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8 Ambedkar: Economics crucial for social justice

9 Country without a Prime Minister

10 THE DIGNIFIED PRESIDENT OF INDIA - PRANAB MUKHERJEE

12 Anushka says she instantly said YES TO 'JAB HARRY MET SEJAL'

Pranab Mukherjee bids farewell; Kovind takes over as 14th President of India



"Old order changeath, yielding place to new". New President Ram Nath Kovind(left) with his predecessor Pranab Mukherjee.

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ram Nath Kovind on July 25 took oath at the 14th President of India, the first BJP leader to occupy the Rashtrapati Bhawan, and said India's unity in diversity was the key to its success. Earlier, outgoing President Pranab Mukherjee on July 23 went down memory lane as he delivered his farewell speech, recalling his first day as a member of Parliament as well as his past associations.

contd on Page 20 | See also pages 8 and 10

Obamacare Repeal Fails as McCain Casts Decisive No Vote

WASHINGTON (TIP): Despite President Trump's Twitter exhortations to Republican Senators shortly before the vote, Obamacare repeal failed. The President tweeted:

Donald J. Trump ? @realDonaldTrump Go Republican Senators, Go! Get there after waiting for 7 years. Give America great healthcare! 10:43 PM - Jul 27, 2017

The Senate rejected legislation to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act, with Senator John McCain casting a decisive "no."

Senate Republicans unveiled a "skinny repeal," a narrow measure to roll back parts of



The Senate rejection of Obamacare Repeal is a huge setback for the majority leader, Mitch McConnell

the Affordable Care Act. It would leave 15 million more Americans without insurance next year, the Congressional Budget Office said.

contd on Page 20

Pakistan Supreme Court disqualifies PM Nawaz Sharif from office



The day of judgement for Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif dawned with Pakistan Supreme Court disqualifying him from office

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The Pakistan Supreme Court on Friday, July 28, disqualified Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office in the Panamagate graft case. The court had recently resumed the hearing of the high-profile case against Sharif and his family, a week after a probe

contd on Page 20

The Eye Foundation of America organizes Golf for Sight Tournament



Funds raised to help prevent avoidable blindness among children

MORGANTOWN, WV (TIP): The Eye Foundation of America organized for the third successive year their annual Golf For Sight tournament at the Lake View resort golf course here, July 21. Lake View resorts have a fabulous 18-hole golf course. It is a favorite golf course with golfers who thronged the place during summers. The tournament attracted 4 teams and around 40 people.

contd on Page 20

Nitish joins NDA, again sworn in Bihar CM, BJP's Sushil Modi is deputy CM



Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar (left) with BJP leader Sushil Modi at the Raj Bhawan in Patna on Thursday, July 27

PATNA (TIP): Bihar's murky politics witnessed another turn of the events, July 27. Fewer than 24 hours after resigning from the post of chief minister, Nitish Kumar was again in the position after he was sworn in on July 27 morning to form a government in the state, this time with the support of the BJP and the NDA. Even as the ceremony was on, RJD workers in Patna set up

contd on Page 32

Nitish Kumar wins trust vote in Bihar Assembly

(Read on Page 20)

15 people arrested in immigration protests in Austin



People, in Austin, opposing Paxton's move to end DACA

AUSTIN (TIP): Fifteen people were arrested in Austin on Wednesday, July 26 during a protest Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton's threat to sue the federal government over a program that shields from deportation unauthorized immigrants who came to the country as children.

cond on page 20

The 2017 MoneyGram Cricket Bee: Dallas winners announced



From L to R: Rahul Walia, Founder of MoneyGram Cricket Bee, Vikram Shukla (Second Runner Up), Nadeem Aslam (Regional Champion), Vinay Bulusu (Second Runner Up)

METUCHEN, NJ (TIP): Three North Texas men are headed the Cricket Bee Finals in New Jersey next month after winning the Dallas regional Cricket Bee held on July 16. Vikram Shukla of Frisco, TX was declared second runner up, Vinay Bulusu of Irving, TX was first runner up and the Regional champion was Nadeem Aslam of Murphy, TX. The competition allows cricket fans to

compete for prizes while sharing their knowledge of the game to win a cash prize of \$10,000.

Open to those 18 and older, the MoneyGram Cricket Bee is continuing the search of the brightest Cricket fan with regional rounds in San Francisco, Dallas, Chicago, New Jersey and will conclude in Toronto, each testing

contd on Page 3

Independence Day Special Edition



The Indian Panorama invites articles and advertisements for the special edition to mark 70 years of India's Independence. Please email to salujaindra@gmail.com or mail to P.O. Box 190067, S Richmond Hill, NY 11419. For any inquiries, please call 646-247-9458.

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION: AUGUST 2, 2017

Indian American Sundar Pichai, Google's CEO, joins Alphabet's Board of Directors

SAN JOSE (TIP): Google's Indian American CEO Sundar Pichai is joining parent company Alphabet's board, according to an announcement on July 24 from the company.

"Sundar has been doing a great job as Google's CEO, driving strong growth, partnerships, and tremendous product innovation. I really enjoy working with him and I'm excited that he is joining the Alphabet board," said Larry Page, CEO of Alphabet, in a statement.

Formerly the Product Chief of Google, Pichai's current role as CEO was announced on 10 August 2015, as part of the restructuring process that made Alphabet Inc. into Google's parent company, and he assumed the position on 2 October 2015.

Pichai worked in engineering and product management at Applied Materials and in management consulting at McKinsey & Company.

Pichai joined Google in 2004, where he led the product management and innovation efforts for a suite of Google's client software products, including Google Chrome and Chrome OS, as well as being largely responsible for Google Drive. He went on to oversee the development of different applications such as Gmail and Google Maps. On 19 November 2009, Pichai gave a demonstration of Chrome OS and the Chromebook was released for trial and testing in 2011, and released to the public in 2012. On 20 May 2010, he announced the open-sourcing of the new video codec VP8 by Google, and introduced the new video format, WebM.

On 13 March 2013, Pichai added Android to the list of Google products that he oversees. Android was formerly managed by Andy Rubin. He was a director of Jive Software from April 2011 to 30 July 2013. Pichai was selected to become the next CEO of Google on 10 August 2015 after previously being appointed Product Chief by CEO, Larry Page. On 24 October 2015 he stepped into the new position at the completion of the formation of Alphabet Inc., the new holding company for the Google company family.

Indian American Businesswoman Pleads Guilty to Tech Worker Visa Fraud

SAN JOSE (TIP): A San Jose businesswoman of Indian origin pleaded guilty in federal court last week to three counts of visa fraud. In pleading guilty, Sridevi Aiyaswamy, 50, of San Jose, admitted that between April 2010 and June 2013 she made numerous false statements, and submitted over 25 fraudulent documents, to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for the purpose of obtaining H-1B non-immigrant classifications for skilled foreign workers.

Acting as a petitioner on behalf of foreign worker beneficiaries, Aiyaswamy falsely represented in I-129 petitions that the foreign worker beneficiaries would be working at Cisco, an information technology and networking company in San Jose, Calif. Aiyaswamy further submitted counterfeit statements of work with forged signatures as back-up documentation to the I-129 petitions. In fact, at the time she submitted these documents to USCIS, Aiyaswamy knew that the statements regarding offers of work from Cisco for these beneficiaries were false statements, and that Cisco had not made any offers of employment regarding these individuals.

A federal grand jury indicted Aiyaswamy on December 3, 2015, charging her with 34 counts of visa fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a). Pursuant to today's plea agreement, Aiyaswamy pleaded guilty to three of the counts of visa fraud and the government agreed to request dismissal of the remaining counts.

Aiyaswamy is currently free on bond. Judge Koh scheduled her sentencing for November 15, 2017, at 9:15 a.m. The maximum statutory penalty for visa fraud is 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

(Source: U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of California)



Formerly the Product Chief of Google, Pichai's current role as CEO was announced on 10 August 2015

Sodexo's Global Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Rohini Anand Appointed New Chair of the Catalyst Board of Advisors

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Dr. Rohini Anand, senior vice president corporate responsibility and Global Chief Diversity Officer for Sodexo, a leading provider of sustainable, integrated facilities management and food service operations, has been appointed as the new Chair of the Catalyst Board of Advisors, which features a variety of senior leaders across Fortune 500 companies, including Coca-Cola Companies, Deloitte, IBM Corporation and Walmart. In this new leadership role, Anand will attend and chair all three Board of Advisors meetings over the next three years, as well as advise Catalyst's CEO Deborah Gillis on new board members, meeting agendas and other board-related issues.

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit organization accelerating progress for women through workplace inclusion. With operations in the United States, Canada, Europe, India, Australia, and Japan, and more than 800 supporting organizations, Catalyst is the trusted resource for research, information, and advice about women at work. Catalyst annually honors exemplary organizational initiatives that promote women's advancement with the Catalyst Award.

"I am delighted to welcome Rohini



Dr. Anand's commitment to diversity and inclusion continues to generate success and position Sodexo as a global leader in the space

Anand as the new chair of the Catalyst Board of Advisors. Rohini is a recognized advocate for gender diversity and inclusion in workplaces," said Deborah Gillis, President and CEO, Catalyst. "She has been a member of the Catalyst Board of Advisors for many years, bringing a breadth of experience

and helping to drive change. I look forward to working with her in this new leadership role that is sure to be incredibly valuable to both the board and Catalyst."

"I am excited to represent Catalyst and Sodexo in my new role as Chair of the Advisory Board," said Dr. Anand. "It's a great honor and I'm looking forward to continuing to advance Catalyst's mission of accelerating progress for women through workplace inclusion."

Dr. Anand's commitment to diversity and inclusion continues to generate success and position Sodexo as a global leader in the space. As Sodexo's SVP Corporate Responsibility and Global Chief Diversity Officer, she has helped the company rank among the world's best. Under Dr. Anand's leadership, Sodexo received the prestigious 2012 Catalyst Award and has ranked in the top ten for nine consecutive years on the DiversityInc business index of Top Companies for Diversity and Inclusion. In addition, The Human Rights Campaign has given Sodexo a 100 percent rating on its Corporate Equality Index for nine years and Sodexo was named Global Sustainability Industry Leader in its sector for the 12th year in a row by the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI).

Arundhati Roy's Novel 'The Ministry of Utmost Happiness' in Booker Longlist

LONDON (TIP): Indian novelist Arundhati Roy, who won the Man Booker prize in 1997 for "The God of Small Things," is among the contenders for this year's Man Booker Prize for fiction.

On a longlist thronged with literary titans, whose combined trophy cabinet would include the Pulitzer, the Costa, the Baileys, the Folio, the Impac and the Goldsmiths prizes, Roy - the only author to have won the Booker before - is listed for her novel about an Indian transgender woman, which judges called a "rich and vital book". Speaking about why it took her two decades to produce a second novel, Roy told the Guardian earlier this year that "fiction just takes its time. It's no hurry. I can't write it faster or slower than I have; it's like you're a sedimentary rock that's just gathering all these layers, and swimming around."

On July 26, The Man Booker Prize unveiled the 13 titles longlisted for its annual £50,000 (\$81,625) award.

The complete longlist is comprised of:

● 4321 by Paul Auster (U.S.) ● Days Without End by Sebastian Barry (Ireland) ● History of Wolves by Emily Fridlund (U.S.) ● Exit West by Mohsin Hamid (Pakistan-U.K.) ● Solar Bones by Mike McCormack (Ireland) ● Reservoir 13 by Jon McGregor (U.K.) ● Elmet by Fiona Mozley (U.K.) ● The Ministry of Utmost Happiness by Arundhati Roy (India) ● Lincoln in the Bardo by George Saunders (U.S.) ● Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie (Pakistan-U.K.) ● Autumn by Ali Smith (U.K.) ● Swing Time by Zadie Smith (U.K.) ● The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead (U.S.)

144 titles were submitted for consideration for the 2017 prize. The Man Booker Prize is open to any book-length work of fiction written in English that has been published in the U.K. This year's award is being judged by Baroness Lola Young, literary critic Lila Zam Zangeneh, novelist Sarah Hall, artist Tom Phillips and writer Colin Thubron. The six finalists will be named Sept. 13, and the winner of the 50,000-pound (\$65,000) prize will be announced on Oct. 17.



Her first book, 'The God of Small Things', published 20 years ago, won the Man Booker Prize in 1997

Indian American Attorney Running for Civil Court Judgeship

NEW YORK (TIP):

Indian American Hemalee J. Patel, a lawyer and involved Brooklyn community member, is running for civil court judge in the 6th municipal district in Brooklyn, reports Kings County Politics. The district includes Northern Park Slope, Lefferts Gardens and a stretch between Coney Island Avenue and Ocean Avenue to Avenue M.

Currently, Patel serves as a Court Attorney-Referee in Richmond County (Staten Island) Supreme Court, where she conducts trials and hearings on financial issues in matrimonial matters, including equitable distribution, child support and maintenance. And while she understands legislative government, she remains drawn to the judicial branch and helping immigrants and less moneyed people navigate the often daunting judicial system, and leaving with the feeling they had a fair and just day in court.

"The quality of our lives is directly and deeply influenced by those who serve the public and I consider myself privileged to be a civil servant and try always to be one in the truest sense. This means, to my mind, that I must not only do my best, but convey that intention by being at all times honest, fair and courteous to the parties and attorneys who appear before me," said Patel.

Patel came to the U.S. from India at the age of 5 with her mother, after her father had first come here.

"As an immigrant South Asian woman I have a unique perspective that, along with my background, experience and proven ability in performing the duties and responsibilities of a Court Attorney-Referee, prepares me to undertake a career as a judge," said Patel.

She grew up in Queens, attended New York University in Manhattan, and attended Brooklyn Law School. She resides with her family in Bay Ridge.



Attorney Hemalee J. Patel is running for judge in the 6th municipal district civil court primary race.

Indian American-led Lyondellbasell to Build World's Largest PO/TBA Plant in Texas

HOUSTON (TIP): Petrochemical giant LyondellBasell is planning to build the world's largest propylene oxide and tertiary butyl alcohol plant in the Houston, Texas area, the company's Indian American CEO has said.

The petrochemical company has made the final investment decision for what would be its single-largest capital investment ever.

The \$2.4 billion project near the ship channel will be the largest factory of its kind in the world and is expected to create up to 2,500 jobs at the peak of construction and about 160 permanent jobs once the plant is operational.

"This world-scale project is a key part of our organic growth strategy which is designed to meet rising global demand for both urethanes and cleaner-burning oxyfuels while creating real, long-term value for our shareholders," said Bhavesh (Bob) V. Patel, the company's chief executive officer.

"Our investment in this plant combines the best of both worlds: our leading PO/TBA process technology with proximity to low-cost feedstocks, which gives LyondellBasell a competitive advantage in the global marketplace for these products," Patel said in a statement.

The project, whose construction is expected to begin during the second half of 2018 and wrap up by the middle of 2021, is part of the company's \$5 billion investment in the Gulf Coast.

The final investment decision comes less than two years after the company picked the Houston area as the location for the proposed plant.

Earlier this year, the company began the construction of a \$700 million polyethylene plant at its manufacturing complex in La Porte.

"We are pleased that LyondellBasell continues to view the Houston area as important to their global operations, creating jobs and opportunities for Houstonians," said Bob Harvey, president and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership.

"This new project further advances Houston's position as a global hub of petrochemical manufacturing, leveraging Houston's strategic access to the Americas and top markets around the world," Harvey said.



The Netherlands-based LyondellBasell has its operational headquarters in Houston.

According to the company's website, prior to joining LyondellBasell, Patel was general manager, Olefins and Natural Gas Liquids, for Chevron Phillips Chemical Company.

Patel is a board member of the Junior Achievement of Southeast Texas, U.S.-India Business Council, and the Greater Houston Partnership. He is a member of the Business Council and serves as vice chairman of the Board and chairman of the Executive Committee of the American Chemistry Council. He is also a member of the external advisory council of the College of Engineering for Ohio State University and a member of the dean's advisory council for the Fox School of Business at Temple University.

Patel received a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering from Ohio State University, and he also holds a Master of Business Administration from Temple University.

The main plant is expected to produce about 1 billion pounds of propylene oxide and 2.2 billion pounds of tertiary butyl alcohol each year.

PO is used to make bedding, furniture, carpeting, coatings, building materials and adhesives. TBA, after being converted into two ether-based oxyfuels, will help gasoline burn cleaner.

contd from page 1

The 2017 MoneyGram...

participants' general cricket knowledge. The regional contest will have two components, a written test and an oral test. In the written qualifier, contestants will be asked 35 questions. They must get at least 25 correct to advance to the oral round. In the oral round, the contest will be held on a miss and out basis; simply if a contestant misses the right answer, they are eliminated.

Unlike quiz shows, the Cricket Bee will be conducted so that contestants are competing with themselves and the question posed to them as opposed to their peers.

Cricket enthusiasts can still participate at the remaining centers in Chicago, New Jersey, and Toronto. Contestants can register to compete in the game of their choice at www.cricketbee.com. A sample set of questions and sources will be provided for the participants.

"We are thrilled to sponsor the 2017 Cricket Bee and as always, we enjoy being a part of an initiative that our customers are passionate about," says Wendi Schlarb, MoneyGram's head of marketing for the Americas. "Cricket is a sport that brings friends and loved ones around the world closer together; much like MoneyGram's services. It's always exciting to be a part of activities that support our South Asian communities."

Kawan Foods serves as the powered by sponsor for the innovative event and has been deeply involved with the South Asian community through various initiatives and hopes to connect with the entire Cricketing community here in the US and Canada. "We want to congratulate the winners of the regional contest and wish them continued success in their endeavor to win \$10,000," said Tim Tan, MD Kawan Foods.

"There was a lot of excitement and immense talent at the regional which goes to show how passionate people are about the game. Participants had an opportunity to network and interact with other cricket players and enthusiasts from various cities and I am very happy to have our first set of finalists," said Rahul Walia, Founder of the Cricket Bee.

"We are so proud to be a part of the MoneyGram Cricket Bee, it's definitely a great platform for cricket enthusiasts across the country and we are excited to see them at the finals," said HR Shah, chairman and CEO of TV Asia and an avid cricketer himself. The finals are slated for August 12th and are open for the public to watch. You can reserve seats by calling 848-248-4199.

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Indian American MIT researcher develops smart sticker to prevent sexual abuse



Manisha Mohan is a Masters student at MIT.
Photo Courtesy / YouTube

BOSTON (TIP): An Indian American student from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology is getting the attention of the world for her invention of a smart device that can prevent women from sexual assault.

Manisha Mohan, a Masters student at MIT has developed a device that she has named Intrepid, which investigates multiple methods that can detect initial signs of assault and develop methods for communication and prevention of assault.

The device, which is a smart sticker, is connected to a smartphone via Bluetooth and it can be attached to any piece of clothing.

In order for the device to start working, the user must first download and install an app that accompanies the device. The user can add their phone number and enter five other immediate contacts that will be either called or sent with a message in any case of emergency.

The app developed by Mohan also has an additional option in which if there is no timely response from the wearer.

Mohan's device, if produced in large numbers, can be proposed as one of the solutions to combat Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), College Campus assault and abuse of elderly and disabled.

The device works on two different mode - active mode and passive mode. In active mode distress message is sent when the victim is unconscious or cannot fight against the assaulter, for example in the case of infants, bed-ridden patients, elderly, disabled, intoxicated people. In passive mode, the victim can self-active the safety mechanism feature.

The design of the clothing to which the smart sticker can be attached to is based on input from sexual assault survivors, 338 on-line participants, 67 volunteers and 20 users.

According to the official MIT page of Intrepid, "Users evaluated the clothing appeal, functionality, cultural sensitivity and provided feedback on their general sense of security wearing the smart clothing."

"We demonstrate the practicality of our unobtrusive design with user studies that support our technological development and use of olfactory stimuli by showing the effect of smells on sexual arousal and partner selection. We believe our techno social approach can help improve user safety and prevent sexual assault," the website added.

US admiral stands ready to obey a Trump nuclear strike order

CANBERRA (TIP): The US Pacific Fleet commander said on July 27 he would launch a nuclear strike against China next week if President Donald Trump ordered it, and warned against the military ever shifting its allegiance from its commander in chief.

