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WEATHER TEMPERATURE

STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE	SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 07:05 PM SUNRISE THURSDAY: 05:57 AM
	ACT	ACT	
SRINAGAR	17.2	8.9	LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR Light Rains/Thundershower, Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 18°C & 09°C respectively.
JAMMU	32.5	18.3	
LEH	20.4	4.7	
KARGIL	17.2	2.6	

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RAJASTHAN ROYALS, KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS AIM TO CONTINUE WINNING MOMENTUM

Jolt to Lal Singh and Company: SUPREME COURT RULES OUT CBI INQUIRY



New Delhi, April 17: In a jolt to ousted BJP Ministers, the Supreme Court today did not favour handing over the investigation into the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in Kathua from the crime branch of Jammu and Kashmir Police to the CBI as her father expressed satisfaction over the investigation carried out so far.

"In the absence of any allegation, why should we enter into this as to who should investigate," a bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Mishra said, adding that it was "the primary duty of the state police to investigate a case".

The father expressed satisfaction with the probe conducted so far by the state police, while vehemently opposing the

See Court...Pg 02

PM Modi wanted BJP ministers, who attended rally for Kathua rape accused, out

New Delhi: On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided that the two Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) ministers — Lal Singh and Chander Prakash Ganga

— in the eye of a storm for participating in a rally defending the Kathua rape accused had to go, said two leaders familiar with political developments that



led up to the resignation. The PM and the BJP's national leadership, including home minister Rajnath Singh, party

See PM...Pg 02

Lal Singh takes out rally for CBI probe in Kathua rape; calls for CM's resignation

SAMBA: BJP leader Lal Singh, who had resigned from the state cabinet over the Kathua rape and murder case, today led a rally in support of CBI probe into the incident and called for the resignation of J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti for her

"failure" to address the issue. Singh and industries minister Chander Prakash Ganga had resigned on April 13 over their participation in an earlier rally in support of the accused in the gang rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl in

Kathua district. The former forest minister said the chief minister had failed to understand the popular sentiment and was yet to seek a CBI probe into the brutal incident.

See Lal Singh...Pg 02

Kathua incident: Students, traders continue to protest for justice

Demand capital punishment against culprits



Srinagar, Apr 17: Continuing to press for stern punishment against the culprits, the students and traders from various places staged protest against the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl, Asifa Bano.

The protests against the rape and murder of Kathua minor girl continued from past one week.

Pro-freedom groups, Civil Society, Lawyers, doctors, Traders, students as well as the teachers staged protest to demand justice to the minor nomad girl.

In continuation of the protests, the students from various educational institutions and the

traders staged protest to seek justice for Asifa.

The students of SP College carried out a protest march in Srinagar in solidarity with the Kathua minor girl.

Amid sloganeering in favour of justice, the students marched from their college campus to Ganta Ghar (clock tower) at Lal Chowk and returned to the campus via residency road.

The students demanded stern action against the culprits. "The threat to victim family is unacceptable and government must ensure

See Students...Pg 02

CHIEF MINISTER MEETS GOVERNOR



Jammu, Apr 17: Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti met Governor N.N. Vohra at the Raj Bhavan here today.

During the course of their extensive discussions Chief Minister apprised Governor about her recent meetings and discussions at Delhi and the subsequent developments

See Minister...Pg 02

'Laws protecting women, children yet to be implemented'

No special courts, child-friendly spaces for child abuse victims

Srinagar, Apr 17: Successive governments over the years have failed to implement several laws protecting women and children against sexual harassment.

Official sources told KNS that one such law is protection of children against sexual offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) was enacted by the government of India in 2012.

It aims to offer protection to children (individuals below the age of 18) from sexual



violence including sexual assault, sexual harassment, and the inclusion of children in pornography.

The law has been extended throughout the country except in J&K.

"The primary reason as to why this law couldn't be extended to the state is because child protection mechanism is still in infancy," an official said.

As per the officials, there are no special courts or child-friendly spaces for child sexual abuse victims.

The offenders are tried

See Laws...Pg 02

J&K GOVERNOR RACE HEATS UP: HASNAIN TIPPED TO BE AMONG FRONT RUNNERS

Malik Sameed

New Delhi, April 17: On April 28, 2013, it was announced that Jammu and Kashmir governor N N Vohra would get second term in the Jammu and Kashmir state, with the then President Pranab Mukherjee renewing his lease over Srinagar Raj Bhavan for five more years at that time. N.N. Vohra's term end in June, 2018.

It is worth mentioning here that the although the governor holds office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his Office, yet this term is subject to pleasure of president. The "doctrine of pleasure" has always been used to drop governors any time and thus, Governors have no security of tenure. Further, a governor can resign

See Governor...Pg 02

PDP has pushed Kashmir into throes of instability: NC

Leaders demand exemplary punishment to Kathua culprits

Anantnag, Apr 17: National Conference on Tuesday said PDP's sellout and recurring ideological U-turns had pushed Kashmir into the throes of instability and turmoil as thousands of young men stood disenchanted and pushed into a corner. Addressing the Party's South Zone meeting at Anantnag today, Senior National Conference Leader and Party's South Zone President, Sakina Ittoo said the deteriorating law and order situation and the unabated spate of civilian killings was a manifestation of PDP's politics of deceit and rank opportunism.

The meeting which was attended by Senior



NC leaders, legislators and office bearers included Sakina Ittoo, MLA Pahalgam Altaf

See NC...Pg 02

STROKE PATIENTS NOT RECEIVING LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT AT KASHMIR HOSPITALS: DAK

Srinagar, Apr 17: "Use of a clot-busting drug saves lives of stroke patients, but at Kashmir hospitals patients don't receive this life-saving treatment," said Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Tuesday in a communique.

"Without treatment, stroke patients end up permanently disabled," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan. "Tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) is the approved clot-busting intravenous medication that works by dissolving blood clots which cause most strokes," he said.

DAK President said timely treatment of this clot-buster reduces disability and improves functionality by restoring blood flow to the brain.

"Treatment must start within three hours (in some cases, four-and-a-half hours) of the stroke onset, and the

See DAK...Pg 02

Madni emphasized need to embark together in people's journey, quest for peace

Srinagar, Apr 17: People's Democratic Party Vice President Mohammad Sartaj Madni has emphasized the need to embark together in people's journey and quest for honour, peace and dignity by committing to the avowed mission of peace anchored by Party's mentor Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

Addressing an impressive party rally at Watihal, Qazigund Madni pledged recourse to the noble mission which he said offers a tested remedy to the ills and problems dogging the state ever since partition.

Madni said he foresees a defining movement for the long haul of miseries and mayhem to end very soon and people in general and party cadre in particular would need to recall



services and struggle of the visionary leader.

Madni said memories are fresh with the masses when in 1999 before the formation of PDP, Kashmir was marooned deep in its own blood. Those were the dark days as the people

See Madni...Pg 02

'WAQAF TO EQUIP SHRINES WITH MODERN FIREFIGHTING GADGETRY'

Installation of CCTVs already in progress

Srinagar, Apr 17: With mysterious fires off and on damaging Kashmir's revered Sufi shrines, the Muslim Wakf Board has decided to install modern fire fighting machinery in prominent shrines in the valley.

One of the officials of Waqaf board told KNS that fire extinguishers were put in place in all shrines keeping in view various security factors in the valley. "Modern fire fighting and preventing systems have been installed in 11 major shrines in the Valley in view of the mysterious fires erupting in revered shrines," the official said.

The installation of fire preventive system at all the

See Waqaf...Pg 02

Malik visits Chattergul, arrested at Kangan

'Our budding flowers are being trampled by forces with impunity'

Srinagar, Apr 17: Chairman of JKLF Muhammad Yasin Malik was on Tuesday detained by police near Kangan, a spokesman said.

According to the statement issued to KNS, the spokesman said that Malik reached Chattergul Kangan without any prior announcement and after evading police barricades and check posts.

He participated in a condolence meeting held for slain



Amir Hameed Lone. "After addressing the gathering, Malik was heading towards the residence of an-

other slain youth Gowhar but police blocked his way and arrested him along with JKLF zonal organizer Bashir Ahmad Kashmiri. Both have been lodged at police station Ganderbal," the spokesman said.

Earlier, evading police barricades, Malik managed to reach Chattergul Kangan toady along with JKLF zonal organizer Bashir Ahmad Kashmiri, district president

See Malik...Pg 02

JK BANK RESTORES SUFFICIENT CASH SUPPLY TO VALLEY

Thanks to RBI for timely support: Chairman

Srinagar, Apr 17: Amid a scenario wherein most of the states in India are facing cash crunch and chain of ATMs stand cash starved, J&K Bank with the timely support of Jammu Regional Office of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has restored sufficient cash supply in the Kashmir valley.

Acting swiftly on the disruptions reported in the functioning of ATMs due to cash starvation, J&K Bank requested the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to mitigate the sufferings of the people by providing sufficient cash in the valley.

Expressing his satisfaction over the restoration of cash supplies to the currency chests managed and operated by J&K Bank in the valley, J&K Bank Chairman & CEO, Parvez

See Bank...Pg 02

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COURT

plea of senior advocate Bhim Singh and Delhi-based lawyer Anuja Kapur that the investigation be transferred to the CBI.

"Be that as it may, we do not intend to enter into this sphere (transfer of case to CBI) at this stage," the bench said, noting the submission of the victim's father.

At the outset, the victim's counsel Indira Jaising, who mentioned the matter for an urgent hearing in the forenoon, said the "biological father" of the victim had no grievance with regard to the police probe.

"We are not seeking transfer of investigation. The issue is that the atmosphere is not conducive (at Kathua) for fair trial and dispensation of justice," she said.

"Investigation is almost complete. Charge sheet has been filed. They (police) may file a supplementary charge sheet. The father of the victim has no problem with the police investigation," she said.

"We do not want CBI investigation. I am the father. We are satisfied with the investigation. Every accused has been identified. DNA samples have been matched," the lawyer said, adding that she hailed the state police.

Pertinently, The Jammu Bar Association and others had demanded transfer of the case to the CBI as they had no faith in the probe carried out by the crime branch. The crime branch submitted two charge sheets against eight people including an alleged juvenile for allegedly raping and murdering the girl in January this year.

PM

president Amit Shah, the PM's general secretary (organisation) Ram Lal, and general secretary in charge of J&K affairs Ram Madhav, then spent the day in overruling the concerns and objections of the state unit. By that evening, both ministers had sent their resignations to the party state unit chief, which was forwarded to CM Mehbooba Mufti the next day.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir governor NN Vohra on Monday accepted the resignations of both the ministers.

Leaders involved with the developments reconstructed the sequence of events from Friday. None of them wished to be identified. With the details of the Kathua charge sheet generating widespread political and public outrage last week, Modi decided that the continuation of the ministers in the J&K government was "untenable".

On Friday, he called a party leader and conveyed the decision. "The PM categorically said the ministers must go." The PM's decision was based on the fact that the party must not be seen as 'defending rape accused', nor of 'communalising an issue and crime as heinous as rape'.

Earlier in the week, Mufti had met both the PM and home minister Singh to convey concerns about the situation in Jammu due to the incident and had informally conveyed the need for action.

The state unit of the BJP was unhappy at the PM's decision and communicated its concerns to the leadership. It suggested that this would demoralise the party rank and file; and this was a deliberate conspiracy by the Mehbooba Mufti government, which had done little to address BJP's concerns, said a leader who was in communication with them.

"State leaders also emphasised that this case was three months old and there was nothing against the party leaders; that there were NIA cases against Mehbooba's own ministers but little action had been taken against them; and any such action — in response to pressure from the media and Mehbooba — would hurt the party electorally," he added.

The objections were overruled. "While recognising that it may harm us, the party's national leadership was clear. It had to keep in mind the bigger picture, the larger interest. No one was comfortable with the party being seen as associated with rape accused. It was also wrong to communalise the issue," said one of the persons familiar with the backroom developments ahead of the resignations.

LAL SINGH

It is her (Mehbooba Mufti's) biggest failure. If she has wisdom and conscience, she should resign, Singh told reporters here.

"If two ministers can sacrifice their posts in the interest of peace, those who are actually responsible for creating such an atmosphere should listen to their conscience," he said targeting the PDP leader.

Singh also said that he would press for CBI probe into the incident.

Asked about his decision to resign from the state government, Singh blamed the media for "creating a perception", thus forcing him to take such a step.

"We resigned because the perception created by the national media was not good. It portrayed the situation in a wrong way, which was not the case at all. It was portrayed that the entire Jammu region was siding with rapists," he claimed.

There was no need to resign had the media not created such a perception, the BJP leader said.

"It (the perception) created problems for our prime minister and country. It was not good. So, we preferred to resign. We have not done anything wrong," Singh added. The brutal gang rape and murder of the girl from the nomadic Bakerwal community and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "silence" on the issue were also written about in an editorial of the New York Times.

In the editorial titled 'Modi's Long Silence as Women in India Are Attacked', the NYT editorial board said Modi tweets frequently and considers himself a "talented orator" yet he "loses his voice when it comes to speaking out about the dangers faced by women and minorities who are frequent targets of the nationalist and communal forces that are part of the base of his Bharatiya Janata Party".

STUDENTS

safety and security to the victim family," the students demand.

Kashmir University Teachers Association (KUTA) also staged a sit-in in the varsity premises and demanded stern action against the culprits.

Reports of protest in favour of Asifa were also received from southern areas.

Scores of students of Government Higher Secondary School Nadihal in north Kashmir's Bandipora district also held a protest march in solidarity with Kathua victim.

The school students assembled outside the school and

held a protest while demanding justice for an eight-year-old girl.

