

# TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

WEDNESDAY

- MAY, 02, 2018
- 15 SHABAN 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 103
- VOLUME: 04
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	28.4	10.1
JAMMU	37.5	26.8
LEH	21.9	3.4
KARGIL	21.4	3.8

SUNSET WEDNESDAY: 07:16 PM  
SUNRISE THURSDAY: 05:41 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR  
Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 27°C & 10°C respectively.

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

STATE | 3

PRESIDENT OF INDIA TO PRESENT VISITOR'S AWARD FOR RESEARCH AND FOR

INTERSTATE | 5

CONGRESS' FAMILY POLITICS BLOCKED DEVELOPMENT IN KARNATAKA, SAYS MODI

BUSINESS | 7

GST COLLECTIONS CROSS RS 1 TRILLION IN APRIL, FIRST TIME SINCE LAUNCH

SPORTS | 8

VIRAT KOHLI'S INDIAN CRICKET TEAM EXTENDS LEAD AT TOP OF ICC TEST RANKINGS

## Kashmir shuts against Pulwama killings, restrictions imposed in Srinagar areas

Thousands attend funeral prayers of slain militants, Hurriyat leaders put under house detention

Srinagar, May 01: Authorities on Tuesday imposed in Srinagar areas while a complete shutdown was Tuesday observed across the Valley against the civilian killings in Drubgam area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

The shutdown call was given by Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) comprising Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik against the civilian killing in Drubgam.

Authorities in the late Monday evening decided to impose restrictions in Srinagar areas to thwart any possible protest against the civilian killing.

An official told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the restrictions were imposed in Srinagar areas falling under the jurisdiction of Rainawari, Khanar, Nowhatta, Safakadal, M R Gunj, and partial in Maisuma and Kralkhud.



Locals said that forces in large number were deployed in downtown areas today.

Pertinently, two Hizbul Mujahideen militants including a top commander Sameer Ahmad Bhat alias Sameer

Tiger and a civilian Shahid Ahmad Dar, aged 25, son of Mohd Ashraf Dar resident of Aihal Pulwama were killed during exchange of fire in a gunfight in Drubgam village in South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Meanwhile, thousands of people attended the funeral prayers of slain militants in Drubgam and Rajpora localities of Pulwama district of South Kashmir.

Reports said thousands of people attended the funeral prayers of slain top Hizbul Mujahideen Commander Samir Ahmad Bhat alias Samir Tiger in martyr's graveyard Drubgam village of Pulwama district.

The body of the slain Hizb commander was laid to rest amid chanting of pro-freedom slogans by thousands of people present at the funeral prayers.

A huge gathering of people was also witnessed in the funeral procession of Aqib Mushtaq Khan in Rajpora village of Pulwama district.

The body of the slain militant was laid to rest amid chanting of pro-freedom slogans by thousands

▶ See **Shuts...** Pg 02

## BLOODY APRIL: 51 killings in 30 days

Srinagar, May 1: This year April turned out to be one of the bloodiest months in the annals of recent Kashmir history. In 30 days, there were 51 human killings including 20 militants, 18 civilians, 10 Army soldiers, 2 Para-military troopers and a policeman.

The month started with the killing of 20 persons including 13 militants, 3 army soldiers and 4 civilians while it also ended on violent note claiming six lives including two militants and four civilians.

Kashmir this month also observed strike for five days mostly against civilian killings. Besides, different district headquarters and

towns remained shut for 27 times this month. A straight thirteen days shutdown was observed in Pulwama against the bloody Dragadh and Kachidoora gunfights.

This month encounters broke out at different places mostly in South Kashmir including Dalgam Anantnag, Shopian district's Dragadh, Kachidoora and Drabgam villages, Khudwani Kulgam, Kangan Pulwama and Laam Tral.

Among the 20 militants who were neutralized by Government Forces this month included Zubair Ahmad Turay, Nazim Nazir

▶ See **Killings...** Pg 02

## Omar Abdullah chides PM Narendra Modi

Srinagar, May 01: Reacting over Prime Minister Narendra Modi challenge thrown to Congress President Rahul Gandhi to speak for 15 minutes without using notes, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday chided him saying "perhaps we can ask the Hon PM to speak for 2 min about why the rape & murder of an 8 year old girl is a 'minor issue'".

Taking to Twitter, Omar wrote: "I hope @RahulGandhi takes up the Hon PM's challenge & speaks w/out using notes for 15 min about the Karnataka Govt & then perhaps we can ask the Hon PM to speak for 2 min about why the rape & murder of an 8 year old girl is a 'minor issue'".

▶ See **Omar...** Pg 02

## NOBLE FOUNDATION DOING GREAT SERVICE IN NATION BUILDING: DGP J&K

Chairperson PWWA among 16 females honoured for excellence in different fields

Jammu, May 01: Noble foundation, Maa Shardha Vidyapeeth organized its annual function at, Guru Nanak Dev Bhawan, Ferozpur Road Ludhiana by felicitating women.

The function was inaugurated by Director General of Police Dr. S.P.Vaid, Chief Patron of Punjab Kesari Group, Vijay Chopra, Chief Commissioner Income Tax Punjab and Jammu Kashmir, Vinay Kumar by lightening the lamp in presence of other dignitaries.

Chairperson Jammu Kashmir Police Wives Welfare Association (PWWA) Bharti Vaid was among 16 women of six different states who were honoured for their

▶ See **DGP...** Pg 02

## India, Pakistan revive Track II diplomacy

Islamabad: A group of Indian experts has visited Pakistan to discuss all aspects of bilateral ties and revive the Track II diplomacy process with Islamabad amidst the chill in the relationship after a number of terror attacks in India by Pakistan-based outfits.

The original Track II initiative, Neemrana Dialogue, received a fresh start with the visit, diplomatic sources here said.

The Indian side was led by former foreign ministry secretary Vivek Katju and included well-known educa-



tionist JS Rajput and other experts, while Pakistan side was led by former foreign secretary Inamul Haque.

The interactions between the two sides took place between April 28 to 30 in Is-

lamabad, sources said.

"The two sides discussed all aspects of bilateral relations and agreed that all issues between the two countries should be resolved through talks," according to a source.

The Pakistani side also included former governor State Bank of Pakistan Ishart Husian, whose name has been circulating in the media as one of candidates to become Pakistan's caretaker prime minister during general election expected to be held in July.

The Track II interaction was kept under tight wraps and nothing had been shared officially about it by the organisers.

Neemrana Dialogue was launched in early 1990s and included influential former

▶ See **India...** Pg 02

## DSEK REVOKES SUSPENSION ORDER, 102 CENTERS AUTHORISED FOR PRIVATE TUITIONS

▶ **Wahid Bhat**

SRINAGAR, MAY 01: After government orders coaching centers to suspend their operations for a period of 90 days to get authorization to conduct private academic tuition Director School Education Kashmir (DSEK) approves 102 coaching centers for private tuitions.

As per the order a copy of which is in the possession of PTK a total of 102 tuition centers authorised to operate, 43 are in Srinagar, 23 in Baramulla, 12 in Pulwama, Budgam 09, Kupwara 04, Bandipora 01, and Kulgam 01.

Worth to mention that the government last Sunday announced suspension of academic activities in tuition centres for 90 days. Two days later a formal order was issued in this regard.

▶ See **DSEK...** Pg 02

## Er. Rasheed asks Govt. to come clean on slum dwellers

SRINAGAR, MAY 01: Asking State Govt. to come clean on huge number of outsiders who every year occupy state land in various towns and in Srinagar city, AIP Supremo and MLA Langate Er. Rasheed has said that the issue is of a serious nature and needs immediate and concrete time bound action.

Addressing a function in Srinagar organized to welcome prominent entrepreneur and political activist Sheeban Ashai in AIP, Er. Rasheed said that we are not against those who come to state as tourists, working class and other professionals but huge entry of baggers and suspicious migrants is unacceptable.

He said "It is strange while Army, police



and other agencies are frequently busy is collecting data of various sorts by infiltrating privacy of the permanent citizens of state,

▶ See **Rasheed...** Pg 02

## POLICE REGISTERS CASE AGAINST SECURITY GUARDS OF BJP MLC

Ramban, May 1: Police have registered a formal case against two Personal Security Officers of Bhartiya Janata Party MLC for resorting to aerial firing and assaulting a man on Srinagar-Jammu highway.

Reports said that one of the security guards of BJP MLC, Sofi Yousuf fired a round in air after they entered into an argument with a man whom police identified as Saleem Ahmed Wani at Banihal.

Reports added that a vehicle part of Sofi Yousuf's escort was driven by his son who tried to overtake Wani near Banihal. AS Wani didn't pave way for the escort vehicle, the security guards alighted from the vehicle and as per witnesses thrashed him. The locals present there came

▶ See **Police...** Pg 02

## Working people should prepare for united struggles for their rights: Tarigami

Defeat communal and divisive agenda of BJP govt

Srinagar, May 01: On the eve of International Labour Day, Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) extends revolutionary greetings to the working people who have been in continuous struggles to defend their rights and livelihood.

In a statement issued to KNS, CITU State President Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said the working class should prepare for united struggles against anti-people onslaught of the BJP-led government.

ASHA's under NHM, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, Mid Day Meal Workers, CPWs, MGNREGA employees, Contractuals, Construction Workers, Need Based, Seasonal,



Casual Labourers, Daily Wagers are neglected and their long pending demands are not

▶ See **Tarigami...** Pg 02

## Paper Leak Claim: POLICE REGISTERS CASE AGAINST YOUTH AFTER SSRB LODGES COMPLAINT

Baramulla, May 1: A written complaint was submitted by Chairman SSRB to the effect that a video is in circulation on Social Media wherein one Mudaris Ahmad Teli R/O Shrakwara, Kreeri, Baramulla claimed that the question paper of Naib Tehsildar examination conducted by J&K SSRB had been leaked. Thereafter Police took the cognizance of the matter.

During verification of the matter the person was called up on phone by police but his mobile was switched off. "A police party was sent to his home and he was asked to accompany the police party to Police Station Kreeri. He

▶ See **SSRB...** Pg 02

## Dy CM's remarks and Jastrotia induction indicates how much justice can be expected in Kathua case: JRL

Srinagar, May 01: Joint Resistance Leadership of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mohammad Yasin Malik strongly condemning the outrageous and inhuman statement by Dy Chief Minister Kavinder Gupta of BJP that the deliberate and gruesome rape and murder of 8-year-old child Asifa from Kathua was a "small matter which was given importance," said it reflects the sick communal mindset and value structure of the "proud RSS



man." JRL said that inducting

another organizer of the Pro rapist rallies Ravinder Jas-

rotia into the government clearly shows that BJP does not believe in deviating from its politics of polarization and appeasement of certain communities for votes, even on a basic human issue like this, which is not surprising. It just reinforces the fact of how helpless the local collaborators, the PDP are and how shameless they can be to stay on for the sake of chair. It also indicates how much justice can be expected for Asifa from a

▶ See **JRL...** Pg 02

## CIVILIAN KILLINGS IN BARAMULLA, NORTH KASHMIR WIDELY CONDEMNED

▶ **Bilal Bashir Bhat**

Srinagar, May 01: Cutting across the political lines, the mainstream, separatists and armed leadership as well have strongly condemned the killing of three civilians in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday evening. Although the Police alleged militants hand behind the killing, however, none of the outfits so far claimed responsibility.

Pertinently, three youth civilians were killed on Monday evening after unknown gunmen fired upon them from a very close range in Iqbal Market at old town Baramulla, north of Kashmir. The slain persons have been identified

▶ See **Civilian...** Pg 02

## SUPREME COURT ASKS HIGH COURTS TO FAST-TRACK TRIAL UNDER POCSO ACT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued a slew of directions to all high courts of the country regarding trial in sexual assault cases involving children.

The bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra directed all high courts to ensure that cases of sexual assault of children are fast-tracked and decided by special courts.

The apex court also asked the high courts to instruct the trial courts not to grant unnecessary adjournments during trial of cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The bench, which also comprised Justices AM Khanwilkar and DY Chandrachud, said the high courts may constitute a committee of three



judges to regulate and monitor the trials of sexual assault cases of children, as it disposed of a PIL filed by advocate Alakh Srivastava.

Srivastava had approached the top court after an 8-month-old girl was allegedly raped by her 28-year-old cousin on January 28 in a locality near Netaji Subhash Place in north-west Delhi.

On April 21, the union cabinet had approved the

sought the provision of death penalty in such cases and framing of guidelines that investigation and trial of cases involving rape of children below 12 years of age under POSCO Act, should be completed in six months from the date of registration of the FIR.

Police had said the accused had confessed to raping the baby under the influence of liquor.

The girl's parents used to go out for work leaving their daughter in the custody of their sister-in-law. It was a Sunday when their sister-in-law's son was at home, the police had said, adding that when the accused saw his mother was not around, he allegedly forced himself on the baby.

ordinance to provide stringent punishment, including death penalty, for those convicted of rape of girls below 12 years.

The Centre's move came after public outcry for award of death penalty to such sexual offenders, including the assaulters of an 8-year-old girl who was allegedly gang-raped and killed at Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir recently.

Srivastava's plea had also

## SINO-INDIAN PROJECT IN AFGHANISTAN SIGNALS COOPERATION, MESSAGE TO PAKISTAN

Beijing: A ground-breaking joint Sino-Indian economic project in Afghanistan will send the signal that cooperation can prevail over competition and a message to Pakistan that China recognises India's legitimate role in Afghanistan, say strategic experts.

During the two-day informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping in Wuhan which concluded on April 28, India and China agreed for the first time to implement a joint economic project in war-torn Afghanistan. Indian and Chinese officials will identify the project and work out the modalities of cooperation.

earlier discussed possible cooperation in third countries and as early as in 2010 when officials from the two countries exchanged views on possible infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. But the discussions which were subsequently sidelined got a major boost at the summit where Modi and Xi talked cooperation in a third country. "There will be more China-India projects in the region in the pipeline, some of which will involve a third party," Vice Foreign Minister Kong Xuanyou told a media briefing at the end of the summit. Separately, an Indian official said the project will be in Afghanistan. The decision will have a bearing on the region and on

Afghanistan's role as a "roundabout" of cooperation in Asia, said Barnett Rubin, Senior Fellow at the Center on International Cooperation and former advisor to UNAMA (UN Mission to Afghanistan).

