

# TIME AND US

DAILY

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

FRIDAY

- MAY, 04, 2018
- 17 SHABAN 1439 AH
- ISSUE: 105
- VOLUME: 04
- PAGES: 08

| WEATHER TEMPERATURE |                 |                 |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| STATION             | MAX TEMPERATURE | MIN TEMPERATURE |
|                     | ACT             | ACT             |
| SRINAGAR            | 19.4            | 12.0            |
| JAMMU               | 35.1            | 23.2            |
| LEH                 | 16.5            | 4.6             |
| KARGIL              | 19.4            | 4.8             |

SUNSET FRIDAY: 07:17 PM  
SUNRISE SATURDAY: 05:39 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR  
Light Rain, Thunder shower. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 20°C & 12°C respectively.

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

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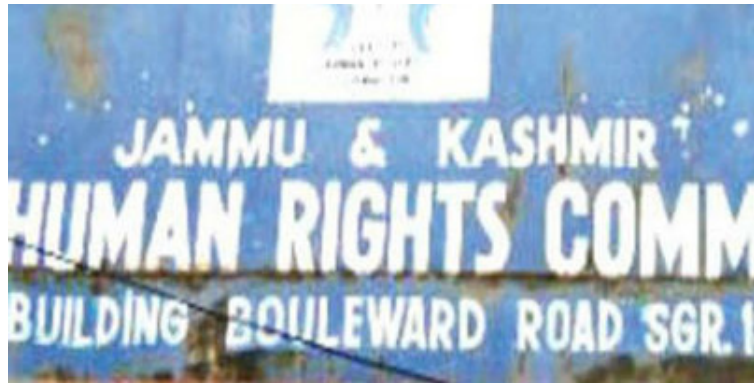
BCCI'S RELUCTANCE TO PLAY A DAY-NIGHT TEST IN AUSTRALIA DEFIES LOGIC

## 2017 KILLINGS: SHRC seeks report from Government

▶ CNS

Srinagar, May 3: Jammu Kashmir Human Rights Body has sought a detailed report from State Government about the 2017 killings near encounter sites in Kashmir Valley.

The directions from the Commission came in the backdrop of the petition filed by Chairman International Forum for Justice and Human Rights Muhammad Ahsan Untoo in which he has sought directions to investigate the killings at encounter



sites during 2017 by investigating wing of State Human Rights Commission.

The petitioner in his petition has claimed that the graph of killings rose massively in 2017 as compared to previous years. As many as 450 persons including 124 armed forces personnel, 217 militants, 108 civilians and one Ikhvani were killed in the conflict. The much hyped propaganda of peace by the Government falls apart when one looks at the scale of unabated violence and gross human

▶ See SHRC...Pg 02

## Thousands participate in Shopian teen's funeral

Two houses damaged as militants escape, south Kashmir districts observe shutdown



Srinagar, May 3: Thousands of people participated in the funeral prayers of the teenager youth killed allegedly in forces action in Turkwangan village of south Kashmir's Shopian district yesterday evening.

The youth, Umar Kumar of Pinjora (17), a class 9th student, was killed near site of encounter between joint team of Government forces and militants, believed to be five in number, who finally managed to escape. A large number of people shouting slogans ▶ See Thousands...Pg 02

## OVER 70 KILLED AS DUST STORM WREAKS HAVOC IN UP, RAJASTHAN

▶ Agencies

LUCKNOW/JAIPUR: A severe dust storm followed by thunder showers hit parts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan overnight, killing over 70 people and leaving a trail of destruction.

Houses collapsed and trees and poles were uprooted in the storm that also led to power outages.

In Uttar Pradesh, the high-intensity dust storm left 45 people dead and 38 injured, Relief Commissioner Sanjay Kumar said in Lucknow.

Agra district was the worst hit, accounting for 36 deaths and injuries to 35 others.

Besides Agra, the other affected districts were Bijnor, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Pilibhit, Firozabad, Chitrakoot, Muzaffarnagar, ▶ See Storm...Pg 02

## GOVT TERMINATES STATE LAWYER FOR 'LACKADAISICAL APPROACH' TO PENDING SENSITIVE CASES

▶ PTI

Jammu: Taking cognizance of "lackadaisical approach" towards sensitive cases pending in Jammu and Kashmir high court, the PDP-BJP government has terminated the services of additional advocate general (AAG) MA Beigh, an official spokesman said in Jammu on Thursday.

Taking cognizance of the strictures passed against the state government by the court for failing to file the objections to the bail application of accused of alleged ▶ See Lawyers...Pg 02

## TARIGAMI EXPRESSES SERIOUS CONCERN OVER UNABATED CIVILIAN KILLINGS

▶ CNS

Srinagar, May 3: While expressing serious concern over unabated civilian killings in Kashmir and stone pelting on a school bus in Shopian, the CPI (M) leader and MLA Kulgam Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami Thursday described these incidents as highly condemnable and painful.

"Another teenager boy died due to security forces firing in Shopian while two students were injured due to stone pelting on a school bus in the same district. For how long our younger generations will have to suffer. The cycle of death and injuries continues unabated in the Valley and unfortunately it has become a routine now," he said.

▶ See Tarigami...Pg 02

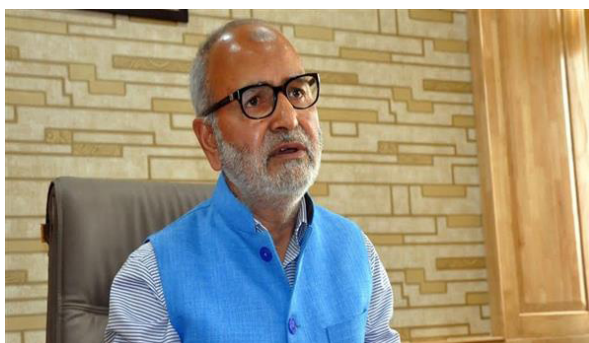
## First phase of Jahangir Chowk- Rambagh flyover ready, to be commissioned any time now: Naeem Akhtar

Disagrees bad condition of roads, says 'potholes to be repaired soon'

▶ KNS

Srinagar, Apr 03: Disagreeing bad condition of roads in the valley, the Minister of Public Works, Naeem Akhtar Thursday said that Rs500 crores are available with the department for macadamization and up-gradation of roads in the current year.

The minister also said that the construction works in the first phase of Jahangir Chowk-Rambagh flyover stretch, from



Bakshi Stadium to Barzalla Bridge have been completed and that it will be commissioned any time now. "I don't agree that the roads are in a bad condition. Last

year we have macadamized around 3000 kilometers of roads and the process will be continued in the current year," Akhtar told KNS over phone.

The minister however said that there are some potholes in the roads especially in the Srinagar city and that the repair work on this will be started soon.

He said while the small patching and pothole repair will go on, but the basic ▶ See Naeem...Pg 02

## TWO 'DEBAUCH' TEACHERS SUSPENDED FOR SENDING VULGAR TEXTS TO GIRL STUDENTS

▶ CNS

Kupwara, May 3: Education Department Thursday suspended two teachers for sending immoral texts on cell phones to girl students here at a North Kashmir school.

Posted at Government Boys High School Hangha Mawar area of North Kashmir's Handwara town, these teachers have been identified as Raja Shamsul Islam and a physical teacher Ishaq Malik.

Deputy Chief Education Officer Handwara told news agency CNS that they received a representation from a group of parents that a group of teachers send their daughters who are students at the school vulgar texts on cell phones.

"Accordingly, I arranged a surprise visit along with ▶ See Teachers...Pg 02

## India-Pak should emulate from North & South Korea: Hakeem Yaseen

Says revival of track 2 diplomacy for peace, tranquility a welcome step

▶ KNS

Srinagar, May 03: Chairman PDF and MLA Khansahib Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen has exuded confidence that the fast improving relations between the two neighboring countries of India and China would cast a positive impact on the bilateral relations of India and Pakistan hoping that the leadership of both the neighboring countries would assimilate from the growing quest for peace at global level.

Expressing satisfaction over reports about revival of Track 11 diplomacy between India and Pakistan to improve bilateral relations



and to resolve all outstanding issues through talks, He hoped that both the countries would tread the path of peace and friendship.

▶ See Hakeem...Pg 02

## SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE ACT HELD AT DPL SRINAGAR

▶ CNS

Srinagar, May 3: Special interaction-cum-training Programme for Police officers of District Police Srinagar was held today at DPL Srinagar. SSP Srinagar Shri Imtiaz Ismail Parry IPS was the chief guest on the occasion. Chairperson CWC (Child Welfare Committee) Ms Munazah Gulzar attended the programme as a special guest. DySP Hq Srinagar, Senior Prosecuting Officer DPO Srinagar, Prosecuting officers & Juvenile Justice officers of various Police stations including SHO's participated in the event.

Senior PO DPO Srinagar, Zia-ur-Rehman presented the welcome address & threw light on the importance of Juvenile Justice Act & consequent responsibilities of ▶ See Special...Pg 02

## All in unison need to stop vicious cycle of killings in Kashmir: PDP

Successful peace process alone can fulfill objectives of democracy and justice: Mansoor Hussain

▶ KNS

Srinagar, May 03: Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday appealed the political leadership of both the state and the country to rise above the party lines and play a vital role in getting Jammu and Kashmir out of the vicious cycle of killings.

In a statement issued to KNS, the PDP General Secretary Mansoor Hussain Soharwady said that political executives of the country and the state can lead this peace project by responding to the need of putting an end to the bloodshed in the state save the



previous lives of the innocent people who are falling prey to the violence.

▶ See PDP...Pg 02

## JKJCCPS CONDEMNS ATTACK ON SCHOOL BUS

Best investment for the society is quality education: Chowdhary

▶ KNS

Srinagar, May 03: Jammu and Kashmir Joint Coordination Committee of Private Schools (JKJCCPS) has condemned the pelting of stones on a school bus in Shopian.

In a statement issued to KNS, President JKJCCPS Showkat Chowdhary said throwing stone on a school going bus is highly unacceptable.

Miscreants hurled stones at a school bus carrying nearly 35 students at Zavoor in Shopian district yesterday morning.

▶ See School...Pg 02

## After 31 years of imprisonment, Shabir Shah says he is as strong as he was in 1968

Family meets DFP chief, says he is seriously unwell but his morale is very high

▶ KNS

Srinagar, May 03: Ailing and incarcerated Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) chairman, Shabir Ahmad Shah said that even after completing 31 years of imprisonment, I am as strong as I was in 1968.

Addressing a presser here, DFP leaders said that Shah's wife accompanied by her elder daughter succeeded in meet-



ing DFP chairman for 18 minutes only after waiting for

at least five hours on the jail gate and going through intense frisking.

The leaders said that the Shah during the meeting with his wife and daughter said that "31 years of jail could not break or weaken my resolve for freedom of Kashmir. I am as strong as I was in 1968 when I was first imprisoned at the age of 12."

▶ See Shah...Pg 02

## FORCES CARRYING OUT 'OPEN AGGRESSION': HURRIYAT (M)

▶ GNS

Srinagar, May 3: Hurriyat Conference (M) has expressed serious concern and condemned the indiscriminate use of force by government forces that include lethal pellets and live bullets on peaceful protesters, at Wangam, Shopian in which a minor boy was killed and dozens of others seriously wounded. The Hurriyat termed it as "an open aggression and worst form of state terrorism".

In a statement issued to GNS, a Hurriyat (M) spokesperson said it is because of the unbridled powers given to forces and the lack of accountability that every day innocent civilians are "brutally" killed, which is condemnable in all forms. He said that "brutal" use of force and the "reign of terror" unleashed in Wangam, Shopian is now

▶ See PDP...Pg 02

# VEERI REVIEWS STATUS OF LAND ACQUISITION CASES OF ANANTNAG DISTRICT

ANANTNAG, MAY 3: Minister for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, A R Veeri today reviewed the status of land acquisition cases for construction of various roads in Anantnag under PMGSY at a meeting held at Dak Bungalow Khanabal.

DDC Anantnag Mohd Younis Malik apprised the Minister about the compensation disbursed for the roads of Zirpora-Gadiseer road, Thajiwara Kran-

digam (Veeri) 4-Lanning of National Highway, Larkipora-Zaldoora Lisser road, Dooru-Kutay Gund Road and Kishtiwari Simthan Anantnag road. He informed the meeting that for construction of Zirpora Gadiseer Road compensation for land Acquisition of 25.8 Kanals has been disbursed amounting to Rs 201.00 lacs and compensation amounting to Rs 36.21 lacs for 39 structures has also been disbursed. Similarly, for Larki-



pora Zaldoora Lisser Road involving amount of Rs 0.31 crores disbursed for land structures and trees out of the received amount of Rs 0.50 crores.

The meeting was also informed that a compensation of Rs 86.41 crores has been disbursed against a released amount of 120.07 crores for construction of Kishtiwari Simthan Anantnag road, completed from Simthan Top to Dornipawa.

The Minister emphasised upon the Engineers of both PHE and PDD for immediate material shifting of pipes, poles, H.T, L.T conductor from Checkkoot to Nanil, Mahind to Wopzan and Thajiwara to Krandigam, to enable time bound macadamization of the said roads.

The meeting among others was attended by ACR, Anantnag, SE PDD, Xen PHE, PDD, Xen R&B and Revenue officers.

## Continue from Front Page

### SHRC

rights violations in the form of killings, extrajudicial executions, torture, enforced disappearances, media gag, arrests, surveillance, use of excessive force," reads the petition.

The petition reads that among 108 civilian killings, 20 people died in cross LoC shelling, 19 were killed near encounter sites by armed forces, 22 were killed by unknown gunmen, 16 persons were killed by suspected militants, 9 were killed by troopers on a day when bye-elections were held and 4 died in pellet firing.