The protesting students demanded death penalty to the culprits.

Meanwhile, reports said that police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse girl students of women's college Baramulla.

Scores of girl students of the college after finishing their classes staged a protest at tehsil road today afternoon.

The protesting students were demanding justice to Kathua victim.

Reports said that the forces also resorted to tear gas shelling to disperse college students in Sopore town of north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

Reports quoting eye-witnesses said that the students of Degree College Sopore, which opened today after a week, tried to stage a protest outside the college.

However, forces deployed in the area resorted to tear gas shelling to break up the protest, triggering clashes.

Before stepping outside, the students staged a protest inside the college where they raised slogans in favour of justice to Kathua minor girl.

Besides students the traders also staged protest against the rape and murder of a minor nomadic girl.

Scores of traders held a protest at the business hub Lal Chowk and demanded justice for the minor girl.

MINISTER

within the State. Among other matters Governor stressed the importance of ensuring that the prosecution of the Asifa rape and murder case proceeded on a day to day basis and lumpen elements must not be allowed to disturb law and order under any circumstances.

Governor also discussed with Ms. Mufti issues relating to the long pending elections to Urban Local Bodies and Panchayats and re-iterated the need for strict accountability being enforced in the functioning of the entire administrative apparatus.

LAWS

before regular criminal courts, they said. He said that Act also prevents "re-victimization" by adopting child-friendly measures. "The victim doesn't have to face police personnel or judiciary at the time of testifying," he added. The State Welfare Department has proposed to establish Child Welfare Committees under Integration Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) in all districts. The initiative aims to provide relief and ensure the protection of vulnerable children. However, the proposal is yet to be implemented on the ground. Similarly, most of the government departments in Jammu and Kashmir have failed to constitute Internal Complaint Committees (ICCs).

The government had directed several times to administrative heads of all departments to constitute ICC to address all complaints of sexual harassment at workplaces and submit action taken report to the government with specific recommendations, in accordance with rules.

General Administration Department (GAD) issued orders several times, says that administrative heads of their respective departments shall constitute committees at the state, divisional and district levels.

However so far, most of the government departments have failed to constitute the ICCs despite directed by the government.

Over the years, there have been number of times, when women faced harassment at work places.

But most of the time action was not been taken. "We need committees in every college in Jammu and Kashmir," a woman professor teaching in one of the colleges in Srinagar, said. She said her colleague faced harassment once in the college. "When she complained to the principal, she was told that she should instead remain silent as there exists no sexual harassment committee, which could investigate the incident," the official told KNS.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was enacted by the central government on December 9, 2013, and under Section 4 (1) of the act, every head of the department is required to constitute an ICC to check sexual harassment at workplace.

The law says every institution or organization where 10 or more women work, there should be an ICC to check cases of sexual harassment against women.

Under this law, sexual harassment' includes, physical contact and advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, making sexually colored remarks or showing pornography. It prescribes strict punishment, including termination of service, for the guilty.

GOVERNOR

from the office by addressing resignation to President.

With few weeks remaining to complete his tenth year the curiosity is on who will be the new governor of the state. Any further extension to NN Vohra does not make any sense, according to ground zero voices as he has outlived his significance.

And now accordingly the talk on who could be the new governor of Jammu and Kashmir state has gained momentum and curiosity is on.

According to the Kashmir News Bureau Former Commander of Srinagar based Chinar Corps Lieutenant General (Retired) Syed Ata Hasnain is tipped to be among the favourites to be new Governor of Jammu & Kashmir. The retired general has won support from the people at helm in the centre and as such the decks seem to have been cleared in this regard.

According to legal experts it is not much heard that Governor term going beyond ten years in any state of India.

The biggest positive in favour of General Hasnain is his legacy of connect with common masses. An outstanding officer, Gen Hasnain had, as General Officer Commanding in Jammu and Kashmir in 2010-2011, set an excellent example of right use with combination of soft power with hard power. There has been much talk of under utilization in crucial times, and one good example of under-utilisation of high-level talent is Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Ata Hasnain, who, many say, should have been the governor of Kashmir under the Modi dispensation or handling some important assignment to do with national security.

Raees Ahmad, a youth stated - "Kashmir is facing quite tough times currently and in this era of darkness and rampant bloodshed everywhere the urge to have a rationale person at the helm of post of Governor is need of times. The personal-

ity of General Ata Hasnain is best suited to tackle these tough circumstances as his conduct, experience and exuberance is much needed on ground to change things towards betterment."

The analytical kaleidoscope clearly suggests at this volatile juncture General Ata Hasnain is the best choice for Governor post in Jammu and Kashmir.

NC

Kaloo, MLA Homshalib Abdul Majeed Bhat (Larmi), Peerzada Ghulam Ahmed Shah, Ghulam Nabi Ratanpuri, Dr. Bashir Ahmed Veeri, Mohiuddin Mir, Dr. Shafi Syed, Imran Nabi Dar, Safdar Khan, Constituency In-charge functionaries and Block Presidents of the party.

"Bloodshed in the Valley since the past three years has failed to awaken the sleeping conscience of PDP as it continues to hold on to power at great costs to the State's stability and peace. This is the same party that sought votes to keep BJP out of power and then went on to create false moral smokescreens to sell the 2014 mandate to the BJP. Every single promise made by PDP ahead of the 2014 elections and then in their 'Agenda of the Alliance' stands broken. PDP has shattered the faith that it had sought from the people in 2014 and is the primary culprit in pushing young boys towards violence and turmoil", Sakina Ittoo said while addressing the meeting.

The NC South Zone President also expressed anguish and sorrow on behalf of the party over the horrific rape and murder of an eight year old child in Kathua and said this too was a matter of shame for the PDP as the Gujjar and Bakerwal communities in Jammu had been at the receiving end of harassment and dispossession ever since the PDP-BJP Govt took over. "Had Mehbooba Mufti acted when Chaudhary Lal Singh threatened Gujjars and Bakerwals with a repeat of 1947 two years ago --- perhaps things wouldn't have come to this pass. PDP's complete surrender and appeasement of rabid voices has emboldened those divisive forces who want to pitch people of one region and religion against people of another region and religion. This alliance has created an unprecedented wedge between Jammu and Kashmir regions and continues to polarize people to reap political dividends. We demand nothing short of the capital punishment to the culprits in the Kathua case and want allow justice to be subverted", the Senior NC leader added.

DAK

sooner the better," he said. Quoting a study, Dr Nisar said patients who did not receive tPA following a stroke were 49 percent more likely to die than those who did receive the treatment.

"Despite life-saving benefits of the drug, patients don't get it," he said.

DAK President said the peripheral hospitals don't have stroke management system in place and patients end up in tertiary care hospitals. Majority of stroke victims don't reach these hospitals within the crucial time frame due to delayed transportation.

"lack of public awareness about the signs of stroke and importance of seeking immediate medical care also leads to delay in arrival at hospitals," he added.

Dr Nisar said patients who arrive at hospitals in time and are perfect candidates for the clot-buster are not offered this life-saving measure.

"And the result is paralysis, impaired cognition, speech or vision, emotional and behavioral dysfunction and many other permanent neurological injuries," he said.

Dr Nisar said stroke is the leading cause of death and serious long-term disability in the valley.

MADNI

of the state were suffering from feeling of helplessness, strong alienation, cynical aloofness and complete lack of faith in democratic political process. The arms of state were seen ruthlessly suppressing the people's yearning of even a minimum decent civil behavior and understanding of their plight. Worst was witnessed in Indo-Pak hostility, particularly after Kargil war.

Madni said it is in such a prevailing atmosphere of disgust that Mufti Mohammad Sayeed discerned the imperative of history who brought in play his wisdom, experience and feelings to espouse the cause for peace process, dialogue and reconciliation through participatory political process and judicious restraint by all the combating forces.

Madni said no one can deny results yielded by Mufti's passionate campaign and his success in salvaging the self respect of the people and in repairing the damaged psyche. While he brought a complete turnaround from 2002 to 2005 as head of the state Government, fortunately the leadership of India and Pakistan also valued his vision. Series of measures from opening of roads to people to people dialogue witnessed a dramatic and momentous change in the political scenario. The calm at borders was reflective of bonhomie in which all hostilities were fading. PDP played a crucial role under Mufti's leadership in this enterprise.

Madni said, as ill luck would have it soon after Kashmir had reached a threshold of far reaching consequence, some local politicians got Mufti tenure scuttled. State receded back into crisis thereafter. However, Mufti remained devoted to his mission and continued to play the role of a whistle blower for recognizing Kashmir as a painful issue to be resolved with respect for people with a proud and distinct cultural identity.

Madni said PDP's alliance with BJP in 2014 emanated from his urge and hope in country's collective conscience and strength to resolve Kashmir issue. PDP president Mehbooba Mufti took up the responsibility in his departure with similar devotion and faith. He said that it is unfortunate that some developments in the region changed the focus and the expected process was put on back-burner. The old mind-set re-emerged at the peril of the state's people. Kashmir appeared to many as an issue on table either as a security topic, a basket case or a law and order problem despite her pleadings against. She warned New Delhi and Islamabad long before the re-emergence of deadly violence about the complacency of New Delhi and Islamabad. She unequivocally expressed her view that Kashmir case cannot be controlled through intelligence memos, economic doles and crowd control methods. She tried a reach out for Indo-Pak amity and reconciliation at local level.

Madni expressed satisfaction that the dark clouds have finally started fading away and Mufti's mission is coming alive as a source of hope and touch-stone for resolution. He

said there can be no good vindication of Mufti's vision than the candid acknowledgement of top brass of the Indo-Pak Armies. The obtaining narrative across the region involving society, communities, establishment and governments on an imperative of peace and reconciliation through medium of dialogue and mutual understanding further proves the efficacy of his vision. Madni said Mufti's voices were always devoid of any acrimonious utterances and unlike those who sat on intransigence or those who spoke of bombing the territories across. He was soft but firm in his faith on peace. He does not feel surprised over the changing mindset at regional level.

Madni made a fervent appeal to people to remain wedded to the cause and rejuvenate their resolve for seeking resolution of problems with dignity and sense of self-respect and through decent terms of engagement. He exuded confidence that unfounded criticism against PDP will vanish in the din of dialogue, for a defining movement to arrive.

Madni was accompanied by Naveem Akhtar, Minister for Public Works. Akhtar who also addressed the gathering assured them of good days ahead.

WAQAF

shrines taken place following the fire gutted the several prominent shrines in the valley for last some years.

In 2012, the 200-year-old shrine of Dastageer Sahib (RA) at Khanyar here was gutted in a major fire.

Soon after, the Wakf Board identified several major shrines including Makhdoom Sahib (RA), Assar-i-Sharif Hazratbal, Shehri Kailashpora, Syed Yaqoob Sahib (RA) Sonwar, Drugjan Mosque, and Khankah-e-Moulla where CCTV cameras were to be installed.

The official said that the Jammu and Kashmir Wakf Board has already begun installing CCTV cameras in shrines across the valley.

He said that CCTVs have been installed in the shrines for security management and watch and ward of the shrines.

Official sources in security establishment said that the government has been alerted about installing CCTVs and fire preventing measures after inputs about miscreants trying to cause fires in shrines to create unrest and social divide.

Last year in November, a nocturnal blaze reportedly caused by lightning damaged spire of the Kashmir's holiest Muslim shrines, the "Khanqah-e-Moula", in Downtown Srinagar.

Timely alertness of fire tenders and locals prevent any major damage to the shrine. Built in memory of renowned Muslim saint, scholar and preacher Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, the shrine mosque is highly revered as it stands out in reverence to the saint whose teachings helped spread Islam in the valley. Kashmiris reverently call Mir Syed Ali Hamadani "Amir-e-Kabeer" (Great Commander) and "Shah-e-Hamadan" (King of Hamadan). He was born in Hamadan, Persia, in 1314 and breathed his last in 1384.

MALIK

Bashir Ahmad Boya, deputy district president Ghulam Jeelani, Mushtaq Ahmad Koreg and others.

As Malik arrived at the village, men, women, youth and children of the area came out of their houses to greet him with enthusiasm.

Malik visited the bereaved family, met with the mother of martyr and expressed solidarity with them.

Many heartbreaking emotional scenes were witnessed on the occasion and everyone around was seen in tears.

On hearing the news of the arrival of Malik, people including women in large numbers gathered at the residence of the martyr.

The gathering was addressed by JKLIF chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik.

While paying tributes to Amir Hameed Lone and Gowhar Ahmad Rather, Malik said that "our budding flowers are being trampled by Indian forces with impunity and no one seems to bother or feel any repulsion."

He said that though Indian occupational forces are directly involved in this genocide but the responsibility of this totally rests on the shoulders of those pro-India politicians and rulers who during every election ask for votes from people and after coming into power order killings and massacres of our loved ones.

He said that these hypocrites belonging to every pro-India party recently came out in support of rapists and murderers of innocent Asifa in Jammu but as they saw situation changing around, these turn coats started candle marches and protests in favor of Asifa. Malik said that be it unrelenting killing spree in Kashmir or case of Kuthua innocent Asifa, these episodes have actually exposed the whole pro-India political class in Jammu Kashmir.

He said that India and its local supporters in the form of pro-India Kashmiri politicians have been and are constantly trying to divide the nation of Kashmir into small fragments and groups. "To divide us and get votes that actually serve the interests of India, they try to split us in the name of Maslak (creed), religion, language and region and a great example of this engineered divide is the region of Kangan where people are being divided in the name of Gujjars and Kashmiris to serve the interests of the oppressor and colonial forces," he said.