"This agreement constitutes recognition of Afghanistan's efforts to become a "roundabout" of Asian cooperation — it is exactly what the government has been working for. It also constitutes an implicit rebuke to both the U.S. and Pakistan," Rubin said.

He added: "The Trump administration has tried to portray Asia as the scene of a new cold war between China with the Belt and Road Initiative and the so-called 'Indo-Pacific' led by the US

and India. This agreement showcases the Chinese position that cooperation should prevail over competition, while the Trump National Security Strategy emphasises the primacy of competition," Rubin said.

Chinese academics agreed, saying it opens up opportunities for India and China to engage in other countries.

"It is a good start. More joint projects should be in their shared neighborhood such as Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and other ASEAN countries. Africa is also a region of full possibilities," said Lili, south Asian scholar at the Institute for International Relations at Beijing's Tsinghua University.

## Continue from Front Page.

### SHUTS

of people present there. The funeral prayers of both the militants passed off peacefully.

Meanwhile, top and middle rung Hurriyat leaders were put under house detention on this morning.

Reports said that heavy contingents of police and paramilitary CRPF have been deployed outside Hyderabad residence of Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Nigeen residence of Mirwaiz Molvi Umar Farooq to prevent them from taking out any protest rally from their respective areas.

JKLF Chairman Muhammad Yaseen Malik and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Chairman Muhammad Ashraf Sehraie have been restrained to move out by the government forces deployed outside their residences.

Among other pro freedom leaders detained outside their residences include G A Gulzar Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaaf and Mohd Ashraf Laya.

Besides, a complete shutdown was observed across the Valley to protest against Drubgam civilian killing.

All the shops, business establishments, educational institutions, petrol pumps and others remained closed today while the traffic was also thin on the roads.

The train services also remained suspended for the fourth consecutive day in Kashmir.

A police official said that the situation across the Valley remained peaceful throughout the day.

### KILLINGS

Dar, Rayees Ahmad Thoker, Ubaid Shafi Malla, Adil Ahmad Thoker, Yawar Ahmad Yatoo, Ishfaq Ahmad Malik, Aietamad Hussain Dar, Ishfaq Ahmed Thoker, Sameer Ahmed, Muhammad Abas Bhat, Waseem Ahmed, Ishfaq Ahmed, Musavir Ahmed, Ishfaq Ahmed, Abid Ahmed, Sameer Tiger and Akib Mushtaq Khan.

At least 18 civilians were killed this month either by unidentified gunmen or were shot at during clashes by government forces. These civilians included Mehrjuddin Mir of Okey Kulgam, Muhammad Iqbal of Khasipora Shopian, Zubair Ahmed Bhat, Mushtaq Ahmed Thoker, Gowhar Ahmed Rather and Amir Ahmed Lone of Kangan, Muntazir Ahmed and Manzoor Ahmed of Hajin Bandipora, Kifayat Ahmed of Moolu Shopian, Ghulam Nabi Patel of Rajpora, Shafaq Shabir of Hergam Shopian and Shahid Ahmed of Arihal Pulwama, Haseeb Nabi, Asghar Khan and Muhammad Asif, all residents of Jamia Mohalla Baramulla.

Besides, four civilians Sarjeel Sheikh of Khudwani, Bilal Ahmed Tantray of Frisal, Faisal Ilahi of Melhoora Shopian and Aijaz Ahmed Pala of Bijbehara were killed after Government Forces on April 11 fired upon protesters trying to help militants escape at Wanimahalla Khudwani Kulgam.

Forces personnel among which some were killed in Pakistan firing were Ganoukar Rao, Havaladar Charanjeet Singh, Ajay Kumar, Latif Gojri, Arvinder Kumar, Gunner Nilesh Singh, Sepoy Hetram, Jaki Sharma and Vinod Singh.

### OMAR

The comment made by newly appointed Jammu and Kashmir deputy chief minister Kavinder Gupta sparked row after he termed Kathua minor rape and murder as "minor incident".

Gupta who took oath on Monday after BJP went for reshuffle to boost party's image following participation of two state cabinet ministers - Chandra Parkash Ganga and Chowdhary Lal Singh in a rally organized by Hindu Ekta Munch in favour of accused in the Kathua minor rape and murder.

### DGP

exemplary work in different fields.

Speaking on the occasion DGP Dr. Vaid said that noble foundation Ludhiana was doing a great service in nation building by educating more than 4000 slum children in 26 schools across Punjab. The best part of this function was that women of different states were felicitated for their excellence in their respective fields, Dr Vaid added.

Foundation's governing body of director Rajnesh Ahuja, Keshav Ramvij, Arun Thapar, Naveen Bhatia, Rakesh Ghambhir, Subash Sachdeva, Vijay Mehtani and Rashmi Sharma honoured Dr. S.P. Vaid, Vinay Kumar Jha and Vijay Chopra.

Expressing his pleasure DGP in his message on twitter said, it was a pleasure and honour being felicitated by chief patron Padamshree VK Chopra on the occasion.

### INDIA

diplomats, military veterans and academics, who were having unofficial backing from the foreign ministries of the two countries.

The India-Pakistan ties nose-dived in recent years with no bilateral talks taking place.

The ties between the two countries had strained after the terror attacks by Pakistan-based groups in 2016 and India's surgical strikes inside Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The sentencing of alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav to death by a military court in April last year further deteriorated bilat-

eral ties.

The two sides often accuse each other of ceasefire violations along the Line of Control, resulting in civilian casualties.

Recently, India said that it would participate along with Pakistan in a multi-nation counter-terror exercise in Russia under the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The Nation newspaper in an editorial hailed the exercise. "The new-fangled initiative is far from an independent cognisant initiative on the part of both the countries at mitigating grievances, and is in fact an enterprise broached under the aegis of the SCO," the daily said.

Where the exercises aim to build trust and mutual understanding, with eye towards coming up with a formula to manage border affairs, any endeavour in this area between the two acrimonious neighbours can go a long way in side stepping their tenuous relationship," it said.

### DSEK

Following which the school education department had started public interactions to chalk out future course of action on functioning of these institutes.

Director education while taking to Press Trust of Kashmir said that they have constituted some guidelines for tuition/coaching centres to qualify for operating these centers.

According to order vide no. 653 DSEK of 2018 dated 24-4-2018 issued on the subject reads, "The authorization to conduct private academic tuition by the private registered tuition centres was suspended for a period of 90 days subject to review and all the registered private tuition/coaching centre were asked to furnish the details vis-a-vis enrollment of students, fee structure faculty engaged for coaching tuitioning alongwith their salary details with in the period of 10 days".

The order further reads that the supra meeting was held 28-4-2018 with the representative of private tuition coaching centres association Kashmir on the issues involved and after threadbare discussion and consensus arrived at with the participant following decisions were taken.

The order issued reads that in partial modification of order no. 653 DSEK of 2018 it is hereby ordered that the suspension of authorization to conduct private academic tuitioning in respect of these 102 private tuition coaching centres is revoked.

The 10 points which has been made mandatory for tuition centers now includes 1. All the registered private tuitions shall conduct the classes only in the 2nd half after one hour of the closure of schools as per notified school timing.

2. No tuition centre shall force the students to pay the fee dues in one installment if the amount exceeds Rs 250000 for completion of course. Therefore fee dues for providing tuition of short term course shall be received by them in two installment while as it shall be three instalments in case of long term course.

3. The aspirant students shall be allowed to monitor and analyses the faculty usage of facilities and material provided in the tuition centres upto maximum 20 days, and if he/she wants to discontinue after feelings dissatisfied with regard to all these parameters he/she shall be refunded all his/her dues.

4. Private coaching shall be permitted from classes 9th onwards only as it is form this stage that career advance planning takes place and this stage requires supplementary academic support through private tuition centres. No private tuition centres shall engage in providing private tuition upto class 8th.

5. The number of students in a class in all the tuition shall not be more than 75 students in respects of academic tuition and 100 in respects of coaching classes for different entrance exams. However this is subject to the condition that a space of 09sq. feet per student the direction of the high court.

6. All the registered coaching centres shall hold the parents tutor meeting once in a month and the feedback must be shared with the directorate for uploading on the official website for the information of general public.

7. A separate web portal shall be established at directorate level on which the list of all the registered coaching centres will be made available and the grievances, if any can be registered on the portal for quick redressal with a similar arrangement to be provide by registered coaching centres and put in place.

8. For the benefit of students the DESK has already constituted counseling cells at school and district level. however it was felt desirable that as far as possible private tuition should also come up with such arrangement in the larger interests of the students community.

9. It has been observed that there are no waiting rooms at maximum coaching centre with the result the students waiting for a their classes are forced to wait in corridors, lanes and stress which is not desirable.

10. There was a demand form parents and social activists that even in private tuition there is a requirement to have arrangement four moral education. Therefore every tuition centre shall make necessary arrangement so that first 15

minutes are devoted for moral education every day.

The order mentions, "Now therefore in partial modification of order no. 653 DSEK of 2018 it is hereby ordered that the suspension of authorization to conduct private academic tuitioning in respect of the list of private tuition coaching centres forming annexure to this order is revoked subject to the conditions that they shall furnish action taken report on the decision quoted at para 2 of the order alongwith the norms already notified in their registration orders within 10 days where after the matter shall be reviewed again".

### RASHEED

no agency from the Govt. is keeping an eye on the flooded entry of thousands of outsiders, who don't work in any private or state sector as skilled or unskilled laborers.

Not only there is every apprehension of miscreants and anti-social elements residing in these tented locations but one has a reason to believe that some elements within the govt. have been facilitating these seasonal illegal migrants. It is ironic that their number is growing every day and from mosques to bus depots and from villages to towns these people have made life of locals miserable".

Er. Rasheed asked Govt. if Kashmiris are like strangers, given step motherly treatment in their own native land and asked to prove their identity day in and day out how come are these uninvited guests allowed to occupy the prime state lands and get away with what they want".

Er. Rasheed while appealing people from all sections of the society to take notice of the issue warned state Govt. of dire consequences, if it doesn't throw all those families out of the valley whose whereabouts are not known and have no business to be here.

Speaking on the occasion Er. Rasheed said that Sheeban Ashai's entry to the party is a welcome move and appealed youth to come forward to strengthen AIP's efforts for resolution to Kashmir dispute in accordance with the sentiments and wishes of Kashmiri people. Besides others party senior leaders Zeeshan Pandith, Prince Parvez and Dr. Bari Nayak were present on the occasion.

### POLICE

to rescue Wani, while in a bid to free themselves, one of the security guards fired a round in the air, thus creating panic in the area.

Witnesses told news agency CNS that, Wani was thrashed by security guards and Sofi's son, a charge refuted by Sofi Yousuf who alleged that Wani provoked people who resorted to sloganeering.

Saleem Wani, the former BJP State General Secretary Minority Morcha filed a complaint against the security guards and accordingly police registered an FIR against the two PSO's who were identified as Javid Ahmed and Muhammad Nawaz.

"Saleem Wani who has registered complaint in the police resorted to hooliganism and tried to snatch weapons from my security guards part of my escort. We have also lodged a counter complaint at police station," MLC Sofi Yousuf said.

### TARIGAMI

met. Daily wagers/casual labourers are awaiting their regularization although government has issued SRO last year which is quite disappointing.

BJP led government is trying to erode whatever the achievement has made by the working class. Whatever has been left is being snatched away from them. Harsh measures are being taken against working class across the country instead of addressing their issues. The administration is hell bent to take repressive measures.

The policies pursued by BJP led government have resulted in job loss and attacks on livelihood of common people have increased. The government is trying to promote such issues which create communal division among people. This divisive agenda of BJP government has to be defeated. Working class should realize that their unity and united struggles can force the government to concede their demands.

Paying rich tributes to Zaldagar martyrs of 1865, Tari-gami said that they laid the foundation of a struggle against the exploitation and atrocities on the artisans, a prominent section of working class. He said that the shawlbaft protest launched at Zaldagar against the ruling class has given vent to numerous movements of working class which are awaiting successful culminations. The traditional artisans and weavers also reap little benefits of their hard toil. He demanded social security board for these artisans on the pattern of Construction Welfare Board and weaver off ACC loans to them.

He said that the social security benefits like pension, provident fund, health insurance etc. are hard won rights of the working class secured through decades of struggle. These gains are now being reversed through privatization of pension funds, provident funds and cuts in subsidies.

### SSRB

was asked to submit any proof he had to substantiate his claim which he failed to do."

"During investigation into the matter his claim was found baseless and not based on facts. The assertion that some unknown people had approached him with question paper was found to be untrue," said police official.

"He confessed to have committed mistake to attract attention for publicity," the official claimed.

Based on the preliminary investigation conducted into the matter FIR vide number 27/2018 has been lodged against the individual in Police Station Kreeri for rumour mongering and defamation

### JRL

system run by such people.

Earlier, the induction of Kathua MLA Rajiv Jastrotia by BJP on Monday as a minister in the Jammu and Kashmir cabinet has triggered a fresh controversy with sane voices raising question over his participation in a rally to favor the accused in Kathua minor's rape and murder case for which BJP earlier forced two stalwarts to quit.

Jastrotia, who took oath along with eight others, was part of the controversial Kathua rally in support of the accused in the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl. Jastrotia was also questioned in connection with the case.

Furore has been generated due to his induction. Prominent Journalist Barkha Dutt tweeted - "Rajiv Jasrotia #Kathua MLA who also attended the rally to back jmmc charged with rape & murder of an 8-year-old girl has today been made minister in #JammuAndKashmir. So why drop the two state ministers at all? Here's what the child's lawyer Talib Hussain told me about MLA's role"

Inam Nabi, Political analyst, while talking to The Kashmir News Bureau stated - "The induction of MLA who came in support of rapists in State cabinet shows the level to which politics has been degraded in Kashmir and especially how those who encourage goon and criminal elements are rewarded. This development is bound to alienate youth further and have negative consequences on the overall situation. PDP BBJP coalition government is taking rot to new levels."

Meanwhile, asking Mehbooba Mufti to clear her stand on how Rajiv Jastrotia was inducted in her cabinet, MLA Langate Sheikh Abdul Rasheed has said that his induction has exposed the collusion Government's claims of taking a moral ground over Kuthua rape and murder case.

### CIVILIAN

as Asger Sheikh, Haseeb Khan and Asif Sheikh.

