

THE EARLY EDITION

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Top Stories

[Union minister Nitin Gadkari seeks Indian-American participation in start-up movement](#)

The Times of India -- Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday urged the Silicon Valley professionals of Indian-origin to participate in India's Start-up Movement to help make it a success.

The government's revolutionary policy initiatives have brought about a lot of positivity among the entrepreneurs across the globe and today India has the world's third largest number of start-ups, said Gadkari, who is Road Transport and Highways and Shipping Minister.

He was addressing a series of meetings organised over the last two days by various outfits of professionals of Indian-origin based in Silicon Valley in Northern California state of the United States, said an official statement here.

Those he addressed included Global Indian Technology Professionals Association (GITPRO) and TiE (The Indus Entrepreneurs) US Chapter.

The minister sought the participation of the Indian origin professionals of the Silicon Valley, so that they could take advantage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious policy initiative of "Ease of doing Business" and contribute to the success of "Make in India".

He urged the professionals to bring their innovations and technologies to India in key sectors of the economy, particularly in the infrastructure sector like roads transport, highways and shipping as well as in the road safety programmes.

[Bring your innovations to India: Nitin Gadkari to IT professionals in Silicon Valley](#)

[External affairs minister Swaraj promises help to family whose 3 members died in US car crash](#)

Hindustan Times -- External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj said on Sunday government would help a Kalyan-based family in arranging for cremating bodies of its three members killed in a road accident in Long Island in the US.

38-year-old IT professional Chandan Gavai and his parents -- Archana Gavai (60) and Kamalnayan Gavai (74)-- were killed when the vehicle they were travelling in was hit head-on by a truck on July 4. Chandan's 32-year-old wife suffered life-threatening burns and is in comma. The couple's 11-month-old son survived the crash and is under treatment.

The Gavai family members in India were finding it difficult to bring back the bodies for cremation due to high expenses involved. Swaraj promised to help the family after she came to know of their difficulty.

Swaraj said India's consulate general in New York has suggested the family to cremate Chandan's parents in New York. She said as per US laws, Chandan's body cannot be cremated as his wife is in coma and unable to give consent.

Swaraj said the consulate general suggested the family that Chandan's mortal remains be buried as his wife Manisha alone can give consent for his cremation.

Swaraj said the government will help the family get death certificates and insurance money for all the three deceased members. The family hails from Maharashtra.

"Our consulate will bear the expenses for cremation," Swaraj tweeted, adding "All members of the family who are in US incl. Manisha's parents are agreeable to this proposal. We hope to resolve this accordingly.

"Burial only till his wife Manisha recovers from coma. Once she gives consent, Chandan will also be cremated."

Swaraj said one of the family members Anand Gavai wants the money be given to him but it cannot be done as he is a Dutch national. "Under government rules, money cannot be given to a foreign national," she said.

Sushma Swaraj steps in to help Kalvan family that lost 3 members in US accident

Pastor from Gannavaram missing in US

The Times of India -- A pastor Veerapaneni Johnson Choudary, who belongs to Gannavaram in Krishna district, is reported to have gone missing in the US. His family has lost contact with him since July 9. Panicked after failing to know his whereabouts, Choudary's wife Subhashini lodged a complaint with the police. According to information, the pastor went to the US on a 40-day visit on June 3. He was to return to Gannavaram on July 13. Subhashini said that her husband had last called her on July 9 and told her that he was preparing to come back to India. She said that he had been in touch with her and their children until he went missing.

Subhashini said she had waited for about a week and grew suspicious after she failed to contact him on Sunday, two days before his scheduled departure from the US. It is not clear as to where he got stuck or where he went missing.

The 38-year-old pastor has two children. He has been in the spiritual service at Gannavaram for the last two decades and is known for his affability.

Transit travellers hit as US bans Turkey flights

The Times of India -- America's decision to ban all flights to and from Turkey could affect the travel plans of scores of Indians who have booked Turkish Airlines (TA) tickets to fly from India to US in the coming days. Leading travel agents say TA has a large number of transit passengers to and from India who travel to the US, Europe and Africa via Istanbul.

"Almost 60-70% of the passengers on TA's India flights are transit passengers. The ban on flights between the US and Turkey will hit those who are to fly TA between India and US," said a leading travel agent who did not wish to be named.

Agents say the airline has options like rebooking passengers on other airlines or giving flyers a refund. When contacted, a TA spokesperson in Delhi said, "The authorities at the Turkish Airlines HQ are discussing the matter and will issue a statement soon". The airline did not announce its stand on the issue at the time of going to press.

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) notice --issued primarily due to safety fears at Turkish airports --bans all "US commercial and private aircraft from operating into or out of any airport in Turkey" and prohibits "any aircraft of any registry from departing Turkey for the US". TA falls in the latter category. Air India and United are the only two airlines that provide direct connectivity between India and the United States. Passengers flying other airlines have to transit through Europe or the Gulf to travel between India and the US, or even Southeast Asia if they are flying to the west coast.

TA, which has two daily flights from India to Istanbul, is also a popular option for transit passengers as it flies to almost 300 destinations worldwide and is a member of the world's largest airline grouping, Star Alliance. In 2013, it had sought a five-fold increase in current flying rights of about 4,000 seats a week to over 20,000, along with a nod to fly to more Indian cities.

"We currently fly 14 flights a week --one each flight a week --one each from Delhi and Mumbai to Istanbul daily. This is a very limited capacity. We have asked the government for more destinations as we want to fly to all the six metros, Amritsar and Ahmedabad. We want to have 70 weekly flights from eight cities in India," its then GM to India, Adnan Aykac, had told TOI in July 2013.

PM Modi govt has turned it into 'India-Pak' situation: Delhi CM Kejriwal on ties with the Centre

Times Now -- In the midst of his bitter fight with the Centre on a range of issues, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal today accused the Modi dispensation of turning its ties with Delhi government into an "India-Pakistan" type situation and said absence of obstacles would have helped him achieve four times of what has been done so far in the city.

In the first edition of his 'Talk to AK' show, seen as an attempt to increase Aam Aadmi Party's national connect, Kejriwal touched upon a number of contentious issues including appointment of 21 Parliamentary Secretaries, arrest of a top bureaucrat by CBI and transfer of officers even as he taunted the Prime Minister

saying, he was the "only corrupt Chief Minister in the country in the eyes of" Narendra Modi.

The Delhi Chief Minister, in the nearly two-hour-long programme that began with a monologue followed by a question and answer session, alleged that the Centre was trying to "break" the AAP government and that BJP President Amit Shah was micromanaging CBI, adding, "but every dog has his day and all these will soon come to an end."

Kejriwal, the AAP national convenor, indicated that the party may contest the next assembly polls in Gujarat, alleging that an "atmosphere of suppression" was prevailing there and people wanted to overthrow the BJP regime.

Justifying his government's spendings on advertisement, he insisted that it spent only Rs 75 crore not 526 crore in the last fiscal and accused the RSS of spreading rumours on the issue, saying it has no parallel in the world in spreading rumours.

"If they would not have made this India-Pakistan situation, then work done by us would have been four times.

"I had told him (PM), forgive me if I have committed any mistake, but please end this irritants. A lot of work has been done. But if not for obstacles, the amount of work would have been four times.

"Our Assembly passed 14 bills, including on time-bound services delivery, which had the clause of automatic compensation. It's been eight months since this passage of this bill.

