

TIME AND US

DAILY SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

THURSDAY

● MAY, 10, 2018
● 23 SHABAN 1439 AH
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WEATHER TEMPERATURE		
STATION	MAX TEMPERATURE	MIN TEMPERATURE
	ACT	ACT
SRINAGAR	24.7	7.9
JAMMU	34.1	19.1
LEH	14.5	1.3
KARGIL	17.8	4.8

SUNSET THURSDAY: 07:22 PM
SUNRISE FRIDAY: 05:34 AM

LOCAL FORECAST OF SRINAGAR
Mainly Clear Sky. Maximum & Minimum temperatures will be around 24°C & 08°C respectively.

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

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FTII-DIPR FILM APPRECIATION COURSE BEGINS IN JAMMU

NOW, KHATTA SINGH 'REVEALS' RAM RAHIM'S ROLE IN FOLLOWER'S MURDER

BHARTI AIRTEL LOOKING TO PARE \$4.6 BILLION OF DEBT WITH AFRICA UNIT IPO, TO

BCCI COMMITTEE OF ADMINISTRATORS OPEN TO REVIEW ONE STATE, ONE VOTE

CM Mehbooba chairs all-party meeting on Kashmir situation

Expresses concern over deteriorating situation in Valley, says 'it is important to revive the dialogue process, centre should consider Ramadan ceasefire'

SRINAGAR, APR 09(KNS): Amid unabated violence in Kashmir, Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti today convened an all-party meeting here to discuss the situation in the state.

Sources told KNS that the all-party meeting decided to push for a "Ramzan ceasefire" proposal within the state and across the border with Pakistan, along the lines of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's initiative in 2003.

Sources said that participants stressed that an inclusive engagement of all parties is needed to carry forward the peace and reconciliation process.

Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti expressed her concern about the deteriorating situation in the Valley. "The issues of Kashmir are old but I am more concerned about the prevailing situation as we are losing young lives," she said at the meeting.

Sources said that the Chief Minister all expressed her concern about the killing of tourist "it was unfortunate that the tourist was killed. Such



incidents spoil our image and do a serious damage to the tourism industry," the CM has said.

Sources said that Chief Minister also said that it is important to revive the dialogue process. "My government will act as a facilitator if tangible steps are taken to reach out to all the stakeholders," sources quoting CM said.

The meeting was called to discuss the security situation in the Valley. On Saturday, three militants were

killed in Srinagar's Chattabal area and a teenager was run over by a police vehicle. On Sunday, five militants and five civilians were killed in a gunfight in Shopian. A tourist from Chennai was killed during stone-pelting in Baramulla on Monday.

One of the participants told KNS that the all-party meeting discussed a Ramzan ceasefire along the lines of Vajpayee's initiative to stop violence in Jammu and Kashmir. "The basic

idea was to make Ramzan as peaceful as possible and hopefully start a new dialogue," the leader added.

He said that the meeting pushed for dialogue within and beyond the state with Pakistan.

Sources said that four members of National conference also attended the meeting.

Sources said that other parties including Congress, BJP, CPI (M),

Four militants among 10 arrested on charges of Baramulla triple murder

SRINAGAR, MAY 09 (KNB): The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday claimed to arrest 4 militants and 6 overground workers allegedly involved in murder of three civilians in old town Baramulla, north of Kashmir. Police has been successful in arresting the killers involved in this gruesome murder that shook the conscience of all across the state, a police spokesman said here.

Pertinently, three civilians identified as Haseeb Nabi Khan, Irfan Ahmad Sheikh, Mohd Asgar Sheikh aka Afsar Khan were killed by unknown gunmen in Iqbal Market Baramulla on 30th April, 2018.

Police while giving details stated that initial eye witness accounts of the crime suggested that three to four militants were involved in the commission of this heinous crime who had escaped towards Drangbal-Hajibal forest area.

According to the police spokesman, suspicious movement was observed by one of the security force parties deployed in the area and thereafter an operation was launched in Hajibal-Drangbal forest area.

While zeroing in the target area, the militants fired towards the Army/Police columns, the militants were chased and one militant was overpowered and captured alive in live action in injured condition.

The militant was immediately given medical treatment and the hideout in which 04 militants had been hiding was busted and recovery of arms and ammunition was made.



One more militant Bilal Ahmad Najar See Four...Pg 02

GOVT APPROVES GREEN LICENCE PLATES FOR E-VEHICLES

Agencies

NEW DELHI: To promote electric vehicles in India, the Government has approved green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts for private e-vehicles and yellow for taxis, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said today.

The government also plans to allow youth in the age bracket of 16-18 years to drive electric scooters, besides mandating taxi aggregators to have a certain percentage of e-vehicle fleet.

"The government has approved distinctive green licence plates for electric vehicles to encourage people to use electric vehicles. Such vehicles will be fitted with green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts for private cars and yellow font for taxis," Gadkari said.

A notification in this regard will be out in a week's time, See Plates...Pg 02

Plead criminal cases with due diligence: Bukhari

SRINAGAR, MAY 09: Minister for Horticulture, Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Syed Basharat Ahmed Bukhari today directed the legal counsels, public prosecutors and police officers to present the facts of the criminal cases with due diligence before the courts.

He made these remarks during a high-level meeting called to review the status of criminal cases before different courts.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ajay Nanda, Advocate General Jehangir Iqbal Ganie,



Principal Secretary Home R K Goyal, DGP Dr S P Vaid, Secretary Law Abdul Majeed Bhat, IGP Kashmir SP Pani, DIG CRK, Director prosecution, officers of Law Department, law officers representing the state in High Court, Public Prosecutors, Chief Prosecuting Officers of Kashmir.

Bukhari directed the concerned to ensure that all the groundwork related to the

cases is properly done so that guilty do not go scot free.

Saying that appeals/ revisions should be done within a given period, the Law Minister asked the participants that any reference beyond limitation shall not be entertained unless it is supported by cogent reasons for the delay.

He also asked the prosecution wing of the police department to provide district and year wise details of criminal cases to the department of law at an earliest.

To ensure the appearance of official witnesses in the See Bukhari...Pg 02

HASEEB DRABU: MASTER OF FRAUDULENT BUSINESS PRACTICES

SRINAGAR, MAY 09 (KNB): The nexus of illegal trade between a premier industrial group of the Kashmir Valley, Younis Zia, a murky businessman and former Finance Minister and MLA Rajpora Haseeb Drabu is all marred by the fraud tactics and illegal means.

The first and foremost is the 'Kahnov Realty Private Limited' Registered on 07 JULY 2011 by Haseeb Drabu and others in contrary to the constitutional law that the representative cannot hold an office of profit under section 9 (A) of the Representation OF People Act and article 191 (1) (A) of the constitution.

The shocking fraudulent practices bloom in this entire trade of the ex finance minister, Capital basic is just one See Drabu...Pg 02

PDP-BJP has neglected all three regions of the State: Omar

'GST extension to J&K has dealt a severe blow to State's economy'

SRINAGAR, MAY 09(KNS): National Conference (NC) working president, Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said the PDP-BJP Government had neglected the economic and administrative needs of all the three regions of the State while plunging the State into a dark period of political uncertainty and instability.

Addressing a workers' convention at Leh on Wednesday, Omar Abdullah said the State's economy was adversely affected due to the extension of GST to the State - an act that also eroded the State's fiscal and political autonomy.

"All three regions of the State have been



neglected by the PDP-BJP Government as it remains invested in dividing people to reap political dividends out of instability and See Omar...Pg 02

LOOTING PUBLIC EXCHEQUER: IN KANGAN BDO CONSTRUCTS TOILET, MLA'S DISMANTLES

SRINAGAR, MAY 09 (PTK): Amid tall claims of good governance and development, the public money is being looted and wasted for self-interests by the people at helm of affairs.

In such a similar case at Kangan area of Ganderbal district, the Block Development Office (BDO) constructs a toilet at Damping Park Kichpora unnecessarily.

Interestingly despite have two existing toilets constructed by J&K Police and Tourism one each, the department sanctioned another just to waste money.

The irony is that the construction of the toilet was later stopped and dismantled on the direction of concern Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Main Altaf. See Looting...Pg 02

India, China should resume military-level talks for border peace: Indian envoy

Agencies

BEIJING: India and China should resume military exchanges and strategic communication between top commanders to maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas, India's envoy to China Gautam Bambawale said on Wednesday.

Differences between the two countries, the envoy said, could only be resolved through discussions.

"Naturally, like any two countries, there are also differences between us. We can only resolve these differences, over time, if we speak to each other about them in an open manner," Bambawale said. See India...Pg 02



India and China have a limited military to military links and the only annual bilateral defence exercise "hand-in-hand" was cancelled last year following the standoff. The exercise is likely to be resumed this year. See India...Pg 02

DOCTORS ASSOCIATION RUES LACK OF TRAUMA CARE FACILITIES IN PERIPHERAL HOSPITALS

SRINAGAR, MAY 09 (KNB): Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) on Wednesday expressed serious concern over lack of trauma care facilities in peripheral hospitals of Kashmir valley because of which precious lives are lost.

"Absence of trained staff and equipment to deal with trauma patients is costing lives," said DAK President Dr Nisar ul Hassan in a communique.

"The peripheral hospitals lack trauma specialists, anaesthetists, blood banks, intensive care units which are essential to handle critically injured patients," he said.

Dr Nisar said every trauma patient is referred to tertiary care hospitals in Srinagar.

"Majority of these patients die because they are unable See Doctors...Pg 02

Mirwaiz terms All Party Meeting as 'farce'

Says meeting aimed to mislead people into believing that they are serious

SRINAGAR, MAY 09 (KNS): The incarcerated Hurriyat Conference (M) chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said that all pro-India parties meeting convened by Mehbooba Mufti is nothing more than a farce to mislead people into believing that they are serious or can do something to bring people out of the current oppressive state.

In a statement issued to KNS, Mirwaiz said "the fact remains that it is these very parties and people who are responsible for our misery

and massacres and the extreme repressive situation that we are facing for the past seventy years in general and thirty years in particular."

Our suffering is an outcome of the draconian laws and legislation put in place here by New Delhi with the full cooperation and support of these pro-India parties. Over the years these parties kept yielding our sovereignty and compromising on our status before New Delhi for the sake of chair," he said. "Today Kashmir is a col-



ony of India with over seven lakh Indian troops stationed here ensuring forcible control through military might result-

ing in severe repression on people. And these parties who willingly preside over that repression for the sake of chair that has no power as all power rests with New Delhi, want us to believe that their meetings will bring us relief!," Mirwaiz said.

He said when all space for the expression of dissent is choked and gagged, as in Kashmir, youth feel forced to turn to violent means. "When these young boys are killed by the forces and police as See Mirwaiz...Pg 02

SLAIN TOURIST'S FATHER PRAISES HOSPITALITY OF KASHMIR

SRINAGAR, MAY 09 (KNB): His son died after he was hit on the head by a stone during a protest in Kashmir, but Rajavel is all praise for Kashmiris, saying the incident was "the work of a few men gone wild."

On Monday morning, 22-year-old R Thirumani, who was travelling with his parents to Gulmarg, was hit on the left of his head by a stone during a protest at Narbal on the outskirts of Srinagar. He was admitted to the SKIMS where he succumbed to injuries in the evening.

"The left side of his face was completely smashed, his jaw, teeth and nose were broken. There was a huge pool of blood under him. So many strangers came forward to help. They offered money for treatment, gave me their numbers. I am thankful to them. At the hospital, everyone was very helpful, but my son was already gone. They tried their See Tourist...Pg 02

Continue from Front Page.....

CM

Peoples Conference, PDF and others attended the five-hour long meeting.

Mehbooba Mufti has come under strong criticism after 16 people, including eight militants; seven civilians and a tourist were killed in separate incidents of violence in the past four days.

Sources said that the general feeling conveyed by the participants was that there is a need for a "political outreach". "Everyone in the meeting felt there was a need for a political outreach and the national leadership must adopt Vajpayee's approach," a source in the PDP said.

Meanwhile talking to reporters after the all-party meeting concluded at SKICC, Mehbooba said: "It was the unanimous decision of all parties during the meeting that the Government of India should consider ceasefire during Ramadhan."

She said that there was consensus among all political parties that there should be a Ramadhan ceasefire like the one announced during the time of then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

She said that an all-party delegation would also meet the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the outreach.

PDP senior leader and R&B minister Nayeem Akhter said that the general feeling among the participants in all-party meeting was that there should be a political outreach on Kashmir.

"The general feeling is that there should be a political outreach on Kashmir," Akhter told reporters at the SKICC.

Engineer Rashid, the chief of Awami Ittehad Party after the All Party Meet, said that during the holy month of Ramadhan, Government of India should announce a unilateral ceasefire and stop anti-militancy operations.

Talking to reporters at SKICC in Srinagar where an all-party meeting chaired by Mehbooba Mufti is underway, Rasheed said that the anti-militancy operations should be stopped forthwith to end the bloodshed in the Valley.

"I demanded unilateral ceasefire in Ramadhan and all anti-militancy operations should be stopped," Rasheed said. He said that Mehbooba Mufti should quit if Delhi doesn't listen to her. "We will support her," he said.

FOUR

aka Sameer S/O Gh. Ahmad Najar R/O Banglow Bagh Baramulla was apprehended near cremation ground of Sikh Community located in the same area being overpowered by teams of Police Army and CRPF.

After questioning of the militant, the involvement of Lashkar-e-Toiba organization was established in commission of heinous crime of killing of 3 innocent civilians. During investigation, it has surfaced that following militants were involved in the killing of Suhaib Farooq Akhooon aka Abu Huraira S/O Farooq Ahmad Akhooon R/O Khanpora.. Ajaz Ahmad Gojri aka Abu Umair S/O Ab. Rehman R/O Jami Mohalla Baramulla (apprehended) Bilal Ahmad Najar aka Abu-Sameer S/O Ghulam Ahmad Najar R/O Banglow Bagh Baramulla (apprehended).

It also surfaced that Bilal Ahmad Najar S/O Gh. Ahmad Najar R/O Banglow Bagh Baramulla has actually tracked the movement of 3 deceased civilians, and was assigned the task of identification and spotting the victims.

Three militants Suhaib Akhooon and Ajaz Gojree opened fire by AK series rifles while as Bilal Najar used a Chinese pistol to commit the triple murder.

As all of these militants are locals of Baramulla they were spotted by eye witnesses who reported to Police and Army.

The Pakistani suspected to be involved in these murders in initial eye witness accounts turned out to be Ajaz Gojri who had changed his appearance.

All the weapons of offence, i.e. 02 AK rifles and one pistol have been recovered and empty cartridges recovered from the scene of crime have same markings as of those of live cartridges recovered from the apprehended militants and their hideout.

