subjugated people while braving bullets and

atrocities perpetrated by authorities are illustrating exemplary steadfastness, valour and patience.

JUSTICE

thoughts about the Criminal appeal in High Courts and corresponding role of investigators and Prosecutors.

Speaking on the occasion, Justice A M Magrey said that Criminal justice system is comprised of three facets i.e., Law enforcement agency, Prosecution and the Court.

According to the KNS correspondent, he reiterated that all the three facets have to work in unison for the fair justice system to prevail. The judge also appreciated the role of police in dealing with major challenges like white colour crimes, social crimes, socio-political instability and mass agitations.

Expressing his dismay that juvenile delinquency, Justice A M Magrey said that alcoholism and social disorder has led to decadence of ethical values in our societies.

Highlighting the multi-dimensional role played by police, Hon'ble judge emphasised that the regular training and a good understanding of information technology is essential for an investigating officer in present times.

Guest of Honour, Justice M. K. Hanjura stressed on the importance of collecting first hand evidence from the scene of crime.

He threw light on the importance of forensic evidence and its good documentation which he said can help in recreating accurately a scene of Crime.

Besides, the other learned jurists of the state, legal experts and prosecuting officers also attended the workshop. Also various serving and retired police officers were present on the occasion.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir Range, Swayam Prakash Pani in his welcome address emphasised the need for sensitizing investigators and prosecutors with the procedure of appeal in Higher Courts.

Delving further on the topic, he reiterated that the idea was to bring together two important pillars of criminal jurisprudence and to hone the investigation skills of officers.

IGP also highlighted the purpose of investigation fund which is being provided to investigation officers.

Stressing the need for bringing in transparency in investigation processes, IGP highlighted the utility of CCTNS in investigation processes at Police Stations.

He further expressed his desire to conduct such more workshops in near future for a meaningful and fruitful dialogue among various stake holders of criminal justice system.

Judicial officers, senior police officers and prosecution officers also presented their papers on the occasion.

The vote of thanks was presented by DIG CKR V.K. Birdi who thanked all the judicial, media persons and police officers for their presence on the occasion.

YASEEN

Center to revoke AFSPA from the state, if it was serious to remove atrocities on people.

Hakeem Yaseen has said that renovation of AFSPA was an essential part of the Agenda of Alliance of the PDP-BJP coalition government, a promise to the people of the state, which has remained unfilled till date.

He said that the coalition partners has forged an alliance on the grounds that they will take several steps including removal of AFSPA but has failed to fulfill its promises despite lapse of last three years.

He said Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti should initiate fresh steps to ensure removal of AFSPA in Jammu and Kashmir and force Center to lift AFSPA from the state.

CRIME

Srinagar for the commission of cheating, dishonestly and fraudulently under the garb of sale/purchase of immovable property comprising of double storey building along with the land underneath and appurtenant thereto measuring one kanal and 05 marlas situated at Chinar Colony Baghat-i-Barzulla, Srinagar, owned by one Mst. Koshaliya Wd/O Jawahar Lal Rafiz.

The said accused persons induced the complainant Mohammad Sidiq Beigh S/O late Mohammad Amin Beigh and his wife Shafiq R/O Devi Angan Hawal, Srinagar to pay an amount of Rs. 1.66 Crore for the purchase of said property by executing a fake agreement to sell in respect of migrant property owned by Koshaliya Wd/O Jawahar Lal Rafiz without any legal authority from the registered owner.

DY CM FOR COORDINATED EFFORTS TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE

JAMMU, APRIL 26 - Deputy Chief minister, Dr Nirmal Singh today stressed for a better co-ordination among different department associated with the agriculture for increasing the productivity of the farmers and ensuring better marketing facilities to them as well.

The deputy chief minister was addressing officers during a meeting convened by the State Advisory Board for farmers to discuss wheat procurement at MSP during Rabi 2017-2018 and review of irrigation system in Jammu Division for Kharief, 2018.

Vice Chairman, JK State Advisory Board for Development of Kissan, Daljeet Singh Chib, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Hemant Kumar Sharma, Members of Kissan Advisory board, Director Agriculture, Jammu, Chief Engineer, PDD and senior officers of different departments were also present.

Deputy Chief minister while directing the officers of the PDD to make available the power needed for irrigation purposes asked for exploring the possibility of providing free power to them as well. He said that we have to provide every possible assistance to the farming community so that they do not face any in convenience and their produce also gets a boost, which would result in economic upliftment of the community as envisaged by the prime minister.

Dr Singh directed the Divisional commissioner to ensure co-ordination of the irrigation and Flood control department and Rural development department for undertaking proper desilting of the minor canals and also explore the possibility of participatory approach for Irrigation management of the minor canals in Jammu division.

Water storage level of 91 major reservoirs of The Country goes down by one percent

Srinagar, April 26: The water storage available in 91 major reservoirs of the country for the week ending on April 26, 2018 was 37,109 BCM which is 23% of total storage capacity of these reservoirs. This percentage was at 24 for the week ending on April 19, 2018. The level of water storage in the week ending on April 26, 2018 was 85% of the storage of corresponding period of last year and 90% of storage of average of last ten years.

The total storage capacity of these 91 reservoirs is 161,993 BCM which is about 63% of the total storage capacity of 257,812 BCM which is estimated to have been created in the country. 37 Reservoirs out of these 91 have hydro-power benefit with installed capacity of more than 60 MW.

REGIONWISE STORAGE STATUS:-

NORTHERN REGION

The northern region includes States of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan. There are six reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 18.01 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 3.54 BCM which is 20% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 26% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 27% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the corresponding period of last year and is also less than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

EASTERN REGION

The Eastern region includes States of Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and

Tripura. There are 15 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 18.83 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 6.72 BCM which is 36% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 44% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 30% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the corresponding period of last year but is better than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

WESTERN REGION

The Western region includes States of Gujarat and Maharashtra. There are 27 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 31.26 BCM. The total live storage available in

these reservoirs is 7.52 BCM which is 24% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 29% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 28% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the storage of last year and is also less than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

CENTRAL REGION

The Central region includes States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. There are 12 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 42.30 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 11.79 BCM which is 28% of total live storage capacity of these

reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 40% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 27% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the storage of last year but is better than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

SOUTHERN REGION

The Southern region includes States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, AP&TG (Two combined projects in both states), Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. There are 31 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 51.59 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 7.54 BCM which is 15% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding pe-

riod of last year was 10% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 20% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is better than the corresponding period of last year but is less than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

States having better storage than last year for corresponding period are Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tripura, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, AP&TG (Two combined projects in both states), Andhra Pradesh Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. States having lesser storage than last year for corresponding period are Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana.

CUK holds photo-narrative exhibition

Srinagar, April 26: School of Media Studies, Central University of Kashmir (CUK) organized a one-day photo-narrative exhibition at the Nowgam-I academic block of the varsity here Thursday.

The exhibition was conducted by DCJ's senior faculty member, Mr. Shahnaz Bashir. Young photojournalists, including the graduated and currently enrolled students of the department, exhibited their photo stories or photo essays based on themes like landscape, portraiture, political conflict, off-road adventure and more. Students displayed their photographs, explaining each shot to the visitors who

thronged the exhibition during the day. The visitors included the students, faculty members and public.

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Mehrajud Din Mir hailed the students for participating in the exhibition. He appreciated the efforts of the department in conducting the event and asked it to organise more such exhibition in future to display the talent of the students.

Registrar and In-Charge Dean School of Media Studies, Prof. M Afzal Zargar while speaking on the occasion said, "It's heartening to see DCJ taking such creative initiatives. I congratulate the department, especially Mr. Shahnaz Bashir

for the idea of this exhibition," he added.

Mr. Shahnaz Bashir said, "I curated a photo exhibition in the university a couple of years ago. There are two objectives of curating this exhibition. One is to open the young talent to the society at large and, therefore, encourage them indirectly as well. The second is to make people aware about the talent we have."

DCJ Coordinator, Dr. Asif Khan while appreciating the initiative said, "The exercise has proven to be fruitful for students who got an opportunity to showcase their work. The department would continue with this initiative."

Make mandatory posting of fresh MBBS graduates in rural areas before granting them their first promotion: Vice President

Srinagar, April 26: The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that a possible solution to address the shortage of doctors in rural areas could be mandatory posting of fresh MBBS graduates in rural areas before granting them their first promotion. He was addressing the inaugural session of 15th World Rural Health Conference with the theme "Healing the Heart of Healthcare - Leaving no one behind", organized by the Academy of Family Physicians, here today. The Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare, Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey and

other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that the rural-urban divide in terms of providing effective healthcare services is more pronounced in the low income countries and developing countries due to shortage of infrastructure and manpower. He further said that extreme rural-urban inequities exist in Asia and the Pacific regions, while 83 per cent of Africa's rural people have no entitlements to health care. The ILO report also mentioned that there was a shortfall of seven million health workers in rural areas

across the globe as compared to three million workers in urban areas, he added.

The Vice President said that there has to be concerted efforts from all stakeholders in the health sector to remedy the situation and a comprehensive and systematic approach can address these inequities and ensure access to affordable healthcare services. He further said that the private sector, NGOs and doctors' organizations like Academy of Family Physicians of India can play a bigger and more participative role in supplementing the efforts of the governments

in ending the urban-rural divide. A possible solution to address the shortage of doctors in rural areas could be mandatory posting of fresh MBBS graduates in rural areas before granting them their first promotion, he added.

To overcome major bottlenecks in the delivery of an effective healthcare system like low doctor-patient ratio, lack of skilled paramedics and poor infrastructure, the Vice President said that there is a need to have strong political commitment and strong advocacy from relevant national and inter-

national organizations with support of nongovernmental organizations.

Highlighting the need to promote the concept of family doctor in a big way, the Vice President said that a family doctor provides primary and continuing care to the entire family within the communities; addresses physical, psychological and social problems; and coordinates comprehensive health care services with other specialists, as needed. Family physicians deliver a range of acute, chronic and preventive medical care services, he added.

National Foreign Trade Directory Released

Srinagar, April 26: Giriraj Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India & MSME Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Panda, released a directory to facilitate the exporters during the recently concluded International SME Convention-2018 in New Delhi. The directory provides information about export-import offices of policy makers, regulators, facilitators and all export promotion councils, commodity boards, development authorities, trade & industry organisations, MSMEs which have been set up, approved or sponsored by Government of India.

The Minister said that the directory will be useful for exporters, importers, traders, manufacturers, MSMEs, authorised economic operators, export import management students, new IEC holders and all those involved in export trade.

The directory has been published by International Trade Consultants, New Delhi.

Behavioral Change in People and Private Sector Participation Important for Success of Swachh Bharat Mission : Puri

Srinagar, April 26: Shri Hardeep Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing & Urban Affairs emphasised on the importance of behavioural change in people and participation of private sector as critical to the success of the ambitious Swachh Bharat Mission that the country has embarked upon. He was speaking at the India Sanitation Conclave 2018 organised by FICCI here today. He exhorted the private sector to play an active role at grassroots level in effecting behavioural change in people like maintaining and using toilets. He said that the Swachh Bharat Mission has shown unprecedented momentum after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call for 'Swachhta' from the ramparts of Red Fort in 2014. He expressed happiness that the flagship scheme has become a mass revolution and has

truly acquired the dimensions of a Jan Andolan.

Underlining the efforts of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in the domain of Urban Sanitation, he said as of April 2018, there are 2050 ODF Cities with 100% door to door waste collection being practiced in 51,734 wards and around 47 lakh units of individual household latrines and 3.19 lakh seats of community and public toilets built as of March, 2018. He said that to foster a healthy competition between cities for improving cleanliness standards, MoHUA has been conducting Swachh Survekshan surveys which has grown from survey of 73 cities in 2016 to 4023 cities/towns in the latest round of Swachh Survekshan conducted from 4 January to 10 March 2018.

Sh. Puri also mentioned the Sustain-

able Development Goals (SDGs) set out by the United Nations to be achieved by 2030, particularly the SDG 6 - Ensure access and sanitation for All. He said that achievement of the SDGs will be achieved mainly through the collective efforts of all which are effectively supplemented by the programs being implemented by the Government such as the Swachh Bharat Mission.