"Remember the Ramlila version of Jan Lokpal Bill? It's been eight months that we passed it and since then the Centre's approval is awaited," Kejriwal said.

Flanked by his deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and music composer Vishal Dadlani - the moderator for the programme which is seen as Kejriwal's answer to PM's 'Maan Ki Baat' radio address, Kejriwal alleged that Delhi has become the "victim" of Centre's confrontational attitude as AAP MLAs are being arrested on "false charges".

"In PM's eyes there is only one corrupt CM in the country. They want to break us. They enter into settings with other parties.

"Have FIRs been filed against Robert Vadra or Sonia Gandhi or Shivraj Singh Chouhan? They are not scared of me, they are scared of my honesty. The full police force is after us," he said.

"The Centre is working like the British used to treat the freedom fighters. I have told MLAs this is the second freedom struggle," Kejriwal said.

"They are not probing the CWG scam. I have told my MLAs to be ready to go to jail. If Rajendra Kumar was not in my office then I can challenge that he would not have been arrested.

"The message to officers is do not work for us. Amit Shah is micromanaging CBI. But every dog has his day. All these will soon come to an end," he said.

Warning the Centre not to "mess" with the student community, he said if the current "trend" continues then there may be a "danger" for the country in the future.

"The Centre led by BJP reduced the education budget by 25 per cent. From 82,000 crore to 68,000 crore. The country will be ruined if youth don't study," he said.

Referring to a letter to him by former Gujarat BJP MLA Yatin Oza in which the latter alleged that Amit Shah had struck a deal with AIMIM MLA Akbaruddin Owaisi ahead of the 2015 Bihar elections, the Delhi Chief Minister said if the claims are true, then it was very dangerous.

"Oza is a senior lawyer who was very close to Amit Shah. If what the letter says is true then it's very dangerous. In Gujarat there is an atmosphere of suppression. There are cases of treason against teachers.

"People have decided to teach them a lesson. We will contest elections in Gujarat if people want. The response we received was tremendous. We will replicate our good work in Punjab," he said.

"In Punjab, there will be a crackdown on illegal agencies taking people abroad. We will form a board to manage the issues of people who want to go abroad," he said.

On the issue of transfer of 11 top officials of Delhi Government out of the city, he said the city dispensation must be discussed on such crucial matters and added that his government will bring officers from outside.

"Officers from my office has been transferred. Probably for the first time in India's history officers have been transferred from CMO without permission. Your intention is to stall governance in Delhi.

"We will bring officers from outside by giving adverts. Delhi government has 39 posts at the secretary level. 20 posts are empty. This is the level of shortage and despite that they transfer.

"They want to paralyse us but we will go strong. Will bring out ads in few days inviting experts from across the country," he said.

Severely critical of functioning of the Anti Corruption Branch (ACB), Kejriwal said "Last year, on June 8, the Centre had sent paramilitary forces in taking over the ACB.

"Today if I spot anyone taking bribe in front me, I won't be able to do anything. We have sent 32 cases in the last one year to it, and people have forwarded 150 complaints but no action has been taken. It has only worked to catch Manish Sisodia, Kapil Mishra and to file FIR against me."

On the issue of appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries, he said he has "full faith" on the Election Commission which was examining the issue and claimed that MLAs holding the post in Punjab and Gujarat were earning in crores.

[Centre creating India-Pak situation with Delhi govt: Kejriwal on 'Talk to AK'](#)

[India ramps up its military presence in Eastern Ladakh](#)

The Hindu -- The process of force enhancement was put in place over the last five years.

Bunkers drilled into barren hills, battle tanks at over 14,000 feet, and additional troops on newly built roads. India's quiet efforts at beefing up military capabilities to match China's wide-ranging transformation across the border are finally becoming a reality.

This reporter was part of a small group of journalists given exclusive access to the eastern frontier with China. A much-criticised policy after the humiliation of 1962 war had resulted in India deliberately neglecting infrastructure even as the Communist neighbour transformed the mountainous and disputed border into a showcase of its economic might with all weather roads running up to frontline military posts.

"We have to defend our borders. So whatever it takes us in terms of infrastructure development, in terms of force accretion, we have to do in the best manner," Lt. Gen. S.K. Patyal, General Officer Commanding the Leh-based 14 Corps, which is responsible for the entire eastern sector with China and some parts of the Line of Control with Pakistan, said at Tangtse.

He also expressed complete satisfaction at the focus on development of border roads by the Army, the Ministry of Defence and the Indian government.

Longer stints for troops

The process of force enhancement was put in place over the last five years.

In a major operational change, since 2012, the Army began deploying units on longer tenures along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

The Army has also moved in tanks and mechanised units, as well as artillery to some areas of Ladakh. Several fortified bunkers on mountains are visible along the way in key areas. In fact the increased patrols both on land and in water on the Pangong Tso lake have resulted in increased stand offs with the Chinese army, which are resolved through banner drills and the agreed mechanisms, officials said.

India and China have historically differed on the boundary between the two countries, and in 1962 fought a short and brutal war. However both sides agreed to resolve the border dispute through talks and in 2005 signed an Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the Boundary Question and have had several rounds Special Representative level talks.

Road, air links upgraded

Augmenting rapid airlift capabilities, India operationalised the Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) at Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) located at over 16,000 feet. Work is now on to improve road connectivity to this critical area. Work on the 255 km Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi road is progressing at a quick pace. The alignment of the DSDBO road was decided by the China Study Group (CSG) with the cabinet secretary and other senior bureaucrats and representatives from the army and intelligence as members. DBO is about 16 km south of the Karakoram Pass.

A critical bridge on the road, 150 kilometers from Darbuk, was completed last month and black topping of the road is in progress. While about 90 kms has been black topped, work up to 120km is expected to be completed by year end.

"In the past few years we have made rapid progress and by 2022 I am confident the road would be completed in all respects," said Col B.S. Uppal, commanding officer of 16 Garhwal Rifles. He added that even now DBO can be reached with the newly constructed bridge. However, as of now, the road is closed for three to four months of the year.

Heavy vehicle ready

In addition several other roads along the route are being upgraded and strengthened which will facilitate the

movement of heavy vehicles. China has already built massive infrastructure along the border and has repeatedly conducted exercises to rapidly transport troops to the border in case of a crisis. In Eastern Ladakh, China has three air fields at Kashgar, Shiquan and Hotan and several mechanised and armoured columns deployed along the frontier.

Officials said with increased numbers, India is only correcting the balance. "There is not much accretion by China, but their logistical capability has gone up," one officer observed. To counter Chinese air power, India has been activating a series of advanced landing grounds along the frontier and fighter aircraft have been practising maneuvers in Leh.

[India's NSG membership bid calls for in-depth discussion, says Beijing envoy Liu Jinsong](#) [India Hardly Trades With China - And Why That's Not Changing: Foreign Media](#) [Tank-full on the China front](#)

[India again dragged in Nepal's power politics](#)

The Economic Times -- India has been dragged into Nepal's new power game yet again, with a senior Maoist leader today asking Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's CPN-UML not to preach nationalism to the party that had waged a "tunnel war" against foreign interference in the past.

"There is no need for CPN-UML to preach lesson on nationalism to us," Barsha Man Pun, senior leader of CPN-Maoist Centre, said.

