

TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

SATURDAY

- MAY, 12, 2018
- 25 SHABAN 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 111
- VOLUME: 04
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	29.4	10.5
JAMMU	39.4	22.3
LEH	19.9	3.1
KARGIL	20.8	5.0

SUNSET SATURDAY: 07:24 PM
SUNRISE SUNDAY: 05:32 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
 Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 24°C & 10°C respectively.

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

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PRESIDENT OF INDIA ADDRESSES THE NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY CELEBRATIONS

PM MODI IN NEPAL TODAY, FOCUS ON REBUILDING TRUST AND GOODWILL

EUROPE NEW VIDEO STREAMING BATTEFIELD AS HBO TAKES ON NETFLIX, AMAZON

VIRAT KOHLI STILL FINDS CONSTANT PUBLIC SCRUTINY ON HIM 'UNCOMFORTABLE'

Mehbooba throws open first phase of Srinagar Expressway Corridor

Rs. 350 cr major connectivity project in Srinagar would hugely decongest city traffic, reduce travel time through the area

SRINAGAR, MAY 11: Giving a major push to the connectivity infrastructure in the summer capital, Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today threw open the first phase of Jehangir Chowk-Rambagh Expressway Corridor from Amar Singh College to Barzalla bridge here today.

Being built at a cost of Rs. 350 crore, the ADB funded project would hugely decongest the traffic on the road towards Barzalla and Srinagar Airport and the time to cover the area would also be reduced by a great measure.

Ministers, Naeem Akhtar, Syed Altaf Bukhari, Muhammad Ashraf Mir and Asiea Naqash; MP, Fayaz Ahmad Mir; several legislators; Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan and other senior officers of divisional and district administration were present on the occasion.

The Natipora limb of the project is going to be made trafficable



within two months and the whole 4-lane flyover spanning more than one and a half kilometres would be ready by the end of the year. See **Mehbooba**...Pg 02

Speaker calls on Guv, CM

Vohra, Mehbooba congratulate him

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Dr. Nirmal Kumar Singh, Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, called on Governor N. N. Vohra at the Raj Bhavan today. This was Dr. Singh's first meeting with the Governor after being elected as the Speaker of J&K Legislative Assembly yesterday. Governor discussed with Dr. Singh the need for frequent meetings of the Legislature, for adequately long periods to discuss, debate and pass various legislative measures. Governor also emphasized the importance of the business of the House being conducted with decency and decorum.

Governor wished Dr. Singh high success in discharging his important constitutional role.

See **Calls**...Pg 02

Let Hurriyat be part of AP delegation to Delhi on ceasefire, peace proposal: Naeem

'Pakistan must also respond to Kashmiris feelings on ceasefire'

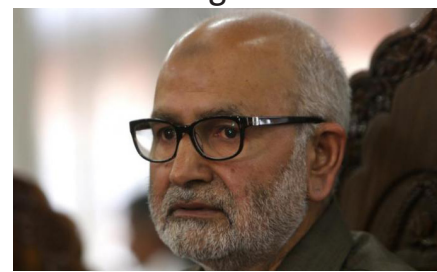
Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Senior PDP Minister and government spokesman, Naeem Akhtar on Friday called upon Joint resistance Leadership to show willingness for joining the All Party delegation proposed to be sent to Delhi for dialogue on ceasefire.

Talking to KNS, the senior PDP Minister said, "The proposal on ceasefire is in public domain and we all welcome the statements on ceasefire from people of all shades and political ideologies. Let JRL also join the All Party delegation to be sent to Delhi for dialogue on ceasefire and Pakistan must also respond to the ceasefire proposal keeping in view the feelings of Kashmiris."

Calling upon Pakistan to respond to the feelings of Kashmiris for peace and reconciliation, the way former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and former Pakistan president General (Retd) Parvez Musharraf, Akhtar said, "If Vajpayee and Musharraf could walk on the path of peace and ceasefire why can't the present leaders in India and Pakistan follow the suit to respect the feelings of Kashmiris."

Saying that Kashmir is not a problem for PDP but is a political issue which deserves engagement of all stakeholders, Akhtar

See **Naeem**...Pg 02



Ceasefire can't be one-sided, be it Pakistan or militants: Avinash Khanna

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National president and In-charge J&K affairs, Avinash Rai Khanna on Friday said that ceasefire can't be one-sided be it Pakistan or militants and asked Pakistan to show respect to ceasefire agreement during the holy month of Ramadan.

Talking to Kashmir News Service (KNS) See **Avinash**...Pg 02

COP KILLED AFTER MILITANTS ATTACK HIM IN BUDGAM: POLICE

'Attempt of militants to enter in Guard Post foiled'

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): A policeman was Friday killed after the militants attacked him in Wadwan village of central Kashmir's Budgam district, police said.

"Militants today attempted to force their entry inside a Guard post at Budgam. Militants appeared outside the Guard Post in Wardwan Budgam and held-up Sg Ct Shamim Ahmad outside his Guard Post who was unarmed and was going to offer Friday prayers at a local mosque in the vicinity," police said in a statement issued here.

See **Cop**...Pg 02

Former RAW chief Dulat questions Pak silence on Ceasefire call, welcomes CM Mehbooba's proposal

'Stone pelters spoiling Kashmir, Geelani, Mirwaiz must appeal them to refrain from attacking forces'

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Former Raw Chief Amarjeet Singh Dulat while terming the Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti's call for Ramazan ceasefire a welcome move, Friday said Pakistan must take a lead and clear its position as a major responsibility lies on the neighboring country for making the call a "grand success."

Dulat also said the leaders like Syed Ali Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq should make a fervent appeal to the



stone pelters hitting streets, to give peace a chance and to refrain from attacking forces. Talking to Kashmir News Service (KNS) from New Delhi, Dulat said: "Unilateral Ceasefire proposal from the Jammu and Kashmir government is a welcome step, but let Pakistan respond and clear its position. I think government can't announce a ceasefire while attacks by militants on security forces continue. Even the Army Chief has said that he is "ready to suspend" military operations to avoid civilian casualties, but who will guarantee that there won't be fire at forces and their vehicles." he

See **Dulat**...Pg 02

PDP LAUDS CM'S DECISION OF SCRAPPING STAMP DUTY ON TRANSFER OF PROPERTY TO WOMEN

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): People's Democratic Party (PD) chief spokesperson, Rafi Ahmad Mir has lauded the decision of chief minister for taking a path breaking initiative in line of empowerment of women where a blanket exemption of stamp duty on transfer of property has been granted to women.

Lauding the decision taken in the state cabinet, PDP chief spokesperson Rafi Ahmad Mir in a statement issued to KNS termed this decision desire of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti to empower the women socially in terms of property rights.

He said that delivering on her promise to empower women, this move by the Chief Minister is a path breaking decision that will ensure that they are given their due right in the property.

See **PDP**...Pg 02

If terrorism stops, operations will automatically cease: Ram Madhav

New Delhi, May 11 (ANI): Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and party in-charge of Jammu and Kashmir Ram Madhav on Friday said that as long as there are terrorist activities in the valley, the security forces are duty bound to tackle it with utmost toughness.

His reaction came after Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti called for unilateral ceasefire.

Speaking to ANI, the BJP national general secretary said that security forces would end their operations in the Valley if 'terrorism stops'.

"Our security forces are not engaged in operations out of any special interest and enthusiasm, it is a necessity that forces tend



to undertake operations, so what is expected is that terrorists should desist from terrorist activities," he said.

"As long as there are terrorist activities See **Madhav** Pg 02

GENERAL NEEDS TO CHANGE HIS NARRATIVE ON KASHMIR: SOZ

'He should refresh his knowledge on situations of conflicts'

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Former Union Minister and senior congress leader, Prof. Saifuddin Soz Friday said that Army chief, Bipin Rawat need to change his narrative on Kashmir.

In a statement issued to KNS, "The Chief of the Staff has apparently stressed the obvious that Kashmiris can't fight the armed forces. But, then, the tenor and method of his communication does not and cannot get him success on ground."

"Perhaps, the General should refresh his knowledge on situations of conflicts in the world and also refresh his

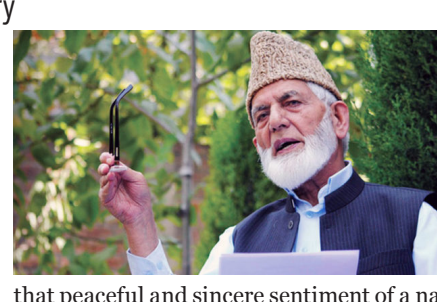
See **Soz**...Pg 02

Geelani terms Army Chief's statement as 'arrogant'

Suggests him to go through pages of history

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Repeated statements by Army and police has at least confirmed our stance that state of Jammu and Kashmir is a police state, governed and managed by men in uniform and they often make announcements beyond their professional domain, while the political veil are only mute puppets just to cut the ribbons of inauguration or nod their head in assertive of these statements.

Commenting on the recent statement of Army chief, Hurriyat Conference (G) chairman, Syed Ali Geelani said that it is arrogant, egoistic and expression of the brute mindset based on military might, but these top ranked soldiers of India forget the historical facts



that peaceful and sincere sentiment of a nation can never die down under the barrel of Gun.

"It should be more than clear to these rulers that our movement is not a campaign See **Geelani**...Pg 02

SUMBAL SHUTS TO EXPRESS SOLIDARITY WITH PELLET VICTIM

Bandipora, May 11, CNS: Sumbal town of North Kashmir's Bandipora district observed a complete shutdown against police action in which an elderly vendor suffered pellet injuries and is on the brink of losing his eye sight. The call for shutdown was forwarded by Traders Federation Sumbal.

On Thursday, while dispersing students who were protesting against civilian killings on Srinagar-Bandipora road at Sumbal, police fired pellets that hit the face of a vendor Abdul Rashid.

Rashid is currently under treatment at SKIMS Srinagar See **Sumbal**...Pg 02

Latest teaching methods, tech interventions must to produce institutes of excellence: Zulfkar

Visits Ustad Ghar, Auditorium building, SIE, DIET building

Srinagar, May 11: Minister for School Education, Hajj & Auqaf and Tribal Affairs, Chowdhary Zulfkar Ali, today directed the concerned to introduce market-oriented professional courses, adopt latest teaching methods and seek technological intervention in teaching methodology as well as in administrative work.

The Minister expressed these views during his visit



to teachers' hostel 'Ustad Ghar', under-construction Auditorium building, and State Institute of Education (SIE) and DIET building here at Be- mina.

be for receiving certificates only. He said the need of the hour is to impart training on modern lines by using the new methodology and latest technology so that the master trainers could propagate the same quality down the line.

The Minister also asked for developing a mechanism through which standard and efficiency of trained teachers, who receive training from See **Zulfkar**...Pg 02

CAREER PARK INITIATES SKILL DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION FOR BEGGARS, ORPHANS AT DELHI

Rameez Makhdoomi

Srinagar, May 11 (KNS): Begging is a serious issue in our part of the world with our society feeling no respite from same. In an optimistic development, the renowned career and Skill development institution Career Park Trust has initiated a fully fledged drive to give skill development tips and education to beggars.

In their drive they have also included the deprived and most vulnerable orphans too.

In this regard, they have started training the beggars, orphans at Delhi in different skills and now they will have same in Kashmir.

See **Carrer**...Pg 02

NIRMAL SINGH FOR UPHOLDING SANCTITY OF JK ASSEMBLY

Inspects various sections of Assembly Secretariat



SRINAGAR, MAY 11: Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Dr Nirmal Singh today inspected various sections in the Assembly Secretariat and took stock of their functioning. On the occasion, Dr Singh interacted with the employees of various sections of the Assembly Secretariat and stressed them to work with utmost dedication and zeal. The Speaker was accom-

panied by Deputy Speaker, Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, Secretary, Legislative Assembly Mulk Raj Singh and other officials to take a detailed review of staff strength besides various affairs of the Assembly complex. The Speaker assured the officials of full support and added that they are welcome to apprise him of their problems and grievances. He also sought their cooperation in

smooth functioning of the Legislative assembly. He said his role is to give more power to the people's voice to ensure the strengthening of the democratic institutions and hassle-free conduct of the business in the Assembly Secretariat. He also called for upholding the sanctity of the Legislative Assembly to ensure issues concerning the state and the people are addressed.

DDC REVIEWS RESTORATION POST-HAILSTORM, CLOUDBURST

RAJOURI, MAY 11: District Development Commissioner, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary today directed the officials to assess the losses to crops and property in Thanamandi due to Hailstorm and cloudburst, on priority basis so that approval of compensation and restoration of public infrastructure is done on fast track basis. The meeting was attended by ACR Abdul Qayoom Mir, SDM Thanamandi Afzal Mirza, Ex En PWD Mushtaq Raina, Ex En PMGSY Zubair Ahmed, Ex En PDD Munshi Khan, Ex En I&FC, CHO, CAO, DSHO, Tehsildar, BDO, and officials of other departments. The DDC said that instant relief and compensation was paid to 10 families for loss of livestock within a day. The authorities were pressed into action for assessment of losses to crops, orchards,

livestock, farmland and public infrastructure enabling early restoration work. Chief Agriculture Office Rajouri reported 100% loss to crop area of 475 Ha (Wheat growing), 961 Ha (Maize), 10.35 Ha (Paddy), 371 Ha (Vegetables) and 102 Ha (Fodder). It was decided that apart from loanee farmers covered under insurance, District Administration will release compensation as per assessment of committee. Regarding livestock, DSHO intimated loss of 169 sheep and 21 goats to farmers. Furthermore, it was informed that nine large animals and 500 poultry birds died due to the hailstorm. Likewise, 3 fish ponds were damaged where entire stock of fishes was damaged, it was revealed. The DDC reviewed the restoration of vital supplies

and infrastructure and directed the departments for early completion of works involving roads and lanes. PWD and PMGSY were also asked for early completion of restoration work. SDM was directed to put in the public domain the loss assessment and compensation recommended by the inter-departmental committee by 18th May 2018. The committee of officers presented a resume of massive damages in villages Panghai, Shahdra, Majhoor, Hasplote, Thanamandi, Alal, Karyote, Azmatabad, Manyal, Baroon, Khanyalkote, Dhoke, Mangota, Chhurang, Rajdhani, Totamorah and Khablan. Moreover, damages were also reported in Kalkote villages viz Taryath, Khabbar, Harichumma, Mathiani, Treru, Jangrial, Malorian.