He congratulated the India Sanitation Coalition for bringing the private and public sector together and enabling cross learning and facilitating more effective actions for sustainable intervention in the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) space. He also presented the ISC - FICCI Sanitation awards 2018 to individuals and institutions in various categories for their commendable work and efforts in the Sanitation sector.

Manufacturing of Planes under Make In India and Safety & Security in Aviation Sector to be top priority: Suresh Prabhu

Srinagar, April 26: Sh. Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Civil Aviation today stated that aircraft and aviation equipment manufacturing under the Make in India programme and safety and security in the aviation sector would be one of his top priorities along with creating world-class passenger and cargo hubs in India. He also stated that air passengers must have a delightful travel experience and private sector must be responsive to customer requirements. He was chairing a meeting of airline industry stakeholders, including CMDs of different airlines, airport directors and others who are involved in airport operations, on wide-ranging issues like passenger service, security, public-private partnership, infrastructure, air connectivity etc. Shri Rajiv Nayan Choubey, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation and senior officers from the Ministry were also present in the meeting.

Shri Suresh Prabhu informed that such meetings would be conducted at regular intervals to ensure that the growth in aviation sector industry is as per world standards. He also stated that PPP should mean private partnership not only with the Government but with the public at large. He also stressed on the need for a demand survey of the air-traffic potential from various cities that needs to be made. The issues discussed in the meeting included transforming India as an air cargo hub and working towards e-national air cargo community system and e-freight cargo.

Ministry of Railways announces Ex gratia amount to Kushinagar victims

Srinagar, April 26: An unfortunate accident on unmanned level crossing (UMLC) between Tamkuhi Road and Dudahi station was reported at 06:45 AM today i.e. 26.04.2018. 13 school children unfortunately lost their lives and 7 injured children were taken to Padrauna Civil Hospital. Administrative inquiry has been ordered into the accident.

Following is the text of Union Minister of Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal on the Kushinagar accident:-

"I am deeply anguished and pained by the loss of lives of young school children at an unmanned level crossing (UMLC) in Kushinagar, UP. My thoughts are with families of the deceased and I pray for the early recovery of the injured.

Ministry of Railways will provide an ex gratia amount of Rs 2 lakh for kin of the deceased, Rs 1 lakh for those with serious injuries and Rs 50,000 for those with simple injuries.

I have ordered a senior level enquiry into the incident. We stand committed to take all possible steps to avoid such accidents in future".

Following are the Helpline numbers for Kushinagar Accident:-

- 1-Commercial Control Varanasi - 05422224742 ,
- 2-Station Supdt./Siwan - 09771443944 ,
- 3-Station Supdt./ Kaptanganj- 9559715398 ,
- 4-Station Supdt./Deoria Sadar - 9794843924 ,
- 5-Station Supdt./Padrauna - 9838784742

Lt Gen Bipin Puri takes over as Senior Colonel Commandant of AMC

Srinagar, April 26: Lt Gen Bipin Puri took over as Senior Col Commandant of the Army Medical Corps, here today. He assumed the appointment of Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS) on 01 November 2017.

Lt Gen Bipin Puri graduated from the Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and was commissioned in the Army Medical Corps (AMC) on 08 December 1979. He com-

pleted his post graduation in General Surgery from AFMC in 1985 and MCh (Paed Surg) from the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh in 1993.

He is a paediatric surgeon par excellence with a national standing in the field. He was Associate Professor at AFMC Pune and has served with distinction in Command Hospital (CC) Lucknow & Army Hospital (Research and Referral) as Senior Adviser, Profes-

sor & HOD. The General Officer has pioneered the NUSS Procedure for Pectus Excavatum deformity in India and has conducted various workshops to showcase the procedure. With a penchant for medical research, the General officer has passionately endeavoured to indulge extensively into diverse facets of Paediatric Surgery & guided many research fellows in their professional journeys. During his illustrious

Service career of more than 38 years, the General Officer has tenanted important staff and command appointments viz. Commandant at 155 Base Hospital, Tezpur, Dy DGAFMS (Coord) at O/DGAFMS, MoD, Commandant at Command Hospital (NC) Udhampur, Major General (Medical) at HQ NC, Assistant Chief of Integrated Defence Staff at HQ IDS, MoD, Sr Consultant (Surgery) at O/O DGAFMS, MoD DG (Org & Pers) at O/O

DGAFMS, DGMS (Navy) at IHQ, MoD (Navy), DGMS (Army) prior to taking over as DGAFMS.

The General Officer was awarded the GOC-in-C Commendation in 2010 and the COAS Commendation twice, in 2001 and 2012. The General officer was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal by the President of India in 2017 in recognition of his meritorious service. The General Officer was appointed Honorary Sur-

geon to The President of India (PHS) from June 2016. For his excellence in medical profession, the General Officer was awarded 'Double Helical's National Health Awards-2017' by Indian Medical Association, which was presented by the Minister of Health and Family Welfare Shri JP Nadda in May 2017. The Royal College of Surgeons (Edinburgh) conferred upon him prestigious Award of Fellowship ad hominem in November 2017.

DC Kupwara reviews developmental works in Trehgam

KUPWARA, APRIL 25: DDC Kupwara Khalid Jahangir today visited Trehgam to take account of the developmental works being undertaken by various departments. DDC was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Development Kupwara, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, District Social Welfare Officer, CMO, CEO, district and sectoral heads and other concerned.

During his interaction with the locals, demand for repair of a water reservoir at Trehgam was raised for which on spot directions were issued to the PHE department to undertake the necessary measures without any dilly-dallying for affording the residents of the area access to safe and clean drinking water.

During his visit, DDC inspected various works undertaken including



upgradation of infrastructure for proper utilization of Spring at Trehgam, repair and beautification of Jamia Masjid and Temple at Trehgam and directed RDD and Floriculture to ensure that both these works are done within stipulated time.

DDC also inspected the playground at Trehgam, interacted with the youth present, offered patient hearing to their aspirations, encouraged them with ex-

amples of various sportspersons of the valley bringing laurels and ensured them all possible cooperation from district administration for their bright future.

DDC also inspected the PHC building and directed the concerned department to accelerate the pace of work and ensure completion of the building by 15th May so that it could be functionalized as soon as possible for the benefit of the people. People demanded macadamisation of inner links in Trehgam and widening of Kupwara-Kralpora road for better connectivity with the towns. DDC urged people to remove structures from the roadside and directed the concerned departments to finalize assessment for compensation against land being acquired and expedite payment to the beneficiaries.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

Revisit AFSPA

The Centre's decision to revoke the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in Meghalaya and reduce its ambit in Arunachal Pradesh is welcome insofar as it signifies a willingness to reconsider the use of the special law as and when the ground situation improves. The extent of 'disturbed areas' in Meghalaya was earlier limited to within 20 km of its border with Assam. The whole of Nagaland, most of Assam, and Manipur excluding the areas falling under seven Assembly constituencies in Imphal, continue to be under the law, which provides protection to the security forces operating in the notified areas. In Arunachal, the areas under AFSPA have been reduced to the limits of eight police stations, instead of the previous 16, in three districts bordering Assam. It was only last month that the Act was extended for six months in Assam, even though the Union Home Ministry has said the situation has improved considerably. AFSPA was extended in Nagaland by six months from January. There is no sign that the vigour of the law will be diluted, but the area of its use may be progressively curtailed over time. It was withdrawn in Tripura in 2015. Assam has been empowered to decide on how long it needs the cover of AFSPA. Even though there is ample evidence that the law has created a sense of impunity among the security forces wherever it has been invoked, the Centre is still far from abrogating the Act, mainly because the Army favours its continuance.

Manipur had borne the brunt of Army excesses over the years. In a rare intervention in a matter concerning internal security, in 2016 the Supreme Court had ruled that the armed forces cannot escape investigation for excesses committed in the discharge of their duties even in 'disturbed areas'. It ordered a probe into specific cases. In other words, accountability for human rights violations is sacrosanct and the legal protection offered by AFSPA cannot be absolute. During the Budget session, Union Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply that the government was considering a proposal to make AFSPA more "operationally effective and humane". In 2005, a committee headed by former Supreme Court judge B.P. Jeevan Reddy was tasked by the then United Progressive Alliance government with suggesting amendments to AFSPA. The committee recommended that the law be repealed altogether, and that the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act be amended in a manner that would enable insurgency and conflict to be tackled legally. Now that there is some degree of official recognition that special laws for protecting armed forces personnel from the legal consequences of their operations and excesses need not continue indefinitely, it is time for the Centre to revisit the Jeevan Reddy committee report and find ways of humanising AFSPA, if not revoking it altogether.

Missiles of aggression

By JOHN CHERIAN

On the basis of unverified charges that the Syrian Arab Army used "chemical weapons" in the town of Douma, the United States, in coordination with the United Kingdom and France, its two trusted North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies, once again launched missile attacks and bombing raids on Syria. President Donald Trump had advertised his plans to "punish" Syria ever since the Western media highlighted reports that chlorine gas was used against the civilian populace of Douma. Trump threatened to rain fire and brimstone on a country that has already been ravaged by more than seven years of a brutal civil war. It was a war thrust on the Syrian people by outside forces under the supervision of the U.S. and its close allies in the region. When the threatened attack finally materialised on April 14, it was short and limited in scope, lasting for an hour and conducted under cover of darkness.

The U.S. timed the attack to coincide with the arrival in Douma of inspectors from the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to look into the allegations that the Syrian government forces had used chemical weapons there. The Syrian government steadfastly denies that it uses chemical weapons in combat. In fact, by 2014 it had handed over its entire arsenal of chemical weapons under international supervision. The OPCW had certified that there were no chemical weapons producing factories in Syria now.

Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS), a group comprising former U.S. security officials, had issued a statement saying that clear evidence on the use of chemical weapons was required before the U.S. President could authorise military strikes against Syria. It stressed that there was evidence showing that the video and images of the victims allegedly affected by the chemical weapons originated from rebel-affiliated groups such as the "White Helmets" and the "Douma Rebellion". The government allowed the families of the rebels safe passage out of Douma in air-conditioned buses that headed for Turkey before the so-called attack took place.

The VIPS also noted that the Russian military and the Syrian Army, both of which entered Douma immediately after pictures of the alleged victims were circulated, found no traces of poison gas or chemicals. After the fall of Douma, the U.S. and its allies like Saudi Arabia have lost the ability to militarily target Damascus from the ground. Douma is located close to the Syrian capital. "A major question for us, as former intelligence officers with some knowledge of the operational use of false information and false flag actions, is what motive would the Syrian government have for making a chemical weapons attack on its own civilian population, especially at a time when it has growing popular support and is having increased military support. Why would it risk Western ire?" the statement said. An American citizen expressed his concerns in a letter to The New York Times a few days before Trump carried out his threat. He asked the following pertinent questions: 1. Why is the death of a few dozen by poison gas in Syria worse than the slaughter of thousands by conventional armaments? 2. Why is it the obligation of the U.S. to punish Syria? 3. What gives the U.S. the legal right to attack another country when that country is not threatening us? 4. What independent authority has found out that Syria used poison gas?

An expert group comprising American legal luminaries specialising in international



law urged the U.S. President in a statement to desist from launching a military attack: "The unlawful killing of any human being without legal justification, under every legal system, is murder. And an act of violence committed by one government against another government, without lawful justification, amounts to the crime of aggression: the supreme international crime which carries with it the evil of every other international crime, as noted by the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1946."

Eighty members of the U.S. Congress had also urged Trump not to take military action against Syria without prior congressional authorisation. In a letter to the President, the Congressmen stated that such an act would "violate the separation of power that is clearly delineated in the Constitution" of the U.S.