Coming down heavily on the Prime Minister, Pun said it was his party that announced a "tunnel war" against India during the armed revolution in Nepal in 2003-2004 and stepped down from the government in 2009 to protest against foreign intervention.

Madhesis, ethnic communities and other backward classes of Nepal, however, could not fit in Oli's idea of nationalism, he said.

Pun, one of the main architects of the emerging new alliance between Nepali Congress and the Maoist party, made the remarks while interacting with reporters here.

According to him, the CPN-UML's accusation that the Maoist party was guided by foreign forces to topple the government was ridiculous as the former had found the Maoists 'good' when they supported the CPN-UML-led government earlier.

[Sri Lanka Navy escalating frequency, magnitude of abduction incidents: CM Jayalithaa](#)

The Indian Express -- Seeking the Prime Minister's intervention to secure the release of 77 fishermen and 102 boats from Sri Lankan custody, Tamil Nadu government informed the Centre that the "SL Navy has escalated the frequency and magnitude of incidents of abduction" of Indian fishers from the state.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, Chief Minister J Jayalithaa said, "The Sri Lankan government continues to infringe upon the historically enjoyed rights of our fishermen to fish in the traditional waters of the Palk Bay."

"The Sri Lankan Navy has escalated the frequency and magnitude of incidents of abduction of our fishermen and seizure of boats and fishing equipment undeterred in recent days," she said in the letter released by the state government on Sunday.

She said four Tamil Nadu fishermen, along with their motorised fishing boat, who set out for fishing from Pamban in Ramanathapuram district, were apprehended by the Lankan Navy on July 15 and taken to Thalaimannar in that country.

She also faulted Colombo for not releasing the fishing boats, saying this was causing 'great frustration' among the fishermen of Tamil Nadu.

"Without their livelihood base, these fishermen are in a state of despondency."

"I urge you to take up this matter with the highest authorities of the Sri Lankan government through our High Commission in Sri Lanka and ensure the immediate release of the precariously berthed boats which continue to suffer great damage.

"I request your urgent directions to the Ministry of External Affairs to initiate earnest efforts to take up this matter with the concerned authorities in Sri Lanka and bring an immediate halt to the apprehensions at high seas and secure the immediate release of (a total of) our 77 fishermen and their 102 fishing boats," she said. Jayalithaa reiterated that the position of the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) with Sri Lanka "itself is a matter which is sub-judice" in the Supreme Court of India.

She recalled that she had challenged, in her personal capacity, the constitutional validity of ceding of Katchatheevu islet through the Indo-Sri Lankan agreements of 1974 and 1976, adding that the state government had subsequently implored itself in the case.

Power-surplus India to electrify B'desh trade

The Times of India -- After turning power-surplus, India is working with Bangladesh on a plan to double the capacity of existing transmission interconnects and set up a third link for increasing cross-border electricity trade in a bid to widen the regional market as new generation capacities come up on both sides.

Sources said the two sides are working to double the capacity of the Baharmapur-Bheramara line to 1,000 mw and also examine the possibility of raising the Tripura-Comilla line's capacity to 200 mw. Also on the table is a proposal to lay a third line from Assam's Bongaigaon to a suitable interconnect point in Bihar through Bangladesh. Though the proposal is at a nascent stage, sources said a HVDC (high-voltage, direct current) line with a capacity of around 2,000 mw is being looked at.

The new line is expected to wheel power from hydel projects proposed to be built in the northeast, some of which can also be shared with Bangladesh. This line would allow an easy tap-in or tap-off facility for both countries to feed -or plug into -each other's markets.

According to the Asian Development Bank, interconnected networks increase the operational efficiency and reliability of existing national grids and encourage the development of new renewable power resources. Besides Bangladesh, India also exports power to Nepal and imports from Bhutan. A wider regional market with easy export and import options will help balance the output swing from the 175 mw of solar power capacity being pursued by India.

The talks for enhanced interconnect capacity are well-timed with developments on the ground as power generation grew at more than 9% in the April-June 2016 period against the same period of 2015.

India wary of cost of joint ventures with Israel

The Times of India -- India plans to further expand its strategic ties with Israel through more R&D projects to develop hi-tech weapon systems, as also clinch several deals in the pipeline, but has expressed concern over the exorbitant costs involved in deploying a jointly-developed surface-to-air missile system on frontline Indian warships.

Sources said this came through in the 12th meeting of the high-powered joint working group between the two countries, co-chaired by defence secretary G Mohan Kumar and director general of Israeli defence ministry Major General Udi Adam (retd), which was held in New Delhi on July 13.

Though there has been no official word on the JWG meeting, sources said defence minister Manohar Parrikar has red-flagged the "high costs" involved in production of the medium-range surface-to-air missile (MR-SAM) systems called Barak-8 by Israel.

First, there was a huge delay by DRDO-Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) joint venture to develop and test the MR-SAM systems, which are to be produced in bulk by defence PSU Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL). Now, the projected costs in deploying them have also raised eyebrows.

As earlier reported by TOI, while the naval MR-SAM project was sanctioned by the Cabinet Committee on Security in December 2005 at an initial cost of Rs 2,606 crore, the IAF one for nine squadrons worth Rs 10,076 crore was cleared in February 2009. While the naval system was tested for the first time in November 2014, the IAF one was tested thrice earlier this month.

With an over 70-km interception range against enemy aircraft, drones and missiles, the naval MR-SAM has already been fitted on the three new Kolkata-class destroyers. But each MR-SAM system is now projected to cost around Rs 1,200 crore for the 12 under-construction warships in Indian shipyards, including aircraft carrier INS Vikrant, four guided-missile destroyers and seven stealth frigates. "Consequently, the orders are on hold as of now. A review to cut costs is in progress," said a defence ministry source.

This has also led to the estimated Rs 14,000-crore Army project to acquire these MR-SAMs, which come with missiles, launchers, surveillance and threat tracking radars, and fire control systems, to be kept in abeyance till now.

The JWG also discussed probable joint R&D projects in fields like high-endurance UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), micro-satellite surveillance systems, armoured vehicles and different types of missiles and precision-guided munitions, said sources.

Then, there are several big-ticket deals in the pipeline. These include two more Israeli Phalcon AWACS (airborne warning and control systems), which are to be mounted on Russian IL-76 military aircraft, and four more Aerostat radars.

The IAF is also on course to acquire 164 laser-designation pods or 'Litening-4' for fighter jets like Sukhoi-30MKIs and Jaguars as well as 250 advanced 'Spice' precision stand-off bombs capable of taking out fortified enemy underground command centres.

The Army, in turn, is looking to acquire the Israeli third-generation Spike anti-tank guided missile systems, with an initial 321 launchers and 8,356 missiles, which too is making slow progress due to the high costs involved. The force is likely to go in for an initial two regiments of the Israeli Spyder quick-reaction SAM systems to defend its forward units for enemy air strikes.

Thank all for stand on Kashmir, now need to pass GST Bill: PM Modi

The Indian Express -- Reaching out to the Opposition on the eve of the monsoon session of Parliament starting Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought its cooperation in ensuring the passage of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill and commended all parties for speaking in "one voice" on Kashmir which has been rocked by protests over the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani.

At an all-party meeting Sunday, Modi welcomed remarks by Ghulam Nabi Azad, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, who said no issue was more topical today than that of Kashmir. Agreeing with calls for a discussion on the Kashmir situation, the Prime Minister said: "Various parties have given statements on Kashmir events which benefited the country. This has sent a right message and I thank all the parties for the same."

