

TIME AND US

DAILY

Srinagar, Kashmir

TUESDAY

- MAY, 22, 2018
- 06 RAMADHAN 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 119
- VOLUME: 04
- PAGES: 08

WEATHER TEMPERATURE

STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	27.2	10.3
JAMMU	39.5	21.6
LEH	20.5	3.4
KARGIL	20.0	5.6

SUNSET TUESDAY: 07:30 PM
SUNRISE WEDNESDAY: 05:27 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR

Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 27°C & 11°C respectively.

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

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DON'T THINK VIRAT KOHLI WIELDS DISPROPORTIONATE INFLUENCE: VINOD RAI

Valley shuts to commemorate death anniversaries of Mirwaiz Farooq, Gani Lone

Restrictions imposed, 'Eidgah chalo' foiled



Srinagar, May 21 (KNS): Authorities on foiled 'Eidgah Chalo' called by Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL) by imposing restrictions in Srinagar areas while a complete shutdown was observed across the Valley to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq and Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone.

The shutdown and Eidgah chalo call was given by JRL comprising Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Muhammad Yasin Malik on the eve of the martyrdom anniversary of Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq and Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone.

See Valley...Pg 02

Mehbooba visits R S Pura, condoles with border shelling hit families

Says people want to live peacefully, expects positive response to ceasefire by all sides

Jammu, May 21: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today visited R S Pura and condoled with the families whose kin were killed in cross border shelling at Arnia and R S Pura during past few days.

Interacting with the people there, the Chief Minister described the killings as highly unfortunate adding these occurred when the holy month of Ramadhan had just begun and people had heaved sigh of relief due to the Centre's welcome step of halting security operations in the State.

Mehbooba Mufti said the people of the State, who have gone through very tough times in the past, want to live a peaceful life free from violence and killings. She said the Centre's move of halting security operations has generated a hope among people who expect positive reciprocation to it by all stakeholders to let people of the State come out of the zero-sum game of killings and uncertainty.

The Chief Minister said world over people are coming to peaceful engagement of issues as acrimony and violence has led them nowhere except deaths, destruction and devastation. She said the way North and South Korea decided to walk on peaceful engagement is an encouraging signal to the entire world that issues, no matter how complex these might be, can only be settled through



Mehbooba conducts whirlwind tour of Jammu projects

Inspects Bus Stand Parking project, airport expansion, Ropeway project, Bour floral camp

Jammu, May 21: Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti today conducted a whirlwind tour of Jammu city and adjoining areas to inspect the pace of

work on several developmental projects undertaken in the winter capital.

See Mehbooba...Pg 02

BORDER SHELLING AGAIN, 04 WOUNDED

Jammu, May 21 (KNS): Border escalation is once again happening. In this regard, the armies of India and Pakistan traded heavy fire along the international border (IB) in Jammu and Samba districts late Sunday, hours after agreeing to maintain peace on the border. Top officials of Border Security Force (BSF) and its Pakistani Rangers had a telephonic conversation on Sunday to end the latest border flare up, officials said, after both sides suffered loss of lives and machinery in the heavy exchange of fire along the border in Jammu last week.

An official said that the Pakistani Army resorted to "unprovoked" firing at the Border Security Force outposts in Arnia, Ramgarh and Chamliyal areas of Jammu and Kashmir late on Sunday.

See Border...Pg 02

Lal Singh's brother in trouble

Police lodges FIR for using abusive language against CM

Srinagar, May 21 (KNS): Taking strong notice of the abusive language used against Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti State police has decided to lodge FIR against the brother former minister and BJP leader Chowdhary Lal Singh.

Pertinently a video has gone viral in which Chowdhary Jitender Singh the brother of BJP leader and former minister Chowdhary Lal Singh is



seen using shameful and vulgar language against the chief minister Mehbooba Mufti during the protest in support

of Kathua rape accused on Sunday in Jammu.

Director General of Police Dr SP Vaid told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the police has taken strong cognizance of the act and has decided to lodge the FIR against the former minister's brother. DGP added that he has personally directed the concerned SSP to lodge an FIR immediately. In the meantime unconfirmed

See FIR...Pg 02

THREE AMONG COUSIN OF SAMEER 'TIGER' BOOKED UNDER PSA IN PULWAMA

Pulwama 21 May (KNS): Three persons were booked under infamous public safety act (PSA) in south Kashmir's Pulwama district on Monday.

A police official from the district said Danish Rashid Bhat, Hilal Ahmad Ahangir and Faisul Ahmad hailing from Drabgam, Karimabad and Pirchoo villages respectively were booked under the act.

He said the trio was booked under PSA for participating in stone throwing on forces and working as militant 'Over Ground Workers' (OGWs).

Incidentally, Bhat happens to be a cousin of slain militant commander Sameer Tiger. He (Bhat) had quit militancy on insistence of his family after joining Hizb, said

See Sameer...Pg 02

'Violation of transfer policy, Scores of employees enjoy overstay in Govt depts, PSUs

Will direct GAD to check officials' overstay: Govt

Srinagar, May 21 (KNS): In gross violation of transfer policy, government departments including some of the corporations are retaining officials for more than two years, moreover it has also been seen that some officials are enjoying overstay for last more than 10 years.

Official sources told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that scores of employees in various departments have not been transferred for years. "There are officials in health and in some state owned corporations who have completed decades at one place. Every now and then government talks about bringing transparency and accountability in government departments, but the ground reality is



that no one actually cares," sources claimed.

Sources alleged that most of these over-staying employees have close proximity either

See Violation...Pg 02

TIME HAS COME TO RESOLVE DECADES-OLD KASHMIR DISPUTE: NEW YORK TIMES

Washington, May 21 (KNS): The growing danger of the Kashmir conflict demands all parties to continue efforts to resolve the decades-old dispute, said the Editorial Board of the New York Times in an opinion article as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was met with strike when he visited the region to inaugurate a controversial hydro power project.

A complete shutdown was observed on the call of Kashmiri leaders as Modi inaugurated the controversial Kishanganga, a hydro power project that Pakistan has challenged and is seeking intervention of the World Bank, which is a guarantor of the Indus Water Treaty that governs

See Resolve...Pg 02

After Ramadan Ceasefire forces will attempt to catch militants alive

Srinagar, May 21 (KNS): The government forces in Kashmir are devising a mechanism so that they could catch militants alive in encounters following the end of Ramadan Ceasefire ending on 17 June 2018.

"Catch them alive" is the new strategy in Jammu and Kashmir to be adopted by security forces in Kashmir who killed over 70 militants in the last seven months, shift gear to focus on finding new recruits and motivating them to return to their families, senior officials said.

"Our effort is to catch them alive and understand their grievances. After all, a 15 or 16 year old boy can't be brainwashed to the extent that he would like to be killed in a gunfight. There has to be a counter-narrative,"



said a senior official engaged in counter-insurgency operations.

After the elimination of several top leaders, efforts are now on to change the script.

Operations based on specific intelligence inputs will continue but there will be also increasing emphasis on catching newly-

See Ramadan...Pg 02

FORMATION OF HURRIYAT WAS A GOOD IDEA: FORMER ISI HEAD

Islamabad, May 21 (KNS): Former head of Pakistan's premier intelligence agency-Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt General Asad Durrani has said the agency's influence on the Kashmir insurgency during '90s "turned out less than successful".

In a freewheeling interview to The Indian Express, Durrani who was head of ISI during '90 said he feels his "biggest failure was when the Kashmir uprising happened we did not know how far it would go... When it became lasting, we wondered how to keep a handle on it. We didn't want it to go out of control, which would lead to a war that neither side wanted. Could we micro-manage it? That was our challenge. ISI's leverage on the Kashmir insurgency turned out less than successful."

See Former...Pg 02

Rana reiterates jobs for locals in IIT, IIM, Jammu Zoo during CM's review meet

JAGTI JAMMU MAY 21- Reiterating his demand for jobs to locals in the upcoming IIT, IIM and Jammu Zoo in Nagrota Assembly Constituency, MLA and Provincial President National Conference Mr Devender Singh Rana on Monday made a strong case for a specific share in the non-academic, technical and support staff of these institutions by the respective managements.

"The locals, being primary stake-holders should be considered for various slots



in these institutions on the analogy of various public sector undertakings including the Indian Railways, which have provision for landlosers, whose lands are acquired for construction purposes", Mr Rana said while intervening

in the discussions held during review meeting of these projects taken by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti at Jagti this morning.

Dwelling upon the allocation of jobs for locals in IIT and IIM, Mr Rana said the

peripheries around these institutions have talented youth who could be considered against the posts of electricians, plumbers, technicians, gardeners, drivers, watch and ward staff besides support staff in the non-academic arena. He said he has, time and again, emphasized this to the managements with a plea that skilled and unskilled force like masons, carpenters, painters, welders etc besides contractors for various supplies could also be engaged

See Rana...Pg 02

TOSAMAIDAN FOREST AREA TURNS INTO OPEN FIELD

Forest Deptt in deep slumbers

Budgam, May 21, CNS: The picturesque Tosamaidan here in Central Kashmir's Budgam district has been completely disfigured by unscrupulous elements while those who are at the helm of affairs in the Forest Department are allegedly unaware about the loot of green gold that is going on at a massive scale.

Kabakoot Forest in the middle of Tosamaidan is presenting a horrific look as almost all the trees have disappeared while their stumps are only visible. This Reporter even saw at a couple of places stumps are on fire to destroy evidence.

Locals blame Forest officials for the mess. They claim,

See Turns...Pg 02

ZULFKAR REVIEWS FUNCTIONING OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN JAMMU, SAMBA, KATHUA

Orders de-clubbing of educational institutions for better results

JAMMU, MAY 21: Minister for School Education, Hajj and Aqaf and Tribal Affairs, Chowdhary Zulfiqar Ali, today ordered de-clubbing of government educational institutions that had earlier been clubbed due to less enrolment.

"Education, being an effective instrument for creating a progressed and prosperous society, is receiving special focus of the present dispensation and all the schools are being equipped with modern infrastructure and highly qualified staff to make these institutions centres of excellence", the Minister maintained.

The Education Minister said this while chairing a review meeting of education sector of Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts.

Minister for Health and Medical Education Devinder Kumar Manyal, Minister of State for Education, Shakti Raj Parihar, Legislators Priya Sethi, Devender Singh Rana, Choudhary Sukhmandan Kumar, Rajesh Gupta, Rajeev Sharma, Jeevan Lal, Dr Krishan Lal,

Kuldeep Raj, Charanjit Singh Khalsa, Vikram Randhawa were also present in the meeting.

The meeting reviewed functioning of constituency wise institutions, student enrollment, literacy rate, staff availability including teachers, principals, lecturers, ZEOs, Headmasters and others, overall result for the year 2017-18, financial and physical status of ongoing construction works, proposed capital expenditure budget for the current session, approved works under TAMEIR plan, mid day meals scheme, model schools, proposal for up-gradation of schools, Financial and physical progress of construction works under Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and others.

The Minister was informed that a total of 91415 students are enrolled in government schools in Jammu districts with zero percent dropout rate as per UDISE 2017-18. The total literacy rate of Jammu district is 83.45 %.

The Minister directed the Director School Education to expedite the recruitment process for the post of Class 4th in a time bound manner.

Taking strong cognizance of poor performance of some of the schools, the Minister instructed the Director to take action against the erring officers and teachers who have registered zero percent result. He also asked for ascertaining the reasons behind poor academic performance of students so that requisite measures are initiated to improve the results.

The Minister said that elementary education is of immense importance for laying a strong foundation for students' future which is being taken care of by the present government. "Qualitative improvement in the education system in government schools and filling up of infrastructural gap is the top priority of the government", he asserted.

The Minister said that the government and people have high expectations from the teaching community as they

are the real architects of future. He asked the teaching fraternity to engage children in objective learning through latest teaching-learning methods to improve quality of primary education in the government schools.

The Minister stressed upon the need of effective working of Village Education Committees as these play significant role in micro-planning and prepare the school development plan including requirement of buildings, toilets and drinking water facilities," he said.

All the legislators highlighted various issues of their respective constituencies which inter alia include formulation of long term policy to improve the overall quality of education in the state to further perk up the literacy rate, rationalization of staff to maintain the student-teacher ratio, infrastructural up-gradation, sanitation, incentivizing rural postings, appointment of subject specific teachers, capacity building programmes for teachers, posting of Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs) and Chief

Education Officers (CEOs). The government has approved engagement of 20,000 watch-and-wards in schools for security and safety of students and educational infrastructure as well" he asserted.

The Minister asked for making Urdu language, being official dialect in the state, as compulsory subject in government as well as private institutions upto primary level. He called for exempting teachers from all non-academic duties in the larger interest of the student community.

The Minister directed the concerned officers to provide desks to Government Higher School Ghagwal and fill the vacant post of ZEO at Khour. He also directed to expedite the process of construction of Auditorium at Akhnour.

The Minister directed the concerned authorities to vacate all the unsafe school buildings so as to avoid any untoward incident on this account.

The Minister exhorted upon the teaching fraternity to uphold the dig-

nity and sanctity of this noble profession by discharging their duties with utmost sincerity and devotion as the onus of shaping the nation's future lies on them.

The Minister welcomed the suggestions of the Legislators and assured them that the same would be incorporated to streamline the functioning of the department.

The Minister urged upon the legislators to keep a strict monitoring over the functioning of schools in their respective areas to ensure that these institutions of education served their best. He also asked them to pay frequent visits to these schools so that they could project the needs and requirement there like infrastructure, staff, teachers and others.

Minister of State for School Education Shakti Raj Parihar, said that education department have a great role in shaping the future of students who are builders of a strong Nation. With the introduction of various reformative initiatives in education, the sector has shown notable improvement in its functioning.

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VALLEY

Notably, Mirwaiz Farooq was killed on May 21, 1990 Ab Gani Lone was killed on May 21, 2002 by unknown gunmen.

In wake of the JRLs call, the district administration Srinagar imposed restrictions in various areas falling under the jurisdiction of Nowhatta, Khanyar, Rainawari, M.R.Gunj and Safa Kadal Police Stations in the old city, while partial restrictions are in Maisuma and Kralkhud Police Stations in the uptown areas.