BANK

Ahmed said, "I am thankful to the RBI's Jammu Office for helping us out of the crisis. Their timely action by remitting sufficient cash to the Currency Chests here is a big relief in cash-starved situation when most of the states in the country are experiencing severe cash crunch. We are looking for their continued support."

A few days back, some of the ATMs across the valley had gone dry after deficient cash supplies hit the currency chests here. The cash situation had further deteriorated following three consecutive holidays.

The chairman thanked the general public, especially the customers of the bank for bearing the inconvenience caused to them in absence of sufficient cash. Notably, the bank had earlier requested the public to be patient and cooperate with the bank as the lack in sufficient cash supplies was temporary.

"We are conscious of our duty as the only Institution with total outreach in the State. Under all circumstances, the bank is committed to ensure uninterrupted banking services to the people of the State. We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to some of our customers due to insufficient cash supplies at some of our locations", said the chairman and further stated that the bank highly values the unconditional loyalty of people of the state towards the bank.

MD Unani programme launched at RRIUM

Srinagar, April 17: With an objective of linking research with education, MD (Unani) programme was launched by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (IC) for the development of NER, PMO, personnel, PG and pensions, DAE and DoS and Shri Shripad Yeso Naik, Minister of State (IC), Ministry of AYUSH today at Regional Research Institute of Unani Medicine, University of Kashmir.

Shri Bali Bhagat, State Minister of Health and Medical education and Smt. Asiea Naqash Minister of State for Health and Medical education, Housing and Urban development, Social welfare, Govt of J&K were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the audience, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the objective of such an initiative is specialization and high-end scientific research. "The institute will churn out rich talent in the form of teachers, researchers and



medical officers. This will go a long way in taking Unani System of medicine to new standards," he said. He urged upon the various stake holders to popularise the institution and attract more attention towards the field.

Shri Yasso Naik, Minister of AYUSH highlighted the role of government in promoting medical education and research in the country. Shri Naik

said, "The Unani System of Medicine is a comprehensive medical system which provides promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative healthcare. The government will consider the proposal of teaching Unani medicine at undergraduate level."

Smt. Asiea Naqash expressed her gratitude to the Ministry of AYUSH for introducing the course and taking

research and development to new heights. She assured every support of the state government for the development of the institute.

Shri Bali Bhagat informed that the government is focussed towards expansion of medical education in view of which five medical colleges have already been sanctioned to the state.

Vice Chancellor, Kashmir University Prof Khursheed Andrai, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Shri Aabid Rashid, Director General CCRUM, Dr. Anil Khurana and Dr. Seema Akbar, Assistant Director In Charge, RRIUM were present on the occasion.

The RRIUM Srinagar is the first Institute of MD Unani course in the J & K state. The intake capacity for admission in MD (Unani) course is 07 in each department selected through All India AYUSH PG Entrance Test.

Suresh Prabhu launches digital platform for MSME Exporters

The Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Suresh Prabhu launched the FIEO GlobalLinker - a digital platform for MSME exporters to digitise their businesses and join a global community of growing businesses today in New Delhi.

The Minister congratulated Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) for coming out with the interesting idea. He said that this initiative will help in expanding India's multi-focused export strategy and also aid in connecting art and artisans to the market. Minister also informed that at least 300 Geographical Indications will be registered very soon, which will give a major boost to exports.

FIEO GlobalLinker is setup with a view to make the business growth of SMEs simpler, more profitable and enjoyable. It is a growing global network currently comprising over 140,000 SME firms, who are seek-

ing business collaboration and growth opportunities through the use of their electronic business card and digital profiles created on the platform. FIEO is available free of cost and it offers exporters a range of features and benefits like:

Business Opportunities: Exporters will be able to find clients, suppliers and advisors using the search and review facilities. Creating a free e-commerce store for direct sales and improved chain management.

Up-to-date Business Knowledge through business articles, industry news and common interest groups.

Improved Efficiencies: Platform provides services like company intranet, integrating email, a business calendar.

FIEO's Services: Application for new RCMC/endorsement/renewal/participation in FIEO's promotional programme and alerts.

Dir CHTI inaugurates 2-day PCP for CUK Admn staff

Srinagar, April 17: The two-day Personal Contact Programme (PCP) for the trainees, from the administrative staff of the Central University of Kashmir (CUK) registered for Prabodh, Praveen and Pragma courses respectively, under Hindi Teaching Scheme, began at Nowgam-II administrative cum academic block of the varsity here Tuesday.

Central Hindi Training Institute (CHTI) Director, Dr. Jai Prakash Kadam in the presence of Registrar, CUK, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, Finance Officer, Mr. Bashir Ahmad Haji, CHTI Assistant Director, Mr. Karan Singh, Hindi Adhikari, Ms Sakeena Akhter and other functionaries of the varsity, inaugurated the programme, organized by the Rajbhasha Cell of the varsity.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jai Prakash Kadam said the main objective of holding the PCP was to correct and rectify the mistakes done by trainees while completing their assignments. He asked the trainees to write the words they learn from time to time in order to gain proficiency



in their writing skills. Dr. Jai Prakash Kadam further said that languages does not belong to any particular religious belief and cannot be associated with any specific community, region, religion or society. "Languages are not only for expressing thoughts, but they link and connect people with one another," he said, adding that before learning language of any particular region, one should get fully acquainted with the culture, traditions and art of that particular region.

Registrar, Prof. M Afzal

Zargar while speaking on the occasion, said that during the last three years, several employees of the university have qualified Prabodh, Praveen and Pragma with flying colors and some of them have already started doing file work in Hindi. He said the employees are keen to learn during the lectures to be delivered during the programme and clarify doubts and mistakes with regard to the use of Hindi, both in writing and speaking. He also gave details about the academic programmes offered by the university and the progress made on the infrastruc-

ture development.

Hindi Adhikari, Ms. Sakina Akhter, informed the participants about the role of Raj Bhasha Cell in promoting the use of Hindi writing in the university. She said the Cell conducts regular classes of the trainees and help them in completing their assignments on time.

Finance Officer, Mr. Bashir Ahmad Haji while proposing the vote of thanks asked the trainees to continuously interact with the experts during these two days in order to gain more knowledge about Hindi writing and reading.

India-US Strategy Energy Partnership Joint Statement

New Delhi, April 17: Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan and U.S. Secretary of Energy Rick Perry co-chaired the inaugural meeting here today of the U.S.-India Strategic Energy Partnership, which President Donald J. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced during their June 26, 2017 Summit in Washington, D.C.

The Partnership affirms the strategic importance of energy cooperation to the U.S.-India bilateral relationship and sets the stage for deeper and more meaningful engagements through government and industry channels. As leading global partners, the United States and India believe that energy cooperation can serve as a centerpiece in the bilateral relationship.

Through the Partnership, the United States and India collectively seek to enhance energy security, expand energy and innovation linkages across our respective energy

sectors, bolster our strategic alignment, and facilitate increased industry and stakeholder engagement in the energy sector.

Today, Secretary Perry and Minister Pradhan led a high-level discussion with senior U.S. and Indian government officials that outlined their vision for the Strategic Energy Partnership and key areas of engagement. Under the Partnership, the United States and India will pursue four primary pillars of cooperation: (1) Oil and Gas; (2) Power and Energy Efficiency; (3) Renewable Energy and Sustainable Growth; and (4) Coal. Both parties may consider establishing additional pillars of cooperation based on mutual agreement.

The Strategic Energy Partnership elevates the role of energy in advancing shared goals, including universal energy access, strengthened energy security and increased energy efficiency. The Partnership will create important

opportunities for advancing favorable policies and commercial investments in support of these goals, including in natural gas markets. In keeping with the shared objectives to provide a stronger business orientation to our energy cooperation, both sides noted with appreciation the growing investment of Indian companies in the United States and the beginning of oil and gas exports from the United States to India.

Recognizing the significance of civilian nuclear energy for meeting the growing global energy demands in a cleaner and more efficient manner, India and the United States are engaged in the implementation of the 2008 Agreement for cooperation concerning peaceful uses of nuclear energy, which represents an important milestone in our strategic relationship.

In this regard, the two sides reaffirm their strong commitment to early and full implementation of our civil nuclear partnership, includ-

ing the Westinghouse civil nuclear project at Kovvada. Cooperation in this area is being pursued through relevant bilateral mechanisms.

As a first step in realizing the full potential of the Strategic Energy Partnership, the United States and India are pleased to announce the U.S.-India Natural Gas Task Force. The Task Force provides a team of U.S. and Indian industry experts with a mandate to propose, develop, and convey innovative policy recommendations to Government of India in support of its vision for natural gas in the economy of India. The work of the Task Force is expected to advance the strategic and economic interests of both the United States and India.

Strategic Energy Partnership teams will convene soon to further develop action plans for the respective pillars of cooperation. The U.S. and Indian co-chairs will receive reports from the pillar teams on a regular basis.

Zulfkar for speedy execution of tribal development projects

Reviews functioning of TA Department

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Minister for Food Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA) and Tribal Affairs, Choudhary Zulfkar Ali today convened a review meeting with the officers of Tribal Affairs Department.

Managing Director JKPCCC Nayem Ahmad, Director Tribal Affairs Department, Mohammad Rafi, Special Secretary Tribal Affairs, Mohammad Shareef, Secretary Gujjar Advisory Board Mukhtar Ahmad Choudhary besides senior officers of Planning, Finance and concerned departments were present in the meeting.

The meeting discussed various issues including detail of funds received/ utilized under SCA to TSP, Article 275 (I), status of work on cluster model villages, establishment of milk villages and construction of



shelter sheds, starting up of academic activities in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) Anantnag and Kulgam, establishment of Tribal Research Institutes and Tribal Bhawan besides others.

The meeting also had detailed deliberations on funds under Article 275 (i) for various ongoing projects which includes tribal hostels, water supply schemes, skill develop-

ment programmes besides other development projects to be executed in the current financial fiscal for welfare and development of tribals.

Zulfkar said the government is working tirelessly to provide better basic amenities to tribal people adding that several reformative measures have been initiated in this regard for effective implementation of welfare schemes launched for the com-

munity.

Appreciating the efforts of the department towards welfare of tribal community, the Minister stressed upon the officers for implementation of policies on ground level and work in a fair, transparent and accountable manner.

The Minister asked concerned officers to establish new ERMS in the state besides directing the officers to identify suitable land for the establishment of ERMS at Rajouri as per the commitment of Chief Minister.

The Minister was informed that the Tribal Department has released Rs 50 lakh in favour of various Universities of the state for Research and Documentation Programmes for Tribals.

While reviewing the status of

establishment of Tribal Research Institute, it was informed that Director Tribal Affairs shall hold the charge of Director of the Institute and expedite the modalities to start the TRI within a month time.

He asked MD JKPCCC to prepare DPR for establishment of Tribal Bhawan at Jagti which includes Administrative Complex, Hostel blocks, theatre and Museum.

Later, the Minister reviewed the status of mega projects under execution by JK Housing Board. He asked the officers of the concerned executing agency to complete ongoing construction works within stipulated time frame.

The meeting also discussed Post and Pre-Matric Scholarships for the students of tribal community including Gaddis and Sippis.

Div Com reviews progress of Swachh Bharat Mission

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan today reviewed the progress of Swachh Bharat Mission in Kashmir (SBM) division.

The meeting was attended by Director Urban Local Bodies while Deputy Commissioners (DC's) of all the districts participated through the Video Conferencing.

All the DCs presented the latest data with regards to achieving goals under SBM. It was revealed that districts like Srinagar and Leh are already Open Defecation free (ODF) and their geo-tagging work is at advanced stage. It was said that progress in Kupwara, Kulgam, Anantnag, Shopian, Pulwama and Baramulla more than sixty percent target has been achieved. The Div Com expressed his satisfaction over the progress and said that Kashmir division is on track to become ODF well in time.

He said that focus should be on sustaining the pace of progress and ensuring that people are made aware of the benefits of cleanliness.

The Div Com also enquired about the awareness drive about the schemes undertaken under SBM so that more people voluntarily come forward to benefit from them. He also asked officials to rope-in local media, TV channels and social media to deliver the message of cleanliness and hygiene.

Tassaduq Mufti chairs LA Select Committee meeting

Committee to visit Shri Mata Sukarala Devi Ji, Shri Mata BalaSundari Shrines

JAMMU, APRIL 17: A meeting of the Select Committee of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was held under the Chairmanship of Minister for Tourism, Tassaduq Hussain Mufti here today.

Threadbare discussion was held on various provisions of "The Jammu and Kashmir Shri Mata Sukarala Devi Ji Shrine and Shri Mata BalaSundari Shrine (Amendment) Bill, 2018 (L.A. Bill No. 16 of 2018)".

Legislators, Nawang Rigzin Jora, Devinder Singh Rana, Satpaul Sharma, Pawan Kumar Gupta, Jeevan Lal, Rajeev Jasrotia, Ravinder Raina and Dr Davinder Kumar Manyal attended the meeting and gave their valuable suggestions



regarding better management and administration for the shrines.

The Committee said the objective of the Bill is better and proper management of the shrines and it has been found that the existing Board has not achieved the objectives to the satisfaction of the local people as well as the pilgrims who visit the two shrines.

The Committee also ob-

served that the Board has not been able to do justice with the mandate given to it and proper management of the two shrines was not achieved.

It was also decided in the meeting that the Committee will soon conduct a visit of Shri Mata Sukarala Devi Ji Shrine and Shri Mata BalaSundari Shrine to take stock of facilities being provided to the local people and pilgrims

in these two shrines.

Secretary Law, Abdul Majid, Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez, Additional Secretary Tourism, Gulzar Ahmed, besides Special Secretary, Assembly, R L Sharma, Additional Secretary, Assembly, Naseem Jan and other senior officers of concerned department and Assembly Secretariat were also present in the meeting.

Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Shri Prakash Javadekar to launch 'Study in India' portal of HRD Ministry tomorrow

In another ground-breaking initiative, the 'Study in India' portal (www.studyinindia.gov.in) of HRD Ministry will be launched at the India Habitat Centre on Wednesday, 18th April 2018 by the Minister of External Affairs, Smt. Sushma Swaraj in the presence of Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar. Dr. Satya Pal Singh, Minister of State for HRD, Government of India will also be present on the occasion. The portal will enable students from 30 countries across South Asia, Africa, CIS and Middle East to select and apply for different courses from 150 select Indian institutions which are high on NAAC and NIRF ranking. The Study in India is aimed at making India a preferred destination for the foreign students to pursue their education. The Event will also include the launch of Study in India film along with a Cultural event by the foreign students. Ambassadors and representatives from across 80 countries have been invited to remain present at the launch of the event.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

Pir Panchal as tourist destination

Numerous places in the State continue to remain "untapped" for becoming attractive tourist spots. With gradual increase in the Gross Domestic product (GDP), variations of short term notwithstanding, standard of living improves and it has a large impact on everyone in the economy, higher salaries (wage revisions etc) and higher wages are paid and that in turn, leads to more spending on goods and services. People tend to spend a part of incomes on sightseeing, visiting new tourist spots and staying for a few days resulting in tourism picking up and with it associated economic activities too get a boost. Tourism, these days throughout the world, is considered as one of the major contributory factors in generating employment and increase in incomes.

With this background, Pir Panchal deserves to be promoted as a tourist destination, rather a major tourist place. The region is best described as a treasure of heritage and adventure tourism. Those tourists and students interested in perusing history and heritage in manner of "on the spot", can find Pir Panchal Range as very interesting and attractive. The State has hitherto not been giving the required attention to this prospective major tourist place and even belatedly, no concrete steps are taken in this regard. It is surprising that even the State Chief Minister's directions in the subject matter are dared to be impeded. In other words, Rajouri and Poonch Tourism Development Authorities do not appear to be taking notable steps in development of the necessary infrastructure in consonance with the directions of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti who presided over the Governing Body meetings of the twin Tourism Development Authorities last year and where major decisions were taken in this regard.

In this connexion, those spots in particular were required to be developed which were heritage sites found along the Mughal Road like Peer Ki Gali, Noori Chamb waterfall, Chingus, Mughal Sarai, Bhimber Gali, Thanamandi and old Poonch Fort. For trekkers, climbers, adventurers lovers of scenic picturesque landscapes too Pir Panchal range provides enough frolic, fun and enjoying of mesmerizing natural beauty. It will not be any exaggeration to say that fortune is knocking at our doors, but we do not respond as we are still neophytes in exposing untapped areas to the vast bubbling market of tourism.

Before major steps in matters of building necessary infrastructure were taken, it is hard to comprehend as to why so far, even food points, view points, way side facilities and the like have not been made available along the road even for passersby, those driving past or commuting on this scenic road. The same indifferent attitude is seen in respect of exploring possibility of a cable car project up to the shrine of Hazrat Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah in Rajouri and an artificial lake at Tata Pani.

LAND TO ADMIRE



► Mehak Gupta Grover

A land of diversity, a land of opportunities, a land of infinite variety, a land of inventions, a land of innumerable languages, a land of belonging, a land of cultures, a land of religious variance, a land of festivals, a land of living traditions, a land of Gods, a land of spices, a land of peace, a land of pilgrimages, a land of oneness and a land of Power. This is My India- Our India.

India is an alluring country. It is a prominent country all over the world for its cultures and traditions. Indian culture is considered as the first and supreme cultures of the world along with being one of the oldest civilisations as well. The vital components being good manners, etiquettes, civilised communication, rituals, beliefs, values, etc. India is a land where many different religions and practices live together in complete congruity. It is a land where cultures and thoughts intermingle to provide an altogether new way of living to the people. It is truly a land of great cultural heritage and enriched traditions. It is home to thousand year old innately sculptured temples and modern skyscrapers.

The national language of India being Hindi, however there are almost twenty two languages being recognised by Indian Constitution (written in thirteen different scripts with over seven hundred twenty dialects), thirty one other languages have received the status of being official and more than eight hundred eighty other languages are spoken in India everyday. India is also home to nine recognised religions, namely Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Baha'i. In spite of so many religions and languages in India, there is 'Unity in Diversity'. It focuses on the existence of unity even after incalculable dissimilarities. The high mountain ranges, vast sea, countless rivers, large river-irrigated lands, dark forests, sandy deserts, all these have adorned India with an exceptional diversity. The modern Indian civilisation has been nourished and developed by multiracial contributions. From times immemorial, diverse races migrated into India and got themselves settled here. The unique ethnic groups such as the Aryans, the Persians, the Arabs, the Kushanas, the Sakas, the Europeans and many more races came to India and enriched Indian culture and ethnicity. The national customs, traditions, national festivals which we Indians celebrate irrespective of caste, creed, colour, religion, in all parts of the country contains within them a sense of unity. Our true nationality is mankind and India follows this saying with a true heart.

Rightly said by PM Narendra Modi "Unity in diversity is India's strength. There is simplicity in every Indian. There is unity in every corner of India.

This is our strength."

Unity in diversity is not just another phrase or quotation. But, these words are highly prudent to a country like India that is incredibly rich in culture and heritage. The warmth in the relations and euphoria in celebrations make the country stand out distinctively in the clutter. The cuisines, festivals, music, literature and theatre- everything is special in this land of God.

Our incredible India is truly incredible! India is aptly considered as the land of inventions. The number system was invented in India by Aryabhata. Algebra, trigonometry, geometry and calculus originated from India. Most of the European languages are originated from Sanskrit. The binary number system used in computers and digital services was invented in India. The value of 'pi' was first discovered in India by Budhayana, ages before the European mathematicians. The wireless communication was first invented by the Indian scientist Professor Jagdish Chandra Bose. Chess was invented in India during Gupta empire. Yoga- the union of the individual consciousness was also invented in India. The word yoga was first mentioned in oldest sacred texts of the Rig Veda. Buttons were discovered in the Indus valley civilisation almost 5000 years ago. Indians started cultivating cotton during 4th and 5th millennium. Rulers- made of ivory were invented in India. Flush toilets were first used in the Indus valley civilisation. The township of Harappa and Mohenjodaro had flush toilet systems in all the houses connected to sewage system. And still we say India is an illiterate country? No doubt the literacy rate in India is not too high and poverty is also at it's high, but every country has certain flaws, right. And working towards improving this blemish is important which India is doing with full dedication.

India is a multicultural country and same is reflected in the festivals of India. There are many festivals which are celebrated as national festivals; while a number of them are celebrated by members of particular religious groups. These Indian festivals bind all Indians together irrespective of their colour, lineage, belief etc. Major festivals are Diwali (festival of lights), Janamashtmi (birthday of lord Krishna), Shivratri (birthday of lord Shiva), Holi (festival of colors), Onam (harvest festival), Raksha Bandhan (festival of brothers and sisters), Eid-Ul-Fitr (one of the most important Muslim festival), Ramzan (holy month for Muslims dedicated for prayers), Easter (festival celebrating resurrection of Jesus from dead), Christmas (birthday of Jesus Christ), Guru Nanak Jayanti (birth of first Sikh guru- Guru Nanakji), Baisakhi (sikh's new year), Mahavir Jayanti (birth of Jain guru Mahaviraji), Pajushan (important festival for jains) and list is endless. Each festival is celebrated with full fervour. Why do people still say- we are not one?

In words of Mark Twain, 'In religion, India is the only millionaire. The one land that all men desire to see and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for all the shows of all the rest of the globe combined.'

The influence of various cultures on each other is evident from the architectural styles, languages as well as the practices in various parts of the country. This innate mixture of various traditions give India the place and the reputation of being the most tolerant and patient country in the world.

Apart from so many religions and languages, India is known for its flavours- which spread the aroma of love and peace all over. The glory of Indian spices are known throughout the world. India commands a formidable position in the world spice trade. Indian spices are popularly known for their aroma and flavour in domestic as well as international markets. It is the world's largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices; and accounts for half of the global trading in spices. Out of 109 spices listed by ISO, India produces around 75 spices. Even organic spice farming is gaining prominence in India.

If we consider India to be the best nation in the world, it is because of all the above features but the major reason is the values which binds the people together.

Asifa

Dampened by clanging temple bells
My screams died before my death
They tied me down in a little space
Like their God in the other room
He silently watched like a stone
While they defiled Him and me

They kept me captive for eight days
Against eight summers I ever lived
They drugged me and starved me out
So that I could not shout
Within the precincts of their holy place
They found solace in my sobs

My tears could not melt their heart
Who fought with me their holy war
Pain in my eyes they could not see
With the spite and their lust for me
I knew no religion at my age
But their rage trounced on me

My sedated eyes figured their shadows
While they crushed me under their weight
They clogged with their heavy hand
My mouth that tried to shout aloud
I called my mom with my feeble whispers
But they choked me with my head scarf

My tears rolled down to floor
Where my hair band was flung away
My blood made my clothes wet
While they bet their turns on me
I lost conscience hundred times
Paid the price for their crimes

Even the stone behind the wall
Pleaded for mercy and to let me off
But they had to fight for their faith
A crusade against a little soul
My tiny body was enough to prove
For them that their faith is true

On my drugged childish innocence
They flagged the victory of their religion
Taught my community and parents
With my honour a painful lesson
How cruel they have been
Heartless people I have never seen

They bribed cops to destroy evidence
With the money from temple coffers
They washed my purple shirt
That had turned crimson
With the holy water
In the name of religion

SY. SAJJAD QADRI

AT HOME AND IN EXILE

► Sujatha Byravan

At the height of the Syrian and Rohingya crises, much of the world's attention turned to forced displacement and refugees. Both exemplified the typical conditions under which people are forcibly displaced: war, political persecution, economic instability and repression. Still, most of the world's migration is internal, i.e. within the same country. Among the tens of millions displaced in 2015, 21.3 million were refugees, but 40.8 million were internally displaced. People usually change their homes to improve household income, for marriage or other purposes relating to family.

With climate change, however, its worsening slow onset effects such as droughts, effects from sea level rise and water shortages will cause many more to leave their homes and move to safer places. Such migration may be a choice in the initial stages; for instance, a young member may travel to a city close by during a drought to increase his or her family's income. But as the stress becomes more severe, the decision to move

may be forced. The gradual rise in sea levels wherein people are compelled to leave their island nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and become climate exiles is one such ongoing process that will likely increase out-migration over time.

Why people move In "Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration", a recent report by the World Bank, it is estimated that in Latin America, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa over 143 million people would be forced to move within borders by 2050 as a result of slow onset climate events alone. In the worst-case scenario, about 40 million of these migrants would be in South Asia, which is the most populous of the regions studied, with a number of climate change effects anticipated.

The report examines countries in East Africa, South Asia and Central America more closely. Here, it dives deep into the conditions in Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Mexico. Three possible scenarios are described: high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions along with unequal development paths, regarded as the

pessimistic reference scenario; an inclusive development scenario with high GHG emissions but development paths that improve access to services for the poor and consider their priorities and unmet needs; and a climate-friendly scenario involving lower GHG emissions but with unequal development.

South Asia is characterised by rain-fed farmland in large parts of the region. With variability in the monsoons and warmer temperatures, crop failures will lead to migration from the Gangetic plains and from the rice-growing northeast of Bangladesh and the inundated coasts. In the pessimistic scenario, the numbers forced to move internally in South Asia are expected to increase six-fold between 2020 and 2050 and will continue to rise beyond 2050 without appropriate climate action. Even in the inclusive development and climate-friendly scenarios, tens of millions will be forced to migrate. While people normally gravitate to big cities, those along the coast such as Mumbai, Chennai, Chittagong and Dhaka will themselves be vulnerable to storm surges and other effects from sea level

rise.

The poor would be the worst affected by these slow onset events and most of them would migrate out of rural areas to nearby urban settlements, which would be cities and the peri-urban surroundings. Such "hotspots" of in and out migration would be stressed for natural resources, public services and livelihoods. In India, areas between Chennai and Bengaluru have been highlighted in the report along with those around Mexico City, Guatemala City and Nairobi. In India, there are already signs of unplanned and frontier-led growth in peri-urban areas. Past experience shows that planning that ignores the ecosystem services provided by local natural resources such as water tanks and forested areas generates further problems particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable.

The implications of these internal migrations will be significant for development in the areas and for the lives of these people. Therefore, understanding migration patterns, getting better socioeconomic data on migration and preparing in advance through appropriate

planning become critical. The scenarios used in the Bank report could be extended to cover other time periods and could also be more localised. Current climate modelling methods are not accurate at high resolutions for local decision-making, but these are expected to improve over time.

What can be done?

What kind of policies are needed? Reducing GHG emissions is of utmost urgency, although that seems to be taking place at a pace determined by geopolitical as well as local initiatives. Second, integrating internal migration with ongoing development planning is vital. The peri-urban areas, which are expected to be hot spots, already show problems of water shortage, waste management, nutritional deficiency, limited services such as health and education, and poor infrastructure. Ecosystems, part of the natural resources in peri-urban areas, ought to be protected as "special ecological zones", so that as urban settlements expand, they don't eat into ecosystem services. Skill building, job training and other opportunities for education.

Decide school safety guidelines in three months, SC asks Centre

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Centre to decide in three months on demands for framing of safety guidelines for all schools, as sought by the father of a seven-year-old boy who was killed in a Gurgaon school, and some lawyers.