DSEJ INFORMS STUDENTS ABOUT TELE-COUNSELLING HELPLINES

JAMMU, MAY 11: The counselling cell of Directorate of School Education Jammu (DSEJ) has informed the students that various professional Tele-Counselling facilities existing at national and state level are providing counselling and professional help in confidential and trustworthy manner related to adolescent's psychological issues, career-related matters, sexual abuse, and other mental health-related issues. Various students tele-helpline numbers include National Adolescent Helpline: 1800-233-1250 by Union Ministry of Health, and National Substance Abuse Helpline: 1800-11-0031 by Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment, National Career Helpline: 1800-425-1514 by Ministry of Labour and Employment, Childline No: 1098 by a renowned national NGO Childline India Foundation. Prevention of Children against sexual offences (POCSO) Helpline: 9868235077, E-BOX by Ministry of Women and Child Development. Other helplines at State / Divisional level which have been publicized include Suicide prevention helpline: +91-9796606060 by NGO SARA, Life Nine: 18001807020 by NGO Kashmir Lifeline: and Counselling helpline: 9419210200, counselling cell dsej@gmail.com by Counselling Cell Directorate of School Education Jammu. Directions have also been issued to all the CEOs of Jammu Division to make students aware about these tele-helpline facilities during morning assemblies and also mount the list of all relevant Tele-helpline numbers on the school walls.

Continue from Front Page

MEHBOOBA

be made functional by the year end. The project is being executed by the Jammu and Kashmir Economic Reconstruction Agency (JKERA). Earlier, the Chief Minister was briefed about the salient features of this ambitious project by the CEO, ERA. The project missed the original deadline of completion due to the unrest of 2016 and floods of 2014.

CALLS

Meanwhile, the Dr. Singh also called on the Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti here today. The Chief Minister congratulated Dr. Singh and hoped that with his acumen, knowledge and experience he would further elevate the position he has been elected for.

NAEEM

said, "A new discourse has started." Akhter said as far as the remarks of NC working president, Omar Abdullah are concerned he is none to deliver sermons when he himself as CM has failed to keep promises on withdrawal of AFSPA and other CBMs on Kashmir. "We don't want to engage with Omar Abdullah on the arguments he has made but welcome his statements over the ceasefire proposal. He is in opposition and deserves the right to put forth his point of view before the government," he said. In reply to a question about the response of main opposition National Conference, Akhter said, "NC leaders had promised to convey their response on the proposal after discussing the issue with the party top brass. They have not responded as yet and

When contacted NC General Secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar told KNS "we have sought time for discussing the issue with the party top brass as both party president Farooq Abdullah and working President, Omar Abdullah are out of station and on their return we will discuss the issue with them and convey the final response to the government thereafter."

AVINASH

over phone from New Delhi, Khanna said, "Ceasefire has to be from both sides be it the militants attacking government forces on plains in Jammu and Kashmir or the Pakistan violating ceasefire on borders. We never target Pakistan but the troops of that country fire on our borders and killings of both forces personnel and civilians pain us. Pakistan is a Muslim country and should show respect to the ceasefire agreement during the holy month of Ramadhan."

About the unanimous proposal of the All Party meeting for ceasefire with the militants, Khanna said "We don't oppose the ceasefire but only want the other side to offer ceasefire from its side."

In reply to a question on ceasefire with militants, Khanna said if militants attack government forces is it possible that government forces will watch bullets from the other side targeting them, obviously not. Ceasefire has to be from both the sides and let militants show restraint the government would reciprocate."

COP

Police spokesman further said that Shamim was asked to lead towards the Guard Post however he raised an alarm and the alert jawans inside the Guard Post successfully foiled it. "In the process the said official was injured who consequently succumbed to his injury. Martyred jawan Sgt Shamim Ahmad No 834 Bd (EXK 981992) is a resident of Check Hanjan Yaripora Kulgam," he said, adding that police has registered a case in this connection.

DULAT

maintained. Dulat said that the unilateral ceasefire was also declared by the then Prime Minister Vajpayee in 2000. "Though the ceasefire was declared only for Ramzan, it was extended for the next few months. I believe it cannot be accepted that the government will announce a ceasefire and militants continue attacks on our security forces," the former RAW chief said.

He however said that the ceasefire may be a better option to tackle the local sentiment and anger that is pushing local Kashmiris to militancy despite the successes in anti militant operations.

He further said that it is unfortunate that stone pelters are hitting streets daily and pelt stones. "Even I have seen students and girls are coming out on the streets to pelt stones. I think they are spoiling Kashmir," he maintained.

He further said that the hurriyat leaders like Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq should make a fervent appeal to the stone pelters to give peace a chance and to refrain from

attacking forces.

Dulat has worked in Kashmir for several years having served as the Intelligence Bureau's (IB) special director in Srinagar during former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's tenure. Not only did he supervise the intelligence network during this period, but he was also advisor on Kashmir in the PMO during Vajpayee's tenure.

His book Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years had created a lot of ripples as he became one of the few members of the Indian security and intelligence community to advocate a reduced military presence in Kashmir and to argue the need for India to build confidence amongst Kashmiris through humanitarian measures.

It is to mention here that Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti has said that she will ask the Centre to consider Ramzan ceasefire in the Valley as was done by Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2000.

Speaking to reporters after an all-party meeting convened by the PDP-BJP government over the security situation in the Valley, Mehbooba had said, "Everyone agreed that we must appeal to Centre that it must think about a unilateral ceasefire like Vajpayee ji did in 2000. Encounters, crackdowns are causing trouble to common man. Efforts must be made to maintain environment so that both Eid and Amarnath Yatra are peaceful." She had said.

She had said that everyone present at the meeting was in agreement that if agenda of alliance between BJP and PDP is followed, then situation in J&K can be changed.

However according to one of the National News Papers, Senior BJP leader and the Deputy Chief Minister of the state Kavinder Gupta has said that during Wednesday's all-party meeting, leaders had suggested a ceasefire but there was no consensus.

PDP

Mir said that with this J&K also becomes the first state to incorporate such a practice which ensures the legal empowerment to the women in property matters.

Termining women to be the foundation of a strong and civilized society, Mir said that this was a desire of the Chief Minister to see the women empowered and as a matter of gratitude, the state government has taken this visionary decision.

He hoped that other states also take women empowerment initiatives to ensure their social and economic well being.

MADHAV

in the valley, the security forces are duty bound to tackle it with utmost toughness. What is needed is terrorist activities should stop, operations would stop automatically. As long as terrorists are active in the valley, the security forces are duty bound to protect the citizens and the country," he added.

Objecting to the use of word 'ceasefire', Madhav said, "If by ceasefire, one meant ceasing of operations by forces in the valley during Ramzan, what's expected is that the terrorist elements will abstain from terrorist activities, as it is a holy month for the Muslims."

Madhav said that they are open for talks to groups like Hurriyat but as far as terrorism is concerned it is their duty to deal with it with an iron hand.

"We do not mind talking to groups like Hurriyat. There is no issue. We're open for talks but as far as terrorism is concerned it's our duty to deal with it with an iron hand," he said.

All political parties of Jammu and Kashmir are for a unilateral ceasefire in the state, said Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday.

"Everyone agreed that we must urge the Centre that government must think about a unilateral ceasefire like Vajpayee ji did in 2000. Encounters, crackdowns are causing trouble to common man. Efforts must be made to maintain environment so that both Eid and Amarnath Yatra are peaceful," Mufti said.

All agreed that if the agenda of an alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is followed then the situation in the state will change, she added.

SOZ

knowledge on the military history of India. It is long back that I had reminded the General to study minutely Field Marshal Cariappa's approach to military operations in situations of conflict," he said.

"I have satisfied myself that he can go on supporting the killings in Kashmir, but should he ever think of helping the political bosses to resolve the crisis on ground in Kashmir, then, both his narrative and approach to resolve the dispute in Kashmir shall have to undergo a change. I wish to tell the General plainly that he has to reach the minds of young men wielding the gun!," he added.

"Whether azadi is possible or not, it is a proposition already before the people of Kashmir and they alone will decide their future. The General could also have a look on what Edmund Burke told the British Parliament during his strong plea for Britain's proper response to American condition on 22 March 1775. Said Burke, 'First, permit me, sir, to observe, that the use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it doesn't remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation (people) is not governed, which is perpetually to be conquered!,' Soz added.

GEELANI

for any emoluments, perks or privileges, nor is it to make a way to the power corridors. It is a mass movement representing the uprising against the unrealistic, undemocratic and unjustified occupation by India. It is a natural and realistic movement nourished by the blood and honor of our people. And any such movement is deemed to reach to its logical conclusion, no matter how and when," said Geelani.

He said that Indian rulers always promoted and pampered their stooges to act as their henchmen.

Geelani further said that it is a fact that 10 lakh army with latest weaponry and technological update cannot be defeated by a few youth with minimum and little ammunition, but it is also a fact that this military might has been kept engaged by these few people for the last 30 years and the Indian army is so afraid of these boys that they have to hide behind the human shield while encountering them.

Hurriyat chairman said "as a nation we can't even think of surrender or submission. We would prefer to vanish but never accept and legitimize the forceful occupation."

He said that armed forces, with all its impunity and thick layer of protective laws, fail to combat the surge of the people. "Operation all Out", "epidemic of dead eyes" and calibrations on more than a dozen deaths in a day too has proved futile.

Geelani, suggesting the Army Chief to go through the pages of history, said that British army also threatened Indians when they were holding the reins of power in India, American sarcastically said same to Vietnamese and in recent past Russians also tried to hold the territory of Afghanistan with same rhetoric, but history stands testimony to the fact that all these arrogant occupiers were dashed to ground along with their military and weaponry might.

Hurriyat Chairman said that we pray and hope that our oppressor and occupier meets the same fate if it prolongs our slavery and encourages brutalities and iron fist as the only remedy.

Meanwhile, Hurriyat Conference lashed out the state administration and police for again barring its chairman Syed Ali Geelani from offering congregational Friday prayers today, terming it as "interference in the religious affairs."

"Syed Ali Geelani could not attend the Friday congregational prayers today due to his continuous house arrest, Hurriyat said.

Spokesman said that police personnel deployed outside his residence informed office that Geelani can't attend Friday prayers.

He and other resistance leaders are barred from performing religious obligations which is interference in religious matters and clear violation of UN charter wherein performing religious obligations have been recognized as fundamental right," the Hurriyat spokesman, said, appealing the human rights organizations and international community to take cognizance of this 'lawlessness, human rights violations' and continuous house arrest of Geelani.

Meanwhile, Hurriyat Conference expressed strong resentment over repeated arbitrary curbs and restrictions in Srinagar and lockdown of central Jamia Masjid and other mosques of the city.

Hurriyat in a statement issued in Srinagar said, "Locking down the central Jamia Masjid especially on Fridays to bar people from all across the Valley to assemble and offer prayers is aimed at weakening the centrality and significance of the grand mosque.

Hurriyat Conference strongly condemned the detention of Syed Ali Geelani, Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai, Hurriyat spokesperson Ghulam Ahmad Gulzar, Aga Syed Hassan Almosvi, Bilal Sidique, Mohd Yasin Ataie, Mohd Ashraf Laya, Syed Imtiyaz Hyder and Bashir Ahmad.

Hurriyat said that despite arbitrary restrictions and curbs, a resolution was read out and passed by the people, today, in various mosques, shrines and Imambargahs across Kashmir and public demonstration at Rambir Garh Baramulla, Maisuma Srinagar, Hyderpora, Lal Chowk were led by Hakim Ab Rashid, Mohd Yusuf Naqash, Mohd Shafi Lone, Bashir Ahmad Qureshi, Syed Mohd Shafi, Nisar Husain Rather, Omer Adil Dar, and other including Rameez raja, Mustafa Sultan, Ishfaq Ahmad Khan, Jan Mohammad Bahaar, Ab Rashid Beg, Mohd Umar, Asif Raja, Tariq Ahmad Mir, Shafeeq Ahmad Khan, Mohd Feisal, Jan Mohd Najjar, Imtiyaz

Ahmad Shah, Mohd Imran Bhat and Mohd Shafi Mir.

SUMBAL

where according to doctors he may lose the sight of his right eye.

People in Sumbal and adjacent areas have been collecting donations for the treatment of the victim.

Meanwhile, PDP leader and MLC, Yasir Reshi who hails from the Sumbal area has demanded registration of FIR against the erring cops.

SSP Bandipora Sheikh Zulfiqar said that they have registered FIR against stone-pelters.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Khurshid Ahmed Sanai has appointed SDM Sumbal Syed Naseer Ahmed as the inquiry officer to examine the circumstances which led to the injuries to the victim.

The inquiry officer has been directed to submit his report before the District Development Commissioner Bandipora within two weeks.

ZULFKAR

SIE and DIETs, could be assessed. Highlighting the importance of introducing the new courses in the curriculum, Zulfiqar said that in present day and age there is a great influx of information, mainly coming through the internet. However, he said the focus should be on relevant and up to date courses that match up with the market trends are introduced, so that the students have better prospects of getting jobs or establishing their entrepreneurial units.

He also directed for providing refresher courses to the teachers. Many new things have come up which a present-day teacher should be aware of, therefore, refresher courses become important, said the Minister.

Zulfiqar also announced that to reward the good work of teachers, besides getting State level award, would be felicitated with zonal as well as district level awards. The awards will be given in all the three categories of best principal, best headmaster and best teacher.