A huge contingent of police and paramilitary were deployed in almost majority of uptown and old parts of Srinagar city. Almost all the examination scheduled to be held today have been postponed.

Witnesses said that the government forces had erected temporary barricades on the roads, halting the vehicular as well as the pedestrian movement in the restriction bound areas.

Besides, a complete shutdown was observed across the Valley to commemorate the martyrdom anniversary of Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq and Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone.

All the shops, business establishments, educational institutions, petrol pumps and other things remained closed throughout the day while as the vehicular movement was also thin on the roads.

Besides closure of educational institutions, the authorities in Kashmir University and Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) postponed the examinations scheduled for today.

All Kashmir University examinations scheduled to be held on Monday have been postponed," a varsity spokesman had said, adding that the fresh dates will be announced later.

Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, son of slain Mirwaiz Farooq, Hurriyat Conference (G) Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani continued to remain under house arrest at Nigeen and Hyderpora residences respectively while as the JKLF Chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik has been taken into preventive custody.

Meanwhile, the train services also remained suspended today as precautionary measure.

Railway officials had told Kashmir News Service (KNS) that the services will remain off the tracks on Monday as 'precautionary measure'.

Meanwhile, a top police official said that the situation across the Valley remained peaceful and under control throughout the day.

R S PURA

negotiations peacefully as violence only kills, both humans and spirits as well.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister disbursed cash assistance of Rs. one lakh each among the families whose kin were killed in the cross-border shelling of past few days. This assistance is over and above the ex gratia relief already paid to them through Jammu Divisional administration. She also directed the Jammu Divisional administration to prepare a report of the damages suffered to houses and dwelling units during the border shelling.

Mehbooba Mufti conveyed her heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved families and prayed for peace to the departed souls.

Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta; Minister for PHE, Irrigation & Flood Control, Shyam Choudhary; MLA, Gagan Bhagat; Vice Chairman SC Board, Bhushan Dogra; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Hemant Sharma; IGP, Jammu zone, Dr. SDS Jamwal and officers of Divisional and District administration were present on the occasion.

MEHBOOBA

Deputy Chief Minister, Kavinder Gupta accompanied the Chief Minister during the visit.

The Chief Minister visited General Bus Stand and took stock of the modernization project and development of multi-level parking there.

Mehbooba Mufti was informed that work on Rs 213 crore project is apace which is expected to be completed by early next year. She was informed that the multi-level parking facility would have space for accommodating 1300 cars and 200 two wheelers besides commercial spaces like restaurants and other office premises. It would also have an elevated corridor from Super Specialty Hospital, Jammu for passenger convenience besides another link to Nawabad.

Minister for Housing & Urban Development, Sat Sharma; Financial Commissioner, Housing & Urban Development, K B Aggarwal and other officers were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister also visited the upcoming Jammu zoo project which is coming up at a cost of Rs. 121 crores. She was informed that on completion it would be the largest Safari zoo in Northern India which would also have the largest aviary in the country. The zoo would have a 12-kilometre-long circular green track besides walking loops. Though the zoo

is getting completely ready by 2020, part of it is being thrown open by October this year in the form of nine bird enclosures and a butterfly park.

MLA, Nagrota, Devender Singh Rana; Commissioner-Secretary, Forests, Saurabh Bhagat and other officers were present on the occasion.

Mehbooba Mufti visited the newly set up Indian Institute of Technology at Jagti and interacted with the management and faculty. She was informed that the first phase of construction on the project would be completed by July this year with the admission of third batch of students.

The Chief Minister was informed that it is expected that in 10 years the IIT would have a student footfall of more than 12000 and subjects like tunnel technology, Himalayan technology, geotechnet are being incorporated in the curriculum. She was informed that eight-kilometer-long boundary wall of the campus has almost been completed and all undergraduate labs would be ready by July this year.

Minister for Higher Education, Imran Raza Ansari; MLA, Devinder Rana and senior officers were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister also laid the foundation of Tribal Bhanwan at Jagti which would come up at a cost of Rs 73 crore. It would have six blocks, an auditorium for 400 people and an Amphitheatre. The project is expected to be completed within two years.

Minister for Tribal Affairs, Choudhary Zulfiqar; MLA, Devender Singh Rana; Vice Chairman, GB Board, Choudhary Gulzar Khatana; prominent Gujjar leader Choudhary Abdul Hamid and other prominent citizens were present on the occasion.

Mehbooba Mufti also visited the upcoming Ropeway project at Maha Maya in the Jammu city and she was informed that the first phase of the cable car would be ready by July this year.

The Chief Minister visited the Bhour floral camp and inspected the pace on upgradation project.

Mehbooba Mufti was informed that the second phase of Rs. 10 crore project envisages setting up of a Floriculture Centre spread over 180 kanals of land.

Minister for Floriculture, Gardens & Parks, Javed Ahmad Mir was present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister later visited the site of expansion of Jammu Airport. She was informed that the transfer of possession of 17 acres of land from Army has been completed and the work would be awarded this month only. The expansion work, she was informed, would be completed within 20 months.

Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Hemant Sharma; IGP, Jammu zone, Dr. SDS Jamwal and officers of Divisional and District administration were present on the occasion.

BORDER

"The firing started at 10 p.m. The BSF retaliated effectively. No casualty or damage was caused on our side," he said.

Pakistani rangers and BSF officials on Sunday had agreed to maintain peace and tranquility on the border.

FIR

reports suggested that police may arrest the accused however there was no official confirmation to it.

Meanwhile, opposition leader and former chief minister Omar Abdullah while taking strong objection to the abusive language against Mehbooba Mufti has demanded stern action against Lal Singh's brother. In a tweet Omar said that such a language against Mehbooba Mufti was unacceptable and demanded an FIR be lodged against the erring BJP leader's kin.

ACT

Chief Minister, People's Democratic Party has decided to lodge a strong protest with state BJP and said such un-parliamentary language was unacceptable and uncalled for.

Talking to Kashmir News Service (KNS), PDP Chief Spokesperson Mohammad Rafi Mir has said that the language used by Lal Singh's brother was extremely objectionable and the PDP would take up the matter with state leadership of BJP. He said that police has taken the suo-moto notice and lodged an FIR against him.

Mir termed the daily protests as a tactics of black mailing said that such actions can't be tolerated and BJP would be approached for the misconduct of the Chowdhary brothers.

SAMEER

a Bhat's relative. Confirming the arrests, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Pulwama Mohammad Aslam Choudhary said the trio was involved in anti state activities. "They were working as OGWs for militants. They would mobilize youth to throw stones on forces," he said.

VIOLATION

with higher ups or enjoying the political patronage due to which they kept themselves away from transfer procedure.

Sources further revealed and alleged that certain officials in health department has been overstaying for over a decade now.

Similarly sources told KNS that some doctors of health department is overstaying from last 15 years at one place.

Sources said that though the HODs in these departments have an authority to transfer the employees especially when an employee completes his minimum two years of the service in one station. But none dare to transfer these influential employees which show that how powerful they are. "A number of times the issue of overstay of some employees was brought in the knowledge of higher officials but everybody overlooked the issue. Many employees in clerical staff who are posted in other districts and waiting their turn to be posted in summer capital have become hopeless due to apathy of concerned administration," sources alleged.

As per government's official transfer policy of 2010 all the employees having more than two years of stay at a particular place shall be transferred.

However, various departments have not been following the transfer policy either by premature transfer of officials or retaining employees for years at a specific post, official sources said.

Sources said that overstay of employees breeds corruption and ultimately the people have to suffer in getting executed their work. Many schemes never reach to the beneficial due to some corrupt officials with help their staff, they maintained. Sources said that many officials in the Public sector undertakings have overstayed at their choicest postings for years together.

Official sources revealed that some officers of the rank of general managers have not been transferred for many years. Official sources said that all these officers are involved in one or the other case which are under active investigation with Vigilance Organization or Crime Branch.

Sources said that even the promotions have been granted to many officials in the state owned corporations, while during the period they have overstayed at one place of posting.

Meanwhile taking a stern view of officers' overstay, one of the senior ministers in the PDP- BJP government told KNS that government will direct departments to strictly monitor the postings of employees. "We will direct the GAD also to closely scrutinize the postings of employees and take stern action against those who are not following the government's transfer policy," the minister said wished not to be named.

RESOLVE

the distribution of waters between Pakistan and India.

According to a NYT report, traffic was sparse and Indian authorities arrested dozens of Kashmiri Muslims overnight and put Kashmiri leaders under house arrest to stop them from taking part in a planned march against Modi, in spite of a so-called ceasefire that was announced for the holy month of Ramadan.

The ceasefire was sought by the Chief Minister of Indian held valley, Mehbooba Mufti who, the editorial said, found herself increasingly isolated since her political alliance with the ruling BJP which has failed to stem violence in the region.

In an opinion article published this week, the NYT Editorial Board said that the struggle over Kashmir seems to have deepened, and border skirmishes between troops along the Line of Control were common.

"With India and Pakistan both in possession of nuclear arms, former President Bill Clinton once called the border" the most dangerous place in the world," the editorial recalled, in an obvious reference to the concern that is often expressed by analysts and military experts to highlight the need for resolving the dispute.

According to a new police report as cited by the NYT article, the Indian offensives and oppression against the freedom fighters this year has doubled the number of local recruits."

"It was an age-old story: Heavy-handed tactics may hold territory, but they lose the population," the NYT observed.

The editorial board noted that former President Barack Obama abandoned his mediation efforts to resolve the Kashmir dispute after stiff Indian opposition.

"A solution to a conflict that touches on so many religious and nationalist nerves must ultimately come from within, through talks among India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir," the NYT said, adding that the obvious and growing danger of the Kashmir conflict demands "trying again and again, however elusive the goal."

RAMADAN

recruited militants alive, they said. "We have got indication from our field intelligence that

many desire to return. Some parents have also approached us and we have no hesitation in helping them resume their normal life and education at the earliest," a senior police official said.

Several people from various parts of the Valley have been booked in the last seven months. They were entrusted with the indoctrination of young minds and motivating them to pick up arms, officials said.

The identification of these overground workers is necessary before a crackdown on the militant top brass, they explained.

The multi-pronged strategy -- including encounters with militants, fighting their overground workers in courts and smashing their network of sympathisers -- has also brought down the number of videos on social media showing groups of militants roaming freely in the orchards and forests of Tral, Shopian and Kulgam in South Kashmir.

The trend is now a single militant posing in a closed room with a rifle so the location can't be identified, an official said. "The trend of videos has ended as security forces have gained an upper hand," he added.

FORMER

Durrani, as per the report, has also said formation of Hurriyat was a "good idea".

"I think the formation of the Hurriyat to provide a political direction to the resistance was a good idea. Giving up handle on the movement-letting the factions do what they bloody well wanted to-was not," report quoted Durrani as having said.

He has made these comments ahead of launch of his new book "The Spy Chronicles: RAW, ISI and the Illusion of Peace", which he has co-authored with A S Dulat, former RAW chief and journalist Aditya Sinha.

The book is set to be launched in Delhi this week, but Durrani will not be able to make it to the venue of book launch since he has not been given granted a visa so far by India, stated the report.

RANA

locally.

Mr Rana said that since a new airport is also proposed to be laid in Bajalta or Panigrian, the avenues of jobs for the locals in various categories will have to be ensured. He said a concrete policy is needed to be devised for optimum job opportunities for the locals wherever projects of eminence come up. "This is a fair proposition that merits consideration and appropriate instructions from the designated quarters", Mr Rana said and urged the Chief Minister to take up the issue with all concerned at the apex level earnestly.

Mr Rana said that the locals have not only spared their precious lands, source of sustenance, for these institutions. Such institutions, he said, do not only open up vistas of academic opportunities to youth but bring economic benefits to the peripheries around. In this context he referred to the standing norms and the policy of the Jammu and Kashmir Government which envisages which provides for jobs to locals besides avenues to skilled and unskilled workers in the projects coming up in their areas.

The MLA Nagrota said that he and the people of his constituency have been monitoring the IIT coming up brick by brick and the contribution of the hardworking local work-force has been crucial.

"Their hard toil, I hope, will bear fruit and prove game changer for the Nagrota Assembly Constituency", Mr Rana maintained. Agreeing in principle to the suggestion of Mr Devender Singh Rana, the Chief Minister assured that the proposition having merits will be considered and taken up with all concerned.

URNS

that top forest officials even lower rung employees of the Department are in connivance with Smugglers loot the green gold. This loot fetch them lot of money. There are still some who hold army responsible for the destruction of Tosamaidan. "It was a firing range that was used by Army. As long as Army was stationed here, nobody dared to visit here. Forest Department didn't launch any afforestation drive after army left this range," said a group of locals to news agency CNS.

When one looks around the Tosamaidan Kabakoot forest, he finds thousands of pine trees fallen flat on the ground. "This is so painful. Stringent punishment should be awarded to officials who allowed this loot," said a teacher.

The irony is that Chief Conservator Forests Kashmir and DFO Budgam are feigning ignorance about this green gold loot. "Has it really happened? Have trees been cut and stumps set on fire," questioned DFO Budgam Muhammad Rafique.

Similarly Chief Conservator Forests Kashmir said that he doesn't know anything about it. "If it has really happened, action will be initiated against the guilty," he assured.

Governor inaugurates Policy Consultative Workshop for Student Innovation and Start-Ups with Academic Leaders of J&K

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: Governor N.N. Vohra inaugurated the Policy Consultative Workshop for Academic Leaders of J&K at Raj Bhavan here today. This Workshop, part of the "National Students Start-Up Policy", was organized to promote and integrate the efforts being made by various institutions and at various levels in the State to support the Start-Up movements.

Ministry of Human Resource and Development had recently reached out to the office of the Governors of all States to extend innovation and Start-Up support to young students across all three Universities. As a part of this initiative, a delegation led by Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe Chairman AICTE had met Governor Vohra on 12th April 2018 at Raj Bhavan Jammu. It was in this context that Governor hosted today's Workshop involving all Universities and key stake holders of the National Start-Up ecosystem. J&K is the first State where the Governor has taken this initiative.

Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Prof. Sanjay Inamdar, Chairman, AICTE Start-up Policy Implementation Committee, Dr. Unnat Pandit, Head, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Dr. H.K. Mittal, Member Secretary, National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB) and a senior representative of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Union Ministry of Commerce and Industries,



gave presentations on the Start-Up scenario in the country and a road-map to develop innovation and entrepreneurship culture across the Universities and educational institutions in J&K. Sh. Parvez Ahmed, Chairman, J&K Bank Ltd. who also participated, presented his suggestions on the role of financial institutions in promoting Start-Ups in the State.

Vice-Chancellors and representatives of 15 institutions including the State Higher Education Department, University of Kashmir, University of Jammu, SKUAST-K, Central University of Kashmir, Central University of Jammu, Cluster University of Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University, SKUAST-J, National Institute of Technology Srinagar, Department of Industry and Commerce, and J&K Bank participated in this Policy Design Work-

shop. Addressing the Workshop Governor highlighted the importance of institutions of higher learning to institutionalise the Start-Up movement in order to harness the creative potential of youth. Governor observed that in order to translate our knowledge and expertise into viable commercial enterprises it is imperative that serious planned steps are taken to develop an innovation based Start-Up ecosystem which will also encourage students to find solutions to contemporary social challenges.

Stressing the importance of moving swiftly for mobilising an environment of entrepreneurship, he advised the Universities to collaborate with each other and pool their resources to create the infrastructure needed to realize the entrepreneurial potential of our youth.

Governor noted that JKEDI had already commenced the process for formulating the Start-Up Policy for the State. He urged the State Government to develop an innovation/

student Start-Ups Hub which can be linked to all the University hubs. It was suggested that the Higher Education Department could develop a holistic Student Innovation and Start-Up Policy in line with the AICTE Start-Up Policy and each University in J&K should develop their own contextual framework to implement this Policy across their affiliated institutes. In addition, each College affiliated with a University should set up an innovation and Start-Up cell. Annually, the best student innovation and start-Ups could be showcased and awarded in a special function (Festival of Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship) hosted by Raj Bhavan with the Education Department to celebrate excellence and achievement of each University.

In his concluding remarks Governor observed that the Universities and institutes of education assume importance and relevance only when they get meaningfully involved in resolving local and regional problems.

By tackling such challenges young students can become job providers with consequent socio-economic benefits all around.

Governor advised the heads of the educational and other participating institutions to devise a mechanism with quantifiable and measurable outcomes for promoting entrepreneurship development. He observed that J&K abounds in opportunities for the promotion of a start-Up ecosystem. He particularly mentioned the high potential existing in the Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Husbandry and the Poultry sectors in which the State is presently a net importer.

Governor urged the Vice Chancellor of Central University, Kashmir, the current Chairman of the J&K Vice Chancellor's Forum to urgently invite all stakeholders including the JKEDI, to give actionable shape to the road map which had been proposed in today's Workshop.

Prof. Sahasrabudhe, Chairman AICTE, appreciated the initiative taken by Governor Vohra and shared that this unique leadership effort can bring about a transformative impact in J&K in the foreseeable future. He assured all possible support for the student innovation and entrepreneurship movement in the State taken under the guidance of Governor J&K. Each participating institution committed to various action points which they would pursue to create a culture of student innovation and entrepreneurship in the State.

ECI holds round table conference with former CECs/ECs

New Delhi, May 21: Election Commission of India today held a round table conference with former CECs/ECs. The consultation meeting was attended by former CECs S/Shri M.S.Gill, J.M.Lyngdoh, T.S.Krishna Murthy, B.B.Tandon, Dr. S.Y.Quraishi, V.S. Sampath, H.R. Bramha, Dr. Nasim Zaidi and former EC GVG Krishnamurthy.

Chief Election Commissioner Shri O.P.Rawat, Election Commissioners Shri Sunil Arora and Shri Ashok Lavasa, welcomed all former CECs/ECs present. The invitees lauded the Commission for this initiative and expressed the hope that such consultations would become a regular feature.

The deliberations focused on following aspects of electoral management:

It was noted that universal use of EVM/VVPAT is a commendable initiative. It was opined that Awareness programmes should be extended to educate all the voters about its benefits. This will help in avoiding any controversy about its use.

It was noticed that hate speeches are being used during campaigns which vitiate the political atmosphere. There is an urgent need to control such speeches in larger public interest.

It was deliberated to analyse the duration of polls so that the number of phases is reduced. The lesser number of phases will reduce the period of MCC it was noted, which has its implications in multiple phases of elections.

The ERO-net was well appreciated. However, the process of voter registration can further be eased after taking cues from the models of voter registration in other successful democracies.

During the meeting, Sr DEC Shri Umesh Sinha also gave a glimpse of current initiatives undertaken by the Commission like Electoral Literacy Clubs, ERO-Net, RO-Net, Grievance Redressal System etc.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan to lead the Indian delegation in the Mission Innovation Ministerial

New Delhi, May 21: Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forests and Climate Change Dr. Harsh Vardhan will be leading an Indian delegation for participation in the Mission Innovation Ministerial being held at Malmo-Sweden during 22-23 May, 2018.

Mission Innovation is a global platform of 23 countries and European Union aimed at accelerating clean energy innovations through enhanced Government funding, greater public-private sector partnership and enhanced global cooperation. India is founding member of Mission Innovation and part of the Steering Committee besides co-lead of innovation challenges on smart grids, off grids and sustainable bio-fuels. During the visit, Minister will show case India's commitment to clean energy through research, development and demonstration programmes initiated in partnership with Mission Innovation countries in various domains of clean energy. The Minister will also explore opportunities for research cooperation with Mission Innovation countries for affordable clean energy innovations. Besides participation in Mission Innovation Ministerial, Dr Harsh vardhan will also hold bilateral meetings with his counter parts from Denmark, Sweden, Canada and European Commission.

General Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Official Statistics notified

New Delhi, May 21: In response to the need for ensuring quality in the Official Statistics being produced in all levels of Government so that public trust in official statistics is maintained, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation has notified "General Guidelines on Quality Assurance for Official Statistics" in Government of India Gazette Extraordinary No. 124 of 6th April, 2018. This can be accessed at http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/main_menu/gazette_notification/6apr18.pdf also. These Guidelines are for use and voluntary compliance by all the offices dealing with statistical matters including administrative statistics.

These Guidelines are useful to producers of official statistics in designing any statistical collection or product. These are also helpful to users in making informed decisions regarding the use of statistical products since the framework enables an assessment whether the statistics produced are fit for use, or are of an acceptable level of quality for their purposes.

All statistical agencies at the Centre and in the States/UTs have been advised to follow the guidelines, and bring these to the notice of all line Departments and Local Governments to improve the quality of their official statistical products. The agencies have also been advised to place in the public domain the manner of compliance with the Guidelines.

LMD Jammu conducts market inspection

JAMMU, MAY 21: Intensifying its drive to keep check on the price and quality of various commodities in view of ongoing holy month of Ramadan, Enforcement Wing of Legal Metrology department inspected various establishments, here today.

The team headed by Assistant Controller, Ajay Kumar Verma conducted surprise checking of business establishment in various localities including Karan Market Jammu, BC Road, Maheshpura Chowk, Amphalla, Sarwal, Janipur, Thather, Akhnoor and adjoining Areas.

Business establishments of meat sellers, chicken, vegetable, fruit, bakery, sweets, LPG dealers, utensils shops were inspected for their compliance with regards to various provisions of J&K Standard of Weights and Measures Enforcement Act 2011(Amended) and packages Commodities rules.

17 traders were booked and penalty of Rs18000.00 was imposed on 12 traders for violations of the act and notices were issued to the remaining traders.

DDC Bandipora chairs DLRC meeting

Rs 486.76 cr advanced under DCP during last fiscal

BANDIPORA, MAY 21: District Development Commissioner Bandipora, Khurshid Ahmad Sanai, Monday chaired the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting to review the performance of banks during 2017-18 fiscal. MLA Bandipora Usman Majid was also present in the meeting.

The meeting was informed that a total amount of Rs. 486.76 crore, including Rs. 308.83 crore provided under the priority sector and Rs. 177.93 crore under the non-priority sector, has been advanced by various banks under the District Credit Plan (DCP) in the district during the last fiscal.

It was informed that J&K Bank alone has disbursed an amount of Rs. 394.15 crore amounting to about 81% of



total credit disbursement in the district. Progress of implementation of various centrally sponsored schemes, including Prime Minister's JhanDhan Yojana, Mudra Yojana, Suraksha Bheema Yojana, Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana, was also reviewed in the meeting.

The DDC asked the bankers and sponsoring agencies to ensure there is coordination and cohesion between them for successful implementation of schemes. He also stressed

on organizing awareness programmes across the district besides disposal of pending cases of sponsorship.

Speaking on the occasion, the MLA called for trouble-free sanctioning of loan to the deserving particularly the unemployed youth to help them become self-employed.

DDM NABARD, LDM, CPO besides district coordinators of all banks, government departments and other development agencies were present in the meeting.

Govt committed to shift CUK to Ganderbal: Div Com

SRINAGAR, MAY 19: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Baseer Ahmad Khan, today chaired a meeting to review the modalities for completing shifting of Central University of Kashmir (CUK) to Ganderbal.

The meeting was informed that the CMO and DIET buildings in Ganderbal have already been transferred to CUK and the varsity has shifted the administration unit to these buildings, adding that 36 rooms in the Government Physical College Ganderbal are ready and will be handed over to CUK on May 28.

The Div Com directed the Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal to complete the pending finishing work of RUSA building on war-footing and hand over it to the CUK au-



thorities within a month. He also instructed for constructing temporary pre-fabricated structures in the campus to meet the requirement of students.

DC Ganderbal was also asked to identify a suitable patch of land for CUK and also send the DPR for upgradation of roads to the Divisional Commissioner's office so that the work will be started soon.

The meeting was also in-

formed that NBCC will hand over first building on May 30 and second building on June 30 to the CUK.

The Div Com said the government is committed to earliest shifting of the entire university campus to Ganderbal. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Vice Chancellor CUK, Registrar CUK, representative of NBCC and other concerned officers.

Joint House Panel for augmenting infra in Govt health institutions

SRINAGAR, MAY 21: The Joint House Committee of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Council constituted to look into the alleged medical negligence by doctors in the death of son of sitting MLC, Ramesh Arora in Government Medical College, Jammu met here today under the chairmanship of MLC, Ghulam Nabi Moga and discussed some of the important aspects related to the incident.

Legislators, Ghulam Mohammad Saroori, Ali Mohammad Dar, Dr Shehnaaz Ganai and Firdous Ahmad Tak attended the meeting.

The Committee discussed the measures to be taken to further improving the health care and infrastructural facilities in Government health institutions, including GMC, Jammu so that every common man can avail these hassle-free. The Committee opined that healthcare is the fundamental right of every citizen, for which the Government spends lot of funds, and authorities must ensure that best treatment is ensured to every needy. They further called that health authorities should be made more transparent and accountable to restore the confidence of patients and every effort should be made that no patient dies due to medical negligence.

The members suggested several valuable measures to be taken at the tertiary level to save precious lives in the government institutions. They called for periodical review of facilities by the higher authorities to plug the gaps, if any found at any level. The health is a paramount sector and Government should pay focused attention to further strengthen it at all levels, said the Committee.

It was also decided that the Committee will undertake a detailed inspection of GMC, Jammu and other health institutions on 25th and 26th of May, 2018 and take stock of the existing health infrastructure vis-a-vis diagnostic facilities available for the patients.

Additional Secretary, Council, Ali Mohammad Rawat, besides other senior officers and officials of Council Secretariat were also present in the meeting.

Sat Sharma inaugurates 3-day drive from Parade Ground

JAMMU, MAY 21- Emphasizing the need for maintaining environment free from pollution of any kind, Minister for Housing and Urban Development Department Sat Sharma today said that cleanliness drive would be speeded up and made a regular feature.

The Minister was addressing a gathering at the inaugural function of launch of Clean Jammu - Clean Tawi campaign here at Parade Ground.

The campaign will continue for three days (up to May 23, 2018) and witness series of cleanliness and anti-pollution awareness activities.

The three-day campaign is being organized by Jammu and Kashmir Police Wives Welfare Association (PWWA) (Police Pariwar).

MLA Jammu East Rajesh Gupta, Chief Secretary B.B. Vyas, Divisional Commissioner Hemant Kumar Sharma, Director General of Police, Dr. S.P. Vaid, IGP, S D Singh and senior functionaries of police and divisional administration were also present on the occasion.

Sat Sharma said that the success of cleanliness campaign only can bring a desirable and positive change in the life of the people of the country. He said with this vision in mind Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. Pinning high hopes from the campaign, he called for involving maximum youth adding that they are real crusaders of the Clean India



campaign.

Highlighting the religious and historical importance of River Tawi, MLA Jammu East Rajesh Gupta said cleaning Tawi with the aim to bring it to its past glory is the objective of this campaign for which all stakeholders must contribute.

The main highlights of the campaign are Walk for Tawi, Cultural Programmes, NukkadNataks, Slogan, painting competition, lectures on waste management, quiz and on spot prizes at different places across Jammu city, Tawi cleanup, cleanliness drives, distribution of community meals, bike rally etc.

After inaugural function, over one thousand students of various educational institutions took part in the march holding placards with messages for Clean Jammu - Clean Tawi. A Bike Rally or-

ganized as part of the campaign was also flagged off by the Minister.

A painting competition/camp will be held at Bagh-e-Bahu on day 2 of the campaign i.e May 22, 2018 from 9.00 am to 11.00 am. Whereas a team of 12 doctors and experts will deliver motivational talks and demonstrations regarding waste management.

The concluding function will be held on the third day in Police Auditorium at 5.30 pm wherein those who contributed for the success of the campaign '#Hero4Tawi' will be felicitated.