After commission of crime, the 4 militants fled from the spot in a silver colour Alto Car bearing registration number JK01J-0010 provided to them by one Uzair Amin Bhat S/O Mohd Amin Bhat R/O Chesti Colony Baramulla who has been arrested along with vehicle in the instant case.

Out of the three civilians killed names of two had figured in threatening video issued by Lashkar in year 2016 from old town Baramulla during unrest.

During sustained interrogation of these arrested militants, the Police and SFs were also able to unearth an LeT module operating in Sopore-Baramulla belt and in all 4 active militants of the LeT have been apprehended alongwith 06 other Over Ground Workers (OGWs).

Multiple raids by Police, Army and CRPF in Sopore and Baramulla areas were launched to bust the terror modules.

One Kingpin of the module namely Nadeem Ahmad Dar aka Abu Osama R/O Nowpora Kalan Sopore alongwith Suhaib Akhooon had been the main motivators and commanders of the group. Nadeem aka Abu Osama had provided all assistance to these terrorists in commission of crime as well as supply of weapons to the terrorists.

He has also transported them to Baramulla from Sopore in white Santro car on April 25th. The vehicle has also been recovered.

He has been in direct contact with a Pakistani militant of LeT Hanzulla Adnan based in Pakistan.

During this investigation Police and Security forces were also successful to solve the cases of two grenade attacks on Police Station Baramulla by apprehending one Naseer Ahmad Mochi R/O Amargrah Sopore. He was provided grenades on two occasions by apprehended militant Ajaz Ahmad Gojri and subsequently lobbed by him on Police Station Baramulla on 2.12.2017 and 22.01.2018 in which two policemen had got injured.

Besides a huge recovery of household material, equipment and vehicle, following war like store were recovered from the possession of terrorists and hideout:- AK Rifles 02 Nos, Pistil Chinese 02 Nos, Hand grenades 04 Nos, AK ammunition 50 Rounds, AK Magazine 04 Nos, Pistol Magazines 02 Nos.

During interrogation of these militants it also surfaced that LeT handlers in Pakistan had given clear instructions to them to create atmosphere of terror in North Kashmir Range by eliminating as many civilians as possible.

This also explains the killings that had taken place in other parts of North Kashmir i.e. Hajin and Sopore done by Lashkar-e-Toiba militants.

The two militants involved in crime had joined terrorist

ranks in October-November 2017 while as the third one joined after murdering three boys on April 30th.

The group along with other militant in Sopore-Handwara belt are commanded by one Pakistani militant operating by code name Abu-Maaz.

Other prominent militant of the group Suhaib Akhooon had gone to Pakistan in July last year on Passport and visa from Pakistan High Commission and had obtained terrorist training in LeT camp based in Faisalabad Pakistan. After returning back via Wagah border he formally joined the LeT group here.

Police and Security forces are thankful to general public for providing valuable timely inputs that helped to solve the heinous case of triple murder and busting of terror module.

PLATES

the minister, who has been advocating electric mobility promotion, he said.

The purpose behind distinctive number plates is their easy identification for preferential treatment in parking, free entry in congested zones besides other proposed benefits like concessional toll, the road transport and highways minister said.

The measure is aimed at promoting e-vehicle's use and the government is considering exemption from permits for such vehicles.

"Exemption from permit will be a game changer as restricted permit regime is a major concern. E-rickshaw growth is attributable to the permit exemption and there is scope to extend the exemption to the e-buses, e-taxis, e-autos and e-bikes. E-auto and e-buses may have a big impact since getting a new permit is extremely difficult," the minister said.

Similarly, e-bikes also should see a considerable impact since it is a new area, he added.

Besides, the government is contemplating permitting youth in the age group of 16-18 years to drive e-scooters, which are gearless and this will lead to a big demand for e-scooters, the minister noted.

Under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, those in the age group of 16-18 years are granted licence for below 50 CC gearless scooters.

Incidentally there is no scooter in this category made in the country.

"The government is also contemplating to ask taxi aggregators to have an incremental share of electric vehicles from 2020 onwards, which could be 1 per cent of the fleet every year," Gadkari said.

Similarly, all public transport operators may also be mandated to provide 1 per cent incremental fleet from 2020 onwards, he added.

Stressing that electric vehicles will bring down vehicular pollution, Gadkari said the government is tightening fuel efficiency norms.

Besides, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will request the finance ministry that the rate of depreciation on EVs may be allowed at 50 per cent as against the rate of 15 per cent for conventional vehicles.

The proposals include bringing down the GST on batteries to 12 per cent at par with the GST on EVs.

As per an estimate, India at present has 1 to 1.5 lakh electric vehicles and it is projected to grow to about 5 per cent of the total vehicles in the next five years, an official said.

Of the about 24 million vehicles sold in India in 2017-18, electric vehicles accounted for barely about 1 per cent, the official added.

India, currently, has four kinds of number plates - white licence plates with numbers on black font for private cars, yellow plates with fonts in black for commercial vehicles, black plates with yellow font letters for self-driven rental vehicles and blue plates with white font letters for Embassies and High Commissions.

Army vehicles on the other hand follow a different registration system given by the defence ministry, while vehicles of the President and Governors have red licence plates with the national emblem.

BUKHARI

courts, Bukhari asked the police officials to include personal identification and mobile numbers as part of challan so that there is no difficulty in notifying witnesses about the date of hearing.

The meeting also decided that department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary affairs will provide the necessary staff to the public prosecutors.

The Minister directed the participants to take steps for the vacation of stay where High Court has ordered a stay for investigation/ trial.

He also directed the DGP to prepare a proposal for engaging retired police officers as 'Pairvi officers' to follow criminal cases along with criteria for engagement. He was also asked to provide an action taken report regarding their police officials who have failed to perform their duties resulting in failure of criminal cases.

"DGP shall also explore the feasibility of posting investigating officers with a legal background," Minister said in the meeting.

The meeting also decided that in order to obviate delay in filing appeals/ revisions concerned police stations will directly approach Law Department for necessary action.

Bukhari also directed that all prosecutors shall inform Law department, office of Advocate General and Director General of Police about the details of applications filed against the witnesses who have resiled from their statements recorded under section 164A Code of Criminal procedure within seven days.

DRABU

lac while as trade tantamounting to Rs 12 Crore is shown. While as the staggering profit of one crore sixty lac also known as reserve and surplus is shown for a financial year, with just capital of one lac.

Thirdly, a shady guy Younis Zia who is said to have taken several loans from JK bank and was close lieutenant of Haseeb Drabu is astonishingly giving Drabu a loan of one crore 25 lac interest free for the business concern of Drabu, while he was heavily funded by the Haseeb Drabu during his tenure.

Fourthly, the premier business group of the Kashmir valley along with this suspicious Younis Zia is in nexus of this fraudulent trade practices.

A business analyst, while talking to The Kashmir News Bureau stated - "Their balance sheet is certainly fraud of the

century and it should be thoroughly probed that what sort of business our former Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu was doing that has a just basic capital of Rs one lac and shows abnormal profit of one crore 25 sixty lac and trade worth of 12 crore. If this is genuine he should share this magic wand with the youth of Kashmir. All said and done this looks clear cut case of dodgy and negative practices."

OMAR

animosity. Be it Kashmir, Ladakh or Jammu - all the State's regions are witnessing a stagnation in terms of development and governance as political uncertainty has become a hallmark of the present Government", Omar said at Leh.

Addressing the convention, Omar Abdullah said the Mehbooba Muti led Government was solely invested in clinging on to power despite the adverse ramifications of an alliance that was crafted for the singular purpose of gaining political power at the cost of numerous promises that were made to the people of the State.

"While every single political promise made by this alliance has been broken without guilt or remorse, the administrative inertia and cluelessness has translated into the State being pushed back by years in terms of governance and development. There isn't a single area that has progressed in the last three years as the Government is fully occupied in concealing its sellouts to remain in power. The people of the State have been betrayed and continue to be at the receiving end of anti-youth policies", the NC Working President added.

"The extension of GST to J&K has dealt a severe blow to the State's economy while eroding our fiscal autonomy which was vital to craft fiscal and taxation policies to meet unique challenges that State faces. Today J&K has no power to create pro-artisan, pro-farmer and pro-business taxation policies to provide a fillip to the State's economy. These powers have been surrendered by the PDP-BJP Government and now rest with the Central Government. Rhetoric can't be an excuse for delivery and it has now become evident that this Government has sold out and compromised on the interests of the State and its people to remain in power", the NC Working President said.

The NC Working President also expressed disappointment at the failure of the State Government to raise the issue of exorbitant airfare with the Central Aviation Ministry and said this was adversely affecting the State's Tourism Industry. "National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah will raise this issue in the Parliament and also with the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation as the State Government seems least bothered to raise this important issue that affects the lives of millions of people in the State", Omar Abdullah added.

Earlier on Tuesday, the NC Working President inaugurated the Party's new District Office at Leh and addressed a workers' convention on the occasion.

Wishing the party's functionaries and workers all the best, Omar Abdullah asked them to work with commitment and zeal to unite the people of the State across regional and religious lines and to serve the people selflessly.

Numerous political activists and workers joined National Conference on this occasion and were welcomed into the party by the NC Working President. Omar Abdullah was accompanied by NC Provincial President Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Spokesperson Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Party Treasurer Shammi Oberoi, Stanzin Phunchok, Chipkyang Thiksey and other functionaries of the party.

LOOTING

Sources told PTK that the concern MLA is allotting government construction works to blue eyed persons in the constituency adding that this particular construction become victim of political interference, hence the money utilised from the public exchequer was wasted.

Sources told PTK Tehsildar approved the construction of toilet but after completion of 60% of work, it was dismantled, hence wasting public money for self-interests.

Locals told PTK that there was no need of another toilet and if the department purchased huge construction material and almost erected the construction, what was need to dismantle it?.

"They give benefits to their relatives; friends and business partners, latter dismantle for self-interests and wasting public money invested.

When contacted, Tehsildar Kangan Mushatq Ahmad told Press Trust of Kashmir that the concern MLA asked to stop work adding that "what can we do?".

When contacted, MLA Kangan Main Altaf he refused to comment over the issue. He said, "Do whatever you want to do. Why should I give answer to you".

INDIA

"An important principle in India-China relations is the necessity of being sensitive to the other country's aspirations and interests... We may talk to each other but little progress will be made if we do not empathise with the other side's point of view," Bambawale said.

"This is an important pre-requisite for moving forward in our bilateral ties," he added.

"I have always maintained that if India and China have to live and progress together, especially in the 21st century, it is essential that we engage each other seriously and talk to each other extremely frankly and candidly."

Bambawale's statement comes days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese president Xi Jinping agreed at the informal summit in Wuhan in central China to take steps aimed at strengthening communications and building trust between the militaries of India and China.

The decision of the two leaders was aimed at effectively managing differences on the border and averting a Doklam-like stand-off, which led to a sharp slump in ties last year.

"The 'Informal Summit' was one such example of engagement at the apex level. I hope you will also do the same during the course of this dialogue today. Talking to each other candidly will help in enhancing understanding and thereby increase trust in each other," Bambawale said.

Bambawale was speaking at the 8th India-China Dialogue between Ananta Aspen Centre, a think-tank in New Delhi, and China Reform Forum, a Beijing-based research institution affiliated to the Communist Party of China's party school.

This dialogue was also cancelled last year.

Leading academics from India and China attended the Aspen dialogue as well as a separate one organised by the Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, an US-based think-tank with a branch in Beijing among other cities.

"Only through such a frank, free and open dialogue, will

we be able to enhance understanding between ourselves and increase trust amongst us, our two peoples, our two governments, and our two countries," he said referring to the India-China Aspen dialogue.

DOCTORS

to reach Srinagar within the "golden hour" which is crucial for survival in a trauma patient," he said.

Time makes the difference between life and death in trauma cases. For patients who require surgical intervention urgently, if they don't get it immediately, they die," he said.

Dr Nisar said while prehospital care saves lives of injured patients, in Kashmir there is no concept of this most important component of trauma care.

"Lack of medical attention at injury site leads to overwhelming proportion of deaths among injured patients," he said.

He further said the ambulances ferrying injured patients lack resuscitation equipment and trained staff. None of these ambulances are fitted with life-support systems rendering them no better than regular transport vehicles. Trauma-related injuries remain one of the leading causes of death in the valley.

"Most of these deaths are due to airway management failure, respiratory failure or continuing hemorrhage that are preventable with appropriate prehospital care and immediate hospital emergency care," Dr Nisar said.

"It is very easily said that the person succumbed to injuries, but in reality he dies due to lack of medical care. Despite repeated advocacy of trauma facilities in peripheries, no efforts have been made in this regard," he ruled.

"It seems value of life has been lost in health care planning and policy," lamented Dr Nisar.

MIRWAZ

in Shopian when their bosses condone and congratulate the forces. And their young civilians are killed, there is silence, not even an FIR is filed anywhere for killing of seven innocent youth which includes the one who was mowed to death by an armoured vehicle," he said.

Mirwaz questioned as to who is responsible and accountable for spilling of their blood?

Mirwaz said if these parties are really serious and mean business then all the black laws should be revoked forthwith and the force's personnel responsible for the massacre of innocent youth should be brought to justice.

Mirwaz said that the situation in Kashmir is so fragile and worrisome that in just two months forces have killed 32 civilians mostly youth while scores have been blinded and maimed by the deadly pellets and pava shells.

He said for the resistance camp, all means of peaceful protests and political space has been closed. Mirwaz asked those in chair that how long will they continue to follow the diktats of New Delhi and preside over the massacres of Kashmiris?

Meanwhile, senior leader Mukhtar Ahmed Waza visited the residence of 20-year-old Sajad Ahmed Rather of Duru Islamabad and expressed solidarity with the bereaved family. Sajad was killed in the government force's firing recently. Speaking on the occasion, Waza paid tributes all the civilians killed recently in South Kashmir parts and said that the sacrifice of martyrs will bear fruit. (

TOURIST

best," Rajavel was quoted as saying by The Indian Express. Rajavel, who works at the Avadi Ordnance Factory, said the incident took place on the third day of their Kashmir tour, soon after they set out for sightseeing in the morning.

"We were 43 of us, all from the same department. We had a vague idea that there was unrest in Kashmir, but we did not expect to be caught in it when the tour was planned some months ago. All I knew was that such things happen once or twice in a month," Rajavel said.

According to Rajavel's colleagues, the tour was an "LTC package". "We decided to go there because we wanted to contribute, help their tourism business," said one of them.

Rajavel said the Tavera in which he and his family were travelling, came to a halt at a place where other vehicles had also stopped. "We were waiting to move, when suddenly the stones started flying.. I was sitting next to the driver and screamed for everyone to duck. That's how my daughter escaped, she was sitting by the window behind the driver. My son was sitting behind me. He didn't duck," he said.