Noting that important Bills including the GST will be taken up during the session, Modi expressed the hope that there will be meaningful discussions and outcomes.

"GST is of national importance. Issue is not which government gets credit. Important Bills, including GST, will be taken up in the monsoon session and I hope there will be meaningful discussions and outcomes. All of us represent both the people and parties and let us keep national interests above everything else," he said.

Azad later told reporters: "We have not taken any decision that we have to stop a Bill. We will support on merit. We will support any Bill which is in support of people, progress and growth."

Congress chief whip in Lok Sabha Jyotiraditya Scindia said: "We want a concrete draft proposal from the government on GST. If we know how they plan to address the three contentious issues, we can revert."

The government and Congress may resume their discussions on the Bill on Tuesday. "We have assured all parties that there will be open-mindedness and we are ready to discuss all issues," Azad said.

The Prime Minister's appeal on GST came close on the heels of talks between senior ministers and parliamentary leaders of the Congress.

CPM leader Sitaram Yechury said the GST Bill could not be a bilateral issue between the Congress and BJP. He said it should be discussed at an all-party meeting before being brought back to the Rajya Sabha. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley assured him this would be done. Yechury's stand was endorsed by SP representative Naresh Agrawal and senior BSP leader Satish Mishra.

Sudip Bandyopadhyay of Trinamool Congress reiterated his party's long-standing support for the GST Bill which is a manifesto commitment of the party. BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab also supported the GST Bill. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar told reporters after the meeting that the Government will talk to all parties to evolve a consensus on the GST Bill. "Our legislative business, including GST, is a priority. We want to see we pass the GST Bill with consensus. We are going to take every party on board".

Ananth Kumar said the government has lined up 16 Bills for passage in the session. Other than GST, these include Enforcement of Security Interest and Recovery of Debts Laws and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) Bill, Indian Trusts (Amendment) Bill, Whistleblowers Protection (Amendment) Bill and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill.

On the situation in Kashmir, Azad, a former chief minister of the state, drew the attention of leaders to the role of the national media. Chat shows featuring religious fundamentalists and exaggerated portrayals of the ground situation, he said, were fanning flames in the Valley.

Azad was backed by Sanjay Raut of Shiv Sena who said every party was concerned about the developments in Kashmir. He demanded a discussion in both Houses and suggested that anybody who wishes to speak on the issue should be allowed to do so. NCP leader Tariq Anwar too sought a discussion on the Kashmir situation.

Azad, meanwhile, accused the government of “tricks” to destabilise Opposition-ruled states and made light of Modi’s talk of cooperation between the Centre and states by pointing out that even a BJP ally like Akali Dal had attacked it for “undermining” states.

Given the developments in Arunachal Pradesh where it managed to avert a trust-vote debacle by changing its CM, the Congress was also vocal on the issue of federalism and what Azad called the “trust deficit” of states because of the “indifferent attitude” of the Centre.

The Trinamool Congress too wanted a discussion on federalism and the BJD and NCP said Parliament needs to discuss the role of Governors. BSP’s Satish Mishra said roles of both Governors and Speakers should be discussed.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge urged the government to have the same “give-and-take” attitude with the Opposition in running the Lower House.

Parliament's Monsoon Session Begins Today, GST Bill Remains Top Priority

NDTV -- As sparks are set to fly in the Parliament over a range of issues, the bill for the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) across the country remains a priority. The Government has listed around a dozen bills pending introduction, consideration and passage during the monsoon session of Parliament, starting today.

Two bills are pending passage in the Lok Sabha, while seven bills are pending in the Rajya Sabha, including the GST Bill.

At an all-party meeting convened by the government a day before Parliament meets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "GST is of national importance. Issue is not which government gets credit. Important Bills, including GST will be taken up in the monsoon session and I hope for meaningful discussions and outcomes." He urged all the political parties to keep national interests above any other considerations. "We represent both the people and parties and there is a need to keep national interests above anything else".

The Congress said it will support bills but based on merit but offered no assurance on the GST, saying it can take a stand only after the government gives it a "written draft" over concerns raised by it.

With the continuing protests in Kashmir following the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani expected to generate heat in Parliament, PM Modi commended political parties for speaking in "one voice" over the issue.

"Various parties have given statements on Kashmir events which benefitted the country. This has sent a right message and I thank all the parties for the same," he said.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said there should be a discussion in the Parliament on the tense situation in Kashmir and that government should provide an answer.

The government's unsuccessful NSG bid, floods in some states, agrarian crisis and terrorism were among the other main issues raised by opposition leaders at the meeting.

The last few sessions of Parliament have seen frequent face-offs between the ruling and the opposition benches but the second part of the Budget Session saw a relative improvement as far as the completion of government business was concerned.

Kashmir: No newspaper for second day running, lines down, restlessness grows in Valley

Indian Express -- With newspapers not being published in the Valley for the second straight day on Sunday, following a three-day curf imposed by the J&K government, residents are facing a total blackout on news from within their own backyard.

And they warn that this latest move by the state, coming after Internet and mobile services were restricted, may prove “counterproductive” as it is fuelling anger and generating a sense of “restlessness”.

“It’s painful when you know what is happening in France or Turkey but don’t know anything about your friend or a relative staying 500 metres away,” said Nisar Iqbal, a resident of Sopore, who teaches Computer Sciences at Government College, Baramulla.

“We are connected internationally but disconnected locally. My friend was getting married. And even though we live in the same locality, I couldn’t even wish him,” said Iqbal.

Following the protests over militant Burhan Wani’s killing on July 8, the government on Friday night raided newspaper printing presses, seized hundreds of copies and “conveyed” to owners its decision to impose the curf till July 19.

“We seldom watch TV news because we feel it is more of a drama. All these days, our sources of information

were the newspapers,” said Sheikh Younis, a businessman from Barbarshah in Srinagar. “But now, there is a strange feeling of restlessness. It’s as if something is happening somewhere and the government wants to hide it from you. This is proving counterproductive.”

Peer G N Suhail, director of Centre for Research and Policy Development (CRDP) in Srinagar, endorsed that view. “The curbs have created uncertainty because we consider newspapers as an authentic source of information. In their absence, news from social media gains currency and that is where the problem lies,” said Suhail.

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Narrating an incident from Saturday to illustrate how the blockade is affecting the common man, Suhail said: “Yesterday, one of my family members had to come from Baramulla and I was expecting him to arrive by 6 am. But when he didn’t reach by 7 am, I took a taxi to Baramulla only to be informed that he had already reached Srinagar. In normal circumstances, the problem could have been solved by a text message to his mobile phone.”

For Irshada Ayoub, a student of Government Women’s College in Srinagar, the Valley is like “a deserted island”.

“These days, we are living in a world where we don’t know if our relatives are alive or not. The state has been disconnected from the rest of the world. It feels like being on a deserted island. We don’t know what’s happening in our own Valley and that is painful when you are in a situation where you only hear about deaths and injuries. We want to know how our dear ones are doing,” she said.

“This is something which I have never seen before. Such a severe crackdown on communication is quite unimaginable in this day and age,” said Mir Jalal, a Kashmir University student.