Adm Scott Swift was responding to a hypothetical question at an Australian National University security conference following a major joint US-Australian military exercise off the Australian coast. The drills were monitored by a Chinese intelligence-gathering ship off northeast Australia.

Asked by an academic in the audience whether he would make a nuclear attack on China next week if Trump ordered it, Swift replied: "The answer would be: yes."

"Every member of the US military has sworn an oath to defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies foreign and domestic and to obey the officers and the president of the United States as commander and chief appointed over us," Swift said.

"This is core to the American democracy and any time you have a military that is moving away from a focus and an allegiance to civilian control, then we really have a significant problem," he added. (AP)

White House infighting turns ugly: Scaramucci vs Priebus

WASHINGTON (TIP): The bitter-infighting among top staffers at White House turned ugly as Anthony Scaramucci, President Donald Trump's new communications director, launched a foul-mouthed attack on his rival Reince Priebus, calling him a "paranoid schizophrenic", a news website has claimed.

Scaramucci, the Wall Street financier who joined the administration last week, had earlier vowed to crack down on leaks from the White House, threatening to fire everyone, if necessary, to stop aides from leaking information.

"Reince is a f----- paranoid schizophrenic, a paranoiac," Scaramucci told New Yorker writer Ryan Lizza on a phone call Wednesday. The journalist revealed this in a lead story on the news website yesterday.

Scaramucci, he wrote, called him to find out who the source of his information was, about the dinner he had with Trump the other night.

Lizza claimed when he refused to divulge the source of information, Scaramucci got agitated.

"I've asked people not to leak things for a period of time and give me a honeymoon period," he said.

"They won't do it. He was getting more and more worked up, and he eventually convinced himself that Priebus was my source," he wrote.

"They'll all be fired by me," Scaramucci said, according to Lizza.



"I fired one guy the other day. I have three to four people I'll fire tomorrow. I'll get to the person who leaked that to you. Reince Priebus-if you want to leak something-- he'll be asked to resign very shortly," he said.

Lizza wrote that Scaramucci believed Priebus had been worried about the dinner because he hadn't been invited.

"Reince is a fXXXXXX paranoid schizophrenic, a paranoiac," Scaramucci said.

Priebus and the White House did not respond to allegations.

Ever since his appointment as the White House Director of Communications, Scaramucci has portrayed himself as a close confidant of the US President.

Last Friday, Sean Spicer had

resigned as White House Press Secretary after Trump appointed Scaramucci as the White House Communications Director.

According to New Yorker, Scaramucci also told Lizza that unlike other senior officials, he had no interest in media attention.

"I'm not Steve Bannon, I'm not trying to s*** my own c***," he said, speaking of Trump's chief strategist.

"I'm not trying to build my own brand off the f***** strength of the President. I'm here to serve the country." Bannon did not comment.

The White House Communications Director said that his list of allegations included leaking the Hannity dinner and the details from his financial-disclosure form. (PTI)

Indian American doctor accused of health care fraud and money laundering

MILFORD, CT (TIP): A federal grand jury in Bridgeport returned an indictment on July 26 charging Indian American physician Dr. Bharat Patel, 70, of Milford, and his ally Dr. Ramil Mansourov, 47, of Darien, both residents of Connecticut, with narcotics distribution, health care fraud and money laundering offenses.

Patel was arrested on a federal criminal complaint on July 12 and is detained. Mansourov was apprehended by the Canada Border Services Agency on an immigration offense on July 13 and is currently detained in Canada.

The five-count indictment charges Patel and Mansourov with one count of conspiracy to distribute oxycodone and hydrocodone, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years, and one count health care fraud, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years. The indictment also charges Mansourov with two counts and Patel with one count of money laundering, an offense that carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years.

The indictment also seeks the forfeiture of Patel's Milford residence, Mansourov's Darien residence, \$16,521.25 seized from a safe deposit box rented by PATEL, and money judgments equal to the proceeds of Patel and Mansourov alleged criminal conduct.



Dr. Ramil Mansourov, 47 of Darien, is detained in Canada after being arrested there on an immigration charge. U.S. officials are seeking to extradite him on federal narcotics, health care fraud and money laundering charges

Amazon's Jeff Bezos bumps Bill Gates from world's richest position

WASHINGTON (TIP): Amazon's founder CEO Jeff Bezos may have ended Microsoft badshah Bill Gates' long reign since 1995 as the world's richest individual - a position interrupted only briefly by the likes of Berkshire Hathaway's Warren Buffett and Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim.

A one per cent bump in the shares of Amazon on Thursday morning pushed the personal wealth of Bezos, who owns about 17% of the company, to over \$91 billion, overtaking Gates' approximately \$90 billion, give or take a few million. Gates has generally been regarded as the wealthiest individual on the planet except when Slim bumped him from the top spot in 2012 and his friend and bridge partner Buffett topped him a few years earlier in 2008. Gates regained the top position on both occasions within a year. Because their wealth is largely a result of the shares they own their company and its fluctuating price, it is possible that the wealthiest title may go back and forth between Gates and Bezos - both from Seattle — for a while.

But Bezos+ is considered a good bet to hold the title in the long run given Amazon's phenomenal run and seemingly endless business interests and revenue stream.

In the past week alone, Bezos' net worth has increased by almost \$3 billion due to a 3% increase in Amazon's stock price; it has increased \$16.5 billion since Forbes' 2017 Billionaires List was published in March, when he was ranked third behind Gates and Buffett. Amazon's market cap+ is now over \$500 billion, just \$72 billion shy of Microsoft's \$575 billion, and the internet giant's bull run not only positions it to overtake the software giant, but also - according to some market experts — put it on track to become the world's first trillion dollar company.

Bezos is also an early investor in Google, and holds interest in AirBnB, Uber, and Twitter among other unicorn companies. Ironically, Amazon's hot streak has coincided with the election as President of Donald Trump, who is not favorably disposed towards Bezos or Amazon despite his pro-business credentials. The company has seen a 40% increase in revenue this year alone, adding billions to the wealth of Bezos, who also happens to own The Washington Post, which has been sharply critical of the President. (PTI)

Indian American Anantha Chandrakasan takes over as MIT's Dean of School of Engineering

BOSTON (TIP): Indian American Anantha P. Chandrakasan, the Vannevar Bush Professor and head of the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS), has been resumed charge as dean of MIT's School of Engineering, from July 1.

During his six-year tenure as head of MIT's largest academic department, Chandrakasan spearheaded a number of initiatives that opened opportunities for students, postdocs, and faculty to conduct research, explore entrepreneurial projects, and engage with EECS.

"Anantha balances his intellectual creativity and infectious energy with a remarkable ability to deeply listen to, learn from, and integrate other people's views into a compelling vision," MIT President L. Rafael Reif says. "In a time of significant challenges, from new pressures on federal funding to the rising global competition for top engineering talent, I am confident that Anantha will guide the School of Engineering to maintain and enhance its position of leadership. And I believe that in the process he will help make all of MIT stronger, too."

Since joining the MIT faculty in 1994, Chandrakasan has produced a significant body of research focused largely on making electronic circuits more energy efficient. His early work on low-power chips for portable computers helped make possible the development of today's smartphones and other mobile devices. More recently, his research has addressed the challenge of powering even more energy-constrained technologies, such as the "internet of things" that would allow many everyday devices to send and receive data via networked servers while being powered from a tiny energy source.

In an email today announcing the news to the MIT community, Provost Martin Schmidt described Chandrakasan as "a people-centered and innovative leader." Schmidt continued, "Having observed Anantha's collaborative approach to building a shared vision within EECS, I am excited for the opportunities that lie ahead for the School of Engineering."

While at the helm of EECS, Chandrakasan launched a number of initiatives on behalf of the department's students. "That's what excites me about an administrative job," he says. "It's how I can enhance the student and postdoc experience. I want to create exciting opportunities for them, whether that's in entrepreneurship, research, or maker activities. One of the key things I plan to do as dean is to connect directly with students."

Many of these initiatives were themselves designed with student input, including the Advanced Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program, more commonly known as "SuperUROP." This year-long independent research program, launched in EECS in 2012 and expanded to the whole School of Engineering in



Since joining the MIT faculty in 1994, Chandrakasan has produced a significant body of research focused largely on making electronic circuits more energy efficient

2015, was shaped in response to feedback about why some EECS students were opting out of MIT's traditional UROP program.

Chandrakasan also initiated the Rising Stars program in EECS, an annual event that convenes graduate and postdoc women for the purpose of sharing advice about the early stages of an academic career. Another program for EECS postdocs created under his direction, Postdoc6, aims to foster a sense of community for postdocs and help them develop skills that will serve their careers. Chandrakasan also helped create StartMIT, an independent activities period (IAP) class that provides students and postdocs the opportunity to learn from and interact with industrial innovation leaders.

"I tend to be a people person," Chandrakasan says. "Of course, data is always important, but it's not where I start. I'm like the quarterback who throws it up in the end zone. I try things, and some of them don't work, which I'm totally fine with; other things we try and then refine. But I do a lot of homework, talking to students and faculty, getting feedback, and incorporating them to improve our efforts."

"I'm also very passionate about helping our faculty explore new research areas," says Chandrakasan, who as department head has sought unrestricted grants and other funding to provide faculty with this flexibility. These efforts have enabled several Faculty Research Innovation Fellowships, for midcareer faculty who seek to branch out in new directions.

Chandrakasan also has a long-standing interest in creating opportunities for innovation outside the lab. He is a board member and chair of the advisory committee dealing with MIT policies for The Engine, a new accelerator launched by MIT last fall to support startup companies working on scientific and technological innovation

with the potential for transformative societal impact. In the latter role, he has overseen five working groups consisting of faculty, students, postdocs, and staff with specialized expertise, and created suggestions for how the MIT community can work with The Engine.

"In building out the concept for The Engine, it was vitally important to make sure it would meet the needs of faculty, student, and alumni entrepreneurs," says MIT Executive Vice-President and Treasurer Israel Ruiz, who helped spearhead The Engine's development. "As the faculty lead, Anantha played an indispensable role in gathering feedback from a wide range of voices and transforming it into actionable ideas for how The Engine should work."

Online learning is another area of interest for Chandrakasan: "I'm very excited about the whole online arena and how we can use MITx for residential education," he says. Last fall, EECS and the Office of Digital Learning piloted a full-credit online course for a small cohort of students on campus, who gave the experience strong marks for providing flexibility and reducing stress. "I'm looking forward to working with the other department heads to see how we can get a license to experiment with these new modes of education," he says.

Born in Chennai, India, Chandrakasan moved to the United States while in high school. His mother was a biochemist and Fulbright scholar, and he enjoyed spending time in her lab where she conducted research on collagen.

"I always knew I wanted to be an engineer and a professor," he says. "My mother really inspired me into an academic career. When I entered graduate school, I knew on day one that I wanted to be academic professor."

Chandrakasan earned his bachelor's (1989), master's (1990), and doctoral (1994) degrees in electrical engineering and computer science from the University of California at Berkeley - the latter two after being rejected from MIT's graduate program, he notes with a laugh. After joining the MIT faculty, he was the director of the Microsystems Technology Laboratories (MTL) from 2006 until he became the head of EECS in 2011.

Chandrakasan is a recipient of awards including the 2009 Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) University Researcher Award, the 2013 IEEE Donald O. Pederson Award in Solid-State Circuits, an honorary doctorate from KU Leuven in 2016, and the UC Berkeley EE Distinguished Alumni Award. He was also recognized as the author with the highest number of publications in the 60-year history of the IEEE International Solid-State Circuits Conference (ISSCC), the foremost global forum for presentation of advances in solid-state circuits and systems-on-a-chip. Since 2010, he served as the ISSCC Conference Chair. A fellow of IEEE, in 2015 he was elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

USCIS Resumes H-1B Premium Processing for Certain Cap-Exempt Petitions



The H-1B visa has an annual cap of 65,000 visas each fiscal year

WASHINGTON (TIP): U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on July 24 announced that it will resume premium processing for certain cap-exempt H-1B petitions effective immediately. The H-1B visa has an annual cap of 65,000 visas each fiscal year. Additionally, there is an annual "master's cap" of 20,000 petitions filed for beneficiaries with a U.S. master's degree or higher.

Premium processing will resume for petitions that may be exempt from the cap if the H-1B petitioner is:

- * An institution of higher education;
- * A nonprofit related to or affiliated with an institution of higher education; or
- * A nonprofit research or governmental research organization.

Premium processing will also resume for petitions that may also be exempt if the beneficiary will be employed at a qualifying cap-exempt institution, organization or entity.

Those cap-exempt petitioners who are eligible for premium processing can file Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service for Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker. Form I-907 can be filed together with an H-1B petition or separately for a pending H-1B petition.

USCIS previously announced that premium processing resumed on June 26 for H-1B petitions filed on behalf of physicians under the Conrad 30 waiver program as well as interested government agency waivers. USCIS plans to resume premium processing of other H-1B petitions as workloads permit. USCIS will make additional announcements with specific details related to when we will begin accepting premium processing for those petitions. Until then, premium processing remains temporarily suspended for all other H-1B petitions. USCIS will reject any Form I-907 filed for those petitions, and if the petitioner submitted one check combining the Form I-907 and Form I-129 fees, USCIS will have to reject both forms.

Pentagon blocks \$350 million military aid to Pakistan

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): The US Department of Defense withheld military payments to Pakistan, after Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis told Congressional defense committees that he was unable to certify that Pakistan took sufficient action against the Haqqani network to permit full reimbursement of the fiscal



Islamabad failed to counter the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network

year 2016 Coalition support funds (CSF). The Pakistan-based Haqqani network has been accused for carrying out many high-profile terror acts against US and Indian interests in Afghanistan, including the 2008 bombing of the Indian mission in Kabul that killed 58 people. This is the second year in a row that the Defense Secretary has refused to certify to Congress, as mandated under National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), that Pakistan has taken satisfactory action against the Haqqani network.

Pakistan had been allotted \$900m in military aid to through the special fund. The country has already received \$550m of that, but Mattis' decision means \$50m will be withheld. The remaining \$300m was rescinded by Congress as part of a broader appropriations act, earlier this year. The Coalition Support Fund (CSF) authority reimburses key cooperating nations for logistical, military and other support provided to US combat operations. Pakistan is the largest recipient of CSF reimbursements, having received more than USD 14 billion since 2002. The US is in the process of reviewing its policy on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Last week, the State Department in a report to the Congress had listed Pakistan as one of the countries having terrorist safe havens. Sanjay Puri, Chairman, US India Political Action Committee, welcomed the announcement adding, "USINPAC has been advocating for years to reevaluate military aid to Pakistan. We cannot have US taxpayer money going towards terror attacks against US and Indian interests from groups in Pakistan."

POLITICAL DRAMA IN BIHAR

Nitish says decision to quit was in Bihar interest, mandate not to serve one family

PATNA(TIP) : The decision to part ways with the RJD and join hands with the BJP was taken in the interest of Bihar and will ensure development and justice for the state, Nitish Kumar on July 27 said after being sworn in as the chief minister.

Kumar resigned the post Wednesday night after a fall out with the alliance partner RJD over corruption charges against Lalu Yadav and some of his family members, including son Tejashwi, who was the then deputy chief minister.

"Whatever decision we have taken will be in the interest of Bihar and of its people. It will ensure development and justice. It will also ensure progress. This is a collective decision. I ensure that our commitment is towards the people of Bihar," Nitish Kumar told reporters.

Kumar was sworn in as the chief minister of the state along side senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi, who will be his deputy in the new government, at the Raj Bhawan in Patna.

NITISH-MODI REUNION NOT A HURRIED AFFAIR

The reunion of Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar appeared hurried on Wednesday, but it was in the works for nearly seven months.

Warmth returned to the chilly relationship between the Prime Minister and Bihar chief minister as early as this January.

The two astute politicians met after a long gap at a function in Patna to commemorate the 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh. It was January 5 and TV screens flashed images of the two politicians sitting together, smiling at each other and even holding hands at different moments. The bitterness of parting ways and poll



Chief minister Nitish Kumar with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a function at the Gandhi Maidan in Patna to commemorate the 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh. Pic courtesy: HT file

campaign was over.

"The unease in the relationship between the two leaders was over," a BJP leader said. "Over the next months, they remained in touch, directly and through emissaries."

The onstage bonhomie between the two was quite palpable.

Modi praised Nitish for arrangements he made for prakash utsav and going ahead with prohibition despite opposition. Kumar reciprocated by praising Modi for successfully implementing a liquor ban in Gujarat as its chief minister.

The event at the historic Gandhi Maidan in Patna happened within months of Kumar supporting Modi's decision to recall high-value banknotes. He also supported Modi on the military "surgical strikes" against terrorist hideouts in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

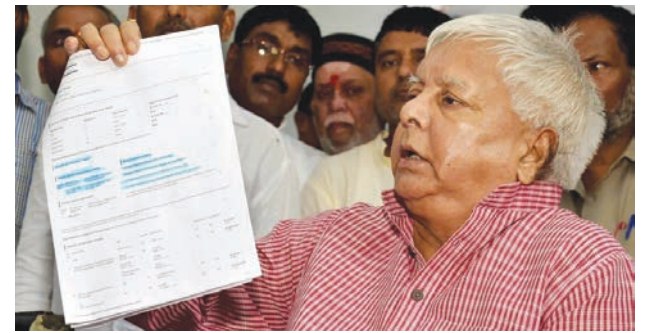
Less than a week after this bonhomie blossomed, Kumar had an ice-breaking meeting with a top BJP leader in Patna.

They met again in Delhi in February to explore if a reunion can happen and on what terms.

The subsequent months saw Kumar talking of a grand alliance against the BJP, and simultaneously sharing with the BJP leadership his unease about the functioning of RJD chief Lalu Prasad, his alliance partner.

He was jittery over Prasad calling the shots in departments headed by his son, deputy chief minister Tejashwi. This was not acceptable to a leader conscious of his image. A senior Union minister remained in constant touch with Kumar and every move was communicated to Prime Minister Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah.

A dispute between Tejashwi and another minister close to Kumar over a government project in Raxaul was another flashpoint. He was upset over friction between allies on sharing boards and corporation and the Congress's dilly-dally on strategic matters.



Former Bihar Chief Minister and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad addresses a press conference in Ranchi on Thursday. Pic courtesy: PTI

LALU PRASAD TO TAKE FIGHT FOR BIHAR TO SUPREME COURT

PATNA (TIP): The battle for Bihar is expected to reach the Supreme Court but legal experts see little hope for Lalu Prasad, who has said that he will approach the top court against the governor's decision to not call his Rashtriya Janata Dal for government formation.

Prasad's ally Nitish Kumar dumped their so-called Grand Alliance on Wednesday and decided to partner with the Bharatiya Janata Party within hours, a development that Prasad has claimed should not have been allowed by governor Keshri Nath Tripathi since his was the largest party by elected legislators.

Legal experts say there is nothing illegal about the governor's action and that he had the prerogative to invite whoever he thought had a better shot at forming government.

"The idea of a single-largest party comes after election; after a crisis comes the concept of who has the larger and a stable combination – So the governor has the discretion to call on a combination or a party that will enjoy majority on the floor of the house," said senior advocate Rajeev Dhawan.

Dhawan cited the example of Goa and Manipur, where too the governor's action was challenged in the Supreme Court but nothing came of it.

The 2017 Goa elections saw a close contest in the 40-member assembly. BJP won 13 seats, while the Congress-NCP with 18 was the single largest collective. Yet the governor invited and appointed a BJP coalition with the MGP (three seats), Goa Forward Party (three seats) and three independents to form the government. Congress took the matter to the Supreme court but its petition was dismissed. Chief Justice of India J S Kehar had then said, "Where are your numbers? You could have finished the case in 30 seconds by showing that BJP don't have the numbers. It seems you were not confident about the support you have. You should have asked the governor what nonsense she is doing and confidently said look we have the numbers. You should have sat on a dharna. You did nothing. You could have filed affidavits of your supporters before us. You are putting us in the position of the governor. These things you should have stated before the governor."