"This was the work of a few men gone wild. That is what I told the J&K Chief Minister, too. She asked for my forgiveness. It was good of her to come and see me," said Rajavel, adding that Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti gave the family Rs 2 lakh. On Tuesday, the Tamil Nadu government announced compensation of Rs 3 lakh.

According to the family, Thirumani, a B.Com graduate, was working with the consultancy major Accenture.

FINANCIAL COMMISSIONER HUDD MEETS GOVERNOR



Srinagar, May 09: Krishan Ballabh Agarwal, Financial Commissioner, Housing and Urban Development Department, met Governor N.N. Vohra at the Raj Bhavan today.

Agarwal briefed Governor about the various ongoing infrastructural development schemes in and around Katra town and about the earlier decision to build a modern Bus Stand and to set up a modern Solid Waste Management Plant at Katra, among various other projects.

Governor observed that if Government wanted to establish a fully planned Katra town, with all required facilities for the pilgrims, it was of utmost importance that all the agencies working in Katra and its surrounding areas must function under a unified command to secure time bound results for improving the civic facilities in the town and upgrading facilities required for the pilgrims.

Umang Narula, Chief Executive Officer of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board was present in the meeting.

Human Resource Development Minister calls upon students for large scale participation in "Swachh Bharat"

New Delhi, May 09: The Human Resource Development Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar has urged students to come forward and become part of the nationwide Swachh Mission by participating in "Swachh Bharat Summer Internship- 100 Hours of Swachhata" campaign. 'Swachh Bharat Summer Internship - 100 Hours of Swachhata' was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in association with the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to engage youth across the country for sanitation related work and village level development. The program from 1st May to 31st July 2018 is aimed to develop the skill and orientation of youth for sanitation related work,

bring youth across the country to make a significant contribution to the swachhata revolution and integrate youth in the community service in rural areas in the run up to the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Shri Prakash Javadekar has said that Swachh Bharat Programme, launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has now become a people's movement in the country. In a tweet/video message, Mr. Javadekar said that Prime Minister launched Swachh Bharat campaign three years ago and now it has caught the imagination of the public and large numbers of people are participating in it. The HRD Minister said that now it is turn of the youth

to participate in Swachh Bharat Summer Internship by visiting villages for 10 to 15 days during the summer vacation for making clean and dirt free ambience. He said that this is the self-education and people's education process to ensure the large scale participation of the people. Students enrolled in Colleges and Universities may apply in 'Swachh Bharat Summer Internship' through the enrolment form. Candidates may participate individually or in teams also. The location and team size may be decided in consultation with Nodal Officers. After enrollment for the internship through the website, candidates will be accepted as valid only once approved by the Nodal Officer at the Parent Institution.

Candidates are to devote at least 100 hours conducting Swachhata-related activities in rural areas selected by them and approved by the parent institution. The last date of registration is 15th May, 2018. An Internship Report to be submitted by the candidate on the online portal in the prescribed format within 15 days of completion of fieldwork. The online report submitted by the candidate shall be reviewed and approved by the Nodal Officer for the purpose of certification and rewards. All participants will be given a Swachh Bharat Internship Certificate on completion of their internship and its approval by the parent institution. 2 curriculum credits will be given to interns whose

internship reports are found eligible to get credits by parent institution. The Best 3 interns/ teams will be recognized at college, university, state and national levels. The winners will be awarded by Shields / cups and special certificates at College Level. In addition to certificates, Cash Awards will be given along with appropriate certificates as per the following: University Level: Rs 30,000, Rs 20,000, Rs 10,000 along with appropriate certificates. State Level: Rs 50,000, Rs 30,000, Rs 20,000 along with appropriate certificates. National Level: Rs 2 lakh, 1 lakh, Rs 50,000 along with appropriate certificates.

Showcasing Top 30 Innovations of the Atal Tinkering Marathon

New Delhi, May 09: In an effort to identify India's best student innovators, Atal Tinkering Labs of the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog, organized an Atal Tinkering Marathon, a six month long nationwide challenge across six different thematic areas, namely, clean energy, water resources, waste management, healthcare, smart mobility and agri-tech. From over 650 innovations received, Top 100 were short-listed based on novelty and prototype functionality. There 100 teams were then given a month to further refine their prototypes and rework their presentations. Following this, their innovations were judged by an esteemed panel of judges including industry and academia experts to select the Top 30 innovations. These top 30 innovations have been identified from 20 different States and Union territories from across India.

These Top 30 innovations and their prizes will be announced by Shri Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog. Atal Tinkering Labs under the Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog, is based on the philosophy that incentives and prize awards are a great beginning to create an exponential wave of innovation and entrepreneurship amongst school children. The ATL Student Innovator Program is an effort to institutionalize a mechanism, where high school students can work with university incubators to pursue their innovative and entrepreneurial ideas along with their education. Our goal is to drive extensive forward and backward linkages within the stakeholders in India, to create a paradigm shift in the student mindset and prepare them to become young innovators and entrepreneurs.

Fifteenth Finance Commission constitutes an Advisory Council to advise on the matters related to its Terms of Reference

New Delhi, May 09: The Fifteenth Finance Commission has constituted an Advisory Council to advise and assist the Commission. The role and functions of the Advisory Council will be:

- To advise the Commission on any issue or subject related to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Commission, which may be of relevance;
 - To assist in the preparation of any paper or research study which would enhance the Commission's understanding on the issues containing in its ToR; and
 - To help in broadening the Commission's ambit and understanding to seek best national and international practices on matters pertaining to fiscal devolution and improving the quality and reach and enforcement of its recommendations.
- Advisory Council will have following members:
- Arvind Virmani, President, Forum for Strategic Initiatives
 - Surjit S. Bhalla, Part-time Member of PMEAC and Sr. Indian Analyst for the Observatory Group and Chairman of Oxus Research and Investments
 - Sanjeev Gupta, Ex-Deputy Director (Fiscal Affairs Department), IMF
 - Pinaki Chakraborty, Professor (NIPFP)
 - Shri Sajjid Chinoy, Chief India Economist, JP Morgan
 - Shri Neelkanth Mishra, Managing Director and the Credit Suisse India Economist and Strategist

JKPCC to emerge major player in public-pvt sector: Naeem Akhtar



SRINAGAR, MAY 9: Minister for Public Works and Culture, Naeem Akhtar, today called for ramping up capacities and positioning the Jammu and Kashmir Projects Construction Corporation (JKPCC) as a major player in the booming public and private sector market. The Minister made these remarks while chairing the 93rd board meeting of the corporation at Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre here. The marathon meeting that lasted for over three hours was attended by top officers of the works department and JKPCC, among others. "The message that must go out of this meeting is that the corporation is on a reform trajectory. In today's competitive market, you have to streamline systems. Proper processes need to be put into place to strengthen the infrastructure available with the corporation and mould it as a competitor in the infrastructure development market," Akhtar said.

Minister's Development Package wherein thousands of crores of rupees are going to be invested in building infrastructure projects in Jammu and Kashmir provides a window of opportunity for the corporation to build capacities. "This is an opportunity for you to not only gain experience while undertaking mega-construction projects coming up in the state but also to use this experience to become a market leader and go for bidding in national and international markets," Akhtar said. Pointing out the interventions required to exploit the full potential of the corporation, Akhtar said the state government will extend all possible support to make it happen. He said the corporation has vast potential to emerge as another successfully listed corporation from the state after J&K Bank. "To standardise the contracting process, including the procurement of mechanical equipment utilised in hospitals like lifts, you must set up a cell that will work

under the Development Commissioner (Works). Rather than going for a particular brand, tenders should be normative but with no compromise on the quality," the minister said. The works minister said the modifications made to projects without revising the DPR results in liability and the tendering processes must be put in place to stop works in excess of the already approved project in future. "Bidding processes should be adhered to in future while giving out projects to vendors. Performance of contractors and labour contractors should be assessed and those living up to the expectations of the corporations must be encouraged," the minister said. The meeting was also attended by Vice-Chairman JKPCC Khalid Jehangir, Advisor Infrastructure Pradeep Singh, Commissioner Secretary R&B Sajeev Verma, Development Commissioner (Works) Satish Razdan and MD JKPCC Waqar Mustafa Shonhth.

FTII-DIPR Film Appreciation Course begins in Jammu

JAMMU, MAY 09: The five-day long Film Appreciation Course organized by the Film & Television Institute of India, Pune (FTII) in collaboration with Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) commenced at media complex here today. The course has been organized to provide a unique opportunity to the cine lovers of state to understand cinema from one of the world's leading film institute.

The programme was inaugurated jointly by Joint Director Information Jammu Naresh Kumar in presence of FTII representatives, senior faculty members, FTII Pune G.B Singh and Pankaj Saxena, Deputy Directors DIPR, Priyanka Bhat, Atul Gupta, Avleen Kour and Rakesh Dubey. Joint Director Information Naresh Kumar, while addressing the participants, said that DIPR in collaboration with FTII has organized this film appreciation course in Jammu to promote comprehensive understanding and insights into the nature of cinema and other related forms and practices among young professionals. He said that state's captivating charms have always attracted filmmakers and exposure to such courses shall provide the right exposure to hone the skills of youth in the field besides giving a fillip to the tourism sector. While deliberating upon the course details, he said that the five-day introductory course shall include film history, analysis, production, fiction and non-fiction documentaries and other dimensions of filmmaking techniques. He said that the course



is primarily designed to meet the needs of teachers/scholars interested in introducing film study activities in educational institutions, media practitioners, film society organizers, researchers, government officials handling films and serious cinéphiles. The curriculum includes a theoretical study of the art and history of film and the development of cinema as a medium of art and communication. The participants will be introduced to the changing nature of film production and its evolving relationship with digital arts. Film classics, short films and non-fiction films, both Indian and International will be used for critical analysis and study. Faculty members of FTII elaborated upon the courses offered at the Institute and about the filmmaking process and said that this course shall help to ignite potential of the participants by helping them to get an insight into the varied processes involved so that they can choose it as a profession according to their interest. They said that FTII's under Skilling India in films and television (SKIIFT) has been organizing such short

term programmes across the country and more such courses are in offing in the state for the interested youth to take up film industry relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood. They also appreciated Director Information Muneer-ul-Islam for collaborating with FTII and extending all requisite logistic support for organizing the programme. Earlier, a two-minute silence was observed to mark tribute to Suram Singh, DIPR cameraman, who lost his life in a tragic road accident on May 05 while performing his duties. Deputy Director (AV) Nodal Officer, Rakesh Dubey presented vote of thanks and will be coordinating the five-day film appreciation course. He further said that such type of programmes would also be organised in future. Among others, the programme was attended by Assistant Director Shabnam Jaipuria, Field Publicity Officer Priya Lakshmi, Information Officer Muzamil Zaman, President Press club Jammu Ashwini Kumar, Deputy Director Doordarshan Sanjit Khajuria and veteran FTII alumni Ramesh Handoo.

Javaid Mustafa tours Chadoora constituency, reviews developmental works

SRINAGAR, MAY 09: Minister for Disaster Management, Relief Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and Floriculture, Javaid Mustafa Mir today toured Chadoora area and reviewed on-going developmental works being executed by different agencies. The Minister was accompanied by Exn, AEE PHE and officers of different departments. During his tour, the Minister visited PHC centre Lasjan and inspected the facilities being provided to the patients. The Minister directed the health officials to keep facilities available round the clock at the health center. He also asked them to maintain proper sanitation in and around the health center, besides posting the adequate staff. While inspecting the sports field in the Lasjan area, the Minister directed the SMC commissioner Srinagar to employ de-watering pumps for draining out the water from the field so that sports persons of the area can resume their activities. He also asked the concerned officers for leveling the playfield to avoid water logging of the playing field and formulate a project report regarding the proper drainage around the field. To give boost to the sports culture in the state, the Minister reiterated that government is committed to upgrade sports infrastructure in the state, he said. Later the Minister also visited PHC Chattergam and took stock of construction of hospital infrastructure. Officers present there apprised the minister that they are committed to meet the deadline of the project and are adhering to the Detailed Project Report (DPR). The Minister exhorted upon the concerned agency to complete the project in a stipulated timeframe.

FCS & CA dept to usher in greater transparency: Ashraf Mir

Reviews activities, functioning of department

SRINAGAR, MAY 9: Minister for Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS & CA), Mohammad Ashraf Mir today held a meeting with the officials of department to review its functioning and discussed ways to further improve its service. The meeting was attended by FCS & CA, Dr. Abdul Rashid, Director, FCS & CA (Kashmir), Nisar Ahmad Wani, JD Planning, Deputy Directors, Chief Accounts Officer, Kashmir, ADs from various districts and other concerned officers of the department. On the occasion, Director FCS & CA briefed the Minister about the functioning of the department. He gave a detailed presentation about various activities of the department, staff strength of the department, various issues pertaining to the functioning of the department. The Minister was informed that the department supplies food grains to 68.10 lakh people in Kashmir division including Leh and Kargil which is supplied through 4637 Sale Centers and Fair Price Shops (FPS). In the year 2017-2018, a total of 38,76,300 Quintals of rice and 2,36,206 quintals of Atta was allocated under NFSA and 9,44,779 quintals of rice was allocated under MMSFES.



The allocation of Kerosene and LPG was also discussed in the meeting. The Minister was also informed that 9,636 families of the nomadic people were allocated 4,097 quintals of rice and 200 quintals of Atta in six months of 2017-2018 by the department. Regarding the distribution of ration cards, the Minister was informed that among the 14,46,780 allocated ration cards, 14,26,913 cards stand distributed. It was informed that the enforcement wing of the department has conducted 55,469 inspections during which a fine of Rs 30,25,620 was imposed on 17,630 defaulters. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that there is a need to bring transparency in the department as the people have many hopes in the department which has direct dealing with the people. To achieve our desired goal, we need to strengthen our enforcement team. Mir asked the officials to work with dedication and honesty and should come up with good ideas so that we facilitate people in better ways. We need to channelize public distribution system, he said. He said that public distribution is a tough job but we need to ensure that we give our best. When informed about the issues pertaining to the department, the minister asked the officials to make the list of these issues for their timely redressal. He said that the mechanism will be formed in the coming days for the betterment of the department.

Wangyal reviews progress of Nyoma dev works

LEH, MAY 09: Executive Council (EC) for Health and Power, Gyal P Wangyal, today convened a meeting of Councilors and sub-divisional officers of Nyoma Sub-Division to review the progress of ongoing developmental works there. Councilor Nyoma Thupstan Wangchuk, SDM Nyoma Tsering Motup and officers from concerned departments were present in the meeting. The EC directed the officers to ensure all infrastructure facilities to the people of the Nyoma Sub-Division. He said that LAHDC, Leh is committed to providing all basic amenities at par with urban pockets of the Leh city. He asked the health authorities to provide quality healthcare facilities to the people of the sub-division. He said that the PHC Nyoma is equipped with latest healthcare facilities and diagnostic labs. He asked the concerned officers to expedite the formulation and submission of detail project report for further upgradation, renovation and beautification of the hospital. The EC directed to provide free medicine to the patients coming from BPL families. Wangyal stressed on the equal importance for upgradation of sports infrastructure in the schools of Nyoma sub-division. He directed for plantation in the open spaces for beautification and healthy environment.