The Minister said the aim is to make the Governmental educational schools institutes of excellence. He said for this whatever, is required will be done. He said constructing 'Ustad Ghar', which is constructed at a cost of Rs 8 crore, is a step in the direction.

He informed that the construction of 'Ustad Ghar' has solved the problem of finding private accommodation for the teachers receiving various trainings here. He said not only the departmental teachers, but even the employees from other departments could avail the boarding and lodging facility available at the Ghar at nominal prices, provided the latter has followed the official protocol for it.

It was revealed that the Ustad Ghar has 24 double bedrooms with attached washrooms, 13 triple bedrooms, and two dormitories with attached washrooms.

The Minister also took stock of the finishing work of Auditorium constructed by J&K Housing Board at an estimated cost of around Rs 11.64 crore. It was revealed that previously department had to book other auditoriums which was costing a great deal to it. However, with the construction of their own auditorium, the department would not only save a great deal of money but by renting it to other government agencies for doing their functions could earn good revenue from it.

After taking stock of the work completed so far, the Minister announced that the auditorium, with a seating capacity of 520, would be inaugurated later this month by the Chief Minister.

Secretary Education Farooq Ahmad Shah, Director School Education Kashmir G N Itoo, Joint Director State Institute of Education Kashmir Mehboob Hussain, Principal DIET Srinagar, Suriya Bano and other concerned officers were accompanying the Minister.

CAREER

Jaffar Allie, Head Career Park Trust stated -"We have started to give deprived sections a hope and give the beggar community a reason to live in a dignified manner and have started in this context skill development initiatives for beggars in Delhi and will have soon the same programme in Kashmir as begging that too uncontrollable has become menace for the people and authorities of Kashmir. We are also trying to cater to the skill development and education needs of orphans as they face lot of tough situations. We hope effective cooperation from all stakeholders in this regard."

With begging assuming menacing proportions for people in Kashmir the idea of skill development for beggars by the Career Park Trust seems a viable initiative for the overall paradigms of the society.

President of India Addresses the National Technology Day Celebrations

New Delhi, May 11: The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, graced and addressed the National Technology Day Celebrations in New Delhi today (May 11, 2018).

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that after Independence, India began to climb the value chain in technology and knowledge production in the areas of space and atomic energy. Today, we have expanded to best-in-class capacities in communication technology, IT, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. This has changed perceptions about our country and helped both our people and our economy. In the past year itself, we have had stand-out achievements such as the launch of the Indian Regional

Navigation Satellite System - 1L. We are also making preparations for the Chandrayaan-2 mission to the moon. India has a formidable reputation in drugs and vaccines.

Congratulating the award winners at the event, the President said the emphasis on quality in our innovation and technology endeavours is non-negotiable. There was a time when we tended to confuse frugal and low-cost innovation with jugaad - small, incremental change or essentially a cut-and-paste approach to technology. As a society, we have and we must continue to overcome that mindset. Today's award winners are examples of how we are moving ahead with daring, with risk-taking ability and

with ingenuity - how we are making genuine leaps of imagination and of innovation. Beyond the products and processes, it is this new energy among our technology incubators that is refreshing.

The President said that now we have to explore new frontiers. The government has proposed to establish Centres of Excellence to train young technologists in robotics, artificial intelligence, digital manufacture, Big Data Analytics, quantum communication, and in the Internet of Things. The government is also pursuing demonstration and deployment of successful technology solutions for clean energy options and for meeting the challenge of water availability.

These are 21st century challenges - and they require 21st century answers.

The President said that technology is destiny, but technology must also be equity. Its fruits must be accessible to all. Finance and resources should be available to all technologists who may wish to turn entrepreneurs - and to migrate from the lab room to the shop floor. Above all, gender equity must be integrated with technology production and technology sharing. We need more of our country's young women to enter the technology and innovation space. Those who are already working here are doing a remarkable job, but their numbers need to improve. And improve urgently.

New Projects on priority for developing tourism in NE states: Dr Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, May 11: The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh held a meeting with the Union Minister of state for Tourism (I/C) and Electronics and Information Technology Shri K.J. Alphons here today. During the meeting, they discussed proposals for identifying new projects on priority for development of tourism in the North Eastern states. The meeting is part of continuing inter-ministerial discussions for development of North Eastern states.

After the meeting, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the Ministry of DoNER has recommended to the Finance Ministry for higher fund allocation and special package for such projects in the NE region. The Minister said under the North East Special Infrastructure Scheme

(NESIDS), the DoNER Ministry is providing financial assistance for projects of physical infrastructure relating to water supply, power, connectivity for promoting tourism in the region. He said that this will be over and above the existing schemes of the Central and State governments of the NE region. Dr. Jitendra Singh said that under the North Eastern Council (NEC), work is underway for promotion of theme-based regional tourism circuits. Pointing out some new initiatives under Ministry of DoNER funded works, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that amenities have been created at Nathu La in Sikkim for acclimatisation of pilgrims undertaking Mansarovar Yatra through this route. He added that such tourist facilities are being developed at the popular tourist hub Majuli island in Assam. He said, improved connectivity has already seen growth in tourism in the NE region.

Promotion and Progress of meritorious youths from Minority communities is the priority of the Government

New Delhi, May 11: Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that the Ministry of Minority Affairs has been putting effective efforts for "promotion and progress" of meritorious youth from Minority communities. Shri Naqvi felicitated the youth belonging to the Minority communities who have cleared civil services 2017 with the help of Minority Affairs Ministry's free-coaching programmes in New Delhi today. Stating that the Minority Affairs Ministry, in collaboration with reputed institutions/organisations of the country, is running free-coaching programmes for civil services, medical, engineering, other administrative services and banking exams for meritorious youths from Minority communities, he said this is to ensure that not even

a single deserving youth from these weaker sections is deprived of best coaching and a chance to get a better job.

Shri Naqvi said the youth, successful in the UPSC, are a "role model" for youth from Minority and other weaker sections of the society. He said that there is immense talent in minority communities, especially Muslim youths and efforts have been undertaken to create such an environment which would give them confidence. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Government has given an atmosphere to protect and promote talent of youths from Minority communities which has resulted in such a large number of youths of the Minority community being selected in the top administrative services.

Shri Naqvi said that the Central Government's policy

of "Development with Dignity", without any discrimination, has ensured that this year, for the first time after the Independence, record 131 minority communities' youth including 51 Muslims have been selected in Civil Services. Shri Naqvi said that last year also, 126 youths belonging to minority communities, including 52 Muslims, had been selected in the prestigious civil services. He said that last year, 1099 people were selected in the Civil Services which include 52 Muslim youths, it was 4.5 per cent of the total selected. In percentage terms, 5.15 per cent of the total 990 successful candidates are Muslims this year. This year, there are 6 Muslims including 3 women, who have secured ranks in top 100.

The Minister said that the Ministry of Minority Affairs

has been running a large scale free-coaching programme for meritorious youths belonging to notified minority communities preparing for UPSC examinations. Through various institutions and organisations, the Ministry has been running coaching programmes such as "Nai Udaan", "Naya Savera" for minority youths preparing for Civil Services, other UPSC examinations, medical, engineering and administrative examinations. During 2017-18, 105 youths from the notified minority communities who qualified prelims of Civil Services Exams, have been provided financial support under the "Nai Udaan" scheme. An awareness campaign is also going on for the youths belonging to minority communities to ensure they participate in these examinations.

India Pavilion Inaugurated at Cannes Film Festival 2018

New Delhi, May 11: The inaugural session of the Indian Pavilion at the Cannes Film Festival 2018 was held at Cannes, France. Hosted by noted actor Shri Sharad Kelkar, the Indian delegation present consisted of H.E. Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Ambassador of India to France, Shri Ashok Kumar Parmar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of I&B, Govt. Of India, Shri Praseon Joshi, Writer, Poet and Chairman, Central Board of Film Certification India, Ms Vani Tripathi Tikoo Member, Central Board of Film Certification, Producer and Director, Shri Jerome Paillard, Executive Director, Marche Du Film Festival, Cannes Film Market, Ms. Huma Qureshi, Film Actress, Shri Shaji Karun, Film maker, Shri Jahnur Barua, Film maker and Shri Bharat Bala,

Film maker. The agenda of the delegation from India this year is to showcase diversity in films of our country while furthering collaborations with various other countries.

Indian delegation in India Pavilion at the Cannes Film Festival 2018

Speaking about the growth of the nation being well reflected through our cinema H.E. Vinay Mohan Kwatra, said that what is happening in our country currently is the unprecedented transformation in technology and the economy and that these growing externalities are reflected in Indian Cinema. Shri Jerome Paillard stated that Indian Pavilion is a very important tool to help connecting the worldwide European and worldwide community of films. Speaking about Indo-

French Cinema collaboration Ms Vani Tripathi Tikoo, said that India has a fantastic relationship with both Cannes film festival and the French film industry. She further added that in recent times films like Tamasha and Bekre were shot extensively in this part of the world and found great resonance with the narrative story telling between the two countries.

During the Inaugural address, Shri Praseon Joshi said that we should also reach out to young filmmakers who might not have access to a festival like Cannes and should organize many mini Cannes film festivals all around the world to help more and more filmmakers.

A meeting between the Indian delegation and Ms. Isabelle Giordano, Director General, Unifrance, M. Loïc

Wong, Director of International Department, CNC, France along with Ms. Valérie L'Epine-Karnik, CEO, Film France was held to explore co-production opportunities between India and France.

A round table discussion was also held to explore collaborations with countries like Brazil, Philippines, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan, Canada and New Zealand where the film commissioners from these countries discussed the opportunities and challenges for co production with India. Discussions were also held with the heads and management of various Indian studios and production houses to see how films in different languages could become more viable and what the government could do to help filmmakers in the country.

Exhibitions provide platform to expand trade promotion activities: Khalil Bandh

SRINAGAR, MAY 11: Minister of Agriculture Mohammad Khalil Bandh on Friday said that organizing exhibitions provide a platform to artists and traders to exhibit their art and merchandise.

The Minister expressed these views at a Trade Fair exhibition cum sale organized here at Sangarmaal Complex by a private company Sharma Brothers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said every opportunity needs to be cashed in to give a much-needed boost to State's business



industry, and holding exhibitions is a step in the direction.

The Minister said an exhibition not only act as platform for traders and artists to exhibit their art and merchandise, but it also provides an opportunity for sellers and buyers to have one on one interaction.

During the visit, the Minister was informed that various stalls are exhibiting products related to handloom, handicraft flowers, crockery, electronics, and wooden furniture.

The Minister was apprised there

is a separate book stall for book lovers.

To get an adrenaline rush, the Minister was informed that the organizers have also included the adventuresport of "moutkakowan" (death well) in the exhibition. Besides, children could enjoy boat rides.

Expressing happiness over the event, Khalil Bandh said with limited entertainment sources, the exhibition could prove a good alternative to State usual entertainment sources of TV and mobiles.

Speaker nominates three MLAs for Select Committee

SRINAGAR, MAY 11: Consequent upon the induction of Sat Paul Sharma, Rajiv Jasrotia and Dr Devinder Kumar Manyal in the council of Ministers, three vacancies have occurred in the Select Committee on "the Jammu and Kashmir Shri Mata Sukhla Devi Ji Shrine and Shri Mata Bala Sundari Shrine (Amendment) Bill, 2018 (L.A. Bill No. 16 of 2018)" the Speaker, in terms of Rule 282(2) of the Rules of Procedure and conduct of Business in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly has nominated lawmakers Priya Sethi, Rajesh Gupta and R S Pathania to serve as members against the vacancies so caused in the said committee.

Civil Engineering Graduates Association calls on Sham Choudhary

SRINAGAR, MAY 11: State Joint Action Committee of all Engineering Graduates Associations today called on Minister for Public Health Engineering Sham Lal Choudhary here and apprised him of various issues being facing by them.

The delegation briefed the Minister about issues like pay anomaly, assured career progression, and fixed travel allowance of all engineering cadres.

The Minister gave the delegation a patient hearing and assured that all of their issues would be looked into and addressed accordingly.

Nirmal Singh for upholding sanctity of JK Assembly

SRINAGAR, MAY 11: Speaker Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Dr Nirmal Singh today inspected various sections in the Assembly Secretariat and took stock of their functioning.

On the occasion, Dr Singh interacted with the employees of various sections of the Assembly secretariat and stressed them to work with utmost dedication and zeal.

The Speaker was accompanied by Deputy Speaker, Nazir Ahmad Khan Gurezi, Secretary, Legislative Assembly Mulik Raj Singh and other officials to take a detailed review of staff strength besides various affairs of the Assembly complex.

The Speaker assured the officials of full support and added that they are welcome to apprise him of their problems and grievances. He also sought their cooperation in smooth functioning of the Legislative assembly.

He said his role is to give more power to the peoples' voice to ensure the strengthening of the democratic intuitions and hassle-free conduct of the business in the Assembly Secretariat. He also called for upholding the sanctity of the Legislative Assembly to ensure issues concerning the state and the people are addressed.

DDC Pulwama reviews Ramadan arrangements

PULWAMA, May 11: District Development Commissioner Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar, today reviewed the arrangements put in place by the district administration for the ensuing holy month of Ramadan.

The meeting held threadbare discussions regarding water, power, ration and security facilities and sought immediate measures for ensuring these besides improving sanitation and ensuring strict check on quality and rates of essentials. The DDC directed the concerned departments to make adequate arrangements for providing better amenities to the people and intensify market checking to keep a check on overcharging and of daily use items. PDD and PHE departments were directed to ensure uninterrupted power and water supplies at Sehri and Iftar to avoid inconvenience to the people.

He also directed the concerned department to make proper arrangement of street lights in the town and make sure that unfunctional lights should be made functional. He asked Pulwama Municipal Corporation to intensify sanitation operations and ensure cleanliness in and around the mosques and shrines.