Earlier, in her welcome address Chairperson, PWWA, Bharti Vaid highlighted the aims and objectives of the campaign. She said cleanliness and its awareness was inherent duty of all and concerted efforts in this regard can make the campaign successful.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

A chance in Srinagar: On Ramzan ceasefire

The Centre's announcement of a cessation of operations in Jammu and Kashmir during the month of Ramzan is a welcome step. The direction to the security forces not to launch operations in the State during this period, while allowing them to reserve "the right to retaliate if attacked or if it is essential to protect the lives of innocent people", is aimed at bringing respite to the Valley after two years of escalated violence, since the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen 'commander' Burhan Wani in July 2016. The decision came days after Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti informed the Centre that an all-party meeting had called for a ceasefire. The quick response will help her recover some equilibrium politically, and get an administrative grip on the street. In this current phase of violence in the Valley, there has been a marked increase in home-grown militancy. All too often, the funeral of a local militant has become the rallying point for anti-state protests, which lead to new recruitment. The ceasefire will limit such occasions. The stone-pelting protests too have taken their toll and deepened alienation. The cessation of cordon-and-search operations is a high-risk initiative – but it is the very riskiness of the gesture that could invite confidence among local groups to consider ways and means to mark an end to the violent couple of years.

A series of calibrated complementary steps are required if any lasting contribution to improving the situation on the ground is to be made. Importantly, the announcement came just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to Srinagar on Saturday, and his remarks will be closely tracked. The ceasefire has brought back memories of the 2000 Ramzan effort of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. That initiative set in motion a series of developments towards dialogue, despite the still-fresh wounds of the 1999 Kargil conflict. There are parallels between those days and today. In terms of violence, Kashmir is quickly spiralling out of control to the level seen 15 years ago. Even as the security forces have gunned down 64 suspected terrorists in 2018, a large number of young Kashmiris have taken up arms. According to the latest data from the State police, 69 local youth have joined militancy, 35 of them in the wake of the April 1 operations in which 13 locals were killed. But just a temporary halt to security operations in Kashmir is not enough. At best, it can be the first step in a long and difficult road to recovery, and eventually peace. Currently, the 2003 ceasefire on the Pakistan border is in tatters. It must be urgently restored. But most important, a political outreach, possibly unconditional, is required to help Kashmir get back to normal. As Mr. Vajpayee did back then, Mr. Modi must take political ownership of the outreach. Else, the Ramzan ceasefire could remain an isolated outreach.

ANATOMY OF A TURF WAR

By V. VENKATESAN

The appointment of judges to the High Courts and the Supreme Court has never been so contentious. The Supreme Court's nine-judge bench's judgment in the Second Judges' case (1993) envisages the appointment process to be a joint or participatory exercise between the executive and the judiciary.

Thus, it was expected that the judiciary's opinion should be dominant in the area of legal acumen of the proposed nominees, while the executive's opinion would have primacy over their antecedents. Together, the two pillars of democracy were expected to select the most suitable nominees for appointment to the highest court in the country.

But the Narendra Modi government's non-appointment of Justice K.M. Joseph, Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court, as a judge of the Supreme Court, in accordance with the recommendation made on January 10 by the collegium comprising the first five senior-most judges, has nothing to do with his merit or antecedents. For the record, both the Centre and the collegium seem to agree on Justice Joseph's outstanding competence and his clean antecedents. Civil society, though, suspects that the Centre is blocking Justice Joseph's elevation to the apex court to punish him for quashing President's Rule in Uttarakhand in 2016.

The Centre has sought to red flag factors that many believe are not directly relevant to his appointment: his lack of seniority in the all-India list of High Court judges, whether a small State like Kerala deserves representation of more than one judge in the Supreme Court, and the inability of the collegium to find a suitable nominee in the Scheduled Castes (S.Cs) and the Scheduled Tribes (S.Ts) category.

On April 26, the Centre referred back for reconsideration the collegium's recommendation for the elevation of Justice Joseph to the Supreme Court. While doing so, it gave "elaborate reasons" for its action in segregating Justice Joseph from another recommendation of the collegium (the nomination of the Senior Advocate Indu Malhotra for appointment as a Supreme Court judge), which it accepted.

On May 2, amid expectations that it would reiterate its recommendation to elevate Justice Joseph, the collegium deferred discussion on the issue. The meeting resolved to identify probable appointees from Calcutta, Rajasthan and Telangana and Andhra Pradesh High Courts, which are currently not represented in the apex court, in order to have a "fair representation".

The action of the Centre in returning a recommendation of the collegium for reconsideration is not unusual and would make sense if the collegium had overlooked certain factors. But what led to outrage in civil society was the Centre's decision to segregate Indu Malhotra's name from the collegium recommendation to appoint two judges and proceed with her appointment, leaving the other recommendation uncertain until the collegium reconsidered it.

Segregation explained
Segregation of names happens at two levels. First, when the collegium segregates eligible candidates who are in the consideration zone for appointment as Supreme Court judges, and recommends first those who might be juniors in the all-India list of seniority. This is done in order to fulfil the criterion of giving representation to States that do not have a judge in the Supreme Court at a par-



ticular time, or to ensure representation to the minority communities, the S.Cs, the S. Ts or women, in order to promote diversity. Here, the segregation has an unstated objective of conferring seniority within the Supreme Court on such judges, who otherwise could never aspire to be seniors, if their names are not segregated from their senior eligible peers elsewhere, and recommended first. Seniority within the Supreme Court matters while deciding the question of who presides over a bench and whether a judge could make it to the collegium and get an opportunity to become the Chief Justice of India (CJI) during his or her term in the apex court.

When the Centre segregates the names of judges recommended by the collegium, it does so for the ostensible reason that it has got some reservations or concerns over the proposed nominees, and the collegium must reconsider them in that light. When the Centre segregates the names of such persons, on whom the collegium intended to confer seniority within the Supreme Court, and returns them for its reconsideration, it usually seeks the consent of the collegium for this purpose. When the Centre does not seek its consent, it leads to controversy.

In 2014, when the Centre segregated the name of the Senior Advocate Gopal Subramaniam, whose name was recommended by the collegium for appointment as a Supreme Court judge, from its other recommendees, it led to a huge controversy. The then CJI, R.M. Lodha, protested against the Centre's decision to segregate Subramaniam's name without the consent of the collegium. As Subramaniam withdrew his consent to be considered for the Supreme Court judgeship, the occasion did not arise for the collegium to reconsider its earlier recommendation.

In its communication to the Centre on January 19, the collegium placed Justice Joseph's name first, followed by Indu Malhotra. It recommended only these two names, although there were many other eligible candidates and there were as many as six vacancies at that time. Its objective was, of course, to confer seniority within the Supreme Court on Justice Joseph and Justice Indu Malhotra, in that order. Not segregating their names from others in the consideration zone would have led to their loss of seniority in the Supreme Court. This is because some judges are senior to Justice Joseph in the consideration zone, in terms of their initial date of appointment as High Court judge. Similarly, other things being equal, a person elevated directly from the Bar as a Supreme Court judge is placed as a junior to another appointee whose previous experience was as a High Court judge. This indicated that the collegium, in its communication to the Centre, sought the appointment of Justices Joseph and Indu Malhotra in the order of seniority in which it placed them and not otherwise. It is debatable whether the Centre can unilaterally alter this order of seniority without

seeking the consent of the collegium.

In a sense, segregation of eligible persons in the zone of consideration as judges of the Supreme Court shows that it aims to minimise the damage likely to be caused by blind adherence to the principle of all-India seniority of judges, which the collegium does not consider as sacrosanct. The subtext is to promote and reward diversity in the apex court, by recognising the merit of the proposed appointees even if they happen to suffer from the disadvantage of being juniors in the all-India list of judges. The all-India list of seniority of judges is prepared on the basis of their initial date of appointment as judges in the High Courts. In the case of direct recruits from the Bar, their date of birth is considered to determine their seniority among them, if more than one is appointed on the same day to the Supreme Court, and subsequently, their date of joining the court is considered to determine their seniority within the court.

The appointment of Indu Malhotra as a judge of the Supreme Court after segregating the name of Justice Joseph, therefore, is considered an instance of serious impropriety. The collegium wanted Justice Joseph to be senior not only to Justice Indu Malhotra but to other eligible judges who are senior to him on the all-India list and who might be considered for elevation in due course. This is also a sign that the Centre wants to reverse the ceding of primacy to the collegium in the appointment process in practice, even though the Supreme Court has repeatedly held that its primacy vis-a-vis the executive ensures independence of the judiciary and therefore is a basic feature of the Constitution.

Indu Malhotra was sworn in by Chief Justice Dipak Misra on April 27. Indeed, a bench consisting of Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud, which, on April 26, heard a petition submitted by nearly 100 advocates of the Supreme Court, seeking a stay on the swearing in of Indu Malhotra, had said that there was nothing wrong if the Centre segregated names recommended by the collegium to ensure expeditious filling up of vacancies. As to the question whether the Centre can reverse the seniority of judges, as recommended by the collegium, the bench showed no urgency and decided to hear it on another day, while refusing a stay of the swearing in of Indu Malhotra, calling the plea "unheard of".

Seniority vs merit
The Centre has suggested that Justice Joseph be placed at number 42 on the all-India High Court judges' seniority list. At present 11 Chief Justices of various High Courts were senior to him, the Centre pointed out. It took the view that in the case where the High Court concerned was adequately represented in the Supreme Court and also in the appointment of Chief Justices of different High Courts, then this consideration cannot be, and should not be, ignored alto-

gether to the detriment and prejudice of other senior judges.

The Centre claimed in its letter that in view of the sanctioned judge strength of 47 in the Kerala High Court, it had received adequate representation in the Supreme Court and as Chief Justices of High Courts. "At this stage, elevation of one more judge from the Kerala High Court as a judge of the Supreme Court of India does not appear to be justified as it does not address the legitimate claims of the Chief Justices and puisne judges of many other High Courts and forestalls the claim of other senior Chief Justices and puisne judges," it reasoned.

The Centre drew the attention of the collegium to a sentence in the Supreme Court's answer to the presidential reference under Article 143 in the Third Judges' case (1998): "...all that was intended to be conveyed was that it was very natural that senior High Court judges should entertain hopes of elevation to the Supreme Court and that the Chief Justice of India and the Collegium should bear this in mind."

The collegium, in its resolution on January 10, said clearly: "While recommending the name of Mr Justice K.M. Joseph, the collegium has taken into consideration combined seniority on all-India basis of Chief Justices and senior puisne judges of High Courts, apart from their merit and integrity."

It added that Justice Joseph was more deserving and suitable in all respects than other Chief Justices and senior puisne judges of High Courts for being appointed as a judge of the Supreme Court.

It recommended Justice Joseph on the basis of the Supreme Court's judgment in the Third Judges' case, (1998) which held:

"Where, therefore, there is outstanding merit the possessor thereof deserves to be appointed regardless of the fact that he may not stand high in the all-India seniority list or in his own High Court. All that then needs to be recorded when recommending him for appointment is that he has outstanding merit."

The Centre's communication to the CJI on April 26 was silent on this ruling of the apex court.

While the Centre's communication seeking reconsideration of the collegium's recommendation on Justice Joseph is a result of its flawed understanding of the legal position, its reference to the need to ensure geographical and social diversity in the court has to be understood in proper perspective.

Seniority conundrum
The Supreme Court has a sanctioned strength of a Chief Justice and 30 puisne judges. Supreme Court judges are appointed mainly under three considerations. First, one who has been a judge of one or more High Courts in succession for at least five years. Second, one who has been an advocate of one or more High Courts in succession for at least 10 years. This normally includes legal practice in the Supreme Court, as those who practice there having been enrolled as advocates with any State Bar Council under the administrative jurisdiction of one of the High Courts. Third, one who is a distinguished jurist in the opinion of the President. While the first two considerations have been used all these years to find nominees as judges, the third source was left completely unused. Legal academic Upendra Baxi once observed that successive Presidents of India had been looking with a telescope and had not found any jurist worth appointing as a Supreme Court judge all these years.

(Courtesy: Frontline)

ERRONEOUS DECISION

By BALAJI SRINIVASAN

The recent events that played out across various stages in Lutyens' Delhi have shocked the public. An independent judiciary is a pillar of democracy and demolition of the same is not an act to be applauded but one to be reviled.

Dipak Misra is merely one in a long line of jurists who have occupied the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The office of the head of Indian judiciary is not defined by his actions. The judicial system is far larger than just one man and his alleged indiscretions.

In the motion submitted seeking his removal from office, five alleged indiscretions of the CJI have been cited. While these may require scrutiny, a trip down memory lane might serve us better.

Justice Ramaswami case
In 1991, a motion to remove Justice V. Ramaswami was submitted to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Kapil Sibal, a senior advocate then, represented the judge before the Supreme Court and Parliament. The motion was admitted by the Speaker, but before an inquiry committee could be formed as per Sec-

tion 3(2) of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, the House dissolved. The Sub-Committee on Judicial Accountability filed a writ before the Supreme Court praying that a committee be formed and the charges be investigated.

Further, it was also prayed that during the pendency of the proceedings before the committee, Justice Ramaswami should be restrained from performing judicial functions and from exercising judicial powers.

The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court (vide order 1991 4 SCC 699) stated that the removal proceedings did not lapse with the dissolution of the House, but refused to restrain Justice Ramaswami from performing judicial functions. Subsequent to this order, an inquiry committee as provided for under Section 3(2) of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, was formed to investigate the allegations made against him.

A writ petition was then filed by M. Krishna Swami (WP(C) No. 149 of 1992) with a view to subverting the Supreme Court's orders in the Sub-Committee on Judicial Accountability case. This petition called into question the powers vested in the Speaker of the Lok Sabha

under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.

Kapil Sibal, who stridently represented the writ petitioner and indirectly the judge, argued that the Speaker's powers under the Judges (Inquiry) Act were violative of Article 124 of the Constitution and prayed that the notice of motion moved against Justice Ramaswami and its admittance by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha be quashed and that the committee formed subsequently be held void ab initio.