DDC reviews traffic scenario in Bandipora

BANDIPORA, MAY 09: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Bandipora, Khursheed Ahmad Sanai, today convened a meeting to review traffic scenario in the district. The meeting held a threadbare discussion and took many decisions to ensure safe and smooth regulation of traffic across the district, especially in the townships of Bandipora, Sumbal and Hajin. The DDC directed all stakeholders to make sure that all footpaths are free from encroachments. He urged upon the shopkeepers to remove voluntarily wherever there is any encroachment on footpaths in the markets within a week's time or due action will be taken. He also directed Executive Officer, Municipal Committee to identify a proper space for the fish market in Bandipora town. Regarding management of heavy loaded vehicles in the district, it was decided that heavy loaded vehicles will not be allowed to ply during daytime in the town, adding that stone.

DAILY Editorial Time and Us SRINAGAR J&K

NH status to Mughal Road

By RAVI SHARMA

Only a few days back, through these very columns, we had expounded in detail, the cause of promoting tourism in the Pir Panchal Range of Jammu and Kashmir and had underlined the importance of numerous destinations for the potential of tourism and about the Mughal Road falling in this picturesque range.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Central Government has, in principle, agreed to accord National Highway status to Mughal Road connecting Jammu and Kashmir divisions through Pir Panchal Range. This comes close on the heels of a marathon meeting of officers held on May 2 with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari and Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti. Both the leaders jointly presided over the meeting. Minister for Public Works and Culture Naem Akhtar too was present in the meeting.

This road gained prominence when a project named as "Mughal Road" was taken up in 1979 by the then Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah with basic intent to improve the economy of Rajouri and Poonch districts but it got lost in the red tape and particularly due to objections from some NGOs and State Wild Life Department. Since the construction of the road had to pass through Heerpur Sanctuary, the prime objection was that it would affect gravely the habitat of the wild animals. However, Supreme Court gave conditional permission for the construction and the actual work on the project started in the year 2005.

The construction was completed in 2008 and regular plying of vehicles on it started from 2010.

It may be recalled that a Mughal Road car rally, the first of its kind, was organized to promote tourism including adventure tourism in the year 2010. And now the decision to accord it the NH status would bestow upon it, recognition across the country as also ensure its maintenance to make it not a fair weather road but an alternate route to reach Srinagar. Not only this, Union Ministry for Road Transport and Highways has also decided to put the construction of Vailoo - Singhpora and Chenani - Sudmahadev tunnels projects on the fast track mode to start the work with requisite speed.

It is heartening for the State of Jammu and Kashmir that the Central Government is keen in respect of accelerating the speed of work as the process of formulation of reports for the projects has already been started and the consultancy report too received and the work is supposed to start the moment snow on some of the roads started melting. We urge the Union Government to continue with the follow-up and periodic monitoring of these projects so that they are completed without unnecessary brakes and humps. These tunnels are meant to connect people more closely and in the words of Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti "taking these tunnel projects in mission mode as a national priority".

With according NH status to Mughal Road, we reiterate, the State tourism is expected to get a fillip and tourist spots like Chhatta Pani, Noori Chamb, Chandhimar, Poshana, Peer Ki Gali, Dubjan, Heerpur etc. shall come into prominence. Home and foreign tourists, holiday makers, trekkers can have and pass nice time of enjoying natural beauty.

However, other roads which could ensure more connectivity on inter regional basis too are reported to have been discussed between the Chief Minister and the Union Minister. The Union Minister has directed the concerned agencies to use the latest technology and soil stabilizing tests in respect of the project to ensure completion not only well in time but at the earliest. This demonstrates the commitment of the Central Government towards the development of infrastructure of the State which we note with satisfaction.

It was an announcement that was as dramatic and bold as it was uncharacteristic, and it set off violent protests, vandalising of party offices, burning of tyres on roads, blockading of highways, sloganeering and mock funerals in a number of constituencies. But by declaring all but six of its candidates for the May 12 elections to the 224-seat Karnataka Legislative Assembly in one go, the Congress made it clear that it was determined to deal with any rebellion by those who were denied the party ticket. Four teams were formed to "reach out and pacify disgruntled/disappointed primary members" such as Brijesh Kalappa, and almost all of them were assured that they would be nominated to the Legislative Council or appointed to posts of Chairmen if the party formed the next government. Nevertheless, a few leaders, such as Ravi Patel, P. Ramesh and N.Y. Gopal Krishna, switched sides.

Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Lingayats dominate the Congress list. Of the 218 candidates named, there are 52 OBCs, 48 Lingayats, 39 Vokkaligas, 36 and 17 from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes respectively, 15 Muslims, seven Brahmins, two Christians and two Jains.

Five parent-child combinations Compared with its two main rivals, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Janata Dal (Secular), the Congress' candidate selection process was more of a minefield as the demand to be nominated as the party's candidate was very high because it is the ruling party in Karnataka. According to a senior Congress leader who was part of the selection process, it was "a humungous task" to zero in on a candidate "when in every constituency there were a number of deserving contenders".

No less than five parent-child combinations have made it to the Congress list: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah (who is contesting from Chamundeshwari) and his son Yathindra, Home Minister Ramalinga Reddy and his daughter Soumya Reddy, Shamanur Shivashankarappa and his son Shamanur Mallikarjun, Law Minister T.B. Jayachandra and his son T.J. Santosh, and Housing Minister M. Krishnappa and his son Priya Krishna. Besides, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge's son Priyank and Member of Parliament K.H. Muniyappa's daughter Roopa Sasidhar have been favoured for candidacy.

Denying there was a dynastic tendency, Jayachandra said that the next generation was capable in its own right of being nominated and had nurtured the constituencies they were contesting from. Seven rebel JD(S) legislators—Zamir Ahmed Khan, N. Cheluvaryaswamy, Iqbal Ansari, Akhanda Srinivas Moorthi, H.C. Balakrishna, Bheema Nayak and Ramesh Bendi Siddhagowda—who had switched over to the Congress recently were given the ticket. But Siddaramaiah's insistence on fielding the businessman-turned-politician Ashok Khenny, the architect of the controversial Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises, did not go down well with the party faithful. The mining baron B.S. Anand Singh, who joined the Congress recently, was given the ticket. A one-time confidant of the Bellary Reddy brothers, he was arrested in 2015 for illegally transporting iron ore.

Former Chief Minister M. Veerappa Moily of the Congress told Frontline that "rather than a pick-and-choose" job, candidates were selected purely on merit, with "winnability as the commanding principle".

BATTLE ROYAL



The winnability factor Winnability certainly was the only criterion for the BJP too as it embarks on its "Mission 150". If declaring B.S. Yeddyurappa (who has spent time in jail) as its chief ministerial candidate was a fait accompli—lest the tallest Lingayat leader in the State do something like floating the Karnataka Janata Paksha, which he did in 2013, and damage the BJP's chances—the decision to welcome back and nominate one of the Bellary Reddy brothers and their confidant, B. Sriramulu, and former Ministers Katta Subramanya Naidu, S.N. Krishnaiah Setty, Hartal Halappa and M.P. Renukacharya smacked of political opportunism.

Although the BJP's national president Amit Shah had declared just days earlier that the party had nothing to do with Gali Janardhana Reddy, who was out on bail (and as part of the bail conditions not allowed to enter Bellary district) after being embroiled in illegal mining and transportation of iron ore, his elder brother G. Somashekara Reddy and Sriramulu became prominent names in the BJP's hall of fame for the 2018 elections. The candidature of the eldest of the Reddy brothers, G. Karunakara Reddy, was also likely to fructify. While the corruption and controversial land acquisition charges against Katta Subramanya Naidu and the rape allegations that singled Halappa have been struck down by the courts, the corruption case registered against Setty is pending. Renukacharya dominated the headlines in 2007 after a woman accused him of sexual harassment, and released intimate photographs of the two of them. A case was registered and later withdrawn.

Speaking to Frontline, a senior BJP leader confided that the list reflected the party's dependence on candidates "who have the best chance to win, candidates who either won, or lost by very narrow margins, 2 to 5 per cent of the votes". The BJP top brass was also wary of sparking off another bout of intra-party rivalry, like the public spat between Yeddyurappa and K.S. Eshwarappa, who, along with a few other senior leaders, had questioned Yeddyurappa's leadership. Informed sources told Frontline that Eshwarappa had been assured of being made the Deputy Chief Minister if the BJP came to power. The party's three lists were finalised not by the State leadership but, in a first, by the central leadership in a bid to ward off factionalism and nepotism and to present a united front.

But all hell broke loose after the BJP's second list was announced. BJP offices in a few constituencies were vandalised and stones were thrown at the election vehicle of official candidates, and posters of Amit Shah and

Narendra Modi were taken down. A number of the ticket hopefuls, including the five-term legislator S. Thippeswamy, quit the party on being denied the chance to contest.

The JD(S), which lacks a pan-Karnataka presence and continues to be a party whose influence is concentrated in the Old Mysore region, made it clear that it was ready to welcome dissenters/rebels from both the Congress and the BJP. The brothers Hemachandra and Ramachandra Sagar, and Prakash Khandre from the BJP and P. Ramesh from the Congress joined the JD(S).

JD(S)'s tie-up It is to be seen whether the JD(S)'s tie-up with Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) will help it electorally. But the JD(S) draws most of its support from the dominant Vokkaliga community, which has not endeared itself to Dalits, the bulwark of the BSP. The JD(S) got a shot in the arm when Asaduddin Owaisi of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen declared that his party would support it. But some leaders like Veerappa Moily felt that Owaisi's support would be a liability. He said: "The minorities feel unsafe with the Owaisi brand of politics."

The Karnataka elections coming as it does hardly a year before the parliamentary elections of 2019 has, according to many political pundits, made it more than a State election. And while it may not set the trend for what is to come, the results will certainly have a lasting impact on both the national parties and the JD(S). The JD(S) has not been in power since 2008 and is desperate to at least be a kingmaker in the event of a hung Assembly. The party, according to Congress leaders, has the ability to play spoiler in some constituencies, especially in the Old Mysore region.

For the Congress, a good showing is important not just for its survival in power (in the past five years, the party has not been able to retain a major State with the lone exception of Punjab) but also to bring it to the forefront of an all-India anti-BJP front. A good showing in Karnataka will allow the BJP to regain the momentum it lost, both in the Gujarat elections, where its showing was lacklustre, and the bye-elections in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which it lost. It hopes to carry the momentum of the Karnataka elections to the State elections due later this year in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and the general election in 2019.

Tough fight The BJP had once hoped Karnataka would be its citadel in the south until the Congress dashed its hopes in 2013. According to analysts, this election will be closely fought between the national narrative of the BJP as espoused by its star campaigners, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah (who has temporarily taken up residence in Bengaluru), and the narrative of regionalism and subnationalism put forth by Siddaramaiah, who is basically a regional satrap in a national party.

His push for a separate State flag, the emphasis on the Kannada language, the removal of Hindi signage at the Bengaluru Metro stations, and the move to grant minority religion status for Lingayats point to his seeking to promote regional powers in a federal set-up. He has also sought to expose Modi and his government as being long on rhetoric but short on action and as exponents of chicanery and doublespeak.

In its election campaign, the BJP has cleverly not projected the State BJP leadership lest the memory of the corruption charges that hit its government in 2008 resurface and has instead stuck to national issues. The party has also not taken a categorical stand on the controversial issue of a minority religion status to the numerically, economically and politically strong Lingayat community. Just how decisive Siddaramaiah's decision to recommend grant of religious minority status to Lingayats under Section 2(d) of the Karnataka State Minorities Commission Act and forward the recommendation to the Union government, seeking notification under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, is far from clear. But the BJP and Yeddyurappa's dithering on their stand has not helped the party.

Further, just how much the Hindi speeches of Modi and Amit Shah will emotionally connect with an audience that is clearly not comfortable with the language is something that could have a bearing on the results. It is becoming clearer by the day that whoever manages to communicate their message better will enjoy a larger portion of the electoral spoils. All three parties are aware that an effective management of caste combinations and equations is crucial to success.

Early indications are that the Congress, led by a combative Siddaramaiah, who has been vigorous in the defence of both secular values and numerous welfare schemes, is optimistic tails up. But as Veerappa Moily said in an interview to this correspondent, the momentum could be rolled back too fast for comfort unless the message was effectively taken to the voters.

Sakthi Kendra programme The BJP, through its Sakthi Kendra programme, has over 50,000 booth-level workers. According to the former Chairman of the State Minorities Commission and senior BJP leader Anwar Manipadi, the BJP's campaign starts with two or three karya kartas (party workers) assigned to people on each page of the voters' list. Their duty is to visit around 20 to 30 households three or four times ahead of the elections and engage with the voters.

Said Law Minister Jayachandra: "The Congress government led by Siddaramaiah has managed the State well, and our welfare programmes have touched all the citizens. The entire country is now looking at Karnataka to see how it votes. The BJP, which has no programme of its own other than to mouth anti-Congress slogans, is scared. The Prime Minister is scared. The people have realised that in the four years of BJP rule at the Centre there has been no conspicuous programme that has helped the common man. The government has made several U-turns too. Demonetisation spoilt the economy."

(Courtesy: Frontline)

Selfless Service with Smile

OP Sharma

The Red Cross Society, the world-wide humanitarian organization, is aimed at ensuring well being of the entire humanity irrespective of religion, region, caste, colour or gender. This welfare movement has very wide network throughout the globe undertaking selfless services for mitigating the sufferings due to man-made or any natural calamity. This organization has the proud record of service in India as also in the strategic and sensitive border Jammu and Kashmir State.

This year's theme is Red Cross: Everyone for Everyone - Smile and the Red Cross Day is being observed on May 8 with enthusiasm across the Jammu and Kashmir State as elsewhere in India and all other countries. Various programmes have been chalked out for this occasion.

The Secretary Dinesh Gupta in an interview, Red Cross Society, Jammu, gave details of the activities and achievements of this selfless service organization and also pin-pointed the special drives being launched on birth anniversary of founder of Red Cross, Henry Dunant. He spoke about the origin and growth

of the Red Cross and its activities over the years.

Youth Participation It was stated that efforts are afoot to involve maximum number of people, especially the youth to ensure their full participation. He stated that special activities will be carried out on this day and it is planned to organize in every school across Jammu region to participate in Red Cross flag hoisting, administering pledge "to take care of own health and that of others" and fully dedicate to the social service. The organization also has plans to hold blood donation and medical camps.