To condemn the killings Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti took to the social media site Twitter and wrote "Distressed to hear of 3 civilians being killed by militants in Baramulla. My deepest condolences to the deceased's families."

Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) comprising of Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik expressing concern and condemnation over these killing appealed the United Nations to take note of this and set up an impartial inquiry into these killings.

"While the state authorities conveniently blame armed youth, the militant organisation, in fact, condemn the killings and many time blame state agencies. In the process the culprits never get identified. JRL reiterated that any killing on grounds of political or party affiliations is inhuman and un-Islamic and unacceptable to people and leadership of Kashmir," reads a statement of JRL.

Militant outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen also condemned the civilian killings stated- "It is India who is killing Kashmiris," appealing people to help them in identifying those who are behind such acts. "3 civilians have been murdered by terrorists in Baramulla just now. I'd like to see the separatist leaders issue the sort of condemnation they usually reserve for when civilians are killed by security forces," stated former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on his Twitter handle.

Taking a dig on local dailies, National Conference spokesman Junaid Azim Matoo stated "On expected lines, the three young men shot dead by militants in Baramulla yesterday have been relegated to a two column, nondescript space in the newspapers - hence subtly affirmed to be Wajib-ul-Qatal. Another day in the selective morality of this conflict."

The netizens on different social networking sites also expressed concern and condemned the civilian killings.

"We are getting killed because we are militants' Informers' mainstream' stone pelters and what not. We issue strike calendars to ask our own people to shut business' education which is destroying our future and economy. Please educate me when and where are we hitting India. From movement of separation to Zakir Mosa's ideology, it is all win-win situation for India. Let's put our head's together to review what we are heading for. Hope better sense prevails," stated a Facebook user Ali Ahemad.

Meanwhile, emotional scenes were witnessed during the funeral of the three civilians, where hundreds of people took part in the prayers held at their native place in Old Baramulla town.

# Social Security of unorganized sector workers is the top most priority of our Ministry- Santosh Gangwar

Srinagar, May 01: Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari today called for innovative ways to work for the welfare of the workers. Presiding over the International Labour Day Programme today, Shri Gadkari said there is a need to link the workers to Aayushman Bharat and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna to provide them better health and housing facilities. Minister for Labour & Employment (I/C), Shri Santosh Gangwar expressed his commitment for Social Security of the unorganized Sector Workers. Greeting workers on the occasion, he said the workers are the top most priority of our Ministry and Central Government.

at the programme organized by Ministry of Labour & Employment and gave awards to model employees of ESIC and EPFO.

These include the Concurrent Audit Software launched by EPFO which will allow instantaneous real time audit of the transactions taking place in its centralized data base system including process of remittances, receipts and settlements of claims, payments of pension, transfer of PF accumulations.

Redevelopment project of Bhavishya Nidhi Bhawan, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi was also inaugurated today. The redevelopment project is being undertaken at an approximate cost of Rs.60.47 crore with an expected time frame of 22 months.

On the occasion of International Labour Day, MetLife Global Op-

erations Support Centre and IDFC Bank Limited were felicitated as model employers in the exempted sector. Gujarat State Fertilizers Co. Ltd. (VP/BRD/5238) was felicitated in the un-exempted sector.

The two employers from Un-exempted sector are those who have more than 5000 employees and have made timely payment of Provident Fund dues in the previous 12 months and have outstanding contribution in providing 'Aadhaar' verified employee details. The establishment identified from the exempted sector is on the basis of their ranking in the online return dashboard for exempted establishments under the EPFO. The establishment identified has secured maximum score in 7 months since the introduction of the online ranking system in July 2017.

Many initiatives like Filing of online Annual Return under 8 labour laws on Shram Suvidha Portal (SSP); Transparent and accountable system of inspection through SSP; Issuing of Online Registration Certificates under BoCW act 1996, ISMW act 1979 and Contract Labour act 1970 were launched by CLC.

M/S the Leprosy Mission Community Hospital Nandnagri, Delhi, M/s Welspun India Ltd. Vapi, Gujarat and M/S Lucas TVS Pudukchery were selected by ESIC as model employers for felicitation. These establishments have paying contribution timely and covering 100% eligible employees.

At the occasion five construction workers namely Smt. Asma, Shri Talsim, Smt. Vandana Devi, Shri Dheer Singh and Shri Nand Kishor

were provided monetary benefits.

Shri Gadkari released a quarterly newsletter "Child Hope" which documents the success stories and best practices of the special Training Centers and the National Child Labour Project Societies for dissemination and replicability among the NCLP Districts across the country. "Child hope" covers a range of issues relating to Child Labour with the purpose of generating awareness and sensitising different sections of population towards progressive elimination of child labour. Special issue of the VVGNI POLICY PERSPECTIVES was also released at the occasion. The programme was attended by representatives of labour organisations, International Labour Organisation and senior officials of the Ministry.

# Dr Jitendra Singh felicitates the toppers of Civil Services Examination, 2017

Srinagar, May 01: The Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh felicitated the toppers of Civil Services Examination (2017) at a ceremony organised by Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, here today.

During the event, Dr Jitendra Singh welcomed and congratulated all the successful candidates and described them as "architects of the New India". He urged them to utilise the opportunities available during their long careers for building a 'New India', which is going to be a super power. He noted that out of the 20 top rankers, 14 have engineering background and 2 medical background. Many of them had early education from Government schools in small towns. This indicates that educational opportunities to excel are not just limited to the metro cities, he added. He said that it has been a learning experience to interact with the young achievers during the felicitation, which is being organised by the Government for the last four years.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, during the last few years, Government has initiated the practice of posting IAS officers early in their careers as Assistant Secretaries to be mentored for a period of 3 months in different Ministries/Departments of Government of India. It introduces the officers to various aspects of the functioning of the Central Government, he said. He wished all the candidates a great success for their future.

Addressing the toppers, Secretary, DoPT, Shri C. Chandramouli said that the young officers have a lot to learn during their long tenure in civil services where they will meet various challenges in due course. He expressed confidence that they would find innovative solutions to these challenges. He wished the toppers best in their future career.

Senior officers of Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions and parents & guardians of the young achievers were also present on the occasion.

# President of India to present visitor's award for Research and for Technology Development today

Srinagar, May 01: The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, will present Visitor's Award for Research in the field of Basic and Applied Science and in the field of Humanities, Arts and Social Science during the meeting of Vice Chancellors of Central Universities at Rashtrapati Bhavan tomorrow (May 2, 2018). He will also present the Visitor's Award for Technology Development.



Humanities, University of Hyderabad, Telangana, for his research and publications particularly covering the important areas of poetry for the underprivileged, memoirs and fiction, the Bhopal gas tragedy and other episodes.

The Visitor's Award for Technology Development will be presented to Prof. Ashwani Pareek, School of Life Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, for developing Stress Tolerant Rice of the Next Generation (STRONG). This has the potential to enhance farm incomes.

For selecting the winners, online applications were invited from all Central Universities for each category. A Selection Committee headed by Shri Sanjay Kothari, Secretary to the President and comprising eminent persons and academicians, assisted by a Sub Committee, chose the winners of the Awards.

This has the potential to reduce toxicity, dosage, regimen and cost of cancer treatment. The second winner is Prof. Ashis Kumar Mukherjee, Department of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Tezpur University, Assam, for his research leading to clarity on the molecular complexity and toxicity of the components of the snake venom from different localities of India. This too has likely utility as a new drug for treatment of diseases.

The Visitor's Award for Research in the field of Humanities, Arts and Social Science will be presented to Prof. Pramod K Nayar, Department of English, School of

The Visitor's Award for Research in the field of Basic and Applied Science will be jointly presented to two academics. The first is Prof. Sanjay K. Jain, Department of Pharmaceutical Science, Dr Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh, for his contribution to the development of a drug delivery system using folic acid conjugated liposomes containing oxaliplatin for targeted delivery of colon tumors.

# NDMA to conduct workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction database

Srinagar, May 01: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is conducting a two-day National Workshop on Data Requirements for Disaster Risk Reduction Database beginning here tomorrow. The workshop is being held in collaboration with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

India often refers to global databases and snapshots of disaster events for reporting disaster losses. However, these databases work under various limitations and are not able to produce accurate analyses.

In this background, it is important to create a uniform and credible national-level disaster database. Locally obtained and validated data will aid scientific analyses and suitable policy interventions to reduce disaster risks.

The workshop aims to develop consensus on disasters, thresholds and develop standardised templates for data collection, updation and validation to ensure accuracy and quality. Issues such as interoperability and security of the data will also be discussed.

This database is crucial for assessing and tracking our risks and progress towards resilience without which India will not be able to meet its developmental goals. It will also be a step forwards towards implementing the Prime Minister's 10-point agenda to address disaster risks, outlined during the Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR (AMCDRR) in November, 2016.

Two technical sessions - Disaster information and data management system on damage and loss and good practices, and Discussion to record an event as a disaster in DRR database - will be held on the first day of the workshop. Three technical sessions -

Group Presentations and Discussions, Panel discussion on setting up baseline data for damage and loss estimation using 2005-2015 dataset and Discussion on Formation of a "Steering Group for DMIS" and Way forward - will be held on the second day of the workshop.

Officials from NDMA and representatives of concerned Central Ministries and Departments, State Governments, UN agencies, Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs), Disaster Management Institutes and Universities will participate in the workshop.

India is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. These disasters result in loss of lives and livelihoods, besides causing significant damage to infrastructure and disruption of critical services. These socio-economic losses undo years of growth and development, especially affecting the most vulnerable and marginalised populations.

# Kohli holds public grievance redressal camp in Rajouri

RAJOURI MAY 01: In order to redress grievances of the general public at their doorsteps, the Minister for Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries Abdul Gani Kohli convened a public grievance redressal camp at Doogani Samkar in Rajouri today.

People in large numbers hailing from nearby villages participated in the camp and apprised the Minister of their problems and grievances. On the occasion, the public deputations raised several issues related to PDD, PHE, and PWD, agriculture, healthcare and livestock.

The Minister assured the public of early redressal of their grievances and directed the officers to take speedy action on the flagged-issues.

Speaking on the occasion, Kohli said that objective behind conducting such camps is to provide a platform to the public for raising their issues and demands.

He said the government has initiated various projects to provide people with amenities like roads, bridges, schools and drinking water schemes. He also sought the cooperation of the people in the fast and better execution of ongoing developmental projects.

The Minister asked the officers to create awareness among the people about various government-sponsored welfare schemes so that the objective behind launching them would be fulfilled.

Director Fisheries R.N. Pandita, Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu Dr. Sanjev Kumar and Director Animal Husbandry Jammu Dr. Victor Koul besides senior officers of allied departments were also present on the occasion.

Earlier, the Minister inspected fisheries farm and ornamental hatchery at Dumi Akhnoor. Director Fisheries R.N. Pandita briefed the Minister about the activities being carried out at the farm.

# Clarification regarding electrification status of certain villages

Srinagar, May 01: Village electrification targets under 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana' (DDUGJY) have been achieved well before time. The Union Government, State agencies and all other stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in this program deserve appreciation and applause for putting in unprecedented efforts to ensure completion of task within the targeted time frame.

It is worthwhile to mention that most of the remaining villages were located in remote and inaccessible areas with difficult hilly terrain, deep forest areas, Left Wing Extremism affected areas and therefore probably remained neglected for electrification.

The progress of village electrification in three years from 2012-13 to 2014-15, prior to commencement of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY), on an average was only 1730 villages per year, including lowest ever figure of 1197 villages in 2013-14.

There are reports in some sections of media that some villages are still un-electrified, contrary to the Governments' claim of achieving 100 per cent village electrification. In this connection, it may be reiterated that the Government had taken up electrification of remaining un-electrified census villages, duly identifiable as per census code, reported by

the States as on 01.04.2015, under 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana' (DDUGJY). Electrification of all these villages has been reported complete by all the concerned States. Some of the households in sub-village units viz. habitations/hamlets/Dhanis/Majras/Tolas may not be having electricity as of now, and it is felt that certain news agencies are reporting about such habitations.

The Government has already launched 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' - 'Saubhagya' to provide last mile connectivity and service connections to all remaining households in both rural and urban areas to achieve universal household electrification. All the remaining households including located in the habitations/hamlets/Dhanis/Majras/Tolas associated with the Census villages and households attached to urban settlements would be covered under 'Saubhagya'.

Most of the villages reported in the news reports are in fact habitations/hamlets/Dhanis/Majras/Tolas and not the Census village, as described below-

(i) Madhya Pradesh  
The 3 villages in Alirajpur District namely Jhandana, Amba and Chameli are situated in submerged areas of Sardar Sarovar. The villagers have been

shifted to Kakrana village which is electrified but some villagers have shifted to another nearby locality which is a habitation not yet electrified.

In Raisen District, Khananpura village is already electrified and intensive electrification in associated Tola is under progress. The other 5 villages of Raisen district namely Jaitgarh, Bili, Pond, Ramgarha and Gopalpur are forest villages wherein households have been electrified with solar power.

(ii) Rajasthan  
All inhabited revenue / census villages in Dholpur district are reported to be electrified. The names of villages reported in the news articles are in fact Dhanis and not the revenue / census village. Intensive electrification works of Goleka Pura and Shankar Pura Dhanis have been completed and in remaining Dhanis, namely Ghuraiya Hera, Hathiyakhar, Kehrikanagla, Haripura, and Thakur Pura, the intensive electrification works are in progress.

The Rajghat village is presently covered under municipal area of Dholpur and as such the households in urban areas are having access to electricity unless disconnected.

(iii) Jharkhand  
The Saprum village reported in the news reports is an electrified village but power is disrupted since long.

# Comm Secy Agri chairs maiden review meet

SRINAGAR, MAY 01: Commissioner Secretary, Agriculture Production Department M D Khan today said that interventions made by the Department should be translated into results and impact should be visible on the ground. The secretary expressed these views while chairing his maiden review meeting here at Lal Mandi.

Director Agriculture Kashmir, Joint Director Agriculture Extension, Joint Director Agriculture Inputs, Joint Director Agriculture Engineering, Subject Matter Specialist (RL), Chief Agriculture Officers of concerned districts and other key functionaries of the department, attended the meeting.

Speaking at the meeting,



Commissioner Secretary said that 75% to 80% population of the State is directly or indirectly related to the agri-

culture sector, therefore, it is the prime responsibility of the department that all the public resources are utilized

in most judicious manner. He said the greatest concern of the department is wellbeing of farmers and strengthening of the rural economy, adding the only solution to the problems of the farming community is providing them effective handholding to boost their socio-economic status.