“What makes it more shocking is that this is a country that claims to be the pioneer in freedom of speech and digital media. First, they curbed the Internet, then phones and cable TV, and now newspapers. The severity of this clampdown has made us more furious,” said Jalal.

[Editors Guild slams ‘muzzling of media’ in Kashmir](#)

[Separatist leader Geelani asks UN, world to intervene over Kashmir violence](#)

[‘Indians joining al Qaeda more than IS in Iraq and Syria’](#)

Hindustan Times -- Interactions between a Canada-based terrorism expert and jihadis fighting in Iraq and Syria have thrown up a hitherto unknown aspect of Indian fighters – many of them gravitate towards an al Qaeda affiliate and not the Islamic State, perceived as global jihad’s sexy beast.

Amarnath Amarasingam, a fellow with George Washington University’s Programme on Extremism, has contacted close to 100 jihadis in the conflict zone since late 2014.

Of those, he has interviewed nearly 40, and about half a dozen were from India.

Amarasingam found almost all the Indians he interviewed had joined the Jabhat al-Nusra, which is affiliated to al Qaeda and fell out with IS.

“IS is the sexy topic for most people who are watching this stuff. And anyone leaving their home country to go to Syria, people just assume they’re going to join IS. But a lot of people are drawn to Nusra because it’s al Qaeda in Syria, it’s carrying the torch of Osama bin Laden and carrying the torch of the original movement,” Amarasingam told Hindustan Times.

There is also the sense that Nusra offers the “purest form” of jihad as against IS, which is “a bit more theologically corrupted”.

According to the latest estimates, nearly 50 Indians have gone to Syria and Iraq to fight with jihadi groups, including 21 cases that recently came to light in Kerala. At least six Indians have reportedly died. Another 25 were arrested while in Syria or on their way to the war-torn country.

“There are definitely Indians who have left to go fight with the IS. There are also very likely women and families who have left to go live under the so-called caliphate,” Amarasingam said.

“But it’s important to recognise that just as many or around the same number have left to go fight with a variety of different organisations that are active in Syria, such as Jabhat ul-Nusra, Jund al-Aqsa and a lot of these other smaller movements,” he pointed out.

There are even those like one Indian who is “independent” and works with whatever group in the region can utilise his services at a particular juncture.

A top official of the National Investigation Agency said his organisation’s findings did not reflect those of the

Canada-based scholar.

“There are indeed many groups in Syria. But our experience has been that most people from India, who have travelled Syria or wanted to, had their eyes set on the IS, not the other groups,” said the official, who did not want to be named as he wasn’t authorised to brief the media.

C Uday Bhaskar, director of the Society for Policy Studies, a New Delhi-based think tank, said his interactions with experts and members of the Indian Muslim community who had tracked the movement of Indians to Iraq and Syria had revealed a sense of revulsion and unease with the extreme violence associated with IS.

“So some of these people who criticise the situation in Kashmir and Palestine and may be thinking of going to Iraq and Syria are also people who don’t subscribe to the extreme violence perpetrated by IS. It’s like a dampener,” Bhaskar said.

Amarasingam’s work offers a crucial insight into the minds and motives of the jihadis in Iraq and Syria at a time when a growing number of Indian families are grappling with the radicalisation of their sons and daughters and their decision to leave home to travel to the Middle East. He is also part of the Canadian Network for Research into Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS).

He said, “I do get the sense that more of them (Indians) are with Nusra than IS, I’m not sure why. I think a lot of this has to do with the networks they were involved with leaving Syria... Some of them were early enough that they did kind of spend some time with IS and then leave.

“I do get the sense a lot of them are drawn to the Nusra brand because they feel like Nusra is addressing the needs of the Syrians more than IS, which is killing Sunni Muslims, is after something very different. They feel like Nusra, to some extent, maintains grassroots support with Syrians.”

The Indians Amarasingham has communicated with are well-educated, having been to college, and all are young males in the 23-28 age bracket. “A lot of the guys are involved in daily fighting. They are on sentry duty, manning the frontlines.” At that time, they talk a lot more.

The Indians in Syria appear to be “influenced by” the Afghan and Chechen jihads, and by preachers like Anwar al-Awlaki. These are often not lone wolves who make their way to Syria, not individuals leaving randomly, but usually part of a like-minded group making the journey together or “friendship clusters”.

While the IS’s caliphate tries to attract women and families to showcase it as a “land of abundance”, that isn’t the case with Nusra. Its young men “are a lot more honest about the struggle of everyday life, scarcity of food, of water. This is seen through the prism of sacrifice,” Amarasingam said.

Also part of the sacrifice is leaving parents and families behind in India. “They always miss home but they downplay it and missing home is part of the sacrifice. If it was easy, it wouldn’t be meaningful,” Amarasingam explained.

Indians are “not a whole lot different” from others drawn to the conflict “out of religious conviction”.

“What is unique in a weird way is they maintain a kind of Indianness. Others are Muslims first. Indians offer their unique experience,” he said.

Amarasingham hasn’t heard of any of them seeking to return to India, as “a lot of them are there for martyrdom.” They also see Syria as the place that offers “the most rewards” in the afterlife.

“Syria is a draw because it’s seen as the greatest jihad, as a place where the most afterlife rewards are. It’s the biggest and most urgent fight they can be involved in,” is Amarasingam’s analysis.

Some experts have taken comfort in the fact that Indian security agencies have registered less than 100 cases of jihadis either travelling to Iraq and Syria or being detained on their way to the conflict zone even though the country has a Muslim population of about 180 million.

But Bhaskar said such figures shouldn’t be a reason for complacency. “IS or al Qaeda are global brand names and people are gravitating towards their affiliates but we shouldn’t be waiting for the lights to turn red only when we find out that thousands of Indians have joined these groups,” he said.

“Our numbers may be limited now but a group like IS has shown even 100 fighters can carry out attacks of a virulently sadistic nature.”

Views

Tackling all shades of terror

The Tribune, Vikram Sood -- At times like this — of extreme and mindless terror of the ISIS kind as seen in Nice — there is a natural tendency to worry and look for similar trends in India. There is heavy media speculation about the ISIS threat to India, and when one sees events in Bangladesh, maybe some of this is justified. In any case, one would expect the security agencies to be closely watching the situation. This was not the act of a madman nor shall we insult the animal kingdom by calling it bestiality. Animals do not kill without good reason. Terror in Nice was an act of utter hatred where a man finds religion to be good enough cause to kill innocents, including children.

The ISIS phenomenon surfaced in all its brutal fury rather suddenly in June 2014. An organisation of this nature, with its terrorists turned out dressed like commandoes, riding SUVs and equipped with the latest weapons, did not just grow out of the Arabian sand. It was made to happen primarily by the Saudis and Qataris anxious to keep their Sunni control in the Islamic world and threatened by a rising Iran. Persons like Abu Bakr Baghdadi had been around in the region for some time and there was a well-known struggle for power in Syria between various factions and the Al-Qaeda. The ISIS was the multi-tasked terror outfit to bring about regime change in Syria and decimate the Al-Qaeda. It failed in both.