Amid Sikkim standoff, Doval, Yang discuss major problems

Talks include bilateral relations, international and regional issues and multilateral affairs

BEIJING/ NEW DELHI (TIP): National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi discussed "major problems" in bilateral ties, the Foreign Ministry here said after the first high-level meeting between India and China since the military standoff erupted in the Sikkim sector on June 16.

The Chinese foreign ministry, in a brief readout on Doval-Yang meeting, said Yang "elaborated China's position on bilateral issues and major problems", which is being seen as an apparent reference to the standoff in the Doklam area.

China's state-run Xinhua news agency also reported that Yang met separately with Doval and his other counterparts from South Africa and Brazil. Though there were no direct reference to the Sikkim standoff in the Xinhua report, it said the talks between Doval and Yang included bilateral relations, international and regional issues and multilateral affairs. Though China had maintained that there won't be a meaningful dialogue without the unconditional withdrawal of Indian troops, India has been maintaining that the

unilateral action by China to build a road in the area was altering the status quo and had serious security implications for India.

India has also been pitching for diplomatic solution to resolve the standoff but sought simultaneous withdrawal of troops of both the sides from the tri-junction with Bhutan. However, the Chinese official media has been carrying a blistering campaign accusing India of trespassing into the Chinese territory.

Doval arrived here yesterday to take part in the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) NSAs meeting being hosted by Yang, who, like Doval, is the Special Representative for India-China boundary talks.

His visit has raised expectations about the likelihood of India and China finding a way-out of the over the month-long standoff. While the media had no access to today's meetings, it will be allowed to cover tomorrow's joint meeting of the NSAs of the five-member bloc. Doval, along with other heads of the delegations, will also call on Chinese President Xi Jinping tomorrow evening.



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi. Source: PTI

Oppn protests in RS over 'kidnapping' of Gujarat Congress MLA

NEW DELHI (TIP): Opposition Congress on July 28 created uproar in the Rajya Sabha, forcing four adjournments in quick succession, alleging that Gujarat Police had kidnapped its MLA in the state with a view to influencing the upcoming elections to the Upper House.

Congress members trooped into the Well of the House raising anti-government slogans and charging the BJP with "stealing" MLAs to help its candidates win the Rajya Sabha polls, forcing brief adjournments one after the other.

Deputy Chairman PJ Kurien first adjourned the proceedings for 10 minutes soon after the House assembled as Congress leaders, including Leader of Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma, raised the issue and party members stormed into the Well raising slogans.

Similar scenes were witnessed when the House met again, forcing Kurien to adjourn the proceedings till 1200 hours. A repeat of the protests saw Chairman Hamid Ansari to adjourn the House again after it reassembled at noon.

As there was no let-up in the opposition protests, the House was again adjourned till 1430 hours.

Azad said he was not raising the issue of three Congress MLAs who had resigned from the party and one of them being immediately named as the BJP candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls.

He said Punabhai Gamit, MLA from reserved constituency of Vyara, after attending district Congress executive committee, had gone for tea to another MLA's house when the district superintendent of police "kidnapped" him.

The police officer, he alleged, told the MLA that the Congress had decided not to give him a ticket for the upcoming assembly elections and he should leave the party and join the BJP and he would arrange his meeting with the BJP president and get him the ticket.

Azad alleged that the police officer who picked the Congress MLA up was the one who was arrested in a fake encounter case. The MLA managed to flee when he asked the police officer to allow him to get a changeover of clothes, he claimed.

"You are stealing MLAs by using the police (to garner votes)," Azad said, adding, "You should be ashamed." Earlier, Sharma had raised the issue



Congress members trooped into the Well of the House raising anti-government slogans and charging the BJP with "stealing" MLAs to help its candidates win the Rajya Sabha polls, forcing brief adjournments one after the other.

through a point of order saying the Constitution was being violated by the ruling BJP which was using the police to "kidnap" MLAs.

"They are stealing MLAs," he said, adding that it must be guaranteed that the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha are free and fair and MLAs are released.

Union Minister Parshottam Rupala sought to counter the charge saying it was an internal matter of the Congress, whose MLAs, including the leader of the party in the state assembly, were deserting it. "Why are you complaining here?" he said. Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said it is the Election Commission's responsibility to hold free and fair elections. "If they have a complaint, they should go to the Election Commission. The Rajya Sabha is not the place to protest."

The Congress is not able "to keep its house in order", Naqvi said, prompting the opposition party MPs to troop into the Well shouting slogans.

"You have to protect the Constitution... Voters are being kidnapped, where do we go," Azad said.

Kurien said the Chair had nothing to do with elections.

"If what has been narrated has happened, solution lies elsewhere. You can approach police, you can approach election commission and seek remedy. I have no remedy for this," he said.

He asked protesting members to return to their seats but his pleas went unheeded. "What is the use of obstructing," he asked before

adjourning the proceedings for 10 minutes.

When the House reassembled, Anand Sharma (Congress) again raised the issue of kidnapping.

To this, Kurien asked what he could do.

Azad suggested that the Chair can give a direction to the Election Commission to ensure fair election. He said the officer involved in the incident should be removed.

Kurien, however, said the Election Commission "does not require a direction from the Chair" to conduct free and fair election, as it is bound to do so and "they are doing it".

"If you have a complaint, approach the Election Commission," he said.

As the Congress members trooped into the Well and started shouting slogans, Naqvi took potshots at the main opposition party saying they would also demand a direction to the Supreme Court as several of their members are involved in "corruption" cases.

The Congress would also seek direction to the Election Commission as they are losing the elections, the minister added.

Kurien asked agitated Congress members to return to their seats so that Zero Hour business could be taken.

However, Congress members kept shouting slogans from the well. Kurien adjourned the House till noon.

When the House met at noon, Chairman Hamid Ansari adjourned the proceedings, first briefly for 15 minutes and then till 1430 hours. *Source: PTI*

NO AUTOMATIC ARREST IN DOWRY CASES, SAYS SC

NEW DELHI (TIP): In an important verdict, the Supreme Court today put an end to automatic arrests in cruelty and dowry-related cases under Section 498A of IPC that has often been misused to harass innocent family members of husbands named in complaints.

A Bench headed by Justice AK Goel — which ordered setting up of one or more family welfare committees comprising three members in each district — said, "Every complaint under Section 498A received by the police or the Magistrate should be referred to and looked into by such a committee."

The committee would interact with the parties personally or by means of telephonic/electronic communication and give a report within a month to the authority which referred the complaint to it, the Bench said, adding that the report would be on "the factual aspects and its opinion" in the matter.

"Till the report of the committee is received, no arrest should normally be effected. The report may be then considered by the Investigating Officer or the Magistrate on its own merit," said the Bench, which also included Justice UU Lalit.

"Complaints under Section 498A and other connected offences may be investigated only by a designated Investigating Officer of the area. Such designations may be made within one month from today," the Bench said. Such officers may be given training, to be completed within four months from today, it added.

The Bench also issued certain directions on how to deal with bail matters. "If a bail application is filed with at least one clear day's notice to the Public Prosecutor/complainant, it should be decided as far as possible on the same day.

"Recovery of disputed dowry items may not by itself be a ground for denial of bail if maintenance or other rights of wife/minor children can otherwise be protected. Needless to say that in dealing with bail matters, individual roles, prima facie truth of the allegations, requirement of further arrest/custody and interest of justice must be carefully weighed... In respect of persons ordinarily residing out of India, impounding of passports or issuance of Red Corner Notice should not be a routine."

The Bench said: "It will be open to the District Judge or a designated senior judicial officer nominated by the District Judge to club all connected cases between the parties arising out of matrimonial disputes so that a holistic view is taken by the court to whom all such cases are entrusted; and personal appearance of all family members and particularly outstation members may not be required and the trial court ought to grant exemption from personal appearance or permit appearance by video-conferencing without adversely affecting progress of the trial.

"These directions will not apply to the offences involving tangible physical injuries or death," it clarified.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveils the bust of the late President APJ Abdul Kalam during the inauguration of his memorial on his second death anniversary, in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, on July 27.

Island named after Kalam

BHUBANESWAR (TIP): The Odisha Government formally named the Outer Wheeler island in Bhadrak district as APJ Abdul Kalam Island as a tribute to the former President on his second death anniversary.

The Revenue and Disaster Management Department yesterday issued a gazette notification after obtaining a no objection certificate from the Ministry of Home Affairs, said Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Maheswar Mohanty. Mohanty today handed over a copy of the notification to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who had earlier announced to name the Wheeler Island after Kalam. Patnaik paid tribute to Kalam at a function. He recalled Kalam's emotional attachment with the interim test range at Chandipur in Balasore district and Wheeler Island in Bhadrak district. Kalam spent most of his time at these two places as part of his efforts to develop missiles for the protection of the country, the Chief Minister said after paying floral tributes. *Source: PTI*

M'RASHTRA 'OKAY' IF HC SENDS DUTT BACK TO JAIL

MUMBAI (TIP): The Maharashtra Government told the Bombay High Court that the state did not have any objection if the latter ordered actor Sanjay Dutt back to jail.

Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told a HC Bench comprising RM Savant and Sadhana Jadhav that Dutt could be sent back to jail if there was any violation in the remission of his sentence. The court is hearing a public interest litigation petition challenging the release of Dutt from jail eight months early.

The court had also asked the state government to explain the regular paroles and furloughs

granted to Dutt while he was serving his sentence in Pune's Yerwada jail. "Within two months from his surrender on May 16, 2013, how could authorities allow his parole and furlough leave application concurrently?" the court asked.

"We do not want to set the clock back in time. We are not for a moment suggesting that he (Dutt) go back to jail," Justice Savant said.

The state government told the court that the practice of granting parole to convicts was meant to motivating them into good behaviour in prison. Dutt was sentenced to five years in for possessing and destroying an AK-56 assault rifle.





GUEST COMMENT

Missed the chance to act, Mr President

As a seasoned parliamentarian, the now ex-President, Pranab Mukherjee, is known to weigh his words before uttering them and he must have taken extra caution about what to say in his parting speech. Yet the farewell message was a little odd for the occasion. The President was telling the government not to do something which he had not disapproved of when the occasion demanded. While Mr Mukherjee's emphasis on "debate, discussion and dissent" and his observation that "disruptions hurt the Opposition more" were all well taken, it was his advice to the government to take the Ordinance route sparingly that has drawn maximum attention.

As President, Mr Mukherjee gave unqualified assent to Ordinances - as many times and as often presented. Not even once did he return to the government for reconsideration any of the crucial recommendations - be it the frequent issue of Ordinances or the imposition of President's rule. The land Ordinance was promulgated thrice. It had replaced the land Bill, which was widely dubbed "anti-farmer" and had remained stuck in the Rajya Sabha before its dilution. Again, the President happily sided with the government in approving the Ordinance that criminalized the holding of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 currency notes beyond December 31, 2016. Despite the nationwide dislocation, loss of jobs and farmer distress it caused without achieving any of the purported gains, the President did not try to satisfy himself, by asking the government or the RBI, whether sufficient arrangements were made for executing such an important policy measure.

The unquestioned approval of President's rule in the two Opposition-ruled states of Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand also did not enhance his stature. It was finally left to the Supreme Court to right the wrong. His predecessor, K R Narayanan, had sent back Cabinet resolutions seeking President's rule in UP and Bihar. Most of the time the President's job is ceremonial. It is on such occasions that the worth of the Rashtrapati Bhavan occupant is judged. Pranab Mukherjee was found wanting at times. Only towards the end of his term did he talk of issues not to the government's liking such as growing intolerance, Parliament turning dysfunctional and constitutional values. It did not add up, Mr Mukherjee.

(Tribune, India)

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By Pritam Singh

Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the chief framer of the Indian Constitution, was also an original economic thinker. The originality of his economic thinking can be interpreted as eclecticism due to his non-adherence to any one particular economic ideology - Marxism, neo-classical economic thought, support for market economy or state regulation. However, behind his eclecticism lies a common running thread in his ideas on different economic issues. That unity was provided by his concern for the Dalit sections of Indian society.

In adopting this approach, he can be compared with Karl Marx who was ruthless in his rigorous analysis of capitalism. That rigor was not merely an academic enterprise but closely linked with defending the interests of the working class. In both cases -Marx for the working class and Ambedkar for the Dalits - there was no compromise in the objective analysis of the economic conditions to suit any partisan considerations.

On the contrary, both viewed a scientific examination of the economic conditions as a necessary condition for advancing the interests of the working class and the Dalits (for Ambedkar). In the Indian context, in particular, and South-Asian context in general, the social categories of class and caste overlap and interpenetrate each other despite the autonomous status. Three main issues on which Ambedkar focused his intellectual energies were: monetary circulation in the economy, size of land holdings as a part of the broader agriculture strategy and public finance especially the pattern of federal finance.

In his writings on money, he directly challenged the dominant Keynesian view in the 1930s regarding the delinking of supply of money from gold reserves. Keynes had argued that due to the development of the monetary-exchange mechanism in advanced capitalist economies such as the UK, there was no need to limit the supply of money by linking it with the gold reserves. Ambedkar opposed this view not because he had any special fascination with gold but because he considered that delinking of money supply from gold reserves would open the possibilities of excessive supply of money. This, in turn, could lead to financial instability and inflation. From the viewpoint of the poor sections of society, Ambedkar thought that both inflation and financial instability would hit them adversely. The rich might benefit from financial instability by using a range of alternative investment options. The 2007-8 financial crisis of the global capitalist economy, triggered by unregulated financial markets and resulting in huge income and wealth inequalities, is a testimony to Ambedkar's prophetic insights. For him, the seemingly technical question of

AS I SEE IT

Ambedkar: Economics crucial for social justice

BR Ambedkar was an original economic thinker who believed in advancing the interests of the Dalits by focusing on the economy. According to him, the economic conditions that affected the Dalits were - monetary circulation in the economy, size of land holdings and the pattern of public finance.

"In his writings on money, he directly challenged the dominant Keynesian view in the 1930s regarding the delinking of supply of money from gold reserves. Keynes had argued that due to the development of the monetary- exchange mechanism in advanced capitalist economies such as the UK, there was no need to limit the supply of money by linking it with the gold reserves. Ambedkar opposed this view not because he had any special fascination with gold but because he considered that delinking of money supply from gold reserves would open the possibilities of excessive supply of money. This, in turn, could lead to financial instability and inflation", says the author.



money supply and gold reserves needed to be assessed for how these impacted the welfare of Dalits who constituted the bulk of the poorer segment.

Ambedkar adopted the same method to assess the conditions in India's rural economy. He argued that fragmentation of land holdings in India was leading to decreasing the average size of land holdings to an economically inefficient level. He advocated consolidation of landholdings in order to increase the average size of a farming unit. On the face of it, this may seem against the interests of small landholders. However, from the viewpoint of economic efficiency, he did not consider the defense of uneconomic landholding size was in the interests of poor peasantry or landless workers. He, therefore, proposed cooperative agriculture which ensured pooling of smaller units into a bigger unit to avail of the economies of scale. In his view, cooperative farming was desirable for small landholders and landless workers who were mostly Dalits. In looking at alternative modes of farming and suggesting cooperative farming as the most-desirable system, Ambedkar's goal was the defense of the economic interest of the Dalits.

The third major issue Ambedkar examined was the question of public finance, dealing with revenue and expenditure of different layers of governance. His basic premise was that each level of government needed to have appropriate sources of revenue to meet its expenditure obligations. He further argued that along with the quantitative dimensions of revenue and expenditure, it was necessary to examine the qualitative dimensions of the revenue-expenditure pattern. A government may be able to generate generous revenue but it might fritter away that revenue through unproductive expenditure such as luxury spending by ministers and government officials. In contrast, even a modest increase in revenue if spent on

public goods such as health and education can have a multiplier effect on improving the quality of life. The provision of such public goods is especially important for the Dalits and other poorer sections of society.

Ambedkar also examined the impact of centralization versus decentralization on the life conditions of Dalits. From one angle, he seemed to be supportive of centralization but he also considered excessive centralization as a threat. In arguments in support of centralization, he viewed that decentralization could empower the local upper-caste elites more against the Dalits. He viewed centralization as creating conditions for authoritarianism that can weaken democracy.

In Ambedkar's view, the weakening of democracy was not in the interests of the Dalits. Precisely for this reason, Ambedkar opposed and defeated a proposal from Jawaharlal Nehru that India's Constitution could be amended by a simple majority in the Parliament. He viewed Nehru's proposal as paving the way for increased centralization and succeeded in inserting that a government needed to have at least a two-third majority in the Parliament to make a constitutional amendment. In supporting or opposing centralization, his key concern was the defense of Dalits' political and economic interests.

All those who oppose caste and other forms of discrimination need to learn this Ambedkarite method of keeping the concerns of Dalits as the central determining criterion in assessing different policy options. In the era of global climate change, a creative development of Ambedkar's ideas is necessary to suggest sustainable and egalitarian modes of economic activities.

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Country without a Prime Minister



Nawaz Sharif is a distracted leader; the Supreme Court's next step will determine if he's seen to be victim or culprit. In this pic taken last month in London, Sharif said Panama probe JIT had lost track and was headed towards opposition direction

“ The real conversation in the drawing rooms these days is whether it is just Mr. Sharif who will be disqualified or whether it would extend to his entire family - two sons and a daughter who are the ones actually named in the Panama leaks. With his eyes already on the 2018 elections, Mr. Sharif would hope that his daughter and political heir, Maryam Nawaz, survives this crisis. If the entire family is disqualified, it will certainly send a signal that things are up for grabs", says the author.

The office of Pakistan's Prime Minister is subject to pulls and pressures far in excess of those in other democracies. But even by these standards, Nawaz Sharif is under inordinate stress. He is facing a court case and a scathing media trial.

A three-member Bench of the Supreme Court is yet to give a final verdict regarding his disqualification. The decision will be based on the report by a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) established by the orders of the court to investigate Mr. Sharif and his family's assets after the leak of the Panama Papers related to holdings in offshore companies.

The question now is whether the Chief Justice will give a verdict based on the decision of the three judges or call for a larger Bench. The judiciary might like to get the decision popularly accepted by calling for a larger Bench. It is not as if all onlookers are convinced about the judges or the JIT being bipartisan.

Odds stacked against PM

It is a fact that corruption investigations are not easy, especially when the country's main anti-corruption institutions, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), lack forensic investigation expertise. Even in the case of some of the Sharifs' assets, the JIT hired the services of a foreign company. Notwithstanding such lacunae, the highest court was willing to open up a Pandora's box of investigating "a constant murmur nationally as well internationally about respondent No. 1 (Nawaz Sharif) indulging in corruption, corrupt practices and money laundering". If proven guilty, Mr. Sharif cannot hold office as per Article 62 (1) (f) of the 1973 Constitution as he would be declared as not being *sadiq* (truthful) and *ameen* (honest). Even if the judges feel uncomfortable using the JIT report as the basis of their decision, the axe could still fall on Mr. Sharif on the basis of him officiating as a director in a company registered in the UAE while he was heading the government.

There are today very few people betting on Mr. Sharif completing his term, which if he does, he'd be the first Prime Minister to do. But as far as the popular narrative in the country goes, Mr. Sharif is already gone. The

working of the state bureaucracy has already slowed down in anticipation of some transition.

There are even rumors of Mr. Sharif's current Interior Minister, Chaudhry Nisar, being favored by both the Establishment and the rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party as one of the candidates to replace him while the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) government is allowed to complete the term.

In any case, there will be no hurry to hold the next elections due to the need for a new delimitation of constituencies based on the recently held census - senior judges believe the delimitation should take place. Meanwhile, Mr. Sharif's future role in politics will be determined by how far the court proceedings drag and how it turns out personally and politically for him in the months and years to come. What is certain is that Mr. Sharif is not inclined to resign, as was expected of him, but, if it comes to that, to go down as a political martyr - a man politically victimized by non-parliamentary institutions of the country.