In his prayers, the petitioner appealed Commission to pass instant and appropriate orders for the investigation of these civilian killings and direct the concerned authorities to compensate the victim families.

Taking cognizance of the petition, learned members of the Commission Abdul Hamid Wani directed Chief Secretary and Director General of Police to submit a detailed report about these killings. The case has been listed for next hearing on July 2, 2018.

### THOUSANDS

pro-freedom slogans later took Umar's body in procession towards the graveyard.

A police officer said that a cordon-and-search-operation was launched in the village following a tip-off about the presence of militants on Wednesday afternoon.

A gunfight broke out when the militants opened fire on the forces, the officer said. An army Major was wounded in the firefight and was shifted to army's 92 Base Hospital in Srinagar.

As soon as the news of gunfight spread, hundreds of youth took to streets and clashed with the government forces in a bid to help militants including top commander of the Hizb ul Mujahideen, Zeenat-ul-Islam, escape.

The forces fired live ammunition, pellets and teargas into the protesters near the gunfight site, resulting into death of a youth Umar Kumar of Pinjura and injuries to more than two dozen other youth, a few of them with bullets.

Locals alleged that the joint team of forces damaged two houses, including the one belonging to the father-in-law of Zeenat-ul-Islam, during the searches.

Meanwhile, a complete shutdown was observed South Kashmir districts of Shopian, Pulwama and Anantnag to mourn the killings in forces' action.

While Pulwama and Shopian districts remained closed for the fourth consecutive day, Anantnag observed shutdown to mourn the killing of the civilian in Turkwangam village yesterday. All shops and other business establishments are closed in the three districts while traffic is off the roads.

Two militants - Sameer Tiger and Aqib Khan - and a civilian Shahid Ahmad were killed during a gunfight on Monday in Drubgam village of Pulwama.

### STORM

Rae Bareilly and Unnao. The dust storm also wreaked havoc in Rajasthan where at least 27 people were killed.

The districts of Dholpur, Alwar and Bharatpur were among those affected.

"So far, 27 people have died due to the disaster, including 12 in Bharatpur, 10 in Dholpur and 5 in Alwar. The squall was reported mainly in three districts," Secretary, Disaster Management and Relief, Hemant Kumar Gera told PTI in Jaipur.

Two of those killed in Dholpur were from Agra in Uttar Pradesh.

He said nearly 100 were injured in the disaster. 20 were injured in Alwar, 32 in Bharatpur and 50 in Dholpur respectively.

"A few are undergoing primary treatment while others were discharged. One critical patient from Dholpur was referred to Jaipur," he said.

A detailed report of the disaster is awaited even as relief and rescue teams have been pressed into service to clear debris and restore power supply, he said.

Gera said contingency funds have been released to the respective district administration. He said Rs 4 lakh will be given to family members of deceased, Rs 2 lakh to persons sustaining 60 per cent injuries and Rs 60,000 to people with 40 to 50 per cent injuries.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje expressed grief over the calamity and said authorities concerned in the districts have been directed to ensure all possible help to victims.

"Condolence for families who lost their loved ones," she said on Twitter.

Taking note of the havoc caused by the dust storm in UP, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officers concerned to personally monitor relief operations and provide all necessary medical facilities to the affected.

He also said that no laxity will be tolerated in providing succour to the needy.

### LAWYER

kidnapping and rapping of a nine-year-old girl in Budgam, law minister Syed Basharat Ahmad Bukhari has ordered termination of services of the Beigh.

The Court has given a number of opportunities to the AAG to file the objections to the bail application filed by the accused in a case titled Mohammad Shafi Sheikh versus State of Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesman said.

On the state failing to file the objections to the bail application, Justice MK Hanjura in his judgment on April 24 termed the attitude of the state as "lackadaisical, inattentive, and indolent".

"A battery of lawyers has been engaged by the state to

conduct and handle the matters in which the state is a party but one gets dismayed to see that even in cases involving horrifying and serious crimes the approach of the state is abject, dismal and desolate," the judge said.

The minister has issued strict instructions to law officers to ensure that no case against the state government goes uncontested. He also enjoined upon them to process the serious and sensitive cases in a total responsible and speedy manner so that justice is ensured to everyone, the spokesman said.

"The case being very sensitive and the offences having been committed against the minor girl cannot be ignored, asserted the Minister, saying that keeping in view of the totality of circumstances, the services of Beigh as Additional Advocate General have been terminated with immediate effect," the spokesman said.

### TARIGAMI

"Given the rising toll of casualties and no visible efforts by New Delhi to engage different stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue, there is apprehension that the situation may get further deteriorated."

While expressing solidarity with the bereaved families, he demanded an immediate end to the civilian killings in the Valley. Killing of civilians can never be solution to any problem. Whether a civilian is killed by the bullet from one side or the other side, it is loss of precious human life. Whose 'cause' is fulfilled by the killings of civilians? Unfortunately, it is a Kashmiri who is getting killed every day

### NAEEM

emphasize of his department is to improve the quality of the roads which is going on everywhere.

Nayeem Akhtar maintained that first phase of flyover will be thrown open for traffic any time now as the construction works have been completed.

Akhtar further told KNS that Jammu and Kashmir under the leadership of chief minister Mehbooba Mufti is achieving new heights of progress and prosperity, and the roads in rural areas, as well as towns and cities, are in for major transformation in coming months and years.

Naeem Akhtar said the government has macadamized a total of 4,056.25 km road length in 2017-18 till November, 2017 including 1,330.02 km in Jammu and 2,726.23 km in Kashmir. "The government would macadamize a road length of 3,898.12 km in 2018-19 under different schemes", he added.

Meanwhile according to the R&B Department's Action Plan for 2018-19, 22.35 km roads will be built/upgraded under NABARD in Srinagar district while 5 kms will be done under CRF. "For Budgam, 37.20 kms and 47.25 kms respectively; for Anantnag, 35 and 57 kms; for Kulgam, 32.13 and 7 kms, for Baramulla, 47.35 and 39 kms, for Kupwara, 30.7 and 38 kms; for Pulwama, 40.85 and 66.75 kms; for Shopian, 22.60 and 11 kms; for Bandipora, 27.95 and 21.65 and for Ganderbal, 16 and 0 km respectively, totaling 312.13 km under NABARD and 292.65 km under CRF."

One of the top officials of the R&B department told KNS that the state met the eligibility under Central Road Fund (CRF) of around Rs 342 crore last fiscal, which has opened an opportunity to get the fund limit for J&K under the scheme enhanced in coming years. "The funds can be utilized for clearing liability of held-up works while the government is in a position now to implement the agenda of development in far-flung areas of the state," the official maintained.

He said that under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna, Jammu and Kashmir used to set a target of laying down 400-500 km new roads. "This year, we will carry out works worth more than Rs 1800 crore under the said scheme," he said.

The Public Works Department (PWD) has said that it has macadamized around 1000 KM road length in district Srinagar during the past three years. This information was given by Minister for PWD, Naeem Akhtar in the recent session of Legislative Assembly.

It is to mention here that the city roads have developed deep potholes. The roads in Jehangir Chowk, Qamarwari Ram Bagh Flyover Road, Ram Munshi Bagh, Sonwar, Batwara, Rangreth, Rawalpura, Sanatnagar, Mehjoor Nagar, Padashaahg, are dotted with potholes.

The road stretch from Batamloo to Qamarwari is also dotted with potholes. "The road link was repaired last year; however it could not sustain for more than one year. The Potholes have posing risk of accidents to the commuters," Shabir Ahmad a resident of qamarwari said.

Chief Engineer Roads and Buildings Kashmir had also admitted that the roads are in a bad condition in the city. "Yes it is true that roads have developed the cracks in the city, but the department has already floated tenders and that the patch work will start in the next week," the CE had told KNS last month.

### TEACHERS

Principal Higher Secondary School Qalamabad, Zonal Education Officer Mawar in presence of Sarpanch and other representatives of the village to ascertain the facts."

"The complaint was found genuine and both the teachers involved in immoral acts were placed under suspension. One accused teacher Raja Shamsul Islam will work in Middle School Dogripora under ZEO Rajwar now while another accused Ishaq Malik is suspended and attached in High School Hengnikot Villgam," Deputy CEO said.

He said that a thorough inquiry has been initiated and a two member committee comprising Farooq Ahmed Malik, Principal GHSS Handwara and Syed Muhammad Farooq Lecturer BHSS Zachaldara has been constituted.

"The committee will enquire and put forth report and recommendations within seven days for necessary action,"

he said.

### HAKEEM

Addressing a public gathering at Raiyar Khansahib today Hakeem Yaseen has said that the media reports quoting diplomatic sources about revival of Neerana Dialogue-track 2 diplomacy process for improving bilateral ties between India and Pakistan and resolution of issues between the two countries through talks was a good omen for the people of the state adding that the meeting between the Armies of India-China in JK's Chushul Ladakh area to maintain peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and agreeing to work on additional Confidence Building Measures CBM S was a most encouraging and welcome step.

Hakeem Yaseen hoped that the quest for peace at global level including thaw in relations between North and south Korea and between India and China shall have far reaching positive effects on the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan hoping that a new Dawn of peace and tranquility will soon begin in the subcontinent replacing animosity with friendship and hatred with love.

Hakeem Yaseen urged for a conducive atmosphere for conflict resolution through dialogue and reconciliation between India and Pakistan to end ongoing bloodshed and mayhem in the state which is facing brunt of the animosity between the two neighboring countries since last 6 decades.

He said if North Korean leader, King Jang un and South Korean President Moon Jae-In can go for permanent peace treaty and demilitarization in Korean peninsula, if China and India can start fresh CBMs, why the leaderships of India and Pakistan cannot shun their egos to shun the path of rivalry in the interest of their people.

He said people of both the countries are eagerly yearning for peace as the animosity between India and Pakistan has put them on disaster politically, economically and socially. "It was necessary rigid stand and needless ego on the issue of Kashmir that has led the three disastrous wars, inflicting untold miseries on the people," "Hakeem Yaseen observed while appealing the leadership of both the neighbouring countries to sit on a negotiating table to resolve their issue. The soon they do it, the more it will be beneficial for their people," Hakeem added.

### SPECIAL

Police to implement this law in letter & spirit without procedural lacunas.

Prosecuting Officer Danish Gul discussed Juvenile Justice Act in detail. He said that Juvenile Justice Act has been drafted with a focus on adopting "reformative approach" in dealing with delinquent juveniles & to provide cover to the juveniles who are in conflict with law & to uphold various UN conventions on Juvenile Justice & basic human rights.

He touched almost all the aspects of policing viz-a-viz juveniles & various legal parameters involved while dealing with such cases. The juvenile in conflict with law, he stressed shall be dealt in a child friendly manner & home like environment is to be provided by the designated juvenile police officers in civvies.

Speaking on the occasion, chairperson CWCs Munazah Gulzar said that Juvenile Justice Rules have been made not only to provide protection to the juveniles who are in conflict with law but also for those in contact with law. She said that it is the responsibility of the police officer to ensure protection of the juvenile in conflict or in contact with law. She revealed that JJB (Juvenile Justice Board) has been constituted to look into legal issues related to juvenile delinquents. She stressed for the coordination & cooperation among different stakeholders like Police, CWC, Judiciary in dealing with the juveniles in conflict with law as well as in contact with law.

SSP Srinagar S Imtiaz Ismail Parray IPS speaking on the occasion said that the first contact which a juvenile in conflict with law faces is police & it is the responsibility of police officer to ensure protection of the juvenile in compliance with all the legal parameters pertaining to juvenile justice. A humanitarian approach needs to be adopted for such juveniles, which are important to reform them & segregate them from the criminals. He stressed upon officers to follow proper legal procedures & said that modalities are to be worked out in this regard as juvenile justice is not only part & parcel of our duty but social obligation.

Senior PO DPO Zia-ur-Rehman thanked the participants & said that mission of the Juvenile Justice Act is to provide relief to the juveniles in conflict with law as it is presumed that Juveniles are immature.

### PDP

He said that the state is craving for the return of the stability and peace and those bearing the brunt of violence have been making the earnest calls for end to the bloodshed and mayhem without further delay.

Mansoor said it is high time for the entire leadership to support the people of the state in getting out of the vicious cycle of killings and uncertainty so that the innocent people no longer fear for their lives and for the wellbeing of their dear-ones.

The PDP General Secretary said peace, reconciliation and dialogue formed the core of the Agenda of Alliance reached between the PDP and the BJP, and that the party has always been in the forefront to fulfill the aspirations of the people of the state who are looking up to for the establishment of the peace, tranquility and stability of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is high time that young men were given hope so that they do not choose the path of violence and a successful peace process in Jammu and Kashmir alone can fulfil the objectives of democracy and justice.

Underscoring the need for the sustained efforts to pt lid over the growing uncertainty and instability, Mansoor said

that every civilian killing or collateral damage puts the peaceful engagement efforts of the Government on the back burner and gives the vested elements an opportunity to exploit the situation to their advantage.

Mansoor said those at the helm must check the power tussles, ego clashes, and internecine conflicts, which have repeatedly debilitated the dialogue and reconciliation process. "Irrespective of the party lines, the political groups need to rise above and play a constructive role in unison so that state's present generation is saved from mayhem and bloodshed."

### SCHOOL

Chowdhary said youth should realize that the students have already suffered due to frequent closure of the schools.

"We have witnessed lesser number of school days this season which is worrisome. The best investment and contribution to the society is providing quality education to the students. Education is everybody's right, which will take the state to emancipation. No society can afford to close the schools or target the busses carrying students," said Chowdhary.

He urged the government and also the civil society to expose those elements who have been indulging in such incidents which not only deprive students of the education but also bring bad image to the state.

"Government should keep watch on such elements so that such incident doesn't recur and ensure the safety of the students," he said.

JKJCCPC President said safety of the students is with the schools and targeting students will cause lot of damage to the education system.