There are now reports that even the US and the UK were ferrying arms to the ISIS from Libya for use against Bashar Assad. Almost immediately after the ISIS burst on the scene, there were learned essays, articles, reports and even books about the ISIS and its threat to the world. Terror outfits take some time to mature and cannot sustain their activity at this level without some State support. Despite such wealth of knowledge and interactive maps showing locations and strengths, the ISIS remained unstoppable. Even in its origins, the ISIS seemed to have been able to telescope all its growth and various gestation periods into a few months. For both, the Al-Qaeda and the ISIS, the US is enemy number 1. Yet both say the US is too far to be targetted regularly. Europe is much easier, especially France, with its imperial past in the Middle East. No wonder the ISIS advisories urge their jihadists to “operate within France. Terrorise them and do not allow them to sleep....” is representative enough. Europe and North America, with ill-adjusted immigrant Muslim populations, are more susceptible today. Many Muslims accept the explanation given by their mullah, and now on the Internet — despite being told they are from a superior religion — that they owe their misery to the kafir and his decadent way of life.

We have our own hatemongers and a recent example being the so-called televangelist Zakir Naik who is credited with the statement to the effect that killing of civilians was forbidden in the Koran, but according to some experts, it was necessary for reasons of state. Why has he not been curbed, but is instead allowed to continue with his hate-mongering? The killing of the terrorist Burhan Wani evoked considerable misplaced sympathy and he was described in the media as a rebel, or even a national leader. Wani’s goal was to “unfurl the flag of Islam on Delhi’s Red Fort” and he called for Kashmiris to wage “holy war”. How does the Indian State compromise with this creed and how does any Indian ever think of Wani to be anything other than a terrorist?

Many have overlooked that over the past few years, there has been an intense effort at radicalisation in Kashmir. Money has been flowing in for Salafi madarasas, and there has been no accountability for this. There are only a few analysts who have the moral courage to write about this. Most usually become evasive, go into denial, or level counter-allegations. The Indian State must show consistency in its essential stand. If the Hurriyat is unacceptable as a representative of the people and known to be in cahoots with the Pakistanis, why is it allowed facilities normally available to loyal Indians? In fact, it gets much more and it repays by being hostile to the Indian State.

Most of us, in India and in the West, have been unwilling to describe the current threat in unequivocal terms. This threat is from radical, violent and narrowly interpreted Islam by some, which even moderate Muslims do not support. A solution will work only if the problem is correctly identified. Instead of giving the latter support, the moderates are usually abandoned and left at the mercy of the radicals because other interests prevail. Naturally, they seek compromises for their survival.

Terrorism of the ISIS variety, operating with large numbers, is highly unlikely in India. There is no ground support for them; we are not Arabs nor is there a Shia-Sunni divide struggle for power in India. However, if in case a lone wolf-type attack is sought to be attributed to the ISIS, it would be prudent to look for clues regarding Pakistani involvement. Pakistan is facing increasing international pressure for its involvement in jihadi activity and duplicity. The best way is to send a reliable jihadi from the LeT or JeM under an ISIS

banner. Indians would not be able to blame Pakistan nor retaliate, the rest of the world, especially the US, would also not pin this on Pakistan. It is necessary therefore we get our narrative right and not get carried away by hasty, convenient narratives. Blind acceptance of an ISIS involvement will only increase Pakistani impunity.

All Indians have multiple identities based on our language, region and religion. All of us, led by the State, need to reinforce a common identity where religion is not the first criterion. The moment we put religion first, everything else gets skewed. While terror itself must be handled by the State's security apparatus in the first place, solutions to problems have to be socio-political. Security, governance in its largest definition, and management of perceptions, where we are the weakest, is what we need first.

Terror of any kind, including the ISIS, is not unbeatable. As S Irfan Habib wrote in December 2015, an armed struggle against the ISIS had become inevitable and needed to be pursued relentlessly.

Oli's departure will be good news for Kathmandu and New Delhi

Hindustan Times, Editorial -- Nepal has had 23 governments in the last 26 years. With the Maoists withdrawing support from the current Prime Minister K P Oli-led dispensation in Kathmandu, the saga of political instability continues. For any country, this kind of staggering political churning spells bad news for governance. But despite this, Oli's possible departure will come as a relief to all those interested in the prospect of inclusive democracy and better Nepal-India relations.

Oli was among the prime drivers of a deeply divisive constitution that eroded the rights of Nepal's marginalised communities and left women as second-class citizens. In government, he has presided over a coalition of the far-Left and the far-Right — united in their belief in ethnic majoritarianism and anti-Indian nationalism. He made little effort to reach out to Madhesi, despite a six-month struggle in Nepal's plains for rights and instead resorted to excessive use of force. The Oli government also performed dismally on the all-important task of post earthquake reconstruction — busy as it was in dividing up the aid kitty among its loyalists. He also tried to invite Chinese role in direct Nepali politics. No one is suggesting that Kathmandu should not have good ties with Beijing, but if it is done with the sole intention of eroding Indian influence, Delhi cannot but take note. Oli's calling card, through this period, was hollow 'nationalism' — which did little to alleviate the suffering of one of South Asia's poorest countries. Oli also sought to infiltrate all key state institution with party loyalists — triggering fears of creeping authoritarianism.

But his possible departure — Oli has not resigned and will face a no confidence vote in parliament this week — will not unlock all of Nepal's problems. At the moment, Maoist chairman Prachanda is the front-runner to become PM — with the support of the largest party in the house, Nepali Congress, and the outside support of agitating Madhesi forces. The next government will be more sensitive to the constitutional aspirations of the excluded communities — but to amend the constitution, it needs a two-thirds majority. With Oli's party in opposition, this will be difficult to achieve. Nepal also needs to begin implementing the constitution. Three elections — local, provincial and national — need to be held by January 2018. Maoists and NC also have a deal to rotate the leadership of government; if Prachanda refuses to give way in nine months, it could force another realignment.

Yet, the next government must be supported for it offers the best chance of steering Nepal back to inclusive democracy. For Delhi, which was exasperated with Oli's games, his possible departure opens up the space to restore bilateral ties with a special neighbour. It must discreetly continue to encourage constitutional accommodation, and publicly reach out to Nepal's new leadership — once elected — with an immediate invitation to visit Delhi.

Game of Thrones in Kathmandu

The Hindu, Rakesh Sood -- With the Oli government on the verge of collapse, a new government headed by Prachanda looks highly probable. Wiser after the missteps of his first stint as PM, he has his development and political tasks cut out.

Nepal has once again been plunged into political uncertainty with the Maoist party — the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre), or CPN (M-C) — withdrawing support from Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's coalition, reducing to a minority the government led by the Communist Party of Nepal (UML), or CPN (UML). Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' announced last week that Mr. Oli had not fulfilled the commitments made earlier in May leaving him with no option. The following day, on July 13, a no-confidence

motion against the government, carrying 254 signatures, was tabled in the National Assembly. Speaker Onsari Gharti has fixed July 21 as the date for taking up the motion for consideration, followed by voting, unless Mr. Oli chooses to resign.

A growing rift

These developments have been expected. On May 4, Mr. Prachanda had carried out the same threat, expressing unhappiness with the Oli government's performance on post-earthquake reconstruction and the lack of progress on the constitutional amendments process. Then too, he had announced that he would lead a new government which would be supported by the Nepali Congress (NC) and Madhesi groups and urged the UML to join in so that a national consensus government could be set up. However, Mr. Prachanda's real source of unhappiness was that the cases registered against the Maoist cadres during the decade-long insurgency had not been withdrawn despite repeated assurances by Prime Minister Oli.