The Governor, N.N. Vohra, who is Chief Patron of this noble organization had at a special meeting underscored need for expansion and also enlarging its sphere of activities for the well being of the people in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Red Cross Society has lived up to its reputation of rendering selfless service to the people in distress. It has also helped those suffering social disadvantages, financial deprivation and physical or mental disabilities. This organization has, in fact, a long history of service with smile. Whenever and wherever, the Red Cross team goes they



are looked up as angels of hope and relief.

Tasks Ahead The task before this welfare organization are challenging indeed. The Indian Red Cross Society has mobilized and sized itself up to the situation for extending relief to the victims.

It may be mentioned that the Red Cross Day is observed on May 8, being the birth anniversary of Jean Henri Dunant, founder of this great humanitarian movement in the world. After a

traumatic personal experience of battle in Solferino, Mr. Dunant, a Swiss businessman wrote a book: "A Memory of Solferino" and he pleaded for formation in all countries voluntary relief societies to work in the battle-fields. And in 1864 the first Red Cross Society came into being but then it was confined to medical care and welfare of wounded soldiers. Subsequently, it undertook wide-range of welfare works as well.

Basic Principles This organization has a charter of

seven Fundamental Principles which are: Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality, Independence, Voluntary, Service, Unity and Universality for mitigation of human sufferings.

Now, some tangible schemes like mobilizing resources, enrollment of volunteers and their trainings as also vigorous implementations of important projects are underway for the benefit of weak and distressed.

Dedication Indian Red Cross Society, national federation of over 600 branches in the country with its headquarters at New Delhi do inspire, encourage and initiate all forms of humanitarian activities. It functions under the Indian Red Cross Society Act passed in 1920 and the President of India is chief patron at the national level while the State in Jammu and Kashmir branch is headed by the Governor.

Healing Touch As the premier and largest voluntary agency in the country, the Red Cross has entered a number of welfare fields in a big way. A commendable job was done during 1947 in relief, repatriation and rehabilitation work for mass exodus of refugees. Then again, it repeated its good

work in 1962, 1965 and 1971 armed conflicts and also during the period of turbulence. Its performance during the peace time too is pivotal and also praise worthy.

The J&K State Red Cross now has its own website for facility of the public to give further impetus to the Red Cross movement. The Red Cross Society has much role to provide soothing balm of relief and love to the victims of terrorism, cross-border firings and natural calamities.

The Red Cross has a significant role of welfare both in war and peace time. The humanitarian work is gigantic indeed and need to be strengthened by men, money and material to mitigate the sufferings of human beings.

The Red Cross Society has rendered commendable service but much more still remains to be done. All of us must join hands with Red Cross Society for doing our part of welfare service.

The spirit of Red Cross must be preserved and also further streamlined and strengthened by involving the people particularly the youth and students in this humanitarian missionary work.

(Courtesy: Daily excelsior)

Now, Khatta Singh 'reveals' Ram Rahim's role in follower's murder

Panchkula: After his testimony in the journalist murder case, Khatta Singh, former driver of rape convict Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim, revealed on Tuesday, the dera chief's involvement in murdering a dera follower, Ranjit Singh, during his testimony in a CBI court here.

He told the court that Ram Rahim issued directions to kill Ranjit during a meeting with his close aides inside his 'gufa' at dera headquarters in Sirsa on June 16, 2002.

Claiming that he was present in that meeting, Khatta said, "Baba ordered his (Ranjit's) killing after his men told him how Ranjit was going against the dera after he suspected Ram Rahim's hand in sexually exploiting his sister."

Khatta also told the court that Ram Rahim's men also believed that Ranjit was behind the circulation of an anonymous letter of sexual abuse of 'sadhvis' inside the dera that finally led to his conviction in rape cases last year. The testimony of Ranjit's sister was vital for his 20-year jail term.

Ram Rahim, who is currently



serving his term in Rohtak's Sunaria Jail, was also present in the court through video conferencing during Khatta's testimony.

Meanwhile, CBI special prosecutor HPS Verma said Khatta supported the prosecution case of dera chief's involvement in murdering Ranjit Singh. He will appear in the court again on May 15 where defence will cross-examine him.

How Ranjit died
Ranjit Singh was murdered on July 10, 2002 at his native Khanpur

Kolian village of Kurukshetra. As per CBI charge sheet, after serving tea to his father, who was working in the fields, he left on his motorcycle. On the way, four people fired at him and fled. Ranjit later died of bullet injuries.

Khatta told the CBI court that he knew Ranjit for many years. He said Ranjit's daughters and sister lived inside the dera but he called them back one day in 2001.

"Later, I came to know that Ranjit was upset as he suspected that dera chief had sexually exploited his sister,"

Khatta said.

As per Khatta Singh, months later, Ranjit too left the dera and an anonymous letter claiming large scale sexual exploitation of sadhvis was circulated inside.

He further said that before his murder, Ranjit was called to the dera and threatened by Ram Rahim's men — Avtar Singh, Inder Sain, Krishan Lal, Jasbir Singh and Sabdil Singh — to seek apology from the dera chief for having circulated the anonymous letters and going against the dera. However, when Ranjit did not agree, they told him to get ready to face the consequences.

CBI charged all the above five persons for killing Ranjit at the behest of Ram Rahim. Khatta Singh also said that he had seen these five persons celebrating in a hotel outside the dera following Ranjit's murder.

Earlier testimony
Khatta Singh has already deposed against the dera chief on May 5 in a journalist's murder, in which dera chief is also prime accused as conspirator. Both the cases are now towards final argument stage.

Rahul Gandhi's Prime Minister remark is 'arrogance', says PM Modi in Karnataka

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday called Rahul Gandhi 'arrogant' after the Congress president said he would like to hold the prime minister's post and accused Gandhi of not giving other senior leaders in his party a chance.

"He came like those bullies barging his way ahead when there are others who have so many years of experience. How can someone just declare himself as the PM? This is simply nothing but arrogance," Modi said at a rally in Bangalore.

"Big meetings are being held to remove Modi. How will the big leaders who attend these meetings react to this sudden announcement by one naamdaar (dynast) that he is going to be the PM?" he asked.

Gandhi said on Tuesday that he is ready to be India's Prime Minister if the Congress emerges as the largest party in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, acknowledging for the first time that he would be willing to take the country's top job.

The Prime Minister also said it was time for Karnataka to say goodbye to the Congress.



"It is now time for the Congress Party to depart Karnataka. Wherever in the country there has been an election opportunity, the party has (lost)" the Prime Minister said.

Modi accused the Congress of bringing six evils to the country and not doing justice to the aspirations of the people of Karnataka, where assembly elections are to be held on May 12.

"There are six Cs that the Congress has brought on the nation and these are the evils Congress stands for: Congress culture, communalism, casteism, crime, corruption, contract system," Modi said.

'Can algae fly': Supreme Court pulls up ASI for failing to protect Taj Mahal

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for not being able to protect the iconic Taj Mahal, and asked about the steps being taken to prevent the Mughal structure from being destroyed by insects and algae.

A bench of Justice Madan B Lokur and Justice Deepak Gupta was concerned after the ASI told it that the Taj Mahal was getting infected by insects which breed in the stagnant water of the Yamuna river that flows by the monument.

The ASI, which is in charge of maintaining and repairing monuments, also told the bench that algae are a "big problem" and all those monuments which are on the riverbank faces similar issues.

The bench asked how could the algae reach the higher reaches of the Taj Mahal. The ASI replied: "It flew there."

"Can algae fly," asked the court.

The ASI also told the court that the Taj Mahal floor at



several places was dirty, because all the people walking on it do not use socks.

"We provide socks only to the VIPs, others use their own socks," it told the court. The Taj floor was also getting discoloured. The bench pulled up the ASI saying the situation would not have been so if it had taken steps to prevent it.

"The problem is that the ASI is not willing to accept that there is a problem. This situation would not have arisen if the ASI had done its

job. We are surprised with the way the ASI is defending itself," the top court said.

"Perhaps we need to examine solution to prevent the decay of the Taj Mahal without the ASI," the bench said. Additional Solicitor General ANS Nadkarni, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) was already considering the top court's suggestion to appoint international experts to look into the issue

of protection and preservation of the 17th century mausoleum. The Uttar Pradesh government said it would place before the court a draft of vision document on protection and preservation of the Taj Mahal that was built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

The government said it was also trying to take care of the environment around the structure so that the historic monument could be there for another 400 years and not just for a generation.

The Centre said it would consider the top court's suggestion to take the assistance of Indian experts or from abroad to see the extent of damage and whether it could be reversed and the steps that could be taken to check them. The court has been hearing a plea filed by environmentalist MC Mehta seeking protection of the Taj from the ill-effects of polluting gases and deforestation in and around the area.

I told Amit Shah Lingayats aren't restricted to one party: Community leader

Chitradurga: The "hype" in Karnataka elections about the demand to give Lingayats the status of a separate religion is a "very positive development", says Shivamurthy Murugha Sharanaru, the head of the Chitradurga-based Sri Jagadguru Murugharajendra Math, which is perceived to have a powerful influence over the community.

Sharanaru, in an interview to Aurangzeb Naqshbandi, called chief minister Siddaramaiah a seasoned and a brilliant politician, but asserts that he will not issue any appeal to his Lingayat followers to vote for a particular party.

Will you ask your followers to vote for either the Congress or the BJP?

Ours is an apolitical but at the same time a secular math. We are against all forms of fundamentalism and casteism. I don't want to put pressure on the people to vote for a particular party, because we are living in a democratic set-up. Voters nowadays have become shrewd and know what is right and what is wrong for them. I am hopeful they



favourable steps on this issue. There are 99 sub-castes under the banner of Lingayats and Veerashivas are one among those.

I call it a philosophical movement. The hype over our demand is a very positive development. This is for the first time that such level of publicity is being given to the issue and we are getting the opportunity to be heard. Even after the elections, we will continue our fight for a separate religious status.

Why have you launched the voter awareness campaign? I request the people to vote compulsorily. In some countries like Australia, voting is compulsory. Through this campaign, I tell the public to vote and select a right candidate. Every vote has a value, so I urge them not to sell that.

will take proper steps and try to evolve a consensus.

But weren't the Lingayats a traditional vote bank of the BJP? Don't you think the Lingayat vote is divided this time?

There is no confusion. Lingayats are very clear that they need the support of all political parties to get the status accorded. I told (BJP president) Amit Shah that Lingayats are not restricted to one party and belong to all parties such as the Congress, Janata Dal (Secular) and the BJP. I told him that if you get

the status accorded, people will be happy. That was my message to him.

Has the issue been politicised due to the approaching elections?

Unfortunately, the movement for a separate religious status for Lingayats got a political shape. Some people used this issue to attack the Congress government. Siddaramaiah, who is a seasoned politician and a brilliant person, was accused of dividing the Lingayats. It is a very sad development. He took some

As PM Modi heads to Nepal, India looks to bring back momentum into ties

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will jointly inaugurate the 900-MW Arun III power project with his Nepalese counterpart, announce special assistance for Janakpur (birthplace of Sita as per Ramayana), and oversee the sides drawing timelines for implementing projects during his two-day visit to Nepal on May 11 and 12, persons familiar with the planning said.

The Arun III power project is a hydroelectric project on river Arun, with an estimated cost of Rs 5,800 crore.

On this third visit to Nepal as Prime Minister, Modi will be accorded two civic receptions — at his port of call in Janakpuri and at Muktinath — and a ceremonial reception in Kathmandu. He will meet former Nepalese PMs Sher Bahadur Deuba and Prachanda as well as Madhesi leaders as the two countries try to bring back momentum into their ties. But a source admitted that the discussion on India taking back the demonetised notes from Nepal remains inconclusive. Indian currency is used in Nepal and India is the largest trading partner of the Himalayan country. The countries have yet to agree on how to exchange the banned bills of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 held by individuals and informal sectors in Nepal, an amount estimated to be Rs 9.5 billion. India has yet to confirm the authenticity of some of those bills.

Speeding up agreed projects according to stricter timelines would be a key area of focus during the visit. These include transmission lines, and integrated check posts and railway lines. A source, who did not wish to be named, said that the two sides are aiming to step up cooperation in three areas — rail connectivity between Raxaul in Bihar and Kathmandu in Nepal, inland waterways, and agriculture cooperation — that were agreed upon when Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli visited India in April.

The two sides are soon expected to do a feasibility study by the East Central Railway for the rail link between the countries. The source cited above said that the two sides are also looking to amend the bilateral trade and transit agreement to include inland waterways, which is not included in the existing pact.

Introduce reservations in part-time, contractual jobs: Social justice ministry

New Delhi: The Union ministry of social justice and empowerment has written to the department of personnel and training (DOPT) to ensure that the reservation policy for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Class (OBCs) are followed for appointments made on contractual basis or a limited time basis in government ministries and departments.

A letter submitted by MSJE minister Thawar Chand Gehlot to his colleague Jitendra Singh, who holds the charge of DoPT, states that all appointments of consultants and contract employees, for time-bound assignments and for outsourced work, should also have provisions for quota-based appointments as per constitutional provisions. Gehlot said the reservation policy should be applied to all state and central government jobs that are non-permanent in nature.

The move is a part of the government's initiatives to reach out to the marginalised communities at a time when the Opposition has accused it of not doing enough to secure the rights of Dalits and tribals.

According to an official aware of the developments, the letter comes in the wake of demands from SC/ST and OBC



groups underlining that since most of the recruitment in government departments and ministries are done on contractual basis, the rules of quota should apply there.

"Salaries to employees who are employed on contract, or for time-bound period, or even work that is outsourced is paid for by the government, so it is appropriate that constitutional provisions of reservation are ensured for these appointments also. It has come to the government's notice that the percentage of SC/ST and OBCs in such jobs is minimal," the official quoted above said.

Former University Grants Commission (UGC) chairman and academic

Professor Sukhdeo Thorat said the government must hire on a regular basis but if that is not possible, it must enforce reservation in jobs even if the appointments are made on a contractual basis.

"According to my estimate, one-third of the government jobs are contractual and if we calculate the percentage of jobs that are lost because reservation is not applied, it comes to roughly 30%," he said.

Thorat said that by not enforcing reservation in contractual jobs that are with the government or government-aided institutions, the base of reservation is shrinking. "Even in the private sector, the government must ensure affirmative action," he said.

Dalit youth shot dead by girlfriend's father in Muzaffarnagar

Muzaffarnagar: In yet another case of honour killing, an 18-year-old Dalit youth was allegedly shot dead by the father of his girlfriend when he had gone to her meet her at her house late Monday night.



The accused was arrested and sent to jail after the weapon allegedly used in the murder was seized from him. Police said one Ram Kumar informed them around midnight that his son Vikas had gone missing after he went to a nearby market around 9 pm.

Kumar said he was later he was informed that a crowd had gathered at the house of one Anil Kumar Gupta of Nirala Nagar locality and when he reached there he found the body of his son lying in the balcony of the house.