The top court said the decision taken by the government should cover both public and private schools.

A bench of Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and RF Nariman said the court was not an expert on framing of policy or guidelines for schools and it would be appropriate if the government looks into the cause raised in various writ petitions.

"We direct Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) to look into the prayers in the PILs and consider taking a decision in three months. The decision taken shall be for both government as well as private schools," the bench said.

Earlier, the apex court had sought compilation of norms formulated by the Centre and states for its consideration. It had asked all the states and



union territories to file their responses on the PILs filed by father of the deceased child, some lawyers and organisations.

Three states -- Haryana, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh -- have filed their responses in the case.

The plea filed by two women lawyers, Abha R Sharma and Sangeta Bharti, sought framing of "non-negotiable" child safety conditions and implementation of existing guidelines

to protect school-going children from offences like sexual abuse and murder across the country.

The plea had also sought cancellation of licences and forfeiture of state grants of erring schools.

Another PIL, filed by lawyer Sujeta Srivastava, raised the issue of children "being exploited and subjected to child abuse repeatedly within the boundaries of the schools" and demanded that central and state

governments notify a set of "non-negotiable" child safety conditions for schools.

Besides the Human Resources Ministry, the plea has made all state governments and union territories as parties and sought proper implementation of the existing guidelines of authorities including the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) on prevention of child abuse in schools.

Referring to the guidelines, it said every school is required to have a "child protection policy which should be understood, explained and signed by all employees or recruits".

All new employees must go through a day-long orientation programme on issues related to child protection within a month of their joining, the plea suggested while referring to the guidelines. Each school must have child abuse monitoring committee with two student as representatives and a thorough police verification was needed before employing a person in a school, it said.

PM Modi can't face Lok Sabha for even 15 minutes: Rahul Gandhi

Under attack from the BJP for virtual washout of the recent Budget session of Parliament, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday hit back, saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi has the time to travel all over the country, but could not spare 15 minutes for Lok Sabha.

"The Prime Minister is travelling across the country but he does not have 15 minutes to give a speech in the Lok Sabha," Rahul Gandhi told reporters in an informal chat on the second day of his three-day visit to his Parliamentary constituency of Amethi.

"15 minute de dein, khare nahi ho payenge Lok Sabha mein (He will not be able to face the Lok Sabha even for 15 minutes, he will not be able to answer our queries)," Rahul said.

"It's a case of direct theft in the Rafale deal... Rs 45,000 crore have been given to his (Modi's) industrialist friend," he said, referring to the Indo-French inter-governmental pact inked in September 2016 for buying 36 off-the-shelf Dassault Rafale twin-engine fighters for the Indian Air Force.



The Congress president said, "Jobs were snatched but the Prime Minister did not speak a word on it."

"He (Modi) refers to Nirav Modi as Nirav and Mehul Choksi as Mehul bhai and this is a fact... whose achhe din (good days) have come... Modi ji had said good days would come for the people but the reality is achhe din have come for only 15 people like Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, while for the farmers, labourers and the poor, these are bad days," he said.

"Nirav Modi fled with the country's money, but the PM did not utter a word... he took out the Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes from the pockets of the common man in the name of demonetisation and put them in the pocket of Nirav Modi."

Five father-children duos in Congress' first list of candidates for Karnataka polls

The first list of candidates announced by the Congress on Sunday threw up five father-children duos who will battle it out in the crucial May 12 assembly elections in Karnataka. Two such pairs have contested previously and three debutants have been fielded alongside their fathers.

The most prominent among them are Siddaramaiah and his son Yathindra, who will contest from the neighbouring constituencies of Chamundeshwari and Varuna, which the chief minister vacated for his son.

State home minister Ramalinga Reddy's daughter Soumya will contest from the Jayanagar constituency, which is next to the BTM Layout constituency, currently held by her father.

Reddy was a five-time legislator from the Jayanagar constituency from 1989 to 2008 before it was split into Jayanagar and BTM layout constituencies after delimitation in 2008. Reddy won the two subsequent elections from BTM Layout.

Reddy said while speaking to the Hindustan Times that he was confident that his daughter would win the Jayanagar seat.

"I had previously won from there, so I definitely know the constituency. Besides, the BJP legislator has anti-incumbency against him," he added.

Law minister TB Jayachan-



dra's son Santhosh is set to contest from the Chikkanayakanahalli constituency in Tumakuru district, while his father will once again contest from the Sira seat.

The father-son duos of M Krishanappa and Priya Krishna, and Shamanur Shivashankarappa and SS Mallikarjun have been fielded once again. Krishna was the richest MLA in the previous election with declared assets of Rs 911 crore.

Shivashankarappa and his son, who are Lingayats, had opposed their own party-led state government's move to recognise the sect as a separate religious minority.

The Congress leadership has come under fire for giving tickets to sons and daughters of senior leaders, bypassing the earlier one family-one ticket norm followed in some states, including Punjab.

Working president of the party's Karnataka unit Dinesh Gundu Rao said the decisions to give tickets were all taken keeping the likelihood of victory in mind.

"In the case of really tall

leaders, their families, too, become politically prominent. So these people are connected with their constituencies and the people there. Hence, we picked them because we feel they are likely to win," Gundu Rao said.

"In the case of Yathindra, it had already been announced that he would contest from Varuna. In fact, our discussions were more centred on trying to find the chief minister a seat to contest from," he said.

"In selecting Santhosh and Soumya we have actually posed them a challenge. In Chikkanayakanahalli, our candidates lost deposits in the past four elections, and there hasn't been a Congress legislator from that constituency for 40 years," said Gundu Rao, whose father was a former chief minister of the state.

"In Jayanagar, after the constituency was split in 2008 and her father shifted to the BTM Layout constituency, the BJP has won the two subsequent elections," he said.

Gundu Rao, while explain-

ing the decision on other debutants whose family members are senior party leaders, said in the case of Roopa Shashidhar, former Union minister KH Muniyappa's daughter, too, the constituency was not a safe seat as the party had not won there in the last few contests.

The spouses of two recently deceased 'sitting' legislators have also been fielded. Former minister Qamarul Islam's wife K Fatima will contest from his erstwhile constituency of Kalaburagi Uttar. Kirtana Rudresh Gowda, the wife of YN Rudresh Gowda who died recently, is contesting from Belur.

In the first list of 218 candidates for the 224 seats released by the ruling party, 103 of the 122 sitting MLAs have been given the tickets.

Karnataka is one of the three states where it is still in power and the Bharatiya Janata Party is pushing for a comeback in the southern state ahead of the Lok Sabha elections next year.

A win for the Congress would come as a huge boost not just for the party but also Rahul Gandhi, who took over as the party chief in December and has been aggressively taking on the Modi government in public as well as social media.

The Congress won 122 out of 224 seats in the last assembly polls held in 2013.

India wins elections to key United Nations subsidiary bodies

India has won an election to a crucial non-governmental organisation committee in the United Nations (UN) after garnering the highest number of votes, besides getting elected by acclamation to other subsidiary bodies in five separate polls.

The UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held elections to a number of its subsidiary bodies at the United Nations on Monday. The ECOSOC focusses on advancing the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental.

Following the elections, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin told PTI that the "results reflect, yet again, the broad support and many friends India has amongst UN members".

India topped the election to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations.

The Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations is a standing committee of ECOSOC and its main tasks include consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by NGOs and consideration of quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs in General and Special categories.

In one round of secret balloting, the Council elected Bahrain, China, India and



Pakistan in the Asia Pacific States category and Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua (Latin American and Caribbean States) to serve a four-year term beginning on January 1, 2019.

India got the highest number of votes at 46, followed by Pakistan (43), Bahrain (40) and China 39. The Council elected by acclamation 11 other nations to serve the same four-year term.

India was also elected by acclamation to the Commission on Population and Development for a term beginning April 16, 2018 and expiring in 2021.

Under its terms of reference the Commission is to assist the Council by arranging for studies and advising the Council on population issues and trends, integrating population and development strategies and population and

and Swaziland, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Thailand, Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico, Austria, France, Turkey and the United States.

The Commission acts as the principal policymaking body of the UN in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Its mandate includes improving international action to combat national and transnational crime and the efficiency and fairness of criminal justice administration systems.

India was among 14 nations elected by acclamation by the Council to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The elected members will serve three-year terms beginning January, 2019.

For the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Council elected by acclamation 16 members, including India, for a three-year term beginning January 2019.

Govt announces plans to build Delhi-Mumbai expressway for Rs 1 lakh crore

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has said a new express highway connecting Delhi and Mumbai will be built at a cost of Rs 1 lakh crore.

The transport and highways minister also talked about plans to build Chambal expressway that would be connected to the Delhi-Mumbai expressway. The Chambal expressway will benefit states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Gadkari has announced development of a new highway alignment between Delhi and Mumbai, the ministry of road transport and highways said in a statement.

"A sum of Rs 1 lakh crore will be spent on this expressway... Nitin Gadkari outlined major initiatives of his ministry for de-congestion of Delhi NCR. A total of ten projects are under way costing Rs 35,600 crore," it said.

About 40,000 commercial vehicles enter Delhi on a daily basis, which cause pollution and congestion in the city state, Gadkari, who is also holding the portfolio of water resources and Ganga rejuvenation, said in the statement.

An ambitious scheme of developing Eastern and Western Peripheral Expressways around Delhi was taken up, and the Eastern Peripheral Expressway will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 29.

Similarly, to ease traffic in East Delhi, Delhi-Meerut Expressway was envisaged, and its Delhi-Dasna portion will also be inaugurated by the Prime Minister on the same day by a road show.

Gadkari said work on signal-free corridor from Dhau-la Kuan to Airport has been awarded at a cost of Rs 260 crore.

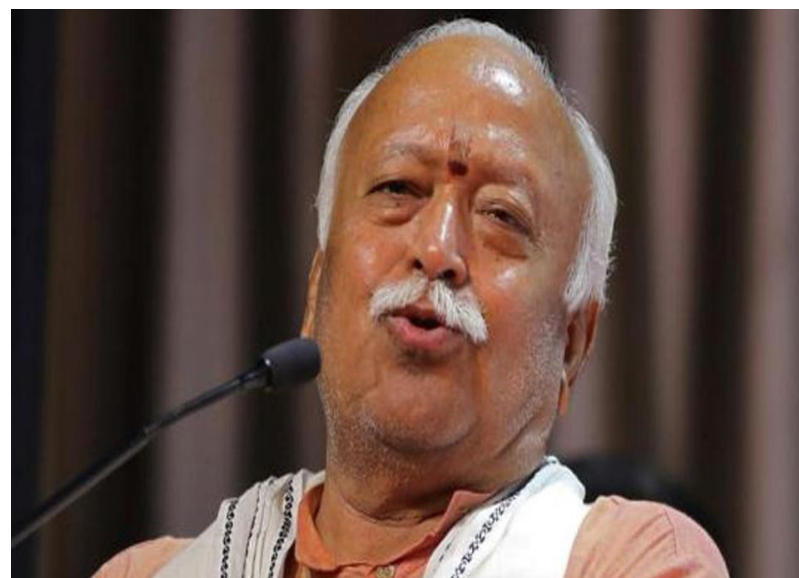
GDP does not reflect true economic performance of India: RSS chief

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat believes that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not truly reflect the economic performance of India, as it is a foreign concept. He suggested that Niti Aayog can come up with a concept to measure growth in India based on parameters exclusive to the economic personality of the country. He also said Air India should be sold only to an Indian company.

Speaking about long-term perspectives for the Indian economy and economic policies at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) in Mumbai, Bhagwat said, "There are countries that have rejected the concept of GDP. Bhutan uses a happiness index. In the Indian scenario that may not be suitable, so we can come up with our own index for measuring growth."

Bhagwat also rejected the concept of a cashless economy, which has been championed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The RSS chief said, "We can aim for a less-cash economy. But there are many people in this country who cannot go cashless. They simply cannot afford to invest energy in understanding 'cashless'. There needs to be some cash flowing in the world economy."

Even as the government pushes to



privatise debt-ridden Air India, Bhagwat said Air India should only be handed over to an Indian company. "It is not that Air India is not working properly, but it is not being run properly. It should be handed over to someone who can run it well. But this has to be an Indian company. India should never hand over its domestic airspace to a foreign company," he said. Bhagwat said Air India has many assets that need to be preserved, such

as landing rights at airports in major cities across the world.

The RSS chief said India by adhering to good economic principles can set an example before the world. Asserting that agricultural economy will have to give way to trade and business, he urged the country to accept that some agricultural land will have to be forfeited for business and trade, as the three will go hand in hand for development.

Maharashtra police raids Dalit activists' homes, offices in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur

The Maharashtra Police carried out multi-city raids on Tuesday against prominent Dalit activists and supporters in a fallout of the January 1 caste riots in Koregaon-Bhima, official sources said here.

The raids which started at around 5 a.m., and were carried out by several teams of the Pune police in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, in the homes and offices of various Dalit activists.

Besides, the police also zeroed in on those involved or connected with the Elgaar Conference of December 31, 2017 held in Pune, which was addressed by Gujarat Dalit leader and MLA Jignesh Mewani and JNU leader Umar Khalid, Chhattisgarh activist Soni Sori and Bhim Army president Vinay Ratan Singh.

The Pune police also raided and searched the home of prominent lawyer Surendra Gadling in Nagpur. He was representing several alleged Maoists in different courts.

Searches continued at the premises of the leftist organization, Kabir Kala Manch and Republican Panthers Party in connection with the Elgaar Conference and leaders like Ramesh Gaychor and Sagar Gorkhe.