"Students in the busses are mostly of lower classes and they have nothing to do with any situation. Parents entrust students to the schools from the time of their pick up outside their residences till they reach back home safely in the evening. Such incident will cause lot of worry among parents and school administration and deal blow to the education sector."

### SHAH

The family as per the leaders also said that Shah is seriously unwell but the family said his morale is very high. "Shah's daughter who after seeing the condition of her jailed father fell down and was hardly brought out of the jail premises," they said.

"Shabir Shah has lost tremendous weight while in his 6 by 8 cell having visible dark circles around his eyes. He is not able to stand properly because of weakness and Back ache. He gets frequent fainting attacks. As per the medical records he has been diagnosed with severe Heart ailment Block in arteries," the leaders said during the presser.

"Irony is that as Shabir Shah was already having multiple ailments and we were again and again pressing hard for his treatment but all went to deaf ears and Shabir Shah was not even allowed to take his regular medicines and now as his health started deteriorating further it still took jail authorities around 5 months to make the diagnoses," they added.

"Shah has been diagnosed with Diabetes Mellitus/ Hypertension/with Severe Heart ailment as diagnosed by undergoing various Tests like HUTT/ Holter/ Stress Thallium Scan at Safderjung Hospital. He has multiple Heart Blocks for which he will require Angiography followed by Angioplasty. But nothing has been done till date. All these tests and diagnosis took the jail authorities months together though all tests were supposed to be of emergency nature. Medical reports provided by Shah clearly say that expert doctors have advised immediate treatment of the jailed leader," DFP said.

"We had time and again warned the authorities in New Delhi and the local government here that Shabir Shah needs immediate treatment. Shabir Shah was already suffering from many ailments when he was kidnapped from Srinagar to Delhi," they said.

The leaders said that though Shah is a firm believer of political resistance however he is being punished by the political leadership of India. "Now when his health condition has further deteriorated and has endangered his life, we stress upon the human rights organizations to come to the rescue of the "Prisoner of Conscience" before it is too late. We further warn New Delhi and its local agents of dire consequences if anything happened to our beloved leader," they added.

Meanwhile, Freedom Party said that they are saddened by the killing of a minor boy, Umar Kumhar, son of Abdullah Kumhar by Indian forces in Turkewangam Shopian.

"We also condemn the use of brute force against unarmed protesters and injuring of dozens. We pray for their speedy recovery," they said.

### FORCES

a routine affair of forces who continue to kill Kashmiri youth at their will and wish. Paying rich tributes to slain youth of Wangam, Shopian, Umar Ahmed Kumar (a student), the spokesperson said even teenagers and small boys are not being spared but shot and killed by forces.

Meanwhile, on the directions of amalgam chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a delegation comprising Ghulam Nabi Zaki, Mushtaq Ahmed Sofi, Farooq Ahmed Saudagar, Muhammad Sidiq Hazar and Sahil Ahmed War visited SMHS hospital to enquire about the health of dozens of injured youth of Shopian. The delegation apprised Mirwaiz about the condition of injured especially those hit by pellets and bullets.

The families and attendants of the injured complained that they were deprived of the quality treatment and that there was a shortage of specialized doctors at SMHS hospital which is a cause of concern, the Hurriyat spokesperson said.

The spokesperson also condemned the arrest of senior leader of the amalgam Mukhtar Ahmed Waza saying it has become a routine of authorities to arrest Waza on one pretext or the other.

# Water storage level of 91 major reservoirs of the country goes down by one percent

New Delhi, May 03: The water storage available in 91 major reservoirs of the country for the week ending on May 03, 2018 was 35,219 BCM which is 22% of total storage capacity of these reservoirs. This percentage was at 23 for the week ending on April 26, 2018. The level of water storage in the week ending on May 03, 2018 was 85% of the storage of corresponding period of last year and 90% of storage of average of last ten years.

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

REGION WISE STORAGE STATUS:-

**NORTHERN REGION**  
The northern region includes States of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan. There are six reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 18.01 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 3.45 BCM which is 19% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 26% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 27% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the corresponding period of last year and is also less than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

**EASTERN REGION**  
The Eastern region includes States

of Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Tripura. There are 15 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 18.83 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 6.42 BCM which is 34% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 41% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 28% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the corresponding period of last year but is better than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

**WESTERN REGION**

The Western region includes States of Gujarat and Maharashtra. There are 27 reservoirs under CWC monitoring

having total live storage capacity of 31.26 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 6.97 BCM which is 22% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 27% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 27% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the storage of last year and is also less than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

The Central region includes States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. There are 12 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 42.30 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 11.38 BCM which is

27% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 38% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 25% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is less than the storage of last year but is better than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

**SOUTHERN REGION**

The Southern region includes States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, AP&TG (Two combined projects in both states), Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. There are 31 reservoirs under CWC monitoring having total live storage capacity of 51.59 BCM. The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 7.00 BCM which is 14% of total live storage capacity of these

reservoirs. The storage during corresponding period of last year was 9% and average storage of last ten years during corresponding period was 19% of live storage capacity of these reservoirs. Thus, storage during current year is better than the corresponding period of last year but is less than the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period. States having better storage than last year for corresponding period are Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tripura, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, AP&TG (Two combined projects in both states), Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. States having lesser storage than last year for corresponding period are Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Jharkhand, Odisha, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Telangana.

## Workshop on disaster database concludes, NDMA paves way for creation of national-level disaster database

New Delhi, May 03: The two-day national workshop on Data Requirements for Disaster Risk Reduction Database successfully concluded here today setting the stage for creation of a national-level disaster database.

Developing this integrated database with locally obtained and validated data is crucial for tracking our risks and progress towards resilience without which India will not be able to meet its developmental goals. It will also play a vital role in implementing the Prime Minister's 10-point agenda to address disaster risks, outlined during the Asian Ministerial Conference on DRR (AMCDRR) in November, 2016.

The workshop was organised by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR). Group presentations and discussions were held on hazards to be included in the database, data collection templates and IT platform for data entry, validation, management and analysis.

During the technical session on issues and challenges in setting up a damage and loss baseline, using data from 2005-2015, existing gaps in

disaster loss data and ways to address them were discussed. Discussions at this workshop will lead to the formation of a Steering Group to oversee the setting up of the database, and guiding trainings and capacity building for operating, maintaining, updating and using the database. The Group will also identify pilot States and draw a roadmap for implementation of the project.

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

## Health Minister inaugurates JK Bank ATM at Chichi Mata, Samba

Jammu, May 03: Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, Minister for Health and Medical Education today inaugurated an ATM facility of J&K Bank near Chichi Mata Mandir, Samba in the presence of Parvez Ahmed, Chairman and CEO, JK Bank, Deputy Commissioner Samba, SSP Samba, Vice Presidents JK bank, distinguished businessmen of Samba and residents of the area. The ATM facility was installed as per request of local residents to ease their cash access besides facilitating the devotees visiting from all parts of the country to the shrine of Chichi Mata.

The Health Minister congratulated the Chairman and

team of JK Bank for accepting the request of residents and offering dedicated services to all parts of state, thereby sending a warm message of "Service to people above all." He said that JK Bank is one of the finest examples of a well functioning institution sensitive towards the needs of people and constantly aiming to offer best service to all. He further said, "The area still needs more intervention by the bank in terms of offering formal credit and other banking services which can help people uplift from poverty towards self-sufficiency through small business ventures and it will be all the more beneficial if more Business

Units can be set-up to serve people better." Taking cognizance of the request, Parvez Ahmed advised his team to undertake a comprehensive survey of the area to explore and identify the locations for penetration of Banking services in the unbanked areas of the Samba District.

He thanked the Hon'ble Minister for according to the request of the bank to inaugurate the ATM facility for the devotees and residents in the area. Interacting with people, Mr. Ahmed said that the Bank is committed to offering the highest standards of customer service delivery at the door steps and enhancing their outreach in service.

## EPFO Introduces 'View Pension Passbook' Service for the pensioners through Umang App

New Delhi, May 03: Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), which is providing a host of e-services for its stakeholders, has now introduced a new service through 'UMANG app'. On clicking "View Passbook" option, it requires PPO Number and Date of Birth information to be entered by the pensioner. After successful validation of the information fed, an OTP will be sent to the registered mobile number of the pensioner. On entering OTP, 'Pensioner Passbook' will display the details of the pensioner like Name, DOB along with last pension credited information. The facility to download the financial year wise complete pass book details is also available.

Other e-services of EPFO already available through UMANG app includes Employee Centric services (View EPF Passbook, Raise claim, Track Claim), Employer Centric Services (Get remittance details by establishment ID, Get TRRN Status), General Services (Search Establishment, Search EPFO Office, Know Your claim Status, Account details on SMS, Account details on Missed Calls), Pensioner Services (Update Jeevan Praman), eKYC services (Aadhaar Seeding).

## Agriculture key to overall development: Band

Various deputations call on Minister, apprise him of their problems



SRINAGAR, MAY 03: Minister for Agriculture Production, Mohammad Khalil Band Thursday called for introducing the latest technology in all productive sectors like agriculture and sericulture with an aim to improve the socio-economic conditions of the farming community.

He said farming is the key source to ensure the economic growth of the State in general and farming community in particular.

This was stated by the Minister today while interacting with the deputation of Agriculture Employees Association by its State President Sajad Khawaja who called on him here.

The deputation projected various demands including conducting of DPC of non-gazetted cadre, removal of pay anomalies, imparting of basic agriculture training course and other related issues.

Other deputations including Centaur Lake View Hotel Employees Association led by Mohammad Shafi Dar also met the Minister and apprised him of their demands.

The Minister gave them a patient hearing and assured them that their genuine demands will be looked into. He also assured the Centaur Lake View Hotel Employees Association that the issues raised by them with regard to the problems being faced by the employees and other issues related to the hotel will be taken up with the concerned on priority.

## J&K Bank chairman inaugurates mega credit awareness camp for aspiring entrepreneurs in MSME sector in Bari Brahmana

Jammu, May 03: J&K Bank Chairman & CEO, Parvez Ahmed, inaugurated a mega credit awareness camp today at the premises of Bari Brahmana Industrial Association. The camp inaugurated in presence of R K Chhibber, Chairman Grameen Bank; Lalit Mahajan, President BBIA; Senior officers of various Banks; representatives of SIDBI, EDI, KVIB and members of the Bari Brahmana Industrial Association, was organized by J&K Bank, Convener State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) in collaboration with other Banks operating in the J&K state. Notably, J&K Bank chairman is the Convener of JKSLBC.

The camp attracted huge response and witnessed a huge turnout of business men and emerging start-up owners, aspiring entrepreneurs and MBA students.

Interacting on the sidelines of the mega camp, Chairman and CEO, JK Bank Parvez Ahmed said, "The rationale to conduct this awareness camp by all banks is to offer maximum support and handholding to the budding entrepreneurs at the inception phases and to sensitize them of the customized offerings besides the willingness each and every bank is showing to promote entrepreneurship in J&K state. The aim is to completely allay any misconception in the minds of youngsters who intend to foray into business ventures that credit availability is a hassle or impediment in realizing their dreams."

"Now is the most conducive time for anyone willing and dedicated to realize an idea into business manifestation as Central and State Governments including all Financial Institutions have unanimously recognized Entrepreneurship as a national mission and are actively promoting business and manufacturing avenues at all levels. This is one bright spot in time where policy,



finance and intent all are being aligned in favor of zealous men and women ready to become job creators rather than job seekers" added Parvez Ahmed.

"Jammu offers huge potential owing to its location and close road proximity to the rest of the country and therefore, Bari Brahmana was an ideal place to start this awareness drive. Through the Industrial Growth Centre presence here and at Samba, the area is already attracting talent from the entire country to augment industrial growth opportunities. We urge the business community and industrialists of J&K to scale this drive further and mentor at least one start-up", asserted the Chairman further.

The Chairman and other dignitaries showed keen interest in the offerings of various banks for promoting the MSME sector in J&K. A number of sanction letters to various beneficiaries of different Banks were handed over by the Chairman JK Bank on the spot during the Mega credit cum awareness camp for entrepreneurs. The most significant was sanction issued to a budding entrepreneur

Sh. Varun Bakshi, sole proprietor M/S NKS Industries, Samba, to set up a unit in the Small Scale Sector for manufacture of Welding Electrodes at Industrial Growth Centre Samba. Notably the loan of Rs 1.46 Cr sanctioned by JK bank in favor of the entrepreneur is without any collateral security under the CGTMSE cover.

Later Parvez Ahmed had an interaction with the management students of Central University who had thronged the Camp venue at Bari Brahmana along with Ms. Jaya Bhasin, Head of Placement Cell of Central University and other professors of MBA department for orientation of the students in Entrepreneurship. The Chairman advised the MBA students to dream big and tap new business ideas for wealth creation in the society besides creating jobs for the people. The Banks he apprised are offering various products for Start-Ups in different sectors wherein the finance is easily available under the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprise with minimum documentation and without collateral security.

## Action Taken wrt Video in circulation in Social Media on Vendor seen coming out of train toilet with tea/coffee cans

New Delhi, May 03: It has come to notice that a video has been in circulation in Social Media in the last few days of a Vendor seen coming out of train toilet with tea/coffee cans, conveying that water is being mixed in the cans inside the toilet. With regard to the same, the following action taken update is issued.

"The incident has occurred in Train No. 12759 Chennai Central - Hyderabad Charminar Express at Secunderabad Railway Station in the month of December 2017. An Inquiry has been held to identify the wrong doers and initiate appropriate action.

On the basis of the Inquiry, stringent action has been taken up against the Train Side Vending contractor for the section between Secunderabad and Kazipet, P. Siva Prasad, with whom the identified vendor in the video was employed. A penalty of Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh) has been levied on the licensee, through IRCTC, the contracting agency.