Russia's warning
Russia had warned that it would shoot down any incoming U.S. missile if its assets or troops in Syria were targeted. Iran, too, issued strong warnings to the U.S., saying that any violation of Syria's sovereignty would have serious repercussions. In a statement issued immediately after the attack, the Russian Defence Ministry said that airfields and military, along with industrial and research facilities, were among the targets hit. According to the statement, the Syrian Army suffered no casualties. The Syrian government has issued a statement saying that there were no major civilian casualties. Three Syrians were injured. President Bashar al-Assad was seen going to his office as usual at 9 a.m., a few hours after the attacks. "Good souls can never be humiliated," read a tweet from the Syrian President. Thousands of Syrians gathered in Umayyad Square in central Damascus to condemn the attack and to celebrate the Syrian Army's success in repelling some of the missiles.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was quick to issue a strong statement condemning the attack. He said that it was "an act of aggression against a sovereign state that is on the front line of the fight against terrorism". The attack on Syria, Putin said, was "committed without a mandate from the U.N. Security Council and in violation of the U.N. Charter and norms and principles of international law". He pointed out that Russian military experts had visited the town of Douma after the reports of the chemical attack surfaced but did not find any traces of chlorine or any other toxic agent. "Not a single local resident was able to confirm that a chemical attack had actually taken place," Putin said. He accused the U.S. and its allies

"of pandering to the terrorists who have been tormenting the people of Syria for seven years, leading to a wave of refugees fleeing this country and the region".

Putin warned that the current escalation around Syria "is destructive for the entire system of international relations". The U.S., Putin said, "already bears responsibility for the bloody outrage in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya". Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, described the leaders of the U.S., the U.K. and France as "criminals". He also said that these countries had committed similar crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya "and did not benefit from them". In a letter to Prime Minister Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn, the Leader of the Opposition in the U.K. and the Labour Party leader, criticised his country's participation in the attack, saying that the British Prime Minister "must be accountable to Parliament, not to the whims of the American President". He said that the action against Syria was "legally questionable", pointing out that the U.N. Secretary-General had said as much on the issue. In France, the air strikes have further exacerbated public anger against President Emmanuel Macron. France is currently in the throes of serious industrial unrest. According to the data analysed by the Russian military, the U.S. and its two NATO allies launched a total of 103 cruise missiles inside Syria. According to the Russian military and the Syrian government, the Syrian Army shot down many of them. The Russians say that in total, 71 of the cruise missiles were "intercepted", including those targeting the Damascus airport. The Russian Defence Ministry said that it would now consider providing the Syrian Army with the more sophisticated and proven S-300 anti-missile systems.

Trump tweeted that the U.S. and its allies had accomplished "a perfectly executed strike" against Syria and that it was "mission accomplished" for him as far as Syria was concerned. On May 2003, President George W. Bush, standing on the deck of an American aircraft carrier, declared that "all major combat operations" in Iraq were over. Displayed prominently behind him was a banner with the words "Mission Accomplished".

The U.S. went to war in Iraq in 2003 on the pretext that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had hidden "weapons of mass destruction" (WMDs) and is still mired militarily in that country. There are currently around 2,200 U.S. troops illegally stationed inside Syria. One-third of Syrian territory is under the control of U.S.-backed Syrian rebel forces. Much of Syria's oil and gas resources are

located there.

U.S. Defence Secretary James Mattis told the media that no more attacks were being planned against Syria for the time being but stressed that the U.S. retained the option to attack Syria again at a time of its choosing. He claimed that future attacks were justified as long as the U.S. was satisfied that the Syrian government was guilty of using chemical weapons. However, while insisting that the U.S. was certain that the Syrian military used chlorine gas in Douma, Mattis did not produce any evidence to back his claims. Colin Powell, the Defence Secretary under Bush, was also sure Iraq had WMDs while justifying the invasion of Iraq. The French President and the British Prime Minister parroted the line that Syria used chemical weapons without bothering to provide any proof whatsoever.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated at a press conference on April 14 that the Kremlin had "irrefutable evidence that the special services of a state which is in the forefront of a Russophobic campaign had a hand in the staging" of the attack. Alexander Yakovenko, Russia's Ambassador to the U.K., said that the "White Helmets", which "receive U.K. money", were involved. Peter Ford, Britain's former Ambassador to Syria, told the BBC that he believed the Douma attack was "staged".

U.N. Security Council meeting
An emergency U.N. Security Council meeting was convened at the request of Russia to discuss the attack on Syria. Russia sponsored a resolution condemning the air strikes on Syria. Speaking during the meeting, Nikki Haley, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., reiterated the viewpoint that the U.S. had the right to punish Syria any time it wished to. "I spoke to the U.S. President this morning, and he said that if the Syrian government uses poison gas again, the U.S. is locked and loaded," she said.

Reacting to this speech, Sacha Sergio Soliz, Bolivia's Ambassador to the U.N., said that the international community was aware of the U.S.'s might and military prowess. Holding up a copy of the U.N. Charter, Soliz pointed out that the U.N. only allowed the use of force for self-defence or with the approval of the Security Council. He said that the international community was also aware that the U.S. "has nothing but scorn for international law". Vassily Nebenzia, the Russian Ambassador to the U.N., said that the three foreign powers carried out "aggression against a sovereign state" without providing any proof that chemical weapons had been used.

Bolivia, which is an elected member of the Security Council, voted along with Russia and China after a two-hour long heated debate on the resolution. Four nations abstained on the resolution. The three permanent members of the Security Council that initiated the aggression against Syria, the U.S., France and Britain, naturally voted against it. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that "the Cold War has returned with a vengeance". He urged member states "to show restraint" and to ensure that situations "don't go out of control". Guterres described the Syrian conflict as the "most serious threat to international peace and security in our time".

The Pentagon claimed that the latest attack was much bigger in scope than the missile strike Trump ordered last year on a Syrian Air Force base. According to the U.S. Defence Secretary, the main targets were the factories producing chemical weapons, which, according to both Syrian and Russian officials, have been lying abandoned since Syria voluntarily gave up its chemical weapons.

ERADICATING THE CASTE

A requisite step to bring in promising change in the society.

Sehar Muneer Malik

Nothing else can be put forward as an authentication to withstand the article than the verses from the holy book of 'Quran' Chapter 49: 'verse 13', "Surah Hujurat" categorically stating.... "O mankind, we created you from one man and one woman, and then divided you into nations and tribes "SO THAT YOU MAY RECOGNIZE ONE ANOTHER". Hence, there comes a clear assertion from the holy book of Quran itself that mankind was never distinguished under the three (high class, middle class, lower class) fold divisions of society. It should have been expunged to every Muslim that only piety and virtuous qualities are the bases for differentiating the people and this differentiation is not associated with the distribution of social status. Islamic sanctions do not divide the community into different endogamous groups

but unfortunately in the traditional society this ideal sanction of Islam has not remained operative as under the impact of traditional culture, subsidising the creation of the Almighty man has always tried to lift his head and hands up to dwell his own inception, the Muslims did develop a caste-like hierarchy.

The story began when humans switched their interest from hunting or fishing to sedentary agricultural societies, with a surplus economy. Henceforth giving rise to a variety of occupations which were essential for the proper functioning of that society. After conversions ineluctably these functions began to be ranked hierarchically. People differentiated one another on the basis of descent and lineages. And that's where the concept of superior and inferior prevailed. The societies began to have internal inequalities between the ones having tremendous amount of resources with

surplus economy and the ones who did not have much to offer. This ultimately gave birth to social classes where in people would be distinguished into RICH and POOR. The economic aspect would not be the only field where divisions were made but people found other ways to parcel out other people into incomparable sects. The divisions were created on the basis of birth, religious knowledge, descents, lineages, and many more reasons which highlighted line bright between the created segments. This custom went on for long, so long that they are still going on. Contemplating the societies of Kashmir in specific where also caste have been attached to ascribe the status of communities, where 'Ulemas', 'Syeds', 'Pirs', and, 'Sheikhs' are at the top, 'Wattals', at the bottom and rest in the middle class.

Another institution where caste system plays a vital role is marriages. Whether we realize it or not the mar-

riages within castes are creating barriers and unnoticed social pathos. The people belonging to higher caste would not even attempt to marry those belonging to lower castes. This is not because the issue lies within the family customs or ways of maintaining relationships or overall life style but the issue arises when the questions are raised about the characteristics of being superior or inferior and if somehow someone manages to bring a change in the system they are socially boycotted for having violated the rules of the entire society. So the fear of social boycott as well as fear of choosing an "uncertain future", we more likely choose someone from our own caste or sub caste.

This absurd system is still going on while no one is paying attention to it as it is real hard to digest. Even though most people would agree that societies are really equal but majority do not believe in and for that matter minorities

are not counted!

Aspiring for eradication in the castes is the second thing, I haven't even heard of, so much so that no one is even ready to talk about bringing slightest change in the subject at the first place. Not expecting much of assistance from the ancestors journals that would probably lead to the same path we are on today yet there is an immense need to make a different choice. Affluence in individual living standard alone does not make a better tomorrow, neither does that convey that we belong to a better sect. There is a need to help ourselves to get rid of the special ordinance instead the change has to begin from within this generation. And if we behold the dilemma that it would merely affect us then there is scope for precision, bisections still have a drastic impact on occupations as there is no swapping of professions among different castes, no novelty in jobs, which kill the creativity

in the professionals and business class big wigs. Favoritism for the higher castes than those belonging to lower one to a larger extent.

For sure there has been a positive change in process as of what it was earlier but not positive enough that we could expect it to extinct. There still is a major scope for improvement; we still can bring promising change in the society. We no more are illiterates; we can make use of our education for cultivating a better society with better social rules that do not stand on the basis of someone's caste, color, creed, birth, religious sect or region. We are no one to claim propensity to God by dividing the Ummah on surnames or so called titles. We do need to stand against the caste system for a preferable tomorrow so that future generations would just read about extinct castes which once upon a time existed.

13 children killed after school van collides with train at railway crossing in UP's Kushinagar

At least 13 school children were killed and several others injured when a train hit a van carrying 20 children at an unmanned level crossing near Dudhi railway station in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district around 7 am on Thursday.

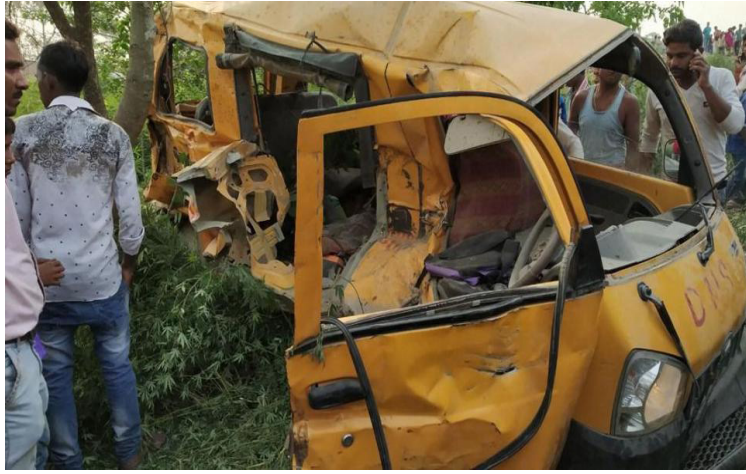
All injured have been admitted to Kushinagar district hospital for treatment. Four of the children are critically injured children and battling for their lives.

The driver of the van, who allegedly ignored the warning of gate mitra and the whistle blown by the train, also died on the way to the hospital.

As per eyewitness, the driver had his earphones on, and as a result, could not hear the approaching train or the gate mitra's warning.

The train was travelling to Gorakhpur from Bihar's Siwan. Locals and district administration officials rushed to rescue on knowing about the accident.

Expressing grief, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was 'extremely saddened' and added that the UP government and railway department



would take appropriate action.

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath announced an ex-gratia of Rs two lakh each to the deceased's family and ordered an inquiry by the Gorakhpur commissioner Anil Kumar and submit a probe report at the earliest.

"Deeply pained over deaths of school children in unfortunate train accident in Kushinagar. Praying to god for peace to departed souls and

strength to parents. Instructions have been issued to provide complete treatment to those affected in accident and for all possible help," tweeted Adityanath, who was reported to have rushed to the accident spot from Lucknow.

Adityanath's deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya and transport minister Swatantra Dev Singh also expressed condolences over the deaths of the children. Railways minister Piyush Goyal

also announced an ex-gratia of Rs two lakh to the kin of the deceased in a tweet.

As per reports, the accident occurred when the Tata Magic van of Divine Public School was taking the children to school.

Sanjay Yadav, CPRO, north eastern railways, said the van driver did not heed to repeated warnings of the gate mitra as he was running late in getting the children to school.