The media campaign aims to make him bleed politically and increase his losses the longer he stays. Interestingly, there are serving state officials in numerous WhatsApp groups who are gently directing conversations in a certain direction, or watching while their partners do the same. It is not that lack of accountability is not a huge problem in Pakistan but that accountability has always been used as a political tool to punish rivals. Hence, ordinary people forgave Dr. A.Q. Khan, the architect of Pakistan's nuclear program, and accept him as a hero despite his confession on television regarding illegal sale of nuclear technology because in their eyes he did return something for all he took. Also, in the absence of the enactment of a strong law or principle of the rule of law, even courts are perceived by the man on the street as either corrupt or highly political. Moreover, when the law is meant to selectively conduct accountability (excluding the military and the judiciary), many raised eyebrows at an earlier judgment in the Panama Papers case that quoted Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* but no law.

Post-verdict scenarios

Since the power rests with the judges, their

verdict will influence the short- or longer-term future of the Sharif family. The real conversation in the drawing rooms these days is whether it is just Mr. Sharif who will be disqualified or whether it would extend to his entire family - two sons and a daughter who are the ones actually named in the Panama leaks. With his eyes already on the 2018 elections, Mr. Sharif would hope that his daughter and political heir, Maryam Nawaz, survives this crisis. If the entire family is disqualified, it will certainly send a signal that things are up for grabs.

This means that even if the PML(N) remains, it would be mired in infighting and could be as easily manipulated as the Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam) was. While parts of central and north Punjab will remain aligned with Mr. Sharif, there will be much greater activity in south and south-west Punjab where people will be influenced by, as per local political lingo, 'whichever way the strong wind blows'. This is translated as a clear indication that the Establishment is not in a party's favor.

But the process of shifting gears will essentially start with electable candidates moving to another party or contesting elections as independent candidates. In urban centers, the anti-corruption slogan, compounded with the anti-incumbency factor, will play a role.

The case against Mr. Sharif is indeed critical as the manner in which the court proceeds will determine not only his short- to medium-term political moves but also his long- to longer-term future. If the judges do not appear bipartisan and use the principle of law rather than their opinion - a fashion that dates back to Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry's days - Mr. Sharif will be perceived as a victim rather than a culprit.

Even his disqualification will then generate the myth that he was punished for something else rather than what the court and the JIT tried him for. This may not save Mr. Sharif now but will haunt the Establishment in a few years.

(The author is a Pakistani military scientist, political commentator and an author who serves as a research associate at the SOAS South Asia Institute. She is the author of 'Military Inc. - Inside Pakistan's Military Economy'.)

THE DIGNIFIED PRESIDENT OF INDIA — PRANAB MUKHERJEE

Pranab Mukherjee's tenure as the 13th President of India ended on July 24, bringing to a close a political career spanning nearly five decades in government and in the Congress party, both extremely eventful and hugely successful.

Pranab Mukherjee's political journey started in West Bengal in the 1969 by-election in Midnapore when he was the election agent for V K Krishna Menon, who ran as an independent candidate. He caught the eye of Siddhartha Shankar Ray who recommended him to prime minister Indira Gandhi, who gave him a Rajya Sabha seat. Thus at the age of 35, Pranab entered the Rajya Sabha. Within a short period he had gained Mrs Gandhi's confidence and became a minister of state in her government.

In the wake of Rajiv Gandhi's tragic assassination, the Congress party emerged as the single largest party, but there was no clarity as to who would be Prime Minister. Pranab was not an MP and PV Narasimha Rao had announced his retirement from active politics. Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar became prime contenders. But as the number of MPs from south India was large, Narasimha Rao was called out of retirement and chosen to be Prime Minister.

During Cabinet formation, Narasimha Rao actively consulted his friend and colleague, Pranab. It appeared certain that Pranab would become the finance minister. But quite unexpectedly, he was left out of the Cabinet altogether and Dr Manmohan Singh was named finance minister. Pranab was shocked. As consolation, Narasimha Rao asked Pranab to take up the deputy chairmanship of the Planning Commission.

Now when a former finance minister is left out of the Cabinet and sent to the Planning Commission, it clearly signals the end of an active political career. Pranab told the Prime Minister that he would think about the offer. Narasimha Rao is supposed to have remarked, "Take as much time as you like, but join on Monday." Narasimha Rao assured Pranab that he would one day tell him the reason for his exclusion from the Cabinet, but he never did.

One can describe Pranab in one word – a survivor. His survival skills in politics are indeed remarkable. After Rajiv Gandhi became prime minister in 1984, he dropped Pranab from the Cabinet and also from the Congress Working Committee. He was subsequently expelled from the Congress party itself, pushing Pranab to launch his own party, the 'Rashtriya Samajwadi Congress,' in 1986. But his political career had clearly stalled. He later admitted he was no mass leader. Within two years, he was back in favour with Rajiv Gandhi and merged his party in the Congress. Despite all the ups and downs, he always bounced back.

Pranab is very good at keeping secrets. In fact, Indiraji used to say, "Whenever Pranab is given any confidential information, it never comes out of his belly. What comes out is only the smoke from his pipe." His excellent command over the English language, drafting skills, razor-sharp memory, vast knowledge of national and international affairs and mastery of parliamentary procedures made him indispensable in the cabinet and the Party. Whenever any complicated and contentious issue arose in the Cabinet, he was called upon to resolve it. He would invariably be asked to draft various AICC resolutions and chair different party committees.

In Dr Manmohan Singh's cabinet, Pranab was the de facto number two. He was the chairman of more than 95 GoMs and EGoMs (Empowered Group of Ministers). I was a member of many such groups dealing with Enron, spectrum, WTO,



In keeping with tradition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a memento to outgoing President Pranab Mukherjee at the farewell hosted by him for the President at Hyderabad House, in New Delhi. (Source: PTI)

Bhopal disaster and disinvestment. One time the issue of amending the law to remove the domicile condition for contesting Rajya Sabha elections came up for discussion. Dr Manmohan Singh was elected from Assam and Pranab had been once elected from Gujarat. The proposal was accepted after a brief discussion as was the proposal for open voting. I insisted that the same condition be made applicable to the legislative council elections in the states. But Pranab strongly opposed this and my proposal was not accepted. Unfortunately, "horse trading" in legislative council elections continues unabated.

Pranab worked under three Prime Ministers – Indiraji, Narasimha Rao and Dr Manmohan Singh. He is the only finance minister to have presented budgets both before the 1991 reforms in the license-permit raj regime as well after the 1991 economic reforms. He took bold decisions after the global economic crisis of 2008 which helped shield the Indian economy. As commerce minister in 1993, Pranab championed the cause of trade liberalisation. But as India dealt with GATT, especially its intellectual property rights regime, the fear was drug prices would increase. Pranab's skilful negotiations not only prevented that from happening, but also charted India's entry

into the WTO.

The Indo-US nuclear deal over 2005-8 was a landmark achievement of the Manmohan Singh government. Both countries wanted to get India out of the discriminatory nuclear world order, facilitate India's participation in nuclear commerce and allow it benefits of clean nuclear energy. But because the Left parties supported the UPA government in power and the Left was against India joining hands with the US, a coordination committee between the UPA and the Left parties was constituted under Pranab's chairmanship – and myself as its convenor. The Committee succeeded in obtaining the consent of the Left, thanks only to the skilful leadership of Pranab and his personal equation with its leaders.

He fulfilled the role of President of India with great dignity. Concerns were raised when the government changed after the 2014 election. But he did not needlessly confront prime minister Narendra Modi's government and always went by the book. At the same time, he often publicly appealed for tolerance, lamented the poor quality of parliamentary debate, and urged protection of the Constitution and democratic values. He was certainly not a "rubber-stamp President".

Source: *The Indian Express*



WHAT MAKES PRANAB MUKHERJEE'S TENURE AS PRESIDENT UNIQUE

As Pranab Mukherjee exits the Rashtrapati Bhavan to hand over the reins to Ram Nath Kovind – India's 14th president, it is an appropriate time to look back to steps and actions that were taken by him that made his tenure unique from others

Ordinances and Mercy petitions

Pranab Mukherjee's tenure's biggest highlight could be the tough stance he took when it came to his judicial powers. Unlike many of his predecessors who seemed to think twice when it came to reviewing mercy petitions, Mukherjee was quite hands on. Of the 34 mercy petitions that were presented to him, he rejected 30, a number which is second only to G Venkataraman. He also promulgated or re-promulgated 26 ordinances.

Peoples president

Under his tenure, many steps were taken to make Rashtrapati Bhavan closer to the common man. Steps were taken to reduce security checks within the Rashtrapati Bhavan to make it more inclusive for people. Many important events were shifted to the Rashtrapati Bhavan so that the public won't suffer from security measures due to presidential movement.

Mukherjee also became the first president to take teaching classes for the school children. An in-residence program aimed at encouraging talented scholars and artists was also set up. The official twitter account of the Rashtrapati Bhavan was launched on July 1, 2014.

Brought an end to the colonial hangover

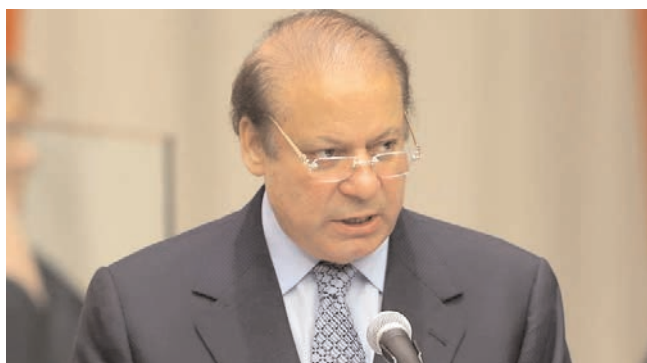
Perhaps one of the greatest achievements of Pranab Mukherjee was the fact that he brought an end to certain practices that were a product of the imperial rule in the country. He ended the practice of using the honorific title 'His Excellency' while addressing the President on the first anniversary of his term. Even governors were encouraged to follow this practice.

Welfare programs

A Smartgram pilot project was launched on July 2, 2016 with the aim of developing and modernising villages. At the initial stage, five villages from Haryana was included in the program. Under another initiative Mukherjee also launched the 4S initiative ie; samskriti, samagam, sparsh and sanskar aimed at overall welfare of senior citizens and children residing in the estate.

Re-development of the Rashtrapati Bhavan A new museum was established in the estate's carriage halls and stables building. Roof top solar panels, water harvesting and recycling programmes were initiated in the Bhavan to make it energy efficient and self-reliant. Also, measures were taken to re-introduce the heritage Buggy in the estate after a gap of over three decades. Pranab Mukherjee Public Library was also set up in the estate. This included the cataloguing and bar coding of the vast number of books as part of the E-Pustakalaya project. Apart from all this, the presidential retreat in Dehradun known as the Rashtrapati Ashiana was also renovated.

Source: *Moneycontrol*



Pakistan SC's verdict on Nawaz Sharif in Panamagate

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's Supreme Court is pronouncing its verdict on Nawaz Sharif in the Panamagate case in which he and his family are accused of corruption. Stay with us for latest updates.

Meanwhile, interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan on Thursday said that he would resign and quit politics after the Supreme Court judgment on the Panamagate case.

Nawaz Sharif leads Pakistan's most powerful political family and the ruling PML-N party.

Sharif, who has been the prime minister of Pakistan for a record three time, faces the risk of being disqualified if the court finds him guilty of corruption and money laundering.

What is Panamagate

The scandal is about alleged money laundering by Sharif in 1990s, when he twice served as prime minister, to purchase assets in London. The assets surfaced when Panama Papers leak last year revealed that they were managed through offshore companies owned by Sharif's children.

Sri Lanka allays India's concerns, renegotiates port deal with China

COLOMBO (TP): Sri Lanka's cabinet has cleared a revised agreement for its Chinese-built southern port of Hambantota on July 24, the government said, after terms of the first pact sparked widespread public anger in the island nation.

The port, close to the world's busiest shipping lanes, has been mired in controversy ever since state-run China Merchants Port Holdings, which built it for \$1.5 billion, signed an agreement taking an 80 per cent stake.

Under the new deal, which Reuters has examined, the Sri Lankan government has sought to limit China's role to running commercial operations at the port while it has oversight of broader security.

Chinese control of Hambantota, which is part of its modern-day "Silk Route" across Asia+ and beyond, as well as a plan to acquire 15,000 acres (23 sq miles) to develop an industrial zone next door, had raised fears that it could also be used for Chinese naval vessels.

Sri Lankans demonstrated in the streets+ at the time, fearing loss of their land, while politicians said such large-scale transfer of land to the Chinese impinged on the country's sovereignty.

Details of the new agreement have not yet been made public. But according to parts of the document seen by Reuters, two companies are being set up to split the operations of the port and allay concerns, in India mainly but also in Japan and the United States, that it won't be used for military purposes. (Reuters)

Myanmar insists no North Korea links as US envoy visits

YANGON (TIP): Myanmar has no military ties with North Korea, a Myanmar official said on Monday, as a US diplomat responsible for North Korea arrived for talks in which he is likely to seek assurances on efforts to isolate it.

Ambassador Joseph Yun was set to meet Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and the military's commander in chief in the capital, Naypyitaw, on Monday, according to the U.S. Embassy in Yangon. Yun attended a conference in Singapore over the weekend focusing on tension on the Korean peninsula over the North's unrelenting nuclear and missile programmes. Ambassador Joseph Yun's trip to Asia was announced after North Korea's test on July 4 of an intercontinental ballistic missile that it says can carry a large nuclear warhead and some experts believe has the range to reach Alaska. Myanmar is the only other stop on his trip, pointing to concern in Washington that Myanmar's army, which used to have ties with North Korea, continues to give succour to Kim Jong Il's regime. (Reuters)

Pakistani council orders 'revenge rape' of 16-year-old girl

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistani police have arrested 25 members of an informal village council accused of ordering the rape of a 16-year-old girl as revenge for her brother's alleged sexual assault of another girl.

The Supreme Court also requested a report on the case, which echoed a notorious case from 2002 in which another teenager was gang-raped on a local council's order.

"A total of 29 people were involved in this ghastly crime, and we have 25 of them in our custody," Multan City Police Officer Ahsan Younus told Reuters by telephone on July 27.

Earlier this month, a local council in the southern city of Multan was called after a family accused a 16-year-old boy of raping a 13-year-old neighbour.

The council ruled that the sister of the boy should be handed over to the victim's brother to be raped. The punishment was carried out on July 17 after her family handed the girl over.

The case came to light when both families filed criminal charges with police accusing the other family's son of rape.

Questioning both sides in the cases, however, soon revealed the role of the informal village council, Younus said.

"All the village council elders who ordered the revenge rape have been arrested," he said.

Both the victims and their mothers have been sent to a women's protection centre, he added.



Pakistan has a centuries-old tradition of quick justice handed down by gatherings of local elders, known as jirgas or panchayats, seen by many villagers as preferable to the often-cumbersome and corrupt formal legal system. In most of the country, jirgas are tolerated but not recognised by the formal courts and police.

The jirgas and the practice of "revenge rape" drew international attention in 2002 when a woman named Mukhtaran Mai was ordered gang-raped by a local council for a male relative's alleged crime.

Mai took the rare step of filing criminal charges against her attackers,

and six men were convicted and sentenced to death later that year, though five of them were later freed on appeal.

Mai went on to become a high-profile campaigner for women's rights in Pakistan. "Another Tribe Court (panchayat) in south Punjab Multan and another girl was raped. We are still in 2002," Mai said on her official Twitter account this week.

Speaking to Reuters by telephone, Mai denounced the revenge rape.

"If there were any justice in the panchayat, they should have shot the rapist. Why punish an innocent girl instead?" (Reuters)

26 Afghan soldiers killed in Taliban attack on Kandahar base: Defence ministry

KANDAHAR (TP): At least 26 Afghan soldiers have been killed and 13 wounded in a Taliban attack on a military base in Kandahar province, the defence ministry said on July 26, the latest blow to struggling security forces.

The militants "attacked an army camp in Karzali area of Khakrez district of Kandahar last night," MoD spokesman General Dawlat Waziri said.

Afghan soldiers "bravely resisted", he said, killing more than 80 insurgents.

Residents in the area described an hours-long attack launched by a 30-strong convoy carrying "hundreds" of Taliban who assaulted the base from multiple directions.

Air support was called in, several residents said, though that was not immediately confirmed by officials. The insurgents claimed the attack via their Twitter account.

The resurgent Taliban have been ramping up their campaign against beleaguered government forces, underscoring rising insecurity in the war-torn country throughout the warmer weather fighting season.

Afghan security forces, beset by killings, desertions and non-existent "ghost soldiers" on the payroll, have been struggling to beat back insurgents since US-led NATO troops ended their combat mission in December 2014.



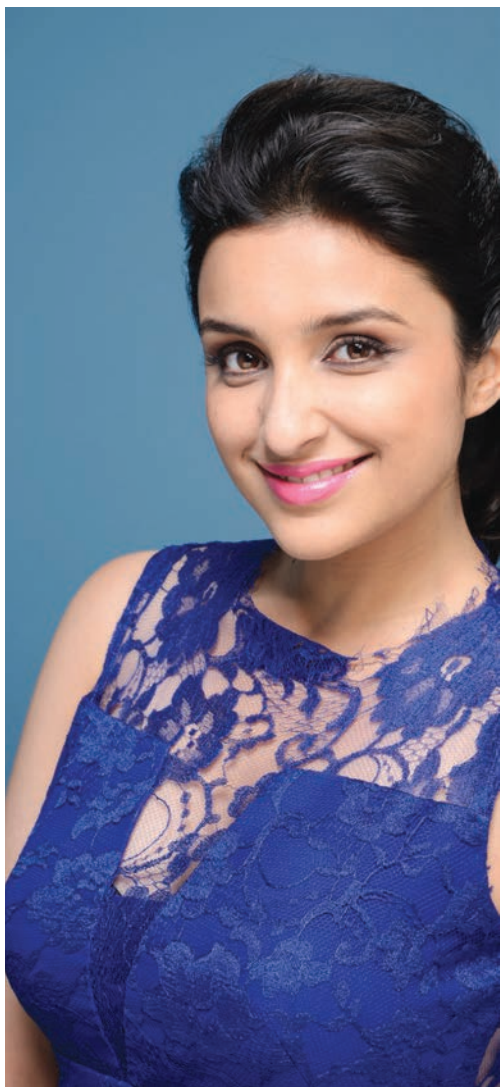
According to US watchdog SIGAR, casualties among Afghan security forces soared by 35 percent in 2016, with 6,800 soldiers and police killed.

The insurgents have carried out more complex attacks against security forces in 2017.

In April more than 140 soldiers are believed to have been killed on a base

outside the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, one of the deadliest ever Taliban attacks on a military installation.

While in early March gunmen disguised as doctors stormed the Sardar Daud Khan hospital — the country's largest military hospital — in Kabul, killing dozens. (AFP)



ANUSHKA SAYS SHE INSTANTLY SAID YES TO 'JAB HARRY MET SEJAL'

Actress Anushka Sharma said she wanted to work with filmmaker Imtiaz Ali since a long time and that's why she instantly agreed to be part of forthcoming film 'Jab Harry Met Sejal'. "The first film he (Ali) offered to me, I instantly said yes to it, which is 'Jab Harry Met Sejal'. In fact, I have been wanting to work with Imtiaz for the longest time," Anushka said in a statement.

"So, yes, this ('Jab Harry Met Sejal') is something I always wanted to do with Imtiaz and this just seemed like a film which I would really enjoy having a great time, so this is the one film," she added.

'Jab Harry Met Sejal' features Anushka with Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan. The film is slated for release on August 4.

'Shah Rukh can even romance a microphone'

Anushka Sharma, who will be seen opposite Shah Rukh Khan in their upcoming 'Jab Harry Met Sejal' says romancing the superstar was quite easy and that he can even romance a microphone.

Both of them came along with music director Pritam and film director Imtiaz Ali for the launch of the new song "Hawayeina" on Wednesday.

Asked about how was it romancing Shah Rukh third time, on-screen, Anushka said: "Extremely easy! There is a genuineness in his eyes that we all can see - that reflects on-screen. In my opinion, he even can romance a microphone."

To this, Shah Rukh replied: "As long as you are holding the mic, darling!"

The evening started with a live performance by Pritam where he sang the song live and went on to show it on the big screen.

Two of the songs of the film 'Radha' and 'Beech Beech Mein' has already been released and gained popularity.