A show cause note has also been issued to M/s P Siva Prasad, Licensee, Train Side Vending as to why his contract for train vending, Section-4, SC-KZJ, SC-NDKD-GNT section, should not be terminated. An explanation has been called within 15 days from the issue of Show Cause Notice done on 02.05.2018.

Two other persons seen in the video are unauthorized hawkers. The Commercial Department of South Central Railway has been carrying on extensive drives against unauthorized hawking at Secunderabad Railway Station in the last few months, during which all the unauthorized hawkers including the two involved in the incident have been removed.

A strict vigil is continuously being kept at various level to ensure that no such incidents recur."

## National Conference of 244 New Districts under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) to be held tomorrow

New Delhi, May 03: The Ministry of Women and Child Development will hold National Conference of 244 Districts under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) in New Delhi tomorrow. The Nodal Officers of 244 Districts, State Nodal Officers and Senior officers will be present in the day-long Conference. The Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi would be the Chief Guest and the Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Dr. Virendra Kumar would be the Guest of Honour.

WCD Secretary Shri Rakesh Srivastava will share the journey so far under BBBP. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development will share experiences from their sectoral interventions on improving the Sex Ratio at Birth and initiatives to encourage girl child education. In an interactive session, the District Collectors of select BBBP districts from different parts of the country would share the innovative interventions undertaken in the past three years. Haryana will share State Level experience. Representative civil society partners would also participate in the Conference.

The Conference will provide an opportunity for experience sharing and will motivate the new districts to plan and execute the programme successfully.

## Dorjey for creating mass awareness about welfare schemes

LEH, MAY 3: Minister for Cooperatives and Ladakh Affairs Chering Dorjey on his second-day tour to Nubra Valley visited the Skuru and Tertse villages in the morning today.

He was accompanied with EC Tourism Tsering Sandup, Councilor Hunder Kunzang Lotos, Tehsilder and officers of Nubra sub-division.

Addressing the gathering

the Minister mentioned about around 150 new schemes launched by Government of India and urged upon people to step forward to avail benefit the schemes applicable in Ladakh. He stressed upon the role of Councilors in creating awareness among the villagers and to make these schemes available to them.

Expressing hopes to provide 24 hours electricity in

Nubra Valley in next two years Tsering Dorjey mentioned about 200 KV transmission line at the approval stage by centre government to connect Nubra with Northern Grid through Pheyang village. He said that with 24 hours electricity facility Nubra will have promising business opportunities and other advantages for people and youth in particular.

Speaking about NCDC scheme, the Minister informed that mass awareness campaigns would be conducted soon in Nubra to educate people about this scheme. He urged upon the farmers and cooperative societies to take initiative in learning and availing benefits of this scheme. He also mentioned about the issue take up with centre government to re-release the fund

under AIBP scheme to complete the major irrigation canals in Nubra. He expressed hope to get the sanction for funds to complete the remaining work shortly.

EC Sandup expressed gratitude to the Minister for immense contribution for Nubra valley in terms of financial support and otherwise. He mentioned about the financial assistance given to

labourers that include scholarship and marriage assistance to their children and insurance schemes. He appealed to villagers engaged in labour work to ensure making job cards to avail these benefits. He also urged the villagers specifically women to make Artisan Credit Card to avail low-interest loan to do handicraft works. He mentioned about Ujjwala scheme.

DAILY Editorial  
**Time and Us**  
SRINAGAR J&K

**Power drive: on the quest to achieve full electrification**

Access to electricity drives the productivity of households, empowers women and enables education and communication. Millions of homes still lack this vital resource in India. And as of April 1, 2015, the official count of unelectrified villages was 18,452. So when Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced that all inhabited villages now enjoy electrification, it signalled a significant milestone in the country's development. It is an achievement that will raise aspirations in the remotest districts. Yet, broad-brush statistics conceal severe disparities, including the actual number of households in villages that have power connections, the number of hours they get reliable power, and the per capita power that rural and urban Indians consume. For one, the existing definition to declare a village electrified is coverage of a mere 10% of households and common facilities such as schools, panchayats and health centres. The claim of electrification pays when viewed against some of these realities. Rural household electrification has a wide range across States, from 47% to 100%. The average hours of power supplied in a day to rural areas in January 2018 ranged from 11.5 in Mizoram, 14.91 in Haryana and 17.72 in Uttar Pradesh to 24 hours in Kerala, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. These anomalies are often the result of infrastructure deficits and administrative inefficiency and they show that, even with supportive Central schemes, the Power for All 24x7 goal adopted by States and Union Territories with a deadline of April 1, 2019 is far from realistic.

Census data for 2001 and 2011 indicate that the number of rural households that use electricity as their primary source of lighting rose by about 12 percentage points to 55.3%, while in that decade urban households rose five points to 92.7%. The per capita consumption between rural and fast-rising urban India also represents a challenge, since there is a divergence between the two. There are twin challenges to be faced in improving access and equity. To many, the falling cost of renewable, decentralised sources such as solar photovoltaics represents a ready solution for rural India. Yet, the evidence from States such as Maharashtra, which made an early claim to full electrification six years ago relying partly on solar power, shows that theft, damage and lack of technical capacity can pose serious hurdles. The answer may lie in a hybrid solution that ensures continued scaling up of both grid-connected and standalone solar systems in appropriate areas, augmenting conventional sources of electricity, with a clear emphasis on rooftop solutions for cities. Cheaper renewables will enable differential pricing for households in remote areas, a key determinant of wider social benefits of electricity. Rural electrification in India has been a long effort, achieving rapid growth from the Third Plan to the Twelfth Plan, but getting affordable power to every household needs sustained policy support.

**Missiles of aggression**

By JOHN CHERIAN

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

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

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

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



Syria used poison gas?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

U.S. Defence Secretary James Mattis told the media that no more attacks were being

planned against Syria for the time being but stressed that the U.S. retained the option to attack Syria again at a time of its choosing. He claimed that future attacks were justified as long as the U.S. was satisfied that the Syrian government was guilty of using chemical weapons. However, while insisting that the U.S. was certain that the Syrian military used chlorine gas in Douma, Mattis did not produce any evidence to back his claims. Colin Powell, the Defence Secretary under Bush, was also sure Iraq had WMDs while justifying the invasion of Iraq. The French President and the British Prime Minister parroted the line that Syria used chemical weapons without bothering to provide any proof whatsoever.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov stated at a press conference on April 14 that the Kremlin had "irrefutable evidence that the special services of a state which is in the forefront of a Russophobic campaign had a hand in the staging" of the attack. Alexander Yakovenko, Russia's Ambassador to the U.K., said that the "White Helmets", which "receive U.K. money", were involved. Peter Ford, Britain's former Ambassador to Syria, told the BBC that he believed the Douma attack was "staged". An emergency U.N. Security Council meeting was convened at the request of Russia to discuss the attack on Syria. Russia sponsored a resolution condemning the air strikes on Syria. Speaking during the meeting, Nikki Haley, U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., reiterated the viewpoint that the U.S. had the right to punish Syria any time it wished to. "I spoke to the U.S. President this morning, and he said that if the Syrian government uses poison gas again, the U.S. is locked and loaded," she said.

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

Bolivia, which is an elected member of the Security Council, voted along with Russia and China after a two-hour long heated debate on the resolution. Four nations abstained on the resolution. The three permanent members of the Security Council that initiated the aggression against Syria, the U.S., France and Britain, naturally voted against it. U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that "the Cold War has returned with a vengeance". He urged member states "to show restraint" and to ensure that situations "don't go out of control". Guterres described the Syrian conflict as the "most serious threat to international peace and security in our time". The Pentagon claimed that the latest attack was much bigger in scope than the missile strike Trump ordered last year on a Syrian Air Force base. According to the U.S. Defence Secretary, the main targets were the factories producing chemical weapons, which, according to both Syrian and Russian officials, have been lying abandoned since Syria voluntarily gave up its chemical weapons arsenal. (Other countries in the region, including Israel.

(COURTESY: THE FRONTLINE)

**ACTS OF INTOLERANCE**

By T.K. RAJALAKSHMI

"MEWAT mein jo musalmaanon ke saath ho raha hai, woh Hindustan mein kisi ke saath nahi ho raha" (whatever is happening to Muslims in Mewat region is not happening to anyone in the entire country), said Sarjit Khan, a Meo Muslim at Pahari, a tehsil headquarters in Bharatpur district in Rajasthan. A lone cloth placard emblazoned with the words "Justice for Umar" hangs on a tent pole, seven kilometres from Ghatmika village in Pahari tehsil. The tent was erected for a public meeting organised to condole the death of the cattle trader Umar Khan, one of the latest victims of cow vigilantism in the region. Umar's body was found on the railway track at Ramgarh in Alwar district on November 10. His family got to know about his death two days later. The police maintain that two groups had exchanged fire and in the ensuing clash, Umar was killed. But they do not explain how the body was found on the railway track. No weapons were found on Umar. His associates, who have been booked under the Rajasthan Bovine Act, also did not possess any weapons. "Mewat is being targeted and we can

see it happening, even sitting in faraway Jaipur. The vigilantes need no proof to establish that the cows are being taken for slaughter," Engineer Khurshed, a Jaipur-based social worker, told Frontline. Pehlu Khan, Junaid Khan and now Umar Khan, the three cattle traders who were murdered in 2017, were all Meo Muslims from the region, which includes the Nuh (previously Mewat) district of Haryana, Alwar and Bharatpur districts of Rajasthan and some parts of western Uttar Pradesh. Since the region is home to Meo Muslims, it has come under the close surveillance of cow vigilantes.

Ghatmika has been labelled as a village of cow smugglers and at least 200 people have been charged with cow smuggling. But not a single case has ended in conviction. Amra Ram, a four-time Member of the Legislative Assembly from the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and former president of the All India Kisan Sabha, said the government suspended three officials when a foreign tourist was killed by a bull. In the case of Umar's death, the police were keen to dismiss it as a result of gang war. Some police posts in Alwar have been designated cow vigilante or gau rakshak posts. Umar, father of nine children, was

most likely accosted by one such group as he was returning home with the cattle. His wife delivered their ninth child four days after his death.

A pall of gloom hangs over Ghatmika. Mubarak, a final year undergraduate student, said livestock owners were scared to rear cows. The police, he said, wanted to be posted in Mewat as there was "more money" there. "The police used to harass us when the Congress was in power, too. But there were no cow vigilantes then," said Mubarak.

In September, the Supreme Court took cognisance of cow vigilantism and directed the Centre and the States to take firm action against such elements and called for some "planned and well-coordinated action" by State governments. But the court's ruling seems to have been ignored.

Since 2015, members of the Muslim community have been targeted in the name of cow vigilantism and "love-jihad". On December 6, Mohammad Afrazul, a migrant labourer from Malda district in West Bengal, was hacked and burnt alive in Rajsamand district by Shambulal Raigar, a Dalit, on the suspicion that he was involved in a relationship with a Hindu woman. Raigar got his 14-year-

old nephew to videotape the assault and posed it on social media. The video, in which Raigar is reported to have been heard saying, "This is what will happen to you if you do 'love-jihad' in our country", led to his arrest. People wonder whether it is possible for Raigar to be familiar with the term "love-jihad" but for orchestrated efforts of some sections to whip up communal passions. Several instances of killing of Muslims were reported soon after the Bharatiya Janata Party headed by Vasundhara Raje formed the government.

In May 2015, Abdul Ghaffar Quereshi, a meat-seller in Birloka village in Nagaur district, was lynched; Pehlu Khan was lynched in April 2017 in Alwar; Zafar Islam was beaten to death in Pratapgarh district in June 2017 by municipal officials; and the Manganivarsinger Ahmad Khan was murdered in Jaisalmer in September 2017 (this resulted in the fleeing of 200 Muslims from Dantal village). The more recent ones are the murders of Umar and Afrazul.

"The people who killed my father have been given jobs in a renowned public sector enterprise, while my brother, who had to discontinue his studies, is without a job," said a young woman at a

convention on women's citizenship rights, organised by the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) in New Delhi on December 8. The convention observed that the "past three and a half years have seen an unprecedented assault on those citizens who are unwilling to accept the Brahmanical and patriarchal notion of the Hindu Rashtra. Increasing instances of assassinations, lynching, rioting, abusive trolling, and justification of attacks on the security and right to choice of women (particularly young women), along with severe economic devastation exposes the unholy nexus of the communal forces with the corporate sector."

The young woman who spoke at the convention was Shaista, daughter of Mohammad Akhlaq, whose lynching in September 2015, on allegations of storing beef, by a communally charged mob in Uttar Pradesh's Dadri district caused a national outrage. In August, 13 of the 17 accused in the murder case were given bail. Among the 13 was the son of a local BJP leader. The public outrage failed to discourage cow vigilantism and minority targeting. In fact, since Akhlaq's murder, cow vigilantes have become more brazen in their attacks.

As Shaista shared her grief, her brother, Danish sobbed quietly. "It was a black night. The people whom I called chaacha and bhaiya attacked us." The family moved out of Bisada village in Dadri, which was its home for generations. "The mahaul [atmosphere] isn't good," Danish told Frontline.

Anita Minj, a Christian tribal woman from Garhwa district in Jharkhand, lost her husband to cow vigilantism. A tenant farmer, Ramesh Minj, had gone to inspect his crops on August 22. He never returned. Anita did not think there was any cause for worry because he used to travel a lot. But when he did not return home after a certain time, she got worried. She soon learnt that people from a neighbouring village had assaulted her husband accusing him of being a "beef-eater". He had been picked up by the police. "They told me gau rakshaks had attacked him. When I saw him in jail, he was crying. The police kept my husband in their custody and he was severely injured. The assaulters had slashed him and broken his fingers. The police taunted me when I took food for him. They said I should give cow meat to my husband and not potato curry.