The DDC directed the officers to work in synergy to carry out market checking and monitor the quality of edibles like mutton and poultry. He also stressed on keeping regulation of rates of commodities. He also asked the concerned officers of FCS&CA to ensure an adequate supply of ration during Ramzan.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Tral and Awantipora, Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Medical Officer, CEO MC, EEs PWD, R&B, PHE, AD FCS & CA besides other district and sectoral officers from various departments.

DDC Pulwama reviews progress under Capex Budget 2017-18

PULWAMA, MAY 11: District Development Commissioner Pulwama, Ghulam Mohammad Dar, today chaired a meeting to review the status of ongoing developmental projects of various departments in the district.

The meeting involved a threadbare review of the implementation of CM's commitments, utilization of funds for various Central and State sector schemes and other developmental projects being implemented in the district.

The meeting was informed that under the CAPEX budget for 2017-18 fiscal involving Rs. 7920.62 crore about 97.18 per cent of the expenditure has been. With regard to the Roads and Buildings sector, it was informed that developmental works worth Rs. 1325 lac were carried out under NABARD and those worth Rs. 240 lac under regular schemes of the available Rs 1565.00 crore. Whereas the education sector has seen an expenditure of Rs 1132.47 lac against the availability of 1200.59 lac under different sectors in the district.



It was informed that under the Health sector, an amount of Rs. 377.90 lac has so far been utilized out of the total availability of Rs 380.45 lac.

While stressing the need for timely completion of developmental works, the DDC directed the concerned to accelerate the pace of works to meet the fixed deadlines. He also directed the concerned departments to start prepara-

tions for framing the new developmental plan for 2018-19 fiscal, instructing them to consult the concerned MLAs during the process.

He also stressed on the thorough implementation of decisions taken during the last district development board meeting and directed the concerned to ensure all works and decisions made during CM's public durbar in Pulwama and

Shopian are completed within their stipulated timeframes. The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Tral and Awantipora, Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Medical Officer, CEO MC, EEs PWD R&B, PHE and PMGSY, AD FCS&CA besides other district and sectoral officers from various departments.

Time and Us

Editorial
SRINAGAR
& J&K

Drowning in dust: dealing with extreme weather

A wave of extreme weather over northern States in India has killed at least 124 people and caused much misery, mostly in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The residents of this 'weather hotspot' region are used to annual storms carrying natural dust clouds in the pre-monsoon season, from the Thar desert and further west. But they have been hit by a particularly destructive version this year, one that combined hot western winds and moisture from the east. Record April temperatures in parts of Pakistan, at one place exceeding 50°C, are thought to have added to the ferocity of the dust-laden winds. This could be a recurring feature, and there is a need to develop accurate forecasting methods and protocols to mitigate the impact. Many of the casualties in the recent storms were caused by collapsing infrastructure, such as electricity transmission lines that were not built to withstand such weather. Good housing could have saved many. India's vulnerability to such storms has always been underscored by scientific estimates of the flow of aerosols, or dust particles. Their presence in the country is three times the global average due to sheer abundance of mineral dust. There is also a body of research that points to altered climate patterns due to accumulation of dust particles, which affect even the Himalayan glaciers. Considering the large population in the Indo-Gangetic Plain, where the impact of weather on public health and agriculture is massive, the Central and State governments should do everything possible to cut loss of life and property.

Globally, the major dust-producing regions pump 1,000-3,000 teragrams of particles into the atmosphere annually, with the Sahara alone responsible for a third of this, according to the UN Environment Programme. India is at the receiving end of winds from West Asia, although some scientists reported recently an overall reduction in dust volumes in the pre-monsoon season due to a pattern of increased rainfall. Even if that were to be true, unexpected surges such as the recent one pose a challenge. The Centre has to raise its game in forecasting, and broadcast early warnings. In fact, as the World Meteorological Organisation points out, clarity and frequency of warnings are key to saving lives. In the wake of the storm on May 2, State governments have blamed the India Meteorological Department for not providing clear warnings, while the IMD claims to have conveyed the forecast of the coming storm to the Centre several days ahead. This clearly points to lack of coordination, that affects disaster-preparedness. Millions of people who are in the path of extreme weather each year expect better from official agencies. On the ground, strong public infrastructure.

By VENKITESH

In a brief interaction after the conclusion of the 22nd congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) held in Hyderabad from April 18 to 22, former Kerala Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan, the oldest living founder-member of the party, summed up his perception of the triennial gathering with a pithy remark: "Uniquely different in dimensions, but steadfast in continued commitment to cherished values, ideals and principles." He went on to explain: "The Visakhapatnam congress [in April 2015] had portrayed in unmistakable terms what the biggest political challenge before the country was when it identified the advent of the Narendra Modi government, its welding together of the neoliberal economic agenda and the Hindutva sociopolitical drive as concrete factors threatening the interests and livelihood of the people. Over the past three years, these threats have become more rampant and concrete and that is exactly why this congress in Hyderabad has accorded primacy to the political and tactical task of ousting the Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] government, simultaneously inflicting body blows on the fascist pursuits of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS] and its associates in the Sangh Parivar. Thus what we have basically done is to ensure the persistence of the political line as well as the continuity of the organisational direction, the latter manifest in the re-election of Sitaram Yechury as general secretary." Achuthanandan did admit, however, that the organisational methods that led to the reassertion of a continued political line were indeed different from those seen in CPI(M) party congresses traditionally.

Departure from convention
The veteran leader, known for his sharp mind and sharper political-organisational interventions, did not elaborate on the different organisational methods that came into play at the Hyderabad party congress, which were evident to all close observers of the party. The most pronounced organisational difference at the Hyderabad congress was in the very presentation of the political resolution—one of the most important documents that are taken up for consideration at the triennial conclaves—before the delegates. In a departure from convention, the political report was presented by Prakash Karat, former general secretary of the party, and not Sitaram Yechury, the incumbent general secretary, who was first elected in 2015 at Visakhapatnam. The roots of this extraordinary procedure were in the Central Committee of the CPI(M) held in January 2018, which finalised the draft political resolution. The CPI(M)'s normal practice is to circulate the draft resolution to all its units and members well in advance so that they can discuss and come up with suggestions and changes before the party congress. When the draft political resolution was approved by the Central Committee in January 2018 for circulation among party members, it was not completely in consonance with the position of the incumbent general secretary. There were significant and nuanced differences in the approach of the general secretary and the majority view in the Central Committee.

While there was general agreement on the need to defeat the BJP and its allies as well as on the need to maximise the pooling of anti-BJP forces, the draft approved by the Central Committee ruled out any electoral

Clear agenda



understanding with the Congress or treating the Congress as an ally or a partner in a united front. It was argued that this was because the Congress had the same class character as the BJP—both being parties of the ruling classes. The draft resolution also noted that the Congress party had proved to be incapable of fighting communal forces consistently. This line was primarily advanced by Prakash Karat and senior Polit Bureau member S. Ramachandran Pillai, with firm support from Kerala Chief Minister and Polit Bureau member Pinarayi Vijayan. Yechury, on his part, was not in favour of an outright rejection of any understanding with the Congress, though he, too, was of the view that there could be no political alliance with the Congress, given its class character. These contending formulations were put to vote in the January Central Committee and the majority view, which was not represented by the general secretary, was carried by a 55-31 margin. Consequently, the responsibility of presenting the draft approved by a majority in the Central Committee fell on Karat.

Amendments to draft resolution
However, as the discussions on the draft political resolution unravelled at the Hyderabad party congress, it became increasingly evident that the draft approved by the Central Committee did not have the support of the majority of delegates. In fact, the mood of the party congress, as some of the delegates who interacted with Frontline stated, seemed to be decisively against marginalising the Left forces from the widespread anti-BJP, anti-fascist sentiment building up among vast sections of the population as well as among secular opposition parties. This mood was not lost on the CPI(M) leadership, especially on the steering committee led by former Tripura Chief Minister and Polit Bureau member Manik Sarkar, which intervened to suggest amendments to the draft resolution approved by the Central Committee. These amendments were based essentially on the understanding that "pursuing a line of treating both the BJP and the Congress as equal dangers" was not the mood of the party congress. In concrete terms, the amendments involved the following:

The word "understanding" was removed from a clause that earlier read: "However, this has to be done without having an understanding or electoral alliance with the Congress party." The amended clause read: "But this has to be done without having a political

alliance with the Congress party." Another clause was added: "However, there can be an understanding with all secular opposition parties including the Congress in Parliament on agreed issues. Outside Parliament, we should cooperate with all secular opposition forces for a broad mobilisation of people against communalism." These amendments were overwhelmingly endorsed by the delegates.

Anti-BJP thrust

Clearly, with these amendments, the anti-BJP thrust of the CPI(M)'s current political position got sharpened. This is exactly what was referred to by Achuthanandan as the continued commitment to follow the line of the past Visakhapatnam congress in fighting the Hindutva communal, fascist forces and ousting the Modi-led BJP government. Elaborating on the new nuances on the political line, the resolution stated as follows: "As far as the word understanding is concerned, we have defined the scope of that understanding with the Congress party. Within Parliament, we have understanding with secular opposition parties including the Congress on agreed issues. We take forward the Visakhapatnam Party Congress resolution that we need a broad mobilisation of all democratic and secular forces against communalism."

Interestingly, discussions on the draft political resolution across CPI(M) units, between January and April, had already given an indication of the mood in the party congress. According to official statistics of the CPI(M), a record 8,174 amendments to the draft political resolution were moved; of these, 6,924 were related to the national section of the document. Among these, as many as 1,318 were specifically on the political line and many of them sought the deletion of the "no understanding with the Congress" line while many others sought the deletion of "no alliance with the Congress". Some other amendments referred to the characterisation of the present regime (at the Centre) as authoritarian or fascist while some other amendments asserted that fascist tendencies and trends existed. Amendments conveying the latter were accepted.

During the deliberations, delegates moved 373 amendments, out of which 37 were accepted. A number of delegates at the party congress pointed out that these statistics were broadly indicative of the dominant political perspective that existed among party

units and the rank and file across the country. Significantly, Achuthanandan had also moved an amendment, which stated as follows: "The 'growing authoritarianism' under Modi Raj that we observed in the 21st congress is now growing towards fascist goal. It is not at all static or stuck amidst. It is in motion led by one of the most seasoned fascist forces in the world: the RSS. The said international and domestic developments working corroboratively become extremely favourable for RSS to lead its Parivar in the fast execution of the said fascist goal. This becomes faster especially amidst political crisis that has struck the other bourgeois political parties creating a political crisis altogether. Thus, the objective and subjective conditions have become extremely conducive for generation of fascist danger." Commenting on the amendments as a whole, a group of delegates from States in northern and western India told Frontline that the urgency to fight and defeat the fascist, communal forces was the paramount concern among a vast majority of the party cadre and activists.

Demand for secret ballot

The uniquely different dimensions of the Hyderabad party congress cited by Achuthanandan reportedly involved discussions that were more intense and heated than usual. At some stages during the proceedings, the impassioned exchanges led to calls for voting and even the demand for a secret ballot on the political resolution and related issues. Though there is no official confirmation of their number, representatives from as many as 13 State units of the CPI(M) reportedly demanded a secret ballot. Leaders, including the re-elected general secretary Yechury, did confirm that demands for a secret ballot had been raised during the discussions. Talking to Frontline, Yechury stressed that the concepts of internal democracy and their advancement had to be commensurate with the precepts of democratic centralism, and what happened at the Hyderabad party congress was in keeping with this. (See interview on page 43.)

Message of unity

The passage of amendments as well as the conclusion of other engagements of the party congress was marked by proclamations of unity by the senior leaders who had presented contrasting perspectives before the delegates. Yechury repeatedly emphasised the need for unity in the party: "We all agreed that our main fight is against the BJP-RSS and to defeat this government. After this party congress, we will go back in a unified manner, take this fight throughout the country to mobilise the vast mass of our people on the guidance of the political resolution."

Yechury added that he was proud that the CPI(M) was the only party in India today that could undertake such a widespread and open democratic exercise to decide its future direction. Prakash Karat also pointed out that it was "unprecedented" that two views were put before the party congress. Karat added: "The Central Committee had decided that since this is a political issue, it should be decided in the highest body of the party, the party congress. It is not a question of the words 'understanding' and 'alliance'. It is the approach of how best to fight the BJP-RSS and ensure their defeat. A large number of comrades asked the leadership to resolve the issue so as to go back from this congress with the message of unity."

(Courtsy: Frontline)

Remembering and forgetting in Karnataka

Janaki Nair

History has been weaponised afresh in the electoral war zone of Karnataka. What set the ball rolling was the first idiomatic reference by Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to the historic face-off between Pulakeshin II (the great Chalukyan king) and Harshavardhana of Kanauj in the early seventh century, in which the former prevented the conquest from the north. Since then, we have been witness to a kind of deep mining of Karnataka history to serve two distinct purposes: reel in the votes of specific caste communities and construct a narrative of Hindutva unity.

All about Tipu
In the last few weeks, historical figures have been plucked out of rich and complex contexts to be beaten into swords, flintlocks, arrows, or simply blunt objects with which to bludgeon the electoral opponent. Here, the favourite (and easiest) beating boy has, predictably, been Tipu Sultan (r. 1782-99). The inflationary career of Tipu Sultan's detractors over the last three decades and Mr. Siddaramaiah's decision to celebrate Tipu Jayanti has provided the ballast

for a campaign which is all too impatient with the historical method. Tipu the Tyrant has won over other equally well documented aspects of this modernising 18th century monarch, through the well-worn (though little substantiated or understood) criticism about his attempts at conversion, his 'destruction' of temples and his indifference to Kannada. To this arguable list of failings, some prominent news channels have now added the charge of 'mass rapist'.