"The train (55075) driver too blew whistle in warning but he (van driver) ignored it, leading to the accident," he said.

This is the second tragic incident this month involving school children. Twenty-three children were among 30 killed when a private school bus ferrying them home veered off the road and plunged into a 200-foot-deep gorge at Malakwal in Nurgpur in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh on April 9.

India's railroad network is one of the world's largest with 23 million people riding daily on about 11,000 passenger trains.

Swachh Bharat can tackle public health issues, promote tourism: Prabhu

The government's 'Swachh Bharat' or 'Clean India' initiative has the potential to address public health issues and promote tourism in the country, union commerce minister Suresh Prabhu said on Thursday.



Addressing an industry chamber FICCI-ISC Sanitation Conclave, the minister also underlined the need to improve soil fertility, saying soil security is a critical component of food security.

"Swachh Bharat can become a big change agent for India. It has huge potential to push economic growth," Prabhu said. "Once this campaign is successful, there will be economic growth because the moment sanitation issue is addressed, the public health will get addressed which will give a boost to economic growth."

"I think several issues will get addressed by Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. We can address public health related issues... tourism, which is the fastest growing sector, will also be benefited by Swachh Bharat," he said.

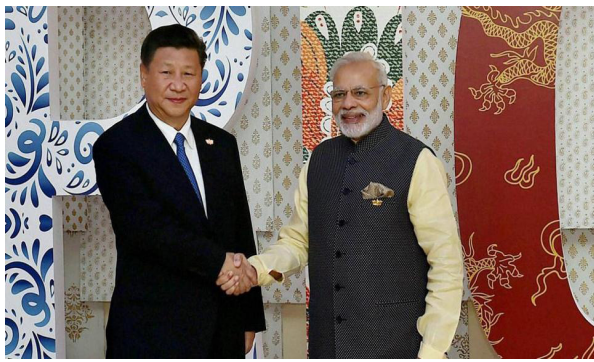
"Sanitation is something that requires effort of all, not just the government. Government can only motivate, facilitate and help but without self-motivation, we cannot do it," he added.

When Modi and Xi talk in China, only one other Indian will be present

The only other Indian at the informal summit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping — it has already been announced that they will meet in private, without aides and written notes, and with no set agenda or pre-negotiated statements — will be R Madhu Sudan, first secretary (political) at the Indian embassy in Beijing.

Madhu Sudan has been asked to be Modi's interpreter at the summit on April 27 and 28, according to people familiar with the details of the meeting who asked not to be identified.

The task of the interpreter in such meetings is straightforward, but difficult: to ensure that nothing is lost in translation. "The choice of interpreters is important. They should have the felicity of language



and understanding of the issues the leaders would possibly talk about. So it is always a careful choice," explained one of the people cited in the first instance.

Madhu Sudan is also special assistant to the Indian ambassador and a fluent Mandarin speaker. It could well be a coincidence that the present foreign secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale was first secretary (political) at the

Indian embassy in Beijing when the landmark summit meeting between late former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Deng Xiaoping, the late paramount leader of China, took place in 1988.

Madhu Sudan belongs to the 2007 batch of the Indian Foreign Service and has spent most of his professional career in China. His first posting abroad after the training was to the Indian embassy in

China as third secretary from 2009 to 2011.

After serving two years in Indian consulate in San Francisco, he was posted back to China in 2013 as the second secretary to Indian embassy in Beijing.

"He has been interpreting high-level meetings for some years now. He was the interpreter when President Xi came to India in 2014," said a government official who asked not to be identified.

Prime Minister Modi prefers to speak in Hindi during most of his foreign engagements, and the presence of a translator/interpreter is critical.

Nilakshi Saha Sinha, a director in the ministry of external affairs, who is conversant in Hindi, English, Bengali and French, is one of his preferred interpreters.

In Karnataka, Congress, BJP candidates back out of polls despite being nominated

Congress leader MH Ambareesh's announcement on Tuesday that he would not defend his seat of Mandya even after getting the ticket highlighted a trend of candidates, across party lines, refusing to contest the assembly election this time despite being nominated.

Ambareesh, a former Union minister and popular film star, said he was refusing to contest because of his advancing age. "I will always be grateful to the people of Mandya for the support they have given me. My party also did not issue a B-form (nomination form) to anybody else till now, that shows their respect for me," he said.

Another Congress leader and state minister for planning MR Seetharam, too, refused to contest saying his decision was based on his lack of preparedness.



"I last contested elections in 2008, when I lost. In 2013, I wasn't given a ticket but later they made me a member of the Legislative Council and a minister. I was only informed that I would contest the polls this time about 15 days ago. This left me with very little time to prepare," Seetharam said.

State Congress working

president Dinesh Gundu Rao said, "In Ambareesh's case, we respected his seniority and decided to give him a ticket. We also left the final decision of contesting to him because he is a very popular leader," he said.

"Seetharam, meanwhile, had made it clear a while ago that he did not wish to contest. But we took a decision to field

him because we felt he could give the BJP candidate a tough fight," Gundu Rao said.

Even in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), two candidates have refused to contest. Senior BJP leader V Somanna's son Arun, who was given the ticket from Arsikere in Hassan district, and BK Manjunath from Sira have refused. Repeated attempts to reach Arun Somanna and Manjunath were unsuccessful.

Party spokesperson S Prakash said this was an unfortunate development and could be explained by the increase in expenditure and the lack of confidence of the candidate of a win.

From Kapil Sibal to Subramanian Swamy, who said what on Justice KM Joseph's elevation row

The elevation of one of the two justices recommended by the collegium as Supreme Court judges, on Thursday evoked sharp reaction with the apex court's bar association chief terming as "disturbing" the government's action of accepting only one name and asking it to reconsider the name of Justice KM Joseph.

The Centre's move comes a day after it cleared the appointment of senior advocate Indu Malhotra as a judge of the Supreme Court and kept in abeyance a decision on Joseph, who is chief justice of the Uttarakhand high court. Both the names were recommended by the collegium in January.

Malhotra will be the first woman judge to be appointed to the top post directly from the bar.

Chidambaram, Congress leader In a series of tweets, the former Union finance minister questioned the delay in justice KM Joseph's elevation. Questioning whether the "Modi government was above law",

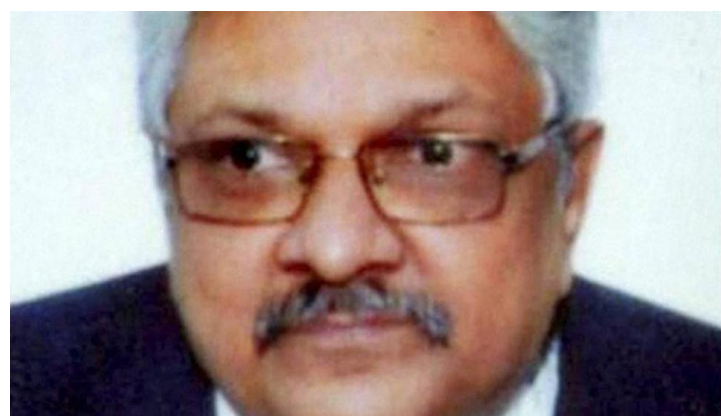
Chidambaram said, "As the law stands now, the recommendation of the SC collegium is final and binding in the appointment of judges... What is holding up Justice KM Joseph's appointment? His state, or his religion or his judgement in the Uttarakhand case?"

A bench headed by Justice Joseph, who is the chief justice of the Uttarakhand high court, in 2016 had quashed the imposition of President rule in the state and had revived the Congress government headed by Harish Rawat, dealing a major blow to Modi government.

Randeep Surjewala, Congress spokesperson

"PM Modi's 'revenge politics' qua judiciary and 'conspiratorial suffocation' of Supreme Court exposed again," Surjewala said on Twitter, adding that Justice Joseph, who heads the Uttarakhand high court, is India's most senior chief justice.

"Yet Modi Government refuses to clear his elevation to SC as



retribution for quashing presidential rule in Uttarakhand?" he said.

"Modiji shredded Parliamentary privileges and supremacy. He road-rolled independent media. Democracy's last refuge i.e Judiciary is now under most vicious attack ever. If the Nation doesn't rise in unison now, totalitarianism will stomp democracy," he further tweeted.

In a letter to the Chief Justice of India, Prasad said, "The proposed

appointment of justice KM Joseph at this stage does not appear to be appropriate. It would also not be fair and justified to other moresenior, suitable, and deserving Chief Justice and senior judges of various high courts."

The letter said the "proposal" to reconsider Joseph's name had the President and Prime Minister's approval.

Speaking in his individual capacity, Singh expressed concern over

the delay in justice Joseph's appointment, and said "this kind of interference by the executive is definitely uncalled for".

"This elevation is very wrong as it disturbs the seniority in the Supreme Court. We have seen in recent past how important seniority is in the apex court. Judges are being labelled as junior judges and said that they were not fit to hear sensitive matters. So tomorrow if somebody says Justice Joseph is a junior judge and not fit to hear a particular matter, it will be very sad," he told PTL.

"Government will be responsible.

This kind of interference by the executive is definitely uncalled for. By delaying this, they have definitely interfered in seniority rules and in that sense they have interfered in the functioning of judiciary. A very serious matter. The civil society and the judges of the Supreme Court in full court should discuss and take it up with the government," Singh added.

Poll panel to introduce tamper-proof, next-gen EVMs in Karnataka election

The Election Commission (EC) is planning to debut the third-generation of electronic voting machines (EVMs) in the upcoming Karnataka assembly elections.

The so-called tamper-proof Mark 3 EVMs have been manufactured by the Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL) and the Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), both government-held companies and comprise a host of new features such as self-diagnostics to rectify any software faults, and digital

signatures for the control and ballot units to protect the machine from any tampering.

The poll panel's decision comes after months of allegations by several opposition parties — including the Congress — of tampering and hacking of EVMs, a charge rubbished by the EC and the government. No party has been able to substantiate the charge of EVM tampering.

The Mark 3 EVMs will be used across 1,800 polling stations in seven assembly constituencies in Bengaluru (RR



Nagar, Chamarajpet, Chickpet, Shivajinagar, Shantinagar, Gandhi Nagar and Rajaji Nagar. In these constituencies, 2,700 ballot units, 2,250 control units and 2,350 Voter

Verified Paper Audit Trail systems (VVPAT) will be used. The Mark 3 control unit can accommodate 24 ballot units, with 384 candidates, as opposed to the Mark 2 con-

trol unit, which could accommodate only four ballot units and 64 candidates. The microcontroller chip in the new Mark 3 EVM's can be programmed only once.

The software code on the chip cannot be read or rewritten. The EVMs also cannot be controlled through the internet or any other network.

The poll panel says any fear of a virus attack on the system is also eliminated as no operating system is used in the machine's functioning. Moreover, the Mark 3 ma-

chines also show the exact battery level, while the older model only said high, medium or low for battery status.

The EC plans to use the third-generation machines widely in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and this trial is being held during the assembly elections because the new generations of EVMs have been manufactured in Bengaluru. The control unit and ballot unit can only accept software and components manufactured by ECIL and BEL.

Asaram case shows need for witness protection law



Three witnesses were killed during the course of a rape trial against self-styled godman Asaram, underlining the need for a witness protection programme in the country, nearly 12 years after the Law Commission's recommendations in the matter. Before a Jodhpur court on Wednesday sentenced Asaram to life in prison after finding him guilty of raping a teenage girl at his ashram, a key witness alleged death threats from the 79-year-old's supporters. Mahendra Chawla was attacked by two unidentified people in May 2015. Despite repeated rebukes by the courts, the government is yet to come up with a model law on witness protection that can be enacted by the states.

The law panel had submitted a report to the government in August 2006, recommending both witness and identity protection. Last year, the Supreme Court asked the home ministry to draft a witness protection scheme.

"We understand there are lakhs of cases, but it can be done for sensitive cases. Why can't the ministry of home affairs make out some draft programme on witness protection?" the apex court had observed.

The National Investigation Agency, too, had recommended to the home ministry to draft a law a few years back. "Witnesses need protection, especially in terror cases. We had also given details of witness protection regimes in other countries also. The matter is pending with the ministry," said NR Wasan, who was special director general in NIA before becoming chief of the Bureau of Police Research and Development.