During the meeting, he

asked the concerned to devise a compact, inclusive; technology-based, multi-dimensional and vibrant agriculture policy, taking all the stakeholders on board, so that the entire potential in this sector can be explored. He stressed for the department to work in close coordination to overcome the challenges of the farm sector.

# Suresh Prabhu lauds Telecom Commission's decision to allow in-flight connectivity

Srinagar, May 01: Sh. Suresh Prabhu, Minister for Civil Aviation has welcomed the Telecom Commission's approval for offering in-flight connectivity within Indian airspace. He said that the decision would enable flyers to avail data and voice services during flights over Indian airspace and the government will now work towards creating the license framework for a special category of service providers called 'In-flight connectivity provider'.

He said that these developments mean that airlines are now equipped to bring dramatic, yet cost effective, enhancements to the passenger experience - with passengers ordering products from their phones and tablets and arranging to have them delivered to their homes, or the hotel on arrival at their destination. He said that connectivity to the ground means cabin crews can help passengers to change their onward transit plans to accommodate for changes to their flight, while they are still in the air.

Sh. Prabhu assured that he will ensure earliest implementation and complimented those involved in the decision. Re-iterating the government's commitment in improving the services to air passengers he stated that a new India is in the making under the leadership of Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi where everything is undergoing a positive transformation, from mindsets to methodologies.

## Time and Us

Editorial  
SRINAGAR  
& K

### Food first: on child nutrition

The central principle that should guide the Centre in improving maternal and child nutrition is that early childhood is the foundation for the health and well-being of an individual. Tinkering with the existing national programme of providing hot-cooked meals to children three to six years old, and take-home rations for younger children and pregnant and lactating mothers is fraught with danger. Attempts to substitute meals or rations with factory-made nutrients will inject commercialisation into a key mission, and upset the nutritional basis of the scheme. Good sense has prevailed, and the newly-formed inter-ministerial National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges has chosen to continue the current practice, overruling the Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, who proposed distribution of packaged nutrients to beneficiaries. Raising nutritional standards for young children has become a policy imperative only in recent years, with the National Food Security Act, 2013, incorporating the mandate in Schedule II, and the Supplementary Nutrition (Integrated Child Development Services Scheme) Rules, 2017, laying down entitlements. Food and Public Distribution Minister Ram Vilas Paswan's emphasis on strengthening these legal guarantees by providing more nutritious hot-cooked meals and rations with the help of local self-help groups is to be welcomed. If the ICDS scheme, now called the Anganwadi Services Scheme, is to achieve better outcomes, it must focus on the provision of physical infrastructure and funding, besides closer monitoring of the nutrition mission. Theoretically, the mission covers every child, but in practice it is not accessible to all.

When the Centre recently launched POSHAN Abhiyaan, an integrator that will build capacity among nutrition workers, it acknowledged that while official data show a reduction in some of the depressing aspects of women and child health, the ground reality is far from comforting: the National Family Health Survey-4 shows a drop in underweight and stunted children under five years of age compared to the previous survey, but the absolute numbers are still high. An estimated 35.7% children are underweight and 38.4% are stunted in that age group. The body mass index of 22.9% women aged 15-49 indicates chronic energy deficiency. These figures should cause alarm that even after a long period of robust economic growth, India has not achieved a transformation. To accelerate the pace of progress, POSHAN Abhiyaan should rigorously measure levels of access and quality of nutrition, and publish the data periodically. It should be pointed out that NFHS data show several States performing worse than the national average. In a recent report, Nourishing India, the NITI Aayog refers to acute malnutrition levels of about 25% in some States. There is no quick fix, and the answer to better nutrition lies in fresh, wholesome and varied intake.

# BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO LABOUR

By A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

HANS ULRICH OBRIST, whom The Guardian once described as a curator who never sleeps, explained the task of a curator in accessible language: "It [curation] means to preserve, in the sense of safeguarding the heritage of art. It means to be the selector of new work. It means to connect to art history. And it means displaying or arranging the work. But it's more than that. Before 1800, few people went to exhibitions. Now hundreds of millions of people visit them every year. It's a mass medium and a ritual. The curator sets it up so that it becomes an extraordinary experience and not just illustrations or specialised books."

India has witnessed the arrival of intelligent and engaging curators in the last two decades. With the art calendar being filled with exciting events—from the India Art Fair in New Delhi to the Kochi Biennale—these curators have sharpened their skills and navigated the world of art through numerous, varying signposts: some are thematic, some are based on material, some are retrospectives to celebrate individual artists and some bring together artists of a select school.

The Kochi Biennale has developed the Students' Biennale, an exhibitory platform that runs parallel to the main Kochi-Muziris Biennale, with a view to reaching out to state-funded art colleges across the country and encouraging young artists to reflect on their practice and exhibit their work on an international stage. Chennai-based C.P. Krishnapriya, a practising artist and an alumna of the Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai, curated the work of students from the college in Chennai, the Government College of Fine Arts, Kumbakonam, and the College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram. Students from Thiruvananthapuram chose to explore how skill and craft play a role in creating a work of art.

In the case of Chennai and Kumbakonam, Krishnapriya took a look at the now closed museum in the college in Chennai to see what would go into it if artists were to recreate the museum and an archive that is living and not dead. Drawing from the history of the college, their location within it, and their own lives, she narrowed down her search to looking at the place of labour in such a recreated space of exhibition. For her, Chennai and Kumbakonam share more history in the instituting of art and the colleges than is usually assumed, with a crossover of artists and art teachers, from their inception to the present. When she brought the students of these two colleges together, an organic linkage surfaced among the students themselves, not just in their approach to art but also in the process of making art.

"It meant labour itself had to be looked at critically, beyond what was in the Western anthropological representation of colonial photo archives and in the valorised post-Independence representation in Debi Prasad Roy Chowdhury's Triumph of Labour statue. Whether, and can, such representations celebrate labour and labourers and pose their lives and concerns centrally became the driving questions for the examination," says Krishnapriya.

The Madras School of Art—as the college



in Chennai was originally called—was established in 1850 as a private institution by the colonial medical doctor Alexander Hunter and was taken over by the British East India Company in 1851 as a centre to provide craft material for industrial and public works construction. Under colonial rule, the city witnessed a massive construction boom to house the new institutions created by the regime—the University of Madras, the High Court, railway buildings, offices for the police and other colonial officials, to name a few. It had departments for drawing, engraving, pottery, photography and an industrial department focussing on building materials and embellishments. The school was transformed into a major centre for arts learning when Ernest Binfield Havell was appointed as its Superintendent in 1884. Havell was transferred to the Calcutta school, and it was there that he met some of India's finest artists, who wanted to look at the Indian mode of working; Roy Chowdhury was one among them. It was Havell's recommendation to the colonial administration that paved the way for Roy Chowdhury to move to Madras in 1928 first as Vice Principal of the college; he became its first Indian head in 1929.

It is the pioneering role played by Havell and Roy Chowdhury that shaped modern art in India and gave it its own idiom and identity. In Chennai, two major public works of art by Roy Chowdhury mark the Marina promenade: the Gandhi statue in the south near the Director General of Police's office and the Triumph of Labour statue in the north near the University of Madras. By taking up labour as the theme for the students from Chennai and Kumbakonam, Krishnapriya located them within the history of the Madras metaphor, which is distinct from both the Bengal and the Baroda schools.

Fundamental questions The journey, says Krishnapriya, took the artists not only to the industrial roots of the college and its brick kilns but also raised questions about the role of the canvas and the pedestal and who and what is depicted on these. What is the role of artisans and crafts? What is the difference between traditional and commercial art? Is the status of artists trained in institutions inhibiting their interactions with traditional artists? She felt

that the journey might provide a clue to answering some fundamental questions: who is an artist?, what is art?, what is the purpose of art? Can art ever be an isolated exercise? What is art's narrative and within what and whose context? These students' work was well received and appreciated in Kochi and later travelled to Spaces in Chennai for a week-long display and evening discussions.

The numerous works of art that came out of this exercise using multiple materials and myriad narratives do seem to provide answers, though implicitly, not explicitly. These works do have all the markings of artists-in-the-making. There is tentativeness to the lines, colours sometimes fail to stand out, and some ideas remain polemical without transforming themselves into a work of art. But every exhibit has a context and a personal story and can be seen as one more point in the continuous line of the Madras school. For instance, A. Thalamuthu reproduced the "school of arts" brick, found in college. The college's kiln standardised the size of bricks, 9 inches by 4 1/2 inches, for the growing construction work within the city nearly 150 years ago. The brick kiln in the college, as seen by some in the closed college museum, is a part of the photograph archive.

The college lost some of its industrial components when in 1962 it chose to focus on arts and crafts and was renamed the Government School of Arts and Crafts, and then the Government College of Arts and Craft. "The craft department of woodwork and the craftsmen working in it, as with some other craft-based departments, then found their way out when the emphasis in the college changed. With the histories of the college being available mainly as hearsay, or remaining hidden, there is a need to recreate the histories not just in museums, archives, and library but with life," says Krishnapriya.

New look at colonial prints A set of diptych photographs titled "re-clicked" showcases an interesting reinterpretation of colonial prints. In 1885, the photography department, the first in South and South-East Asia, came into being in the school. A group of students—K. Deepika, A. Kameshwaran, K. Padmapriya, M. Sinduja, A. Thalamuthu, R. Moovendhran, V. Saranraj and A. Sandhiya—identified some colonial

photographs that may have been shot in the college. They felt that these images were orchestrated and were removed from their usual milieu. They saw the set of photographs as a colonial narrative and reductive in its approach. The artists recreated the same compositions by becoming the subjects themselves to bring back the subjective dignity and render them personal and contemporary.

Among the various crafts the college nurtured in its heyday, carpentry was given pride of place. Apart from the usual doors and windows, the carpentry department was involved in helping the textile industry design its weaving shuttles, block print wooden casts and furniture. It was not just stone that was rendered fluid in the portals of the college but even wood was reimagined in myriad shapes and forms from pure utilitarian items to exquisite ornamental items. However, the department lost its sheen over time and was shut down when the institution became a fine arts college. Deepika, who hails from a family of woodworkers, decided to do a woodcarving of a womb within a bearing. Her sister was pregnant and she asked a few questions: What is a child born into? Why is childbirth called labour? What is labour pain? What dies, what lives, what is made to be born, what is discarded? Why was the woodwork department at the college discarded? Can there be art without craft?

Other participants picked up the gender question posed by Deepika in her woodcarving. Each came up with a new strand to weave a tapestry in the form of fabrics. Sinduja wove silk on silk portraits of four weavers from Kanchipuram. These weavers do not wear the silk that they weave it. It is too expensive. It takes 10 days to make a saree for a family. It is always a family affair. And they earn about a thousand rupees for each saree, which forced Sinduja's family to abandon their traditional weaving work. Sinduja's other work, titled "Mother accounted", is a dosa pan used by her mother. Inspired by Ambai's Tamil short story "Veetin moelaiyil oru samaiyalara" (A kitchen in the corner of the house), she accounts for the unacknowledged and unaccounted labour of her mother, of women, of domestic labour.

The joint work titled "Labouring women" by Deepika, Kameshwaran, Padmapriya, Sandhiya, Sinduja and Thalamuthu is a Kalamkari saree with natural pigments on cloth. The textile department is one of the few craft departments that survived the metamorphosis of the college. While the looms are still there, the focus has moved away from the weaving to purely designing. Some of the best designers in most of the Weavers Service Centres, a Union government institution, including Redappa Naidu and K.M. Adimoolam, were from the Madras school. In this full-length Kalamkari saree, these students have used different motifs to decorate the fabric: everyday tools, utensils of daily life, public and private interactions, and finally a woman giving birth—literally in labour. "Labour means giving a new life," they assert.

Students also documented the work of bronze sculptors working in workshops in Swamimalai, near Kumbakonam. This video, which has a tantalising bilingual title, "Pattarai within pattarai, play within work", provides a context for the creation of the college in Kumbakonam.

# DEATH AS DETERRENT?

By V. VENKATESAN

In the aftermath of the horrific gang rapes of minor girls in Kathua and Unnao, the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, has said that her department will work on a proposal to amend the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act to bring in the provision of death penalty for the rape of a minor below the age of 12.

The POCSO Act was enacted in 2012 to protect children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography, and provide for special courts for the trial of such cases. The Act was enacted under Clause (3) of Article 15 of the Constitution, which empowers the state to make special provisions for children. The Act defines a child as any person below the age of 18.

Section 4 of the Act says that whoever commits penetrative sexual assault shall be punished with imprisonment for either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to a fine. Section 6 says whoever commits aggravated penetrative sexual assault shall

be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 10 years, but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to a fine.

The Act illustrates actions which constitute penetrative sexual assault and aggravated penetrative sexual assault. Penetrative sexual assault involves rape, while aggravated penetrative sexual assault involves either rape by those in positions of power and trust or gang rape. The Act has separate provisions for aggravated sexual assault, which does not involve penetration, and sexual harassment.

Maneka Gandhi's proposal to amend the POCSO Act is deeply problematic. First and foremost, to distinguish the rape of children below 12 years and accord the perpetrators of rape on them with severe punishment of the death penalty may fail to meet the standard legal test of reasonable classification. Any classification, to be reasonable, must be founded on an intelligible differentia, which distinguishes persons or things that are grouped together from others left out of the group. Secondly, the differentia must have a rational relation to the object sought to be achieved. In

other words, there must be a nexus between the basis of classification and the object of the Act.

Critics may ask why the rape of children below 12 years is deemed more heinous, warranting the death sentence, than the rape of children above 12 years. The question whether a potential rapist of a child below 12 years would hesitate to commit the heinous offence if he knows that the punishment for the offence is the death sentence also may not get an affirmative answer. It is naive to think that a potential criminal first analyses the degrees of punishment for a given offence before committing it.

In a sense, Maneka Gandhi's proposal may appeal to populist sentiment, which is not based on reason and logic, let alone any empirical evidence. Harsh punishments such as the death penalty may seem justified from the retributive theory of punishment, but have little value in terms of deterrent or reformative theories. Our abhorrence for the crime should not be allowed to cloud the pragmatic test for ensuring justice. The death penalty for a rapist, whether the victim is a child or an adult, cannot ensure justice because it supplies the perpetrator of the crime an additional

motive to kill the victim and the witnesses and erase possible evidence being relied upon by the investigators.