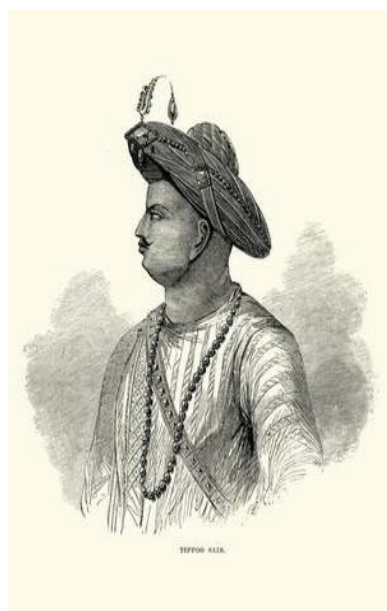
Yet it was Tipu the Moderniser who also supported many temples and mathas and left the larger part of his domain undisturbed on matters of religion. Tipu the Indefatigable Fighter who died valiantly on the battlefield, making him, along with Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, the 'figure of the epoch' in Nandal Bose's enduring illustrations of the Indian Constitution. Tipu the Untiring Innovator, particularly of rocket technology, who was admired by leading Indian technologists (Roddam Narasimha and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, for starters).

What has changed between the 1950s and the second decade of the new millennium in popular assessments of Tipu? Has 'the sense of the past' triumphed over the indisputable historical docu-

ment? Does the insistence on making Tipu the Tyrant reflect either the discovery of new archives or new interpretations of the massive archival presence of this monarch? The answer is none of the above. Tipu's fall from grace has been drawn, ironically, from the oldest and most prejudiced accounts of colonial historians, rather than the sophisticated late 20th century analyses of this 18th century monarch.

Hence the promise to honour the memory of Madakari Nayaka of Chitradurga, who was defeated by Hyder Ali in 1779. In order to do this, one would have to ignore the fact that Madakari Nayaka shrewdly weighed his options between the two powers that had made his independent continuance impossible: the Marathas and the Mysoreans under Hyder Ali. This war between rising regional powers and petty Poligars was not between Hindus and Muslims, but it will be made one. And Onake Obavva who purportedly clobbered the Hyderi soldiers entering the fort with her pestle, and has gained much affection over the years, will be defied.

Inconvenient truths
Not since the 1920s and 1930s in the Hindi/Hindu heartland has there been



such a determined search for a Hinduised historical narrative. Historical heroes who had already been annexed by one or another caste group (Sangolli Rayanna and Kanakadasa by the Kurubas, Kempe Gowda and even Kuvempu by the Vokkaligas, Koti and Chennayya by the Billavas) are now being woven into electoral speeches both to connect to

the demand for a caste history and also to create a new Hindu narrative. So all the new historical research about what the Vijayanagar kings shared with the Bahmani sultans — administratively, militarily, economically — will be no more than an inconvenient truth.

Such selective memorialising also effaces the pasts of Karnataka: nothing has revealed this as much as the Right's 'ownership' of the Basavanna legacy. Similarly, quoting the poetry of Shishunala Sharif, that saint poet of the 19th century, has also defiled the memory of the rich commingling from which such poetry emerged.

A past to plunder

That is why the real military pioneer, Tipu Sultan, calls for an act of forgetting: though the past is a place to be plundered only for pride and glory, it would disturb the singular narrative of Tipu the Tyrant to admit any complexities. At the same time, it would be too much to expect the newcomers to Karnataka to understand the deep beauty of one of Sharif's most popular songs set to music by C. Aswath: the hen has swallowed the monkey, the goat consumed the elephant, the wall has eaten up the paint. The Right will no doubt use its unique historical train-

ing to detect some scientific miracle or another in this poem, because they have firmly jettisoned nuance or metaphor for a painfully literal reading of poetry and myth.

Truly, we can do no better than turn to Shishunala Sharif, when he said, 'The roof is leaking due to ignorance, the roof is leaking...'. (Sorithihudu maneya maalige, agnanadinda), and there is no one to repair the beams, he said, in this darkness that surrounds me.

Dispensable specialists

To argue in the face of this sustained onslaught, which a certain regional and even sectarian pride had kept at bay for some time, that 'history is too important for the likes of politicians' is a futile cry in the wilderness. There is today an explosion of lay interest in questions of history, and a demand for a past that stokes only pride, making the specialist a dispensable figure. She may even endanger the project of speaking in one historical voice. But, as Walter Benjamin had darkly warned, even the dead will no longer be safe if this mission of programmatic remembering and forgetting is allowed to triumph.

(Courtsy: The Hindu)

PM Modi in Nepal today, focus on rebuilding trust and goodwill

New Delhi: As he embarks on his third visit to Nepal on Friday, a key element of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus will be engaging with all political streams in Nepal, including, but not confined to, the elected government of the day, and sending signals of support and reassurance to all, said a person familiar with the planning of the visit.

"This is a working visit. The PM will focus on bilateral projects and steps needed on both sides to expedite it. But another element will be political engagement with all sides," the person said on condition of anonymity. This engagement will take place at four levels.

The PM will extensively interact with his host, Prime Minister KP Oli, with whom India shared difficult ties in the past. It was during the congratulatory call after he got elected that Oli invited Modi to come to Nepal soon, and Modi had promised he would do so.

Oli stuck to tradition and made India his first foreign port of call in April after becoming PM. Such a quick reciprocal visit, in just over a month is unusual for Modi. "It signals the PM's personal commitment to working with the elected government of the day in Kathmandu," said the person quoted above.

Oli had long requested a one-on-one meeting with Modi, without the presence of any official, and got it in Delhi.

"Trust-building with Oli began



with Sushma Swaraj's visit before he had taken over, his own visit, and the one-on-one meeting. The PM's visit will deepen it," said the person cited above.

But the Prime Minister will also meet other key stakeholders in Nepal's polity.

The Nepali Congress (NC), the key opposition force, has sent messages to Delhi that it believes that in its outreach to Oli, India has neglected its older allies, two NC leaders confirmed. Modi will meet NC president and former PM, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and his party representatives.

"We will assure NC that India plans to maintain all its old contacts and relationships. We believe they are vital participants in Nepali democracy," the person said. But if the opposition has expectations that India will undermine the elected government,

or 'play politics', this will not happen, he said.

Modi will also have a 'goodwill meeting' with Oli's key ally Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre). Maoists and Oli's party, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) are discussing a possible merger, but this has got delayed. India, the person quoted above said, is "agnostic" on this and believes it is entirely up to the two parties concerned.

Modi will finish off his balancing act from where he starts: the southern plains, Tarai. It was due to concerns of the Madhesi population of the plains about the constitution — demands India sympathised with — that Delhi-Kathmandu ties nosedived.

Large sections of the hill population were upset with Indian backing

for Madhesi protests at the border which crippled essential supplies. But as Delhi mended ties with Kathmandu, Madhesis began harbouring a sense of resentment that India had dropped their cause.

"The fact that Modi is beginning his visit from Janakpur in Province 2, a Madhesi-dominated province, is itself a signal and symbolic recognition of the importance India accords to them," said the person quoted above.

At a public reception, Modi is expected to speak about the historic ties between the two countries and societies. But while promising development cooperation, Modi will be careful not to push any formulation which is seen to undermine the establishment in Kathmandu.

"We are conscious that this is a federal system. And any assistance we announce has to be routed through the centre in Kathmandu," the person involved in planning the visit added. Modi will also meet the leaders of the two prominent Madhesi parties and convey a message that Madhesi forces should remain united.

Explaining the multi-pronged engagement, Ranjit Rae, former Indian ambassador to Nepal, said, "While it is important to engage with the government of the day and give impetus to bilateral relationship, India cannot be seen as partisan in Nepal. Governments come and go; we cannot take a short-term view. It must engage with all stakeholders, and have meaningful conversations with all."

Tagore rejected Nobel Prize to protest British atrocities, says Tripura CM Biplab Deb

Agartala: Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Wednesday said that famous Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore refused the Nobel Prize in protest against the British, inviting controversy through contentious statements for probably the fifth time since he assumed charge of the state two months ago.



In reality, Tagore had rejected the knighthood conferred on him by the British after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. The Nobel Prize for Literature — awarded to the poet in 1913 — remained with him until his death on August 7, 1941.

Speaking at the inauguration of the three-day-long Rajarshi festival at the Bhubaneswari temple in Udaipur, Deb said: "Besides being a world-famous poet, Rabindranath Tagore is also known for rejecting the Nobel Prize in protest against the British government."

Highlighting the works penned by Tagore, Deb said Tripura could reach great heights if his ideals and thoughts were followed. "Tagore enjoyed an intimate relationship with the state's royal family. His works bagged worldwide praise. So, I appeal to all that we follow his ideals and thoughts to make our state the greatest in the country," he added.

The opposition was quick to pounce on Deb's mistake, criticising him for not doing "basic homework" before delivering lectures.

"Our chief minister has crossed every limit of idiocy. We even don't feel like commenting on the issue," said Communist Party of India (Marxist) central committee leader Goutam Das.

The Congress, for its part, dubbed the chief minister's statement as "unfortunate". "It's a request from our side that he (Deb) do a deep study on subjects he would like to speak on before an audience. Confusing the knighthood with the Nobel Prize is not expected of a chief minister," said Tapas Dey, vice-president of the party's state unit.

Deb has been in the news for his views on various subjects — including the existence of the Internet during the Mahabharata war, whether 1994 Miss World Diana Hayden can be considered an "Indian beauty", the questionability of mechanical engineers joining the civil services, and raising cattle instead of approaching politicians for government jobs — over the last few weeks.

Karnataka elections: Congress asks EC to disqualify BJP candidate Sriramulu, cites sting video

New Delhi: The Congress on Friday petitioned the Election Commission demanding that BJP candidate B Sriramulu be disqualified from contesting the Karnataka assembly election over a 'sting' video allegedly showing him trying to bribe a former chief justice of India's relative.

A delegation of senior Congress leaders, including Kapil Sibal, Mukul Wasnik and Randeep Surjewala, met Election Commission officials and presented a memorandum, which also demanded that the chief electoral officer in Karnataka be directed to lift the ban on the airing of such videos by local television channels.

"We have requested the Election Commission to disqualify B Sriramulu from contesting the election," Sibal told reporters after the meeting.

On Thursday, the Congress released two videos, dating back to 2010, allegedly showing Sriramulu and mining baron G Janardhana Reddy negotiating a bribe to a rela-



tive of a former chief justice of India to influence a verdict in a mining case.

The videos also appeared on a local channel in Karnataka. Later, state electoral authorities directed channels not to air the videos.

The sting videos purportedly show conversations between Sriramulu, a former CJI's son-in-law and Reddy.

Sriramulu, a confidant of the tainted mining baron and his brothers, is contesting from two constituencies Molakalmuru and Badami in the assembly polls tomorrow.

In Badami, he is pitted against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

"We humble and respect-

and playing the tapes, the Congress delegation also urged the poll panel to take actions necessary in law for holding a free and fair election in Karnataka.

The memorandum said they were compelled to bring to the attention of the Election Commission, "significant and shocking evidence", released by the Kannada media on the evening of May 10, 2018, which clearly disqualifies Sriramulu as a candidate.

"It warrants immediate exercise of the EC's constitutional powers under Article 324 of the Constitution of India. The evidence gives rise to serious questions and allegations about certain heinous and deplorable criminal activities being indulged in by BJP's candidate B Sriramulu..." the memorandum said.

The Congress has been criticising BJP and the prime minister for their decision to give tickets to eight persons from the Reddy "camp", including Reddy brothers G Somashekara Reddy and G Karunakara Reddy.

SC collegium to meet today on Justice KM Joseph's elevation issue

New Delhi: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra has called a meeting of the Supreme court collegium on Friday afternoon to decide on the names of high court judges for elevation to the top court, including that of Uttarakhanda chief justice KM Joseph, whose nomination has been spurned by the government.

This move comes in the wake of a letter written by justice Jasti Chelameswar to the CJI to convene a meeting of the collegium, which comprises the five senior-most judges of the Supreme Court and decides on appointments to the higher judiciary. Chelameswar said the collegium should reiterate its recommendation to the government that Justice Joseph be elevated to the top court.

The collegium comprises the CJI, and Justices Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, MB Lokur and Kurien Joseph. On May 2, the collegium met to reconsider Joseph's elevation to the Supreme Court.



The names of three more judges — from the Calcutta high court, Andhra & Telangana high court and Rajasthan high court — too were discussed. But no decision was taken at the meeting.

It was decided at the May 2 meeting that the collegium would meet a week later and take a call on the four names.

Justice Joseph's elevation to the top court has been a bone of contention between the government and the col-

legium, which found it to be a meritorious and eminently suitable candidate for appointment to the Supreme court; it recommended his name as early as on January 10 to the government.

But the government, after sitting on the recommendation for over three months, returned the name of Justice Joseph, calling the proposed appointment 'not appropriate' and unfair and unjustified to other chief justices

and judges of high courts in line for elevation to the top court.

Despite the government's objections, the judges of the collegium are of the view that justice Joseph's appointment must be reiterated and sent back to the government.

If the collegium sends the name of justice Joseph again for elevation to the Supreme Court, the government will have no option but to accept the recommendation.

Punjab gov cites sanjeevani booti, Ram setu to claim tech advances in ancient India

Mohali: Punjab governor VP Singh Badnore on Friday became the latest political figure to expound on the technological advances that India purportedly enjoyed in the days of the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

"Advanced weapons were used in the Mahabharata. And we all know how Hanuman brought the 'sanjeevani booti' (a herbal drug) to cure Lakshmana," he said on the occasion of National Science Day at the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research in Mohali.

The senior BJP leader, who had assumed the governor's role in mid-2016, did not stop here. "The setu (bridge) built by Rama is also an example of technology," he pointed out.

Badnore then went on to say that the National Science Day is observed in the memory of Shakti, the nuclear test conducted at Pokhran on May 11, 1998. "After the Pokhran test, other nations started looking for India on the map. Such is the impact of technology," he added.

Recently, Tripura chief minister Biplab Deb had insisted on the existence of the world wide web during the Mahabharata war. "The Internet was invented in India ages ago. If the Internet wasn't there, how could Sanjay see the war happen live in Kurukshetra and then describe it to Dhritarashtra?" he asked.