Asked what is his favourite genre of films, Shah Rukh, who is known for his romantic films but in an earlier interview had said that he is not a fan of love stories, said: "No no, I think that was misinterpreted. I like a love story also but I like comedy more."



PARINEETI CHOPRA DYING TO START 'NAMASTEY CANADA'

Actress Parineeti Chopra said she is "dying" to start working on the film 'Namastey Canada'. "A desi film with a videsi heart! my kind of film! Dying to start 'Namastey Canada'," Parineeti tweeted on Tuesday.

The film is directed by Vipul Amrutlal Shah and also stars Arjun Kapoor with Parineeti. This will be the second time the two will be seen sharing screen space after 'Ishaqzaade'.

'Namastey Canada' is not a sequel to the Akshay Kumar and Sonakshi Sinha starrer 'Namastey London'.

MOVIE REVIEW



RAAG DESH

CAST: Kunal Kapoor, Amit Sadh, Mohit Marwah

DIRECTION: Tigmanshu Dhulia

GENRE: History

DURATION: 2 hours 17 minutes

STORY

Three officers of the Indian National Army are on trial for treason. An ailing lawyer must help them face the consequence of their courage.

REVIEW

We are living in the time of terrific national pride. If your patriotism doesn't reflect in your attitude, your cuisine, your movie-theatre etiquette and your twitter feed, its existence is called into question. And while we jump to conclusions faster than we can say 'India', we often forget the people who fought actual blood-and-bullet wars (as opposed to shouting matches on news shows) to get us where we are today.

Raag Desh takes us back to these heroes. It tells the story of Maj. Gen. Shahnawaz Khan (Kunal Kapoor), Lt. Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon (Amit Sadh) and Col. Prem Sahgal

(Mohit Marwah), three officers of Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, who put everything on the line and gathered troops to re-enter India to take down the British after the Second World War. Khan, Dhillon and Sahgal are captured and tried in court for conspiring against the British Indian Army, while their lawyer, Bhulabhai Desai (Kenneth Desai), tries to twist facts to free them of the charges.

Writer-Director Tigmanshu Dhulia has chosen to narrate an incredibly interesting anecdote from our freedom struggle. The hard work of his four-member research team and two-member writing team is evident. Whether the story needed to be told in a non-linear fashion is debatable, but it mostly gets the point across. In a lot of ways, it educates you about the socio-political climate of the time. However, its educational quality is its bane.

Even though Dhulia painstakingly recreates the pre-independence era with researched costumes and sets, and employs multiple languages (the Japanese speak Japanese, the British speak English; no shady dubbing here) to maintain authenticity, the movie proceeds with the mechanical tone of a disinterested college professor. It gives you numbers and dates and facts and suddenly introduces relatives of the protagonists who have stories of their own. It's death by information.

Had the movie been freed of its half-hearted side-tracks it would have made for great infotainment. It is only half of that word now.



CHARLIZE THERON WANTS TO DO ANOTHER 'MAD MAX' MOVIE

Actress Charlize Theron wants to return for a 'Mad Max' movie based on her character Furiosa.

The 41-year-old actress said she knows more of the character's backstory, including how she lost her arm, but will wait for director George Miller to be ready. "But I'm going to be 42 in August, so let's get to it," she said.

Theron, who was speaking at the Comic-con, will next be seen in 'Atomic Blonde', and the actress opened up about her wish to essay an unrepentant woman who plays by the rules men get to play by. "Women in film typically need a reason to become warriors losing a child or husband. They can just be warriors," she said. "That's what Atomic Blonde is supposed to portray. Lorraine is simply herself. There's no explanation for why the way she is the way she is," she added.

Source: PTI

ANNE HATHAWAY TO STAR IN NEXT 'BARBIE' MOVIE?

Anne Hathaway may be the next one to get behind the wheel of the pink dream convertible for a Barbie movie.

The Oscar winner is in negotiations to star in the long-in-the-works feature project, putting on the outfit that was originally going to be worn by Amy Schumer, reports the Hollywood Reporter.

On that note, Schumer was announced to star in December, but dropped out in March, citing "scheduling conflicts."

Along with this, rising Australian director Alethea Jones is in talks to helm the flick, after being handpicked by Hathaway, who was integral in the search for a filmmaker.

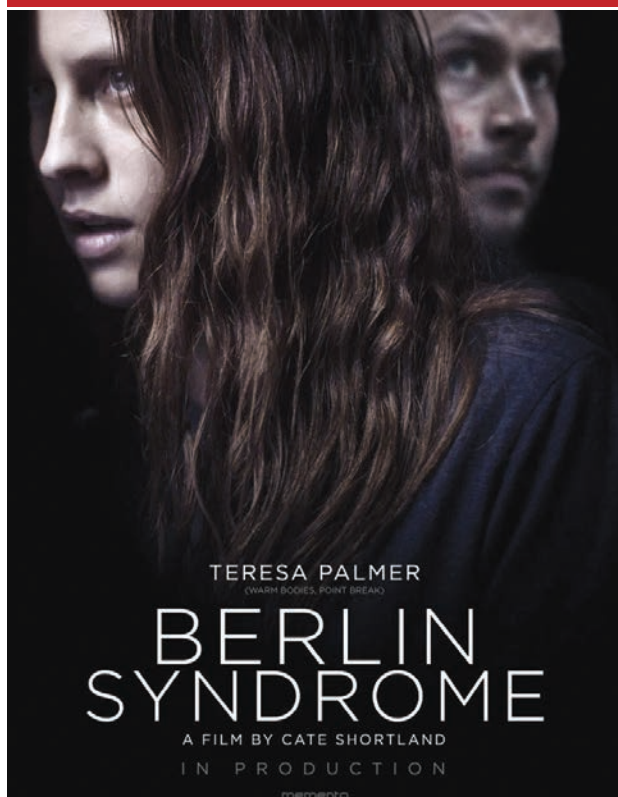
Reports further say, Sony is hesitant to move the release date, which has already been scheduled to be June 29, 2018, and "there's a chance that if Hathaway's schedule isn't worked out in a satisfactory way, a deal may not be made."

Hathaway was last seen in the indie Colossal and will next be seen palling around with Rihanna and Sarah Paulson in 'Ocean's 8' and with Rebel Wilson in 'Nasty Women,' MGM's remake of 'Dirty Rotten Scoundrels.'

Source: ANI



MOVIE REVIEW



BERLIN SYNDROME

CAST: Teresa Palmer, Max Riemelt, Matthias Habich

DIRECTION: Cate Shortland

GENRE: Mystery

DURATION: 1 hour 56 minutes

Review

Clare (Teresa Palmer) is an explorer in search of a new beginning. Andi (Max Riemelt), a mysterious and charming young man catches her fancy on a busy Berlin street. She's a photographer from Australia. He's a German native, who teaches English. After an instant attraction, their intriguing story takes an unlikely turn when the girl discovers there's more to him than meets the eye.

Story

Berlin Syndrome works on your mind. Cate Shortland's slow-moving arthouse thriller manages to suffocate you with

its creepy and unpredictable nature and atmospheric execution. Shot within the confines of a secluded house, the intense cinematography makes you feel claustrophobic, evoking a sense of paranoia. The psychological thriller manages to instil fear and will make you think twice before trusting strangers or walking into strange homes. You might also rethink your exotic fantasies of 'falling for a stranger in a foreign country'.

The concept isn't original per se as various foreign indie films have played around a similar theme – a film revolving around a trapped protagonist. However, Shortland's nuanced interpretation of her characters and their psyche is what makes the difference. She makes you wonder how everything can be subjective; including one's perception of 'abnormal'.

Interestingly, there are no character clichés per se. You often wonder if Clare would be 'institutionalised' eventually, after being trapped in Andi's house for the longest time. The twists and turns keep you guessing and wondering if the lead pair's strange relationship might actually have a deeper meaning. Speaking of the pair, the film solely rests on the shoulders of its two lead actors - Teresa Palmer (who looks and acts exactly like Kristen Stewart) and Max Riemelt. They portray their characters' vulnerabilities, fear and erraticism with utmost conviction.

Overall, this one's creepy and unsettling but will largely appeal to a niche audience, owing to its languid pace and world cinema sensibilities.

Britain's Boris Johnson compares Maori greeting to headbutt

WELLINGTON (TIP): Britain's gaffe-prone Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson likened a traditional Maori greeting to a headbutt Monday while visiting indigenous leaders in New Zealand.

Johnson opened his two-day trip with a visit to a marae, or Maori meeting house, in Kaikoura, the South Island town that was hit by a massive earthquake last year.

While there he was greeted with a hongi, the Maori welcome which involves two people pressing their noses together.

The ritual symbolises participants sharing the breath of life, but Johnson said he was concerned about how it would be received in Scotland, home of the "Glasgow kiss", or headbutt.

"Thank you for teaching me the hongi, I think it is a beautiful form of introduction, though it might be misinterpreted in a pub in Glasgow if you were to try it," he said.

Johnson also quipped that "the marae has a tradition of strong female leadership, which we also have back home", referring to his boss, British Prime Minister Theresa May.

Johnson is on a two-day visit to New Zealand which is expected to focus on trade, foreign policy and international security issues.

While in Wellington, Johnson will also unveil a war memorial and will meet New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English.

It is the former London mayor's first visit to New Zealand.

"I also have to say that this is the most mind-blowingly, mind-numbingly beautiful country that I've ever seen," he said.

"I think probably the only landscape that I can think of that can conceivably do justice to the imagination of JRR Tolkien and the Lord of the Rings."

Johnson has a history of blunders, including touting the trade benefits of Scotch whisky in a Sikh temple earlier this year, before being told that alcohol was against the religion.

Prior to becoming Britain's top diplomat, he compared Hillary Clinton to "sadistic nurse in a mental hospital" and said ex-US president Barack Obama was "part-Kenyan" with "an ancestral dislike of the British Empire". (AFP)

Muslim woman assaulted, hijab pulled off in UK

LONDON (TIP): A Muslim woman's hijab was pulled off allegedly by a man in a vicious assault in London, amid a spike in hate crime incidents following a series of terror attacks by Islamists in the UK.

Aniso Abdulkadir was waiting for a tube at Baker Street station on July 16 when she says the man grabbed her headscarf before lashing out with his fists and pinning one of her friends up against a wall, the BBC reported.

"This man at Baker Street station forcefully attempted to pull my hijab off and when I instinctively grabbed ahold of my scarf he hit me," Abdulkadir tweeted and posted a picture of the man who allegedly attacked her.

"He proceeded to verbally abuse my friends and I, pinning one of them against the wall and spitting in her face," the tweet read.

Abdulkadir added that a woman who was present was also threatening and verbally abusive, the report said.

A British Transport Police spokesman said it was being investigated as a hate crime.

"Behaviour like this is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated...This incident has been reported to us and we're investigating," the official said.

However, a man claiming to be the man in the image tweeted on July 17 to protest his innocence, claiming he had been defending his partner from what he called a "racist attack", the Guardian reported.

He said the allegation against him was "completely false".

"I would like to confirm I never hit or attacked anyone I simply defused the situation by separating them," Pawel Uzcziwek wrote.

"The police is fully cooperating with me and will be able to obtain CCTV footage showing the three women attempting to attack my partner because we are in an interracial relationship," he claimed.

The assault comes amid a spike in hate crime incidents in the UK following a suicide bombing at a concert in Manchester that claimed 22 lives and an attack in London by three terrorists, who drove a van into pedestrians and then went on a stabbing spree, killing eight persons before being shot dead.

Anti-Muslim crimes in the British capital increased fivefold since the London attack, London Mayor Sadiq Khan had said, warning that police would take a "zero-tolerance approach". (AFP)

Shakespeare was gay, wrote sonnets for men: UK scholar

LONDON (TIP): William Shakespeare, whose sexuality has been a long-running debate in academic circles, may have been a gay, a top UK theatre director has claimed, asserting that it was "no longer acceptable" for performers to conceal the sexual orientation of the Bard's homosexual characters.

Artistic director of Britain's major theatre company 'Royal Shakespeare Company' Greg Doran said he believed it was Shakespeare's sexuality which gave the noted playwright an outsider's insight that had helped his work.

"I guess a growing understanding of Shakespeare as I have worked with him over the many years that I have, makes me realise that his perspective is very possibly that of an outsider," Doran said.

"It allows him to get inside the soul of a black general, a Venetian jew, an Egyptian queen or whatever and that perhaps that outsider perspective has something to do with his sexuality," he told BBC Radio 4. Doran said the key clues to understanding Shakespeare's sexuality were in his sonnets. "He wrote a cycle of 154 sonnets, which were published in 1609, and 126 of those sonnets are addressed to a man and not to a woman," Doran said.



He said directors should not hide the sexuality of Shakespeare's gay characters including Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, who is "absolutely clearly in love with the young man Bassanio and sometimes that is kind of toned down".

Doran said their love had instead been depicted as "we chaps are very fond of each other".

"It's not, it's clearly a very particular portrait of a gay man and I think in the 21st century it's no longer acceptable to play that as anything other than a homosexual," he said.

Debate over Shakespeare's sexuality has raged for decades among scholars.

Three years ago leading scholars clashed in the *Times Literary Supplement* about the issue, *The Telegraph* reported.

Brian Vickers started the row by criticising a book suggesting sonnet 116 appeared in a "primarily homosexual context," the report said.

He said it was an "anachronistic assumption" because Shakespeare, 52, was using a form of rhetoric that allowed men to express love without implying sexual attraction.

Stanley Wells, a Shakespeare expert at the University of Birmingham, said, "Shakespeare was certainly not exclusively gay. He married Anne Hathaway when he was only 18 and they had a daughter, Susanna, within six months, then twins - a boy, Hamnet and a girl, Judith".

"But he was pretty certainly bisexual, and actively so. The strongest evidence comes from the sonnets, in some of which he writes of a triangular relationship with a man and a woman. Some people claim that these poems are fictional, but I think this is an evasion," the report quoted Wells as saying.

Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets, 38 plays and two long narrative poems. Born in 1564, the Bard died in 1616. (PTI)

Iran in 'successful' test of satellite-launch rocket

TEHRAN (TIP): Iran on July 27 "successfully" tested a satellite-launch rocket, days after warning Washington of a response to new US sanctions over the Islamic republic's ballistic missile programme, state television said.

It said the launch vehicle, named Simorgh after a bird in Iranian mythology, was capable of propelling a satellite weighing 250 kilograms to an altitude of 500 kilometres above earth.

The launch marked the official inauguration of Iran's Imam Khomeini space centre, named after the late founder of the Islamic republic, built for sending satellites into space, the television said, without giving its location.

Western states suspect Iran of developing the technology capable of launching long-range ballistic missiles with conventional or nuclear payloads, a charge denied by Tehran which insists its space programme has purely peaceful aims.

Iran's four other launches of domestically produced satellites since 2009 have all sparked condemnation in the West.

President Hassan Rouhani said yesterday that Iran would respond in kind to any breach by the United States of a 2015 nuclear deal after the House of Representatives passed a new sanctions bill.

"If the enemy steps over part of the agreement, we will do the same, and if they step over the entire deal, we will do the same too," Rouhani said at a cabinet meeting.

The Iranian parliament's national security and foreign affairs committee said it would hold an extraordinary session on Saturday to discuss its formal response.

The parliament voted earlier this month to fast-track a bill introduced in June that would increase funds for Iran's missile programme and Revolutionary Guards.

"We must always develop our defence capability and we will strengthen our defensive weapons regardless of the opinion of others," Rouhani said.

The US House passed a new sanctions bill on Tuesday targeting the Revolutionary Guards over its missile programme.

As part of its space programme, Iran has also sent two capsules into space, the first in February 2010 carrying a rat, tortoises and insects, and the other in January 2013 when a monkey was sent into space and returned to earth safely, according to official media. (AFP)

Japan defence minister quits amid plunging support for PM

TOKYO (TIP): Japan's hawkish defence minister on July 28 said she had resigned over a long-brewing scandal involving the handling of military documents, in a political blow to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Abe, who has seen his popularity plummet in recent weeks over a series of controversies, immediately apologised to the nation over the saga.

"I decided to resign as defence minister," Tomomi Inada told a press conference. "I submitted my resignation to the prime minister and it was accepted."

Inada, a close confidante of Abe who shares his staunchly nationalist views, was appointed defence minister in August 2016, a time when she was touted as a possible future leader.

But her nearly year-long stint has been characterised by repeated controversy, including increasing criticism of the ministry's handling of log reports filed by Japanese peacekeepers in South Sudan showing worsening security.

Abe, who became prime minister for a second time in December 2012 with a vow to rejuvenate Japan's economy, has been hit by scandals and gaffes involving members of his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

"I apologise from the bottom of my heart to the people for this situation in which a minister resigns," Abe told reporters after the resignation.

"All responsibilities lie with me, the prime minister, in the appointment of cabinet ministers," Abe said, adding he "must seriously accept the people's severe criticism".

The most recent setback to the prime minister has been claims he showed favouritism to a friend in a business deal, an accusation he has vigorously denied. His government's public support ratings have fallen precipitously over the summer, with voters punishing the LDP in local Tokyo elections early this month.

The party suffered a drubbing in the vote for Tokyo's municipal assembly that media and analysts chalked up to a growing perception of "arrogance" on the part of his government.

It lost more than half of its seats, with the result seen as a bellwether for national political sentiment.

Abe will reportedly revamp his cabinet next week in a bid to reboot his government. During her tenure, Inada delighted conservatives but drew domestic and international criticism in December when she prayed at a controversial war shrine in Tokyo -- the day after accompanying Abe on a symbolic visit of reconciliation to Pearl Harbor in the United States.

Yasukuni Shrine honours millions of mostly Japanese war dead, but is contentious for lionising senior military and political figures convicted of war crimes by an international tribunal. (Reuters)

Fringing the Hooghly River, the city of Kolkata has a rich lineage in culture, history and cuisine, and a versatile ability to keep up with changing times. The capital of West Bengal and the birthplace of Indian communism, the city has many monikers – some perceive it as the ‘cultural capital of India’, while others know it as the ‘city of processions’ and yet more call it the ‘city of joy’. Through a long association with the British, there is much to show for its years as the showpiece capital of colonised India with its marvellous Victorian architecture which stand tall as testimonials to its past.

PLACES TO VISIT

Thanks to its rich cultural heritage and history, there are many places to visit in Kolkata. Historical structures like the Writers Building, the Victoria Memorial and the St. Paul’s Cathedral are stunning examples of the city’s royal past. Cross the majestic Howrah Bridge, or take a ride down the Hooghly River from Princep Ghat in the evening and capture the hues of the setting sun in your lenses—there’s lots to do here. For the religiously inclined, Kalighat Temple and the Belur Math are great sites to visit. The old world charm of Kolkata is bound to have an all pervading effect on you.

If you are the kind of traveller who prefers to travel like a local and enjoys offbeat more than the beaten track—then Kolkata has some of the best options for you. Pray at the pagodas at India’s only existing Chinatown in Tangra, marvel at the creations and stories of the idol makers of Kumortuli and spare some moments of solitude at Mother House—Kolkata’s offbeat attractions will leave you coming back for more. Admire the cenotaphs and epitaphs at Kolkata’s heritage Christian cemetery, visit the historical Lal Dighi and do stopover at Belvedere Road to admire India’s largest library, the National Library.

Apart from all the historic buildings, temples and museums, there are several other interesting places to visit in Kolkata.

LAL DIGHI

A large enough water body, spanning across 25 acres of land, Lal Dighi (literally translates into the Red Pond) is a lesser-known wonder of Kolkata that can have a charming effect on you. Earlier it was known as Dalhousie Square or Tank Square. The water body or tank is of historical significance because the surrounding area was also the place where the Battle of Lal Dighi was fought between Siraj-ud-Daulah and the British East India Company in 1756. The pond is said to have acquired the name during the festival of holi when the tank became red or crimson in colour.