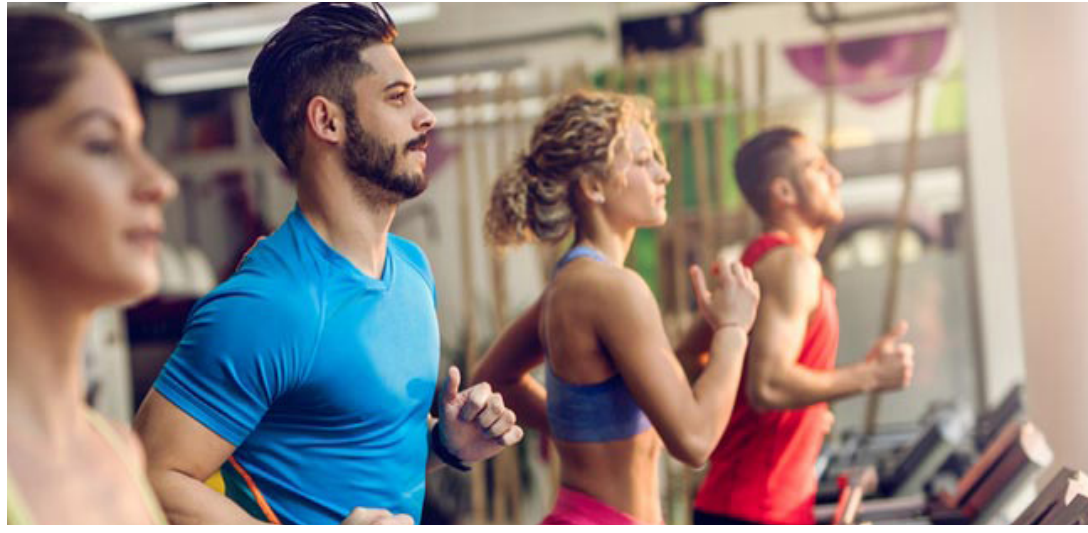
Wasan said that witnesses not only get killed but also turn hostile due to threats from accused.

"The right of the accused for an open trial in his or her presence, being not absolute, the law has to balance that right of the accused as against the need for fair administration of justice in which the victims and witness depose without fear or danger of their lives or property.

Here's How Belly Fat Can Increase Your Chances Of Heart Attack! Tips To Reduce Belly Fat

Beer belly, also commonly called belly fat can increase your risks of heart disease, reveals a study. The study says that belly fat is bad for your cardiovascular health, even if you are not overweight. Having belly fat will make you more prone to risk of heart disease as compared to people who are obese as per their body mass index but don't have belly fat. The latter kind of body shape is known as central obesity, which is defined by a person who is living a sedentary lifestyle, eating too many carbs and has low muscle mass. A person with body mass index of 30 or more is defined as obese. But it has to be noted that body mass index does not differentiate between excess fat, muscle or bone mass. Neither does it inform about distribution of fat among individuals. Body mass index (BMI) is defined by weight in relation to height in kg/metre square. BMI is used to categorise people as overweight, underweight, normal weight or obese. A person's BMI does not tell about the distribution and amount of fat and muscle. Belly fat or any kind of abnormal fat distribution in the body will not be accounted by the BMI.

From 1997 to 2000, around 1,700 people of the age of 45 years or



older in the US participated in the study. These participants were made to undergo a clinical examination where measurements were taken of their height, weight and waist and hip circumference. From 2000 to 2016, these participants followed up for the occurrence of cardiovascular diseases like stroke, heart attack and death from cardiovascular diseases.

The study included people with normal weight, normal fat distribution and the ones with central obesity. It was found that people with

normal weight and central obesity were more prone to risks of heart diseases as compared to people with normal weight and normal fat distribution. According to the study, People who were found with normal BMI, which ranges between 18.5 - 24.9 kg/metre square, and central obesity had two-fold higher risk of heart problems as compared to people who did not have central obesity, irrespective of their BMI.

Hence, any fat around your belly which is greater than size of your hips should be checked by a

doctor for cardiovascular health. People with central obesity should focus more on waist loss than weight loss. This can be achieved by exercising regularly and maintaining an active lifestyle. Make sure you engage in as much physical activity as possible, take the stairs instead of taking the elevator, park your vehicle away from home to walk more. People with central obesity should work on increasing muscle mass by including strength and resistance training in fitness regime. Cutting down on refined carbs is also im-

portant in order to lose waist. In order to reduce your waist size, you need to focus on changing your daily intake of calories. Consuming lesser calories forces your body to resort to fat as fuel. Cutting down on calories can lead help in reducing inches from your waist.

However, you need to be smart when it comes to the kind of food choices that you will make. Certain foods that are known to contribute to belly fat include refined carbs such as sweets and white bread, high-fat meats, and trans-fats in baked and fried foods. In order to reduce your waist circumference, you need to cut down on all of these foods. You should instead focus more on eating whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, healthy sources of protein such as poultry, lean meat, eggs and beans, etc. In order to reduce your waist line, reducing intake of salt and sodium is important. Sodium can contribute to fluid retention and bloating in the abdomen. Also, avoid processed and canned foods as they come packed with salt and sodium.

This includes packed ketchup, sauces and salty snacks such as salted nuts. This should be combined with drinking lots of water in order to flush out harmful toxins.

Lack Of Vitamin D May Up Diabetes Risk By 5 Times: 6 Foods With The Highest Vitamin D Content



Vitamin D is extremely vital to your overall health. It is also known as the sunshine vitamin because when your skin comes in direct contact with sunlight, it produces vitamin D naturally. You may not realize how important vitamin D is for your overall health until you realize the important functions of this vital nutrient. The sunshine vitamin regulates the absorption of calcium and phosphorus in your body. It keeps your immune system running and also ensures the normal growth of your bones and teeth. Now that you know what all vitamin D is capable of, you can certainly imagine how its deficiency can harm you. Typically one may think of osteoarthritis but the health risks of vitamin D deficiencies do not end here. Recently researchers warned that its deficiency can place you at a five times higher risk of diabetes.

An average individual between 19 to 50 years of age needs 200UI of vitamin D in a day. People aged 51 to 70 need 400UI of vitamin D for bone maintenance in old age. After 70, people need 600UI of vitamin D in a day. Exceeding this limit can also lead to some health risks so you must keep a tab on your portions.

There are only a few natural sources of vitamin D. Of them, here's a list of 6 foods with the highest vitamin D content ever. Take a look. Oily fish like mackerel, tuna and salmon have a high vitamin D content. Only 100 grams of canned salmon can make up for 91% of your daily requirement. These can be enjoyed both raw and canned. They also give you omega 3 fatty acids, protein, calcium and phosphorus.

Mushrooms are also an important source of vitamin D. Other than the fortified foods, they are the only plant-based source of protein. Mushrooms need sunlight to grow; this is when they maximize their vitamin D content. One cup of diced mushrooms gives you 64% of your daily requirement of vitamin D. Most packaged milk varieties are fortified with vitamin D these days. So bring another pack of milk and gulp down a glass of this super-healthy drink. It makes up for 21% of your daily vitamin D requirement.

Soy foods are another vitamin D rich source. Every product has a different level of vitamin D so you must check the label before buying any product. Only 100 grams of tofu can give you as much as 39% of vitamin D. It is also rich in proteins.

Oysters are a clam which lives in salt water. This variety of seafood is extremely low in calories and high in terms of nutrients. 100 grams of oysters contain 68 calories and 320UI of vitamin D. They are also rich in copper, vitamin B12 and zinc. One of the easiest ways to fill up on vitamin D is to take cod liver oil. This oil is obtained from the liver of codfish and is more of a supplement than a food item. It gives you 450UI of vitamin D and promotes better bone health in the elderly.

WHAT DOES YOUR HANDSHAKE SAY ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

Your physical strength has a lot of impact on your brain. In short, a fit body means a sharper brain. A study conducted by the NICM Health Research Institute, Western Sydney University, Australia, reveals that stronger people perform better in brain functioning tests. And muscular strength, measured by handgrip, is an indication of how healthy our brains are, said the study published in the journal Schizophrenia Bulletin.

"Our study confirms that people who are stronger do indeed tend to have better functioning brains," said study co-author Joseph Firth from NICM Health Research Institute, Western Sydney University, Australia. For the study, the researchers used data from 4,75,397 participants from all around Britain. The new study showed that on average, stronger people performed better in brain functioning tests that included reaction speed, logical problem solving, and tests of memory.

The impact is not just on the mind. A previous study had shown that hand grip strength is also associated with a healthy heart.

The findings also showed that maximal handgrip was strongly correlated with both visual memory and reaction time in over one thousand people with psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. "We can see there is a clear connection between muscular strength and brain health," Firth, who is also an honorary research fellow at the University of Manchester in Britain, said. "But really, what we need now, are more studies to test if we can actually make our brains healthier by doing things which make our muscles stronger — such as weight training," he added.

Previous research by the group has already found that aerobic exercise can improve brain health. "These sort of novel interventions, such as weight training, could be particularly beneficial for people with mental health conditions," Firth said. "Our research has shown that the connections between muscular strength and brain functioning also exist in people experiencing schizophrenia, major depression and bipolar disorder — all of which can interfere with regular brain functioning," he added.

People with allergies and asthma have a higher risk of psychiatric disorders

A robust new study out of Taiwan has found evidence that people who suffer from allergies are more likely to develop a psychiatric disorder. These findings confirm smaller studies in which researchers have suggested the same. For those who suffer from allergies and mental health issues, it's an important — and potentially validating — discovery. But for doctors who treat these conditions, it's even more significant.

Published in Frontiers in Psychiatry, the study was the brainchild of Dr. Nian-Sheng Tzeng, a psychiatrist at Tri-Service General Hospital in Taipei. An acting clinician at Tri-Service — a teaching hospital run by the country's military — Tzeng told ScienceDaily that he began the research after noticing a pattern. "I observed that some patients with the three A's appeared to suffer emotionally," Tzeng said, referring to asthma, allergies, and atopic dermatitis (eczema). "Therefore, I wanted to clarify whether these allergic diseases are associated with psychiatric disorders."

To conduct the research, Tzeng and his colleagues gathered a database of health insurance claims from within Taiwan, spanning 15 years and all age groups. Among the data, they identified 46,647 people with allergic diseases (such as the three mentioned) and 139,931 without. Of those with them, 10.8 percent developed a psychiatric condition such as anxiety or posttraumatic stress disorder. Among those without allergic diseases, the number was just 6.7 percent. Tzeng and his team concluded from this that those who suffer from allergies are 1.6 times more likely to develop a psychiatric disorder than those who don't. More specifically, those who suffer from asthma and allergies are more likely to develop a psychiatric illness.



The research builds on earlier studies that have linked psychiatric disorders and allergies. One significant study from 2008 — published in the International Journal of Child Health and Human Development — found a prevalence of depression and anxiety among children with asthma. In that study, researchers theorized that the two conditions share underlying causes, including chronic stress, genetic factors, and inflammation. Inflammation, according to Tzeng's team, may be the factor that connects allergic diseases and psychiatric disorders. Although still often considered an abstract term by the general public, inflammation has been gaining steam in the research world for decades. The National Center for Biotechnology Information defines it simply as "the body's immune system's response to stimulus."

This means that, on its face, inflammation is a good thing. It allows the body to ramp up its defenses in order to perform important functions such as healing wounds or fighting off bacteria. The problem is that, in too many cases, the body perceives an enemy when there isn't one — and switches on an inflammatory response that never gets turned off. In 2006, Harvard University published a paper titled Inflammation: A Unifying

Theory of Disease, in which it summarized comprehensive proof that inflammation leads to numerous illnesses — both mental and physical. Since then, even more studies have linked inflammation to major disorders that continue to spike in the U.S., including obesity, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease (such as Crohn's and ulcerative colitis), cancer, and Alzheimer's disease. Allergies, which affect 24 million people in the U.S., are an "overreaction of the immune system," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But now scientists are beginning to believe that psychiatric disorders have a similar origin. Specifically, there is a growing body of research showing that depression responds to an anti-inflammatory diet — in some cases, more than it responds to pharmacological intervention.