Anup Surendranath, director of the Centre on the Death Penalty at National Law University, Delhi, wrote in a recent article in The Hindu as follows: "There is an extensive body of work that documents many preventive measures and policies that have a definitive impact on preventing child rape. By diverting resources to the death penalty, we are taking away from developing strategies such as risk assessment and management, cognitive behavioural treatment and community protection measures that have proven to have far greater preventive potential."

Low conviction rates under POCSO Prosecutions under POCSO, according to activists, do not have low conviction rates because there is no death sentence for those found guilty. Lack of specialisation among investigators, prosecutors and judges dealing with cases under POCSO is cited as a major factor for the low conviction rate. There is a dire need to increase the number of mental health professionals, doctors, forensic experts and social workers to deal with offences involving the rape of

children and minor girls.

Justice for the victims need not be understood only in terms of harsher punishment for the offenders. Provision of adequate and qualitative child protection and rehabilitation schemes and well-paid lawyers who can make the legal procedures child-friendly could make a huge difference in ensuring substantive justice to the victims and survivors of gender-based violence. As Anup Surendranath points out, research on child sexual violence in India shows that a large proportion of the perpetrators are family members or those who are close to or known to the family. This, he says, results in massive under-reporting of such crimes. "This concern will only intensify with the death penalty because we are effectively asking the child's family to risk sending a family member or a known person to the gallows," he says.

The foremost reason which would militate against the death penalty for rapists is that mandatory death sentences have been frowned upon by the judiciary time and again because they do away with the element of discretion of the judges in sentencing. If the judges have the discretion to decide whether a particular child rapist deserves to

be punished with death or life sentence, it could lead to arbitrariness in sentencing, which is equally undesirable.

Madhya Pradesh amended the Indian Penal Code (IPC) last year, the first State to do so, to provide for the death sentence or rigorous imprisonment for not less than 14 years or life imprisonment in cases of rape or gang rape of girls up to 12 years of age. The Rajasthan Assembly passed a similar Bill in March, inserting Section 376-AA in the IPC. The Bill reportedly has a provision to deny release from prison for the remainder of one's life, even after completing 14 years of sentence, if sentenced to life imprisonment. Section 376-DD has been inserted to deal with offences of gang rape. Both Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have reportedly registered a rise in the crimes against children. A few other States, reports say, consider these amendments as examples worthy of emulation.

While amendments such as this may stand legal scrutiny because they safeguard the discretion of the sentencing judge to impose either the death penalty or life sentence on a convicted rapist, their relevance in deterring child rape or ensuring justice to the survivors or the victims is open to question.

# Congress' family politics blocked development in Karnataka, says Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday lamented that development in Karnataka has been blocked by the ruling Congress due to its obsession with family politics.

"Where there is Congress, all roads that lead to development are blocked. There is only family politics, corruption and lack of harmony," Modi told a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rally in Santhamarahalli village, about 170 km south of Bengaluru.

Launching the BJP's election campaign in the district for the upcoming assembly election, Modi addressed hundreds of people, including party cadres. "We hear in Delhi that there is a BJP wave in Karnataka. But as I see it, it's not just a wave but a storm," thundered Modi.

The Prime Minister's 40-minute speech in Hindi was simultaneously translated into Kannada, a first since his visits to the southern state over the past few months, so as to connect with the people in the local language.

Law and order in Karnataka has collapsed under Congress rule, Modi said. "When the Lokayukta in the state is not safe, how can one expect the common people to be safe under the Congress government?"

Karnataka's anti-graft ombudsman Justice P Vishwanatha Shetty was stabbed at his office by a man in the state capital on March 7.



The Congress has also failed in keeping its promises about electrifying villages, Modi said, adding that April 28, 2018 would be remembered by the country forever when 18,000 Indian villages were electrified.

"(Former Prime Minister) Manmohan Singh said Indian villages would be electrified by 2009, but in four years they could electrify only two villages. The Congress has nothing but contempt for the poor," alleged Modi.

The Centre will now work towards electrifying each household in the country, he added.

Modi also challenged Congress President Rahul Gandhi to speak for 15 minutes on the achievements of his party's government in Karnataka. "The Congress President had chal-

lenged me that if he speaks for 15 minutes in Parliament, I will not be able to take it. I ask him (Gandhi) to talk about the achievements of Congress government in Karnataka, without a paper in your hand."

Modi also attacked the Congress for indulging in "family politics" by allowing a party's leaders kith and kin to contest in the assembly elections.

"For the chief minister (Siddaramaiah) the rule is '2+1', where he will contest from two seats and has given his old seat (Varuna in Mysuru district) to his son (Yathindra) and for the other ministers (in the state cabinet), the rule seems to be '1+1', allowing their relatives to fight polls."

Fearing defeat, Siddaramaiah was changing his assembly constituencies

and contesting from two seats, Modi alleged.

Siddaramaiah has filed nominations for the May 12 election from Chamundeshwari in Mysuru district and Badami in Bagalkot district, while his son Yathindra is contesting from Varuna in Mysuru district.

Though Siddaramaiah had won from Varuna twice since the 2008 Assembly elections, he shifted to Chamundeshwari, making way for his son Yathindra to contest from his home constituency.

"For the Congress, it has always been about family politics. But for us (BJP), it is about people's politics. People of the state will decide which kind of politics they will choose (in the upcoming election)," Modi said.

He appealed to the people to vote for politics of honesty.

"Let this vote strengthen our commitment to end corruption. This vote of yours will not just choose your MLA, but will decide the future of the state."

"(BJP's chief ministerial candidate) Yeddyurappa is the hope for Karnataka and he will soon be chosen as the chief minister," asserted Modi.

The BJP wants to create a safe and secure Karnataka on the path of development, he added.

Modi will also address rallies on Tuesday in Udipi and Belagavi districts.

# Karnataka poll diary: Yeddyurappa has oath ceremony date, plans ready

The votes are yet to be cast, counted and the winners declared. Karnataka goes to polls on May 12 and results will be declared on May 15 for the 224-member assembly. Politicians however are never short of confidence. The Bharatiya Janata Party's Chief Ministerial candidate BS Yeddyurappa is so confident of a win, that he even declared when he plans to take oath as the 23rd Chief Minister of the state, only to recant the very next day.

No, it was not sudden modesty or any kind of apprehension on the likely outcome of polls that prompted this. Yeddyurappa, who had initially said he would probably take oath on 18 or 19th May, said that he is likely to do so on 17th May because 18th and 19th were declared to be not so 'auspicious'. He even declared the number of people (about 3-4 lakh) who would assemble for the ceremony. Will the voters of Karnataka oblige Yeddyurappa's soothsaying or will Siddaramaiah have the last laugh?

What is in a symbol While the candidates of major registered parties can contest on the reserved symbol (say Hand for Congress or Lotus for BJP), independent candidates have a tougher task. Unlike in the past when animals and other easily recognizable symbols were available, the Election Commission now releases a carefully curated list of them, for independents to choose from. This election season, candidates could choose among cup & saucer, sword, biscuit, a saw, nail cutter and a pair of pliers. Some of the symbols which used to be

allotted earlier like fan or a coconut tree have fallen out of favour. This is because at or near the voting station, there cannot be visual representation of a particular candidate. This had led to extreme situations of fans being covered or dismantled in a polling booth (not a good choice in the sweltering summer) or demands by some candidates that coconut trees near a booth be covered so as not to confer an advantage to an opponent.

One attention seeking actor who calls himself a 'firing star' Huccha (literally, mad) Venkat, who is contesting from Raja Rajeshwari Nagar constituency as an independent, has chosen a pair of sandals as his election symbol. To each his own.

A divine promise You have heard of politicians enriching voters with food, liquor, money even appliances. But one contestant in Karnataka is being accused of using visitation to divine abode to win elections. C S Puttaraju, the Janata Dal (Secular) candidate for the Melukote constituency is being accused of offering voters a round trip to have a darshan of Tirupati Balaji. Voters not only get a free ride on specially arranged buses, but also free accommodation and food. The catch, according to his opponents, is that people who avail this are asked to swear in the name of Lord Venkateswara that they will vote for him.

While some villagers claim to have gone on the trip, the party and candidate say they are doing no such thing. Results day will indicate who has the true blessings of the lord.

# Manesar land scam: Ex-CM Hooda appears in CBI court, granted bail

The special CBI court on Tuesday granted bail to former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda in connection with the Rs 1,500 crore Manesar land scam, hearing for which commenced on Tuesday.

Hooda had failed to turn up for previous hearing, citing "health" reasons. Hooda's counsel SPS Parmar told media that court granted bail after taking two surety bonds of Rs 5 lakh each. Next hearing is on May 31.

Battery of senior Congress leaders, including former Haryana Vidhan Sabha speaker Kuldeep Sharma, Karan Dalal, Anand Singh Dangi, Lalit Nagar, were present outside court complex. Hooda's son and Rohtak MP Deepinder Singh Hooda was also present. Former Punjab minister Rana Gurjit Singh, who resigned after allegations of sand mining, was also seen outside court.

This was Hooda's first appearance after the CBI court summoned him and others in this case, following the chargesheet on February 1. Hooda's former aides,



builders get bail Hooda's former principal secretaries Murari Lal Tayal and Chhatar Singh and former director of town and country planning department SS Dhillion — all co-accused in the scam — were granted bail following their appearance in last hearing on April 19, even as the CBI opposed their plea.

The-then district town planning officer Jaswant Singh too was allowed bail.

Apart from them, Atul Bansal, promoter of Gurgaon-based realty firm, ABW Group, whose 15 companies are named in the chargesheet as major beneficiary of this scam was also granted bail. The bail plea of other builders including,

Varinder Jain and Naveen Rao, too were accepted.

Supporters defended Hooda Kuldeep Sharma said Hooda was "being targeted by BJP" because of his "stature".

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Case history The CBI, in its voluminous challan on February 2, had charged Hooda, his aides and realty firms with criminal conspiracy and fraud.

The Rs 1,500-crore alleged scam pertains to misuse of the Land Acquisition Act for acquisition of 12-acre land in Industrial Model Township (IMT), Manesar, Gurgaon. While the acquisition was

ordered in 2004 during the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) government, the process began during Hooda's government that came to power in 2005.

Under the Hooda regime, a large number of farmers sold 350 acres at throwaway prices of Rs 20-25 lakh per acre to builders in a haste, fearing poor compensation.

Another 50 acres were purchased by land sharks even as the government issued a notification for Rs 1.5 crore per acre of compensation Gurgaon-based realty firm, ABW Group, and other builders bought a total of 459 acres through distress sale.

The Hooda government scrapped the acquisition process in 2007, only to later grant licences for housing and commercial development to the builders over 260 acres of that land.

Soon after coming to power in the state, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime had ordered a CBI probe in 2015.

ABW Group's owner Atul Bansal, the CBI claimed, was the major beneficiary.

# Give nod to Karnataka flag to prove you are a true Kannadiga: Siddaramaiah to PM Modi

Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah invoked Kannada pride on the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's whirlwind election tour on Tuesday and asked him to approve the state flag.

Modi launched his campaign blitzkrieg on Tuesday in Karnataka with rallies at Santhamarahalli in Chamarajanagara district, and Udipi and Chikkodi in Belagavi.

In a series of tweets on Monday night, Siddaramaiah complimented Modi over his recent claim that he too is a Kannadiga and raised concerns over alleged imposition of Hindi.

"Congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi who has declared himself a Kannadiga. Becoming Kannadiga means 'accepting Kannada language, naada geete (state anthem), naada' dwaja (state flag)."

"Will you become true Kannadiga by giving approval to Karnataka's naada dwaja? #AnswerMadiModi," Siddaramaiah tweeted in Kannada.

Flagging "Kannadiga pride" ahead of the assembly polls, Siddaramaiah had un-



Karnataka to resolve the Mahadayi dispute.

Maintaining that becoming Kannadiga entails protecting Kannada, Kannadiga and Karnataka's interest, he asked, "Will you become Kannadiga by allowing Kannadiga to write entrance exams of

nationalised banks in Kannada?"

Siddaramaiah wrote about Karnataka's tradition of brotherhood, and wondered how Modi could be a Kannadiga when the BJP has not fielded a single Muslim or Christian candidate.

Launching his campaign blitzkrieg today in poll-bound Karnataka, Modi will address rallies at Santhamarahalli in Chamarajanagara district, and Udipi and Chikkodi in Belagavi.

Reacting to Siddaramaiah's tweets, Karnataka BJP in a tweet said, "Tweeting at midnight? Looks like the perpetually sleeping CM has lost sleep over Modi's visit! Fun begins now."

app on April 26, Modi had claimed he "was also a Kannadiga."

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

Noting that becoming Kannadiga means being committed to protecting Karnataka's land, water and language, the chief minister asked, "Will you call meeting of chief ministers of three states to resolve Mahadayi river water sharing dispute?"

Karnataka has been demanding that the prime minister call a meeting of the chief ministers of riparian states of Maharashtra, Goa and

# Trump administration agrees to supply Predator drones to India

In a bid to substantially enhance India's so-called stand-off weapon capabilities, the Trump administration in the United States has agreed to supply long endurance high-altitude surveillance armed unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), which are capable of hunting and destroying targets across seas and over land borders.

Indian and US diplomatic officials confirmed to Hindustan Times that the Pentagon's decision to supply Predator-B drones to Indian military has been conveyed through official channels and that it is now up to the Narendra Modi government to take the final call based on the overall cost of India's drone programme. The matter was taken up during official level meetings attended by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, foreign secretary Vijay Gokhale and defence secretary in Washington last month, they added.

Manufactured by General Atomics, Predator-B has both land and naval versions and can be armed with air-to-land missiles, anti-ship missiles and laser guided bombs.

Stand-off capabilities refer to the ability to strike without fear of the defensive capabilities of the target.



Although the Pentagon had cleared the sale of 22 Guardian naval surveillance drones to India, New Delhi was insistent that given the costs involved, it was in favour of acquiring an armed drone which operates over both land and sea. "Purchase of the Guardian drone through government to government route did not make sense as even if the unarmed drone identifies a hostile target over Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal or Arabian Sea, it will have to request for Boeing P-81 Neptune (aircraft) to destroy the target. The

time lag and effort is not worth the while. The Indian need is an armed drone which not only locates but hunts down the target," said a senior Indian government official who asked not to be identified.