Due to years of negligence the pond has lost its former charm and attracts very less crowd these days. However, one of the perks of a visit to the pond is a magnificent view of the Kolkata General Post Office (GPO), the Reserve Bank of India building and also the iconic Writers Building. The state government has also been pumping in money to renovate the area and restore it as a tourist attraction. Take a trip down history or capture the panoramic views of the city’s skyline—a tour of Lal Dighi will fill you with a sense of wonder.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF INDIA

The foundation of the National Library of India dates back to 1836 with the formation of the Calcutta Public Library. In 1903, it was merged with the Imperial Library for public use by Lord Curzon, former Governor General of India. After independence, it was renamed the National Library of India and opened to the public in 1953. Spread over 30 acres of land, it is India’s largest library by volume. Boasting of an extensive collection of books, (more than two million)—the library is worth visiting, for book lovers, it is a unique experience. A treasure trove of knowledge,

KOLKATA FOR THE OFFBEAT TRAVELLER



the architecture of the building exudes ultimate colonial grandeur. The building flaunts an impressive structure with tall pillars and arches. The green-coloured doors and windows against the white building is an attraction in itself. Roman beams, Corinthian pillars, off-white ceilings—all command appreciation. Dining tables, fire places and a London-made grandfather clock used by the British viceroys continue to be well preserved by the library authorities. The entire area is surrounded by thick foliage that adds to its beauty. You can undertake a walk around the campus and also capture it in your lenses. Do remember to carry your identity card while visiting the library. Given its proximity to the Alipore Zoological Gardens, you can visit the two on the same day. Once in the city of Kolkata, a tour of the National Library will keep you coming back for more.

MOTHER HOUSE

The Mother House is the erstwhile residence of probably the most renowned and inspirational female figures in Indian History—Mother Teresa. If you are searching for something more meaningful, more awe inspiring, do not forget to visit this landmark. The house was built by Mother Teresa in 1950

with the motive of selfless service to humankind and also to uplift humanity and take it towards salvation. She lived and worked in this home from 1953 till 1997 when she breathed her last.

The simplicity of the area renders a heartwarming feeling to all those who visit this place. The site of the tomb is extremely simple and humble, yet exudes a benign vibration that fills the heart with utmost gratitude. Adjacent to the building is a small museum named Mother Teresa’s Life Spirit and Message. The museum houses her belongings such as her sandals, a dinner bowl used by her, a crucifix and a few other objects. With a crown-of-thorns above her modest bed, the mother’s room is preserved in all its simplicity. It is barely 15 minutes away from the Park Street Metro Station.

CHINATOWN

Hidden between the narrow alleys of Tangra, lies Kolkata’s very own (and India’s only existing) Chinatown. The area is a landmark for the City of Joy. Though not frequented by too many tourists, the area has its own charm. If you want to experience a completely different aspect of the city and of course have some delectable Chinese

delicacies—then remember to include Chinatown in your itinerary. Chinatown has succeeded in preserving its very own customs and traditions for nearly two centuries. At the same time it has imbibed some existing Indian and Bengali customs too. Once home to several tanneries, today the area has developed a distinctive character of its own. While the tanneries have been shifted to another part of the city, Chinatown has continued to retain its oriental charm.

The brightly coloured doors of houses and dangling paper lamps impart a liveliness to the entire neighbourhood. After offering prayers at the Chinese pagodas, buy some souvenirs or authentic Chinese sauces from roadside shops (do not forget to bargain for the goods though). Once you have explored the area, head straight towards any of the food joints that Chinatown is peppered with. Opt for the prawn and crab soup, Peking duck, and the authentic Schezwan fried rice. Currently, the local residents are partnering with the Chinese community of Singapore to refurbish the area. This is being done not only to preserve Chinese heritage, but also to promote tourism. Post facelift, Chinatown should become a mandatory visit for tourists and Kolkata residents.

HAIRCUTS THAT CAN MAKE YOU LOOK YOUNGER

Who knew a change in your hair cut could bring such a drastic change to your face? Throw away those anti-aging creams and serums, we have rounded up six effortless hairstyles which would take years off your face and take you back to your youthful 20s.

THE LONG LAYERED STYLE

There are days when you probably reminisce about those long, luscious hair you had back in college. Days, when you wish that the word thin should only apply to your waist and not hair. The 40s are a weird time, with hair that is probably making you look way beyond your years.

What to do?

Keep your youth and your length by getting long layers throughout your hair. Longer layers will make your hair appear dense and voluminous. This cut will definitely give you a youthful look without cutting off your precious locks.

THE TOUSLED SHAGGY STYLE

Styling your hair every single day is no easy feat and continuing that practice daily for more than a decade? Definitely worth an award. If you feel that styling has done your locks no good and has not made any difference in your appearance, then this style is for you. Low on maintenance, stylish and a style that also makes you look younger. What more could you ask for?

What to do?

This cut works in two ways, first, it adds volume. Second, it prevents your hair from being weighed down by extra length. Chopping up excess length will make your hair bouncier and thicker. Ask your stylist for a long layer at the back and slightly uneven hair at the front. Bangs could also be added if you want to go for that extra oomph.



THE KEEP-IT-LONG BOB

A sleek, chic look is very hard to maintain owing to work schedules, family, and the shortage of time. Since most of us don't have our own glam squad to keep the bob in check, we can resort to more budget friendly options like this. Perfectly bouncy and blunt hair with no extra work. This ultra-modern bob would make you and your hair look as healthy as ever.

What to do?

The ideal length of this cut should be till your collarbone. Ask your stylist to add layers both on the front and back. With hair full at the bottom, this look would require minimum styling and would even look good air-dried.

THE PIXIE STYLE

Nothing can beat the classic pixie cut. Known to enhance shine and intensify texture, this is the go to cut if you're tired of your weirdly short but not stylish hair or if you're

looking for absolutely zero fuss and maintenance. An added bonus? Young would be the first word to describe you.

What to do?

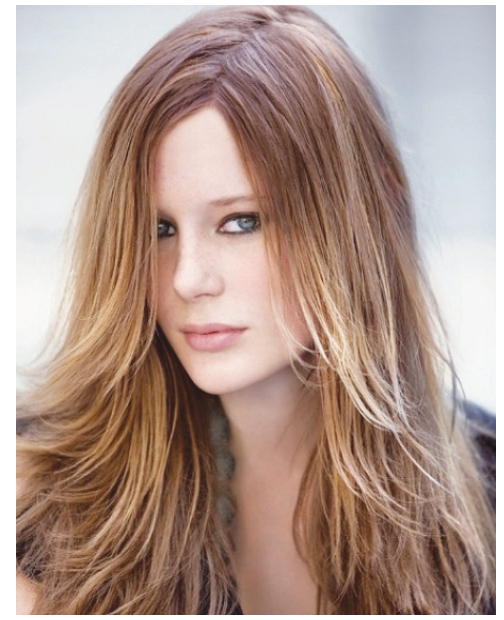
In order to get rid of damaged, chemically treated hair ask your stylist for a soft or fierce pixie cut. You could even ask them to maintain your desired length. You could step it up further by adding a little hair wax for a tousled look.

THE FLIRTY PIXIE STYLE

If pixie is not your style or if you feel it's too edgy yet you want to have the short, fuss free look, then this is the cut for you. If pixie is the edgy sister, this is the flirty one. It will give you the right amount of volume and a girlish touch.

What to do?

Ask your stylist to give you chin length hair, which will provide an illusion of fullness. Keep the edges choppy to get a more flattering look



FOOD CORNER

MAWA KACHORI

INGREDIENTS

500 gm all purpose flour, 1 kilogram sugar, 200 gm khoya,

700 ml water, 1 pinch saffron, 15 gm peeled pistachios, 15 gm peeled almonds, 2.5 cup ghee



Method

- Make a dough with all purpose flour, ghee and water and rest for 30 minutes.
- Divide into balls and stuff center with mawa, and flatten to make discs.
- Fry in ghee till golden brown. Make sugar syrup by heating water and sugar till the sugar dissolves completely.
- Just before serving dip the fried Kachoris in sugar syrup and garnish with chopped nuts.

MALAI GHEVAR

INGREDIENTS

500 gm all purpose flour, 1 1/2 litre water, 50 gm sugar, 1 gm saffron, 150 gm ghee, 1 litre milk, 5 gm powdered green, cardamom, 2 ice cubes, 20 gm chopped almonds. 10 gm chopped melon seeds, 20 gm chopped cashews, 500 gm sugar, 1 pinch saffron, 250 ml water, 3 cup ghee

Method

- Heat ghee in a heavy-bottomed pan and cool by adding ice, by this all the impurities are left behind and pure ghee gets accumulated on the surface.
- Massage the ghee nicely till it is smooth and start incorporating the flour and water slowly till you get batter.
- Heat ghee in a heavy-bottomed pan, place a circular mould and start pouring the batter in center, fry till it is golden brown.
- Now, to prepare the sugar syrup for the main dish, heat water and sugar till the sugar dissolves completely.
- Add the fried Ghevar to the warm syrup and remove.
- To make the malai, heat milk, sugar, cardamom powder and saffron and reduce to half. Cool till it thickens. Top the malai on the ghevar and garnish with chopped nuts.

WAYS TO MAKE YOUR LIPSTICK LAST LONGER

EXFOLIATION IS KEY:

No long lasting lipstick can withstand dry, chapped lips. To make your lipstick last longer, use a gentle exfoliator to remove any flaky patches and follow it up with a moisturizing lip balm. This will provide an even base to your lip color and help it last the entire day.

LINE YOUR LIPS: Lip pencils have waxier formulas in contrast to lipsticks. Because of this longer staying power, it creates a barrier that keeps the color intact within your lips. By adding this step, the lipstick will cling to your lips keeping your make-up flawless through the day. You can use a lip pencil closest to the shade of your lipstick or go for a neutral or universal lip liner. Start by outlining the lips and then fill them in using the lip pencil.

BLOT AND REPEAT: A secret among make-up artists and beauty gurus is blotting. It soaks up the excess oils and prevents the lipstick from smudging. First, tuck a tissue between your lips and apply light pressure for several seconds. Next, take some setting or translucent powder along with a fluffy brush and gently dust it on your tissue.



WHY ALMOND IS DESI SUPERFOOD?

When it comes to healthy eating, most of us are only dimly witted. Call it lack of reliable sources or an easy availability of junk alternatives, we don't even know the benefits of a nut that's in everyone's kitchens! Sure chia and sunflower seeds are good, but what about almonds? For most of us, an almond is equal to good eyesight, nothing more, nothing less. So here's a shocker, as per the traditional schools of thought of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani, almonds have innumerable benefits that include relieving menstrual cramps, loss of appetite, chronic constipation, itchy diseases and eye paralysis and palsy. These problems may not have anything in common but they have a common cure: Almonds!

To know the benefits of almonds, a study was conducted by Dr. Padma Venkatasubramanian and Dr. Subrahmanya Kumar of Trans-disciplinary University (TDU). They reviewed and published Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani texts and have documented the health benefits of almonds.

Almonds may cure male infertility

As per the conclusions drawn, according to both Ayurveda and Unani, almonds may even cure male infertility and decreased sexual desire, a concern that's growing bigger by the day in the modern times. So, here we look at the various therapeutic and pharmacological benefits that almonds have as per these three schools of thought.

Ayurveda therapeutic benefits

From diabetes-related debility to male infertility, Ayurveda has found a cure for almost everything in the magical almonds.

Ayurveda pharmacological benefits:



A handful of almonds contains

Fiber: 3.5 grams.

Protein: 6 grams.

Fat: 14 grams (9 of which are monounsaturated).

Vitamin E: 37% of the RDA.

Manganese: 32% of the RDA.

Magnesium: 20% of the RDA.

- Almonds are among the world's best sources of vitamin E. Getting plenty of vitamin E from foods is linked to numerous health benefits.

- Almonds are extremely high in magnesium, a mineral that most people don't get enough of. High magnesium intake may have major benefits for metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes.

As per this discipline, almonds can even act as a tonic if that's what your body needs or function as an aphrodisiac.

Siddha therapeutic benefits: Siddha school of thought has found almonds beneficial in therapeutic aspects only. They believe that it can cure excess heat in the body, itchiness or even eczema, besides other benefits listed above!

Unani therapeutic benefits: For

Unanis, almonds are helpful in treating anything from diseases related to the central nervous system or heavy menstrual bleeding in women.

Unani pharmacological benefits: As far as the pharmacological benefits are concerned, for this school of thought, almonds can promote an intellectual health and nourish the abdominal and thoracic viscera, besides other benefits.

Regenerative properties of Liver help tackle Hepatitis



By Dr. Pradeep Mahajan

Hepatitis causes inflammation of the liver; it can cause either acute and chronic infection or inflammation. Liver is one of the few organs in the body with regenerative properties. Hepatitis is a group of infectious disease known as Hepatitis A, B, C, D and E. As per World Health Organization (WHO), in India, 40 million people are infected with Hepatitis B and around 6 to 12 million people are infected with chronic Hepatitis C.

Hepatitis is asymptomatic, it is estimated that only 5% of people with chronic hepatitis know of their infection, and less than 1% have access to treatment. Symptoms of Hepatitis are jaundice, dark colored urine, fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. Hepatitis B, C and D are commonly transmitted through blood, semen and other body fluids. Although Hepatitis A does not generally result in chronic infection, Hepatitis B and C can increase incidence of liver cirrhosis, liver failure or liver cancer.

Vaccinations are now available for hepatitis A, B and C but Hepatitis B and C are the most common cause of liver cirrhosis and cancer, according to WHO. Dr Pradeep Mahajan, Regenerative medicine researcher, says "Liver disease can progress to cirrhosis and liver failure. The majority of the liver (80 %) is made up of liver cells called hepatocytes. These cells have an average lifespan of 150 days, which means that the liver is constantly renewing itself under normal conditions. It is only organ that can regenerate. In many countries, autologous cells therapy is used for clinically treating liver disease. The major advantage with using these cells is that because they come from the patient, there is no risk of rejection when they are transplanted back."

"Mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) are capable of promoting regeneration of liver tissue. Autoimmune hepatitis may benefit by the immune-modulatory potential of MSCs. Bone marrow MSCs have also been shown to reduce levels of liver enzymes and subsequently resolve inflammation. It is the Anti-fibrotic property of MSCs which aids in eliminating fibrotic or scar tissue that would otherwise impair vascular supply and delay regeneration".



Smoking may increase sensitivity to social stress: Study

Lighting a cigarette may not be a good way to relax and it may increase sensitivity to social stress, according to a new study by the French National Centre for Scientific Research published on Tuesday.

Researchers found that exposure to nicotine, rather than withdrawal from it, which is commonly seen as anxiety-inducing in smokers, produced a stressing effect on lab mice, reports Efe news.

"(The experiments) suggest that nicotine could enhance the effects of stress," said Philippe Faure, the centre's head of research, during the study's presentation in Paris.

Scientists from the University of Paris-Seine's Neuroscience Laboratory and the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis' Institute of Molecular and Cellular Pharmacology evaluated the levels of social stress in the rodents when exposed to nicotine. Social stress was induced when the critters were subjected to repeated aggressions by their dominant congeners.

Source: IANS

Your car may contain harmful pollutants

If you thought driving a car on a heavily polluted road may be safe, think twice. According to a new study, car cabins contain extremely high levels of some harmful particulate matter, twice the amount previously thought.

The findings showed the pollution inside the cars contained twice the amount of chemicals that cause oxidative stress, thought to be involved in the development of many diseases including respiratory and heart disease, cancer and some types of neuro-degenerative diseases.

"We found that people are likely getting a double whammy of exposure in terms of health during rush-hour commutes," said Michael Bergin, professor at the Duke University in North Carolina.

The pollutants can cause the body to produce chemicals to deal with the reactive oxygen, while particulate matter also causes the same response.

In combination, the exposure triggers an overreaction that can be destructive to healthy cells and DNA, the researchers said, in the paper published in the journal Atmospheric Environment.

To explore what drivers are actually exposed to during rush hour, researchers from strapped specially designed sampling devices -- that draws in air at a similar rate to human lungs -- into the passenger seats of cars of more than 30 different cars as they completed more than 60 rush hour commutes in downtown Atlanta.



The devices detected up to twice as much particulate matter as the roadside sensors.

It is because, "the chemical composition of exhaust changes very quickly, even in the space of just a few feet", explained Heidi Vreeland, doctoral student at the Duke University.

"And morning sun heats the roadways, which causes an updraft that brings more pollution higher into the air," Vreeland added.

"If these chemicals are as bad for people as many researchers believe, then commuters should seriously be rethinking their driving habits," Bergin added.



USER-INTERACTIVE COLOR CHANGING ELECTRONIC SKIN DEVELOPED

BEIJING (TIP): Scientists have developed a user-interactive colour changing electronic skin inspired by chameleons that could be used in robotics, prosthetics and wearables.

While science has been able to replicate the ability of animals such as chameleons, octopus and squids to change colour with artificial skin, the colour changes are often only visible to the naked eye when the material is put under huge mechanical strain.

Now, researchers from Tsinghua University in China have developed a new type of user-interactive electronic skin, with a colour change perceptible to the human eye, and achieved it with a much-reduced level of strain.

The team employed flexible electronics made from graphene, in the form of a highly-sensitive resistive strain sensor; combined with a stretchable organic electrochromic device.

Researchers explored the substrate (underlying) effect on the electromechanical behaviour of graphene.

To obtain good performance with a simple process and reduced cost, they designed a structure to use graphene as both the highly sensitive strain-sensing element and the insensitive stretchable electrode of the electric current density (ECD) layer.

"We found subtle strain - between zero and 10 per cent - was enough to cause an obvious colour change, and the RGB (red green blue) value of the colour quantified the magnitude of the applied strain," said Tingting Yang from Tsinghua University.

"Graphene, with its high transparency, rapid carrier transport, flexibility and large specific surface area, shows application potential for flexible electronics, including stretchable electrodes, super capacitor, sensors, and optical devices," said Hongwei Zhu, professor at Tsinghua University.

However, our results also show that the mechanical property of the substrate was strongly relevant to the performance of the strain sensing materials, Zhu said.

"It's important to note that the capability we found for interactive colour changes with such a small strain range has been rarely reported before. This user-interactive e-skin should be promising for applications in wearable devices, robots and prosthetics in the future," Yang added.

Source: PTI

Microsoft Paint brushed aside

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Microsoft has announced the end of days for its pioneering Paint application as it focuses on software for 3-D drawing.

Paint drawing and image processing

software that made its debut in 1985 with the Windows operating system was among the applications listed as "removed or deprecated" in a Windows 10 Fall Creators Update set for release later this year.

Features or functions on the list "are not in active development and might be removed in future releases," according to the US technology company.

For decades, Paint was among applications installed by default on Windows-powered personal computers and drew a strong following.

Fans of the application will be able to take solace in a Paint 3-D version launched early this year. Source: AFP



NEW 4D CAMERA TO BOOST ROBOT VISION, VIRTUAL REALITY

BOSTON (TIP): Stanford scientists have developed a first-of-its-kind camera which can generate information-rich four dimensional (4D) images that robots need to navigate the world.

The camera, which captures nearly 140 degrees of information, can be better than current options for close-up robotic vision and augmented reality, researchers said.

"We want to consider what would be the right camera for a robot that drives or delivers packages by air. We are great at making cameras for humans but do robots need to see the way humans do? Probably not," said Donald Dansereau, a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University in the US.

The robots have to move around, gathering different perspectives, if they want to understand certain aspects of their environment, such as movement and material composition of different objects.

The new camera could allow them to gather much the same information in a single image. The researchers also see this being used in autonomous vehicles and augmented and virtual reality technologies.

The difference between looking through a normal camera and the new design is like the difference between looking through a peephole and a window, the scientists said.

"A 2D photo is like a peephole because you cannot move your head around to gain more information about depth, translucency or light scattering," Dansereau said.



"Looking through a window, you can move and, as a result, identify features like shape, transparency and shininess," he said.

That additional information comes from a type of photography called light field photography, first described in 1996 by Stanford researchers.

Light field photography captures the same image as a conventional 2D camera plus information about the direction and distance of the light hitting the lens, creating what is known as a 4D image.

A well-known feature of light field photography is that it allows users to refocus images after they are taken because the images include information about the light position and direction. Robots might use this to see through

rain and other things that could obscure their vision.

This camera system's wide field of view, detailed depth information and potential compact size are all desirable features for imaging systems incorporated in wearables, robotics, autonomous vehicles and augmented and virtual reality.