The Supreme Court saw through the elaborate hoax being perpetrated by the writ petitioner and his lawyers and gave the petitioner an option to implead the party concerned, that is, Justice Ramaswami. But Sibal refused to implead him. The Supreme Court, in a 4:1 majority, dismissed the petition and noted that the petition was an attempt to challenge the order passed in the Sub-Committee on Judicial Accountability case and that it was a bad non-joinder of necessary parties.

However, it is crucial to note that in the Krishna Swami case, the apex court upheld the Lok Sabha Speaker's right to admit or dismiss notices of motion for

removal of judges as per his discretion.

Simultaneous to the writ petition filed by Krishna Swami, Justice Ramaswami's wife, Sarojini Ramaswami, filed a writ petition wherein the judge submitted a letter stating that even though he was not a party to the proceedings, he would be bound by the judgment passed in the same. This writ petition prayed for reliefs identical to those mentioned in the writ petition filed by Krishna Swami. Not surprisingly, Sibal appeared for her.

The inquiry committee formed to investigate the charges against Justice Ramaswami filed a report, and when the matter came up for vote in the Lok Sabha, the Congress, which is crusading for the independence of the judiciary now, abstained from voting. Apparently, the Congress' zeal to eradicate the alleged rot from the judicial system is new-found. It is clear that Kapil Sibal's stance today is in direct contravention to his stance in 1991. Sibal has performed an admirable volte-face and has swung from aggressively protecting a judge's rights and independence to directly attacking the CJI. The Congress, which had no difficulty in abstaining from voting when the removal of Justice Ramas-

wami was on the floor, has now lent its support to some of its members filing a notice of motion to remove the sitting CJI from his office.

While appearing for Justice Ramaswami, Sibal propounded the role of the Speaker/Chairman in admitting or dismissing a motion filed for the removal of a judge. Ironically, it is his arguments in the Krishna Swami case that M. Venkaiah Naidu relied on to dismiss the notice of motion filed by Sibal.

Burden on Vice President
The procedure for removal of a sitting judge has been laid down in Article 124 (4) of the Constitution. Further, the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, deals with the minutiae involved in removal of judges. Section 3 of the Judges Inquiry Act is unambiguous and states that when a notice of motion has been moved in the Rajya Sabha with more than 50 signatures, as in the present case, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha "may, after consulting such persons, if any, as he thinks fit and after considering such materials, if any, as may be available to him, either admit the motion or not admit the same".

It is clear from the bare reading of

the Section 3 of the Act that the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is vested with complete discretion to admit or dismiss a motion to remove a Supreme Court judge. Only when a motion is admitted is an inquiry committee to be formed. Further, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is not bound to lay out before the House his reasons for admitting or dismissing a motion to remove a judge.

In the present case, the Chairman, after consultation with several eminent jurists, the Attorney General and the Law Minister, has chosen to dismiss the motion to remove CJI Misra from office. There is no question that the Chairman was well within his rights to dismiss the motion. However, the manner of dismissal is found to be distasteful in the present case.

The Chairman has not acquitted himself to the best of his capabilities and has fallen short of discharging the constitutional duty cast upon him. He is expected to assimilate the information put before him vide a notice of motion and reach a well-informed conclusion as to whether the motion warrants admission or rejection.

(Courtesy: Frontline)

Eye on ties, PM Modi arrives in Sochi for informal talks with Putin

Sochi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today arrived in Russia's Black Sea coastal city Sochi for an informal summit with President Vladimir Putin that will focus on pressing global and regional issues, including impact of the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal.

The aim of the informal summit is to use the friendship and trust between the two countries to create convergence on key global and regional issues, official sources said.

They said the two leaders will meet for around four to six hours for the "agendaless" talks where deliberations on bilateral issues are likely to be very limited.

"Greetings to the friendly people of Russia. I look forward to my visit to Sochi tomorrow and my meeting with President Putin. It is always a pleasure to meet him," Modi had tweeted yesterday.

"Am confident the talks with President Putin will further strengthen the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia," Modi had tweeted.

The issues on the table may include economic impact on India and Russia in the wake of the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, situation in



Afghanistan, Syria, threat of terrorism and matters relating to upcoming SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) and BRICS summits.

The sources said possible impact of the US sanctions against Russia under Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) on Indo-Russia defence cooperation may also figure during the talks between Modi and Putin.

There have been apprehensions that the US decision on Iran deal may adversely impact New Delhi's oil import from the Persian Gulf nation as well as on the Chabahar port project.

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

The countries having financial dealings with Iran are expected to be hit by the comprehensive sanctions regime announced by the Trump administration after withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

The US had imposed sanctions on Russia earlier this year under CAATSA for its military intervention in Ukraine and alleged meddling in the 2016 US Presidential elections.

The two leaders may also deliberate on extending Indo-Russia civil

nuclear cooperation in third countries, possible areas for cooperation for the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) project, India's engagement with five-nation Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the situation in the Korean peninsula.

The sources said the large part of the informal meeting between Modi and Putin will be one-to-one and there may be limited segment for restricted delegation level discussions.

They said President Putin will also host a lunch for Modi.

It would be Modi's second informal summit in as many months as he held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping in China's Wuhan in a similar format last month.

Sources said there could be more such informal summits between Modi and other world leaders in the coming months as India eyes to play an important role in global power dynamics.

They said President Putin will be in India later this year for the annual summit during which key bilateral issues will be deliberated upon.

The annual summit talks between the top leadership of the two countries have been taking place alternately in Moscow and New Delhi since 2000

Rajbhar says those flocking rallies of opposition parties will be 'cursed' with jaundice



Ballia: Senior UP minister Om Prakash Rajbhar has sent out a bizarre warning to those attending rallies of his political rivals -- they will be "cursed" with jaundice.

The Suheldev Bharat Samaj Party president also said that those cursed will only recover when he will provide medicine (blessing).

"Until my team comes to you with a message of rally you will not attend rally of any other party. If somebody attends it he/she will have to face my curse. He will suffer from jaundice and it will be only cured when OP Rajbhar provides medicine," he said.

Rajbhar was speaking at a prohibition rally of his party in Ballia on Sunday.

The SBSP president also demanded a ban on liquor in UP to open new avenues for development. "PM Narendra Modi, during his election meetings in UP, had promised to implement the Gujarat model in UP. I remind him of his promise and request him to ban liquor in the state to open new avenues for development," Rajbhar said.

He said that no party has mustered the strength to raise issue of banning liquor in the state and urged women to defeat those who provide liquor for votes.

On reports that he had some differences with the chief minister, Rajbhar said, "He is my captain and I follow his directions."

Congress old guard proves mettle, outsmarts BJP in Karnataka amidst generational shift

New Delhi: The deft handling of the imbroglio following the Karnataka election results by Congress veterans has once again proven their relevance in the grand old party, which is in the midst of a generational shift after Rahul Gandhi took over as its chief in December last year.

After instructions from Gandhi, the leaders moved swiftly to wrest the initiative from a rampaging Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to form the next government in the southern state. Experienced leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, 69, and Ashok Gehlot, 67, helped outfox the BJP by offering support to the JD(S) with HD Kumaraswamy as the chief minister.

While JD(S) leaders HD Deve Gowda and Kumaraswamy found the offer too tempting to resist, the BJP had not anticipated the move, particularly since the Congress chief Rahul Gandhi had attacked the JD(S) during the campaign trail, even calling



it a "B-team" of the BJP.

That the Congress, with 78 legislators was willing to play second fiddle to the JD(S), which had bagged 37 seats, was a significant departure from the past when the party, in a similar situation, would insist on the leadership role while negotiating post-poll alliances. In Meghalaya as well, the party had to rush senior leaders Ahmed Patel, 68, and Kamal Nath, 71, to talk to potential alliance partners after the Congress emerged as the single-largest party in the election held in February this year. However,

the BJP outsmarted the two and went on to form a coalition government in the state.

Gehlot had been entrusted with the task of handling party affairs in Gujarat, the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah, just before the assembly polls last year. The Congress for the first time in the past two decades gave a tough fight to the BJP, significantly improving its tally.

"The old guard is here to stay. You cannot simply crush them and move forward. The young leaders should learn from the seniors. It is the ex-

perience of seniors and energy of the youth that will take the party to new heights," Congress leader from Bihar Kishore Kumar Jha said.

Gandhi had announced at the party's 84th plenary that he will strive to build a new Congress with "talented" youngsters but maintained that he will take along both young and old in making the party a powerful instrument of change.

Observers say the old guard will continue to play an important role in the Congress. "The senior leaders are a valuable asset for the Congress and have been deployed very imaginatively. The old guard and the young eagles must work together if the Congress has to revive in states and nationally," said political analyst Balveer Arora.

The immediate task for Gandhi after the Karnataka is to carry out an elaborate organisational reshuffle of the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

Congress opposes proposed changes in civil services allocation

New Delhi: The Congress on Monday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "main objective is to destroy institutions" as it opposed the proposed changes in the civil services allocation.

It also took a swipe at the ruling NDA, saying it should be renamed as NPA due to piling bad loans under its government.

Congress communications in-charge Randeep Surjewala hit out at the prime minister alleging that he has unleashed a "sinister proposal" to destroy the all-India civil services merit.

"MODI- 'Main Objective to Destroy Institutions'."

"Modiji has unleashed a sinister proposal to destroy the All India Civil Services Merit!"

"Adding 'Foundation Marks' will demolish UPSC's merit list giving leeway to executive to tamper the merit as per their whims. Unpardonable!" he said on Twitter.

The central government is considering a major change



in the allocation of services to successful candidates of civil services examination.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has asked the department concerned to examine if the services can be allocated after the completion of foundation course, according to an official communication.

The duration of foundation course for officers of almost all the services is three months.

At present, service allocation to the candidates selected on the basis of civil services examination, con-

ducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), is made well before the commencement of the foundation course.

The PMO has desired to examine if service allocation/cadre allocation to probationers selected on the basis of the examination can be made after foundation course, as per the communication sent by the Personnel Ministry to different cadre-controlling authorities.

Claiming that non-performing assets (NPAs) rose

during the current government, Surjewala said, "Banks in peril. People's money unsafe, Defaulters' Loot and 'Escape'!"

"Bad loans of private banks rise by a whopping 317 pc under Modi Government - Rs 26,112 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 1,09,076 crore in 2017-18."

"Banks in peril, people's money unsafe. 'NDA' should be renamed as 'NPA'."

"NPA's of all banks rise by 230 pc - from Rs 2,51,054 crore in March 2014 to Rs 8,31,141 crore in December 2017," he also said on Twitter.

NDA govt has almost done away with blacklist of NRI Sikhs denied visa: Ram Madhav

Washington: The NDA government has almost done away with the "blacklist" of overseas Sikhs which denied them an Indian visa, a senior BJP leader told Sikh community members here.

The blacklisted NRI Sikhs are barred from travelling to India due to their alleged ties with Khalistan movement in the 80s and 90s. The list was prepared at different levels by the security agencies.

The names in the list, and denial of India visas to them, of late, has been one of the main reasons of discontent among the Sikh communities in the US.

"We have almost done away with the most inhuman blacklist, which used to deny the community their right to visit India, the right to visit Harmandir Sahib, right to meet

with their relatives, near and dear ones," BJP general secretary Ram Madhav told a congregation of Sikhs at one of the oldest Gurdwaras of Maryland in a suburb of Washington DC. "The (black) list has been almost completely removed. Only a few individuals remain (on the list). Those names will also go," he said.

Early this year, several Sikh Gurdwaras in the US had announced that they would not let any Indian government official to address their congregation. A large number of Gurdwaras had later denied such a move.

Madhav said the government has approached the Supreme Court to cancel anticipatory bail of those who had led the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, that took the lives of more than 3,000 people, so that they can be put behind



the bars, he said.

Madhav also addressed a gathering of Indian Americans where he said the BJP wants to be ruling in all the 29 states of India.

"We narrowly missed the 22nd State. It should rightfully belong to us. People voted for Mukti from

Congress," he said and alleged that the Congress-brand politics has made a "back-door entry" to power in Karnataka, even after it lost the recently concluded Assembly elections.

"They have managed to try and enter from the backdoor. Congress

is the party of the past. It is (now) ready to be a second fiddle to a local party. They are happy, as long as they are able to keep BJP out (of power) for at least three months. BJP is the present of India and BJP is going to be the future of India," Madhav said at the New India event organised by Overseas Friends of BJP to celebrate the fourth anniversary of the NDA government.

He said that the government has decided not to have security operations during the month of Ramadan in Jammu and Kashmir.

But this does not mean that the security forces would be sitting ducks for anybody to come and attack.

"If any attack happened, it would be retaliated with full force," said the BJP leader who is party's in-charge of Jammu and Kashmir.

Venkaiah Naidu says doctors in ancient India could do cataract, plastic surgeries

Kochi: Indian history is replete with those who have significantly advanced human knowledge, with surgeons from the era capable of performing complex medical procedures like cataract and plastic surgery, vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu said in Kochi on Monday.

He said besides surgeons, many scientists, mathematicians, physicians, chemists,

metallurgists, astronomers and a number of innovators in ancient India have significantly advanced human knowledge.

Naidu was addressing a function organised to honour young scientists in Kalady, the birthplace of Adi Shankaracharya, about 45 km from Kochi.

"One recalls a number of such illustrious names like

Aryabhata, Pingala, Brahmagupta, Bhaskara, Varahamihira, Charaka and Sushruta. India gave the concept of zero and the binary system to the world," he said.

"We knew how to make steel alloys and smelt zinc. Our ancient surgeons could conduct many complicated surgeries, including plastic surgery and cataract surgery," he said.

He conferred the Adi Shankara Asianet News Young Scientist Awards 2018 at the Adi Shankara Institute of Engineering & Technology, Kalady.

Naidu said the award was an eloquent testimony to the inquisitiveness, ingenuity and innovative initiative inherent in young India.

He said along with "gross national income", the focus

must also be on how Science and Technology can foster greater happiness and better quality of life, as well as harmonious inclusive societies.

"Knowledge must lead us to become wise and we must have the wisdom to use the knowledge we acquire for improving our lives," Naidu said.