All this serves to bolster what Tzeng's research implies — that the cause of allergies may help doctors to not only better understand psychiatric disorders, but also to better treat them. "We would like to let clinicians who care for patients with allergic diseases know that their risk for psychiatric diseases may be higher," Tzeng said to ScienceDaily. "Assessing their emotional condition and monitoring their mental health.

6 herbs for your kitchen garden, from tulsi to triphala to Guduchi, more



Ayurveda texts and modern research says that herbs contain compounds that have beneficial health properties which can protect from lifestyle disorders. Dr Shrutli M Hegde, Ayurveda expert, The Himalaya Drug Company, suggests incorporating the following herbs in your diet to practice preventive wellness and take a concrete step towards maintaining good health:

Tulsi: Popularly known as "the queen of herbs", it has compounds which are anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial. Tulsi helps modulate healthy immune response and supports early recovery from respiratory conditions. Use it to get relief from cough and cold, especially during seasonal changes, when your body is prone to respiratory ailments.

Ashvagandha: This herb contains rejuvenating properties, and being an adaptogen, helps cope with stress, reduces harmful effects of long-term stress on the body, and promotes healthy sleep. This makes it particularly useful in our stressful lives, where good work-life balance is often difficult to maintain.

Triphala: It's difficult to always consume healthy and hygienically prepared food in our hectic lifestyle, making digestive issues a common problem. Triphala helps promote overall digestive wellness in a number of ways. It acts as an effective colon cleanser, regularises bowel movements, and aids healthy digestion. Neem: It helps fight acne by inhibiting the bacteria that causes acne growth. The herb helps promote skin wellness, which becomes even more important during summer, when the skin is prone to acne breakouts and inflammation. It helps rejuvenate your skin, and prevents recurrence of acne and blemishes.

Haridra: This herb contains beneficial inflammation-relieving properties. It boosts cell health through its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, helping improve overall health. Guduchi: This herb supports the immune system and helps fight infections by increasing the effectiveness of disease-fighting white blood cells. Including this herb in your daily diet will help increase your body's resistance to stress and illness.

Fish is the healthiest food you can include in your diet. Here's why

Almost every nutritionist worth her salt will tell you to consume more fish to reach your weight loss and fitness goals. Fish, they say, is the healthiest food you can include in your diet. However, until now, the reasons were not clear why dieticians and nutritionists included fish in most healthy diet. Omega 3 and -6 — present in large quantities in fish — have been called your skin's best friend. But there's more to eating fish than just good skin.

According to a recent study conducted by the Chalmers University of Technology, fish is linked to better long-term neurological health. A certain protein called parvalbumin is found in great quantities in different fish species. This protein helps prevent formation of certain protein structures that are closely associated with Parkinson's disease. "Parvalbumin collects up the 'Parkinson's protein' and actually prevents it from aggregating, simply by aggregating itself first," explained Pernilla Wittung-Stafshede, the lead author on the study.

According to Janvi Chitalia, fitness nutritionist and weight management expert, "Another benefit of eating fish is associated with combating depression. A study which compared levels of anxiety and stress showed reduced levels of these parameters in people who had a regular intake of omega3 for 12 weeks." She further adds that Omega 3 fatty acid plays a big role in improving mental abilities such as improving memory, concentration and reasoning. Skincare basics, 7 superfoods that make your skin look younger, for longer.

LYME DISEASE DETECTION MAY SOON HAVE A BETTER TEST

April 23rd, 2018 — Tick-borne diseases (TBDs) are the most common vector-borne diseases in the USA. As of the end of 2017, 19 different bacterial, protozoan and viral agents have been implicated in TBDs. Moreover, Borrelia burgdorferi, the causative agent of Lyme disease accounts for an estimated 300,000 annual cases of TBDs. Lyme disease in North America is transmitted by black-legged Ixodes scapularis and Ixodes pacificus ticks. "The true incidence of TBDs is likely greatly underestimated, as patients with presumed TBDs are rarely tested for the full range of tick-borne agents, and only a fraction of positive cases are properly reported," said Nischay Mishra, Ph.D. The most frequently employed serologic assays for TBD diagnoses include the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA), indirect immunofluorescent assay (IFA), and western blot. For Lyme disease, the recommend-



ed method for diagnosis is a 2-tiered testing algorithm, consisting of an ELISA followed by supplemental western blots. Lyme disease misdiagnosis may be because ticks frequently carry more than 1 type of pathogen.

"The number of Americans diagnosed with tick-borne diseases is steadily increasing as tick populations have expand-

ed geographically," says Rafal Tokarz, Ph.D. But, the test accuracy is less than 40 percent in patients with early disease and can result in up to 28 percent of IgM western blots yielding false positive results. Recently, researchers developed the first multiplex, an array-based assay for serodiagnosis of tick-borne diseases called the TBD-Serochip.

StayUncle to Secondshaadi: Startups breaking sex, relationship taboos in India

Pankaj Chowdhry knows first hand how difficult it is for young, unmarried couples in India.

The 25-year-old automotive engineer lives with his parents in New Delhi, while his girlfriend of four years lives with hers. They long struggled to get private time together in a society where premarital sex is a no-no and their only options were seedy guest houses with exorbitant fees and invasive questions.

Not anymore. Chowdhry can now book a few hours at a respectable hotel with a smartphone app called StayUncle, which specializes in short daytime stays. It's part of a wave of young startups that are building businesses out of breaking centuries-old stigma surrounding sex, romance and relationships in one of the world's most traditional cultures.

"My girl doesn't have to mummify her face with a scarf or deal with employees' sleazy stares," he said. "We get away from the public eye and feel safe."

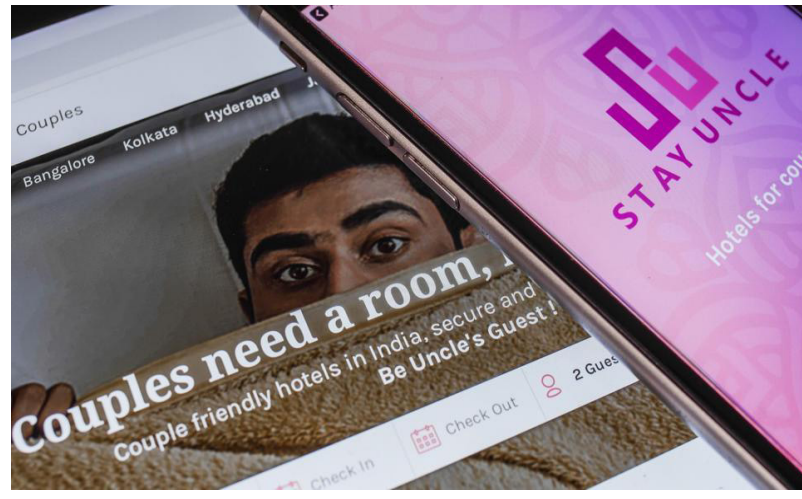
India is a place like no other when it comes to sex. Police raid hotels where canoodling couples try to snatch private moments. Gay partners can face crimi-

nal prosecution, while second marriages are actively discouraged in many places. Premarital sex isn't technically a crime, but it is legally dubious enough it took a Supreme Court decision a few years ago to clarify that couples couldn't be sent to jail for conjugal relations outside of marriage.

Technology is beginning to change practices, if not morals themselves. A startup app called Delta brings together gay singles, while Inclov handles match-making between the physically handicapped. Secondshaadi helps liaisons between the divorced and widowed, long shunned as inauspicious partners. New Delhi-based StayUncle's tagline: "Couples need a room, not a judgment."

The startups see growth ahead. The Internet and Mobile Association of India estimates the country will have 478 million mobile web users by this summer, with millions of younger locals looking to connect through mobile devices.

"Smartphones are helping reach users however dispersed they may be, making it viable for niche businesses to breach social barriers," said Anupam



Mittal, a Mumbai-based angel investor who founded online matrimonial service Shaadi.com.

New Delhi-based Delta, like many of the startups, is part business, part passion project. Founder Ishaan Sethi was bullied as a boy in India, came out while studying at Brown University and then worked in New York before returning home. The LGBT dating app aims to

help users find matches, counselors and gay-friendly spaces, even in smaller cities where blackmail and extortion have been widespread.

"We counsel them about coming out, help find partners, jobs and therapists," said Sethi.

Shankar Srinivasan co-founded Inclov in 2016 because he thinks it's unfair that the country's disabled don't have

better opportunities for finding romance and love. The startup has 30,000 registered users and arranges meet-ups at yoga studios, beaches or night clubs. It's already made 8,000 matches.

"We are giving disabled people an equal shot at relationships," Srinivasan said. "It's a fully-inclusive place where even those without disabilities are welcome."

Sanchit Sethi grew up in obscure, conservative Jaunpur in central India before founding StayUncle. Sethi, who is not related to Delta's founder, initially targeted business travelers, but swiveled in 2016 when he saw soaring inquiries from young couples desperate for privacy.

The transition wasn't easy. When Sethi and Macedonian co-founder Blaze Arizanov began touting the proposition, hotel owners gave them innumerable moral lectures that began "Arre beta" -- or hey son. "They called us evil, said sex before marriage is a sin, and accused us of supporting prostitution," said Sethi, 29. The founders got personal threats on their Facebook page. One mother cursed

them for exposing her young daughter to such culture. Getting the first 20 hotels was arduous but after that, owners began signing on. The service now lists 900 hotels in 35 cities, including socially conservative places like Patna and Bhopal.

Even Sethi's parents steadfastly refuse to discuss his startup with their son. But business is booming.

"After 18 months, we are more profitable than established, better-funded travel and hospitality startups," he said.

Sethi and others benefit from millennials who are chipping away at social conventions. Sakshi, a 19-year-old Delhi student, is a frequent StayUncle user with her partner, also a student. She and her friends talk openly to each other about the service -- a recent student-managed event at her college even gave away StayUncle stay coupons as prizes -- but they don't share with their parents.

"My parents will never approve of a boyfriend, let alone sharing a hotel room with him," said Sakshi, who didn't want her last name revealed. "We're a different India."

Facebook shares surge after sending upbeat message to Wall Street

Facebook Inc.'s message for investors is clear: the business is healthy and growing.

In its first-quarter earnings report, the social network said revenue jumped 49%, beating analysts' estimates, as the digital-advertising business charged ahead. While Facebook is spending to fix big problems like election manipulation and privacy -- issues that have dealt blows to the company's image -- "we're going to invest even more in building the experiences that bring people together on Facebook in the first place," Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg said on a conference call Wednesday.

Shares in Facebook were up 6.3% to \$169.83 at 5:25 am premarket in New York Thursday. The stock has dropped about 14% since the new reports about data-privacy lapses emerged in March.

On the call, executives used the word "proud" five times. "We're proud of the ads model we built," Chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg said. By tracking user activity, the company's marketing business can serve up relevant promotions and make sure Facebook remains free for its users. And there are plenty more ways for Facebook's advertising business to expand further, such as through the photo-sharing app Instagram.

After a month of turmoil and scrutiny from lawmakers, during which the company has struck a contrite tone about lapses in data protection, executives needed to reassure investors about Facebook's popularity and the strength of its advertising powerhouse. The numbers did most of the work. Quarterly sales rose to almost \$12 billion, and monthly user growth also topped estimates. Facebook said it now has 1.45 billion daily users, matching estimates on this key measure of engagement. Shares surged more than 5% in extended trading.

The results were "a relief," said Daniel Ives, an analyst at GBH Insights. Facebook has spent the past month explaining, apologizing and tweaking its rules after an app developer passed along personal information on as many as 87 million users to Cambridge Analytica, a political consulting firm, which may have failed to delete it. That crisis, which resulted in a #deleteFacebook campaign and a congressional inquiry for Zuckerberg, hit toward the end of the quarter -- so its implications have had little visible impact so far.

"Facebook continues to have a long revenue runway ahead of it," Mark Mahaney, an analyst at RBC Capital Markets, said in a note to in-

vestors. "Marketers continued to spend on the platform at record highs. And we believe actions that lead to revenues speak louder than words."

The company's main social network added users in North America, reversing the decline that happened for the first time ever in the fourth quarter. Monthly active users in the US and Canada rose to 241 million, while daily active users climbed to 185 million in the first quarter.