The other Indian worry is about encryption keys to weaponised drone. Essentially, Indian national security planners are worried whether the US will also have control of the armed drones and could theoretically jam them. The US defence manufacturers have dismissed this concern by saying

that India will have all the encryption keys for the armed drone.

This question, and the issue of the sale of the drones will come up before the technical team of Office of Secretary of Defence (OSD) policy arrives in the Capital on May 3-4, 2018 to discuss the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) with Defence Ministry officials. India needs to sign COMCASA and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for operating highly advanced US defence platforms requiring secured communication and spatial equipment.

The Indian and US officials said the sale of armed drones could also come up during the two-plus-two dialogue between external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman with newly appointed US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Jim Mattis in Washington later this month.

While Indian national security planners are pleased over the US nod to armed drones, the cost, logistics and maintenance of the UAVs is prohibitive due to separate command and control centres and requirement of round the clock combat vigil.

# PM event to bring CJI face to face with Oppn leaders who sought his ouster

Days after the Opposition sought a motion for his removal, Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra will come face to face with some of those leaders on May 2 at a meeting led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for planning celebrations on Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi, leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar are expected to attend. However, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, who is part of the 114-member panel constituted by the culture ministry to approve policies, programmes and guide the commemoration of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, will not attend the meeting.

The panel, in its first meeting on Wednesday, will also decide on the broad dates and programme for the celebration.

Although the agenda is way beyond the realm of partisan politics, the meeting will see the CJI and Opposition leaders sharing space shortly after some of them backed a move to remove him. Several Congress, NCP and Left MPs had come together and served a notice to Vice President Venkaiah Naidu for Misra's removal a week ago. The VP had rejected the move that the Congress is considering challenging legally.

Naidu refused to accept the proposal and



remarked that the allegations have a "serious tendency" to undermine the independence of the judiciary. Finance minister Arun Jaitley lashed out at the Opposition in a blog post shortly after and said the notice was meant to intimidate the judiciary.

Opposition leaders had maintained that Naidu should have formed a panel to review the charges instead of rejecting the notice outright.

Yechury, who had first mooted the idea to push a motion for CJI's removal will miss the meeting because he says he is attending a seminar in England on the occasion of the 200th birth anniversary of Karl Marx. "I will definitely attend all the subsequent meetings," he added.

Apart from Modi, the CJI and the Opposition leaders, the panel includes all state chief ministers, senior BJP ministers and eminent scholars.

# SCIENTISTS SPOT GENES BEHIND SKIN COLOR

Humans come in a range of colors, and new research is getting a step closer to how that happens. Newly identified gene variants tied to skin colors among Africans could offer insights into human evolution. The findings could also boost scientists' understanding of skin cancer and other conditions, researchers say. "We have identified new genetic variants that contribute to the genetic basis of one of the most strikingly variable traits in modern humans," said study senior author Sarah Tishkoff.

She's professor of genetics and biology at the University of Pennsylvania. Until now, only a few genes linked with normal variation in skin color have been pinpointed. Most of them have been found in studies of Europeans. In this study, researchers assessed skin pigmentation and genetic data from nearly 1,600 ethnically and genetically diverse people in Africa. "When people think of skin color in Africa, most would think of darker skin, but we show that

within Africa there is a huge amount of variation, ranging from skin as light as some Asians to the darkest skin on a global level and everything in between," Tishkoff said in a university news release. "We identify genetic variants affecting these traits and show that mutations influencing light and dark skin have been around for a long time, since before the origin of modern humans," she noted.

"Skin color is a classic variable trait in humans, and it's thought to be adaptive," Tishkoff said. "Analysis of the genetic basis of variation in skin color sheds light on how adaptive traits evolve, including those that play a role in disease risk."

There are benefits to both light and dark skin. For example, darker skin is believed to help provide some protection against the sun's ultraviolet rays. Africans don't often develop the deadliest skin cancer, melanoma, the researchers said. On the other hand, lighter skin improves sunlight-triggered vitamin D in regions



with lower amounts of sunlight, the study authors added. Most of the skin color-linked genetic variants identified in the study appear to have originated more

than 300,000 years ago. Some emerged roughly 1 million years ago, well before the advent of modern humans, according to the report. In many cases, older versions of these variants were associ-

ated with moderately pigmented skin, which suggests that our ancient ancestors had lighter rather than darker skin. "If you were to shave a chimp, it has light pigmentation, so it makes sense"

that skin color in the ancestors of modern humans could have been relatively light. It is likely that when we lost the hair covering our bodies and moved from forests to the open savannah, we needed darker skin. Mutations influencing both light and dark skin have continued to evolve in humans, even within the past few thousand years," Tishkoff explained.

She also said the study highlights the diversity of Africans and challenges biological notions of race. "Many of the genes and new genetic variants we identified to be associated with skin color may never have been found outside of Africa, because they are not as highly variable," she said.

"There is so much diversity in Africa that's not often appreciated. There's no such thing as an African race. We show that skin color is extremely variable on the African continent and that it is still evolving. Further, in most cases the genetic variants associated with light skin arose in Africa," Tishkoff concluded.

## WORLD SIGHT DAY FOLLOW THESE 5 TIPS TO ENSURE BETTER EYE HEALTH



World Sight Day on October 12 is a good reminder to take stock of yours and your family's eye health. We round some expert tips on how we can all take steps each day to protect our sight and look after eye health.

A nutritious diet has benefits for all types of health conditions, but some foods are particularly beneficial for eyes. Fatty fish such as tuna, herring or sardines are rich in omega-3 which nourish the cell membranes of nerve cells, including the retina, and help prevent the onset of eye diseases linked to ageing. Including fruits and vegetables in your diet, especially clem-

entines, oranges and mandarins, blueberries, carrots, and spinach and broccoli, can also boost eye health thanks to being rich in antioxidants and vitamins A and C, which help protect the cornea and lens of the eye, prevent cataracts, and prevent eye fatigue. Associate professor Scott Read from Queensland University of Technology, Australia, says spending more time in natural light is one of his top five everyday tips for keeping your eyes healthy. Heading outdoors will give eyes a chance to focus on things further away and have a rest from close-up work, and it also exposes

our eyes to brighter outdoor light which appears to reduce our risks of developing short-sightedness (myopia). He also adds that ideally, children should spend at least two hours a day outside to help prevent the condition from developing and progressing.

Fatty fish such as tuna, herring or sardines are rich in omega-3 which nourish the cell membranes of nerve cells, including the retina, and help prevent the onset of eye diseases linked to ageing. (Shutterstock) Kicking the habit can have a positive effect on all areas of health, but Professor Read explains that quitting smoking is also

important for eye health. Smoking increases the risk of cataracts, macular degeneration and damage to your optic nerve. It also helps maintain a healthy weight which reduces the risk of diabetes, which can also cause eye problems. Professor Read also says that getting to know your own and your family's eye health history is important so make sure you go for regular checkups, especially if there are hereditary eye conditions. Marcela Frazier from the University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA, also recommends watching out for any eye problems in kids,

which can become more noticeable once they start school. She advises looking out for any complaints of headaches, being tired after reading, squinting, holding books close to the eyes, and even poor school and sports performance, which can all be a result of changes in vision. According to a report by The Vision Council, 93.3% of Americans spend two or more hours every day on digital devices for work or play, which is resulting in "digital eye strain," a condition which causes "temporary physical discomfort" after two or more hours in front of a digital screen. To avoid the condition, which can result in redness, irritation, dry eyes, blurred vision, eye fatigue, back and neck pain and headaches, experts recommend taking regular screen breaks, and also adjusting things like text size, posture and computer setup.

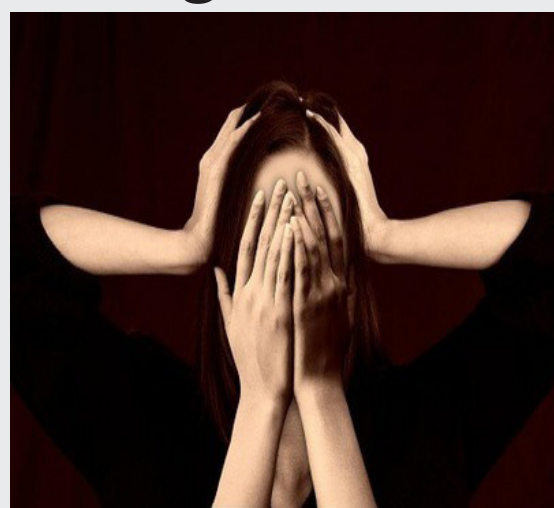
## WHAT IS POSITIVE INTELLIGENCE



We like to believe we are an intelligent lot. Evolution has ensured we come this far. We take pride in our IQ, and it's a quality we aspire for ourselves, and want our children to aspire to. But somewhere, something very vital has gone amiss. Because all that we have — Ivy League degrees, material wealth, instant gratification of all desires — hasn't made us happy or wise. In fact, we are more fractured than ever, and grappling with everyday anxiety and misery. IQ isn't the answer to everything, we've been told decades before, when we were introduced to the concept of EQ (Emotional Quotient). Experts said EQ was as important as our Intelligence Quotient for us to become wholesome individuals. Now, the whole world is talking about PQ, a.k.a., Positive Intelligence Quotient. Shiraz Chamine, the former chairman of CTI (Coaches Training Institute), the largest coach-training organisation in

the world, and founder and CEO of Positive Intelligence Inc., coined this term. In his New York Times bestseller Positive Intelligence, Chamine explains: "Your mind is your best friend, but it is also your worst enemy. Your Positive Intelligence Quotient is the percentage of time your mind is serving you as opposed to sabotaging you. Your PQ indicates how much mastery you have over your own mind." Perhaps, it's the most important life skill that we have left behind in our quest to achieve and conquer, and call it success. How does one go about acquiring PQ? Life coach Sarah Alexander says, "Positive Intelligence is our focus and action on the positive. What we focus our minds upon has the power to enhance our mental well-being (or destroy it)." The keyword here is 'action' more than 'focus', because action differentiates positive thinking from .

## Role of parents to prevent suicide among children



In recent times, due to the influence of technology, kids have become aloof and do not share much with their parents. It is at this time that the parents need to be cautious to identify signs that might lead to self-harm or worse, suicide. There are times when kids show clear signs of Depression, but parents tend to ignore them or pass them off as usual mood swings. Suicidal symptoms are often seen in youth facing court appearances, family distress, pressure of examinations and peers, those who are sexually abused or those who have been rejected by their loved ones. If there is a doubt that your child is being highly temperamental or suicidal, parents should immediately seek help from counsellors at school or a Mental Health expert, but at the same time they should respect their child's space and not question or pressurise them frequently. If they are forced to disclose their worries, they might get annoyed and take drastic steps to get out of the situation. Ms. Tara Mehta, Clinical Psychologist at S.L. Raheja Hospital, Mahim - A Fortis Associate, shares a few signs one could look out for in their kids. When they talk about death and dying very often, or even about disappearing or jumping or shooting oneself or any other form of self-harm if they have encountered any situational crisis of losing a close one.

## Government curbs random use of stem cells for therapeutic purposes

In order to curb the misuse of stem cell treatments, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) released updated national guidelines on Wednesday that restrict the use of stem cell therapy. For adults, stem cells can be used for therapeutic purposes in different cases of leukemia (cancer of the blood) and lymphomas (cancer of the lymphatic system), solid tumours such as germ cell, and non-cancerous diseases of the blood such as severe aplastic anaemia, sickle cell disease, among others.

In children, the therapy is also permitted in different types of blood cancers, solid tumours of brain, bones, etc, and non-cancerous diseases such as thalassemia major, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, and osteopetrosis, among others. At the moment, certain medical practitioners offer stem cell therapy for conditions even outside their speciality and for conditions where there has been no proven cure through this treatment.

"The 2017 guidelines reiterate that any stem cell use in patients, other than that ... for ap-



proved indications, is investigational at present... every use of stem cells in patients outside an

approved clinical trial is unethical and shall be considered as malpractice," says the report.

An expert, on condition of anonymity, said, "Even clinical trials in stem cell treatments should only be done by domain experts. However, these days you would find stem cell clinics almost everywhere. It is an expensive treatment modality and you can't fool people." The guidelines elaborately mention categories where stem cell use "permissible, restrictive or prohibited". The use of stem cells has been strictly

prohibited in human germ line gene therapy, wherein changes are made to the DNA that will be passed on to the next generation, and human cloning; use of gene modified human embryos; breeding of animals in which any type of human stem cells have been introduced at any stage of development, etc. "India has a large unmet medical need, which requires facilitation of safe and regulated translational and clinical stem cell research," says the report. Dr Soumya Swaminathan, director general, ICMR, said, "These are the updated guidelines keeping in mind the advances that have happened in the field. It is a fast-paced area and needs constant upgradation."

## NEW STUDY FINDS WORLD OBESITY RATES DRAMATICALLY INCREASE BY TENFOLD IN 40 YEARS

Children are fatter than they've been in 40 years, with obesity rates up tenfold since researchers started studying the issue. A new report in The Lancet shows that there are now 124 million obese children around the globe, up from 11 million children in 1975. And experts say the health risks are worse in nations that 'can least afford it.' Over the past four decades, obesity rates in children and adolescents have soared ... in low- and middle-income countries," Majid Ezzati, lead author

of the study and professor at the Imperial's School of Public Health, told CNN. Keep Up With This Story And More By Subscribing Now The World Health Organization defines obesity as having a Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 30, which would be anything over 125 pounds for the typical 4-foot-6 adolescent. Polynesia, where 25.4 percent of girls and 22.4 percent of boys are obese, leads the roll, with the U.S. (19 percent of girls and 23 percent of boys), Canada and Australia near the

top. The Imperial College London and the World Health Organization global study also revealed: Obesity rates are rising in low- and middle-income countries while leveling off in higher income countries. Unsurprisingly, the U.S. ranked at the top of high-income countries with the largest obesity rates. Childhood obesity affects boys more than girls, with 74 million boys affected compared to 50 million girls. Girls in Malta and boys in Greece made up the highest obesity rates in Europe while girls and boys

in Moldova had the lowest numbers. The island of Nauru with its population of about 13,000 near Australia had the highest rate of obesity for girls at 33 percent and the nearby Cook Islands had the highest for boys at the same rate. In rankings, the United Kingdom had the 73rd highest obesity rate for girls and sixth in Europe. Boys ranked 84th highest globally and 18th in Europe. But experts say the problem of obesity is reversible. These worrying trends reflect the impact of food

marketing and policies across the globe, with healthy nutritious foods too expensive for poor families and communities," Ezzati, said in a statement. To combat obesity, the World Health Organization says people should eat less processed foods and exercise more. "There is a continued need for policies that enhance food security in low-income countries and households, especially in South Asia," Ezzati told CNN.