A police team headed by inspector Har Saran Sharma arrived at the spot and took custody of the body. Vikas had been shot in the head.

Ram Kumar told police that Vikas and Gupta's daughter were having an affair and Gupta had threatened to kill him.

"We have arrested Anil Kumar Gupta under sections 302 of IPC and 3(2)(5) of SC/ST Act and sent him to jail. We have seized the country-made pistol which was used in the murder from him," inspector Sharma said.

Vikas' body was sent for post mortem, he said. Muzaffarnagar in western Uttar Pradesh is one of the most sensitive places where Dalits have often been targeted. In January, a 22-year-old Dalit man was allegedly assaulted and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' by the activists of a right-wing Hindu group.

In May last year, Thakurs torched over 20 houses of Dalits after a Thakur man was killed in brick-battling between members of the two communities.

How Eating Fast Food May Make It Harder to Get Pregnant

The foods women eat could be tied to their risk of infertility, a new study from Australia finds. Researchers found that eating fast food regularly was linked to a twofold increase in the risk of infertility in women of childbearing age. What's more, not eating enough fruit was tied to a 50 percent increase in infertility risk, and eating fruit several times a day appeared to reduce the amount of time it took to conceive.

The study found only an association between diet and infertility; more research is needed to prove that certain foods have a direct impact on infertility risk. [Future of Fertility Treatment: 7 Ways Baby-Making Could Change]

Dr. Raj Mathur, secretary of the British Fertility Society, who was not involved in the study, said the new study is useful "for clinicians and women who are looking to start trying to conceive."

"It is in keeping with other pieces of research, which show that your overall dietary pattern may influence fertility," Mathur told Live Science.

"The message from these studies seems to be that processed foods are bad, and fresh fruit and vegetables are good, for fertility." The research, published today (May 3) in the journal *Human Reproduction*, included nearly 5,600 women, ages 18 to 43, from Australia, New Zealand, the U.K. and Ireland, all of whom were in the early stages of their first pregnancy.



Midwives looking after these women were instructed to interview them about their diet in the month before they conceived and to record how long it took the women to get pregnant once they started trying.

Couples are considered infertile when they are unable to conceive within a year of trying, according to the study. So, although all the women involved in the study were pregnant, 8 percent of them fell into the infertile category, as it took them longer than a year to get pregnant.

"The major finding is that the risk of infertility — that is, taking longer than 12 months to conceive — went from 8

percent for all the women in the cohort to 12 percent... in women with the lowest fruit intake," said lead study author Claire Roberts, a senior research fellow at Robinson Research Institute at the University of Adelaide in Australia. (That jump, from 8 percent to 12 percent, represents a 50 percent increase in the risk of infertility, Roberts added.) "There was also an increase from 8 to 16 percent in the risk of infertility in women who ate four or more servings of fast food each week," Roberts told Live Science.

Food intake was also tied to the amount of time it took women to become pregnant. Women who ate fruit three or more times

a day, for example, became pregnant half a month sooner than women who ate fruit only a few times in a month. Similarly, women who consumed fast food such as burgers, pizza, fried chicken and chips four or more times a week became pregnant, on average, a month after women who never ate fast food.

Intake of other foods, including green leafy vegetables and fish, weren't linked to risk of infertility or the amount of time it took women to get pregnant.

However, the researchers were surprised that these healthy foods didn't appear to have an effect, Roberts said.

The study adjusted for factors such as age, maternal smoking, alcohol consumption and body mass index, to make sure the data reflected only the effects of diet on infertility and time needed to conceive, Roberts noted.

Although the study didn't look at why these foods were linked to a woman's odds of getting pregnant, Roberts said earlier research indicated that fatty acids from a woman's bloodstream may affect the quality of her eggs. "The things that you eat could get into your eggs, and that can affect whether your eggs could be fertilized or not," she said. "Fast-food diets are also high in fat, sugar and salt, which can alter metabolism." (Metabolic health is another factor that's known to impact fertility and contribute to developing pregnancy complications, she added.)

SURGEONS REMOVE 'VERY RARE' 132-POUND OVARIAN TUMOR



Connecticut surgeons recently removed a 132-lb. (60 kilograms) ovarian tumor from a woman's abdomen. The tumor, a "benign [noncancerous] mucinous ovarian tumor," was removed during a 5-hour surgery that involved more than 20 specialists at Danbury Hospital, according to a news release from Western Connecticut Health Network. A "mucinous" ovarian tumor is a type of epithelial ovarian tumor, meaning that it grows from the cells that cover the outside of the ovaries, according to the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC). Most tumors that grow from these cells are noncancerous; however, in cases where these types of tumors are cancerous, they are very dangerous, as they are often not

diagnosed until the disease is advanced, the NOCC says. The woman had gone to her gynecologist after she experienced a rapid weight gain — about 10 lbs. (4.5 kg) a week — over a two-month period, according to the release. A CT scan showed that she had a large mass on her ovary. [5 Things Women Should Know About Ovarian Cancer] "I might expect to see a 25-lb. [11 kg] ovarian tumor, but a 132-lb. tumor is very rare," Dr. Vaagn Andikyan, a gynecologic oncologist at Danbury Hospital who operated on the woman, said in the statement. Andikyan noted that when he met the woman, she was "extremely malnourished because the tumor was sitting on her digestive tract, and she used.

HOW DOES NOROVIRUS GET INTO OYSTERS? (IT'S PRETTY GROSS)



Raw oysters from Canada are tied to a norovirus outbreak that's sickened more than 200 people, according to health officials. On Tuesday (May 1), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) warned consumers to avoid eating raw oysters from British Columbia, which are implicated in the outbreak. So far, the outbreak has sickened about 100 people in California and 172 people in Canada, CDPH said. Norovirus is a highly contagious virus that causes sudden vomiting and diarrhea. The virus can be spread from person to person, or by eating contaminated food; and oysters and other shellfish are common causes of norovirus outbreaks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Exactly how norovirus makes its way into oysters is pretty unappetizing: It can happen when the marine shellfish are exposed to "untreated human sewage (poop) and vomit," according to the Washington State Department of Health. Sewage can get into the ocean in several different ways: for example, through leaky septic systems, faulty waste-water treatment plants or even beachgoers who use the sea as their toilet. [Poop Sausage to Pee Drinks: 7 Gross 'Human Foods'] Since shellfish filter seawater through their bodies to get food, norovirus particles that are in the water can accumulate in the shellfish, the Washington State Department of Health said. Although many types of shellfish can transmit norovirus, outbreaks are most often linked to oysters because they are commonly eaten raw, the health department said. To prevent norovirus illnesses tied to eating shellfish, CDPH recommends cooking shellfish until the food reaches an internal temperature.

How Adorable Hibernating Squirrels Could Help Scientists Preserve Human Organs

Hibernating animals may look lazy, but their bodies are actually accomplishing an outstanding feat: In some cases, hibernating animals lower their core body temperature to near freezing (zero degrees Celsius, or 32 degrees Fahrenheit) and drop their heart rate dramatically.

Now, scientists are trying to unlock the secrets of hibernation to aid in medical advances. For example, figuring out how the cells of hibernating animals adapt to cold temperatures may help scientists extend the storage life of human donor organs awaiting transplantation, the researchers said in a new study.

In addition, such findings could one day help researchers improve a therapy called induced hypothermia, in which a person's body temperature is deliberately lowered after a cardiac arrest or brain injury. This therapy can help protect the brain in such patients, but it can have side effects due to cold-induced cellular damage.

"By understanding the biology of cold adaptation in hibernation, we may be able to improve and broaden the applications of induced hypothermia in the future, and perhaps prolong the viability of organs prior to transplantation,"

"Wei Li, a senior investigator in the National Eye Institute's Retinal Neurophysiology Section and study co-author, said in a statement.

Li noted that currently, donor kidneys can be stored for no more than 30 hours



before the tissues start to deteriorate. [The 12 Weirdest Animal Discoveries] For the new study, the researchers focused on the thirteen-lined ground squirrel (*Ictidomys tridecemlineatus*), a small hibernating rodent that lives in central North America. During their hibernating period the animals dramatically lower their body temperature to just above freezing and lower their heart rate from their usual 200 beats per minute to about 20 beats per minute, according to the University of Michigan.

When studying cells from these animals, the researchers were particularly interested in a cellular structure called the microtubule cytoskeleton, a network of small tubes that provides structural support to a cell and is vulnerable to the cold.

The researchers compared ground-squirrel cells to human cells. They found that the microtubule cytoskeleton in ground-squirrel cells remained intact

when exposed to cold temperatures, while the microtubule cytoskeleton in human cells deteriorated.

Images show cells from a mouse kidney. On the left, the cells' microtubules are intact, but after exposure to cold temperatures, the microtubule structures are no longer visible (middle). However, pre-treating the cells with two drugs before cooling helps prevent the microtubules from deteriorating (right).

Images show cells from a mouse kidney. On the left, the cells' microtubules are intact, but after exposure to cold temperatures, the microtubule structures are no longer visible (middle).

However, pre-treating the cells with two drugs before cooling helps prevent the microtubules from deteriorating (right). The study also found that the mitochondria — the "powerhouses" of the cells that provide energy — responded differently to cold if they were from the ground-squirrel cells, compared

with human cells. Specifically, the human cells overproduced a byproduct of metabolism called reactive oxygen species (ROS), and it was this high ROS level that caused destruction of the microtubules. In contrast, the ROS levels remained low in the mitochondria from ground-squirrel cells.

In addition, human cells had problems with components called lysosomes, which help with waste disposal inside the cell. During cold exposure, lysosomes in the human cells leaked enzymes called proteases, which digested nearby microtubules, the study found.

Next, the researchers tried to make nonhibernating cells act more like hibernating cells by using two drugs: one that inhibits the production of ATP, a compound that reduces the production of ROS, and another that inhibits protease activity. They found that this drug combination preserved the microtubule structure in cells from nonhibernators when the cells were exposed to cold temperatures.

For most of these experiments, the researchers used a model of hibernation that they created, which they described as "hibernation in a dish." They took cells from a newborn thirteen-lined ground squirrel and reprogrammed them to become stem cells known as induced pluripotent stem cells, which can become any tissue in the body. They hope that this model can serve as a platform for studying other aspects of hibernation. The study was published yesterday (May 3) in the journal *Cell*.

Doctors Pulled 14 Squirming Roundworms from a Woman's Bile Ducts

If the idea of a single 7-inch (18 centimeters) worm wriggling inside your body sounds horrifying, try 14 of them. That was the case for a woman in India who had more than a dozen squirming roundworms pulled from her bile ducts.

The 38-year-old woman went to the hospital after experiencing severe abdominal pain, fever, vomiting and episodes of jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) for six months, according to South West News Service (SWNS).

"My pain was so bad that I could barely stand on my feet," the woman, whose first name is Sunita, told SWNS. She added that she lost more than 26 lbs. (12 kilograms) in about one month during her illness. [8 Awful Parasite Infections That Will Make Your Skin Crawl]

Sunita was originally misdiagnosed and was given antibiotics before doctors found the real cause of her symptoms: A CT scan revealed 14 roundworms in her bile ducts, the tubes that carry bile from the liver and gallbladder to the small intestine. The roundworms were about 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 centimeters) long. The SWNS report did not specify the exact type of round-



worm that was removed from the woman's gut. However, Dr. Peter Hotez, the dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, said that the worms appear to be *Ascaris lumbricoides*, a type of intestinal parasite. This parasite is "one of the most common agents of human disease in the world," said Hotez, who was not involved in the woman's case.

An estimated 800 million people worldwide have *Ascaris* worms in their intestinal tract, Hotez told Live Science, and the roundworm is extremely common in India.

People become infected with this worm when they ingest eggs from the parasite, and this can happen when people eat fruits or vegetables that have been grown in contaminated soil, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

And it's not that uncommon to see *Ascaris* in the bile ducts, Hotez said. Although the worms live in the small intestine, "they'll wander out of the intestinal tract and into the bile duct, where they can cause obstruction," he said. This complication is seen more often in adults than in children. But in kids, a large number of these worms can block the intestine and cause life-threatening complications, he added. In Sunita's case, doctors removed the worms with the help of an endoscope — a long, flexible tube with a camera attached that reaches the bile ducts through the mouth. This procedure does not require surgery, her doctors said. "Once [Sunita] was properly diagnosed, we managed to remove all the roundworms endoscopically in a single session," Dr. Arvind Khurana, head of gastroenterology at Fortis Hospital in New Delhi, who treated the patient, told SWNS.

Top 5 Vitamin E-Rich Foods For Healthy And Glowing Skin

When it comes to healthy living, it is imperative to have a nutrient-dense diet. A diet rich in various vitamins and minerals can prove to be quite beneficial for our overall health. One of the most important vitamins needed by our body is vitamin E. Our body needs it to keep the immune system strong against viruses and bacteria. If you happen to be vitamin E deficient, then you're more likely to experience digestive problems, hair loss, leg cramps and dry skin.

Vitamin E oil can play a great role in enhancing your skin's health. Vitamin E oil is known to block free radicals from the body, which play a large part in the ageing process. It also acts as a cleansing agent that could possibly treat sunburns and lighten dark spots as well. If you wish to have a soft, supple and radiant skin, then you must include vitamin E-rich foods in your daily diet. Here is a list of 5 such foods.

Read on to know more about them. Spinach is a powerhouse of various essential vitamins and minerals, especially vitamin E. Including spinach in your daily meals can provide you with a considerable dose of vitamin E. You can have it cooked or raw in the form of salads. This creamy and rich fruit is loaded with fibre, mag-



nesium and vitamin E. You can mash it up as guacamole and savour it by spreading it on toasted bread slices. Include it in your daily diet and watch out for results.

Talking about vitamin E, one cannot miss almonds. Almonds are an excellent source of vitamin E. Its oil can come to great help in keeping dry skin at bay. So if you have a dry skin type, then bring almond oil to your rescue. This nutritional showstopper is packed with health benefiting properties.

Bharti Airtel looking to pare \$4.6 billion of debt with Africa unit IPO, to sell stake in tower biz

Bharti Airtel Ltd. is looking to pare \$4.6 billion from its net borrowings over the next three years by listing its African unit and potentially selling some stake in its tower business, according to a person with knowledge of the matter, in a bid to safeguard its investment grade ratings.

India's top wireless operator plans to raise as much as \$1.5 billion by listing a quarter of equity in its Africa unit by early 2019 in either London or South Africa, the person said, asking not to be identified as the information isn't public. The parent will also look to sell part of its stake in the \$1.6 billion tower giant after Bharti Infratel Ltd. merges with Indus Towers Ltd.

The twin deals will help the billionaire Sunil Mittal-controlled carrier improve its balance sheet after net debt rose almost 45% to \$14.6 billion over four years as the company borrowed to buy spectrum and defend its position against disruptive upstart Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. The build-up, which came with an eight-quarter-long stretch of earnings declines, has put Bharti Airtel at risk of a downgrade to junk at both Moody's Investors Service and S&P Global Ratings.