"It could enable various types of artificially intelligent technology to understand how far away objects are, whether they are moving and what they have made of," said Gordon Wetzstein, assistant professor at Stanford.

"This system could be helpful in any situation where you have limited space and you want the computer to understand the entire world around it," Wetzstein said. Source: PTI

Moon's interior may contain water, say researchers

NEW YORK (TIP): There may be substantial amounts of trapped water in the interior of the moon, researchers have said.

By analysing satellite data, researchers at Brown University in the US discovered rich amounts of indigenous water within the volcanic deposits or within layers of rocks spread across the lunar surface after ancient volcanoes erupted on the moon, Xinhua news agency reported.

This suggests that water may be rich in the moon's mantle, the layer between the crust and the core, according to the study published in the journal Nature Geoscience.

The study's lead author, Ralph Milliken, said past findings of water on the moon did not appear to come from indigenous sources.

The moon is believed to have been formed from debris of an object that hit the Earth early in the solar system's history, but the essential hydrogen to form



water could hardly survive the heat in the formation of the moon. Li Shuai, who co-authored the story, said, "Water did somehow survive or that it was brought in shortly after the impact by asteroids or comets before the moon had completely

solidified. The exact origin of water in the lunar interior is still a big question."

The finding also sheds light on future lunar exploration as water could potentially be extracted from volcanic deposits.

AXIS BANK BUYS SNAPDEAL'S FREECHARGE FOR RS 385 CRORE

MUMBAI (TIP): After nearly a year of scouting for a buyer, struggling e-commerce firm Snapdeal today agreed to sell its payment wallet FreeCharge to Axis Bank for Rs 385 crore, almost 90 per cent lower than what it had paid for the firm in 2015.

The price paid by the third largest private sector lender for the acquisition — which will help it double the customer base and address the digitally savvy people — is also higher than what was reportedly offered by other suitors.

According to some reports, others were offering \$15-20 million for FreeCharge, which was acquired by Snapdeal for \$400 million in 2015 during heady days for the e-commerce sector in the country.

Rival e-commerce company and wallet Paytm had made an offer \$10-20 million for FreeCharge, while Amazon also made a late bid for the digital payments platform.

From business as well as value-addition angles, the deal does not make much sense as other banks have been going slow in investing in wallets after the RBI-promoted National Payments Corporation has launched UPI and IMPS applications.

Echoing similar views, Sandy Shen, a research director at Gartner, said, "Though the acquisition will give Axis Bank a jump-start in customer acquisition, whether the bank can keep growing that number is a question." "Digital wallet is a highly competitive space with dozens of players and it takes lots of efforts and resources to increase merchant acceptance and offer good services, which is key in winning over the customers," he said.

Stating that it is difficult to put a price tag for such buys, Axis Bank MD and Chief Executive Shikha Sharma said, "What we are excited about is its tech platform, its capabilities, customer base and the brand. We'd certainly like to continue with the brand."

The announcement comes at a time



Deal dynamics

- The sale price is huge markdown for Snapdeal, which acquired payment wallet FreeCharge for \$400 m in 2015
- The deal will help the third largest private sector lender to double the customer base and address the digitally savvy people
- FreeCharge clocked revenues of Rs 80 crore last year, and has a gross merchandise value of Rs 2,700 crore. Its 200 employees will be retained by Axis Bank as part of the deal

Axis Bank boss gets 3-yr extension

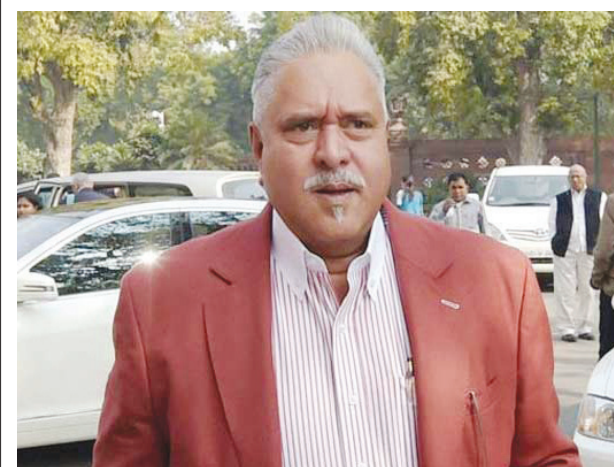
- Seeking to rest speculation, Axis Bank on Thursday re-appointed Shikha Sharma as the managing director and chief executive of the third largest private lender for a third term that will last till June 2021
- "The board, at its meeting held on Wednesday, approved the re-appointment of Shikha Sharma as the managing director and chief executive of the bank for three years, with effect from June 1, 2018," the bank said
- The unusual announcement comes over 11 months ahead of the 59-year-old banker's current term. The veteran banker is serving the second term that comes to an end in June 2018. She joined Axis Bank in 2009 with a five-year mandate which was subsequently extended
- A section of the media had first reported appointment of an executive search firm by the bank to find her successor, which was followed by another report that Tata Sons sounded her out with an offer



Shikha Sharma

when sale of parent Snapdeal to Flipkart is in the final lap and will give it headroom. "This is a win-win deal that allows Snapdeal to further focus on our core e-commerce business, while giving

Axis Bank some of the most agile and innovative capabilities in the financial services space," Kunal Bahl, Snapdeal co-founder and chief executive, said in a video call. *Source: PTI*



Vijay Mallya

Diageo asks Vijay Mallya to return \$40 m

LONDON/NEW DELHI (TIP): British liquor giant Diageo said it had asked beleaguered businessman Vijay Mallya to return \$40 million paid to him as part of the \$75 million (Rs 515 crore) sweetheart deal for his exit from United Spirits Ltd (USL).

Diageo has stopped payment of \$7 million a year to Mallya as part of the deal and sought compensation for the losses incurred by it.

The British firm had agreed to pay Mallya, who now lives in the UK after Indian banks approached courts to recover money lent to his now defunct airline, \$75 million over five years as global non-compete and non-interference fee post his exit from USL.

Citing violation of the agreement by Mallya, Diageo has also ruled out the future instalments to him, saying "it was not liable to pay such amount". "Diageo and other group companies have demanded from Mallya the repayment of \$40 million which was paid by Diageo on 25 February, 2016, and also sought compensation from him for various losses incurred by the relevant members of the Diageo group on account of the breaches committed by him," Diageo said.

Diageo has paid \$40 million of the total \$75 million on signing of the pact on February 25, 2016, while the balance \$35 million was to be paid in equal instalments of \$7 million a year over five years. This was subject to and conditional on Mallya's compliance, with certain terms, it said. *Source: PTI*

JIO EFFECT: AIRTEL Q1 PROFIT TANKS 75%

NEW DELHI (TIP): Country's largest telecom company, Bharti Airtel today posted 74.89% decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 367 crore for the June quarter of the current fiscal, hit hard by the disruptive pricing of newcomer Reliance Jio.

In contrast, its net income was Rs 1,462 crore in the April-June quarter of last fiscal, 2016-17. Total revenue fell 14% to Rs 21,958 crore in the first quarter of 2017-18, from Rs 25,546 crore in the year-ago period. "The pricing disruption in the Indian telecom market caused by the entry of a new operator continued with industry revenues declining over 15% year-on-year, creating further stress on sector profitability, cash flows and leverage," Gopal Vittal, MD and CEO, India & South Asia, Bharti Airtel said.

Hero MotoCorp Q1 net up at Rs 914.04 crore

Riding on its best-ever quarterly unit sales, two-wheeler market leader Hero MotoCorp on Tuesday reported a 3.5% increase in profit after tax at Rs 914.04 crore for the April-June quarter. Revenue from operations during the period under review stood at Rs 8,612.91 crore as against Rs 8,010.66 crore in the year-ago quarter, up 7.52%.

Vedanta profit doubles to Rs 1,525 crore

Mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd's consolidated profit after tax doubled to Rs 1,525 crore for the quarter through June, driven by strong show in zinc and oil and gas businesses, the company said on Tuesday. Total income during the quarter was at Rs 20,397 crore, an increase of 23 per cent over a year ago. The quantum jump in profit during the April-June quarter was on account of volumes and improved zinc pricing.

Amazon CEO Bezos was briefly the world's richest man

NEW YORK (TIP): Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos briefly became the world's richest man Thursday in Forbes magazine's tracking of wealth, as stock in his e-commerce company hit an all-time high.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates reclaimed the lead by afternoon, as Amazon's stock fell nearly 1 per cent for the day to \$1,046.

Amazon shares have been trading at a record high. They hit \$1,083.31 at about noon Thursday. According to securities filings, Bezos owns about 80 million shares, or 17 percent; those shares were valued at more than \$87 billion at the peak. Bezos also owns The Washington Post through a holding company.

Forbes said Bezos' net worth was about \$90.6 billion when the market opened Thursday. Gates had \$90.1 billion. Forbes said Gates would have been the undisputed leader had he not given billions of dollars away to various philanthropic causes. Bezos issued a request for philanthropic ideas in a tweet in June, just before Amazon announced a \$13.7 billion deal for organic grocer Whole Foods.

The changes in Bezos' fortune coincided with Amazon's report of a 77 percent decline in quarterly profit on heavy spending. Shares fell another 2 percent in after-markets trading as the company missed Wall Street's expectations on profit.



Bill Gates



Jeff Bezos

Amazon said it earned \$197 million, or 40 cents per share, in the second quarter, down from \$857 million, or \$1.78 per share, a year ago. Analysts surveyed by Zacks investment Research were expecting earnings of \$1.40 per share on revenue.

Revenue grew 25 percent to \$38 billion, compared with \$30 billion a year ago. That topped expectations of \$37.2 billion.

But Amazon has long been known for investing the money it makes back into its businesses. For the second quarter, Amazon reported operating expenses of \$37 billion, a 28 percent increase from a year earlier.

contd from Page 1

Obamacare Repeal Fails...

Speaker Ryan tried to reassure senators balking at the narrow bill, but he left the door open for "skinny" passage. The health insurance lobby came off the sidelines Thursday, July 27, to warn Republicans against repealing the individual mandate.

While 49 Republican Senators voted for Skinny Repeal, 3 said Nay. All 48 Democrats opposed the repeal. Senate, thus, rejected the scaled-down Obamacare repeal.

Senator John McCain, Republican of Arizona, cast a decisive vote to defeat the proposal, joining two other Republicans, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, in opposing it.

The 49-51 vote was a huge setback for the majority leader, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who has spent the last three months trying to devise a repeal bill that could win support from members of his conference.

The truncated Republican plan was far less than what Republicans once envisioned. Republican leaders, unable to overcome complaints from both moderate and conservative members of their caucus, said the skeletal plan was just a vehicle to permit negotiations with the House, which passed a much more ambitious repeal bill in early May.

The so-called "skinny" repeal bill, as it became known at the Capitol this week, would still have broad effects on health care. The bill would increase the number of people who are uninsured by 15 million next year compared with current law, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. Premiums for people buying insurance on their own would increase by roughly 20 percent, the budget office said.

The Eye Foundation of...

Dr. VK Raju, Founder and President of Eye Foundation of America described the response as very encouraging and better than the last year's. He said: "Many new faces came for the reception. Participation was better than previous year".

Speaking about the forthcoming programs of Eye Foundation of America, he said the Foundation will host an event on Oct 27 in India. People from all walks of life across the globe will come together. Mr Ravi from Sri Lanka - President of Rotary International will be the Chief Guest. Shrinu - foster child of EFA will be the guest of honor.

Nitish joins NDA, again...

blockades and protested Nitish forming the government with the BJP. Also sworn in on Thursday morning, as deputy chief minister of Bihar, was the BJP's Sushil Modi, considered by many to be the man who deflated the not-so-grand 'mahagathbandhan', or 'grand alliance'. Until Wednesday, Modi's post was held by the erstwhile alliance's Tejashwi Yadav, son of RJD chief Lalu Prasad.

Tejashwi was the cause celebre cited by Nitish as the reason for his resigning as Bihar chief minister on Wednesday evening, hours after Lalu Prasad insisted his son wouldn't resign after being named in a CBI corruption case. Soon after Nitish's resignation was accepted by Bihar governor Keshri Nath Tripathi, Sushil Modi submitted a letter to Tripathi pledging the support of 132 MLAs for Nitish to form the next government. Tripathi then set the time for Thursday's swearing-in ceremony and said Nitish has to prove his majority in the state Assembly+ within two days of being sworn in.

Tejashwi and RJD leaders also met the governor+ on Wednesday to protest the governor's decision to invite Nitish to form the government.

"RJD being the single largest party in the state should be given an opportunity to stake claim to form the government," Tejashwi said.

The JD(U), BJP, their allies and supporting independent MLAs together account for 132 seats in the 243-member Bihar Assembly, 10 more than the magic figure of 122.

The RJD has 81 MLAs, and even if the Congress with 27 MLAs and the CPI-ML with 3 decide to back Tejashwi, their number would add up to just 110.

Pranab Mukherjee bids...

"With a sense of gratitude and a prayer in my heart, I take leave of you. I leave with a sense of fulfillment and happiness of having served the people of this great country through this institution - as their humble servant," he said in his address to members of both the houses at the Central Hall of Parliament.

The 71-year-old Kovind was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice of India J S Khehar at an impressive ceremony in the Central Hall of Parliament. He took oath in the name of God and pledged to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law".

The ceremony was attended by Mukherjee, Vice President Hamid Ansari, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governors, Chief Ministers, Union Ministers, Parliamentarians diplomats and 22 members from Kovind's family. Kovind began his innings in office invoking Sardar Patel, Deendayal Upadhyay - leaders looked up by the Sangh parivar and dove-tailing their message with that of Mahatma Gandhi. Absent from the President's inaugural speech was any reference to Congress stalwarts barring those held dear by the BJP.

A section of BJP MPs raised slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' soon after Kovind was sworn-in as the President.

Upadhyaya's philosophy of 'antodyaya' was also reflected in the President's speech as he spoke of reaching the fruits of development to the "last person, in the last house in the last village." At the outset, the President said he was conscious that he was following in the footsteps of stalwarts such as Dr Rajendra Prasad, S Radhakrishnan, APJ Abdul Kalam and his immediate predecessor Pranab Mukherjee.

"We need to build an India that is an economic leader as well as moral exemplar. For us, those two touchstones can never be separate. They are and must forever be linked," said Kovind, the first leader from Uttar Pradesh to adorn the top constitutional post.

Reflecting a clear shift from the era of entitlement furthered during the UPA, the President spoke of the government being a facilitator in nation building.

"Nations are not built by governments alone. The government can at best be a facilitator, and a trigger for society's innate entrepreneurial and creative instincts. Nation building requires national pride," Kovind said.

Referring to Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel and B.R. Ambedkar, the President said these leaders did not believe that political freedom was enough. "For them, it was crucial to also achieve economic and social freedom for millions of our people," he said.

"The key to India's success is its diversity. Our diversity is the core that makes us so unique. In this land, we find a mix of states and regions, religions, languages, cultures, lifestyles and much more. We are so different and yet so similar and united," the President said. Kovind said India of the 21st century India will be in conformity with its ancient values as well as compliant with the fourth industrial revolution. "There is no dichotomy there, no question of choice. We must combine tradition and technology, the wisdom

Nitish Kumar wins trust vote in Bihar Assembly

PATNA (TIP): Nitish Kumar on July 28 won the trust vote in the Bihar Assembly a day after he took oath as Chief Minister to head the JD-U-BJP government after dumping the Grand Alliance.

In a 243-member Bihar Assembly, 131 members cast their votes in favor of Nitish Kumar and 108 went against.

The RJD staged a walk out of the House after the Nitish government won the trust vote.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, the son of Lalu Prasad Yadav, spoke first on the confidence motion and launched a scathing attack against Kumar for dumping the

Grand Alliance government.

RJD MLAs protested in the portico of Assembly, signaling their aggressive mood ahead of the trust vote.

The NDA alliance had submitted a list of 132 MLAs to the governor. These include 71 of JD(U), BJP 53, RLSP two, LJP two, HAM one and three independents.

In the 243-member Bihar Assembly, the RJD has 80 MLAs, the Congress 27 and the CPI-ML has three.

The Janata Dal-United leaders said Nitish Kumar was "calm and cool" and spent the early morning at his official residence as usual, not worried about the trust vote.

of an age-old Bharat and the science of a contemporary India." he said.

Earlier, the President-elect and his wife Savita were ceremonially escorted to the Rashtrapati Bhawan where Mukherjee took Kovind on a guided tour of the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

Pakistan Supreme...

panel in its final report recommended filing of the case against him and his children.

The six-member Joint Investigation Team (JIT), set up by the apex court to investigate charges of money laundering against 67-year-old Sharif, submitted its 60-day investigation report to the court on July 10.

It recommended filing of a corruption case against him and his children after finding "significant" disparities in their income and actual wealth.

The JIT report recommended that a corruption case should be filed against Sharif and his sons Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz, as well as daughter Maryam Nawaz, under the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) ordinance 1999. Agencies.

15 people arrested in...

They were all charged with obstructing a highway or other passageway - a Class B misdemeanor - and taken to the Travis County Jail.

Victor Taylor, a DPS spokesman, said in a news release that the protesters were arrested without incident after ignoring requests to leave the roadway they were blocking.

The group of about 40 protesters, organized by a national immigrant rights group called Cosecha, decried Paxton's June letter to President Donald Trump's administration asking it to rescind the Deferred Action Against Childhood Arrivals program - commonly known as DACA - or face a lawsuit over its legality.

The 15 people arrested during the protest sat in the middle of an intersection directly to the north of the Texas Capitol and blocked traffic for about 15 minutes. They chanted and laid out posters that read "Permanent protection. Dignity and Respect."

Four of the arrested protesters were DACA recipients. The program gives immigrants who came to the country illegally as children a two-year relief from deportation and a work permit. Around 800,000 people have benefited from the program since its implementation in 2012. Strict immigration enforcement advocates have decried it as a mini "amnesty" and urged Trump to rescind it.

Trump promised to do away with the program during the campaign trail but has waffled on the issue since.

Under the heightened immigration enforcement of the Trump administration, the four recipients of the program could face

a revocation of its benefits for the arrest.

"We know there's a lot of fear and anxiety in our communities. However, we know that we cannot put our faith and hopes in politicians," said Reyna Montoya, one of the organizers of the protest. "We have seen that victories have [only] been won when communities have put everything at risk."

Responding to the protest, Paxton wrote in a prepared statement: "We're fortunate to live in a great country where the First Amendment matters and people have the right to express their opinions freely and hold peaceful protests. It's my sworn duty to defend the Constitution and enforce the laws passed by the Texas Legislature."

Cosecha is an immigrant rights groups with operations in 20 states. Protesters on Wednesday included people who lived in El Paso and Austin, but also came from as far as Arizona, California, Florida and New York.

"We want to send a message to the American public that we are tired of how we are treated in this country," said Jose Luis Santiago, a 21-year-old recipient of the deportation relief program, who immigrated from Mexico as a child.

Protesters also rallied against Texas' recently passed "sanctuary cities" ban.

"We're here in Austin because of all the pain that politicians in this city are giving our immigrant community," said Maria Fernanda Cabello, one of the protest organizers. "We have SB 4 that's going to come into effect Sept. 1 that's going to affect all immigrants in the state, not because of your legal status, but because of the color of your skin."

Supporters of the sanctuary cities ban say the law is necessary to ensure local jurisdictions are cooperating with immigration authorities. The law, proponents say, will help ensure that immigrants who have broken the law are turned over to federal authorities and will prevent them from committing more serious crimes.

The protesters were transferred to Travis County Jail, where officials turn over unauthorized immigrants to federal immigration authorities only if they have been charged with violent crimes, such as murder, aggravated sexual assault and kidnapping. The Travis County Sheriff's Office, which operates the jail, was one of Gov. Greg Abbott's main targets during his campaign to pass the sanctuary cities ban.

The protest was mostly peaceful, but state troopers did have to forcibly move some people while redirecting traffic. A state trooper dragged a man across the asphalt for a few feet after he refused to allow a car to pass.