Corruption, discrimination, exploitation erode social fabric across world, says Venkaiah Naidu

Panama: Vice President Venkaiah Naidu has said that corruption, discrimination, exploitation and violation of basic human rights continue to erode social fabric across the world, triggering unrest, anger, rebellion and extremism.

Addressing diplomats and students in Panama City, Naidu expressed serious concern over the growing disconnect in the present world and called for intensified collective global effort to address basic problems like poverty and inequality.

"Corruption, discrimination, exploitation, violence and violation of basic human rights continue to erode social fabric across the world," he said.

"These evils and perceptions of exploitation and failure of established governance systems lead to unrest, anger, rebellion and extremism. The sooner we effectively address these issues, the better will be our collective," Naidu was quoted as saying by an official release.

He asserted that India is seeking a new world order and action based on the country's ancient wisdom and values that advocated harmonious existence and common good.

Ambassadors of about 40 countries to Panama later interacted with Naidu



and appreciated the major initiatives and their implementation by the central government and the fast growing Indian economy.

Later in the day, Naidu arrived in the Peruvian capital of Lima after visiting Guatemala and Panama for two days each.

On Wednesday, Naidu met Panama-

nian President Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez and discussed bilateral cooperation in agriculture, trade, health, culture and education.

Naidu also met Panamanian leaders on Wednesday and reaffirmed India's support for Panama's candidature for the UN Security Council's non-permanent seat.

TDP workers block Amit Shah's convoy, demand special status for Andhra

Hyderabad: Telugu Desam Party (TDP) workers demanding special status for Andhra Pradesh blocked Bharatiya Janata Party president Amit Shah's way, broke the windshield of a car in his convoy, and clashed with BJP workers near Tirumala in Chittoor district on Friday.

Shah, who finished campaigning for the Karnataka elections Thursday, came to Tirumala early Friday pray to Lord Venkateshwara. As he was coming out of the temple, devotees in a queue shouted slogans against the BJP and demanded special category status for Andhra Pradesh.

As Shah was returning to Tirupati down the Tirumala hills, TDP workers wearing black badges and holding party flags blocked his convoy at the Alipiri check-post. The workers squatted on the road and shouted slogans saying "Amit Shah Go Back," "We want justice" and "Give us special category status".

BJP workers following Shah's convoy resisted the TDP workers, resulting in clashes. A TDP worker threw stones at Shah's convoy and broke the windshield of one of the vehicles.

Security personnel accompanying the convoy and police officials at the check-post dispersed the TDP workers and detained some of as Shah's convoy drove away.

TDP chief and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu broke away from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government this year after failing to get more central funds.

Urinary, respiratory tract infections may double stroke risk: Study

Those suffering from urinary or respiratory tract infections may face nearly double the risk of heart attacks and strokes than obesity, researchers have warned.

The study -- led by a researcher of Indian origin -- found that if the frequency of these common infections causing hospitalisation continues for a longer period it may even lead to death.

Patients diagnosed with any one of these common infections were three times more likely to die than those without prior infection after developing heart disease, and



almost twice as likely to die if they had a stroke. Our figures suggest that those who are admitted to hospital with a respiratory or urinary tract infection are 40 per cent more likely to suffer a subsequent

heart attack, and 2.5 times more likely to have a stroke, than patients who have had no such infection -- and are considerably less likely to survive from these conditions," Rahul Potluri, researcher at Britain's Aston University, said in a statement. The effects of the common infections were of similar magnitude among the people suffering from diabetes, hypertension, and cholesterol, researchers said.

"It is notable that infection appears to confer as much, if not more, of a risk for future heart disease and stroke as very well established

risk factors such as high blood pressure and diabetes," Potluri added. Researchers conducted the study over 34,027 patients who had been admitted with a urinary or respiratory tract infection with an age and sex-matched control group without infection.

Factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, obesity and tobacco use, as well as medical conditions including excess cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and kidney disease, heart failure and atrial fibrillation were also taken into account.

Apple's 'Families' to help curb kids' screen addiction

To help parents control their children's screen addiction touted as a "growing public health crisis", Apple has introduced a new page called "Families" on its website.

The page has features like "Ask To Buy" tool that lets parents approve or decline app purchases from their device. "Find My Friends" feature lets parents keep track of their kids' locations, get alerts when they leave or arrive somewhere, and see distances and travel times to where they are. Another app management feature lets users automatically block in-app purchases. It has the option to limit adult content on kids' devices and restricts browsing to only pre-approved websites. "We've also made it easy for parents to set privacy controls on their kids' devices. We're continually designing new features to help make sure kids use them in the ways you want," Apple said on the new page. Two key Apple shareholders had requested the Cupertino-based iPhone maker to take urgent steps to safeguard young users from the ill-effects of iPhone addiction. In a letter, Jana Partners and the California State Teachers' Retirement System told Apple to make its products safer for the younger users.

NEW TEST MAY PREVENT ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCES FROM SPREADING

Scientists have developed a new "rapid test" that produces a cheaper and faster diagnosis on infectious diseases in just three hours thus preventing antibiotic resistances from spreading. Owing to small number of pathogens in a patient's sample, standard practices require up to 72 hours to allow for a reliable result for the infectious diagnostics.

The new method provides much faster diagnosis with the help of tiny electrodes that are fixed on the surface of a stamp-sized chip. Electric fields secure bacteria in a very small area," said Ute Neugebauer from the Friedrich Schiller University Jena in Germany.

The scientists then apply various antibiotics in different concentrations on the trapped bacteria and examine them with Raman spectroscopy.

"This means that we irradiate the pathogens with laser light and evalu-



ate the scattered light spectrum", Neugebauer said.

"We combine light-based analytical methods with microfluidic sample processing. With our Lab-on-a-Chip system, thus a miniaturised lab, we are able to clearly identify bacterial strains and their resistances, in less than three hours," he explained.

The combination of fast, light-based diagnostics and a high automation level reduces the time from sampling to result from 72 to three and a half hours.

The doctors can then derive wheth-

er the strain is resistant or sensible. At the same time they can also derive information on the needed concentration of the antibiotic to constrain bacterial growth.

"This is an important diagnostic parameter that influences the success of a treatment decidedly...such a fast procedure could revolutionise diagnostics of infectious diseases", the researchers said, in a paper published in the journal Analytical Chemistry.

Another, more far reaching, aim is the further development into a cartridge-based rapid test system, which will enable general practitioners to identify resistances in a fast and easy way for the first time.

Thereby, physicians would hold a powerful tool from which they could benefit in personalised therapy -- this means the administration of a fitting drug, the researchers said.

World Sleep Day 2018: Five simple tips to sleep better at night

World Sleep Day, is an annual event held on the Friday before the March Equinox each year.

Organised by the World Sleep Day Committee of World Sleep Society, it aims to lessen the burden of sleep problems on society through better prevention and management.

This year, World Sleep Day will be held on March 16, 2018, with the theme 'Join the Sleep World, Preserve Your Rhythms to Enjoy Life'. Sleep is very important for a person's physical health and emotional well-being. Lack of sleep can lead to various illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, obesity as well as depression.

Here are a few simple tips to sleep better at night:

Healthy lifestyle

One should practice a healthy lifestyle such as eating the right foods, exercising and knowing how to manage stress to help prevent sleep problems and disorders.

Things to avoid

Reduce caffeine, nicotine and al-



cohol intake before bedtime as these can disrupt sleep.

Regular bedtime

Maintaining a consistent bedtime routine, like going to bed and waking up at the same time daily, will help you improve your sleep quality.

Avoid afternoon naps

One should avoid afternoon naps as it can cause you to remain awake during the night. If napping is neces-

sary, then restrict your nap to 15 to 20 minutes.

Comfy bed

Apart from keeping your bedroom clean and tidy, make sure that your bed is cozy and spacious enough to let you stretch and turn comfortably. Research has claimed that a good mattress and pillows can contribute to better sleep. The first World Sleep Day was held on March 14, 2008.

Having trouble Sleeping? This could be the reason

There are a lot of reasons why you might be experiencing lack of sleep, but a new survey has found that your salary hike may also have something to do with it.

The survey indicates that there is a direct correlation between increasing salary and ease of falling asleep. The India Sleep and Wellness survey was commissioned by Sunday Mattresses and conducted among 345 working professionals above the age of 25, read a statement.

New Delhi: There are a lot of reasons why you might be experiencing lack of sleep, but a new survey has found that your salary hike may also have something to do with it. The survey indicates that there is a direct correlation between increasing salary and ease of falling asleep. The India Sleep and Wellness survey was commissioned by Sunday Mattresses and conducted among 345 working professionals above the age of 25, read a statement.

It was released ahead of the World Sleep Day which falls on Friday, March 16.

The survey was conducted across Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru which shows that there is also a direct correlation between productivity and sleep.

Over two-thirds of the sound sleepers believe they are 100 per cent productive at work. Whereas more than half of those who reported getting insufficient sleep, believed they were only 75 per cent (or less) productive.

Plastic particles contaminating leading bottled water brands: Report

Do you feel safe drinking packaged bottled water? Think again. According to a major study conducted across nine countries, the world's leading brands of bottled water may contain plastic particles, that are likely seeping in during the packaging process. "Widespread contamination" with plastic was found in the study, led by microplastic researcher Sherri Mason of the State University of New York at Fredonia, according to a summary released by Orb Media, a US-based non-profit media collective. 250 bottles of water were tested by researchers in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Thailand, and the United States. 93 percent of the samples, which included top brands like Aqua, Aquafina, Dasani, Evian, Nestle Pure Life and San Pellegrino, were found to be contaminated with plastic.

The plastic debris included polypropylene, nylon, and polyethylene terephthalate (PET), which is used to make bottle caps. "In this study, 65 percent of the particles we found were actually fragments and not fibres," Mason told agencies. "I think it is coming through the process of bottling the water. I think that most of the plastic that we are seeing is coming from the bottle itself, it is coming from the cap, it is coming from the industrial process of bottling the water." Particle concentration ranged from "zero to more than 10,000 likely plastic particles in a single bottle", said the report. On average, plastic particles in the 100 micron (0.10mm) size range -- considered "microplastics" -- were found at an average rate of 10.4 plastic particles per litre.

Even smaller particles were more common -- averaging about 325 per litre. Other brands that were found to contain plastic contaminated included Bisleri, Epura, Gerolsteiner, Minalba and Wahaha.

Experts cautioned that the extent of the risk to human health posed by such contamination remains unclear. "There are connections to increases in certain kinds of cancer to lower sperm count to increases in conditions like ADHD and autism," said Mason. "We know that they are connected to these synthetic chemicals in the environment and we know that plastics are providing kind of a means to get those chemicals into our bodies." Time to ditch plastic? research by Orb Media has found plastic particles in tap water, too, but on a smaller scale.

"Tap water, by and large, is much safer than bottled water," said Mason. The three-month study used a technique developed by the University of East Anglia's School of Chemistry to "see" microplastic particles by staining them using fluorescent Nile Red dye, which makes plastic fluorescent when irradiated with blue light.

"We have been involved with independently reviewing the findings and methodology to ensure the study is robust and credible," said lead researcher Andrew Mayes, from UEA's School of Chemistry.

"The results stack up."

Jacqueline Savitz, chief policy officer for North America at Oceana, a marine advocacy group that was not involved in the research, said the study provides more evidence that society must abandon the ubiquitous use of plastic water bottles. "We know plastics are building-up in marine animals, and this means we too are being exposed, some of us, every day," she said. "It's more urgent now than ever before to make plastic water bottles a thing of the past."

WHO member-countries commit to end TB by 2030

Member-countries of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region, including India, on Wednesday committed to intensifying efforts to eradicate tuberculosis by 2030. "The member-countries unanimously agreed to actualise and intensify essential actions agreed to in the Delhi Call to Action, adopted in March last year, to accelerate efforts to end TB in the region," a statement adopted at the two-day Delhi End TB Summit that concluded here said. The summit sets the stage for the September 2018 United Nations high-level meeting on TB, wherein the issue will be discussed at the Heads of State level.

The UN meeting is likely to endorse a set of goals to put the world on course to ending TB. The WHO South-East Asia Region, which comprises 11 countries including North Korea and India, is host to one fourth of the global population but a disproportionate 46 per cent of the global TB burden. "Progress against TB in this region will have a major impact on the global progress.

"Too much is at stake, we cannot afford to fail," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization.

As per the statement, the member-countries would collectively reach out to 2 million missing TB cases and 150,000 multidrug-resistance cases by 2020 and implement a response adequate to end TB. On Tuesday, the Health Ministry and the WHO signed an agreement for enhanced cooperation in the health sector. WHO's Tedros met Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda and complimented the government's bold initiatives to expand universal health coverage through Ayushman Bharat.

An apex government body for biomedical research, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) functioning under the Health Ministry was awarded the International Kochon Prize 2017 for contribution to the National Programme in Tuberculosis research on Tuesday. ICMR through its TB consortium has accelerated efforts for research and development of TB in the country.

The TB consortium is working with public and private institutes to guide the country's research towards development of point-of-care diagnostics, shorter treatment regimens, and effective vaccine for tuberculosis.

The Kochon Prize, endowed by the Kochon Foundation, a non-profit foundation registered in the Republic of Korea, consists of \$65,000 award. The summit, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, was attended by the Health Ministers number of countries, including Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Kazakhstan and Peru.

Physically-fit women 90% less likely to develop dementia, says study

A new study shows that physically-fit middle-aged women are 90 percent less likely to develop dementia as compared to those who were moderately fit.

When the highly fit women did develop dementia, they developed the disease an average of 11 years later than those women who were moderately fit. Dr Helena Horder from the University of Gothenburg in Sweden said, "These findings are exciting because it's possible that improving people's cardiovascular fitness in middle age could delay or even prevent them from developing dementia." For the study,

Around 191 women with an average age of 50 took a bicycle exercise test until they were exhausted to measure their peak cardiovascular capacity.