"We see a high likelihood that Bharti can avoid becoming a fallen



angel," Anthony Leung, a Hong Kong-based senior analyst at Wells Fargo & Co. wrote in a report dated May 7. "We expect a majority, if not all, of Bharti's tower business to be sold in a year's time, which will meet the timeline target imposed by Moody's to keep the credit at Baa3," which is the lowest investment grade rating.

Bankers for the listing of Bharti Airtel's Africa unit will be appointed by September, according to the person. The unit will house about \$2.3 billion of debt, pushing its enterprise value to \$8.3 billion, the person said.

A Bharti Airtel spokesman declined to comment.

The pressure to provide 4G services across India and expand broad-

band before Jio roils this segment too, will imply capital spending of about Rs 240 billion (\$3.6 billion) in the year to March 2019, the person said. The company invested Rs 250 billion last fiscal.

Ratings concern
S&P Global Ratings put a negative outlook on Bharti Airtel's BBB- rating on May 3 after "cut-throat pricing" led to weaker-than-expected earnings and given the need for high capital spending. There's "a one-in-three possibility" of a ratings downgrade in the next 18 months if the financials don't improve as expected "or if leveraging does not materialize," S&P said in a statement.

Moody's affirmed the company's

Baa3 rating with a negative outlook on April 26, saying "demonstrated progress" toward debt reduction was necessary to maintain the investment grade.

Equity investors too are feeling the heat. Bharti Airtel's shares have plunged 23.7% this year, compared with a 3.6% rise in the S&P BSE Sensex.

The company's continuing asset monetisation push will allay some of these concerns. Bharti Airtel will engage with investors to evaluate a strategic stake sale once the merger of Bharti Infratel and Indus is complete, according to an April 25 filing. It will own up to 37.2% in the new entity that will control more than 163,000 towers across India.

It sold about 8,300 towers in seven African countries for about \$1.7 billion in 2015 and followed with the sale of its Tanzanian tower business for \$179 million a year later. In 2016, Bharti Airtel also sold its Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone units.

India's top carrier raised \$2 billion through the sale of its African tower assets and \$1 billion from the sale of its Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone businesses, the person said. Bharti Airtel in 2010 acquired the African assets of Kuwait's Mobile Telecommunications Co., also known as Zain, for an enterprise valuation of \$10.7 billion.

Flipkart sale to Walmart confirmed as SoftBank strikes deal to sell stake for \$4 billion

SoftBank Group Co. CEO Masayoshi Son on Wednesday said it has reached a deal to sell its 20% stake in Flipkart, confirming Walmart's majority-stake acquisition in India's largest e-commerce player.

The deal is the largest acquisition yet for Walmart, and also the biggest such transaction in the e-commerce market.

SoftBank, through its Vision Fund, invested \$2.5 billion in Flipkart and that stake will be worth about \$4 billion in the deal, Son told a briefing on Wednesday, according to Bloomberg.

Walmart, the world's largest retailer will invest \$2 billion in fresh capital into Flipkart, and buy the remaining from the company's existing investors, thus valuing it around \$18-\$20 billion, according to Mint.

Google parent Alphabet Inc is also expected to pick up some stake in the e-commerce venture.

Co-founder Sachin Bansal is also likely to let go of his entire 5.5% stake in the company for \$1 billion, Mint said.

However, a few investors including Tiger Global Management and Tencent Holdings, are expected to retain a small part of their



stake in the company.

After Sachin Bansal's exit, co-founder Binny Bansal is expected to take on the role of Chairman of the Flipkart group, while CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy will remain in his role.

The deal has prompted Amazon to ramp up investments in India, with the company recently infusing Rs2600 crore in its Indian unit to strengthen its war chest against rival Flipkart.

"As India's fastest growing e-commerce player with a long-term commitment to make e-commerce a habit for Indian customers, we continue to invest in the necessary technology and infrastructure to grow the entire ecosystem," said an Amazon India spokesperson to PTI.

Déjà vu: How India and other oil buyers tackled US curbs on Iran before

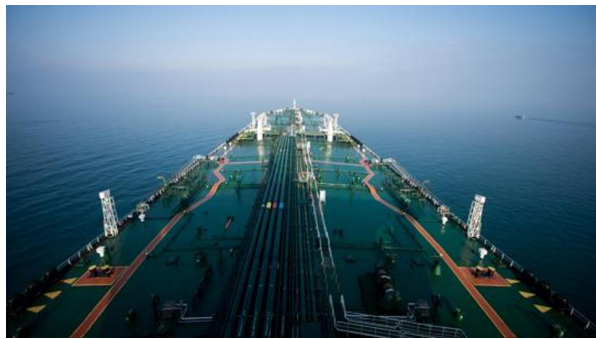
For the world's biggest oil buyers, the imposition of sanctions on Iran will be a case of déjà vu.

Earlier in the decade -- before the crude market was roiled by a global glut, before prices were rocked by the biggest crash in a generation, and before American oil began getting shipped all over the world -- refiners in Asia had to contend with international financial measures aimed at curbing the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

By seeking exemptions and getting creative with payments and shipping, they managed to keep buying limited volumes. Now, with President Donald Trump renewing sanctions against OPEC's third-largest producer, they're going to have to curb purchases again. Here are some of the ways they tackled the constraints last time around.

Waivers
At the heart of the problem for Iran's biggest customers was a law that cut off access to the banking system for foreign financial institutions that settled trades with Middle East nation's central bank. That meant that even though there were no direct restrictions on buying the Persian Gulf state's crude, the refiners faced hurdles paying the OPEC member for purchases.

Still, countries were given exemptions by the -- reviewed every 180 days -- if they "significantly" reduced imports from the Islamic Republic. While a specific quantity of reductions that would make buyers eligible for waivers wasn't announced, a slew of nations including China, India and South Korea received them. Iran's exports dropped, and so did its output, until a



2015 deal with world powers that placed limits on its nuclear program.

The US is going to pursue efforts to reduce Iran's crude sales again during and following a 180-day wind-down period, but once again has left the door open for countries to seek "significant reduction exceptions" at the end of the period if they reduce the volume of purchases during that time.

The will assess each country's efforts "including the quantity and percentage of the reduction in purchases of Iranian crude oil, the termination of contracts for future delivery of Iranian crude oil, and other actions that demonstrate a commitment to decrease substantially such purchases," according to the Treasury Department. The State Department expects to consult with nations currently buying from the Middle East producer during the 180 days.

Countries such as China, now the world's biggest oil importer, and India, where demand is growing faster than anywhere else, had last time around repeatedly expressed disapproval over the measures that effectively forced them to curb Iranian crude imports even though broader United Nations sanctions did not.

China's crude trade with Iran didn't breach UN Security Council resolutions or

cause harm to the international community, and was "completely lawful and reasonable," the nation's foreign ministry said in 2012, after it was initially left out of a list of countries that received exemptions from the sanctions.

Their desire to defy the and press ahead with purchases may be stronger this time around, given the global trade frictions that have been spawned by the Trump administration's policies. Additionally, the pull-out from the nuclear accord is unilateral, so the pressure may not be as strong as last time.

Crude perks
With benchmark oil prices recovering from their crash and surging to levels last seen in 2014 as a global glut disappears and demand picks up, Asian refiners may welcome any perks Iran offers to lure buyers in spite of the sanctions.

The Islamic Republic had provided 90 days of credit for crude purchases, at least twice the amount of time given by other producers, and flexibility with grades offered and loading dates to some refiners when it was last under sanctions.

As the nation's crude production and exports recovered in 2016 and it sought to recapture lost share in the prized Asian market, Iran also offered bigger discounts on some of

its oil compared with Saudi Arabia's prices for the first time in a decade.

Insured tankers
Buyers were also roiled in 2012 after European Union restrictions on insurance of Iranian oil affected about 95 percent of the global tanker fleet, because the ships were covered under rules governed by the region's law.

To get around the problem, nations such as India and Japan offered state-backed insurance to ships, helping carriers resume shipments from the Persian Gulf state with protection against risks including oil spills and collisions. Additionally, processors used tankers operated and covered by Iran to receive supplies.

In the current scenario, the refiners may be spared the insurance hurdle because European nations such as the UK and France are sticking with the nuclear accord, saying the deal has been essential to reining in Iran's atomic program.

Currencies and banks
In order to skirt the financial system, Asian buyers could also resort to using currencies other than the dollar to pay Iran for their oil purchases. Payments may be routed through either local or foreign banks that don't have close ties to America.

India initially paid Iran via a Turkish bank before routing payments through a domestic financial institution the last time sanctions were in place. The nation, along with China, also sought to get around the restrictions by trading oil with the Persian Gulf state for local currencies and goods including wheat, soybean meal and consumer products.

Sensex, Nifty end higher among Trump's Iran deal turmoil

Benchmarks ended higher for the third session on the trot today as strong buying in tech and consumption stocks offset global concerns triggered by the US pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal.

IT counters spurred after the rupee hit fresh 15-month lows against the US currency, boosting the dollar revenues of software outsourcing.

The BSE Sensex moved up 103 points to 35,319.35, while the wider NSE Nifty finished at 10,741.70, up 23.90 points.

Crude oil climbed to the highest level since late 2014 at \$77.07 per barrel after US President Donald Trump abandoned an international nuclear deal with Iran, ratcheting up geopolitical tensions and likely disrupting oil supplies.

Back home, the 30-share Sensex opened weak and hit a low of 35,134.20 on profit-taking in recent gainers amid sustained outflows by foreign funds.

However, it soon recovered to touch the day's high of 35,404.83, before finally ending at 35,319.35 -- up 103.03 points, or 0.29%.



The 50-share NSE Nifty too moved in a wide range on hectic selling and buying and closed 23.90 points, or 0.22%, higher at 10,741.70. Intra-day, it hovered between 10,689.85 and 10,766.25.

Meanwhile, on a net basis, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) bought shares worth Rs 923.25 crore while foreign institutional investors (FIIs) sold shares to the tune of Rs 97.15 crore in Tuesday's trade, provisional data showed.

"The US decision to withdraw from nuclear deal with Iran added pressure on oil prices while gains in IT index owing to weaknesses in rupee and other stock specific buying led the bourses to close positive.

"Volatility in bond yield will impact companies' mar-

0.66%, M&M 0.64%, Bajaj Auto 0.61%, NTPC 0.61%, Dr Reddy's 0.57% and SBI 0.48%.

Sectorally, the BSE IT index ended 0.74% higher, while tech rose 0.56%, consumer durables 0.46%, capital goods 0.40%, bankex 0.23% and metal 0.11%.

However, power declined 0.57%, healthcare 0.47%, infrastructure 0.37%, PSU 0.36%, FMCG 0.26%, auto 0.22% and oil and gas 0.05%.

In the broader markets, the BSE mid-cap index fell 0.63% and the small-cap index shed 0.13%.

In the global commodities markets, Brent crude oil prices rose by 2.97% to USD 77.07 a barrel and WTI jumped 2.92% to \$71.08.

Asian markets were mixed as investors digested the news of the US pulling out of the Iran deal.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.44%, Singapore gained 0.15%, while Japan's Nikkei fell 0.44% and Shanghai Composite index inched lower by 0.07%. In the Eurozone, Frankfurt's DAX rose 0.27% and Paris CAC was up 0.07% in early trade. London's FTSE too gained 0.60%.

Rupee sheds 24 paise against US dollar as crude oil prices rally

The rupee plunged by 24 paise to 67.32 against the US dollar in early trade on Wednesday, following surging demand for the greenback as crude oil prices zoomed past \$76 per barrel level amid foreign capital outflows.

Forex dealers said the dollar strengthened against major global currencies overseas as crude oil prices rallied and pushed Treasury yields higher after US President Donald Trump pulled out from the international nuclear deal with Iran.

Early losses in stock markets and demand for the US currency from importers also weighed on the rupee, they



added.

lower on weak global cues.

On Tuesday, the rupee gained five paise to 67.08 against the US currency on suspected RBI intervention and stray dollar demand.

Meanwhile, the benchmark BSE Sensex was range-bound in early trade, with oil and gas stocks trading

It's a deal: Walmart buys 77% stake in Flipkart for \$16 billion

Walmart Inc. agreed to buy a controlling stake in India's biggest online retailer, striking a blow against rival Amazon.com Inc. as the battle for e-commerce supremacy goes global.

The world's largest retailer will acquire a 77% holding in Flipkart Group for \$16 billion, the companies said in a statement. Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal and other shareholders will hold the remainder. The deal -- Walmart's biggest ever -- gives it greater access to India's e-commerce market, which Morgan Stanley has estimated will grow to \$200 billion in about a decade. Flipkart, mean-

while, gets additional capital and expertise to battle Amazon, which has spent billions of dollars to gain customers in India. Online sales in the world's second most-populous nation are growing about 35% a year, according to data tracker Euromonitor, fueled by a rising middle class and urbanization that present an attractive environment for e-commerce.

Walmart was upstaged earlier Wednesday when Masayoshi Son, chief executive officer of SoftBank Group Corp., confirmed during a briefing in Tokyo that the US retailer had agreed to buy control of Flipkart. SoftBank invested \$2.5

billion in the Indian company and that stake will be worth about \$4 billion in the deal, Son said.

For the US retailer, acquiring a stake in Flipkart enables it to tap into India's retail market without building stores. Walmart once envisioned operating hundreds of locations across India but it has been unable to open traditional units because of long-standing governmental rules for so-called multibrand international retailers. Walmart entered India in 2009 through a joint venture with Bharti Enterprises, and took full control of that business in 2013. It currently operates 20 wholesale



businesses.

"Online retail is seemingly the only way for a foreign company to

have meaningful retail operations in the country," Barclays analyst Karen Short said in an April 16 note. The deal is the largest-ever

in e-commerce, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Walmart's investment includes \$2 billion in new equity funding, which the companies say will be used to spur Flipkart's growth. The companies said they're also in talks with other potential investors, which could result in the US company's stake being lowered, though it will retain majority ownership. Flipkart will maintain a separate brand and operating structure, the companies said.

The deal represents another missed opportunity for Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, who has also failed to create a meaningful presence

in China. Amazon needs another potential high-growth market in which to succeed to prove it can effectively replicate its model beyond North America, and it has been aggressively expanding in India. Bezos has committed \$5.5 billion to the country and his local chief, Amit Agarwal, has made progress by adapting the site to local conditions.

Despite its size and global clout, Walmart has found it necessary to forge alliances in its battle against Amazon, which last year bought Whole Foods Market to gain a foothold in the U.S. grocery industry.

BCCI Committee of Administrators open to review one state, one vote

The Indian cricket Board's Committee of Administrators has firmly backed the tenure cap, age cap and cooling off period as recommended in the Justice RM Lodha report on administrative reform.