In the early afternoon, organizers said the 15 protesters had not yet been released. They said the 11 people who were citizens or legal permanent residents would remain behind bars until the four other arrested protesters, who are DACA recipients, were released.

Kremlin warns against 'harmful' new US sanctions on Russia

MOSCOW (TIP): The Kremlin on July 28 warned that new US sanctions on Russia would hit the interests of both sides as Congress gears up to approved fresh punitive measures.

"We consider such a continuation of the rhetoric of sanctions counter-productive and harmful to the interests of both countries," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

In mid-June, the US Senate overwhelmingly passed tough sanctions, but the text stalled in the House of Representatives, until agreement was reached on Saturday.

The House is now set to vote Tuesday on a bill that targets Russia -- for its alleged meddling in the 2016 presidential election and its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 -- as well as Iran and North Korea, for its ballistic missile tests. Initially, US President Donald Trump resisted the legislation, which would prevent him from unilaterally easing penalties against Moscow in the future -- effectively placing him under Congress's watch.

But he seems to be left with little



option but to sign off on the move as a political firestorm swirls over potential collusion between his campaign and Russia.

Peskov said the Kremlin is still waiting and watching to see if Trump will approve the measures, after White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci said the US leader was weighing his decision.

Before Trump definitively takes a decision it is too early to talk about any

potential counter measure from Moscow, Peskov said.

Ties between Moscow and Washington have slumped to their lowest since the Cold War as the US slapped sanctions on Moscow over its meddling in Ukraine.

Russia had hoped that Trump's election might ease relations between the two sides, but those prospects have dimmed in the face of a major political pushback in Washington. (AFP)

Beijing sends conciliatory signals after Doval's first meeting with his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi

BEIJING (TIP): In the first official meeting between top Indian and Chinese officials since the Doklam stand-off+ became public, national security adviser Ajit Doval met state councillor Yang Jiechi here on July 27, offering the possibility of serious diplomatic efforts to deescalate the confrontation.

Yang, who as China's state councillor overseeing foreign affairs occupies a powerful position in the state council, is the Chinese nominee in the India-China special representative level dialogue with Doval. An influential post, the state councillor is a member of the state council.

Indications of how the bilateral meeting went could be gleaned by the commentary released by the official Xinhua news agency which sent out a conciliatory signal before Doval is expected to meet Chinese president Xi Jinping+ on Friday. It spoke of the need to enhance mutual trust as the two countries are "not born rivals".

The comments released by the official Xinhua news agency made a strong plea to avoid the possibility of a war. "Most economies, including those in the West, will find themselves negatively affected by an India-China war in a globalised and intertwined world today," it said. In Delhi, the Indian government reminded China of the agreements on peace and tranquility that go back to 1993.

Yang also held separate meetings with security officials of three other countries on the sidelines of a security dialogue of BRICS nations comprising Brazil, Russia, India,

China and South Africa.

He discussed issues concerning bilateral relations, international and regional issues and multilateral affairs with the visiting security officials, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The remarks are a contrast to the hectoring tone in the comments published in publications like Global Times that are seen to reflect the views of the government.

China's official spokespersons have accused India of trespassing into Chinese territory, ignoring India's protests that the face-off near the Sikkim-Tibet-Bhutan trijunction has been caused by unilateral attempts by China to alter the ground position.

There are signs that the two neighbours might be able to scale down tensions that have spiked due to the military muscle flexing over China's bid to build a road through a plateau in Bhutanese territory.

This is the first time in weeks that the official media ran a commentary without demanding withdrawal of Indian troops from the disputed Doklam region. China has so far been insisting that troop withdrawal is a pre-condition to a "meaningful dialogue".

Doval reached Beijing on Thursday ahead of his planned meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and state counsellor Yang Jiechi on Friday.

"The recent border issue between the two countries shows a lack of strategic trust on the Indian side," Xinhua said.

It is not China but a set of problems common to all developing countries

like corruption, a lack of quality education and healthcare that is holding back India.

"India must understand that China wishes what's good for the Indian people and would love to see a strong India standing shoulder by shoulder with China," Xinhua, which reflects the government's thinking said, giving an emotional touch to the vexed relationship.

Doval's formal purpose of visiting Beijing is to attend a security dialogue of BRICS nations. He is expected to discuss the border standoff with Chinese leaders in separate meetings.

Chinese foreign ministry has said that bilateral meetings are usually held during BRICS meetings and indirectly confirmed meetings on the border issue with Doval.

"Instead of being rivals, India and China have much more common ground, common interests and common aspirations. Both as developing countries, the two need to work together on important issues like fighting climate change, protectionism and the financial privileges of Washington," Xinhua said.

It further said, "Hopefully, wisdom will guide the two countries to common prosperity. There is more than enough room for them to co-exist and thrive in Asia and in the world".

"Both China and India need to enhance communication and nurture trust between them, first by recognizing that the two are not born rivals and that harboring ill will against each other is dangerous," Xinhua added.

Russia signs deal to use Syria air base for 49 years

MOSCOW (TIP): President Vladimir Putin has signed a law ratifying a deal with the Syrian government allowing Russia to keep its air base in Syria for almost half a century, official documents show.

The original deal, signed in Damascus in January, sets out the terms under which Russia can use its Hmeymim air base in Latakia Province which it has used to carry out air strikes against forces opposing President Bashar al-Assad.

Putin approved the agreement on Wednesday, after the two chambers of the Russian parliament backed it earlier this month, according to the government's official information portal.

The document says Russian forces will be deployed at the Hmeymim base for 49 years with the option of extending that arrangement for 25-year periods.

The base has been at the heart of Moscow's military foray since it intervened in the conflict in September 2015, helping turn the tide in favour of Assad, one of Russia's closest Middle East allies. (Reuters)

Wildfires prompt 10,000 evacuations on French Riviera

MARSEILLE (TIP): Firefighters evacuated thousands of campers and local residents after a wildfire broke out on France's tourist-thronged Riviera coast overnight.

The blaze was the latest of several wind-whipped fires that are ravaging forest and scrubland on the hills and slopes that spill into the Mediterranean sea between the Marseilles and the city of Nice in the southeastern corner of France.

Not far west of the yacht-filled marinas of Saint-Tropez resort, 10,000 people were evacuated - 3,000 of them from campsites - as a fast-encroaching fire ripped through the hills of La Lodes les Manures, the Lavabo and Bromes.

"A fast-spreading fire broke out at 22:50 (2050 GMT), burning up about 800 hectares of land," the local government prefect's office said in a statement.

Hundreds of firefighters fought the blaze with planes and helicopters dropping tonnes of water on the tinder box hills where fires regularly break out in summer time, often as a result of a carelessly discarded cigarette butt.

Thousands of hectares of land have been devastated by flames since the start of the week, although Tuesday night's evacuation was far larger than other more minor ones where dozens of people and horses were moved to safety from fast-encroaching infernos.

High winds risked whipping up more fires, said the prefect's office of the Vary region, where most of the blazes are located.

So far there have been no deaths reported in the summertime wildfires, unlike in other countries such as Portugal where they have killed dozens (Reuters)

China steps up warning to Botswana over Dalai Lama visit

BEIJING (TIP): China stepped up its warning to Botswana on July 27 over a planned visit by exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama next month, demanding the African nation respect China's core interests.

The Dalai Lama, reviled by Beijing as a dangerous separatist, is expected to address a human rights conference in the capital, Gaborone, on August 17-19 and will also meet Botswana's president. China is a major investor in Botswana's economy.

China has already "clearly" expressed its point of view about the Dalai Lama's visit, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a daily news briefing.

"Issues relating to Tibet concern China's sovereignty and territory integrity. We demand the relevant country earnestly respect China's core interests and make the correct political decision on this matter," Lu said, using stronger language than before on the issue.

"China will not interfere in other countries' internal affairs, but will certainly not tolerate another country doing anything that harms China's core interests," he added, without elaborating.

The Dalai Lama, who fled from Tibet into exile in India in 1959 following a failed uprising against Chinese rule, has long been at loggerheads with China, which sent its troops into Tibet in 1950.

The Dalai Lama, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, denies he is seeking independence for his Himalayan homeland. He says he is merely seeking greater rights, including religious freedom and genuine autonomy. Visits by the Dalai Lama to foreign countries infuriate China. (Reuters)

BCCI HAS NO ROAD MAP TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S CRICKET

NEW DELHI (TIP): So, what's next for the Indian women's cricket team that made the final of the World Cup? And what lies in store for several young girls who want to play for the country? Sadly, cricket administrators have no answers to these crucial questions, at least right now.

The Committee of Administrators (CoA) and women cricketers hope the Indian cricket board (BCCI) will ensure that the wave of popularity the women cricket is riding at present does not fizzle out. The board, caught in a fight for survival in the wake of the Lodha Committee's recommendations, doesn't seem to have women's cricket on its priority list, so much so that nobody knows when the women's team will play their next match. "We don't know when we would assemble for our next series," said a member of the World Cup squad.

A BCCI office-bearer said: "Everyone is looking to save his chair at the moment. We don't know who will be in, and who will be out. We are uncertain of our own future, so how can we promise something to the women's team?"

The World Cup squad was felicitated by the board in New Delhi today; each player was given a cheque for Rs 50 lakh. Later, Railways Minister Suresh Prabhu announced Rs 13 lakh each for the 10 players employed with the department.

Demand for women's IPL

Following India's spirited performance in the World Cup, the demand for starting an IPL-like tournament for women is growing. Besides, women cricketers want a Future Tours Programme (FTP) in place, as is there for their male counterparts. "If women's IPL happens, players from other countries will come and play here. Sharing the dressing room with international players will



Indian women's cricket team that made the final of the World Cup.

boost the confidence of local players," said Harmanpreet Kaur. "Similarly, more international fixtures will help the team prepare for the next World Cup."

Edulji wants league next year

CoA member and former India captain Diana Edulji advocated the need for a T20 league and an organised tournament calendar. "Apart from felicitations, cash awards and government jobs, where are we heading next? Is this all we want, or do we want to build on this momentum?" Edulji asked. Edulji knows she doesn't have much time to turn her ideas into reality since CoA isn't going to last forever. "In 3-4 months, I would like to put in place a system for women cricketers. Maybe, by next year, BCCI would be able to start a T20 league (for them)," said Edulji.

No talent pool, sponsors

It's not going to be easy, though. BCCI

cites the lack of a talent pool in women's cricket as a stumbling block to start a T20 league. "Name 30 Indian women cricketers who we can put in the players' auction in case we start the league? Apart from these 15-20 girls, no other name comes to mind. Also, there are no sponsors. Corporates are not ready yet to invest in these girls. These girls can play the Big Bash League in Australia like Harmanpreet and Smriti Mandhana," said a BCCI official.

But isn't it BCCI's responsibility to find sponsors and arrange funds for women's cricket? Shouldn't the board be organising more inter-school, inter-college, inter-university, inter-district and inter-state tournaments for women cricketers on a regular basis to increase the talent pool? Yes, the board has recently provided central contracts to women cricketers, besides enhancing their daily allowance. But there's a long way to go before women's cricket can come even close to men's in terms of facilities, structures and rewards.

Source: *The Tribune*

BCCI gets bolder, raises objection to five key reforms

NEW DELHI (TIP): In another act of brazen defiance, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) decided against implementing the contentious age, tenure and cooling-off recommendations at its Special General Meeting (SGM) here today. BCCI, after showing intent over the past few weeks to implement most of the recommendations made by the Lodha Committee, did a complete U-turn at its SGM, with the participating representatives of the state units unanimously voicing their objection to five "difficult and impractical" reforms.

The five recommendations the officials objected to are: matters pertaining to membership (one-state one-vote); demarcation of the functions of the elected office-bearers and the appointed executives; size of the proposed Apex Council (BCCI wants to increase the number of its members to six from five); size of the national selection panel (BCCI wants a five-member selection panel while the Lodha Committee had recommended a three-member body); and, most importantly, the age, tenure and cooling-off period. The resolution was passed unanimously.

BCCI's objection to the recommendations pertaining to the age, tenure and cooling-off period is likely to invite the Supreme Court's wrath at the all-important September 5 hearing. The hearing scheduled for August 18 would revolve around two issues — filling the two vacant posts of the Committee of Administrators (CoA), and looking into the difficulties, as pointed out by BCCI today, in implementing the Lodha reforms.

BCCI also has problems with the 'conflict of interest' recommendation and certain words like "friends", "relatives" and "associates" in the clause. It has demanded more clarification from the SC on the issue. The other objection BCCI came up with was regarding the "restriction on government servants" to join BCCI and its state units. "Railways has to be represented by a government servant, so how could you bar someone? We want more clarity from the SC," acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary said. "This list of difficulties will be submitted to the Supreme Court. We will give a copy of the adopted resolution to CoA for its consideration," Choudhary added.

It's been more than a year since the top court directed BCCI to implement the recommendations in "totality". The board, however, has managed to defy the order so far. "It's clear that former BCCI president N Srinivasan is still calling the shots despite being barred by the Supreme Court from attending the SGM."

Source: *The Tribune*



BACK WITH A BANG

Dhawan smashes a career-best 190 in his comeback match; Pujara hits his 12th ton

GALLE (TIP): Shikhar Dhawan smashed a career-best 190 on his Test return and Cheteshwar Pujara hit 144 not out to put India on course for a massive first innings total in the first Test against Sri Lanka on Wednesday. The duo scored 253 runs for the second wicket, with Dhawan playing the aggressor and Pujara the accumulator as India dominated the opening day to reach 399/3 at stumps. Ajinkya Rahane was batting on 39 with Pujara, their fourth-wicket association already worth 113 runs at the Galle International Stadium.

With regular openers Murali Vijay and Lokesh Rahul indisposed, Dhawan and Abhinav Mukund opened the Indian innings after captain Virat Kohli opted to bat in the first match of the three-Test series. Mukund fell for 12 to Nuwan Pradeep, but Dhawan grabbed the opportunity with both hands. The 31-year-old was on 31 when

he lashed at Lahiru Kumara, only for Asela Gunaratne to spill the catch at second slip.

Compounding Sri Lanka's crisis, Gunaratne had to be rushed to Colombo with a fractured thumb and looks certain to miss the remainder of the Test, and possibly the series. Dhawan did not look back after the reprieve and toyed with the Sri Lankan attack, pulling the pacers and sweeping the spinners freely.

A sweep off Dilruwan Perera brought up his fifth Test century off just 110 balls. India scored nearly run-a-ball after lunch with Dhawan plundering 100-plus runs in one session for the second time in his career.

The 31-year-old was cruising towards his maiden Test double century when he threw away his wicket, stepping out to slap a Pradeep delivery straight to Angelo Mathews

HIGHLIGHTS

- Shikhar Dhawan matches Bradman, Sehwag's record
- Dhawan is 3rd batsman to score 100 runs in single session twice
- Dhawan smashed 190 off 168 balls on Day 1 of the 1st Test

at mid-off. Pujara, on the other hand, played with characteristic assuredness to bring up his 12th Test century, which included 12 boundaries.

Pradeep claimed his third wicket when he dismissed Kohli for three with a short ball when Rangana Herath, leading Sri Lanka in the absence of ailing Dinesh Chandimal, challenged the original not-out decision.

Source: *Reuters*

"|| SHRI GANESHAYA NAMAHA ||"



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Predictions for the month of AUGUST, 2017

Today there is computerized voice type analysis. My observation is you, Scorpio, Taurus and Libra are blessed with the baritone which persuades people to do your bidding. This is certainly yoga time or yoke time or partnerships of all possible sorts. I suggest yoga and partnership with God will be exceptionally fruitful. Enjoy it. Life is sweet but short.

Aries

Ganesha says - A larger canvas for you this month. You reach out in every way you can - from meetings and rendezvous to fax, email, voice-mail, the works, in short. Not just to people, please remember, but places. The environment, eco-concerns, wider issues also keep you busy. And how: A huge level of awareness and commitment is to be seen in you this week. You are the world, now. Not in confrontation but in fine accord.

Taurus

The growing awareness of last month develops further. After the pleasures and pain of the material plane, your mind is irresistibly drawn to a higher level. You set your sights on a higher and superior consciousness, spirituality, the cosmic cycle of karma. Also, research, higher studies and imbibing knowledge for its own sake. Travel of the mind, and perhaps actual journeys, too, not just spiritual ones, keep you firmly anchored in this world even while you seek another. Conference, business meets, seminars, study tours, pilgrimages.

Gemini

A somewhat taxing and certainly demanding month lies ahead. A little stress may develop. You could be over-wrought perhaps about unfairness in your work / business and somewhat depleted in health. At the same time, there are useful discussions, meaningful dialogues with those to whom you can reveal your innermost thoughts. Perhaps a mystery could be revealed. The possibility is there, says Ganesha.

Cancer

A strengthening of commitment comes now - and it's really needed, too. Money will be easy, though not wonderful. Nor will your health. More rest will be very desirable to you as once again, all kinds of pulls could level you feeling as if your batteries are running low and you just can't cope with all that you're required to do. Your faith will energize you, as will your warm interactions with loved ones. Once again you focus very definitely on home, family, property, in several ways.

Leo

A time when Ganesha endows you with a large measure of satisfaction, the belief that you're going the right way to a better life. Harmony and contentment are your goals now. All that the preceding forecast was about is now sought to be put into action, or motion, by you. You get off to a dramatic, stylish start in the work arena. You are redefining your attitudes to home and career, refocusing on fresh goals in terms of advancement.

Virgo

A truly fine period, again, in which you find satisfaction in all spheres - work, family, love and marriage. You gain in effortless ways both at home and at work. Understanding and rapport with people who are part of your personal "think-tank" lends to an energizing effect on both money matters and affairs of the heart. You work with equal zest and energy as you play.

Libra

Energy, inspiration, enthusiasm all comes to you in a torrent with this new moon. The operative word here is new - most definitely. It's ideal for creating a new product / project / venture / piece of art / book / a symphony / poem. Creativity manifests itself even in getting a new job or a new addition to the family. Also, a wonderful time for those in the media, publicity, writing, copywriting, the e-world (and that in itself is really a universe, isn't it?)

Scorpio

A typical Scorpio with its emphasis on faith, religion, spirituality. You feel an urge to live less in the material world and more in the spiritual, but it is material concerns that will force themselves on your attention. Finances, joint-funds, debts and loans will all have to be dealt with or handled in some form or the other. If not your own, they could pertain to the family interactions of the last week.

Sagittarius

Much comes to you now, and in easy, harmonious ways; you don't have to struggle to achieve. Your efforts produce effects far beyond your expectations. Fun and games are embraced joyfully in a spirit of celebration. Don't let go of the cleanliness of communication and sharing you've established with those around you - friends as well as workmates. You realize and appreciate the role of good people in your life.

Capricorn

Solid gains - in this world and the higher one too make it a week of progress. You ponder on deeper questions, undertake further study / training / orientation and gain much in terms of ultimate wisdom and maturity. Good ideas at work, solid interaction with friends, family, mate or lover, all add to the creation of deeper ties. So, travel and ties with a whole new connotation. Not armchair travelling, but travel of the spirit.

Aquarius

Right now, you're really a fine person to know and this will continue, since it's a trend for the month. You are full of grace in your public position, and exercise authority with affection and charm. And that is probably the least of your gains, though it brings mind-bogglingly good results at work and in the family scene. You feel a little more internal, more reflective, more introspective.

Pisces

Your spiritual and emotional growth has been steady and sustained. It's a much larger canvas that you are painting on, once again, leaving your own individual imprint. You function as a part of a group or social organization, see your place in the world order and open up the vistas of your mind. Original studies, research, higher learning, these, hypothesis - even the media, and particularly television - are all part of your sphere.

Bejan Daruwalla is world's most famous astrologer today. He appears regularly on world wide TV shows. Bejan who has been a professor in English, has authored a number of books on astrology. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 29, 2012, lunched one of Bejan's books, '2012- End of the World? Bejan contributes to a number of journals and

newspapers in many parts of the world which include Berkley Communications (London) Times of India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai) and The Indian Panorama (New York and Texas). Bejan's predictions have mostly been correct and people the world over rely on his predictions.

Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwalla.com and on phone 011-91-9825470377 www.bejandaruwalla.com



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