The vice president said one should draw inspiration

from the best in Indian tradition, remove the "deadwood" accumulated over the years and revitalise the nation.

Noting that nearly two third of the country's population is aged below 35 years, Naidu said if youth can acquire the right mix of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the 21st century, the dividends to growth and development could be enormous.

Petition in Supreme Court seeks review of justice Loya death case verdict

New Delhi: A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking review of its verdict rejecting the demand for an independent probe into the death of special CBI judge BH Loya, who dealt with the high-profile Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter case.

The review petition filed by Bombay Lawyers Association has challenged the apex court's April 19 judgment by which it had dismissed a batch of pleas and brought the curtains down on the raging debate over Loya's death.

The judge had died of cardiac arrest in Nagpur on December 1, 2014 when he had gone to attend the wedding of a colleague's daughter.

In its April 19 verdict, the apex court bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra had ruled that Loya died of "natural causes" and there was no ground for the court to hold that there was reasonable suspicion about the cause or circumstances of death which would merit a further inquiry.

The review petition filed in the apex court has said this judgement "has resulted in miscarriage of justice, if not complete negation of justice on the facts of the case. It is therefore clearly required in the interests of justice that the judgment and order in question be reviewed and recalled."

"The present review petition seek to neither sensationalise the subject matter of the petition, nor make a veiled attempt to launch a frontal attack on independence of the judiciary or to dilute the credibility of judicial institutions."

"Also, no attempt is being made to create prejudice or malign dignity of the judges whose statements form part of the enquiry or those who gave the press interviews on the matter during the period of the enquiry," the plea said.



Find out the health benefits of wheat pasta

With more gluten-free diets becoming fashionable, together with a lack of genuine understanding of the subject, many people have started to question how healthy wheat pasta really is.

The only secret to healthy and awesome food combination is a balance of protein,

Carbohydrates, fat and fibre! One such meal from the Mediterranean diet is Pasta – which is delicious and fairly easy to prepare.

Rajneesh Bhasin, MD, Borges India says, pasta provides energy and essential nutrients in the form of fiber, vitamins and minerals.

What better than filling your tummy with a platter of mouth watering pasta!

While we are frequently burdened with health advice that pastas aren't healthy, one single meal of pasta (100g) is loaded with 12.5 g protein and 2.5 g fibre while whole wheat pastas are loaded with 3.5 to 4 times the fibre of regular durum wheat pastas.

The research, published in Nutrition and Diabetes, indicates that pasta consumption doesn't contribute to obesity, and was actually linked to a lower body mass index (BMI) because it known to be a part of a healthy Mediterranean diet people across the globe aspire to adopt.

Well, it is important to know that own it doesn't raise cholesterol, it contains no unhealthy fats and it is good source of the carbohydrates and nutrients we need for our body to work properly.

Your aim should be to increase your energy expenditure while cutting down the amount of fat you eat, which will come from the accompanying ingredients rather than the pasta itself.

Bhasin further stated, wheat has been a staple foodstuff for humans for centuries, but of late refined wheat flour (maida) has taken up dominant position in our daily diets in the form of bread, noodles and other products.

It is mostly due to its ease in conversion to different shapes, better shelf life and reduced price even though we know that refined flour (maida) is difficult to digest and is known to increase insulin levels in blood over a period of time.

With this growing awareness and health concern with respect to refined flours, we are seeing a switch to whole wheat products.

These health concerns coupled with good taste are easily addressed with nutritious products like whole wheat pasta.

Whole wheat pasta is made up from whole durum wheat semolina which contains all the parts of a wheat grain i.e bran, germ, endosperm unlike refined flours which contains only endosperm which erodes major fibre and protein boosters in the form of bran and germ.

In fact, most Indians are aware of the fact that it is the bran which has the major portion of fiber and protein due to the lineage and knowledge about wheat farming and grounding process.

And cooking pasta al dente reduces its glycemic index, which cuts out any sugar rush.

Several studies have also shown that ½ cup serving of whole wheat pasta can reduce the risk of chronic health conditions like cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, cancer, digestive issues.

Even though many of us are already aware about the health benefits of whole wheat pasta, we are apprehensive about introducing it in our daily lives due to the inhibition about its taste and pasta experience it is meant to deliver.

But in the case of whole wheat pasta, even though the taste is little different from durum wheat pasta it is nuttier goes well with the Indian palate while delivering an authentic Italian gourmet pasta experience. It is time we Indians switch to healthier products which win on the grounds of taste without compromising on the health benefits, concludes Bhasin.

THINK GENETICALLY MODIFIED SOYBEAN OIL IS HEALTHY SCIENTISTS HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU

Cooking oils and their health properties have long since been a topic of debate for scientists all over the world.

With numerous varieties of oils in the markets, it doesn't come as a surprise that the diet conscious get confused and argue about which oil is healthier.

Soybean oil and genetically modified (GM) soybean oil are two such products whose health properties are highly debated, with the latter often getting the upper hand. However, a study has now busted the myth that GM soybean oil is healthier than normal soybean oil, warning that it's harmful to liver function. According to University Of California – Riverside researchers, while soybean oil induces less obesity and insulin resistance than soybean oil, but its effects on diabetes and fatty liver are similar to those of soybean oil.

The team tested Plenish®, a genetically-modified (GM) soybean oil released by DuPont in 2014.

Plenish is engineered to have low linoleic acid, resulting in an oil similar in composition to olive oil, the basis of the Mediterranean diet and considered to be healthful.

They compared the long-term met-



abolic effects of soybean oil to those of Plenish. The study also compares both soybean oil and Plenish to coconut oil, which is rich in saturated fatty acids and causes the least amount of weight gain among all the high-fat diets tested.

Lead researcher said Frances Sladek found that all three oils raised the cholesterol levels in the liver and blood, dispelling the popular myth that soybean oil reduces cholesterol levels.

Next, the researchers compared Plenish to olive oil. Both oils have high oleic acid, a fatty acid believed to reduce blood pressure and help with weight loss. "In our mouse experiments, olive oil produced essentially identical effects

as Plenish - more obesity than coconut oil, although less than soybean oil - and very fatty livers, which was surprising as olive oil is typically considered to be the healthiest of all the vegetable oils," said another researcher Poonamjot Deol.

Plenish, which has a fatty acid composition similar to olive oil, induced hepatomegaly, or enlarged livers, and liver dysfunction, just like olive oil."

"Our findings do not necessarily relate to other soybean products like soy sauce, tofu, or soy milk - products that are largely from the water-soluble compartment of the soybean; oil, on the other hand, is from the fat-soluble compartment," Sladek said.

Why dairy products low on Iodine matters

Milk and dairy products are believed to be one of the richest sources for iodine in many diets.

But, it is now believed that the iodine concentration of most alternatives to cows' milk, such as soy and almond milk is very low, reports The Independent. This is considered to be very important because deficiency of iodine, especially during pregnancy, affects brain development and is linked to lower intelligence.

The researchers measured the iodine concentration of 47 milk substitutes available in the UK, including a range of different types: soya, almond, oat, rice, coconut, hazelnut and hemp. It was found that most milk substitutes were naturally low in iodine; their concentration was around 2 per cent of that of cows' milk. And only three of the 47 drinks were fortified with iodine.

While some manufacturers replace the calcium found in cows' milk, the vast majority, including big brands, do not replace the iodine. Cows' milk is an excellent source of iodine, with a glass (200g) providing around 70µg (micrograms): a considerable proportion of the 150µg iodine intake recommended for European adults every day. Severe iodine deficiency during pregnancy is well known to cause impaired brain development and lead to lower IQ in the infant. It is for that reason that many countries have added iodine to table salt (iodised salt) in order to improve iodine intake and reduce the impact of deficiency on population health. As a result, the number of countries with severe iodine deficiency has been reduced, but some countries are still classified as mildly-to-moderately iodine deficient.

You'll think twice before throwing away that banana peel Here are some health benefits

Bananas are well-known all over the world for their health benefits and are perhaps one of the most consumed fruits in the world. A rich source of energy, bananas are also nature's most under-rated fruits.

However, once peeled, the fruit goes into our tummies and the peel goes into the trash. What if we told you that banana peels have health benefits of their own?

You won't be throwing it away if you knew what it can do. Check it out!

Teeth whitening

Rub the peel on your teeth for two weeks. You should begin to see some results very soon. Remove skin warts

If you have skin warts, this problem can be easily solved with a banana peel. Simply rub the peel on the wart. This will also prevent them from appearing in the future.

Acne and wrinkles

Bananas are great for skin care. All you need to do is rub a banana peel on your skin,

specially on problematic areas and leave it for 30 minutes. Do this everyday till you start seeing the difference.

Banana peel also helps to keep your skin hydrated. Add an egg yolk to a mashed banana peel. Apply this mixture on your face and wash it off after 5 minutes.

Treat psoriasis

Apply the peel on the psoriasis affected area. The banana peel has moisturizing properties and also reduces itchiness. It will quickly heal psoriasis and you can see noticeable results within no time.

UV Protection

Banana peel helps in protecting the eyes from the harmful UV rays. Make sure you leave the peel under the sun before rubbing the banana peel on your eyes. It is also proven to reduce the risk of cataracts.

Some important tips:

Use a fresh banana peel for best results. Never keep an unpeeled banana for long.



Consume immediately after peeling. Also, the peel should be used immediately.

Store bananas in a cool, dry place and always keep them away from heat or sunlight.

BLACK TEA MAY HELP IN PREVENTING OBESITY AND PROMOTING WEIGHT-LOSS

While the caffeine content in black tea is a concerning factor, it is still considered to be the healthier option in comparison to black coffee.

Tea drinkers are in abundance across the globe and a lot of them like theirs black. But, here's a good news for you if you're one of them.

Researchers have revealed that black tea may be as beneficial as green tea in preventing obesity and promoting well-being.

The findings showed that chemicals found in black tea – called polyphenols – alters energy metabolism in the liver by changing gut metabolites.

Studies have previously linked black tea consumption to improvement in health problems like digestion, brain health, cancer, heart health, diarrhoea and even Parkinson's, provided it is consumed in moderation.

Earlier, it was known that green



tea polyphenols are more effective and offer more health benefits than black tea polyphenols since green tea chemicals are absorbed into the blood and tissue.

However, "our new findings sug-

gest that black tea, through a specific mechanism through the gut microbiome, may also contribute to good health and weight loss in humans", said lead author Susanne Henning, Professor at the Univer-

sity of California – Los Angeles (UCLA). "The results suggest that both green and black teas are pre-biotics, substances that induce the growth of good microorganisms that contribute to a person's well-being,"

Henning added.

For the study, published in the European Journal of Nutrition, the team conducted experiments on mice that consumed a high-fat, high-sugar diets and were supplemented with green tea or black tea extracts.

Both groups had lesser type of bacteria associated with obesity, but had more of bacteria associated with lean body mass.

However, only the mice that consumed black tea extract had an increase in a type of bacteria called Pseudobutyrvibrio – which could help explain the difference between how black and green tea change energy metabolism.

The findings suggest that the health benefits of both tea go beyond their antioxidant benefits and that both have a strong impact on the gut microbiome, noted Zhaoqing Li, Director at UCLA's Centre for Human Nutrition.

Visual learning linked to deep sleep

Can lack of sleep affect our ability to learn? It appears so as researchers have found that visual learning gets cemented in the brain during the deepest part of sleep, called slow-wave sleep. When we see something, our retinas transmit that image to the thalamus in the brain, where neurons send very basic visual information to the visual cortex to be processed, said study author Sara Aton, Assistant Professor at University of Michigan in the US. When the brain is awake, neurons in the thalamus and cortex fire steadily to transmit visual information between them. However, in slow-wave sleep, those neurons will



burst and then pause rhythmically and in synchrony, Aton said. There is also communication in the opposite direction -- between the visual cortex and thalamus -- forming a loop of communication between the two structures, said the study published

in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. What is the significance of these brain waves? Lead author Jaclyn Durkin, a doctoral student in Aton's lab, made recordings in a part of the thalamus called the lateral geniculate nucleus,

which processes visual information, and the visual cortex of mice. The researchers tracked the activity of these populations of neurons while presenting the mice with patterns of visual stimulation. They did this across many hours of subsequent sleep. "In these mice, during visual experience, we saw immediate changes in the neurons in the thalamus, but nothing going on in the visual cortex," Aton said. "These waves during subsequent sleep are apparently able to transfer information from the thalamus to the cortex, and that information reflects what that animal has just been looking at," Aton said.

Resort to Vitamin D supplements if you are suffering from asthma

Vitamin D supplements may halve the risk of suffering a severe asthma attack, claims a study. If clubbed with medicines, it can act as a source of immediate relief for the ones who suffer from a severe asthma attack. Asthma deaths arise primarily during episodes of acute worsening of symptoms, known as attacks or 'exacerbations', which are commonly triggered by viral upper respiratory infections, researchers said. Vitamin D is thought to protect against such attacks by boosting immune responses to respiratory viruses and dampening down harmful airway inflammation, they said.

Researchers from Queen Mary Univer-

sity of London (QMUL) in the UK analysed data from 955 participants in seven randomised controlled trials, which tested the use of vitamin D supplements.

The study, published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine journal, found that vitamin D supplementation resulted in a 30 per cent reduction in the rate of asthma attacks requiring treatment with steroid tablets or injections. Researchers also found that the supplementation resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in the risk of experiencing at least one asthma attack requiring hospitalisation - from six per cent of people experiencing such an event to three per cent.

Oil rises as US says trade war with China is 'on hold'

Oil rose on Monday, lifted by a rally across stocks and other commodities, after the United States said it had put a possible trade war with China "on hold".

Brent crude futures were up 35 cents at \$78.86 a barrel at 0845 GMT, having hit a high above \$80 last week, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose 29 cents to \$71.57 a barrel.

A possible US trade war with China is "on hold" after the world's largest economies agreed to drop their tariff threats while they work on a wider trade agreement, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday, giving global markets a lift in early trading on Monday.

"That's the main thing that's driven oil and equity futures. It does for now, in terms of trade wars, put that risk away," Petromatrix strategist Olivier Jakob said.