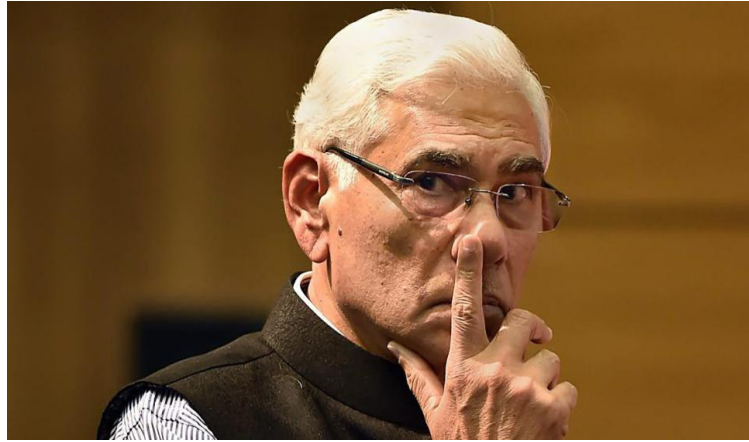
However, the Supreme Court panel headed by Vinod Rai has recommended that the Apex court may reconsider the one-state, one-vote recommendation. The need for the selection committee to revert to five members -- it was crunched to three as per Lodha panel -- is also identified for consideration.

In its last hearing on the implementation of the Lodha report, the court had sought suggestions from officials of BCCI and its state units to see if changes need to be made to the draft constitution submitted by the CoA.

In response to inputs from the state units and office-bearers, past and present, CoA has made comments against each suggestion.

In what will come as huge relief to the three associations in Maharashtra (Mumbai, Vidarbha and Maharashtra) and Gujarat (Baroda, Gujarat and Saurashtra), CoA has given a positive feedback on the suggestion that all units should retain full membership.

"The recommendation pertaining to the existing Full Members from Maharashtra and Gujarat (as modified by the judgement dated 18 July 2016) viz. annual rotation of Full Membership between the three associations



from said states is one of the issues identified by this Hon'ble Court for consideration," CoA said in its response published on BCCI website in a tabulated form. The matter is up for hearing next on May 11.

The CoA has also recommended that the issue of membership of Services, Indian Railways and Universities be treated separately from those of NCC (National Cricket Club, Kolkata) and CCI (Cricket Club of India, Mumbai). "The recommendation pertaining to the existing Full Members who do not represent any territory (Railways, Services, Universities, CCI and NCC) viz. that the said existing Full Members be relegated to Associate Membership without voting rights is one of the issues identified by this Hon'ble Court for consideration. In doing so, it would be relevant to take into account the fact that Railways and Services field teams in tourna-

ment conducted by the BCCI and Universities conducts all-India tournaments at the university level. This is one of the reasons why the cases of NCC and CCI should be considered separately from that of Railways, Services and Universities," the CoA said.

CoA however is clear that "at least one Full Member from every State should be inducted, including from States that are currently not-represented like Uttarakhand.... This will make BCCI a more inclusive body."

The CoA has dismissed the state associations' suggestions for relaxation in tenure (total nine years) and cooling off periods (after three years). It has also made it clear that the cooling off period will be total and will mean the person cannot take up any post, whether at state units, BCCI or ICC.

"The spirit of the Hon'ble Justice Lodha Committee recommendations

would require that the concept of cooling off period apply across BCCI and State Associations. In fact, even a person who has been an office-bearer of a State Association for 3 years cannot be an office-bearer of the BCCI for the next 3 years. The clarification issued by this Hon'ble Court vide order dated 24 March 2017 relates only to the 9-year disqualification and not to the concept of cooling off period. The spirit of the recommendations would require that once an individual has been an office-bearer for 3 years, such office-bearer should not be a member of the Governing Council or any Committee during the cooling off period."

CoA suggestions on player involvement:

The CoA requests to consider a procedure whereby the General Body does not directly appoint the Selection Committees but instead appoints a professional committee comprising reputed former cricketers (like the erstwhile Cricket Advisory Committee which had comprised Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman). Such professional committee then will appoint the selection committee for a term of 2 years.

The Hon'ble Justice Lodha Committee has recommended the inclusion of players' representatives (in administration) because the players form the very core of the game and their involvement through these representatives is most deserving and long awaited.

Tour of Ireland: Virat Kohli county stint leaves selectors confused

New Delhi: The national selection committee's decision to name India skipper Virat Kohli for the two-match T20 series against Ireland has created confusion as it's clashing with his county commitments for Surrey.

There were rumours in the BCCI corridors that the section which wasn't happy with Kohli skipping the one-off Test match against



Afghanistan, has played a role in cutting short his county stint in favour of the T20 Internationals against the minnows.

India are set to play two T20s against Ireland in Dublin's Malahide on June 27 and 29 while Kohli is scheduled to play his last county match for Surrey against Yorkshire at Scarborough from June 25 to 28.

According to an announcement made by the county: "India captain Virat Kohli will play for Surrey during the entire month of June."

Despite the county matches schedule being announced much in advance before the team selection, it was surprising to find Kohli's name for the two-match series against Ireland.

When chairman of selectors MSK Prasad was contacted by PTI for a clarification whether it was a clerical error, he said: "Kindly talk to the BCCI secretary on this issue."

When BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary was asked, he replied.

"Be rest assured, everything is fine," was all he said.

However, there has been no clarity as to what will be Kohli's choice as he gets to play only three four-day matches during his stint.

"If the selectors have picked him for the Ireland T20s despite the county dates being available, it means that he will not play the game against Yorkshire. This cannot be a unilateral decision as the county contracts has been inked after much deliberation. Playing against Ireland means that he will get only two county games.

"It will be very interesting to know why has there been a change in Virat's schedule if England Tests are paramount," wondered a senior BCCI official when apprised of the situation.

Whether Surrey would agree to the new arrangement is another question because the contract was signed after a lot of deliberations regarding Kohli's image rights.

Rohit Sharma, seeking to fire, back at favourite Eden Gardens

The Eden Gardens is to Rohit Sharma what it was to Mohammad Azharuddin and VVS Laxman. Rohit has a world record score of 264 in One-day Internationals here in 2014 made while coming back from a finger injury, a Test ton worth 177 and two IPL titles won on this ground.

Rohit also made his first-class debut at Eden and got his first IPL ton here. In an interview, Rohit has said fans once gave him a card which said this was "Rohit Gardens."

What better venue, therefore, to help Mumbai Indians continue their customary late surge into the IPL playoffs. Even in IPL, Rohit has tormented Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), scoring an unbeaten 109 in 2012 (60balls; 12x4, 5x6), 98 not out in 2015 (65b; 12x4; 4x6) and 84 (10x4, 2x6) in 2016. Add to that a 26-ball 50 in the 2015 IPL final and it is difficult to find a better setting for Rohit to end his somewhat ordinary run in IPL 2018.

Man of the moment With ex-Knight Suryakumar Yadav in good form, Mumbai Indians (MI) need Rohit to fire to ensure that their starts are not wasted. Rohit is scoring at 28.87 this term and though he did worse in IPL10 on way to taking MI to their third title, the last time before 2017 when he averaged less than 30 was in 2010.

"The general public will judge that Rohit's performance has not been that good by his high standards. But for me, he has performed when the team needed it. That has been crucial. He played an unbelievable innings against RCB. We were nought for two and he stood up and got 94. Those are crucial moments from a leadership point of view. You stand up when adversity hits the team. That is when your leadership mentality comes through," said MI's JP Duminy. "That is when your team follows you. And that is the cornerstone of who he is as a person."

The other pressure-moment performer for Duminy is Hardik Pandya. "He is an exceptional talent and the kind of player you need at this stage," said the South African. "What makes Pandya different is that he treats triumph and disaster just the same." With Rohit at Eden, and Yadav, Evin Lewis and Hardik on song, if MI can adjust to the conditions here, their run to the playoffs may not look like mission impossible it did not so long ago.

Best opportunity for us to give Karun Nair a chance: India chief selector MSK Prasad

Bengaluru: Chairman of selectors MSK Prasad today said that his panel thought it was the "best opportunity" to get Karun Nair back in the Test team rather than persisting with Rohit Sharma, who has flattered to deceive in the longest version.

Karun was back in the Indian team after slamming 600 plus runs in Ranji Trophy while limited overs vice-captain Rohit paid the price for his consistent run away from home in the longest format.

"This was the best opportunity for us to give Karun a chance because he's been doing well," Prasad replied when

asked why Rohit had been omitted from the Test squad.

While no senior India player has been named in the A squad, Prasad said that Murali Vijay, Wriddhiman Saha, Mohammed Shami will play a four-day Test against West Indies A before playing the warm-up game against Essex, which will precede the first Test against England in August.

"We did discuss, had a meeting with Virat, Ravi and Rahul. Some of the Test specialists like Saha, Vijay and Shami will play the third India A Test against West Indies A before playing the warm-up game against Essex and then



the England Tests," Prasad said. Prasad, a former India stumper, once again made it clear that Mahendra Singh Dhoni is the best wicketkeeper-batsman that India has at the moment.

Asked if the selectors have

kept a pool ready, Prasad said: "Yes, we are working towards it. We have tried six wicketkeepers for India A during the past few months. We are rotating and preparing them for the next level."

One of the cliched ques-

tions that Prasad has had to answer was Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja's exclusion. The reply was same as it has been on earlier occasions.

"When they were excluded, we made it clear that two-three youngsters would given the opportunity. It made sense to give them a long rope. If you see the wickets they've (Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal) taken, it's heartening. They've kept improving game after game, so it makes sense to continue with them when they're winning games both home and abroad," said Prasad.

On selection of A teams, Prasad said that tracking do-

mestic cricket has been one of their strong points.

"Credit to my colleagues because one thing that I am very proud about our committee is that we keep track of every match. We have designed a strategy where match referees give their reports on those matches, which we have not watched.

"So we keep track of every domestic match played in India. Also we talk to the senior boys and take their inputs," Prasad said.

He said that the likes of Mayank Agarwal, Prasad Krishna, Rajneesh Gurbani have all been rewarded for their domestic performances.

Indian cricketer Shardul Thakur's parents injured in bike accident in Palghar

Mumbai: The parents of 27 year old Shardul Thakur, fast bowler with the Indian cricket team, were injured after their bike skidded off the road on Tuesday night.

Both were rushed to the Dr Dhawale Charitable Hospital at Palghar. Narendra Thakur was later shifted to Leelavati hospital as a brain clot was detected.

Narendra and his wife Housna were returning to their Mahim (not Mumbai) village home after attending a wedding in Alyali in Palghar.

Road construction work was going on near Sundaram school and Narendra, who was riding the bike could not see the road construction work as the area has no streetlights. As a result the bike skidded and both fell on a side depression.

Locals rushed the duo to the Palghar hospital where Narendra was treated, and Dr Prakash Gudsoorkar, ortho surgeon detected a brain clot during a CT scan and at around 2300 hrs Narendra was shifted to Leelavati Hospital.

"The patient is diabetic with hyper

tension and already had undergone two heart surgeries and suffered intra cranial bleeding (intern bleeding of skull and brain) and was vomiting, hence we advised him to be shifted to the Mumbai hospital while his wife has been discharged as she suffered minor injuries", said the medico.

Doctors also confirmed that Narendra's condition is stable. However, Shardul has rushed from Pune - where he is currently based as a part of the Indian Premier League side Chennai Super Kings - to Mumbai to visit his parents.

IPL 2018: Kings XI Punjab coach Brad Hodge bemoans lack of support for KL Rahul

KL Rahul's sensational, unbeaten 95 off 70 balls was not enough for Kings XI Punjab as they suffered a 15-run loss to Rajasthan Royals to continue their woeful run at the Sawai Mansingh stadium where they have lost all their games at the venue in the IPL.

Speaking in the post-match press conference, Kings XI Punjab coach Brad Hodge rued the lack of support for Rahul as the team failed to get over the line.

"If your one, two and three fire, you are in pretty good shape. We did not have anyone to help Rahul get the job done. It is a slight area of concern. If we had contributions from the middle order, we might have been in a better position," Hodge said.

Rahul lone warrior The right-handed batsman had smashed an unbeaten 84 off 54 balls to help Kings XI Punjab cross the line in Indore. However, during his knock



of 95, he was let down by the top and middle order.

Barring the right-hander's knock, the next best was Marcus Stoinis' 11 while the rest of the batsmen had scores of 1, 0, 3, 9, 7, 9.

With Rahul scoring close

to 67% of Kings XI Punjab's score of 143/7, Hodge said the over-reliance on Rahul and Chris Gayle was a bit of a concern. "Rahul is in great form and when Chris Gayle fires, anything can happen. We have got some extremely talented players and we need them to lift a little bit and contribute a little bit more to what they are doing. That is reality for most teams in this IPL," Hodge said. No momentum in powerplay Chasing 159,

Kings XI Punjab started badly and managed just 33 runs in the first six overs of the powerplay. Hodge said the team did not recover from that position on this pitch.

"This was a tough surface when we saw the wicket at the toss. We never got momentum going. At the end of the powerplay, we were 20 runs short of where we should have been and that cost us a bit. We could not get back into the game," Hodge said.

All roads lead to Rome for double-chasing Juventus

All roads lead to Rome this week for Juventus who will look to seal the Italian Cup and Serie A double in the space of four days at the Stadio Olimpico.

Massimiliano Allegri's Turin giants take on his former club AC Milan in the Italian Cup final on Wednesday, and on Sunday play AS Roma needing just one point to rubbustamp a seventh successive Serie A title.

Milan have not won a major trophy since Allegri led them to the Serie A title in 2011.

Beaten twice by Juventus in the league this season, the club's last Italian Cup trophy dates back to the playing days of coach Gennaro Gattuso in 2003.

"They want to start winning silverware again and we want to bring this trophy back to Turin for a fourth straight year," said Bosnian midfielder Miralem Pjanic as his side target a 13th Cup title. "We really wanted to win every trophy available this year. Unfortunately, we are out of the Champions League, but we are well-positioned in the league and winning the Coppa Italia is another goal of ours." Milan are also looking to ensure Europa League action next season as they sit sixth in Serie A and are one of three teams fighting for the remaining European berth.

Midfielder Giacomo Bonaventura credited Gattuso with building team confidence since the former AC Milan player took over last November.

"The coach has given me a lot of confidence, not only me but the entire team," said Bonaventura. "He has believed in us from the moment he arrived and we're grateful."

And Turkish midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu said his side were desperate for a win which would also ensure a Europa League spot next season.

"We want to win this trophy," Calhanoglu, who arrived from Bayer Leverkusen at the start of the season told Gazzetta dello Sport.

"It's something that would change our outlook and the whole season. It would change everything," he continued.

"The match in Turin, but also the one in Milan, showed that we can beat Juventus. We can do it.