"But our data also show that the transition from underweight to overweight and obesity can happen quickly in an unhealthy nutritional transition, with an increase in nutrient-poor, energy-dense foods." In the United States, Former First Lady Michelle Obama championed her "Let's Move!" initiative to end childhood obesity in a generation. She campaigned for healthier school lunches and worked to motivate children to get active. School lunch regulations are currently being reconsidered by the Trump administration.

## Income Tax dept raises rewards for informers of benami property, tax evasions

In its fight against black money, the Income Tax department has unveiled a scheme under which people who inform it of benami properties and tax evasions can earn rewards up to Rs 5 crore, including substantial sums in immediate payments.

The Union finance ministry has for the first time come out with a scheme to reward informants of benami transactions and has also amended the existing income tax informant reward scheme of 2007.

Under the scheme finalised on April 23, any person who provides credible information to Income Tax authorities about benami property can earn instant reward which will be 1% of the market value of the property subject to a maximum cap of Rs 10 lakh.

"Pursuant to the information, if the I-T department can provisionally attach the property, the informant will immediately get the said amount," said a senior I-T official who was involved in the framing of the scheme.

The final amount, which the informant will get two years after the confiscation of the property provided there is no litigation, will be 5% of the total cost with the maximum cap of



Rs 1 crore.

The finance ministry also introduced a reward scheme for any undisclosed foreign income and assets.

"We have recommended the highest award for this category of informant because it is very difficult to get information about people who have properties abroad or stashed away their money in foreign destinations," said the officer.

For this type of information, the maximum instant reward is Rs 50 lakh "when the competent authority is satisfied that assessment made is

likely to be sustained in appeal and taxes levied are likely to be recovered."

On final settlement, the informant can get 10% of the additional tax levied with a cap of Rs 5 crore.

As far as providing information regarding undisclosed income/assets in the country is concerned, the amended scheme recommends maximum instant reward of Rs 10 lakh with Rs 50 lakh being the final reward after the final assessment.

The maximum instant award money in the previous scheme was Rs 1 lakh and final reward was Rs 15

lakh.

Last month, HT had reported that government was planning to substantially enhance the rewards for informants as senior officials were of the view in a majority of the cases, where defaulters seek legal recourse, informants have to wait for years for their rewards. "So it was very important to increase the instant reward money along with the reward after the final settlement of the case," said a senior I-T official.

He cited a case in which an informant has been waiting for over two decades to get his due. The amended scheme also comes with a new provision in which if an informant provides specific information of unaccounted/undisclosed cash exceeding Rs 1 crore, the immediate reward will be Rs 15 lakh.

"This sounds like a good scheme. However, the department should ensure that the antecedents of the informants are rechecked for genuineness so that unscrupulous people don't try to abuse the same to settle scores with business or personal rivals etc," said SK Goyal, former chief commissioner of the Income Tax department.

## GST collections cross Rs 1 trillion in April, first time since launch



The goods and services tax (GST) collections in the month of April were at Rs 1.03 trillion, the first time that revenues have crossed Rs 1 trillion after the new tax regime was rolled out on 1 July.

The buoyancy in tax collections could be attributed to economic recovery and improvement in compliances, the finance ministry said in a statement, but cautioned that the higher numbers could be partly attributed to the payment of tax arrears in the month for the last financial year.

To be sure, GST revenue buoyancy is expected to improve in the coming months with implementation of the e-way bill or electronic tracking of movement of goods from 1 April. This is expected to become a deterrent for tax evaders looking to keep transactions com-

pletely off their books or to understate their turnover.

Of the total revenue of Rs 1.03 trillion collected in April, Rs 18,652 crore was central GST, Rs 2,570.4 crore was state GST and Rs 50,548 crore was integrated GST (including Rs 21,246 crore collected on imports), the finance ministry statement said. The cess was Rs 8,554 crore.

The total number of GSTR 3B Returns filed for the month of March up to 30 April was 60.47 lakh as against 87.12 lakh taxpayers, who are eligible to file the Return for the month of March, putting the compliance rate at 69.5%. Around 11.47 lakh composition dealers of a total of 19.31 lakh such dealers filed their quarterly return in April and paid a tax of Rs 579 crore.

## Reliance Jio suffers from tariff wars, competition, results show

Reliance Jio Infocomm (R.Jio), the telecom unit of India's most valuable company, is no longer insulated from competition and price wars that eventually led to shrinking profits and losses for incumbent telecom operators.

During the quarter ended 31 March, the performance of R.Jio remained subdued, with the company posting a mere 1% growth in profit from the preceding three months.

R.Jio saw its average revenue per user (Arpu) fall to Rs 137 in the March quarter from Rs 154 a quarter earlier.

The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) margin, which is a measure of operating profitability, took a beating because of the various discounts offered and stood at 37.8% at the end of the March quarter. R.Jio's Ebitda margin was 38.2% during the December quarter.

"Arpu came down... due to price action earlier in the quarter (March quarter)," said R.Jio's head of strategy and planning, Anshuman Thakur, at a post-result press conference.

"We have had a tariff reduction of about Rs 50 over three months, which we have more than made up with sub-



scriber growth," Thakur said.

The fourth quarter numbers demonstrate that R.Jio is no longer insulated from competition, said an ICICI Securities note on Reliance Jio dated 30 April.

Any increase in competition would hurt R.Jio equally or probably more than the incumbents, said the report.

R.Jio has benefited from a 46.7% increase in prime membership revenue to Rs 750 crore in Q4 FY18, according to the ICICI Securities research. It will, however, see revenues from prime memberships cease from the next quarter as the company has waived off the one-year prime membership fees for many of its subscribers.

It is difficult to comment about the ARPU going ahead (FY19), Thakur said on 27 April. "We will have to see how the other operators do and of course the customer traction," Thakur added.

R.Jio's focus for the coming months will remain on adding more subscribers to its network and price hikes—that could lead to ARPU corrections—are thus unlikely, Morgan Stanley said in a research report on the Indian telecom sector dated 29 April.

R.Jio's management is expected to remain focused on providing higher value to consumers compared to incumbents, and prioritize customer engagement over short-term revenue recovery,

said a 30 April UBS report on the sector.

"Management hopes for revenue growth coming from subscriber growth and higher value to customers. Jio will continue to invest and bid aggressively for content, which it sees as a key differentiator," the report said.

The company is in the final stage of commercial launch of home broadband services, whose rollout though gradual, is expected to add to the sales and profit of the company, it added.

R.Jio, which is bullish about its feature phone offerings (Jio Phone), expects to add 8 million subscribers per month.

"What is yet to be seen is how much Jio Phone subscribers, particularly the Rs 49/month adopters, would add to operating profit," said the ICICI Securities research report dated 30 April.

"For now, it is interesting to note that most Jio Phone users continue to recharge under the Rs 153 plan, and average data usage is 6-6.5 GB/month (vs 5 GB in Q3 FY18)," it said, adding that the company has not seen Jio Phone traction among voice-only users.

R.Jio did not respond to an email seeking comments on its future plans.

## Oil PSUs freeze petrol, diesel prices ahead of Karnataka polls

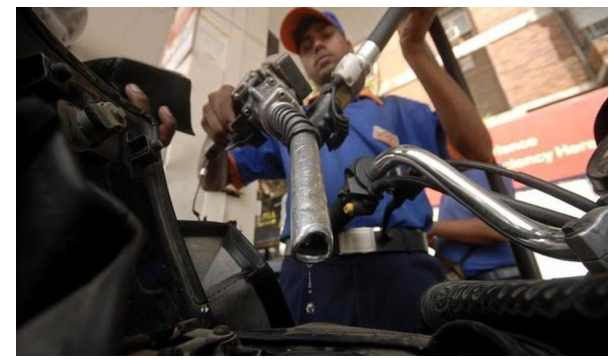
A fortnight before Karnataka goes to polls, PSU oil firms have stopped revising petrol and diesel prices even though benchmark international rates have gone up by almost \$2 per barrel.

With the finance ministry refusing to cut excise duty to give relief to the common man from petrol hitting a 55-month high of Rs 74.63 a litre and diesel at a record high of Rs 65.93, oil PSUs have since April 24 not changed fuel rates. Daily price notification issued by oil firms showed static petrol and diesel price since April 24. This is despite the benchmark international rate for petrol going up from \$78.84 per barrel, which was used for raising the price to Rs 74.63 a litre on April 24, to \$80.56 now, according to sources privy to fuel pricing methodology.

The benchmark international diesel rates during this period have climbed from \$84.68 per barrel to \$86.35. Also, the rupee has weakened to Rs 66.14 to a US dollar from Rs 65.41, making imports costlier.

Oil PSU executives refused to discuss pricing saying they have been asked not to speak on the issue.

"We have been told not to discuss pricing," said a top official at one of the three



state-owned oil marketing firm said. "You can neither quote me or my company on this," he said.

Oil ministry officials said they don't have anything to do with pricing and its up to the companies how they price fuel.

Karnataka goes to polls on May 12. Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had last month denied reports of a directive to state oil firms to absorb at least Re 1 a litre of hike by not raising prices in line with cost.

The prices at petrol pumps of state-owned fuel retailers like Indian Oil Corp (IOC) were cut by 1-3 paise every day in the first fortnight of December 2017 before Gujarat went to polls.

They started moving up immediately after polling for assembly elections in Gujarat concluded on December 14, leading to speculation that

government may have asked oil companies to hold on to the prices.

State-owned oil companies in June last year dumped the 15-year old practice of revising rates on 1st and 16th of every month and instead adopted a dynamic daily price revision to instantly reflect changes in cost.

If this practice was followed in letter and spirit petrol and diesel prices should have been increased by 50-60 paise a litre in last one week, an analyst tracking the sector said.

The government had in June 2010 freed petrol price from its control and the diesel rates were deregulated in October 2014. Prices have since then moved more or less in tandem with international rates barring a few exceptions like the period before a crucial election.

Finance Secretary Has-

mukh Adhia and Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Garg had last week ruled out any immediate reduction in excise duty to cushion the increases warranted from spike in international oil price.

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

The government had raised excise duty on petrol by Rs 11.77 a litre and that on diesel by Rs 13.47 per litre between November 2014 and January 2016 to take away gains arising from plummeting global oil prices. This led to its excise mop up more than doubling to Rs 2,42,000 crore in 2016-17 from Rs 99,000 crore in 2014-15.

The central government had cut excise duty by Rs 2 per litre in October 2017, when petrol price reached Rs 70.88 per litre in Delhi and diesel Rs 59.14. Because of the reduction in excise duty, diesel prices had on October 4, 2017, come down to Rs 56.89 per litre and petrol to Rs 68.38 per litre.

However, a global rally in crude prices pushed domestic fuel prices far higher than those levels.

## Walmart's big overseas ambitions require big steps, and a Flipkart deal qualifies

Walmart Inc. is starting to make moves that reveal its international ambitions.

The retailing giant has agreed to sell its UK grocery chain, Asda, to rival J Sainsbury PLC in a transaction worth about \$10.1 billion. Walmart will retain a 42 percent stake in the combined company.

That splashy deal comes amid signs Walmart is considering other big changes to its global portfolio. Bloomberg News has reported the company is in advanced talks to spend at least \$12 billion on a majority stake in Flipkart, India's biggest ecommerce player. Walmart is also reportedly exploring selling a large stake in its Brazil business.

Walmart investors gave the deal with Sainsbury a polite clap, sending shares up more than 2 percent in early trading on Monday. And chatter about a Flipkart deal hasn't done much to nudge Walmart's stock in recent weeks.

In some ways, I suppose that makes sense; the US is still Walmart's largest market and accounts for the majority of its operating income. But don't let the relatively stable share price lull you into thinking these moves



aren't significant. Together, they signal Walmart is thinking differently about risk and reward and is prudently focusing more on the long game.

First, consider the Asda deal. There wasn't enormous risk for Walmart in keeping the chain. It has said that while the UK is not its most profitable market, Asda generates a good bit of cash simply because it's such a large business.

But there also wasn't a particularly awesome potential reward for hanging onto full ownership of Asda.

The UK is a mature market for groceries, so racking up more sales there is largely a matter of fighting for market share.

And Asda doesn't look particularly well-positioned for that battle. Yes, its comparable sales growth has perked up a bit in recent quarters. But if you look at its performance over the longer term, it's clearly been rocked by competition from hard discounters Aldi and Lidl, and that pressure won't let up anytime soon.

Next, consider what Walmart is

reportedly poised to do with Flipkart. The risk in this case is fairly high. Paying \$12 billion or more for a majority stake would be Walmart's biggest acquisition ever, according to Bloomberg data. (That would top the \$10.8 billion deal it struck in 1999 to buy -- wait for it -- Asda.)

But India is also a place where the possible reward is huge. E-commerce is expected to grow explosively there, and it's a market Amazon.com Inc. has not yet dominated.

An investment in Flipkart will demand a great deal of patience. The payoff -- if there even is one -- will almost certainly not be instantaneous. But at this point in its quest to conquer e-commerce, Walmart needs dramatic action, and the Flipkart deal would qualify.

It makes sense for Walmart to run toward bigger prizes overseas, because that's also what it has been doing lately at home. It has pulled back marketing spending from its fledgling Jet.com brand, for example, and instead is focusing on trumpeting its flagship Walmart.com site.

## Weinstein Company set to be taken over by Lantern Capital, say sources

Private equity firm Lantern Capital is nearing a deal to acquire Weinstein Company, the TV and film studio whose former chairman Harvey Weinstein faces sexual assault claims, with a \$310 million offer, people familiar with the matter said.

The Weinstein Company filed for bankruptcy in March with the offer from Lantern Capital in hand as a so-called stalking horse bidder. It had hoped to get better offers from other suitors, but no higher bid emerged by a deadline set in a bankruptcy auction for Monday, the sources said.

The sources asked not to be identified ahead of an official announcement. The Weinstein Company declined to comment, while Lantern did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Hollywood trade publication Deadline Hollywood first reported earlier on Monday that Lantern was the winning bidder for the Weinstein Company.