The energy ministers of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates last week voiced concern about recent oil market volatility and plan to meet



Russian counterpart Alexander Novak in St Petersburg to continue consultations. "It's worth watching St Petersburg at the end of this week, that could provide the key input for the next few weeks," Jakob said.

Saudi Arabian minister of energy Khalid al-Falih and the UAE's Suhail al-Mazroui will attend the St Peters-

burg Economic Forum this week, along with OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo and corporate heavyweights Bob Dudley and Ben van Beurden, the chief executives of BP and Royal Dutch Shell, respectively.

BP's Dudley told Reuters he expected a flood of US shale and a possible reopening of OPEC taps to cool

oil markets after crude rose above \$80 a barrel last week.

Dudley said he saw oil prices falling to between \$50 and \$65 a barrel due to surging shale output and OPEC's capacity to boost production to replace potential falls in Iranian supplies due to sanctions.

Oil prices are within sight of last week's November 2014 highs, but many traders and analysts say they believe there is enough supply to meet demand despite ongoing production cuts led by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), plunging output in crisis-struck Venezuela and looming US sanctions against major oil producer Iran.

"Without a further escalation in geopolitical risk, oil might be due a pullback," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at futures brokerage AxiTrader.

Fund managers cut their holdings of US crude to the lowest level this year, according to the most recent data from the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission on Friday.

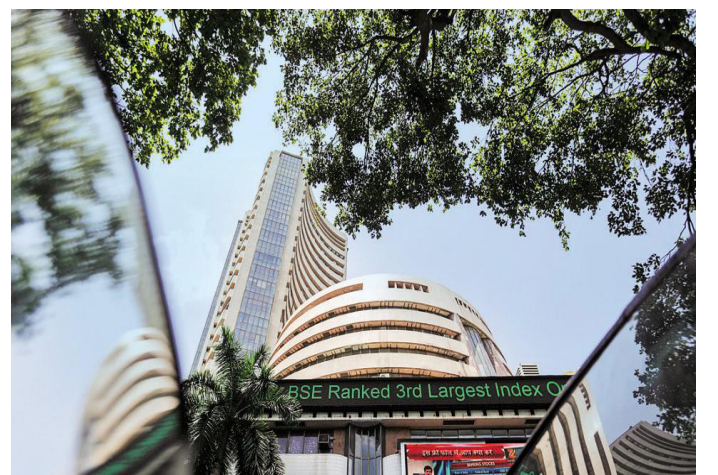
Sensex extends losses for fifth day, sinks 232 points over Karnataka, macroeconomic concerns

Benchmark equity index BSE Sensex plunged over 232 points to end at 34,616.13 on Monday, extending its fall to the fifth straight session over political and macroeconomic concerns.

Investors were wary after BJP's B S Yeddyurappa resigned as the chief minister of Karnataka on Saturday minutes before he was to face a floor test to prove his contested majority in the hung assembly, paving the way for the JD(S)-Congress combine to form the government.

Sentiment got another jolt after Moody's Investors Service downgraded PNB's rating, citing the impact of recent fraud on its capital as well as weak internal controls, brokers said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex had soared about 126 points to hit a high of 34,973.95 in early trade but gave up its gains following a wide-



spread sell-off, which dragged it down to 34,593.82. The gauge finally ended at a nearly one-month low of 34,616.13, down 232.17 points or 0.67%. This is its weakest closing since April 25 when it had finished at 34,501.60.

It had lost 708.41 points in the previous four sessions. The broader NSE Nifty closed lower by 79.70 points, or 0.75%, at 10,516.70, after hovering between 10,621.70 and 10,505.80.

A plunge in the rupee's value and sustained foreign fund outflows added to the gloom.

Two more Fortis directors quit ahead of crucial shareholders' meet tomorrow

Fortis Healthcare on Monday said two more of its directors, Harpal Singh and Sabina Vaisoha, have resigned -- a day ahead of a crucial meeting of shareholders called to vote on the removal of four directors of the cash-strapped healthcare chain.

Tejinder Singh Shergill had resigned on Sunday. He was among the four directors along with Singh, Vaisoha and Brian Tempest whose removal has been sought by investors National Westminster Bank Plc as trustee of Jupiter India Fund and East Bridge Capital Master Fund.

The two institutional investors, which together hold 12.04% stake in Fortis Healthcare, had demanded last month that these four directors be removed from the board and had called for the company's EGM on May 22 for shareholders to vote.

These investors had sought the removal of the directors for allegedly failing to work in the interest of all shareholders, particularly in their handling of the hospital chain's proposed sale.

At the same time, these



two institutions had also sought to seek shareholders' nod for appointment of three directors -- Suvalaxmi Chakraborty, Ravi Rajagopal and Indrajit Banerjee to the company's board.

In a BSE filing on Monday Fortis said Singh, who is also Chairman Emeritus of the company, has resigned as a non-executive director with effect from May 20 citing personal reasons.

Similarly, Vaisoha also put in her papers to step down as non-executive independent director on the company's board, the company said in a separate filing.

Singh in his resignation letter to fellow board members,

said "despite delivering a good outcome for the company and its shareholders there still persist some less informed attempts to steer the board and the company into a situation that could be perilous for the company's future".

He also defended the board's decision to go with the final Munjal-Burman bid saying it "was selected on criteria of certainty, simplicity of structure, no walk away rights, an early infusion of funds, capacity to address strategic needs and the ability to traverse a challenging landscape".

Vaisoha in her resignation letter said: "As the shareholders have expressed the desire

to bring in a new board, I welcome their decision and I would be happy to step down from the board."

Shergill had resigned from the board on Sunday citing personal reasons.

Earlier this month, the four directors had sent a joint representation to the shareholders of the company refuting allegations of not exercising their fiduciary duties and stated that they fairly represent interests of all shareholders.

They had also claimed that the change of the entire board at this time will certainly bring more turbulence and ambiguity to Fortis as well as its management.

They had asked shareholders to take an informed decision while voting on a resolution seeking their removal.

Fortis Healthcare is trying to finalise a new owner after receiving bids from five suitors, which included Manipal-TPG combine, Malaysia's IHH Healthcare, KKR-backed Radiant Life Care, China's Fosun Healthcare besides the successful bidder Munjals-Burmans combine.

UltraTech to acquire Century Textiles' cement unit

Aditya Birla Group firm UltraTech said it would acquire the cement business of BK Birla Group company Century Textiles and Industries through a share swap deal, a move which would further consolidate its position as market leader in the segment.

The Board of Directors of UltraTech Cement, at its meeting held on Sunday, approved a scheme of arrangement amongst Century Textiles and Industries and its respective shareholders and creditors, the Aditya Birla Group firm said in a statement.

According to the scheme, the shareholders of Century would get one equity share of UltraTech, having a face Rs 10 each for every eight equity shares of Century of face value Rs 10 each.

"UltraTech will issue 1.4 crore new equity shares to the shareholders of Century, which will increase its equity capital to Rs 288.58 crore, divided into 28.86 crores equity shares of Rs. 10 each," said UltraTech.

"The acquisition will contribute positively to the company's earnings," it said fur-



ther.

The transaction would provide UltraTech, opportunity to further strengthen its presence in the east and central markets and extending its footprint in the Western and Southern markets in the country.

"The operations will be bolstered by economies of scale arising out of synergies in procurement and logistics costs; creation of efficiencies by reducing time to market, enhancing competitiveness as well as customer service," said UltraTech.

It further said that the transaction is expected to be "consummated within 6-9 months".

Other advantages stem from ready to use assets with a strong distribution network,

availability of land, railway and other infrastructure. The acquisition is expected to lead to greater shareholder value creation, the company said.

"The transaction is subject to the approval of shareholders and creditors, stock exchanges, NCLT, CCI and all other regulatory approvals as may be required," the company said.

Century Textiles has three integrated cement units situated in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra with a total capacity of 11.4 mtpa (million tonnes per annum) and a grinding unit in West Bengal of 2.0 mtpa.

For the financial year ended March 31, 2018, it had reported revenue of Rs 4,306 crore.

In June last year, UltraTech Cement completed the Rs 16,189 crore acquisition of Jaiprakash Associates' six integrated cement plants and five grinding units, having a capacity of 21.2 million tonnes.

Besides, the company is also into race to acquire debt-ridden Binani Cement and has put its revised offer competing with Dalmia Bharat Group.

UltraTech, which is a leader in the segment, has an installed capacity of 96.5 MTPA of grey cement. It has 19 integrated plants, 1 clinkerisation plant, 25 grinding units and 7 bulk terminals.

"Upon consummation, the Company's cement capacity will stand augmented to 109.9 mtpa including its overseas operations," the company said adding "This will position UltraTech as the 3rd largest cement player globally (excluding China)".

Its operations span across India, UAE, Bahrain, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Besides UltraTech Cement is also India's largest exporter of cement to the countries around the Indian Ocean and the Middle East.

Google could face \$4.3 billion claim in UK iPhone privacy case

iPhone users suing Google over data-collection claims may be seeking as much as 3.2 billion pounds (\$4.29 billion), the search giant said in a court filing.

The group representing iPhone users, known as Google You Owe Us, now includes 4.4 million people, according to documents filed with the court at a hearing Monday. The

group says the Alphabet Inc. unit unlawfully collected people's personal information by bypassing Apple Inc.'s iPhone default privacy settings.

While any potential damages are still to be determined, the group has suggested each individual could receive 750 pounds if the case is successful, Google said in court

documents. The Mountain View, California-based company denies the allegations and argued at the hearing that the dispute doesn't belong in a London court.

Privacy has been a hot topic for the manufacturers of the world's most popular devices, from Apple to Samsung Electronics Co. to Google. In 2015, Apple allowed iPhone and

iPad users to start installing content blockers -- software that can block ads on websites, for example -- on their devices as a way of giving people more control over how their data is gathered and used.

Led by consumer advocate Richard Lloyd, the group is seeking permission to hear the case as a "representative action" that is akin to a

US class action, arguing that all the customers share the same interests.

The group said that Google used an algorithm that allowed developers to track a user's browsing history and collect personal information. The algorithm acted to get around the default settings of Apple's Safari browser, which blocked third-party tracking via cookies.

Industry urges govt to cut excise duty on fuel as oil prices zoom

India Inc on Monday urged the government to cut excise duty on petrol and diesel immediately, observing that rising oil prices pose a high risk to India's economic growth trajectory.

Industry bodies FICCI and ASSOCHAM also pitched for inclusion of automobile fuel under the ambit of GST as a long-term solution to rising prices, which coupled with a weakening rupee would increase the country's import bill significantly and have a cascading impact on inflation.

"With global oil prices once again spiralling upwards, the macroeconomic risks of higher inflation, higher trade deficit and pressure on balance of payments with attendant consequences for the rupee value have once again surfaced," FICCI president Rashesh Shah said.

He said the weakening

rupee will further add pressure on the import bill, highlighting that there is also a risk of monetary policy turning hawkish, which would in turn have a bearing on growth of private investments.

"At a time when Indian economy is on a recovery path, rising oil prices are again posing high risk to India's economic growth trajectory," Shah said. "Unless swift action is taken to address the situation, economic growth will again head towards a speed breaker. Amongst the most immediate actions that can be taken by the government is to bring down the excise duty on fuel," he added.

He said going forward, the Centre should also work with states to bring petrol products under the GST regime.

"While cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel may provide temporary relief to con-



sumers, the sustainable solution lies in the automobile fuel coming under Goods and Services Tax, which can happen only after the Centre and states together reduce their dependence on the fuel considerably," ASSOCHAM secretary general DS Rawat said.

He said the rising crude prices coupled with weaker rupee with cascading impact on inflation pose a big challenge for the Indian macro picture and ironically, there is little that can be done in the short term.

In the long run, India needs

to rework its energy security and ensure that petrol and diesel do not remain a huge revenue resource. Rather than being a revenue source for the government, auto fuel should drive economic growth, ASSOCHAM said.

Brent crude oil prices went

past the \$80 per barrel mark last week. On Monday, Brent touched \$78.87 per barrel, up 0.5% from last close.

The government said on Friday the recent spurt in global rates is a matter of concern as it could inflate import bill by as much as \$50 billion and impact current account deficit (CAD). However, it remained non-committal on cutting excise duty to ease the burden from rising oil prices.

Economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg had said the spurt in oil prices will push up the oil import bill by \$25 billion to \$50 billion under different scenarios, adding that India spent \$72 billion on oil imports last year.

Asked if the government would cut excise duty on petrol and diesel, he said he has nothing to say on the excise duty front. "Just watch."

Gold prices continue to slide on muted demand, global cues



Gold prices slipped by Rs 75 to Rs 31,875 per 10 grams at the bullion market on Monday, on easing demand from local jewellers amid weak trend overseas.

Silver cracked below the Rs 41,000-mark by falling Rs 440 to Rs 40,760 per kg due to reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers.

Traders said sentiment remained downbeat due to fall in demand from local jewellers and a weak trend overseas, as the dollar rose, reducing the precious metals' safe-haven appeal after China and the US struck a deal to avert a trade war.

Globally, gold fell 0.74% to \$1,282.30 an ounce and silver by 0.94% to \$16.27 an ounce in Singapore.

In the national capital, gold of 99.9% and 99.5% purity declined by Rs 75 each to Rs 31,875 and Rs 31,725 per 10 grams respectively. The yellow metal had lost Rs 40 in Saturday's trade.

Sovereign, however, remained flat at Rs 24,800 per piece of eight grams. In sync with gold, silver dropped by Rs 440 to Rs 40,760 per kg and weekly-based delivery by Rs 250 to Rs 39,945 per kg.

On the other hand, silver coins continued to be traded at the last level of Rs 75,000 for buying and Rs 76,000 for selling of 100 pieces.

Don't think Virat Kohli wields disproportionate influence: Vinod Rai

Virat Kohli's aura in Indian cricket has grown exponentially over the past few years but contrary to popular perception, he has never wielded "disproportionate influence" when it comes to policy decisions, says Committee of Administrators (COA) chief Vinod Rai.