In Mumbai, searches were carried out at the residences of Left activists Sudhir Dhawale and Harshali Potdar. The police carried search warrants at all the places.

Reacting sharply to the police action, Bharipa Bahujan Mahasangh President Prakash Ambedkar termed it as "harassment and diversionary tactics" of the government.

"Instead of arresting Sambhaji Bhide, alias Guruji, the main culprit who fuelled the Koregaon-Bhima riots, the government is indulging in these diversions."

Go ahead and relish mangoes this summer but don't overindulge, warn experts

Although the blazing sun and the sweltering heat make life unbearable during the summer in India, the season also brings along its share of perks, with mango possibly being the best of them! The delectable and succulent 'king of fruits' not only serves as a sweet dish in itself when it is ripe, but is also used in several delicacies, desserts and beverages.

But experts opine that although this gorgeous orange-yellow fruit is packed with several health benefits, its moderate consumption is the key to stay healthy and fit as feasting too much on this high-calorie fruit may lead to health problems. Different states in India boast of different varieties of mango including Alphonso, Chaunsa, Langra and Kesar.

Ruffy Shaikh, executive chef at the city-based Peninsula Redpine hotel says depending on the varieties of regional mangoes available, restaurants use them in preparing dishes. "Alphonso mangoes are used to make 'aamras' in Maharashtra, while Badami mangoes are used in

making variety of dishes like 'maavina hannina gojju', 'mango rasa' curry in Karnataka. Chaunsa, Langra and Dasheri varieties are used in making sweet dishes like kheer, phirni, rabri and shrikhand. In North India and Kerala, mambazha pulisseri is devoured as a mango delicacy. Kesar mangoes are famous in Gujarat and are mostly used in making pickles, chutneys and chunda," he adds.

Lion Bhakta, head chef of the city-based Daily Bar and Kitchen says restaurants have started experimenting with a variety of dishes prepared using mangoes. "In Punjab and Delhi, people like mangoes paired with yogurt. Kerala pairs mango with seafood in quick and easy prawn and fish curries throughout the summer. In Karnataka, they have a seasonal delicacy offering of mango rasam, which is made with jaggery, spices and a green mango on the brink of ripening," Bhakta adds.

Preeti Seth, a nutritionist and cosmetologist at Pachouli Wellness Clinic



in Delhi says health benefits of mangoes have always been a topic of debate since the fruit contains excessive sugar and calorie content that generally overpower its nutritional value. "Diabetics are mostly advised to eat mangoes in moderation. Excessive consumption of man-

goes is not good for anyone," she says.

Mandeep Singh, Fitness Expert and Founder of Step On Fitness Center based in the national capital, says proper consumption of mangoes helps in reduction of weight and even promotes weight gain when added with dairy items or by eat-

ing plenty of them. "Mangoes have several anti-oxidant properties, alkalises human body and maintains cholesterol level. Mangoes are also rich in iron and calcium which results in elevated bone health. It strengthens our immune system," Singh says.

Akhil Multani, executive chef at HITCHKI, an eatery based in Mumbai, says mango is known to be a very 'heaty' fruit, which may cause skin rashes and some other effects. Chef Amit Bajaj at city-based Glocal Junction eatery says mango is known to increase acne as it has a high glycemic index, hence it quickly increases blood sugar and therefore blood insulin levels. "Since mangoes are loaded with vitamins A, B, and C, as well as fiber, copper, potassium, and magnesium, it is better to keep a moderate number of mangoes in your diet and cut down on other sweets like chocolates and candies," he says.

According to food experts and chefs, the demand for organically-grown mangoes in on the rise. Maharaj Jodharam

Choudhary, corporate chef in Mumbai's Khandani Rajdhani restaurant says demand for organic mangoes has increased over the last few years as people have started understanding the health benefits of an organic fruit as compared to those cultivated using chemicals. "Organic mangoes are not artificially ripened. The fruit takes its own time to mature and to develop the natural sweetness, thus giving the fruit a much more well rounded flavour and aroma," he says.

Narayan Salunke, senior executive sous chef, Radisson Blu Resort and Spa at Alibaug in Raigad district also feels that consumers have become conscious about the ill-effects of chemicals that are used to artificially ripen the fruit. Dhawal Shah, chief patisserie at the Desert Street, says Indian organic food market has begun grow rapidly. "On an average the growth of this industry varies from 30-40 per cent annually. Advantages of organic produce include fewer pesticides and fresher and better stuff," he says.

Taking painkillers during pregnancy may harm baby's fertility

London: Taking painkillers during pregnancy may lower the fertility of the unborn child in later life, scientists have warned.

The study identifies that these drugs may also affect the fertility of future generations, by leaving marks on DNA.

The findings add to a growing body of evidence that certain medicines, including paracetamol, should be used with caution during pregnancy.

Researchers stress that advice for pregnant women remains unchanged. Current guidelines say that, if necessary, paracetamol - also known as acetaminophen - should be used at the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time. Ibuprofen should be avoided during pregnancy. Scientists at the University of Edinburgh in the UK looked at the effects of paracetamol and ibuprofen on samples of human foetal testes and ovaries.

They found similar effects using several different experimental approaches, including lab tests on human tissue samples and animal studies.

Human tissues exposed to either drug for one week in a dish had reduced numbers of cells that give rise to sperm and eggs, called germ cells, the study found.

Ovaries exposed to paracetamol for one week had more than 40 per cent fewer egg-producing cells. After ibuprofen exposure, the number of cells was almost halved.

This is important because girls produce all of their eggs in the womb, so if they are born with a reduced number it could lead to an early menopause. Painkiller exposure during development could have effects on unborn boys too, the study found. Testicular tissue exposed to painkillers in a culture dish had around a quarter fewer sperm-producing cells after exposure to paracetamol or ibuprofen.

The team also tested the effects of painkiller treatment on mice that carried grafts of human foetal testicular tissue. These grafts have been shown to mimic how the testes grow and function during development in the womb.

After just one day of treatment with a human-equivalent dose of paracetamol, the number of sperm-producing cells in the graft tissue had dropped by 17 per cent. After a week of drug treatment, there were almost one third fewer cells. Previous studies with rats have shown that painkillers administered in pregnancy led to a reduction in germ cells in female offspring. This affected their fertility and the fertility of females in subsequent generations.

Ditch that cup of coffee. Hot water may be the ultimate health drink for you

Drinking hot water may be a traditional practice in India. But now several global researchers also agree that just consuming hot water (and not mixing lemon with it) would not only help you shed extra belly fat but also keep various health issues at bay. It has further been suggested that the optimum temperature of the hot water should be 120 degrees to avoid damaging the cells and inner skin layers in the mouth.

According to media reports, there are seven ways in which drinking hot water could work wonder for our bodies:

- * Helps in weight loss
- * This is surely the most-

wanted health benefit for fitness lovers who tirelessly hit the gym and follow a strict diet. Just by drinking a glass of water on an empty stomach can help you get rid of toxins and feel fuller for a longer time, thus preventing unnecessary snacking.

- * Clears sinuses
- Tired of a chronic ailment like sinus, which has given you constant headaches and a stuffy nose? Guess what, just a glass of warm water could help alleviate some of the symptoms of a respiratory tract infection.

- * Easier on the teeth
- Your teeth will also remain healthy for a long time if you practice drinking hot water.



But make sure that the temperature is optimum enough to not damage your gum and enamel.

- * Better for digestion
- Are you affected by con-

stant constipation or irregular bowel movements? Again, hot water is the solution for it. Warm water has a vasodilator effect, which means it widens the blood vessels and

stimulates the blood flow towards the intestine, aiding the digestive process. Further, the intake of warm water on an empty stomach speeds up bowel movements. It has a faster hydrating effect, so when it is followed by a meal, the temperature helps emulsify fats, making them more digestible.

- * Wash out toxins
- A glass of hot water raises the core body temperature, stimulating the sweating process which is required to push out toxic elements from our body. In case, you do not like drinking lemon-based preparations, try taking green tea which has similar benefits.
- * Pain reliever

Replace the intake of painkillers with water, especially for stomach-related pains which are largely caused due to digestive issues. Sometimes, pain caused in other body parts is also a result of dehydration which causes muscle contractions. Replace the glass of cold water with a hot one and body pains will soon be cured.

- * Eases constipation
- Constipation has become a major health problem among the youth. This is largely caused due to imbalanced eating habits. If you start each day with a drink of warm water, on an empty stomach, you can improve your bowel movements and reduce likelihood of constipation.

Ketamine nasal spray can fight depression, suicidal thoughts

Washington: A novel nasal spray of ketamine - often misused as a party drug - can rapidly treat symptoms of major depression, and suicidal thoughts, a study has found.

The study, published in The American Journal of Psychiatry, compared an intranasal formulation of esketamine, part of the ketamine molecule, to a placebo for rapid treatment of symptoms of major depression, including suicidality, among individuals at imminent suicide risk.

The researchers at the Yale School of Medicine in the US involved 68 participants randomly assigned to one of two groups - either receiving esketamine or placebo twice a week for four weeks alongside standard treatment with antidepressants.



They looked at effects at four hours after first treatment, at 24 hours and at 25 days.

Researchers, including those from Janssen Research and Development, found a significant improvement in depression scores and decreased suicidal ideation in the esketamine group compared to the placebo group at four hours and at 24 hours.

The esketamine effects were not greater than the placebo at 25 days. The measurement of suicide risk took into consideration both the patient's and clinician's perspectives.

The results of the study support nasal spray esketamine as a possible effective rapid treatment for depressive symptoms in patients assessed to be at imminent risk for suicide, researchers said.

Esketamine could be an important treatment to bridge the gap that exists because of the delayed effect of most common antidepressants. Most antidepressants take four to six weeks to become fully effective.

The scientists caution that more research is needed on the potential for abuse of ketamine.

Caffeine used to create novel gels for drug delivery

Boston: Caffeine is well-known for its ability to help people stay alert, but scientists have now come up with a novel use for the stimulant - creating biocompatible gels for drug delivery and other medical applications.

Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US loaded the gels with two antimalarial drugs.

The material could also be used to carry other types of drugs, said former MIT postdoc Angela DiCiccio, lead author of the research paper published in the journal Biomaterials.

Drugs carried by this kind of material could be chewable or easier to swallow, the researchers said.

"It is really appealing for patient populations, especially children, who have difficulty with swallowing capsules and tablets," said

Giovanni Traverso, a research affiliate at MIT.

"Making polymer gels usually requires metal catalysts, which could be hazardous if any of the catalyst remains in the material after the gel is formed.

The MIT team wanted to come up with a new way to make gels using catalysts and starting materials that are based on food products and other materials that are safe to ingest.

Making polymer gels usually requires metal catalysts, which could be hazardous if any of the catalyst remains in the material after the gel is formed.

The MIT team wanted to come up with a new way to make gels using catalysts and starting materials that are based on food products and other materials that are safe to ingest.

"Our goal was to try to simplify the method of man-



ufacturing and impart an improved safety profile from the beginning by using potentially safer catalysts," Traverso said.

Although caffeine has not been used for chemical syn-

thesis before, it drew the researchers' attention because it is plant-derived and can act as a weak base, meaning that it gently removes protons from other molecules.

It also has a similar struc-

ture to some other organic weak bases that have been used to catalyse the type of chemical reaction needed to form these gels - the formation of ester bonds to create a polyester.

Novel implant to protect women from HIV infection

Toronto: Scientists have developed a vaginal implant that can protect women from HIV infection by decreasing the number of cells that the virus can target in their genital tract.

Unlike conventional methods of HIV prevention, such as condoms or anti-HIV drugs, the implant takes advantage of some people's natural immunity to the virus, according to researchers at the University of Waterloo in Canada.

The implant, described in the Journal of Controlled Release, is a hollow tube and two pliable arms to hold it in place.

It contains hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) which is disseminated slowly through the porous material of the tube and absorbed by the walls of the vaginal tract.

"We know that some drugs taken orally never make it to the vaginal tract, so this implant could provide a more reliable way to encourage T cells not to respond to infection and therefore more reliably and cheaply prevent transmission," said Emmanuel Ho, a professor at the University of Waterloo.

"What we do not know yet is if this can be a stand-alone option for preventing HIV transmission or if it might be best used in conjunction with other prevention strategies," said Ho.

HIV infects the body by corrupting T cells that are mobilised by the immune system when the virus enters a person's body.

When the T cells stay resting and do not attempt to fight the virus they are not infected and the HIV virus is not transmitted between people. When the T cells stay resting, it is referred to as being immune quiescent.

The implants were tested in an animal model and the team observed a significant reduction in T cell activation, meaning that the vaginal tract was demonstrating an immune quiescent state.

The new implant was inspired by previous research involving sex workers in Kenya.

In Kenya, Ho and research partner Keith Fowke of the University of Manitoba, observed that many of these women who had sex with HIV positive clients but did not contract the virus.

They later found the women possessed T cells that were naturally immune quiescent.

"Observing this, we asked ourselves if it was possible to pharmacologically induce immune quiescence with medication that was better assured of reaching the point of infection," said Ho.

Netflix original programming binge pays off with subscriber surge

Netflix Inc's blitz of original programs attracted a surprisingly high 7.4 million new customers from January to March, reassuring investors who are betting the video streaming pioneer's massive spending will fuel growth around the world.

New shows like "Altered Carbon" and "O Mecanismo" helped Netflix smash analysts' subscriber estimates, and its better-than-expected second-quarter outlook soothed fears about competition from Apple Inc and Amazon.com Inc.

Shares of Netflix jumped more than 7% in after-hours trading on Monday to \$330.30. The stock is the top performer on the S&P 500 this year, gaining more than 60%.