Net income in the first quarter climbed 63% to \$4.99 billion, or \$1.69 a share, topping the \$1.35 per share analysts predicted. Capital expenditures reached \$2.81 billion in the quarter as Menlo Park, California-based Facebook increases its spending on security, video content and new technologies. The company also said it boosted its stock-buyback program by \$9 billion.

Facebook still holds a dominant position in mobile advertising, alongside Alphabet Inc.'s Google. That has let the company increase the price of ads -- Facebook said mobile made up 91% of ad revenue in the recent period, compared with about 85% a year earlier. The company also has plenty of properties where it's starting to make more money beyond the main social network, like Instagram, which is ex-

pected to reach a billion users this year, and popular chat apps WhatsApp and Messenger.

Still, the company has been rocked internally by the data crisis, which has caused Facebook to launch a review of all of its products and evaluate how much information it should share with app developers, researchers and advertisers. Meanwhile, it's working to address new privacy rules in Europe, called the General Data Protection Regulation, which Facebook has said could reduce the amount of monthly and daily users from that region.

Facebook made the argument that because GDPR in Europe affects the entire ad industry, it's difficult to forecast the repercussions -- including on users outside Europe, where Facebook says it's going to roll out the same protections. "While we don't expect these changes will significantly impact advertising revenue, there's certainly potential for some impact," Chief Financial Officer David Wehner said. The company may no longer be able to build products quickly and roll them out without concern for their potential negative impact. Zuckerberg has said that the company failed to take a broad enough view of its responsibility to users.

Sunil Mittal's Bharti Infratel tower deal tells Ambani he's no walkover

His business model has been upended, profitability lies in tatters and the regulatory environment has turned against him. But billionaire Sunil Mittal, who controls India's largest mobile company, has just signalled a \$14.6 billion intention to fight to the finish.

Bharti Airtel Ltd. reported a fiscal fourth-quarter loss this week in its Indian operations -- its first in 15 years. Yet to write off Mittal as a loser in the great Indian data war of 2016-2020 may be a mistake.

For evidence, look no further than the timing of the merger announcement between Bharti Infratel Ltd. and Indus Towers Ltd. The deal, which will create India's largest operator of cellular towers, was unveiled a day after Airtel's financial results. (Infratel didn't fare much better, reporting a steeper-than-expected drop in tenancies amid a scramble by incumbent operators to sell out, close down or file for bankruptcy.)

Mittal is agreeing to share control equally with Vodafone Plc in the merged tower business despite having a higher equity stake. The telecom tycoon is making his intention clear: He wants to monetize his real estate to invest in the battle against Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd.

If the expanded tower company is able to negotiate



better rates with tenants, finding a buyer for, say, half of Airtel's stake could easily add \$3 billion to Mittal's telecom war chest.

Nothing else matters. Bharti Airtel's wireless market share of 26 percent has it comfortably ahead of Jio at 15 percent. However, the problem is that Jio, backed by Mukesh Ambani, India's richest man, added almost 9 million subscribers in February, compared with little more than a 4 million gain for Bharti.

Every second person in the country who took a mobile broadband connection last quarter opted for Jio's plans that offer unlimited voice calls and as much as 2 gigabytes of data per day. Before Jio's September 2016 entry with an expensive \$31 billion 4G network, data was a sideshow in India.

The business model used to be about charging customers for voice conversations -- and collecting money from

smaller operators for terminating calls on their networks. Ambani killed the first avenue by offering lifetime free calls, and the regulator choked off the second.

Jio's stated goals of making 350 rupees (\$5.20) a month from an average user -- and charging at least Rs 50 per gigabyte of data -- are red herrings to confuse competitors into thinking the price war will end relatively soon, as Elara Securities' analyst Ravi Menon puts it. Mittal, struggling with average revenue per user of Rs 116, isn't falling for the ruse.

What Ambani really wants is market dominance, which Menon translates as a revenue market share of 40 to 45 percent by the end of 2019. To get there, Jio could relentlessly undercut on price.

Currently, only 20 percent of India's mobile subscribers have broadband internet. But that could change if the early success of JioPhone -- a 4G-enabled feature phone that

Ambani is effectively giving away -- is anything to go by. While the smartphone market in India is showing signs of saturation, JioPhone is being lapped up by bottom-of-the-pyramid customers excited to go online for the first time.

To withstand Ambani's triple play of carriage, content and commerce, Mittal will need to offer customers more than free Netflix. Given a net debt to Ebitda of more than 3 times, capital infusion into the network would need to come from equity. That's why the tower merger, which will allow Bharti to cash in by selling a stake, is a good first step. Listing the promising Africa mobile business is another opportunity. It's hard to say what the 2020 landscape may look like. Assuming Jio and Bharti are close rivals that each have a substantial revenue market share, the prognosis must be bleak for Vodafone and billionaire Kumar Mangalam Birla.

Currently ranked second and third by subscriber numbers, Vodafone's India operations and Idea Cellular Ltd. are merging. Their strategy beyond marriage, however, is unclear. No wonder Idea's shares have 12 sell ratings from analysts, versus six buy recommendations, while 22 analysts say Bharti is a buy, and only four advise offloading.

Samsung beats profit estimates, but warns of weak smartphone demand

Samsung Electronics Co. beat analysts' profit estimates on booming exports of memory chips, but warned of challenges in smartphone demand in the coming months.

Net income rose to 11.6 trillion won (\$10.7 billion) in the three months ended March, the Suwon, South Korea-based company said in a filing Thursday, exceeding the 10.9 trillion won average of projections compiled by Bloomberg. Sales climbed 20 percent to 60.6 trillion won.

Although the results demonstrate the chips business is strong, Samsung offered no such reassurance for the smartphone industry, where suppliers have issued gloomy outlooks and seen their shares fall in the past two weeks. The Korean company said its own mobile division will see declining profitability amid weak demand and warned of softer demand for the screens used in Apple Inc.'s flagship iPhone X smartphone.

"Semiconductors are doing better and it sets the stage for a very strong second quarter," said Sanjeev Rana, a Korea technology analyst at CLSA.

Samsung shares rose as much as 3.2% Thursday. The stock has fluctu-



ated this year on concerns of slowing chip and smartphone markets after they traded near record highs in 2017.

The mobile-phone industry has hit a slowdown as major markets from the US to China grow more saturated. Global smartphone shipments fell 8.5% in the fourth quarter and declined 0.5% for the year, according to researcher IDC. Samsung held 22% of the market in 2017 based on shipments, while Apple had 15%. Huawei Technologies Co., Oppo and Xiaomi Corp. rounded out the top five.

Samsung's chips unit posted operating profit of 11.6 trillion won, three times as much as the higher-profile mobile division. Samsung controls about two thirds of the global DRAM market, and contract prices for 32 gigabyte DRAM server modules climbed 5.6% in the March quarter

from the December period, while prices for 128 gigabit MLC NAND flash memory chips fell 11%, according to inSpectrum Tech Inc.

Click here for an analysis of the memory chip business

Samsung's mobile unit, which rolled out its flagship Galaxy S9 smartphone in February, reported operating profit of 3.77 trillion won. But Samsung warned in a statement that its mobile business will see "stagnant sales of flagship models amid weak demand and an increase in marketing expenses" in the current quarter.

"Samsung is facing competition from every direction, from Chinese-based OEMs in the low- and mid-end segment and from Apple in the high-end segment," said Jusy Hong, analyst for mobile devices at IHS Markit.

For the display business, Samsung

reported profit of 410 billion won, saying that the result was "affected by slow demand for flexible OLED panels," which are the screens used inside the iPhone X. "Apple's iPhone X shipments have actually been pretty bad, so everyone is looking to the next model cycle," Rana said.

Even though it warned of slow OLED demand, Samsung does anticipate -- like some other Apple suppliers -- a component rebound in the second half, when Apple typically releases new models. Apple is preparing to launch two new smartphones with OLED screens later this year: an upgrade to the iPhone X along with a larger version with a giant display. OLED screens are significantly more expensive than LCD displays, adding to the cost of smartphones that use the newer technology.

Samsung's stock will be suspended from trading from April 30 to May 3 for a 50:1 split approved at a shareholders' meeting last month. The meeting ushered in a new generation of board members to help chart a path under Jay Y. Lee, a vice chairman who has led the company since his father Lee Kun-hee had a heart attack.

Rare bull says rupee will gain as RBI hikes rates this year

The Reserve Bank of India will raise interest rates this year, which will help reverse the declines that have made the rupee Asia's second-worst performer, according to Capital Economics Ltd.

The rupee will strengthen to as much as 62 per dollar by the end of 2018, said Shilan Shah, a Singapore-based India economist. The bullish forecast comes amid a spate of cuts by analysts from banks including Standard Chartered Plc as rising oil prices and slowing capital inflows sour sentiment.

"We expect a hike in the policy rate in India, which will widen the interest-rate differential between India and its peers, including the US," Shah said. "We do also expect further tightening in the US but this has already been priced into markets."

The RBI may tighten policy as early as October, Shah said, with the main repurchase rate rising 75 basis points over the next year to 6.75%. The central bank brought forward rate-hike expectations last week by releasing unexpectedly hawkish minutes of its last meeting.

While higher borrowing costs tend to support the currency, that correlation doesn't typically work in India, where foreign inflows into equities -- an asset class sensitive to rate cuts -- matter more. Bond investments by global funds are subject to limits, though



there have been moves recently to ease the caps.

Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. and Malayan Banking Bhd. both said that a hawkish RBI doesn't bode well for the rupee. The currency dropped to the weakest level in more than 13 months on Wednesday.

"The possibility of an earlier or additional hike will be negative for INR," ANZ analysts including Khoon Goh wrote in a note Tuesday.

India imports two-thirds of its crude needs and the spurt in oil prices has coincided with the slowdown in capital inflows. Foreigners have pulled \$1.4 billion from its debt so far in 2018 amid hardening global yields, and this month turned net sellers of local shares. Elevated energy costs are a threat to the rupee, though Capital Economics expects crude to drop to \$65 a barrel by year-end, Shah said.

"These are concerns, but they will be allayed by tighter policy," he said.

'IPL continues to remain out of bounds for national selectors'

Sometimes it appears the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is confused about how to handle the Indian Premier League (IPL). Not sure whether to treat it like its own son, or a distant cousin who happens to be loaded. In commercial matters, the BCCI is fully switched on and takes ownership of the IPL. But on issues of policy making and governance, the BCCI chooses to keep an arm's length.

According to the BCCI's constitution, the IPL is a 'sub' committee which is managed by its Governing Council (GC). But the GC is nominated/controlled by the BCCI and ultimately everything in the IPL is subject to the Working Committee and the AGM which are the highest decision-making bodies.

Confusing and muddled? Yes, but there is more.

Franchises who participate in the IPL are not stakeholders in the true sense. Teams are privately 'owned' because the IPL sold this asset (the team) for a price and granted owners the right to 'operate' the team in perpetuity. But, unlike genuine stakeholders elsewhere, franchise team owners have zero say in IPL management or governance. They are not represent-



ed on the GC, excluded from all decision making and not kept in the loop on important issues.

Without direct access to the BCCI, communication lines are clogged and teams find out about developments impacting them only from media reports. For team owners, constructive involvement or participation in running the league is a faraway hope. What comes their way, at present, is the odd crumb — unstructured consultation —, a brief 'feedback' meeting or the occasional workshop.

If the BCCI deals strangely with

team owners, the treatment meted out to its own selection committee is no different. While the IPL plays out in 60 matches across India, the MSK Prasad-led national selection committee gives the tournament a total miss and is not present at matches. National selectors follow India's premier domestic tournament, and the most competitive cricket league in the world, on television over dinner like you and me.

This IPL snub to India's national selectors is bizarre. The norm is selectors turn up at all domestic cricket,

including the T20 Mushtaq Ali tournament, and accompany 'A' sides on overseas tours. So, why not watch India's young talent to judge their potential, technique and temperament in a high-pressure 'live' situation?

Reasons for skipping IPL are unclear but this has been the practice since the league started. For some reason, IPL continues to remain out of bounds for national selectors.

It is argued, correctly, that IPL franchise teams are selected not by India selectors but by owners and their relatives who are assisted by professionally-appointed coaching staff. Even so, national selectors, if present at the ground, would get a better understanding about a player's ability.