Within 24 hours, a patch-up between Mr. Oli and Mr. Prachanda was put in place, thanks to the efforts of UML leader Bam Dev Gautam. A nine-point agreement was announced to address Maoist concerns which included clemency to the Maoist cadres, provision of compensation to the injured, facilitation of land allotments, giving Maoists a greater say in government appointments, etc. In addition was an unwritten three-point 'gentlemen's agreement' that Mr. Oli would step down as Prime Minister within two months after presenting the budget (Nepal's financial year begins on July 16) and the UML would support Mr. Prachanda as the next Prime Minister.

In recent weeks, rumours had begun surfacing that Mr. Oli had had second thoughts and was in no mood to step down. In fact, many UML leaders are upset with Mr. Oli on his change of position. Former UML Prime Ministers Madhav Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal urged Mr. Oli to maintain Left unity as did Mr. Gautam who has publicly criticised Mr. Oli for backtracking on the May deal that he had brokered.

Assessing Mr. Oli's tenure

Realising that he had been taken for a ride, Mr. Prachanda revived talks with NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and struck again. In a desperate attempt to save his chair, Mr. Oli reached out to rival NC leader Ram Chandra Poudel, offering the lollipop of backing him for prime-ministership down the road in return for support now, but by then it was too late.

Predictably, Mr. Oli has blamed India for his problems. Invoking Nepali nationalism, he has suggested that he is being removed because he had refused to listen to India's suggestions on the Constitution. He claimed that meetings to remove his government have been "remotely controlled", a claim that he had also made in May, and described the current impasse as "a sad situation for the country".

Addressing a national security seminar on July 14, in a barely veiled reference to India, Mr. Oli said, "Maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries is an important aspect of national security but we cannot jeopardise national security for the sake of maintaining good neighbourly relations."

In a pugnacious mood, he declared that he would not quit "at any cost", preferring instead to face the no-confidence motion in the Assembly. As it stands, the numbers are against him. In the 598-member House, the no-confidence motion needs only 300 positive votes. The NC and the Maoists together account for 290 seats; the Madhesis can add another 40 votes, making Mr. Oli's exit a certainty.

Mr. Oli has also cited "constitutional complexities" claiming that since he was appointed Prime Minister following the promulgation of the new Constitution on September 20 last year, he will have to continue as Prime Minister (or caretaker PM) till the general election is held by January 2018, to establish the bicameral legislature envisaged in the Constitution. Perhaps he hopes that President Bidya Devi Bhandari, his old comrade in arms from the UML, will back him in this. However, this suggestion has dubious legality and is likely to be thrown out by the Supreme Court if matters go that far.

Mr. Oli's nine-month tenure has been a sorry one. He had enjoyed a good reputation during his tenures as Home Minister and Foreign Minister during the 1990s, but as Prime Minister he was unable to reach out to the agitating groups who had felt short-changed by the new Constitution. Even when he relented and the government carried out constitutional amendments to partially address the demands of the Madhesis, it was never with a sense of generosity. His constant refrain of Nepali nationalism led to a downturn in Nepal's ties with India and like other Left leaders, Mr. Oli too fell prey to overplaying the China card.

Governance took a back seat even as Mr. Oli donned his nationalist mantle. Most tragic was his inept handling of the post-earthquake relief and reconstruction effort, squandering the goodwill and sympathy of the international community which had pledged \$4.4 billion at the international conference held in Kathmandu a

year ago. To date, not even 10 per cent of the pledged amount has come to the National Reconstruction Authority where key appointments were held up on account of political jockeying.

Speaker Gharti is a Maoist, and despite Finance Minister Bishnu Poudel's request, has held up passage of the Finance Bill to deal with the no-confidence motion first, further increasing the pressure on the government.

Challenges ahead

According to the understanding between the Maoists and the NC, Mr. Prachanda will take over as prime minister for the next nine months, following which, he will hand over the prime-ministership to NC leader Sher Bahadur Deuba. The local body elections will be conducted during Mr. Prachanda's tenure and the provincial and general elections will take place under Mr. Deuba, possibly in November 2017.

According to most political observers, a NC-Maoist combination could be a more stable political combination than a UML-Maoist combine because the two Left parties essentially compete for the same vote bank. Whether this calculation turns out to be correct will nevertheless depend on the maturity of the two leaders, Mr.

Prachanda and Mr. Deuba.

From all accounts, Mr. Prachanda is wiser today than in 2008-9 when his coalition collapsed on account of his decision to sack the then Army chief, General Rookmangud Katawal. He now publicly acknowledges that it was a political mistake. He too had blamed India for his debacle but now has his task cut out to restore bilateral ties. The NC can be helpful in this too. Mr. Deuba, a wily NC leader, has been prime minister thrice before but will have to be pragmatic in accommodating the Madhesi and Tharu demands on federalism and representation in a more generous manner than Mr. Oli did.

Lessons for India

Out of the concessional funds amounting to \$1.65 billion pledged by India during the last two years, the utilisation has been a meagre \$150 million. From the grant assistance of \$250 million pledged last year, \$100 million has been allocated for construction of 50,000 dwelling units for the quake affected but the PPP model has yet to be worked out. The balance grant amount remains to be committed. In addition, \$750 million was promised for the Kathmandu-Nijgadh highway but the Oli government sought to review the project after the contract was awarded to an Indian consultant! Other development partners have accumulated similar experiences. Getting implementation of long stalled projects back on track should be the priority for the new government.

The Narendra Modi government too needs to introspect as to how its much vaunted 'neighbourhood first' policy went wrong. The problem of too many interlocutors, claiming to act on behalf of the political powers in Delhi and often conveying conflicting messages, always existed with Nepal but has become more acute during the last two years. Hopefully, this can now be curbed.

A positive turn in relations with India will work to Nepal's advantage in reviving the sentiment that was generated when Prime Minister Modi visited Nepal in August 2014, of a friendly and caring India, sensitive to Nepal's concerns and generous in seeking mutually beneficial partnerships.

[At Stake In Kashmir](#)

The Indian Express, Abhinav Kumar -- Another summer, another round of violent protests in the Kashmir valley. This time the trigger has been the death of Burhan Wani, the young, social media savvy commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen. If only he had as many military kills as Facebook likes to his credit, his dream of azadi might have been possible. For now it remains a dream, despite the spontaneous and unprecedented outburst of public anger, despite the calculated statements of separatist and mainstream Kashmiri politicians, and despite all the manipulation by the supporters and handlers of Kashmiri separatism in Pakistan's military establishment.