"I don't think this is a one-time thing," said Chaim Siegel, analyst at Elazar Advisors, "It's very similar to the results we saw last quarter. It's getting better."

Wall Street expected Netflix to add 6.5 million new subscribers, according to FactSet data. Netflix topped that and also said it would bring in 6.2 million more customers from April through June, one million more than analyst predictions.

Netflix says it will spend up to \$8 billion on global TV shows and movies in 2018. As it has expanded to some 190 countries, investors ac-



cepted negative free cash flow in exchange for the potential of outsized growth in future years.

In the first three months of the year, Netflix boosted original programming by 85% from a year earlier to a record 483 hours, according to Cowen & Co analysts.

The slate included science fiction series "Altered Carbon" and Marvel action drama "Jessica Jones."

Non-English programming also is gaining traction, Netflix said. That includes "O Mecanismo," which is on pace to become one of the service's most-viewed original series in Brazil, and Spanish language heist thriller "La Casa de Papel" the most-watched non-English series ever on Netflix.

For the just-ended quarter, revenue grew 40% year-over-year to \$3.7 billion, the fastest pace in the company's history. The average cost of a Netflix membership rose 14% during that time.

"Subscribers are accelerating even at higher pricing," BTIG analyst Richard Greenfield said. "Content spend is having a direct effect on its subscriber growth."

In a quarterly letter to shareholders, Netflix said it will "continue to raise debt as needed to fund our increase in original content," adding that its debt levels were "quite modest as a % of our enterprise value."

The company's market capitalization stands at \$137.2 billion, more

than double a year earlier.

But it faces growing competition as technology companies such as Apple and Amazon pour money into premium programming, international rivals jump into streaming and traditional media companies pursue digital customers.

Walt Disney Co will stop supplying new movies to Netflix starting next year and will start its own streaming service for families.

Netflix has signed up more than half of all US broadband households and is building its customer base globally. At the end of March, its customer ranks had swelled to 125 million.

Investors have appeared bullish on the company's ability to add more members. Netflix recently traded at 93 times expected earnings for the next 12 months, versus Amazon at 133 times earnings and Disney at 17 times earnings, according to Thomson Reuters data.

Net income rose to \$290.1 million, or 64 cents per share, in the quarter ended March 31 from \$178.2 million, or 40 cents per share, a year earlier.

Revenue grew 40% year-over-year to \$3.7 billion, the fastest pace in the company's history, thanks to the increase in new subscribers and a 14% rise in the average cost of a Netflix membership.

Toyota plans to hike vehicle prices next month

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) is planning to increase vehicle prices from next month in order to partially offset rise in input costs.

The company, which is a joint venture between Japanese auto major Toyota and Kirloskar group, currently sells a range of vehicles

from the hatchback Etios Liva with a price starting at Rs 5.49 lakh, to luxury SUV Land Cruiser tagged at Rs 1.41 crore (ex-showroom Delhi) in the country.

"Challenges in terms of rising input costs have been there. We are holding on to it (price increase) for some time now. Shortly, we will be doing it. It could be even as early as next month," TKM Deputy Managing Director N Raja told PTI.

The company is currently working on the quantum of price hike, he added. Luxury car makers such as Audi, JLR and Mercedes-Benz have hiked prices ranging between Rs 1 lakh to Rs 10 lakh from this month to pass on increase in custom duties.

Raja said the industry is expected to grow in the range of 8-9%, and TKM growth is also likely to be in that range.



He added that the company expects the hatchback and sedan segment to grow better this year as compared with last year (2017).

"Last year passenger car sales growth was 3-4%, but this year we expect the sedan and hatch segment to grow by around 6-7 per cent on an average," Raja said.

Growth, however, will depend on various factors like interest rates, fuel pricing and monsoon, he added.

"Demand generation from rural segment was robust last year... Our expectation is higher side of single digit so 8-9% growth is possible this year," Raja noted.

The company, which sells popular models like Innova and Fortuner, has now lined up a mid-sized sedan Yaris to compete with the likes of Honda City, Hyundai Verna and Maruti Ciaz.

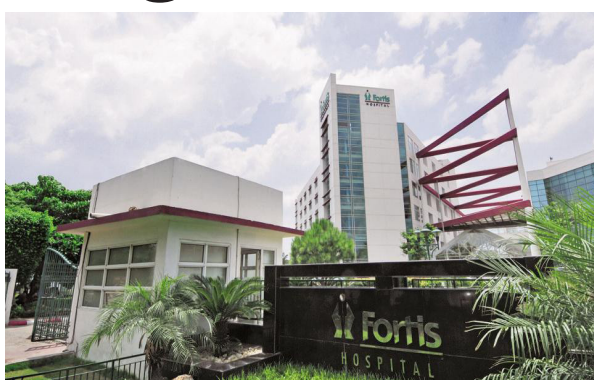
Fortis should put this bid to bed, and forget its founders

Things haven't been going well for India's second-largest hospital chain. In January, a Delhi court asked founders Malvinder Singh and his brother, Shivinder, to pay a \$550 million arbitration award to Daiichi Sankyo Co. The Japanese company had sued in Singapore over a drug-maker it bought from them in 2008 -- without the siblings being fully transparent about a US probe that would soon cripple its export business.

Then, Bloomberg News reported in February that the embattled founders had taken at least Rs 500 crore (\$76 million) of Fortis Healthcare's cash without board approval about a year earlier. The Singhs have since resigned, and with lenders invoking pledges on the shares mortgaged to them, they have also lost control.

Still, the brothers' shadow lingers. The market regulator, and India's Serious Fraud Investigation Office, are looking into the company; the auditors have refused to certify financial results.

Given the uncertainty over



what new Fortis liabilities (or deficient assets) may be uncovered, the interest among potential buyers of the business is remarkably strong.

Malaysia's IHH Healthcare Bhd. is valuing Fortis at \$1.3 billion, or Rs 160 a share, which puts it slightly ahead of TPG-backed Mani Health Enterprise Pvt. Ltd.'s revised offer of Rs 155 a share. Separately, two prominent Indian business families have come together to offer Rs 156 a share. IHH has threatened to go hostile if its bid is rebuffed.

While that puts some heat on the board's decision to talk exclusively with Mani, the directors may be on the right

track. For one thing, Mani's is a binding bid. And folding Fortis Healthcare's 6,500 beds (which are mostly in northern India) into Mani's southern India-based 6,400-bed operation, would create a national business, comfortably ahead of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd.'s 9,400 beds.

Finally, although Fortis has managed to raise short-term debt, a long campaign by shareholders of the cash-strapped company to play off rival bidders would greatly increase the odds of bankruptcy.

While Mani may also take time to close the transaction, at least it has completed

due diligence. Fresh funds from a proposed rights offer would allow Fortis to complete a previously announced \$711 million acquisition of RHT Health Trust, which would lead to savings on fees paid to the Singapore-listed entity. Profitability, currently the worst among large Indian hospital operators, would improve -- B&K Securities reckons Fortis's Ebitda margin would more than double to 14 percent after the Singapore acquisition.

While IHH's Singapore hospitals, Mount Elizabeth and Gleneagles, are state-of-the-art, Mani has better credentials domestically. IHH, with 1,200 beds in India, isn't even among the top five.

To be sure, Mani CEO Rajan Pai isn't making investors an offer they can't refuse. However, he has agreed to buy private-equity investors' stake in a diagnostics business part-owned by Fortis, and then merge it with the parent. By doing so, Pai is taking the risk of multiple probes into Fortis throwing up rude surprises.

China's economy beats forecasts, clocks 6.8% growth in Q1

China's economy grew a forecast-beating 6.8% in the first quarter, official data showed Tuesday, overcoming Beijing's battle on financial risk and pollution and trade tensions with the US.

The world's number two economy exceeded the 6.7% growth forecast by analysts surveyed by AFP, and equalled the fourth quarter performance.

"The national economy maintained the momentum of steady and sound development," said Xing Zhihong, a spokesman for the National Statistics Bureau.

"The economic performance continued to improve and the economy was off to a good start."

China's sustained growth shows the economy has remained resilient even as Beijing kicked its war on pollution into a high gear during the winter months by cutting production for many steel smelters, mills and factories.

Fears of a trade war with the US have also roiled markets in recent weeks, with Washington and Beijing exchanging warnings of tit-for-



tat tariffs on a significant portion of their bilateral trade.

The tensions have yet to cause real harm to the economy, analysts say, but that may change in coming months when tariffs threatened by US President Donald Trump are expected to be implemented.

"Years of unfair trade have hammered American families and plundered American wealth," Trump said Friday in his weekly address.

"It's been absolutely terrible for our country," he said, adding his administration was proposing tariffs to "save our industries for the future."

"We have no other choice,"

Trump said. The threatened tariffs on a \$150 billion worth of Chinese goods, and \$50 billion of US goods, would dent economic growth on both sides of the Pacific, analysts say.

Debt fears For the last decade, about 20% of China's exports have been ferried to the US, according to Moody's Investors Services, which forecasts a material macroeconomic impact if Trump makes good on his threats with the consequences vibrating beyond China's end exporters and deep into the economy.

Along with exports, debt-fuelled investment has driv-

en China's economy over the last decade -- but with fears growing over a possible credit crisis, officials in Beijing are stepping up their battle against debt and financial risk.

Output at China's factories and workshops expanded 6.8% year-on-year for the first quarter, matching the expansion seen during the same period last year, but below the 6.9% forecast by Bloomberg News. Industrial production grew by 6% in March.

Last week, China's central bank released data showing total financing grew at 10.5% in March, the slowest pace on record, according to China-focused economist Andrew Polk.

Analysts say the financial risk battle will take a toll on growth but China is counting on its 1.4 billion consumers to pick up the slack.

Economic data show China's savers spending with retail sales growing 9.8% in the first quarter on-year, outpacing forecasts of 9.7% by Bloomberg News.

But the reading is down from 10% in the same period of last year.

Hiatus in Tesla Model 3 production shows Musk unable to make on-the-fly fixes

Tesla Inc. is temporarily suspending production of the Model 3 sedan for at least the second time in roughly two months, just after Elon Musk acknowledged mistakes that hindered his most important car.

The company informed employees that the pause will last four to five days, Buzzfeed reported Monday. A Tesla spokesman referred back to a statement provided last month, when Bloomberg News first reported that Model 3 production was idled from Feb. 20 to 24. The carmaker said then that it planned periods of downtime at both its vehicle and battery factories to improve automation and address bottlenecks.

The hiatus is another setback for the first model Musk has tried to mass-manufacture. In addition to trying to bring electric vehicles to the mainstream, the chief executive officer had sought to build a competitive advantage over established automakers by installing more robots to quickly produce vehicles. Last week, he acknowledged "excessive" automation at Tesla was a mistake.

"Traditional automakers adjust bottlenecks on the fly during a launch," Dave Sullivan, an analyst at AutoPacific Inc., said in an email. "This is to-



tally out of the ordinary."

Tesla employees are expected to use vacation days or stay home without pay during the Model 3 downtime, though a small number may be offered paid work elsewhere at the factory in Fremont, California, Buzzfeed reported.

Factory tour

The shutdown is taking place a week after Musk gave CBS This Morning a tour of Tesla's assembly plant

and said the company should be able to sustain producing 2,000 Model 3 sedans a week. He said manufacturing issues that had been crimping output were being resolved and that Tesla probably will make three or four times as many of the cars in the second quarter.

Tesla built 9,766 Model 3 sedans in the first quarter. The company said in an April 3 statement that the process of boosting production and ad-

ressing bottlenecks during the first three months of the year included "several short factory shutdowns to upgrade equipment."

"Shutting down for days on end during ramp is far from normal," Kristin Diczek, director of the industry, labor and economics group at the Center for Automotive Research, wrote in an email.

Getting Model 3 output up to speed is crucial to generating revenue after the billions of dollars Tesla

Deutsche Bank's new CEO likely to shelve sale of Indian units to IndusInd

Deutsche Bank AG called off talks to sell its retail and private wealth businesses in India to IndusInd Bank Ltd., people with knowledge of the matter said.

The sale was a project initiated under former chief executive officer John Cryan, and Deutsche Bank is reconsidering the deal following his departure earlier this month, the people said, asking not to be identified because the information is private. The two businesses have about Rs 300 billion (\$4.6 billion) in assets, according to one of the people. The bank's new CEO, Christian Sewing, and retail head Frank Strauss decided that Deutsche Bank didn't get a price that justified selling the profitable unit, the people said. The lender has instead decided to keep the assets and is now considering increasing its investment in India, several people said. In January, Bloomberg News reported Deutsche Bank's planned to sell the units, part of a move to refocus on its home market.

"Assuming the unit is profitable, it makes sense for Deutsche Bank to keep it and maintain its presence in Asia," Andreas Plaesier, an analyst at M.M. Warburg with a hold recommendation on the stock, said by phone. "Sewing was probably already planning to stop the sale when he was appointed CEO, and it's therefore unlikely to affect his target" of keeping adjusted costs below 23 billion euros (\$28.5 billion) in 2018, he said.

In a statement when he was appointed earlier in April, Sewing said that Deutsche



Bank must regain its "hunger for business" to achieve its revenue targets this year. The leadership change has prompted scrutiny from S&P Global Ratings, which said it may downgrade the bank's credit rating if it's affected by a "prolonged, deepened or more costly restructuring."

Deutsche Bank hasn't made any final decisions on its future India strategy, one of the people said. A Hong Kong-based spokeswoman for Deutsche Bank declined to comment. A representative for Mumbai-based IndusInd Bank said she couldn't immediately comment. Asia's No. 3 economy is the only country outside Europe where Deutsche Bank has retail operations. It employs more than 12,400 people in India.