The deal, which is subject to approval by a US bankruptcy judge, would be the culmination of efforts by the Weinstein Company over several months to find a buyer. When the allegations against Harvey Weinstein became public in October, the company's board fired him, and Hollywood heavyweights distanced themselves from the studio. Combined with lawsuits filed by Harvey Weinstein's victims, this made the company an unappealing acquisition target.

An offer for the studio from a group of

investors led by former Obama administration official Maria Contreras-Sweet failed to produce a deal earlier this year, after New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman filed a civil lawsuit against the company and demanded more compensation for Harvey Weinstein's victims. Contreras-Sweet's offer included an \$80 million to \$90 million compensation fund that would supplement any insurance payouts victims would receive.

Harvey Weinstein, once one of Hollywood's most influential men, has been accused of sexual misconduct including rape by more than 70 women. He has denied having non-consensual sex with anyone. It has been unclear how his alleged victims would be treated in a potential bankruptcy filing.

Co-founded with Bob Weinstein, Harvey's brother, the Weinstein Company produced and distributed critically acclaimed hits including "The King's Speech" and "Silver Linings Playbook," as well as TV's fashion reality competition "Project Runway."

With its bankruptcy filing, the Weinstein Company said it released anyone "who suffered or witnessed any form of sexual misconduct by Harvey Weinstein" from nondisclosure agreements, contracts that prevented victims from speaking out. As part of the deal, Lantern will acquire Weinstein's prized asset, its library of 277 feature films that have generated over \$2 billion in aggregate box office receipts worldwide.

# Virat Kohli's Indian cricket team extends lead at top of ICC Test rankings

The Virat Kohli-led India continued to sit at the top of the latest ICC Test Team Rankings, ahead of South Africa and Australia.

Not only that, with the results from 2014-15 being removed from the equation and those from 2015-16 and 2016-17 being weighted at 50 per cent, India have actually stretched their lead over South Africa from four to 13 points.

For India, who played four Tests in the 2014-15 season - losing 2-0 in Australia - and had earlier lost the five-Test tour of England 3-1 in the summer of 2014, the move up was expected following an excellent run since, highlighted by 10 wins in 13 Tests in the 2016-17 season.

India have reached an aggregate of 125 while South Africa have lost five points and slipped to 112. South Africa, are however, still comfortably ahead of the remaining sides.



Australia are placed third with 106 points after gaining four points following the update, taking back the position from New Zealand, who had overtaken them at the last cut-off date of April 3.

England have gained one point and sit fifth on the rankings table.

That change saw New Zealand assure themselves of USD 200,000 for finishing third. India and South Africa had won USD 1 million and USD 500,000, respectively for finishing first and second at the cut-off date. After the update, New Zealand remain on 102 points while England

have inched closer, reaching 98 after gaining one point.

In another interesting movement, Bangladesh have moved ahead of the West Indies, who are in ninth position for the first time ever.

The Windies have lost five points and are now on 67 points while Bangladesh have gained four points to reach 75, eight points clear of the Caribbeans.

Sri Lanka remain in sixth position after losing one point while Zimbabwe have gained one point to reach two. The table will see new additions in the form of Afghanistan and Ireland after they play their first Tests following their Full Membership status. Ireland are due to play their first Test against Pakistan in Malahide, Dublin, from May 11 to 15 while Afghanistan's first Test will be against India in Bengaluru from June 14 to 18.

# Pakistan's Mohammad Amir wants to be the best bowler in 2019 Cricket World Cup

Ace Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Amir has set his goal of emerging as the best bowler in next year's 50-over World Cup in England.

Pakistan, who won the World Cup way back in 1992 when the competition was held in Australia and New Zealand, are currently on an important tour of England where they will play two Tests against the Joe Root-led side.

Pakistan will also be a part of history when they take on one of the newest Test debuts - Ireland - at Dublin on May 11.

However, Amir, who has just received visa for England, has set his sights on winning the ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 for Pakistan and emerging as the best bowler in the competition.

"We have a good rotation policy and that's why I'm well prepared for the tournament," Amir told the ICC.

"It's such a big event. First of all, I wish



Pakistan win and then (I wish) to be the best bowler in the tournament," said the left-arm bowler who claimed 3/16 against India to guide Pakistan to a win in last year's Champions Trophy final.

"It will be my first World Cup and I will try to do my best. It's like a dream come true. Representing your country and playing in a big ICC tournament, one has to be lucky for all this and I consider myself just that," Amir concluded.

## Delhi Daredevils face Rajasthan Royals in must-win encounter



The equation continues to get more difficult for Delhi Daredevils after a demoralising defeat against Chennai Super Kings but no way are they out of the race, not yet. With just six games left in the league phase, Delhi Daredevils know they need at least five wins to stay in the reckoning for the playoffs. If nothing else, this should provide some clarity of thought.

Also of some relief would be the fact that the Daredevils, on the road most of the time till now, will play their last four matches at home. That means no travel in the last two weeks of the league phase. Ask any team and that is a huge advantage as it allows more time for strategising and more importantly, rest. But to make the most of that phase, Delhi Daredevils have to keep themselves in contention by winning against Rajasthan Royals on Wednesday.

Rajasthan Royals have an imperious record against Delhi Daredevils, winning 11 out of 17 clashes so far. But they have only won once outside home. Delhi Daredevils would surely take note of that. But Delhi seem too reliant on the Indian trio of Prithvi Shaw, new captain Shreyas Iyer and Rishabh Pant to buttress their batting.

Here is where Glen Maxwell can lend some perspective. After opening the batting in the first match, Maxwell has batted at different positions. Someone who needs few deliveries to get his eye in, Maxwell could be of greater impact if allowed to get back to at least No 3, if not opening the batting. And Delhi need that too, stitching 1, 50, 4, 7, 25, 59 and 10 in their opening stands so far. Only a strong opening stand can give the likes of Iyer and Pant permission to go ballistic in the middle overs.

For two consecutive matches, Gautam Gambhir hasn't featured in an IPL match. While the knives maybe out after his questionable performance that led to him abdicating the captain's mantle for Iyer, Delhi could try him again in the opening slot with Shaw so that Maxwell, Iyer and Pant could follow in and bat according to the situation.

With Delhi's bowling not showing enough steel against Chennai Super Kings, few changes could be on the anvil. Especially Liam Plunkett who went for 48 runs. Barring Avesh Khan and Rahul Tewatia, Delhi Daredevils' bowling hasn't really done much talking. So it might be down to their batsmen again to salvage the team's fortunes. To do that, Delhi need to make quick amends at the top.

# Why MS Dhoni is unstoppable, Chennai Super Kings teammate Faf du Plessis explains

At 130 for three in the match against Delhi Daredevils on Monday, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) were in similar position as their last game against Mumbai Indians. Like Saturday's game, the launchpad was set for MS Dhoni to go for the kill.

This time the result was different. While against Mumbai Dhoni's big push was stifled, on Monday -- with Ambati Rayudu (41) for company -- Dhoni played another gem of an innings help Super Kings post 211, the fourth highest total of the season.

His 22-ball 51, laced with two boundaries and five sixes, earned high praise from his teammate, South Africa skipper Faf du Plessis.

"He is in really good form at the moment and it's extremely tough to bowl to him when he is in form like that because he has got such a big arch and if you want to bowl wide he can still hit you to leg side," said Du Plessis.

"So he has got a lot of options so it makes life difficult for bowler to plan and bowl to him and even a captain where they want to put the field because he can hit any ball to wherever he wants to," said Du Plessis after Super Kings recorded a 13-run win over the Daredevils.

It was Dhoni's third fifty of the season which took his tally to 286 runs after eight matches with a strike rate of 169.23 which is his best since IPL's inception in 2008 and



way above his career strike rate of 138.73.

Couple of days ago Super Kings bowling consultant Eric Simons had high praise for

Dhoni. "He senses where the game changes. It's more about him understanding where the game is going and allowing his strengths to move with it.

So his evolution is more about how he understands the game than him trying to be technically different," explained Simons.

Du Plessis was full of praise for Ambati Rayudu, who played another useful knock and now is the Orange Cap holder with 370 runs from eight matches.

"The flexibility that Rayudu has had has really impressed me. I've really enjoyed him bat this IPL. The ability to come in and score boundaries from the first ball is a very difficult skill, not a lot of people can do that."

He added: "With Suresh (Raina) at three and him (Rayudu) at four and if we get off to a solid start at the top, two then can just come in and play their natural game which is very dangerous for the opposition. So, we are fortunate that we have got a lot of options in our batting unit."

## Roberto Mancini to become new Italy national football team coach - reports

Roberto Mancini has reached an agreement to become the next Italy national football team coach, according to multiple media reports on Tuesday.

The Zenit St Petersburg manager met with the Italian FA sub-commissioner Alessandro Costacurta and team manager Gabriele Oriali for over two hours in Rome on Monday evening.

It was reported over the weekend that Carlo Ancelotti had turned down the job, and both Gazzetta dello Sport and Corriere dello Sport said on Tuesday that Mancini had agreed to take over and help revive the fortunes of the national side.

Gazzetta said the federation had offered the former Manchester City manager a two-year contract until 2020 worth four million euros (\$4.8 million) a year.

"Coaching the national team would be prestigious and a source of pride for me because Italy are one of the most important teams in the world," Man-



cini told Italian radio on Monday.

Mancini is expected to take over the national team after the final round of Russian domestic fixtures on May 13 and before the May 20 deadline set by the Italian FA.

Zenit however are not happy that Mancini is leaving having only taken over last June, but the club are only fifth in the Russian Super League standings with two matches remaining.

The 53-year-old former Italian international is confident however he can reach a deal with the Russians.

During his 17-year coaching career

Mancini led Manchester City to their first English title in 44 years in 2012, and won three Serie A titles with Inter Milan and Italian Cups with Inter, Fiorentina and Lazio.

The former Lazio and Sampdoria forward never became a regular with Italy during his 10-year international career, during which he won 36 caps and scored four goals.

Italy have been without a permanent coach since Gian Piero Ventura was sacked after they failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time in 60 years after losing to Sweden in a two-legged playoff in November.

Italy's under-21 coach Luigi Di Biagio has been filling the position on an interim basis.

Among the other names being touted are Chelsea manager Antonio Conte and former Leicester coach Claudio Ranieri, now in charge of French club Nantes.

## Sjoerd Marijne was confident of winning Asian Games, World Cup hockey medals

Sjoerd Marijne has accepted Hockey India's decision to send him back to the women's camp, but the Dutchman said he was confident of delivering results with men's side in the Asian Games and World Cup despite a poor Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast.

Women's hockey coach Harendra Singh was today made in-charge of the men's side, while men's coach Marijne was redesignated as the women's coach in an inexplicable rejigging of roles by the national federation following India's medal-less finish at the CWG since 2006.

Dutchman Marijne, who was handed the reigns of the men's team in November last year, is currently at his home in the Netherlands. "We won the Asia Cup with dominating hockey, in the World league we have shown we can beat world class teams and with our New Zealand tour we made another step in our process to win the Asian Games and the World Cup," Marijne said in a statement posted on his official blog. "Unfortunately the Commonwealth Games, we did not perform the way we expected but still we had good statistics. (But) I had a lot of confidence that we could win the Asian Games and the World Cup," he maintained.

The 44-year-old Dutchman did not have any past experience of coaching a men's team when he was given the India job but it seems he has now resigned to his fate with the women's side. "I wish the new coach all the best with this process and I will focus on the woman to continue the process I started 14 months ago. The girls worked hard and I am looking forward to see them again at the Asian Champions Trophy in Korea," Marijne said.

The decision to replace Marijne with Harendra was taken after a review of the team's performance at Gold Coast. Questions were raised on Marijne's team selection and preparedness for an event of such magnitude.

Some senior players had also criticised Marijne's decision to blood youngsters in the CWG-side in place of experienced campaigners like Sardar Singh, Birendra Lakra, and Ramandeep Singh to name a few, besides questioning his players-driven approach. But Marijne, who replaced countryman Roelant Oltmans at the help of the men's team seven months ago, defended his style of coaching.

"The coaching style I choose was players' driven. The reason is that players have to take responsibility for their actions because they are involved and that they are supporting the plan," he said. "The other reason is that when you involve players in the thinking process they will get more tactical awareness and learn faster. This is scientifically proven because they have to learn on the pitch. It means that I prepare for the matches and after this I share it with the leaders so that they can explain in Hindi.

## For BCCI draft constitution, give suggestions: Supreme Court to state cricket bodies

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked state cricket associations and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) office-bearers to give their suggestions on the draft constitution for the apex cricket body, to be approved by it.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra also disposed of a contempt petition filed by Cricket Association of Bihar against the BCCI officials for not implementing its earlier order allowing Bihar to play national level cricket tournaments, including the Ranji Trophy matches.

The bench, which also comprised Justices AM Khanwilkar and DY Chandrachud, considered the submissions of the BCCI, Committee of Administrators (COA) and senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam, who is assisting as amicus curiae, that Bihar would take part in national level tournaments in the cricketing season commencing from September.

The bench said a draft constitution would be approved by it, which would be binding on the BCCI. However, it clarified that its order on petitions seeking recall of the 2016 verdict would deal



with the validity of the draft constitution.

It asked state cricket bodies and BCCI office-bearers to give their suggestions with regard to the draft constitution to the amicus curiae

before May 11, the next date of hearing.

The bench also directed Maharashtra Cricket Association, represented by Additional Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, to postpone

Tuesday's election till the next date.

The COA had in October last year filed a draft constitution of the BCCI incorporating suggestions of the Justice RM Lodha panel on reforms in the cash-rich cricket body.

The top court had said the draft constitution should include the suggestions of the Lodha committee in its entirety so that a holistic document can be placed before it for a final decision. It had approved the Lodha panel's recommendations like 'one state, one vote', 'one member, one post' and fixing a 70-year age-cap on those occupying

BCCI posts.

The Cricket Association of Bihar (CAB) had on April 20 this year moved the apex court seeking initiation of contempt proceedings against some office-bearers of BCCI for not complying with its order allowing Bihar to participate in Ranji Trophy and other national championships.

The CAB, in its plea, had alleged that the BCCI had neither invited any cricket association to play in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, nor allowed any cricket association from Bihar to participate in the tournament held in February.