The death of Wani has triggered a somewhat predictable response both in the Valley and elsewhere. The popular outburst of grief and rage is undoubtedly genuine. It has been encouraged by the separatist leaders on both sides of the border, but it would be a mistake to think that these violent protests are manufactured or mere posturing. In Pakistan they have led to plenty of public displays of solidarity and official statements denouncing Indian repression. In India too a whole range of activists and media platforms have denounced both the killing of Wani and the response of the state to public protests. The positions taken by the Pakistanis and the Kashmiri separatists are hardly surprising. Neither is the popular sentiment expressed in the Valley. What is surprising and disappointing is the inability of our public intellectuals to appreciate the central place of Kashmir in the idea of India not just as a secular, pluralistic society, but also as an economically and socially

modernising democracy holding its own in an extremely hostile and dangerous neighbourhood, There is no doubt that jihadi attacks across India and by the separatists in Kashmir pose tough questions for the idea of India. But they are not merely moral questions about the legitimacy of the Indian state and its commitment to human rights and the rule of law, that are to be answered in a purely ethical framework. They are also existential questions that involve statecraft, military tactics and hard-nosed realpolitik. The Indian state is not a wide-eyed groupie at a love fest that it will give up territory to be loved and respected by its neighbours or an assortment of self-appointed nonstate arbiters of international morality. The depth of alienation in the Valley is real and enduring. It is naive to think it can be countered with economic packages and political concessions. The separatist narrative in Kashmir has a long history and for the large part it runs parallel to the two-nation theory that led to the Partition of India. The underlying impulse in both is a political and cultural identity based on religion. In the initial years, both Kashmiri separatism and the pre-1947 articulation of Pakistani ideology paid lip service to the ideals of secularism and a composite culture. Today, both have given up the pretence and are unabashedly Islamist in their ideology. Today, Kashmir is one of the flashpoints in the global jihadi narrative like Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. And it is a narrative that has repeatedly betrayed its own syncretic history and multicultural demography with cynicism and brutality. The treatment of Kashmiri Pandits in the 1990s was an ethnic cleansing. The continued divergence of political aspirations between the Valley on one hand and Jammu and Ladakh on the other is also a case in point. Taken together they blow a big hole through the lie that the separatist claim in Kashmir is a moral imperative. Faced with an enemy that knows no norms of war or manners of peace, what does the republic do? Does it stay faithful to abstract ideals, a leap of faith unlike any in world history, or does it gather itself, ready to be wounded, ready to wound, because survival is non-negotiable in any moral framework? If we can't see a mortal threat for what it is, how do we expect to survive and thrive as a nation and civilisation. I envy the moralist and the idealist. They are guided by a glorious sense of certainty. The rest of us, the fools who actually do the killing and the dying, simply have the weight of a flawed past and our present instincts to guide us. For post independence India, Kashmir is not simply a story of loss of innocence and guilt. It is also the road to possible oblivion for India as a nation. Continuing with heavyhandedness and cruelty may or may not win us Kashmir. But cowardice or even confused inaction will surely not save Kashmir. Or India.

One unpleasant question: Do Kashmir's poor hate their elite more than India?

Hindustan Times, Manu Joseph -- The white lady asked her two black maids, "Do you like Robert Mugabe?" This was in Harare, about 13 years ago when the Cricket World Cup was underway. I was staying in the sprawling home of an athletic couple. The lady of the house, minutes before she asked the maids the question, had told me that even the blacks hated Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe then as he is now. But, as an Indian I was confident that the poor would despise their elites more than their despot. The hostess found that hard to accept because she treated her maids very well; she gave them good clothes and paid them good salaries while Mugabe was destroying the nation apart from driving away white landlords. So she decided to ask the maids. "Don't think I will be offended by your answer...just speak the truth. Do you like Robert Mugabe?" The maids giggled a lot, which was wise, but eventually they said they liked him. One of them delivered a devastating analysis, "He is for us." Soon after creating serious domestic discord, I left.

Do Kashmir's poor, too, hate their elite more than their despot, India? It would appear that they don't. The Indian government may have ensured, through exceptional financial pampering, that the average Kashmiri is not as impoverished as the average Indian, but it does not have the racial qualities to delude him into believing that it is "for us". As a result the elite and the rest of Kashmir have similar views about the Indian occupation of their home.

Anywhere in the world, the rich and the poor very rarely hold the same strong opinions, but sometimes they do. It is usually a consequence of one indoctrinating the other. Common gods, we know, are a triumph of elite evangelism. The gods of the losers were demoted as evil. Cricket, too, was a transmission. So were Modi, "Development" and Amitabh Bachchan. India's freedom struggle began as an upper class grouse against their white Brahmins, which tried to enlist the poor through the ruse of nationalism, a notion that it is the duty of the poor to lend their bodies to their native historical oppressors to fight the new white oppressors. Naturally, it was never a convincing idea. Even today, a Dalit community celebrates the day when their ancestors fought under the British flag against the Peshwas.

Kashmir's nationalism, too, was herded by local and Pakistani elites, but it really does not matter now because

after a point indoctrination becomes 'the way things are'. Even so, there is a strong but underrated resentment among the poor and the new educated lower middleclass youth towards the economic and cultural elite, especially the Kashmiris who live outside Kashmir — in affluent First World suburbs, Dubai, even Delhi; Kashmiris who do not require peace in valley to enjoy a good life; who are horrified at the words 'peace returns to the valley'; in whose view violence keeps the revolution going while peace, brisk tourism and a healing economy that helps the majority of Kashmiris eek out a living are vulgar signs of defeat to despicable India.

"These are the upper caste, Peers, the Brahmins of Kashmir, fake intellectuals, biased journalists, street smarts," a young Kashmiri wrote to me, "They dominate the narrative of Kashmir, any view opposing theirs is dealt with harshly. And you're not a true Kashmiri if you oppose them." It is a common opinion I get in my inbox from a class of Kashmiris, but most of them would not state this openly because they would be shamed by people who have powerful tools of shaming.

The non-resident Kashmiri patriot is identical to the non-resident Hindu patriot. Wallowing in a facile long-distance love they try to influence events whose consequence they do not have to face.

Shah Faesal, who had topped the civil services examination in 2009 and is a civil servant in Kashmir, recently posted on Facebook an amused portrait of "Kashmiris not living in Kashmir" and their patriotism. "Using worldwideweb for online nation-building is a carbon-neutral, non-bureaucratic method of doing things." He invited them "to participate in offline nation-building by coming back and either work in remote hospitals and schools of Kashmir or join their brothers in jungle. But since it needs sacrifice and courage, it will never be convenient to them." Then he arrives at the core of the issue. "Online nation building is a defective model because it allows the elite to hide behind digital windows and fake profiles while outsourcing actual fighting to emotionally-immature children of the poor and dispossessed."

The upper class use of other bodies — same old story. In recent mFreadonths they glorified a boy in his early twenties, Burhan Wani, as he used the social media to become a militant folkhero, which is a method of digging one's own grave. Instead of beseeching him to choose life over death, they egged him on to die. And they celebrated his inevitable glorious death through trauma prose.

In a Marquez novel, mothers who have had enough of war go out into the streets and drag their militant sons back home by their ears. That was what those who cared about Wani should have done. But then the freedom movement has to be outsourced to suckers.

To the question what constitutes a nation, scholars often have very sophisticated cultural explanations. But, South Indians would tell you being an Indian is merely a habit. You are told from childhood to love an enclosed space and you love it forever. Kashmiris have not acquired that habit. But most of them have lost the habit of imagining they are a part of Pakistan. Most of them, it appears, now like the idea of a sovereign Islamic republic of Kashmir. In India's view such a fantasy kingdom lodged between India, Pakistan and China would disintegrated when Kashmiris rise from the happy dream. So India continues its morally indefensible occupation and on good days tries to lure Kashmiris into seeing the truth — that they must ideally mistrust their elites more than their despot.

The Times of India -- independent, centrist

The Hindu - independent, left-of-center

The Indian Express - independent, centrist

Hindustan Times - independent, centrist

The Economic Times - pro-reform business daily

Business Standard - pro-reform business daily

The Pioneer - pro-BJP, right of center

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