(COURTESY: THE FRONTLINE)

# Modi plays nationalism card, rakes up surgical strike in Karnataka

Playing the nationalism card, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday accused the Congress of "insulting national heroes" and the Indian Army by "questioning" the veracity of cross-border surgical strikes.

He also said that Congress president Rahul Gandhi "disrespected" the national song 'Vande Mataram'.

"Forgetting national heroes, patriots and history is the nature of a family in the Congress. (Jawaharlal) Nehru and VK Krishna Menon insulted General (KS) Thimayya, who had to resign. They neglected General (KM) Cariappa," Modi told an election rally at Kalaburagi in Karnataka, as he sought to connect with the voters of the home state of the two Army legends.

Invoking Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the PM said independent India's first home minister was instrumental in forcing the Nizam of Hyderabad,



who controlled the region where Kalaburagi is located, to accede to the country. "But one family in the Congress loses its sleep whenever Sardar Patel's name crops up," he said.

Seeking to appeal to patriotic sentiments of voters, the prime minister

raked up the issue of cross-border surgical strikes, claiming the Congress questioned the genuineness of the assault by the Indian Army.

"They (Congress) sought proof about the genuineness of the surgical strike. Bodies of Pakistani soldiers

were carried on trucks, a newspaper said that... and they need proof. Should our soldiers go on such operations with a camera or a gun?" he said.

The PM said a Congress leader even called the Army chief a "goonda" (gangster) after the surgical strike.

He reached out to farmers of Karnataka, saying his government would take up farming of pulses in a big way.

Rejecting the Congress' claim that it was a champion of Dalit causes, Modi referred to "atrocities" on a Dalit girl in Karnataka's Bidar. "But the state's ruling party did not speak about it. They had no candlelight protests," he said.

"This party (Congress) only knows how to prostrate before the members of one family. But we have decided to construct memorials to the tribals who fought against the British since 1857 to 1947 when India became independent," he said.

# Judge who sentenced Asaram to life till death transferred

Madhu Sudan Sharma, the judge of the special SC/ST cases court in Jodhpur metropolitan, was transferred on Wednesday evening. He has been posted as joint secretary (law) in the law and legal affairs department, Jaipur.

Judge Sharma delivered the verdict in the Asaram rape case on April 25, sentencing the rapist to life in jail until his death.

The Rajasthan High court had earlier directed the special SC/ST court to pronounce its verdict on the jail premises owing to security concerns.

The registrar general of Rajasthan high court, in two separate orders, transferred five judicial officers in the district judge cadre and nine other judicial officers, on Wednesday.



Prabu Lal Ameta has been appointed member (judicial) in the Rajasthan Civil Services Appellate Tribunal, Jaipur. Rajesh Narayan Sharma has been appointed judge of the industrial tribunal-cum-labour court, Jodhpur.

Ashutosh Kumar, who was secretary (law) in the law and legal affairs department in Jaipur, has been posted as district and sessions judge of Jaisalmer. Sanjay Kumar has replaced him in the law department.

# Power tussle in Tripura between Biplab Deb and Sunil Deodhar worries BJP

A tussle between Tripura chief minister Biplab Deb and the party's in-charge for the northeastern state, Sunil Deodhar, has the BJP's leadership in Delhi worried, two leaders familiar with the matter said.

The tug-of-war between the two leaders comes at a time Deb is in the midst of controversies over his outrageous remarks over the past few weeks.

The duo of Deb and Deodhar is credited with bringing down the 20-year-long CPM rule in Tripura, but the two fell out soon, one of the two leaders cited above said on condition of anonymity. Deodhar had opposed the elevation of the 47-year-old Deb as the chief minister in March and the chief minister is now getting back at him, the first leader added. Deodhar wanted Congress turncoat Sudip Roy Barman, currently the health minister, as Tripura chief minister according to this person.

The second leader, who asked not to be identified, said the equation between the two



took a hit during the ongoing controversy over Deb's remarks.

The chief minister brought to the notice of the party leadership that Deodhar "liked" on his Facebook page certain critical remarks against the CM and added that the party in-charge's loyalists were amongst those that shared fake news reports about PM Narendra Modi summoning the CM to Delhi to give him a talking to. The sparring hides a larger problem, the second leader admitted.

"As in-charge of the state, Deodhar wants to have say in Tripura. As chief minister,

Deb wants to be in total command. The problem lies here," this person said.

This has also resulted in uncharacteristic behaviour, according to the second leader. For instance, Deodhar has started taking part in private events such as the inauguration of an automobile showroom in Agartala last week, this person added — a move that did not find favour with BJP top brass in the state and Delhi.

Deodhar was missing from the BJP's state executive committee meeting in Tripura last month, and also skipped a workers conference in Agartala on Tuesday.

A call to the Chief Minister's office for a reaction to this story did not elicit a response.

Deodhar said the reports about differences between him and the chief minister are totally incorrect. "I needed to win the state. It was a difficult state, so I spent two years here. After victory I had a backlog of work for my organization, which I am completing now," Deodhar said.

Deodhar said now he spends only two to three days in a fortnight in Tripura and had informed the party that he would not be able to attend the meeting in Agartala because of his prior engagement with a programme organized by the Agra unit of the RSS. He added that he doesn't remember anyone liking anti-Deb comments on his Facebook. "Earlier I used to run my page and like all positive comments to encourage interaction. I am not handling it on my own (now), but I have not posted anything (against Deb). I will check."

# Rahul never disrespected Deve Gowda, says Congress after Modi's attack

Congress president Rahul Gandhi has not shown any disrespect towards JD(S) supremo HD Deve Gowda as claimed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the party said.

Hitting back, the Congress said it was Modi who "disrespected" his two predecessors — Manmohan Singh and Gowda — and sought an apology from him for it.

"There was no disrespect ever towards Deve Gowda by Rahul Gandhi... it is not the Congress' culture to insult," deputy leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma told reporters in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

Modi, addressing an election rally on Tuesday, had lashed out at Gandhi for "insulting" Gowda, saying it showed his "arrogance".

Accusing the prime minister of assaulting the dignity of his office with his expressions and language, the Congress leader said Modi had said things during his campaign speeches that were not true.

"This government's very foundations are on false prom-



ises, lies, deceit, propaganda and boastful claims," Sharma alleged and said Modi and his government were in the "departure lounge".

"When Deve Gowda ji was prime minister, his government had full support of the Congress party. Rahul Gandhi has not said anything derogatory about Shri Deve Gowda," he said.

Sharma alleged that Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah had created an "opportunistic understanding and unholy nexus" with the JD(S), and that was the reason a criticism was levelled.

Sharma insisted that Modi

apologise for repeatedly insulting former prime minister Manmohan Singh, whom he described as one of the respected elders, leaders and statesmen.

The country had seen how "insulting and disrespectful" Modi had been towards Singh in Parliament itself. "So let him apologise," the senior Congress leader said.

He recalled Gowda had in the run-up to 2014 elections said he would take 'political sanyas' if Modi became the prime minister. Modi had also said he would send Gowda to an "old age home," Sharma alleged.

"Let him also apologise to Deve Gowda ji... Let the people of Karnataka know this prime minister has a forked tongue and basically he is a master in the art of duplicity and hypocrisy," he added.

Attacking the government on a host of issues including women's safety, farmer issues, bank fraud and Rafale deal, Sharma said Modi should know the time has come and the countdown for BJP will start from Karnataka.

"...he is in the departure lounge; his government is in the departure lounge. People of India are not disappointed but fed up of untruth, lies, false promises and false claims, insulting the wisdom of the people and they are waiting to send them off," he charged.

Charging that the announcement on creation of 15 million jobs in the country had been made with an eye on Karnataka polls, he said "this is yet another lie."

# Collegium defers decision on KM Joseph's elevation, CJI suggests other judges be considered

The Supreme Court collegium on Wednesday unanimously agreed to defer by a week a decision on whether to recommend the name of Uttarakhand chief justice KM Joseph once again for elevation to the top court, after Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra suggested that the names of more judges be considered.

A person privy to the collegium proceedings said Wednesday's meeting lasted about 50 minutes. CJI Misra was of the view that judges from the high courts of Rajasthan, Calcutta and Andhra Pradesh and Telangana should be considered along with the proposal to elevate Justice Joseph, the person said on condition of anonymity.

Members of the collegium, which comprises the five senior-most Supreme Court judges and decides on appointments to the higher judiciary, then deferred the decision on the elevation of Justice Joseph.

Three of the others said they needed time to respond to other names proposed by the CJI and also to decide if a consolidated list of the four names should be sent to the government or just the name of Justice Joseph. Last week, the government cleared the appointment of senior advocate to the Supreme Court as a judge of the top court, but put on hold the collegium's recommendation to elevate Joseph.

Four of the five collegium members were also for the first time informed on Wednesday of a letter written by law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad to the CJI on April 30 wherein he reiterated the government position that the principle of seniority must be followed in the elevation of judges to the top court.

The letter pointed out that justice Joseph is 42nd in seniority among



the high court judges and many HCs such as Gujarat, Calcutta and Jammu and Kashmir are not represented in the apex court.

A second person with knowledge of the situation confirmed to Hindustan Times that so far the collegium had not decided whether to return the name of justice Joseph to the government for elevation. But there is a general view among the judges that his name needs to be reiterated as available facts and figures suggest that he is the "most meritorious" judge among the present lot of judges.

Apart from justice Joseph's case, the collegium next week is likely to consider the names of justice Indira Banerjee, who hails from the Calcutta high court and is presently the chief justice of Madras high court; justice R. Subhash Reddy, who is from Telangana and is presently Gujarat high court chief justice; and justice Dinesh Maheshwari, who hails from Rajasthan and is chief justice of the Karnataka high court.

After putting on hold justice Joseph's elevation, law minister wrote

to the CJI that it would "not be fair and justified to other more senior, suitable, and deserving chief justices and senior judges of various high courts."

The collegium, which is headed by the CJI, comprises justices J Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, MB Lokur and Kurien Joseph.

A number of Supreme Court lawyers urged the top court to put on hold Malhotra's appointment and direct the government to clear Joseph's name — a request that was rejected by a bench led by the chief justice Misra. The bench said the government is within its rights to send back a name for reconsideration.

A petition was filed by senior lawyer Indira Jaising, which said appointments have now become a matter concerning the "independence of judiciary".

Jaising told the court that the government was stalling justice Joseph's elevation because as chief justice of the Uttarakhand high court, he had quashed the imposition of President's rule in Uttarakhand in

2016, leading to the reinstatement of the Congress party government led by Harish Rawat. The Congress has made a similar allegation.

On Wednesday, the law minister said the charges levelled against the government by the "Congress party in particular and others in general" that justice Joseph's appointment had been stalled because of his Uttarakhand verdict amounted to "sponsored allegations."

"I wish to deny with all authority at my command. It has nothing to do with that at all," Prasad told reporters at a cabinet briefing. Prasad noted that a Bharatiya Janata Party government was elected with a three-fourths majority last year. And justice Joseph's order was confirmed by justice J S Khehar of the Supreme Court, who had also set aside the National Judicial Appointments Commission Act; yet Khehar became CJI under the NDA government, Prasad said.

The law minister said the right of the government to seek a reconsideration of proposals made by the collegium is granted to it by the Supreme Court judgements of 1993, 1998 and 2015 relating to the collegium system.

On former CJI RM Lodha's remarks that the independence of the judiciary is under challenge and should be "non-negotiable," Prasad said that he did not want to comment on observations made by a retired judge.

"I always felt that independence of judiciary is non-negotiable and it is for the CJI, who is the leader of the court, to take them forward. Only one thing I would like to observe is the commitment of this government for the independence of the judiciary and respect for the institution of judiciary and the judges is complete and uncompromising," he added.

# Apna Ghar convicts are monsters in garb of social activists: CBI judge

In his 240-page detailed order in Rohtak's Apna Ghar sexual abuse case, CBI judge Jagdeep Singh said people like main accused Jaswanti were monsters in the garb of social activists and deserved no leniency.

He sentenced Jaswanti (in-charge of Apna Ghar), his brother-in-law Jai Bhagwan and driver Satish to life imprisonment last week. He is known for sending Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim to 20-year jail in a rape case in August last year.

The judge, however, stated in his order that there was no sufficient evidence to prove grievous charges against Jaswanti's daughter and other accused who were left with sentence already undergone by them during the trial.

Jagdeep Singh stated that Jaswanti and her kin, who were entrusted with custody and protection of destitute children, not only crossed limits of breach of trust, but also turned NGOs into organisations violating chastity of such destitute homes.

He added that convicts took advantage of physical and social weaknesses of inmates of protection home called, Apna Ghar, knowing fully well that such destitute inmates are already victims of nature. Therefore, such abominable acts of convicts, who indulged in sexual abuse of inmates, don't deserve any leniency.

The judge said that the conduct of Jaswanti Devi further aggravated the situation by roping in others in the ghastly acts perpetrated by her inside the premises of the welfare organisation.

Jaswanti's son-in-law Jai Bhagwan and driver Satish were also sentenced to life imprisonment in the case.

Justifying sending the three convicts to life, he said courts must not only keep in view the rights of the victims but also the society at large while considering the imposition of



appropriate punishment.

During arguments, defence counsels representing these convicts said that there were contradictions in victims' statements. To this, judge observed that when any destitute person had been at the mercy of perpetrators of crime, then minor contradictions in the statement of victims can't be given much importance, especially when there is no evidence to suggest that a victim had any motive to falsely implicate the accused. Even otherwise, these victims come from poor strata of society and they may not be able to express properly the sequence of the events.

Judge tore into defence's argument casting aspersions on the "bad character" of the victims during the trial. He said this argument was quite misconceived. It is settled law that even a woman of easy virtue is not available to be sexually exploited without her will or without her consent. He added that law does not permit rape of such women even. "Even if a woman is of easy virtue, it would not give licence to anyone to commit sexual offences against her. Therefore, the argument of the accused that women raped were of easy virtue cannot escape punishment," he added.