Rai has had first-hand experience of interacting with Kohli on policy matters and after 16 months, he has his own assessment of the maverick Indian skipper.

"Any captain will exercise a certain amount of influence on the team. I am in favour of allowing that flexibility and discretion to a certain degree. After all, the captain carries the cross," Rai told PTI in an exclusive interaction during an event at Delhi Gymkhana here.

"But I will make it clear that nobody has come to me and said that Virat exercises influence, which is disproportionate to what a captain should be enjoying," he added.

The former CAG stated that the skipper has never pressurised him on any policy matter.

"At a personal level, Virat's behaviour with me has been absolutely proper. Virat has never pressurised me for anything. Neither the team management nor selectors have ever had any complaints about Virat," Rai said.

The speculation over Kohli's excessive influence in policy decisions was quite high during the resignation of Anil Kumble as chief coach. It was widely reported that it was Kohli's pressure that forced Kumble to step



down. The three-member selection committee led by MSK Prasad with a collective playing experience of 13 Tests, at times have been put under pressure but the COA chief believes that the former wicket-keeper is not one who can be easily dominated.

"I have no first hand of knowledge that selectors have been under any pressure. I have great amount of respect for MSK," he replied.

Without getting into details, he spoke about how Prasad had handled a selection pressure once just after the COA had taken over.

"I know of a particular incident when there was a bit of pressure on MSK. It was during January, last year when we (COA) had just come. I was told that MSK switched off his phone and then did the selection which was purely based on merit," he said.

"MSK can't be cowed down and he is senior enough to tackle the star power. When he selected the team for Afghanistan Test, he was given a pool

of players without Virat. Also neither me nor Diana (Eduji) sit in selection meetings," he added.

Rai also explained the rationale behind allowing Kohli to play county cricket for Surrey at the expense of Afghanistan Test.

"I was involved in the decision-making right from the start. There was a lot of criticism that the team didn't have enough time to acclimatise during the South Africa tour where we lost the Test series 1-2.

"This time we discussed with team management, with India A coach Rahul Dravid and chalked an elaborate plan so that our boys reach their early and get to play matches in order to get ready. Also the Afghanistan CEO (Shafiq Stanikzai) made a statesman like statement that they are playing India and not Virat Kohli," he added.

Rai also made it clear that the decision of not playing 'pink ball cricket' was taken only after consulting the "primary stakeholders" -- which

is the players -- and insisted that knowing their "mindset" is necessary.

"The whole world plays matches to win. May be 50 years back, Indian team used to play Test matches for a draw. We have a fantastic team and they want to focus on whatever is the immediate objective (win Test series in England and Australia, 2019 WC in England)."

Rai also said that Team Director Ravi Shastri had provided the COA with the players' feedback having spoken to the skipper and some other senior players.

"On April 12, Ravi (Shastri) had met us for a debriefing and he told us, 'Look the team is focussed on something else (with a year left for World Cup). The team is not ready to start practising with pink ball yet'.

"When we asked Ravi, has he spoken to senior players, he replied that he has indeed taken feedback from Virat and Rohit (limited overs vice-captain)." While Shastri's e-mailed response when acting secretary Amitabh Chaudhary had first discussed the idea was that there is no harm in "experimenting".

"When Ravi was asked about his response he said 'let's experiment' and that doesn't mean playing any match with international teams. We have been experimenting in Duleep Trophy and it will continue."

Questioned whether India will play a 'pink ball Test' in the 2019-20 home series, Rai replied: "I am not making a commitment. It requires a long-term planning and I leave it to GM (Cricket Operations) Saba Karim."

Mohammad Amir proves his fitness as Pakistan draw final warm-up match in England

Mohammad Amir appeared to prove his fitness as Pakistan drew their final warm-up match ahead of the start of their two-Test series against England.



A two-day game against Leicestershire was always likely to end in a draw and that was the case as the Midlands county finished on 226 for six in reply to Pakistan's first innings 321 for nine declared.

Amir was one of several first-choice players rested from this match ahead of the first Test at Lord's starting Thursday after suffering a recurrence of a longstanding knee problem during Pakistan's preceding five-wicket victory over Test debutants Ireland in Malahide, Dublin completed on Tuesday.

The left-arm quick did however bowl at a lively pace on the side of the square during the lunch break and is understood not to have suffered any adverse reaction.

Amir, now 26, saw his cricket career almost ended for good after he was caught up in a spot-fixing scandal during a 2010 Test against England at Lord's.

He was given a jail sentence by an English court and a five-year ban by the International Cricket Council, but made his return to the world stage two years ago.

In Amir's absence, Pakistan still had several frontline bowlers playing against Leicestershire, who kept the tourists at bay thanks to a fifty from Ateeq Javid.

That Pakistan failed to dismiss Leicestershire, a Second Division county, may be regarded as disappointing but for fixtures are a notoriously unreliable guide to how a team will perform in Test matches.

It is only two years ago since Pakistan, albeit with now retired batsmen Misbah-ul-Haq and Younis Khan in the side, drew a four-Test series in England 2-2.

They also upset the odds to beat arch-rivals India in the final of last year's Champions Trophy one-day tournament at The Oval in London.

That 2016 series also saw the now injured Yasir Shah play a key role and the performance of the leg-spinner's teenage replacement Shadab Khan could now have an important bearing on this year's shortened campaign.

Pakistan look likely to stick with the same side that beat Ireland with England, who failed to win a single one out of seven Test during their recent tours of Australia and New Zealand, recalling talented ball-striker Jos Butler to a reshaped batting line-up.

ANDRES INIESTA, FERNANDO TORRES GIVEN EMOTIONAL LA LIGA SEND OFFS ON SEASON'S FINAL DAY

Barcelona captain Andres Iniesta lifted a ninth Liga title after his side beat Real Sociedad 1-0 on Sunday in an emotional final game for the midfielder at the Nou Camp while Fernando Torres scored twice in his final game for Atletico Madrid. Philippe Coutinho rattled in the only goal in the champions' final game of the season in the 57th minute as they finished the campaign with 93 points, while Torres struck both of Atletico's goals in their 2-2 draw at home to Eibar. Coutinho drifted inside from the left and held off two defenders outside the area before rattling the ball in off the far post with a venomous shot.

The league's top scorer Lionel Messi started the game on the bench but replaced Coutinho in the 67th minute. Iniesta was substituted in the 82nd, hugging most of his team mates as well as some Real Sociedad players and the referee as he left the Nou Camp pitch for the last time as a Barca player. Barca's fans held up a mosaic before the game reading "Infinite Iniesta".

They later revealed a banner saying "Thanks for so much" in tribute to a player who came through their academy 22 years ago and spent 16 seasons pulling the strings in midfield, winning nine Liga titles, four Champions Leagues and six domestic Cups. They continued to sing Iniesta's name long after he had gone off the pitch. The captain returned with his team mates after the final whistle to lift the club's 25th Liga title and also show off the King's Cup trophy which they won in April, beating Sevilla 5-0 in the final. "Today is a difficult day. I have spent 22 marvellous years here and I've been so proud to defend and represent this badge, which for me is the best in the world," Iniesta said, addressing Barca fans from the Nou Camp pitch. "Thanks to all our fans, for the support you've shown and the respect you have given me. I came here as a boy and I leave aged 34 as a man. I'll always carry you in my heart."

IPL 2018: Humbled Kings XI Punjab look to learn from Chennai Super Kings

Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) coach Brad Hodge on Sunday hoped that in future his team would be able to draw lessons from the Chennai Super Kings (CSK), who handed them a five-wicket defeat and exit from Indian Premier League (IPL) 2018 here.

Chennai's impressive win was bolstered with the surprise promotions of Harbhajan Singh (19) and fast bowler Deepak Chahar (39) ahead of the likes of MS Dhoni and others while chasing 154.

Talking to media post KXIP's exit, Hodge heaped praise on Chennai and hoped that in future, his team learns the lessons.

"I think the reality is that MS (Dhoni) and his side are in a position to be able to pull those moves and have the confidence of doing it. We know that MS would do that sort of creative stuff and that is why he is a champion and that is why he has got a champion team," Hodge said.

He added, "We look to emulate such things and we know we are short in experience compared to this Chennai Super Kings side. But hopefully over the coming years, whatever group comes together learns those traits and have courage as well, to be able to that with their group and have trust to get the job done."



Much to his disappointment, the KXIP coach admitted once again that batting let down his team. Needing to win the contest by at least 53 runs or more, Punjab scored 153.

Hodge said, "It was always going to be a tough ask. Our game plan was to get 200 and hopefully try and restrict (CSK) as best as possible we could. But at 16 for three the target was probably unrealistic. I think we showed great fight-

ing spirit out there, we did not get over the line... the score was below-par."

KXIP's defence saw Ankit Rajpoot claiming 2/19, but their captain Ravichandran Ashwin came out to bowl only in the 11th over.

"Yeah, we felt that we had to try and exploit the wicket as early as possible. We knew that the fast bowlers were the ones who were going to do that. We also knew we had to bowl them out, under 100," Hodge expressed.

"To be able to do that you chuck all your eggs into one basket and we had our chances as well. I thought we bowled well and put them under pres-

sure. We created chances but just missed a couple. Having said that, the effort and energy was right there. We knew what we had to do. But we were probably short of the mark with the bat again," he added. Hodge admitted that KXIP's performance this year was "bits and pieces".

"Unfortunately we just thought we have not had the opportunity to put together, in games, consistent performance with (both) bat and ball and in field. Those three aspects have been bits and pieces throughout the season and it is the indictment of where we sit at the end of the year," Hodge said.

Sachin Tendulkar bats for healthy India, urges everyone to play a game

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar on Sunday urged Indians to start playing sport and lead a healthy lifestyle. The maestro has always encouraged people to take up sport.

"I have always mentioned that India should become a sports playing nation. Yes, we have always been a sports loving nation but to transfer ourselves from sports loving nation to sports playing

one, we all need to start playing sports. Healthy competition is always good," Tendulkar said while launching a Smaaash game centre at Seawood Mall in Navi Mumbai. "Leading active lifestyle is very important. I urge everyone to adopt a sport and start playing it. This way, we will be able to become a healthy and fit nation," the little master said.

Narrating an incident from his child-

hood as to how his grandmother taught him to make health a priority in life, Tendulkar said Indians have potential to excel in all walks of life provided they remain fit and healthy.

"I remember my grandmother telling me during my childhood that health is your wealth. There are many ways to look after your health and playing game is one of them.

Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur excited ahead of historic women's IPL exhibition match

In a bid to promote and nurture women's cricket, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will be hosting a one-off Twenty20 exhibition match on Tuesday afternoon at the Wankhede Stadium involving some of the best women's players from around the world.

The Women's T20 Challenge is being played mainly to test the waters for a prospective T20 league in India involving women's stars in the future. Naturally, the importance of it is not lost on all the players involved.

Harmanpreet Kaur and

Smriti Mandhana will lead the two sides which will feature several internationals from India, Australia, New Zealand and England.

"It is very exciting for all of us to be playing this match. It is a stepping stone to the IPL. And hopefully, we will put up a good show and the audience and the BCCI people will think of having a (women's) IPL," Smriti said on the sidelines of her team's practice session at the Cricket Club of India on Monday. "Whenever I went to play the Women's Big Bash League, all of them used to ask when is the



IPL starting and I had no answer to them. Everyone wants to put up a good show and brings women's cricket to the world," Smriti, India's dashing opener said.

While the opinion is divided whether India is ready for a women's T20 league,

India's star player Harmanpreet feels there is enough talent pool available.

"Yes I do think. We have 20 girls who are representing India - be it T20, 50 overs, and apart from it there is India A team. We do have 30-35 girls. Everything else depends

on tomorrow's match and how we get response from the public. And if there is good response, BCCI is very keen to form such a T20 tournament from next year," Harmanpreet said.

New Zealand captain Suzie Bates and all-rounder Sophie Devine, Australia all-rounder Ellyse Perry and wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy are some of the names expected to be playing. "This is the first-ever match we will be playing with foreign players on Indian soil. Everyone is excited to part of this historical moment," Smriti said. Seeing the impact of the

Women's Big Bash League in Australia, New Zealand legend Suzie Bates said she could see the same happening in India.

"I think this is going to be absolutely key (women's league), if we want to see more female cricketers in India seeing it as a career. In the WBBL, you always had the Australian players that were great players and worked hard. But now, younger players are able to make it to the Big Bash teams and be the best cricketers they can be. That just lifts the standards. So if that can happen in India, it could be massive for the women's game."

CHRIS GAYLE REMAINS KING OF SIXES IN IPL, RISHABH PANT IN ELITE LEAGUE

In 2008, when the Indian Premier League was in its inaugural edition, not many would have expected how the shortest format of the game would reinvent the game altogether.

Usually dubbed as a batsman-friendly format, the onus was a lot on the bowlers to try and sneak out a dot ball and more importantly not get hammered to the fence. For the batsmen, it was the complete opposite.

From Yuvraj Singh's aggressive but clean strokes, AB de Villiers's unimaginable shots to Chris Gayle's nonchalant ability to hit sixes at will, batting records have been rewritten at will.

10 years on, a new record has been established by the batsmen who notched up the highest number of sixes in a single edition of an IPL season with 87 sixes.

The previous record of 731 sixes was recorded during the 2012 edition when Chris Gayle had topped the chart with 59 sixes to his name.

So far, 7,322 sixes have been hit across the 11 editions of the IPL of which Chris Gayle has the highest contribution with 292 sixes against his name.

Overall, in the 11 editions so far, Gayle has hit the maximum number of sixes in a single campaign on four occasions, including on three consecutive years between 2011 and 2013.

The next in line is De Villiers and although he's as good a destructive batsman as the West Indian, De Villiers trails by 106 sixes despite played in 30 more matches.

This year, the chart is currently being dominated by Ambati Rayudu and Rishabh Pant. However, while the former has nearly ensured his side manages to finish in the top-two, Pant's heroics have gone in vain as his side, Delhi Daredevils, was the first to be ousted from the tournament.