Income before taxes from the India business stood at 305 million euros in 2017, putting the country among Deutsche Bank's top four income-generating regions, including Germany and Singapore, filings show. The bank has a credit exposure of about 15.2 billion euros in India, its second-highest among Asia-Pacific markets after Japan.

IPL 2018:

Rajasthan Royals, Kolkata Knight Riders aim to continue winning momentum

It will be a battle about which team carries forward the winning momentum as Rajasthan Royals (RR) clash with Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the 15th match of the 2018 Indian Premier League (IPL) here on Wednesday.

Following a loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in their opening fixture, the Ajinkya Rahane-led Royals have made a solid comeback to win their next two matches and find a firm footing in the 11th edition of the cash-rich Twenty20 tournament.

The hosts will play their second home game of the season at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium where last time, the Royals edged out Delhi Daredevils (DD) by 10 runs (D/L method) in a rain-curtailed thriller.

One wicket the Knights will be looking to get early is Sanju Samson. With scores of 49, 37, 92 not out, the 23-year-old is currently the highest run-scorer in IPL 2018. Samson was his team's top-scorer in two out of three games and has already won the Man-of-the-Match awards twice.

Though they do not have a plethora of stars, Rajasthan Royals' batting looks quite settled with skipper Ra-



hane being consistent as an opener, even though he is yet to 'explode' with the bat. Coming down the order, Englishmen Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler can accelerate when needed and are assets to the team.

Credit has to be given to the Royals bowlers, who despite looking vulnerable, have led their team to victories in the last two games. In a format where teams prefer to bat second, the Royals bowlers delivered when it mattered most.

On Wednesday, Rahane will be hoping the flip of the coin falls in his favour after losing all three tosses yet and being asked to bat.

The Knights, on the other hand, have had a topsy-turvy four matches so far. After impressing with a convincing win over the Virat Kohli-captained Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in their opener, they went down in an enthralling contest to Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and then surrendered to Sunrisers Hyderabad.

However, a dominant win over Delhi Daredevils on Monday has put their campaign back on track and new skipper Dinesh Karthik will look to impress with his captaincy skills.

This will be KKR's second away game in five matches after losing narrowly to CSK in the only game that was played at Chepauk, this IPL.

The Royals may have Samson, but KKR's Andre Russell is also in prime form, currently being the tournament's second highest run-getter. Other KKR batsmen have also chipped in when needed with the likes of Chris Lynn and Nitish Rana coming good in crunch situations.

But the trio of Sunil Narine, Piyush Chawla and Kuldeep Yadav spinning a tight web around opposition batsmen is what will really and truly bother RR. Jaipur cricket fans will also be eager to see some action after the previous game on April 11 was curtailed due to rain.

Curator Taposh Chatterjee said that the side batting first should score around 180-190 runs. "It is a batting friendly track, according to the demands of the format and the outfield is very fast," said Chatterjee.

Ben Stokes aims to restore England cricket's Test lustre

Ben Stokes is desperate to inspire England back to the pinnacle of Test cricket, saying the team has "slacked off" in the past two years, slipping to fifth in the world rankings.

The 26-year-old all-rounder returned to international cricket in February against New Zealand but could not prevent a 1-0 defeat for the tourists to extend a miserable run that has seen England win just one Test series overseas since 2012.

Stokes missed his side's 4-0 Ashes humbling after being suspended from playing for England over a nightclub incident and admitted he was "gutted" to watch his teammates struggling in Australia.

Just two years ago England were one Test win away from holding all nine bilateral Test trophies but were denied as Pakistan won at the Oval and squared the series.

"I just want to get us back to playing the way we want to play," Stokes told Britain's Guardian newspaper. "We were so close to



being one of the best teams in the world. "We've slacked off in the past two years but knowing how close we were gives you that desire to get back there."

New Zealand-born Stokes said he had accepted the decision of coach Trevor Bayliss not to reinstate him as vice-captain for the New Zealand series.

Stokes, currently playing for Rajasthan Royals in the Indian Premier League, pleaded not guilty to a charge of affray over the nightclub incident that forced him out of the Ashes tour.

He looks set to miss the second Test against India at Lord's, with his trial set for August 6.

Alec Stewart wants IPL cut-off date after Surrey lose Tom Curran



Surrey director of cricket Alec Stewart wants a cut-off date for county players to join the Indian Premier League (IPL) after losing seamer Tom Curran to the Twenty20 tournament just days before the start of their championship campaign.

Curran went unsold in February's IPL auction but Kolkata Knight Riders recruited him for around \$247,000 earlier this month to replace injured Australian paceman Mitchell Starc.

Yorkshire suffered a double blow with the similar late departures of David Willey and Liam Plunkett, leading county coaches to discuss the issue at Edgbaston last week.

"It's far from ideal losing Tom so late," former England captain Stewart was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "I hope in time this will be looked at. The IPL is not going anywhere -- I fully understand players wanting to be part of it because, one, it's a good competition and, second, it helps your bank balance."

"The problem is when you get the phone calls I got for Tom, and Martyn Moxon (Yorkshire's director of cricket) got for Willey and Plunkett, your planning goes out of the window." The readiness of county players ahead of the English season makes them prime IPL targets to replace injured players in the lucrative Twenty20 league and Stewart suggested that a fixed final recruitment date would help resolve the issue.

"All I think needs to be looked at is a cut-off, ideally a month before the championship starts," he said.

"If you get picked up in the auction, that's fine -- it's at the end of February, so that's six or seven weeks before the start of the season."

"Then everyone knows that, even if you don't get picked up in the auction, there's a three- or four-week window, but once that has gone, you can't then go and play (in the IPL)." Stewart also demanded a redistribution of the money the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) receives for allowing its players to take part in the IPL. "We have discovered that the ECB have been receiving 10 percent of the overall contract a player gets from IPL for a number of years and this year it is 20 percent," he said.

As teams search for momentum, it's all about trial and error early in IPL 2018

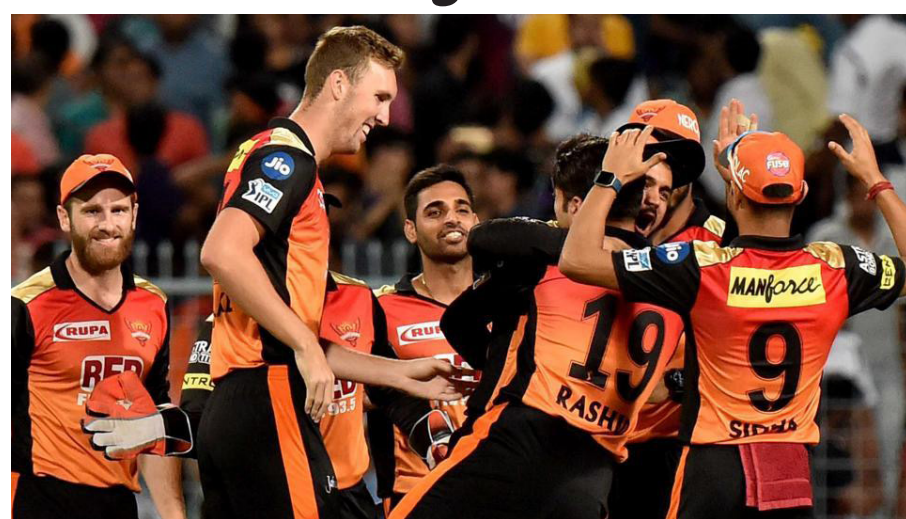
Ten days into the IPL, how do the teams line up? These are early days and it is too early to call but as they stand no team appears dominant. Hyderabad is ahead with 3/3, defending champs Mumbai at the bottom with 0/3.

A coach broke down team strategy during the IPL. It is simple, he said: The IPL is a marathon because each team plays 14 matches over 6 weeks. So it must have endurance and energy and think long term, not just what just round the corner. The IPL is also a sprint to make the play-offs. Successful teams need two things - stamina of Mo Farah and the explosive speed of Usain Bolt. In the initial phase, teams set themselves short term goals. The journey from base camp to summit is long

but the first target is to win 8 games, the magic number to make the cut for the playoffs. The trick therefore is to play ball by ball, one game at a time and not get too far ahead.

To get there, teams search for momentum, the happy but elusive feeling of getting off to a good start and staying ahead. Just as a sound opening partnership is crucial for scoring big, wins in initial matches lift spirits, boost confidence and spread fear among competing teams.

Early momentum is a terrific pickup but early losses are a crippling viral. Defeat erodes confidence and teams that fall behind find themselves in a tough catch up mode. With every match turning out to be must-win, there is little room for a stumble. Teams



understand that in a long tournament a bad day will come when things go horribly wrong. Which is another reason why it's necessary to buy insurance upfront and bolt

from the blocks. For that to happen, several pieces have to fall into place. Finding the right balance is crucial. Given the four-foreigner player rule, it is never

easy to decide which high quality/high cost asset to bench. This season Chris Gayle has sat out games, a sad decline for the 'universe boss' but also a comment on the selection chal-

lenges of the IPL.

Finding the right slots for batsmen/bowlers is another issue to be addressed. Pushing Sunil Narine to the top of the order is inspirational. There must also be serious thought behind dropping Rahul Tripathy - so impressive as an opener - to the middle order. Each team faces these challenges: MS Dhoni as finisher or at number 4? Kieran Pollard and Andre Russell should be released early or held back till late? Should Washington Sundar, K Gowtham or Shahbaz Nadeem bowl in the powerplay? How about Vinay Kumar or Umesh Yadav as death bowler? As teams search for momentum in the initial phase of the IPL, it's all about trial and error.

Nic Pothas steps down as Sri Lanka cricket team fielding coach

South African Nic Pothas has stepped down as the fielding consultant of the Sri Lanka cricket team he briefly coached until Chandika Hathurusingha was hired in December, the country's cricket board said on Tuesday.

The 44-year-old was handed the interim head coach's role last June following Graham Ford's exit and considered a contender for the permanent position before returning to his fielding role once Hathurusingha arrived.

"After two incredible years with Sri Lanka cricket, this is the right time for me to move on to other opportunities, which will allow me to spend quality time with my young family," Pothas said in a statement issued by Sri Lanka Cricket.

"It has been an honour and a privilege



to be involved with Sri Lanka. It has given me the opportunity to learn and improve as a coach as well as to contrib-

ute to a very talented bunch of players. It will always hold a special place in my heart."

Kolkata Police summons Mohammad Shami's brother for questioning

The Women's Grievance Cell of Kolkata Police has summoned Indian cricketer Mohammad Shami's elder brother Hasib Ahmad for questioning in relation with the complaint filed by the pacer's wife Hasin Jahan in March.

Ahmad has been asked to be present at the police headquarters at 2 pm on Wednesday.

"I was informed by officers of Kolkata Police that they have summoned Hasib Ahmad for interrogation," said Zakir Hossain, the advocate of Hasin Jahan.

However, local reports hint the cricketer has also been asked to appear for questioning. On April 10, Jahan filed a petition against her husband at a Kolkata court seeking a monthly maintenance of Rs 10 lakh for her and her daughter. She also filed a case under Domestic Violence Act 2005 against Shami and her family members. The hearing in these cases will be held on May 4. Those named in the petition under Domestic Violence Act include the cricketer's mother Anjuman Ara Begum, his brother Mohammad Hasib Ahmad, Hasib's wife Shama Parveen and Shami's sister Sabina Anjum.

On March 8, Jahan lodged a complaint against her husband with Kolkata Police, following which the city police has started a probe under Sections 498A (domestic violence), 376 (rape), 307 (attempt to murder) and 323 (voluntarily causing hurt) of Indian Penal Code among others.

On March 19, Jahan recorded her confidential statement before a magistrate at Alipore court.

Shami, who plays for Delhi Daredevils in the Indian Premier League (IPL) was also subjected to a probe by the anti-corruption unit of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after his wife accused him of receiving money from a Pakistani woman named Alishba on the insistence of an England-based businessman, Mohammad Bhai.

The warring couple met once after he met with a road accident near Delhi but the meeting ended in acrimony.

Shami and Jahan were married on April 7, 2014, about two years after they met at a Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) party. They have a two-and-a-half-year old daughter.

Sachin Tendulkar lone Indian in Jason Holder's best-ever cricketing XI

Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar has been named by West Indies Test skipper Jason Holder in his best-ever cricketing XI.

Alongside Tendulkar, Australian great Shane Warne also features in Holder's all-time XI, which was revealed by him on the Lord's Cricket YouTube channel, with the criteria being that he had to have played with or against them, or have been strongly influenced by the players mentioned, reports Sport24.

Apart from these two, the list also included former South African all-rounder Jacques Kallis.

Holder has decided to go with an opening combination of Australia's Matthew Hayden and Sri Lanka's Kumar Sangakkara.

The Caribbean batsman's middle-order includes former Australian skipper Ricky Ponting, West Indies great Brian Lara, followed by Tendulkar, Kallis, former wicketkeeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist.



Holder, who has appeared in a total of 29 Tests for the

national side and has bagged

while, Shane Warne and Adam

53 wickets with an average of 38.52, picked paceman Dale Steyn as his fast bowling option alongside Australian legend Glenn McGrath.

Mea-n Gilchrist have been chosen to take care of the spin department.

Jason Holder's all-time XI is as follows: Matthew Hayden (Australia), Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka), Ricky Ponting (Australia), Brian Lara (West Indies), Sachin Tendulkar (India), Jacques Kallis (South Africa), Adam Gilchrist (wicketkeeper - Australia), Shane Warne (Australia), Dale Steyn (South Africa), Curtly Ambrose (West Indies), Glenn McGrath (Australia).