During trial, the defence also argued that Jaswanti and her kin were charged that they used to click nude photos of inmates but there was no recovery of any nude content in expert reports. On this, judge said that the mere non-finding of any nude content can't be made basis to discredit the entire case.

# Nine out of 10 people globally breathe toxic air: WHO

Air pollution levels remain dangerously high in many parts of the world with nine out of 10 people breathing air containing high levels of pollutants, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday.

It praised India's Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana Scheme for providing some 37 million free liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) connections in the past two years that help promoting the use of clean household energy.

The WHO's updated estimations reveal around 90 per cent of people worldwide breathe polluted air and an alarming death toll of seven million people every year caused by ambient (outdoor) and household air pollution.

"Air pollution threatens us all, but the poorest and most marginalized people bear the brunt of the burden," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

"It is unacceptable that over three billion people -- most of them women and children -- are still breathing deadly smoke every day from using polluting stoves and fuels in their homes. If we don't take urgent action on air pollution, we will never come close to achieving

sustainable development."

The UN body launched its latest data on air pollution levels for more than 4,000 cities in over 100 countries as well as the estimated health effects from both ambient and household air pollution. Air pollution represents the biggest environmental risk to health. Yet solutions exist and the data shows some countries have made substantial progress.

WHO estimates that around seven million people die every year from exposure to fine particles in polluted air that penetrate deep into the lungs and cardiovascular system, causing diseases including stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and respiratory infections, including pneumonia.

Ambient air pollution alone caused some 4.2 million deaths in 2016, while household air pollution from cooking with polluting fuels and technologies caused an estimated 3.8 million deaths in the same period.

More than 90 per cent of air pollution-related deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, mainly in Asia and Africa, followed by low and middle-income countries of the Eastern Mediterranean



region, Europe and the Americas.

Around three billion people -- more than 40 per cent of the world's population -- still do not have access to clean cooking fuels and technologies in their homes, the main source of household air pollution.

WHO has been monitoring household

air pollution for more than a decade and, while the rate of access to clean fuels and technologies is increasing everywhere, improvements are not even keeping pace with population growth in many parts of the world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa.

WHO recognises that air pollution

is a critical risk factor for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), causing an estimated one-quarter (24 per cent) of all adult deaths from heart disease, 25 per cent from stroke, 43 per cent from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and 29 per cent from lung cancer.

More than 4,300 cities in 108 countries are now included in WHO's ambient air quality database, making this the world's most comprehensive database on ambient air pollution.

Since 2016, more than 1,000 additional cities have been added to WHO's database which shows that more countries are measuring and taking action to reduce air pollution than ever before.

The database collects annual mean concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5).

PM2.5 includes pollutants, such as sulfate, nitrates and black carbon, which pose the greatest risks to human health.

WHO air quality recommendations call for countries to reduce their air pollution to annual mean values of 20 Ig/m3 (for PM10) and 10 Ig/m3 (for PM2.5).

"Many of the world's megacities exceed WHO's guideline levels for air quality by more than five times, representing

a major risk to people's health," said Maria Neira, Director of the Department of Public Health, Social and Environmental Determinants of Health, at WHO.

"We are seeing an acceleration of political interest in this global public health challenge. The increase in cities recording air pollution data reflects a commitment to air quality assessment and monitoring. Most of this increase has occurred in high-income countries, but we hope to see a similar scale-up of monitoring efforts worldwide."

While the latest data show ambient air pollution levels are still dangerously high in most parts of the world, they also show some positive progress.

Countries are taking measures to tackle and reduce air pollution from particulate matter.

For example, in just two years, India's Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana Scheme has provided some 37 million women living below the poverty line with free LPG connections to support them to switch to clean household energy use.

Likewise, Mexico City has committed to cleaner vehicle standards, including a move to soot-free buses and a ban on private diesel cars by 2025.

## Kale, beetroot: Nutritious ingredients for healthy food



New Delhi: With people becoming more health conscious, several restaurants have started introducing dishes with healthy ingredients like kale, beetroot and quinoa. These dishes offer wholesome goodness as it is not just good on nutrient value but also on taste, say experts.

Rajesh Sawhney, Co-founder of Healthie.in and Rajiv Kumar, CEO of Culinate, have listed some of the healthy ingredients that restaurants and cafes have started using in their dishes:

\* Quinoa is a seed that belongs to the spinach/charad family, which is why it is called a pseudo-cereal or pseudo-grain. Quinoa is rich in protein and a lot of other vital nutrients such as magnesium, dietary fiber and vitamin B. It is also a good source of antioxidants called flavonoids and it's a healthy alternative to rice.

\* Kale is high in fiber, low on calorie and has zero fat. It is one of the most common ingredients in the healthy dishes prepared by restaurants. Apart from being highly nutritious, kale is also high in antioxidants and has anti-inflammatory properties. It can be added to pasta, green smoothies or can be simply tossed in a salad.

\* Chia seeds are a good source of Omega-3 fatty acids, fiber, antioxidants, iron, and calcium. A 28 gram, or 1 ounce, serving of chia seeds also contains 5.6 grams of protein. Hence, they make it on the menu of most healthy food restaurants. These seeds can be added to smoothies, oatmeal or yogurt.

\* Nuts are often counted as good fats and are also rich in fiber and Omega-3. Plant sterols are a substance present in nuts that helps in lowering the cholesterol level in the body. Nuts are a great source of L-arginine, which make the artery walls more flexible and less prone to blood clots that can block blood flow. You can make a nutty trail mix and simply munch on nuts in between meals or add them to your stir-fry.

\* Activated charcoal is a natural ingredient that helps in flushing out toxins from the body. It not only helps in the detoxification of the body but also helps in digestive cleansing by alleviating problems like gas and bloating.

Activated charcoal also helps in fighting the signs of ageing. Healthy restaurants incorporate activated charcoal in their healthy drinks and also in the breads and buns used for their special sandwiches and burgers.

## Asthma in children could become worse if you live near a busy road

Asthma attacks in children, who live near a busy, major roadway or a playground, is often severe, suggests a new study. Long-time exposure to traffic-related pollution and dust has been linked to asthma in children. According to a research conducted by the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, children living within a football field's length of major roadways had nearly three times the odds of paediatric asthma compared to children who lived four times farther away.

It has been long known that smog and pollution can bring on an asthma attack among children and adults who are already suffering from

asthma. However, researchers had been uncertain about the role of long-term exposure to certain pollutants and its impact.

Why is pollution so bad? Poor air quality can worsen asthma symptoms for patients. Pollutants such as traffic fumes, or wood smoke, can quickly irritate your airways and trigger asthma symptoms. The particles that are found in dust, soot, smoke, diesel and petrol fumes are so small that they are likely to enter your lungs, making them inflamed and swollen. This can also trigger an asthma attack.

Pollution can be really harmful to children as they are more at risk from its effects



because they have faster breathing rates and their lungs are still developing. What makes it worse is that symptoms of asthma -- wheezing, chronic cough -- are common and can thus lead to misdiagnosis.

Method for research

For the study, researchers analysed data from 1,522 Boston-area children born between 1999 and 2002 whose mothers had enrolled in a long-term study called Project Viva. The project was established to study how environmental factors such as

sleep, eating habits and exposure to pollution can impact a child's health.

"Our previous research demonstrated that living close to a major roadway and lifetime exposure to air pollutants were associated with lower lung function in seven- to ten-year-old children," said corresponding author Mary B. Rice. "We suspected that these exposures would also be associated with paediatric asthma."

The researchers also linked home addresses to census data and satellite-derived atmospheric data to calculate each participant's daily exposure to fine particulate matter (PM) - tiny particles suspended in the air that when inhaled deposit in the terminal sacs of

the lung.

The findings revealed that children who living less than 100 metres from a major road had nearly three times the odds of current asthma. "Even in the Boston area, where pollution levels are relatively low and within Environmental Protection Agency standards, traffic-related pollutants appear to increase the risk of asthma in childhood," added Rice.

Lifetime exposure to black carbon and fine PM were also linked to asthma in early childhood (ages three to five years), but in mid-childhood (ages seven to 10 years), these pollutants were associated with asthma only among girls.

## Ecstasy therapy could help service veterans suffering from PTSD

Combining intensive psychotherapy with a pure form of the party drug ecstasy is safe and could aid recovery in people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), according to the findings of a study in military veterans.

Scientists who conducted the research - a small study involving just 26 people - said its results suggested that with close medical and psychological supervision, giving MDMA to PTSD patients "could enhance the benefits of psychotherapy."

"Key elements that contribute to the safety and efficacy of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy include careful medical and psychological screening, preparing participants for the MDMA experience and treatment, close support by trained psychotherapists," said Allison Feduccia, a doctor working with the non-profit U.S. Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, which funded the research.

The study is one of several mid-stage trials looking into the potential for MDMA, or 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine - the main active ingredient of ecstasy - to be used alongside psychotherapies in people suffering combat trauma and PTSD.

The U.S. drug regulator last year designated MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for PTSD a "breakthrough therapy" - meaning it can be fast tracked for review and potential approval.

This latest trial, conducted in South Carolina and published on Tuesday in The Lancet Psychiatry journal, was not designed to test the effectiveness of the treatment, but to assess safety.

Trial participants - service personnel, firefighters and one police officer - were randomly assigned to receive either 30 milligram (mg), 75mg or 125mg doses of MDMA plus psychotherapy, and their symptoms and side effects were monitored.

The treatment had some adverse effects - including anxiety, insomnia and some transient increases in suicidal thoughts - but was found to be safe overall and showed promise in alleviating PTSD symptoms, the scientists said. They said a larger efficacy trial is now needed to assess the MDMA therapy's full potential.

Michael Bloomfield, a psychiatry expert at University College London who was not directly involved in this trial, said its findings were fascinating and worth pursuing.

"Larger research studies are needed which include a placebo group and can tease out which specific parts of the psychotherapy the MDMA may be helping with," he said. He cautioned that this research was conducted in a highly supervised setting using "medical grade" MDMA, so PTSD sufferers should not try this on themselves because of the risks associated with street ecstasy.

## LOW TESTOSTERONE LEVEL LINKED TO CHRONIC DISEASES IN MEN



New York: Low levels of testosterone in men could be associated with chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension, even among those 40 years of age and younger, new research has found.

The total levels of the hormone are commonly associated with just sexual health and muscle mass preservation.

The new study, published in the journal Scientific Reports, suggests that the declining levels of testosterone "could be contributing to a silent decline in overall health and increased risk for chronic disease", said lead author of the study Mark Peterson, Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan in the US.

Using data from the US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, the research team examined the extent to which hypogonadism, which occurs when the body's sex glands produce little or no hormones, is prevalent among men of all ages.

The team examined the prevalence of nine chronic conditions, including Type-2 diabetes, arthritis, cardiovascular disease, stroke, pulmonary disease, high triglycerides, hypercholesterolemia, hypertension and clinical depression among more than 2,000 men in the survey who were at least 20 years old.

The researchers studied the prevalence of multimorbidity, or when two or more of the chronic conditions were present, among three age groups (young, middle-aged and older men) with and without testosterone deficiency.

They found that low total testosterone was associated with multimorbidity in all age groups -- but it was more prevalent among young and older men with testosterone deficiency.

"Men should be concerned about declining total testosterone, even if it has not reached a level to warrant a clinical diagnosis (less than 300 nanograms per deciliter)," Peterson said.

## Human brain grown in rodents to boost treatments for neurological disorders

New York: In a first, US scientists have grown miniature human brains or human brain organoids, in the skulls of mice, a breakthrough that could boost stem cell research as well as provide insight into neurological disorders such as autism, dementia, and schizophrenia.

Scientists from the Salk Institute grafted human stem-cell-based organoids into a blood-vessel-rich area of the mouse brain.

The grafted human organoids integrated into the host environment, formed both neurons and neuronal support

cells called astrocytes, and were surveyed by immune cells.

Significantly, the team saw not only native blood vessels, but vessels with blood flowing through them - a first for organoids, revealed the paper detailed in the journal Nature Biotechnology.

"That was a big accomplishment," lead author Abed AlFattah Mansour, a research associate at Salk, said in a statement.

"We saw infiltration of blood vessels into the organoid and supplying it with blood, which was exciting because



it's perhaps the ticket for organoids' long-term survival," Mansour added.

In the study, the team divided each organoid in half before transplantation, and

healthy.

Human transplantation in animals has been used for

decades in brain and other tissues to enhance survival and test for mature function.

But, the new approach can develop more sophisticated organoid models by ensuring they receive sufficient oxygen and other nutrients via transplantation into rodents.

The work could yield insights into the development of cures for brain disorders, speed up the testing of drugs, and even pave the way for someday transplanting healthy populations of human cells into people's brains to replace damaged or dysfunctional tissue, the researchers said.

# GDP revisions, calculation methods are 'confusing', say RBI economists

India's multiple revisions of the gross domestic product (GDP) growth estimates are "confusing," much less provide a true state of the economy, according to researchers at the Reserve Bank of India.

The first readings of GDP tend to underestimate growth more often than not, officers at the central bank's Department of Economic and Policy Research wrote in a paper. They flagged considerable volatility in the statistics ministry's initial estimates of GDP, raising questions on the credibility of India's growth numbers.

Investors often question the veracity of official data in a country which has no timely employment report or retail sales numbers. Over the past few years, multiple changes have been made to how India uses and calculates statistics -- from economic growth and inflation to jobs and taxes. This has sparked a debate on credibility about government data once hailed for its rigor. In January, the central



statistics office estimated economic growth in the financial year that ended March 31 to be 6.5% and revised it to 6.6% a month later. The next provisional annual estimates for fiscal 2018 are due to be released May 31.