They were tested for dementia six times.

The results showed five percent of the highly fit women developed dementia, compared to 25 percent of moderately fit women and 32 percent of the women with low fitness. The highly fit women were 88 percent less



likely to develop dementia than the moderately fit women. Among the women who had to stop the exercise test due to problems, 45 percent developed dementia decades later.

Horder said, "This indicates that negative cardiovascular processes may be happening in midlife that could increase the risk of dementia much later in life."

She added, "More research is needed to see if improved fitness could have a positive effect on the risk of dementia and also to look at when during a lifetime a high fitness level is most important."

The study was published in the journal Neurology.

Do you have a strong hand grip? It could be good for your heart

The strength of your hand grip could determine your heart health, a study has found. According to researchers, the stronger your hand grip, the lesser the chances of developing cardiovascular diseases and better the heart functioning.

Previous studies have also linked hand grip strength to cardiovascular risk calculation, mortality and diabetes risk. The study found that despite having a lower heart mass, people with stronger hand grips were often pumping more blood per heart beat.

This functioning further indicated that the heart is suffering less from a condition called remodelling -- reshaping of the heart muscle -- occurring in response to stressors such as high blood pressure or a heart attack.

Less remodelling is known to reduce the risk for cardiovascular events.

"Our study of over 4,600 people shows that better hand grip strength is associated with having a healthier heart structure and function," said Steffen Petersen, Professor at the Queen Mary University in Britain.

"Hand grip strength is an inexpensive, reproducible and easy to implement measure, and could become an important method for identifying those at a high risk of heart dis-



ease and preventing major life-changing events, such as heart attacks," the researcher suggested.

To reach this conclusion, the researchers analysed cardiovascular magnetic resonance images and data on hand grip strength from 5,065 participants.

They then constructed a statistical model that accounted for potential factors that could impact the data such as baseline demographics, cardiac risk factors, drivers of muscle mass, and physical activity level.

The study was published in the journal PLOS ONE.

Europe new video streaming battlefield as HBO takes on Netflix, Amazon

HBO has won international acclaim for "Game of Thrones." Fewer people have heard of "Mammon."

Yet the Czech drama about a journalist who uncovers evidence of fraud, implicating his brother, often gets more viewers in the Czech Republic than the famous, bloody adaptation of George R. R. Martin's novels. It's a common phenomenon that helps explain why HBO is stepping up production of original TV series in Europe and elsewhere outside the US.

For the first time, Time Warner Inc.'s premium channel is developing country-specific shows from Spain and Scandinavia, a sign of how the global competition for cord-cutters is pushing entertainment giants to produce more foreign-language programming.

"Our local productions are in some cases No. 1 or No. 2, next to 'Game of Thrones' or 'Westworld,'" Bernadette Aulestia, HBO's head of global distribution, said in an interview, referring to HBO's other big series, a dystopian sci-fi western. "Those shows are huge drivers of the service."

But HBO is not alone—and that's also driving the expansion effort. Europe has become the new battlefield in the global streaming wars. Amazon.com Inc. recently hired its first head of original television for Europe and is developing local shows in France and Spain. Last month, Netflix Inc. unveiled seven new original series on the continent, including product from the Netherlands, France, Italy, Spain and Germany, touting some as having global appeal. A

recently introduced German sci-fi thriller, "Dark," is watched nine times as much outside Germany as it is within, Netflix said.

HBO is available in 17 European countries, in many cases via traditional cable and satellite TV services. But in Spain and the Nordic countries, it's available only online, making it easier to cancel if it doesn't offer enough compelling shows.

HBO's global approach has evolved from the days when it simply exported American programs such as "The Sopranos." Like their counterparts at Netflix and Amazon, HBO executives realized they needed to supplement US hits with more stories of local culture in local languages and with famous local actors to earn the loyalty of international subscribers.

This year, HBO is creating 250 hours of original programming for its foreign subscribers, including shows, movies and documentaries—a 40 percent increase over last year. The channel will make 14 original scripted series outside the US, up from 10 two years ago.

The Spanish drama "Patria" is one of them. It's based on a best-selling novel about two families during the Basque conflict—still a fraught topic in some quarters. It's being developed by one of Spain's most famous TV showrunners, Aitor Gabilondo, creator of "The Prince," a cop show that was the country's biggest primetime series in 2016, according to Variety. Another HBO project is the Swedish comedy "Gosta," which tells the story of a child psychologist in



Stockholm who moves to a rural town, rents a cottage in the woods and attempts to be the nicest person in the world.

Both shows are expected to be released next year on their country's streaming services—HBO Spain and HBO Nordic. Each of the online channels has more than 1 million subscribers and offers a mix of popular American HBO shows and acquired hits from other programmers.

Some existing HBO shows in Europe include the Polish drama "Wataha," which translates to "the pack" in English but is also known as "The Border." It's a show about a guard unit that patrols the Polish border with Ukraine. Meanwhile, in Mexico, HBO has backed "Sr. Avila," a drama which tells the tale of a hit man who struggles with personal demons. Both programs have at times drawn larger audiences in their home countries than have HBO's flagship American

series.

HBO said introducing homegrown programs often leads to a surge in subscribers. From 2001 to 2004, for instance, the channel saw 16 percent subscription growth in Latin America. In 2004, HBO unveiled its first international scripted series, the Argentine detective show "Epitafios." Over the next four years, subscriptions in Latin America grew by a whopping 53 percent.

To be fair, HBO's efforts abroad aren't totally new. It already gets about one-fourth of its \$6 billion in annual revenue from outside the US. The channel, which may end up being owned by AT&T Inc. depending on the outcome of a US antitrust fight, is available in 67 countries, including Asia, and has 142 million subscribers worldwide, including its sister channel, Cinemax, and streaming services. By comparison, Netflix has about 125 million subscribers while

Amazon Prime has more than 100 million.

HBO executives said they believe global expansion is a two-way street, predicting that their foreign-language shows could add to its roughly 40 million US subscribers. For instance, "Wasteland," an HBO series from the Czech Republic about a town whose buildings are razed by a coal company, averages about 100,000 American viewers. While that's a far cry from the season finale of "Game of Thrones," which drew 16.5 million viewers, HBO said its foreign shows are aimed at niche audiences in the US.

For now, only a few European HBO shows are available to its American viewers. But next year, the channel plans to take the unprecedented step of making its entire international catalog—about 40 series total—part of its US offerings.

"What people are most interested in is the quality of the show," Aulestia said. "The barrier of language or where it was produced has gone away."

HBO's creative push into Europe is being led by Antony Root, 64, a former Sony Pictures executive. Based in London, Root joined seven years ago with the goal of delivering what he calls "the HBO promise:" programming that is "distinctive, original, bold and having a strong point of view." Equally important, he said, are shows with a local flavor.

Root has local production heads in European countries who have deep ties with local writers, directors and producers. In the Nordic region, that person is

Hanne Palmquist, who joined HBO two years ago from the Danish Film Institute. HBO's point person in Spain is Miguel Salvat, a former director of content at Canal Plus, the Spanish satellite-TV company.

"We engage with local audiences in a more intimate and profound way when we make shows that derive from the local culture, local language groups—and when they see local actors they're familiar with," Root said in an interview.

The channel's global endeavor, however, is not without hurdles. While camera crews or directors can usually be found, in some parts of Europe it's hard to find local writers. HBO executives have sought to overcome this by organizing television writing classes in European film schools, sponsoring film festivals and recruiting writers to work on local adaptations of existing shows. For example, "In Treatment," an Israeli show about a therapist that HBO adapted for the US audience, has been remade in four European countries.

"It's a good way to get people to understand what our values are," Root said.

HBO also hosts scriptwriting contests across Europe to find new talent. One recent competition in Croatia generated about 400 submissions. The winner, Marjan Alčevski, was awarded a six-episode HBO series based on his idea about four strangers who are bound together after witnessing a violent act. That show, "Success," is being made for TV by Oscar-winning Bosnian filmmaker Danis Tanović. It went into production in March.

2 days after announcing Flipkart-Walmart deal, SoftBank undecided on selling stake

Japan's SoftBank Group Corp has not yet decided to sell its 20-22% stake in Flipkart to US retailer Walmart Inc., sources with direct knowledge of the development said.

SoftBank's Masayoshi Son will take a call in the next 7-10 days, on whether the group will exit India's biggest online retailer or say invested for some more time, they said.

Walmart had on Wednesday announced that it will pay about \$16 billion to buy 77% stake in Flipkart.

A statement issued by Walmart that day identified Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal, Tencent Holdings Ltd, Tiger Global Management LLC and Microsoft Corp as the investors who would hold the remaining 23%, implying SoftBank had agreed to sell its 20-22% stake.

Sources, however, said SoftBank is yet to take a call on exiting Flipkart. The factors that hold key to the decision include the tax SoftBank has to pay on profits it would earn from such share sale.

SoftBank had invested \$2.5 billion in Flipkart and exiting the company would



fetch it up to \$4.5 billion. The \$2 billion profit would be taxed as per Indian law.

Since the profit is made from shares that were held for more than two years, it would attract a long-term capital gains tax of 20% plus surcharge and education cess, effectively wiping away a fourth of the profit.

Other deciding factors would be Son's relationship with Walmart and that SoftBank likes to be a long-term investor, sources said, adding the Japanese conglomerate is very bullish on India and sees immense opportunities for growth of investment.

When contacted, a SoftBank spokesperson declined to comment.

Sources said Walmart had indeed courted SoftBank for buying its shares but the Japanese group has not yet taken a final call on the issue.

On May 9, hours before Walmart was scheduled to announce the Flipkart acquisition, SoftBank chief executive Masayoshi Son told an investor call on his company's earnings that Walmart had agreed to buy a controlling stake in the Indian e-commerce company.

"Last night, (they) reached a final agreement and it was

decided that Flipkart will be sold to America's Walmart," Son had stated in Tokyo, according to an AFP report.

He had gone on to state that the \$2.5 billion that the Japanese company through its Vision Fund had invested in Flipkart was worth about \$4 billion in the deal. He had not clearly stated if SoftBank had agreed to sell the stake at such valuations.

In case SoftBank decides to not sell its stake, Walmart would be left with about 55% holding in Flipkart.

On Wednesday, all significant shareholders in Flipkart like Naspers, venture fund Accel Partners and eBay had confirmed they were selling their shares to Walmart.

South African internet and entertainment firm Naspers, which had invested \$616 million in Flipkart in August 2012, sold its entire 11.18% stake in the company to Walmart for \$2.2 billion. eBay said it is selling its stake in Flipkart for about \$1.1 billion.

Reliance said to plan four new subsidiaries

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is planning to create four new units for its various businesses, two people in the know said.

The subsidiaries could be in refining and marketing; exploration and production (E&P); petrochemicals; textiles; hydrocarbons and real estate.

"The new subsidiaries would have an authorized share-capital of Rs1,000 crore each," one of the two people said, requesting anonymity. The company plans to apply to the corporate affairs ministry shortly to obtain requisite approvals required for incorporating the companies.

For the six segments RIL operates in—refining and marketing; petrochemicals; oil and gas exploration; retail; telecom/digital services and media and entertainment—the firm has 99 subsidiaries, joint ventures and associate firms, according to its 2016-17 annual report.

"The company is engaged in multiple businesses which



inter alia include E&P, refining, petchem, retail, telecom and media. Reliance has a wide corporate holding structure (having multiple subsidiaries/associates) due to reasons like regulatory requirements, joint ventures, strategic investments and past acquisitions," a RIL spokesperson said in an emailed response. "The company continuously endeavors to have efficient holding structure, so that it can maximize shareholder value on sustainable basis."

"RIL has been, for any new business segment or a sub-segment, creating a new entity. This could be done for

them after few years. While in some cases, it must be doing this to list some of these entities at a later date, in a few it is done to enable better cash management and operational efficiency," said another analyst tracking RIL.

Among the new subsidiaries to be created, RIL may be forming a new one to bring under one umbrella, all of its real estate ventures. RIL had this February, bought a 65% stake in a real estate project in Bandra-Kurla Complex in central Mumbai for Rs1,105 crore, taking its total investment in property to \$2.6 billion. RIL has also approved an increased investment limit for in Reliance Corporate IT Park Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary from Rs3,800 crore to Rs6,000 crore for the next financial year.

According to RIL, it has a policy for determining a material subsidiary for the company when its income or net-worth exceeds 20% of the consolidated income or net-worth respectively, of the company.

Airtel, Idea shares fall as Jio unveils new Rs 199 postpaid plan

Shares of Indian telecom services providers fell sharply on Friday after Reliance Jio Info-comm Ltd unveiled a new post-paid plan as it takes on bigger rivals such as Bharti Airtel Ltd and Idea Cellular Ltd.



Jio, the telecom arm of Reliance Industries Ltd, introduced an unlimited domestic post-paid plan for Rs 199 and international calling at Rs 0.50 per minute on Thursday.

Shares of Idea fell as much as 8.1% to their lowest since February 2011, while Airtel declined about 5.8%.

Reliance Jio's entry into the telecoms sector has set off a brutal price war among operators as they drastically cut prices to compete with Jio's bottomed-out plans.

For the top three big telecom operators in India, post-paid users make up only 7% of the total subscribers, but contribute more than 20% to their revenues, said Jefferies.

Airtel and Idea are expected to launch new plans in response to Jio's offer and thus see a further decline in their average revenue per user, Jefferies added.

Freeze on fuel prices coincidental, not linked to Karnataka elections, says IOC chief

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) chairman Sanjiv Singh on Thursday said the decision of oil PSUs not to hike petrol and diesel prices since April 24 was aimed at stabilising them and it 'incidentally' coincided with the Karnataka elections.

He said before prices were stabilised, there were daily spikes varying from 25 paise to 35 paise, resulting in change in fuel prices by Rs 2 or Rs 3 every 15 days.