The irony is selectors, though absent, give IPL performances due consideration when picking players for India. Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammad Siraj, Jaydev Unadkat, Manish Pandey and others attracted attention through impressive IPL performances. Selectors track IPL for picking zonal teams, short-listing names for building India's bench strength and making recommendations for annual retainer contracts.

Virat Kohli recommended for Khel Ratna, Rahul Dravid for Dronacharya award

The BCCI has recommended former India captain Rahul Dravid for the prestigious Dronacharya award and once again nominated Virat Kohli for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna honour.

Legendary opener Sunil Gavaskar's name has been recommended for Dhyana Chand Lifetime Achievement Award.

Co-Achiever Vinod Rai confirmed Dravid's nomination for the Dronacharya award.

"Yes, we have sent a number of nominations in various categories to the government. Rahul is the BCCI nominee for the Dronacharya award," Rai told PTI.

Dravid has been nominated for successfully guiding the India U-19 team to World Cup title early this year. Under his guidance, the Colts batch of 2016 played the finals. He has worked with India A team also and is the bridge between international and junior cricket.

BCCI had stopped sending nominations for Dronacharya awards due to multiple coaches at times claiming credit for a player's success.

"It happened when a former India opener had signed two nominations where coaches claimed that the player worked under them. From then, we had stopped sending nomina-



tions," a senior BCCI official said.

"However when Rajkumar Sharma (Kohli coach) got Dronacharya award, it was a personal nomination. He was not BCCI nominee. For someone of Rahul's stature, we have decided to depart from convention," the official added.

As per Kohli's nomination for Khel Ratna, it has been learnt that BCCI has nominated the Indian captain him for the second time.

Kohli's name was sent in 2016 but being the Olympic year, the three stars of Rio, PV Sindhu, Sakshi Malik and Deepa Karmakar were conferred with the award.

As far as Gavaskar is concerned, his contribution in Indian cricket as a player and then as a critique has been unquestionable.

Normally, the convention for Dhyana Chand award is to confer those who have not got Arjuna award during their playing days. However Gavaskar is an Arjuna awardee.

When I feel low, I go to Sreesanth for advice: Basil Thampi

Basil Thampi has often been helped by timely advice. Some of them crucial enough for the 24-year-old Sunrisers Hyderabad pacer to let go the lure of easy money in tennis cricket, and become a top aspirant for the Indian cricket team. Speaking on his journey from being 2017 IPL's 'Best Emerging Player' to getting selected for the T20 series against Sri Lanka, Thampi never forgets to thank all those who shaped his career — from his childhood club mentor to his Kerala state cricket seniors.

Sreesanth, the pace sensation from Kerala whose career took a downturn following allegations of spot-fixing in IPL, finds an important mention in Thampi's list of advisers. "Yeah, I speak with Sreebhai also when I have some doubt. If I am feeling low, I message him and he replies. He tells me what to do in certain situations, or things that I ought to have done. He motivates me," Thampi said in an interview.

It was the IPL which saw Sreesanth's downfall, but it is the same tournament that has seen Thampi rise through the ranks. "Now everyone knows me. It happened after the last IPL. I got confidence in my bowling. After the 2017 edition, I got a chance in Deodhar Trophy, Duleep Trophy, India A (Away tour of South Africa and home series against New Zealand). I got selected in the India team also for the Sri Lanka tour. MSK Prasad recently texted me to keep practicing hard," he said. Thampi's emergence has come at a time when the Indian pace attack has an abundance of options. From Bhuvneshwar Kumar to Jasprit Bumrah, the competition is tough. Even in his new IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad, Thampi has the likes of Bhuvu, Siddharth Kaul and Sandeep Sharma for company.

"I am not competing with anyone. I know my bowling well. I don't have that much swing. What I can do is hit the right length with great speed. Last year, I consistently bowled yorkers. This time, I just want to mix the deliveries, maybe two yorkers and then a slower one. I am still working on it," said Thampi, who picked two wickets for four runs against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday and helped his team defend a low total of 118. Thampi also worked with Glenn McGrath at the MRF Pace Foundation in Chennai before the IPL 2018. "He advised me to study the batsman well. He told me of different situations during his playing days. He said I should not reduce my pace, even if that means the ball does not swing. This is not the first time I have worked with him. He and Tinu Yohannan have helped me a lot grow as a bowler," he said.

Gautam Gambhir steps down as Delhi Daredevils skipper, career looks done

Indian Premier League (IPL) has provided popularity and commercial windfall to players, but there is no place for sentiment in the glitzy tournament. Gautam Gambhir is the latest to realise that after quitting as Delhi Daredevils skipper mid-tournament. The former India opener led Kolkata Knight Riders to two IPL titles and was bought for Rs. 2.8 crore by Daredevils to inspire a turnaround in the underperforming team. However, he announced on Wednesday that he was stepping away as his poor batting form has compounded the woes of a team that lies last on the points table.

Shreyas Iyer, Mumbai's talented 23-year-old batsman will be the new skipper — he was one of two players to be retained — as Daredevils

looked to make a fresh start though playoff hopes are fast receding.

Daredevils have struggled with poor team balance and performances in the last few seasons. Their hopes of riding on Gambhir's acumen have been dashed. The team has won one game out of six.

With eight games to go, chances of a playoff is all but gone. Gambhir, 36, has looked out of touch since scoring 55 in the first game, a six-wicket loss to Kings XI Punjab.

Gambhir's struggles His 85 runs in five innings at an average of 17 seems to have all but ended the IPL, and possibly domestic, career of a player who has the fifth highest league games (154), fourth highest aggregate (4,217) and most fours (491). Gambhir addressed a me-



dia conference with chief coach, Ricky Ponting, Daredevils CEO, Hemant Dua and Shreyas Iyer and the mood was sombre. "As a leader of this ship, I take complete responsibility for where we are in the points table and I have decided to step down," he announced.

The batsman, Ponting and Dua made it clear it was entirely Gambhir's decision. The

batman said Monday's four-run loss to Kings XI Punjab at the Ferozeshah Kotla, failing to chase down a modest 144, "rang a bell". It was in keeping with Daredevils' underwhelming efforts.

"I absolutely believe we got the group to turn it around. We still need to win seven out of eight, which is absolutely possible in this format. Teams have done it in the past, we

have the capability to do that this year as well," he said.

"Maybe the only thing I can point out is I was desperate to turn things around. Sometimes you are too keen, it just makes you hard on yourself. Maybe I just couldn't handle the pressure which came with the position, responsibility I was given."

Too old to handle pressure But isn't he used to IPL captaincy pressure? "Well, when I joined KKR I was 28 years old, now I am 36. Maybe coming back to Delhi was an emotional decision as well, an emotional home-coming. Sometimes emotion gets the better of you and you get desperate to turn things around."

Another poor year could also lead to a shake-up of the support cast in the team. Dua bristled when asked if he

planned to step down, but said he would not hesitate. There was little doubt Daredevils was a team in crisis.

Ponting empathised with Gambhir, having given way to let Rohit Sharma take over and lead Mumbai Indians to the title in 2013, hailed Gambhir and said the rare decision by an Indian skipper ought to be acknowledged.

"Just to back up what Gautam said, having been in the same situation myself a number of years ago, it's a tough decision for anyone to make.

"As tough as it might be, it gives us a fresh start to this tournament, one on which we can start to make an impact with the talent we have."

Gambhir will mentor the side, but it is only likely to increase the pressure on Shreyas Iyer and Ponting.

Virat Kohli lauds MS Dhoni's batting form after CSK's win over RCB

Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) skipper Virat Kohli lauded Chennai Super Kings (CSK) counterpart MS Dhoni after the latter smashed an unbeaten 70 off 34 as CSK chased down the 206-run target to defeat RCB with two balls to spare.

Dhoni hit the ball over the boundary seven times — including to seal the winning runs — while opener Ambati Rayudu slammed eight sixes on Thursday.

"Dhoni is looking in really good touch, he's hitting the ball really well this IPL but not great to see it against us," Kohli said.

Dhoni, 36, displayed his signature cool at the crease in a 101-run, fifth-wicket partnership with Rayudu, who hit 82. Some have suggested the wicketkeeper-batsman is past his prime but Dhoni's 209 runs in six games, including two half-centuries, have been critical to putting two-time champions Chennai top of the IPL.

"What's important in a chase is to know which bowler has how many (overs) left and who the captain will bowl when, and you play accordingly," said Dhoni.

"You will win some, you'll lose some but the job of the finisher is to finish the

job and help others."

Kohli, however, slammed his side's bowling as "criminal" after the game featured a record 33 sixes.

"The way we bowled was just not acceptable, giving that many runs in the end was criminal," he said.

Kohli was also docked his match fee of \$18,000 because of the Challengers' slow over-rate at Bangalore's M. Chinnaswamy Stadium.

This year's IPL is offering \$8 million in prize money, including \$4 million for the team crowned champions at the May 27 final in Mumbai.

Stephen Fleming not concerned by Chennai Super Kings' bowling

Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming on Wednesday stated that he wasn't worried with his side's bowling unit despite it leaking runs in almost every match so far in the season. Barring just one game against Rajasthan Royals (140), the least that Chennai Super Kings have conceded so far is 165, while on three occasions the opposition has managed to go past the 200-run mark.

Fleming, however, was happier with the fact that his side has managed to scale down those totals, albeit it took a lot from finishers like MS Dhoni, Dwayne Bravo, Shane Watson and Ambati Rayudu to help them cross

the finishing line.

"I don't think we bowled too badly but AB de took the game away from us. So, just as good as Dhoni is at the death, AB through that top and middle was superb. He counted what we had today and I thought we hung in there pretty well," the former Kiwi skipper said. "You could bowl a lot worse than what we did today. We asked some questions and the answers were emphatic from de Villiers and de Kock so they had no problems with that. I would like to bowl out teams for 130-140 but if we're chasing down the scores that they get, it suggests that we're doing ok."

He also heaped praise on



Dhoni (34-ball 70) and Rayudu (53-ball 82) who rescued

the side from a precarious situation at one point to steer

them to victory. At one point, CSK required 99 from seven

overs and they did so with two balls to spare.

"Having seen it (Dhoni finishing off games) so many times, the expectations just get so high. Some of the shots he played tonight (was incredible). He (never) ceases to amaze. In this IPL, his batting has been exceptional," Fleming added before saying, "Dhoni's going to get a lot of the headlines but the innings from Rayudu was outstanding as well. He's been the in-form player for us in all conditions and has followed on from the Hyderabad game with another instrumental knock. We've got across the line and it's becoming a habit which is great."

England legend David Gower fears 100-ball cricket plan is '12 years out of date'

Former England Test captain David Gower has welcomed plans for a new 100-ball format but says it is "12 years out of date", with the Indian Premier League now setting the pace.

The 61-year-old, who scored 8,231 Test runs before moving into TV work, believes the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) may have missed a trick by not acting sooner.

"In many ways you could say that this new competition is going to be 12 years out of date before it starts," said Gower, speaking at the launch of a Lord's property investment project in London.

"The ECB had the opportunity to be at the forefront of Twenty20. This new competition could have started and been competing with the IPL from the outset.

"But for various reasons, which you have to respect, it's taken this long to get under way."

The proposed eight-team city-based competition, due to start in 2020, has had mixed reviews.

England captain Joe Root said it could attract a new audience to Test cricket but his predecessor as skipper, Alastair Cook, believes Tests need to be protected.

Gower believes there is room for both long and short formats, and suggested simply adding another T20 tournament to the schedule would have been the wrong move.

"I agree with Alastair that Test cricket is important and there are people like him who have made their reputations almost entirely in Test match cricket," Gower said.

"But the game has changed dramatically in the last 20 years, even more in the last 10 years. T20 has gained traction and the IPL is one of the biggest sporting events in the world currently. The idea of making this (competition) different has validity, because another T20 competition added to the world's crowded schedule, and the English summer's crowded schedule, would have been just that."

"The shorter the game, the likelihood is you'll have close games, so it will be interesting." Gower is the public face of a consortium that is offering members of the public an opportunity to own parcels of land at the Lord's Nursery End.