"This is mainly because firmer data are captured in successive rounds of revisions accompanied by a gradual increase in data coverage," the officers wrote in a Mint Street

Memo that examined GDP data revisions since 2002. "More importantly, we observe a bias when the growth cycle 'turns'."

"In view of multiple rounds of data revision, it may be confusing for data users to decide on the true state of the economy, and, more specifically, the real strength of the growth momentum. The dilemma/confusion regarding the reliability of data is

usually the greatest around the release of advance estimates, which is generally understood to be tentative and liable to change with the arrival of subsequent firmer datasets", the report said.

The RBI study found there were substantial upward revisions in the years coinciding with the 'upturns' in the economy, and a huge downward revision around the time of the global financial crisis in 2008 and 2009.

The paper showed that for real GDP, first estimates were revised upwards for twelve years by an average of 81 basis points. They were revised down in only two years by an average margin of 204 basis points.

"The advance estimates need to be supplemented with other high frequency indicators of real sector to arrive at a more realistic assessment of the state of the economy," said the four researchers, who work under Monetary Policy Committee member Michael Patra.

# HCL poised to replace Wipro as India's third biggest IT firm

HCL Technologies Ltd is set to surpass Wipro Ltd to become India's third biggest software services provider in the three months to 30 June, marking the first change in the pecking order of the country's \$167 billion information technology outsourcing industry in six years.

Billionaire Shiv Nadar-led HCL Technologies expects its dollar revenue to grow by as much as 12.5% in the current financial year, implying that the company will race past Azim Premji-led Wipro.

HCL Technologies's rise has come on the back of years of underperformance by Wipro. Until a few years ago, both companies used to generate significant business from managing data centres or offering infrastructure services to their clients. That revenue disappeared with the rise of cloud computing or offerings of computing power by the hour by firms such as Amazon Web Services.

To mitigate this, HCL Technologies has invested over \$1.3 billion over the past two years in licensing intellectual properties (IPs) from companies and then building products around them for clients. This has proved fi-

nancially lucrative for the company in the short run. Noida-based HCL Technologies reported 2.5% sequential dollar revenue growth in the quarter ended March to end with \$2.038 billion in revenue, a mere \$24 million less than Wipro's \$2.062 billion.

Wipro does not provide full-year revenue forecast but expects its quarterly revenue to be between a decline of 2% and growth of 0.2% in constant currency terms in the April-June period from the preceding quarter. If Wipro manages to retain its revenue in constant currency terms and gains from favourable currency movements, it will mean reporting at best 1% dollar revenue growth, according to Mint's calculations.

HCL Technologies does not provide a quarterly revenue outlook but the management expects dollar revenue to grow between 10.5% and 12.5% in 2018-19. Based on its full-year forecast, HCL Technologies expects its dollar revenue to grow between 2.4% and 3.2% in the April-June period, according to Mint's calculations. HCL Technologies's revenue in the June quarter will total \$2.087 billion if the company grows at the lower end.

# Xiaomi files in Hong Kong for what may be world's biggest IPO since 2014

Xiaomi Corp. became the first major company to use Hong Kong's new rules for going public, filing for what's expected to be the world's biggest debut since 2014.

The Chinese smartphone maker is taking advantage of changes in the former British colony that mean companies with different share classes can now list in the city. While the filing didn't say how much Xiaomi is looking to raise in the initial public offering, it's expected to be at least \$10 billion, people with knowledge of the matter have said, and could value the business as high as \$100 billion.

Xiaomi, reporting detailed financials for the first time, posted a net loss of 43.9 billion yuan (\$6.9 billion) in 2017, reversing from a profit a year earlier. Revenue however surged 67.5 percent to 114.5 billion yuan last year.

It's a big win for Hong Kong



Exchanges & Clearing Ltd., whose officials spent years pushing to scrap a ban on weighted-voting rights, which gave founders and executives control even with minority ownership. While some investors opposed the move, Xiaomi's decision, four years after Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. chose New York, signals a new phase for the city in its ambitions to rival the US market.

Xiaomi could be the biggest IPO since Alibaba's \$25

billion debut in 2014. Though it suffered through a challenging 2016, the company bounced back by revamping its sales model and expanding in India, where it rivals Samsung Electronics Co. as the biggest vendor.

The firm is also expected to issue Chinese depositary receipts after it goes public. Xiaomi has picked Citic Securities to handle its CDR issuance, people familiar with the matters said. While China's

State Council has approved plans to introduce CDRs, timing and details are unclear.

Co-founder and chief executive officer Lei Jun said CDRs were "an excellent idea" in a recent interview, calling them "a great policy innovation."

Under Lei, Xiaomi is looking to enter developed markets for smartphones as it consolidates its position in emerging markets. It entered Spain last year and is also said to be talking to U.S. carriers to sell devices on Apple Inc.'s home turf. Apart from smartphones, Xiaomi has backed dozens of startups producing a wide spectrum of products from wearables to rice cookers. Total sales from its ecosystem doubled to 20 billion yuan in 2017.

CITIC Securities' CLSA, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley are joint sponsors of the offering.

# Jaypee Infratech lenders to meet on May 7 to consider Lakshadweep bid

Lenders of Jaypee Infratech will meet on May 7 to consider Lakshadweep Pvt Ltd's Rs 7,350 crore bid to acquire the debt-laden firm, banking sources said.

Jaypee Infratech is facing insolvency proceedings after it defaulted on loan repayments. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had last year admitted the application by an IDBI Bank-led consortium seeking resolution for Jaypee Infratech under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

According to banking sources, the Committee of Creditors (CoC) will meet on May 7 to consider the Rs 7,350 crore resolution plan submitted by Lakshadweep to acquire Jaypee Infratech, a subsidiary of Jaypee group's flagship firm Jaiprakash Associates.

Jaypee Infratech currently has about Rs 24,000 crore worth assets while its debt is nearly Rs 10,000 crore, they said, adding that even



the liquidation value is worth about Rs 14,000 crore.

The assets, which include land parcels, Yamuna Expressway and a hospital, can be monetised to protect the interest of creditors, about 30,000 homebuyers and a large number of minority shareholders, sources said.

Jaypee Infratech has about 3,300 acres of vacant land parcels worth about Rs 14,000 crore alongside the Yamuna Expressway that connects Noida and Agra. It also has unsold housing stock of about Rs 1,500 crore and licensed saleable area (called FSI) worth

delivered 9,500 apartments. For giving possession of another 4,500 flats, it has applied for occupancy certificates.

The company plans to deliver the remaining 18,000 flats by 2021. It needs Rs 6,500 crore to construct these flats while Rs 4,000 crore is receivable from customers, leaving a shortfall of Rs 2,500 crore.

Jaypee Infratech is currently investing Rs 50 crore a month to complete these units, sources said, adding that more funds were needed to meet the 2021 deadline.

Sources had earlier said that Lakshadweep Pvt Ltd, a joint venture between Sudhir Valia-led Suraksha Asset Reconstruction Company and Mumbai-based Dosti Reality, has offered Rs 1,200 crore in cash to the banks, Rs 4,000 crore worth land parcel and the rest in form of long-term non-convertible debentures in the insolvency auction. A small equity stake to lenders is also part of the offer.

# Modi govt mapping invisible jobs to help measure India's real growth

For those trying to solve the Indian economy jigsaw puzzle, reliable jobs data has been one crucial missing piece. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has a plan to fix that defect.

The government is set to map employment in the economy's vast informal sector when the labour ministry starts publishing quarterly surveys on jobs in about a year's time, covering enterprises with less than 10 people, including those who are self-employed. These are businesses that are typically cash-based and don't pay tax.

"It's a huge survey and takes the entire country into account," BN Nanda, senior labor and employment adviser in India's labor ministry, said in an interview at his office in New Delhi last week. "This will be the first informal sector data from the government, enterprise-wise."

With more than 90% of India's labour force estimated to work in the informal economy, a lack of periodic and credible data in this sector makes it difficult to assess the impact of policy actions and measure true growth.

Multiple data sets for formal jobs point in different directions, giving the perception that Modi has failed to generate employment. That's denting his popularity among young

voters ahead of next year's election. He swept to power in May 2014 with the biggest electoral mandate in three decades after promising to create 10 million jobs each year for the country's burgeoning youth population.

About 12 million young people are set to enter the workforce every year in Asia's third-largest economy over the next two decades. The World Bank says India must create 8.1 million jobs a year to maintain its employment rate.

The state of joblessness is so dire that over 28 million people applied for about 90,000 vacancies this year at Indian Railways, the country's biggest employer, while engineers and lawyers vie for low-skilled jobs in the government.

Much of the government's annual jobs data based on household surveys, which also captures the informal sector, is dated. The survey published for 2015-16 put the unemployment rate at 3.7%. The labour bureau will soon publish the data for 2016-17 -- after a lag of two years -- and has discontinued any more surveys, Nanda said.

The organized sector, for which data is available from multiple sources, creates some confusion. The labour ministry's figures released



in March show India added 136,000 workers across eight sectors in the quarter starting July 2017, against 64,000 additions in the previous quarter.

The first set of data released by social security organizations in April showed over 3.5 million new payrolls were generated in the six months through February. As the levels of employment are from various sources, there are elements of overlap and the estimates are not additive, the statistics ministry said in a statement Wednesday.

NITI Aayog, the government's policy think tank, had in April said the monthly payroll data was an "eye opener" and puts an end to

"speculations and conjectures regarding job creation."

But not everyone bought the argument because payroll data could be more of a reflection of a formalization of jobs rather than a creation of new jobs.

"This, of course, is not employment data," Mahesh Vyas of the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt., a business information company, wrote in a column published on CMIE's website. "Growth in EPFO enrollments largely reflect the conversion of hitherto informally employed people into formal employment," he said, referring to the Employees' Provident Fund Orga-

nization data on payroll.

Private surveys paint a bleak picture. India's jobless rate rose to 6.23% in March from 6.06% in February -- the highest monthly rate in the past 15 months, data from CMIE show.

The statistics office has also started conducting surveys for generating estimates of various labour force indicators on a quarterly basis for urban areas and an annual basis for rural. The results of the surveys will be published this year.

The economy, which saw world-beating growth prior to a surprise cash ban in 2016, is forecast to have slumped to a four-year low of 6.6% in the fiscal year 2018 that ended March 31. Unemployment remained high even during the boom years and that led to Modi's opponents concluding that the \$2.3 trillion economy was seeing jobless growth. The International Monetary Fund sees India's economic growth at 7.4% in fiscal year 2019.

"I don't believe in all this talk about jobless growth because your economy cannot grow at 7.4% without employment," said Nanda. "If productivity has not been spectacular and capital growth isn't remarkable the growth is basically coming from employment."

# What's it worth to use Facebook? An experiment gives surprising insights

People do not, of course, have to pay to use Facebook. It's free. The company's revenues come mostly from advertising.

But in light of recent controversies, there have been discussions, at least outside of Facebook, about changing the business model. What if people had to pay to use it? How much would they be willing to spend? Any answers would tell us something important about the value of social media in general.

I recently conducted a pilot experiment to obtain some preliminary answers. Using Amazon's Mechanical Turk, I tried to find out, from 400 Facebook users, exactly how much the platform is worth.

More specifically, I asked 200 Facebook users a simple question: "Suppose that you had to pay for the use of Facebook. How much would you be willing to pay, at most, per month?"

I asked 200 other Facebook users a different question: "Suppose that you are being offered money to stop using Facebook. How much would you have to be paid per month, at a minimum, to make it worth your while to stop using Facebook?"

According to standard economic theory, the two questions should produce the same answers. But they didn't -- not close.

For the first question, the median answer was just \$1 per month. The average was \$7.38. Nearly half of participants (46%) said that they would pay \$0 if Facebook tried to charge them a fee.

For the second question, the median answer was a whopping \$59 per month. The average amount people would demand to leave Facebook was \$74.99.

What's going on here?

Behavioral economists, led by Nobel Prize winner Richard Thaler, have drawn attention to the "endowment effect," which means that most people would demand a lot more to give up a good than they would be willing to pay to get it in the first instance. For example, people might be willing to pay \$5 for a coffee mug with their college's insignia on it -- but if they are given such a mug, and are asked how much they would demand to sell it, they might say \$10.

My pilot study finds an endowment effect, but it's unusually high. That tells us something important not just about Facebook but also other goods provided by modern technology. The critical point is that we are now used to getting those goods for free.

# Sensex snaps four-day winning streak, IndiGo shares sink 10%

Market benchmark BSE Sensex broke its four-day winning streak to end over 73 points lower at 35,103.14 on Thursday, as investors chose to trim their positions on weak global cues ahead of talks between China and the US on their trade dispute.

Unabated capital outflows by foreign funds and lower-than-expected quarterly numbers by InterGlobe Avia-

tion and some other companies too added to the caution, brokers said.

Investors kept an eye on high-level talks between China and the US on trade in Beijing on Thursday.

Back home, counters such as realty, capital goods, IT, teck, infrastructure, FMCG, consumer durables, oil and gas and auto suffered as participants pulled money off the



table. After opening higher, the

30-share BSE Sensex quickly slipped into the red largely

in line with weak Asian cues and hit a low of 35,020.08 before settling at 35,103.14, still down by 73.28 points, or 0.21%.

The index had surged 675.15 points in the past four sessions, spurred by sustained buying by domestic institutional investors (DIIs) and encouraging quarterly earnings by some companies.

The 50-share NSE Nifty

slipped below the 10,700-mark and finished at 10,679.65 -- down 38.40 points, or 0.36%. During the day, it shuttled between 10,720.60 and 10,647.45.

Meanwhile, on a net basis, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) sold shares worth Rs 525.93 crore, while DIIs bought shares to the tune of Rs 165.84 crore in Wednesday's trade, provisional data showed..