"We strongly believe this was unrealistic. So, we thought of stabilising that, tapering it down to a certain extent. Now incidentally it has coincided with some of the state elections. It was not the intention (of oil marketing companies)," he told reporters here.

Singh, who was here to review the financial performance of group company Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd, said today's oil prices in international markets were not supported by fundamentals. There were other factors also.

Noting that the oil firms had freedom to vary the prices in line with international prices, he said, "now, some more development has taken place in the international market recently. Lets see



how prices stabilise".

Responding to a question on the US decision to withdraw from Iran nuclear deal and its impact, he said India was buying about 15 per cent Iranian crude.

"So, lets see. I am sure we will be able to find a solution which will be good for the company and for the country", he added.

He also noted that the US had given some window. Other countries are still discussing... I am sure we will find a solution", he said.

"India buys about 15% Iranian crude. So, lets see. I am sure we will be able to find a solution which will be good for

the company and for the country", he said.

There have been apprehensions that the US decision may adversely impact India's oil imports from the Persian Gulf nation as well as Chabahar port project.

Iran is the third largest supplier of crude oil to India after Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

On bringing petroleum products under the Goods and Service Tax, Singh it would be welcome measure as there would be a uniform pricing policy.

Oil companies were unable to take input tax credit while they pay GST for input components for the raw material, he said.

"This impact we are not passing on to the consumer. We support very strongly that these products should be brought under GST so that there is uniformity and there is lot of simplicity between all those who are not only buying but also who are trading these products", he said.

Legal challenges, delays force writedowns on Adani's Carmichael Coal

Adani Enterprises Ltd. has taken a Rs 896.4 million (\$13.3 million) writedown on its Carmichael coal mine in Australia's Queensland state due to delays and legal challenges. The impairment charge was booked by its Australian unit Adani Mining Pty in the quarter ended March 31, Adani Enterprises said in a stock exchange filing Thursday in Mumbai.

Even though the writedown is small compared to the overall size of the \$16.5 billion (\$12.4 billion) project, it's the latest sign of strain to hit the massive thermal coal development.

The billionaire Gautam Adani-backed company has pushed back by one year its original 2020 target to start the Carmichael mine after failing to obtain up to \$3 billion of funds by a March deadline. Major financiers in Australia and China have excluded themselves from funding the development because they oppose polluting fossil-fuel projects.

The writedowns stem from Adani being forced to duplicate studies and redesign elements of the Carmichael project due to delays in regulatory approvals and ongoing legal challenges, an Australian spokesman said in an email Friday. Additional labour costs have also contributed to the charge, he said.

Virat Kohli still finds constant public scrutiny on him 'uncomfortable'

New Delhi: From the time he was dating actress Anushka Sharma to his wedding in Italy and even now -- months after the two tied the knot -- prying paparazzi and public scrutiny of Virat Kohli's life has not stopped. The Indian cricket team captain and the icon of the country's youth says it can get uncomfortable, but he is learning to deal with it.

Virat and Anushka, fondly called "Virushka" by their fans, dated for four years before tying the knot in an intimate affair in Tuscany, Italy, last December.

With celebrity status comes the baggage of being under the scanner all the time. Does he find it easy?

"The constant public scrutiny about my personal life can become a bit uncomfortable at times. However, I have learnt how to handle it. Celebrities are also normal human beings -- just like any other person, and I feel people should let them have their space," Kohli told IANS in an interview.

The 29-year-old Indian cricket team captain, who endorses multiple brands, says he keeps a good balance between his personal and profes-



sional lives despite his chock-a-block schedules.

"I keep a good balance between my personal and professional life. When I am with family, I try to completely switch off from cricket. I try to catch up with friends, watch a movie or go out for a drive. I like spending time with my dog," he said.

However, he said when he is on a tour for cricket, he puts his "mind and heart into the next game".

"It includes regular training for fitness and skills," added the Delhi

boy, who represented the city's cricket team at several age-group levels before making his India team debut in 2006.

On his journey from domestic cricket to becoming India captain, Kohli told IANS: "It has been an incredible journey. I come from a humble background, and my journey towards where I am today started from a colony in West Delhi.

"The road to success was not easy and I have learnt to face challenges head on. I have come through the

ranks of junior cricket, making my way to Ranji trophy and then the Indian team."

The Padma Shri awardee cherishes being a part of the winning team during the World Cup in 2011, describing it as an "amazing experience".

Kohli, who made his ODI debut for India against Sri Lanka at the age of 19, asserted that it was always his dream to represent India.

"From the very first day, my goal has been to play for my country, and this brings me immense pride. Standing on the cricket pitch, and seeing your countrymen cheer for you, is a happy feeling, and I enjoy every moment of it," said the India team skipper, who also won the Arjuna Award in 2013.

With biopics on cricketers like MS Dhoni, Sachin Tendulkar and Kapil Dev gaining popularity in Bollywood, does he foresee a movie on his life?

"It is not something I have thought about a lot. And if there's one ever made, I feel it will be more of a real account of my life than a biopic," said the Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper.

How Delhi Daredevils' Rishabh Pant exposed chink in Sunrisers Hyderabad's armour

New Delhi: On Wednesday evening, the eve of their tie against Delhi Daredevils (DD), Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) coach Tom Moody had pointed out how his side's bowlers have been helped by the wicket in Hyderabad, which is tough for batsmen, and how the Ferozeshah Kotla game could be a bit different.

He was proved right as a young Rishabh Pant tore into Sunrisers Hyderabad attack that had up until now been miserly. Thanks to Pant, Delhi Daredevils took 135 in the last 10 overs to reach 187 which though eventually didn't prove enough.

Right after the match, pace bowler Sandeep Sharma, one bowler who was spared, said that while their bowling has been good, they still need to think about situations like these.

"Our plan was to bowl wide outside the off-stump because he generally hits well straight down the ground. However, he came up with strokes like the reverse scoop to negate that. Going forward, we need to have plans for players like him. How to get a player like him off-strike or how to minimise the damage that he does. So we'll discuss that in the re-

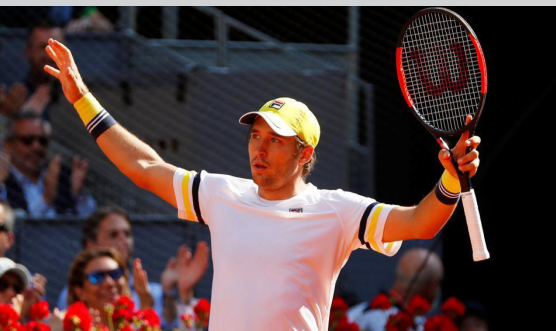


maining matches," said Sandeep.

It was one of the rare occasions that Sunrisers had conceded so many runs but as Moody had pointed out earlier, they had been bowling on helpful surfaces. Delhi Daredevils bowling coach James Hopes too added that the Hyderabad ground is bigger in size meaning there are far lesser boundaries there than in Delhi, thereby helping the bowlers.

Sunrisers, as Sandeep pointed out, will need to take wickets with the new ball upfront when confronted with wickets like these. "There hasn't been help in the wicket especially the movement and swing. So it is tough. But we have to improve and take wickets with new ball."

DUSAN LAJOVIC DEFEATS JUAN MARTIN DEL POTRO IN MADRID OPEN



Madrid: World number six Juan Martin del Potro crashed out of the Madrid Open on Thursday, after Serbia's Dusan Lajovic came back from a set down to beat the Argentine 3-6, 6-4, 7-6(6) in the third round.

Del Potro looked in complete control as he converted two break-point opportunities to take the opening set but Lajovic, ranked 95 in the world, dug deep to stay in the contest. A break midway through the second set was enough for Lajovic to force a decider before he wrapped up his first career victory over a top-10 opponent in the tiebreak.

In the quarter-finals, Lajovic will meet South Africa's Kevin Anderson who overcame German Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-3, 7-6(7).

Britain's Kyle Edmund followed up his surprise win over Novak Djokovic by defeating world number 10 David Goffin to reach the last eight of an ATP Masters 1000 event for the first time in his career.

READ | Simona Halep loses to Karolina Pliskova in Madrid Open tennis quarter-finals

The 23-year-old broke his Belgian opponent's serve twice in the opening set and once in the second, to seal a 6-3 6-3 victory in an hour and 12 minutes.

"I managed my game very well," the Briton said. "My game is better the better I manage it and pick the moments not to be aggressive.

"If I don't pull the trigger too often, then I play well. It's about being controlled and relaxed and not worrying too much. Goffin is a top player so I'm very pleased.

"My new trick is to try and continue that momentum and not just have a good win and not back it up."

Edmund will next face Canadian youngster Denis Shapovalov, who achieved a 6-4, 6-4 win over compatriot Milos Raonic.

Indian cricket team can win day-night Test: Sourav Ganguly

Kolkata: The BCCI may have ruled out playing a day-night Test when the Indian team tours Australia later this year, but former captain Sourav Ganguly on Thursday termed the pink-ball contest as the future of cricket which the country will have to embrace some day.

"Day/Night Test is the way forward. Every country has to play day-night Test. India has reservations but that's a long term future for Test cricket," Ganguly said.

India is one of the only two current Test-playing nations to have avoided playing pink-ball cricket at the International level, with Bangladesh being the other.

But Ganguly said the Indian team has the potential to win a day/night Test.

"They (Indian side) are a good side, they will win D/N Test matches also. It's just a different ball, I don't think there's any other difference. And they have such class players, they can win," he said at an awareness campaign with health drink 'Complan'.

Ganguly also backed Indian captain Virat Kohli's decision to skip the historic Test against Afghanistan in Bengaluru next month.

"I think since the side is Afghanistan, he has chosen to play county. If it would have been any other team, he would have not gone. It just shows



how important the England tour is for him. I have always maintained, a captain's recognition is how well he and his team does overseas," said Ganguly.

"As a captain, he wants to

win (in England) so that is the reason (he has gone to play county)."

Ganguly said India are good enough to beat Afghanistan minus Kohli.

"India will still beat Af-

ghanistan without Virat. And hopefully they can do well in England also."

Ajinkya Rahane has been given the responsibility to lead the Test side against Afghanistan but he does not find a place in ODI and T20 squads for the tour of England.

"I am surprised Rahane is not in the team. He should have been in the team. He has been moved around too much, he is a quality player," Ganguly said.

He also spoke about IPL and said Kolkata Knight Riders' play-off hopes are all but over after their crushing 102-run defeat to Mumbai Indians last night. "I don't think they will make it (to play-offs) this

time. Hopefully next season. KKR, Mumbai have three matches to go. Ultimately, they will have to fight for the fourth place. Batting has been a bit of a problem," the former India captain said.

Ishan Kishan's 21-ball 62 has been the talk of the town in MI's big win against KKR and Ganguly said the wicket-keeper batsman has a long way to go.

"You just don't get 21-ball 62 overnight against a good bowling attack. He is talented but one performance in T20 does not make you a fantastic player. Undoubtedly, he is talented but I hope he becomes consistent as he goes ahead."

Telangana Cricket Association request associate member status from BCCI

The Telangana Cricket Association (TCA) has applied for an associate member status with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) after registering complaints of inadequate representation and opportunities for the players outside of Hyderabad city.

"TCA is delighted with directions from the Mumbai High Court to the COA (Committee of Administrators) of BCCI directing them to consider the applications of TCA and give due opportunity of hearing the cause and take a reasoned decision within six weeks," the TCA said

in a media release distributed at their press conference held here on Thursday.

Ever since Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated in 2014 to form Telangana - India's 29th state - the two existing cricket associations, Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) and Andhra Cricket Association (ACA) continued to govern cricket within the districts that constitute the two states.

The ACA continues to concentrate on players within its own purview in Andhra Pradesh. And the HCA, that represents Hyderabad city -- which

geographically falls in Telangana state after the split -- seems to have neglected players from outside leaving cricketers from all other districts in the state as 'orphans'.

The association argues that although there are more than 12,000 cricketers across the state, none from outside the city of Hyderabad have represented India. Only eight players from outside Hyderabad have made it to the HCA state teams since its formation 70-years ago as compared to the 2600 cricketers living in the city.

Rishabh Pant hits unbeaten 63-ball 128 for Delhi Daredevils vs Sunrisers Hyderabad

Despite keeping his batting partners edgy with his running between the wickets, even leading to two run outs, Rishabh Pant carved out a fluent century to help Delhi Daredevils reach a challenging total against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League (IPL) match in New Delhi on Thursday.

Pant's first century of the season also saw him get past the 400-run mark this IPL season and share a 55-run partnership off 37 balls with Harshal Patel for the fourth wicket. It was much-needed as the hosts had found themselves struggling at 48/3 after nine overs. He was unbeaten on 128 off 63 balls - the high-

est individual score of this year's IPL.

Pant, who reached his century off 56 balls with a four through mid-wicket off Siddharth Kaul, hit 15 fours and seven sixes during his stay at the crease.

He had been one of the few bright spots for the Daredevils this season with three half-centuries to his name. He had scored 69 off 29 in the win over Rajasthan Royals, 79 off 45 in the 13-run loss against CSK and his brilliant 85 off 48 against RCB at Bengaluru, where he surged towards the end with fiery shots, but was overshadowed only by the skill of AB de Villiers.

On Thursday, he began



with three boundaries off Siddharth Kaul's first three deliveries. Pant, despite pres-

sure, managed to place the ball well and pace his innings. Even as two run outs -- of

skipper Shreyas Iyer and Harshal -- resulted out of what seemed like Pant's poor call-

ing, he kept a calm head, cashing in on opportunities.

The Delhi wicketkeeper batsman took on Sunrisers' ace leg-spinner Rashid Khan, squeezing 13 off one of his overs. Pant reverse swept Rashid for four, then swept him for another in the Afghan's second over. He wound that over up from Rashid with a pull shot to boundary.

That he was batting in a different zone on a tough batting wicket was clear from the fact that he reached his fifty off a six immediately after his partner Harshal was run out. In fact, he turned it on after that, reaching the second fifty off just 20 deliveries.