# BCCI's reluctance to play a Day-Night Test in Australia defies logic

The Indian cricket establishment is reportedly dithering over playing the pink-ball, day-night Test Down Under in the series scheduled later this year, which has Cricket Australia at sixes and sevens.

Since the first day-night Test was played in Adelaide against New Zealand in late 2015, it has become a marquee event in Australia's cricket calendar. Cancelling this match would affect gate receipts, sponsorship et al, so their distress is understandable.

What explains India's sudden uncompromising position? Unconfirmed stories suggest that the team management is apprehensive of playing under lights because the players are not used to this, and it could boomerang on them.

True, there are hardships involved. As yet there have only been nine day-night Tests, so some uncertainty exists. But players I've spoken to in the past 20-24 months seemed eager to take on the new challenge. So what's causing the change of mind?

Obviously India are concerned about preserving their No 1 Test status as well as winning their first Test series in Australia. It's a laudable twin ambition, but success will not come on a platter, irrespective of whether one of the four Tests is a day-night affair.

Even if the Australian cricket team



have won all the day-night Tests played at home, these are only four in number. So there is no great legacy advantage for them to derive: Nothing that some advance preparation can't offset.

Moreover, India's reluctance is not befitting a side that prides itself as the best in the game currently. I'd go further to say fear is misplaced against a beleaguered Australia who have lost their two best batsmen to bans: their morale would be low, vulnerability high.

Yet it is not the result that is germane to the issue, rather the future of the five-day format, struggling from spectatorship drought. I witnessed the 2015 day-night Test between Aus-

tralia and New Zealand, and the response from fans was fantastic, suggesting this could be the route to salvation.

In fact, former Australia captain Ian Chappell who I spoke to then wondered why cricket administrators had been like Rip Van Winkle when day-night ODIs had been in existence for more than four decades.

True, some compunctions remain: about the texture of the ball, how it behaves under lights, difficulty of playing in English summers when daylight extends almost to 9 pm etc. But as Mark Nicholas, asked pertinently during that inaugural match, "Does Test cricket have a choice?" Honestly it doesn't. This makes it

incumbent for the richest cricket Board to see the big picture rather than fret about short-term gains and losses. But the Indian cricket establishment - which has the most pelf and wields the most power - has usually been only self-serving.

For the record, eight of the 12 Test-playing countries have played the 5-day format under lights. Of the four that haven't, Afghanistan and Ireland have only recently got Test status while opportunity hasn't arisen for Bangladesh. But it has for India who are playing difficult. Sadly, this recalcitrance seems to be a pattern rather than exception. For instance, India was the last country to agree to play the inaugural T20 World Championship, which must seem ironical now considering how it has since milked this format to fill its coffers.

Also, after becoming the first to accept DRS, India suddenly took a sulking, non-co-operative position that lasted over five years leading to the irksome situation where every other country was okay with decision reviews -- save one.

Given its enormous clout, India should be in the vanguard where preserving and promoting the sport is concerned. The Indian establishment - players included - loses no opportunity to tom-tom how concerned it is about the future of Test cricket.

# Sunrisers Hyderabad have done well even without Bhuvneshwar Kumar: Irfan Pathan

Former India pacer Irfan Pathan has heaped praise on the bowling attack of Sunrisers Hyderabad saying they have performed well even without their pacespearhead Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

"Sunrisers Hyderabad...the way they have performed without Bhuvneshwar, who is a big bowler...According to me, in the Indian team, if anyone is at par with (Jasprit) Bumrah in ODI cricket, it is Bhuvneshwar Kumar," Pathan said when asked which is the strongest attack in this Indian Premier League.

"And the way they (SRH bowlers) have performed without him in the last 2-3 matches, it is a big thing..." he added.

"They have fast bowlers- Siddharth Kaul and Sandeep Sharma, but no big international name in their pace department...Only Rashid Khan (from Afghanistan) and Shakib (Al Hasan). But the way they have bowled is impressive."

"But with limited resources, the young boys are bowling well in right areas and doing well and so Sunrisers Hyderabad," Pathan explained on why he rated the SRH bowling attack highly.

Bhuvni has been affected by a niggling back



injury and has missed the last 2-3 games for the SRH.

Despite his absence, SRH have defended low totals, one against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium here and also against Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur.

The 33-year-old former pacer also praised young Mumbai Indians leg-spinners Mayank Markande, who has been the find of the tournament and has clicked since his first game against the Chennai Super Kings.

"One thing for a leg spinner is to bowl in right areas and he (Markande) is bowling consistently in the right areas. A leg spinner has variations, but to have the control and to bowl in the (right) areas is not an easy task and this boy has done that," the former pacer, who was part of the inaugural World T20, which had India won, added.

# Siddarth Kaul draws inspiration from Virat Kohli in IPL 2018

Siddarth Kaul is one of few bowlers who is making the right noises in the ongoing Indian Premier League and deserves the tag of being the most lethal medium-pace in the T20 mega-event so far.

In the IPL 2018, he has taken 11 wickets in 8 matches. Thus far, he is the second highest wicket taker after medium pacer Trent Boult.

"I am enjoying bowling this season and trying to make the most of my abilities. The fact that all other bowlers are doing pretty well is also helping me bowl with confidence," said Siddarth, who is with Sunrisers Hyderabad for a third consecutive year.

Even though both Siddarth Kaul and Virat Kohli were part of the same Youth World Cup winning India U-19 team in 2008, Kohli tasted success long ago and now captains the Indian cricket team.

On the other hand, Kaul earned an India ODI team call-up just a few months back after toiling hard for almost 10 years in the domestic circuit.

"Virat Paaji is an inspiration. The way he has conducted himself in the last 10 years is just fantastic. I might be a bit late but I have always believed that it is better to be late than never. I didn't get a chance to play in the series against Sri Lanka. I hope I get to make my debut under Virat soon," said Siddarth, who was selected in the India ODI team for a three-match series at home against Sri Lanka last year.

Although the quickie did not get a chance to make his ODI debut in the series, he made most of the dressing room experience. "It has been challenging to make a mark for myself. Injuries hamper a fast bowler's life and then one has to start afresh. I have done a lot of mental conditioning in the past one year, which has helped me to remain focused and positive," he added.

## A SPORTING FAMILY

It was natural for both Siddarth and his elder brother Uday to follow in the footsteps of their cricketer father Dr Tej Kaul and gymnastics coach mother Sandhya Kaul.

The young Kaul sibling duo picked cricket - while Uday chose to be a wicket-keeper-cum-batsman, Siddarth took to pace bowling. Brother Uday has also played for India U-19 team and is a member of the Punjab senior team.

In the 90s, Siddarth's father was the Indian cricket team's physiotherapist and this gave Siddarth a chance to meet and spend time with legend like Sachin Tendulkar.

# Justin Langer hails series win in India as 'ultimate goal' for Australian cricket team

It is a tough road ahead for the new Australia cricket team head coach Justin Langer. With the team still reeling from the after-effects of the ball-tampering scandal that shook the world of cricket, Langer faces a daunting task of restoring the pride of the baggy green cap.

Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Langer said that the team needs to earn back the respect from the fans and a Test series win on Indian soil in 2021 will certainly be the 'ultimate' goal for the Australian cricket team.

"We've got a World Cup, a T20 World Cup, a couple of Ashes (in 2019 and 2021-22) I get nervous when I start

thinking about it," Langer was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au. "There are some big tournaments coming up. But ultimately, if I fast forward it, the Indian Test tour in about three or four years time, to me that's the ultimate. We will judge ourselves on whether we're a great cricket team if we beat India in India," he added.

A Test series win in India is not something that many Australian cricket teams have achieved over the years. After three back-to-back series wins between 1956 and 1969, there was a 35-year period where India dominated proceedings at home.

In 2001, the team came



to India at the back of a 15-match unbeaten run and it looked like the curse might finally come to an end. But, the Steve Waugh-led side were unable to conquer the 'final frontier' as they were beaten

comprehensively in Kolkata and Chennai. The curse was finally broken under Ricky Ponting in 2004 as the visitors clinched the four-match series 2-1. Langer, who scored two half

centuries while opening the batting, still fondly refers to the series victory as the 'Mount Everest' of his career.

"I look back on my career, the Mount Everest moment was 2004 when we finally beat India in India."

"We've got to get better at playing overseas, we become a great team if we win overseas and at home so that will be something for us to aspire to," he said.

Since that victory, they have travelled to India four times and the hosts have emerged victorious on all occasions. In 2016, they started well with a huge win in Pune but the Steve Smith-led side was unable to continue their

momentum as they were defeated 2-1.

Thus, a win in India will be a huge achievement for both the Australian cricket team and their new coach Justin Langer. However, there is a more immediate challenge for Langer and his team as they take on India in a four-match Test series at home starting December 6.

India have never won a Test series at Australia but without the services of Steve Smith and David Warner, the hosts are extremely vulnerable this time and Langer's first assignment will be to safeguard the perfect home record against the Virat Kohli-led Indian cricket team.

# Prithvi Shaw reminds me of Sachin Tendulkar, says Mark Waugh

Prithvi Shaw is earning high praise as the teenaged batsman makes an impact with classic strokeplay for Delhi Daredevils in the Indian Premier League.

The 18-year-old, who led India to the U-19 World Cup in New Zealand, has stepped into the shoes of Gautam Gambhir and produced two match-winning knocks at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground as an opener. The Mumbai batsman's 25-ball 47 in Wednesday night's win against Rajasthan Royals has earned him comparisons with Sachin Tendulkar, from ex-Australia batting great Mark Waugh, who was himself famous for his stylish strokeplay.

Analysing the game on the Select Dugout show for official broadcasters Star, Waugh said: "The first thing you notice is his technique, it's very similar to Sachin Tendulkar. His grip, his stance, he stays very still at the crease and plays all his shots around the wicket. He plays the ball quite late and is quite punchy in his stroke play and has an excellent base to play any shot from any bowler. He's just so much like Sachin Tendulkar."

Shaw has been hailed as a special talent since he scored 546 as a 14-year-old, for Rizvi Springfield School in Mumbai Harris Shield tournament in 2013. Last year, he struck a century on Ranji

Trophy debut in the semifinals against Tamil Nadu and then became the youngest at 17 to score a hundred on Duleep Trophy debut, eclipsing Tendulkar's record. Former West Indies pacer Ian Bishop too had compared Shaw's front foot drive to Tendulkar, while doing commentary at the U-19 World Cup.

Shaw, who was bought by Delhi Daredevils for Rs 1.2 crore, became the joint youngest to score an IPL half-century. He has scored 140 runs in four innings at an amazing strike rate of 166.67.

His latest innings versus Royals, included a brilliant shot off left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat.

# Hockey India recommends Manpreet Singh, Savita Punia for Arjuna Award

Manpreet Singh, who led India's men's hockey team at last month's 2018 Commonwealth Games, was among the three players recommended for this year's Arjuna award by the national federation in New Delhi on Thursday. Another experienced mid-fielder Dharamvir Singh, and Indian women's team goalkeeper Savita have also been recommended for the Arjuna Award.

"Sangai Ibemhal Chanu

and former men's captain Bharat Chetri have been recommended for the Dhyani Chand Award for Lifetime Achievement," Hockey India said in a statement.

Hockey India also recommended Coach BS Chauhan for the Dronacharya Award.

Speaking on the recommendations, Mohd Mushtaq Ahmad, Secretary General, Hockey India said, "They have proven their worth with significant performances that



has elevated the Indian team to new heights. "They have donned the India colours with pride and have given it their all to help the team win several accolades within the

country and internationally. We at Hockey India are proud of their achievements and are happy to recommend their names for the National awards," he added.

Dharamvir formed the mid-field of the Indian team and was part of the gold medal feat at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, Korea. He was also part of the Indian Team that participated at the 2012 London Olympics and has also represented the coun-

try at the 2014 World Cup in the Netherlands.

Manpreet, on the other hand, captained the Indian team in the absence of PR Sreejesh who was injured last year. Manpreet was part of the Asia Cup success where India beat Malaysia to lift the title. He also led the Indian team to a bronze medal at the World League Final last year. With over 200 international caps, Manpreet was part of the Team.

# MS Dhoni, Dwayne Bravo and Shane Watson have lots to offer: CSK coach Stephen Fleming

Chennai Super Kings' coach Stephen Fleming is happy that pivotal role played by veteran trio of MS Dhoni, Shane Watson and Dwayne Bravo have shut the sceptics, who termed the team as Dad's Army.

Dhoni and Watson are months shy from being 37 while Bravo is in his 35th year. However all three have made major contribution CSK's six wins out of eight.

Dhoni has three half centuries while Watson has a century and a half-ton. Bravo has played a blinder at the start and been mostly economical with the ball.

"Age isn't really a barrier. I still think the big guys are still have a lot to give. The calmness around the group plays a big part. Yes, we have some youngsters around but under pressure experience counts. There's not many games where you don't have pressure," Fleming told reporters on the eve of their return leg fixture against Kolkata Knight Riders here.

CSK have put up 200-plus totals four times this season and Fleming said it would have been a concern if they were not getting one more than what their opponents were getting.

"That's the silver lining. It's keeping us on the edge and making us uncomfortable about each game which is a good thing from a coach's point of view. Most times we have put up fight that matched them. If you lose three four games you are down in the bottom, we know that."

The biggest gain for CSK has been Ambati Rayudu who has done well both as an opener and also at No 4 as he leads the run charts with 370 runs from eight matches.

"It just shows how flexible and how calm he is at the crease. He is having a fantastic season. He has been massive for us," he said.

Young South African pacer Lungi Ngidi made his presence felt in his debut as he returned with a tidy 1/26.

Fleming said he's looking forward to relish the conditions on the seaming Eden Gardens wicket.

"We have been excited about him for a while. He has a massive presence, conditions like the new Kolkata pitch, it would be exciting to see him have a go (at KKR)."