

India's Budget focuses on farm sector, gives little to middle class

National Health Protection scheme announced



India's Finance Minister Arun Jaitley speaks on budget 2018, flanked by Nitin Gadkari on his right and nonagenarian Lal Krishna Advani on his left.

NEW DELHI (TIP): In his last budget before general elections, India's Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Feb 1 unveiled a slew of measures for agriculture as well as the rural sector and announced a new health insurance scheme for the poor but provided little relief to the middle class.

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Trump calls for bipartisanship even as he sticks to his avowed agenda in State of the Union address

Immigration, border wall, infrastructure, strong military among priorities

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): In his lengthy State of the Union address on January 30 night, Trump doubled down on themes which he has embraced since his campaign for the presidency. He again pushed for stricter immigration laws and the building of a "great wall" along the U.S. border with Mexico. He also repeated his call for an end to family-based immigration, connecting immigration to crime, saying that "loopholes" in the immigration system had allowed gangs to proliferate. Democrats and many in his own party may not agree with this view though.

But in a marked departure from his earlier rhetoric, Trump also tried to

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President Trump, in his first State of the Union address on January 30 night called for bipartisanship even as he pushed an agenda not to the liking of his political opponents. Seen behind the President are Vice President Mike Pence (left) and Speaker Paul Ryan (right).

INDIAN AMERICANS CELEBRATE REPUBLIC DAY WITH ENTHUSIASM ACROSS US



Ambassador Navtej Sarna paying floral tributes at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of 69th Republic Day of India on January 26, 2018.

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Indian American community in the US celebrated the 69th Republic Day of India with much enthusiasm. From a small township in mid-West or down South to mega cities of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington, Republic Day celebrations were organized by the Indian missions, Indian community activists and organizations.

A Political Storm imminent in the event of release of classified Nunes memo

WASHINGTON (TIP): Despite objections of Democrats and the FBI, President Trump is expected to make public Friday, February 2, a classified memo about the Russia investigation, which was written by the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, which is bound to result in a political storm. The impending release of the memo has touched raw nerves in Washington. Throughout the day on Thursday, February 1 the White House batted down rumors

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Indian community stays busy with Hindu American Foundation gala

DALLAS (TIP): Hinduism is the world's oldest living religion and the third largest behind Christianity and Islam. There are about 1 billion followers, with more than 2 million living in America.

Samir Kalra shared information about the religion with more than 200 guests at the Hindu American Foundation Dallas Chapter's dinner Saturday, January 28 in Irving. From the foundation's San Francisco office, Kalra was one of the speakers. He talked about the nonprofit's growth but also the need for funds. The foundation needs to increase its budget to keep up with its growth, he said. Based in Washington, D.C., the organization has six chapters nationwide with a paid staff of 12. Its mission is to promote "dignity, mutual respect and pluralism."

The keynote speaker was Shalini Kantanya, a New York-based filmmaker and environmentalist. She gave a presentation on the importance of saving the planet that included clips from her films. A recent film, *Catching the Sun*, premiered at the Los Angeles Film Festival and was named a 2016 New York Times Critics' Pick. It's available on Netflix. One part of the event included recognizing a devoted teacher. Mona Chadha, who teaches physics at Conrad High School in Dallas, received the Community Award. The evening ended with a buffet dinner of Indian food.

To learn more about the foundation, visit www.hafsite.org.

(Source: Dallas News Community Blog)



Filmmaker Shalini Kantanya gave a presentation on the importance of saving the planet

Indian American lawmakers strongly criticize Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric



US Senator Kamala Harris and Representatives Pramila Jayapal, Ro Khanna, Ami Bera and Raja Krishnamoorthi have strongly criticized Trump's speech at the State of the Union address

WASHINGTON (TIP): All Indian Americans in Congress, much like their Democratic congressional colleagues, strongly criticized Trump's State of the Union address. Reiterating his position on immigration and young Dreamers, Trump said the \$25 billion border wall that

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Indian American innovation pioneers inducted into the prestigious National Inventors Hall of Fame

WASHINGTON (TIP): Two Indian American innovation pioneers Arogyaswami Paulraj and Sumita Mitra have been inducted into the prestigious National Inventors Hall of Fame this year for their MIMO wireless technology and for nanocomposite dental materials respectively.

Paulraj and Mitra along with 13 other innovation pioneers would be formally felicitated during the innovation industry's most highly anticipated event "The Greatest Celebration of American Innovation" on May 2-3 organized in partnership with the US Patent and Trademark Office.

National Inventors Hall of Fame, releasing its list of 2018 inductees, said Paulraj's wireless technology has revolutionized broadband wireless Internet access for billions of people worldwide. MIMO (Multiple-Input Multiple-Output) improves both transmission data rates and expands network coverage. It is the essential foundation for all current (Wi-Fi and 4G mobile) and future broadband wireless communications.

"It is a wonderful honor. I feel enormously humbled to be counted among the inventors who have made the modern world possible," Paulraj said. Last month, he assumed a chairmanship of the Department of Telecom's Steering Committee "to deliberate and finalize Vision, Mission, Goals and Roadmaps for 5G India 2020." "We in India are truly privileged to have Dr Paulraj guiding the DoT and the Government of India at this point in time and for taking the time out to help us put India on the 5G global map, Telecom Secretary Aruna Sundararajan said in a statement issued by IndiaTechOnline.

Paulraj said, "I have always felt that India needs to join the club of countries like US, China, Europe, South Korea and Japan that dominate communications and computing technology."

Paulraj said when he joined Stanford in 1992, he had not worked in wireless technology, since his prior years in India were spent on sonar systems with brief forays into AI and Computing.

"It was perhaps being an outsider that helped me come up with this transformative idea. Like many big breakthroughs, MIMO faced significant skepticism for a few years, but it eventually took off and is now the foundation of all wireless systems," he



Sumita Mitra (left) and Arogyaswami Paulraj have been inducted into the prestigious National Inventors Hall of Fame 2018 for their inventions

Paulraj and Mitra along with 13 other innovation pioneers would be formally felicitated during the innovation industry's most highly anticipated event "The Greatest Celebration of American Innovation" on May 2-3 organized in partnership with the US Patent and Trademark Office.

said. Paulraj joins eight other famed inventors in wireless technology, inducted to the Hall of Fame: Guglielmo Marconi, Oliver Lodge (Wireless Telegraph), Reginald Fessenden (AM radio), Edwin Armstrong (FM Radio), Amos Joel (Cellular tech), Andrew Viterbi and Irwin Jacobs (CDMA 3G), Jan Haartsen (Bluetooth).

US patent holding wireless pioneers include another Indian -- Dr Jagdish Chandra Bose for his breakthrough work in radio and microwave optics in 1904.

Born in Pollachi, Tamil Nadu, in 1944, Paulraj joined the Indian Navy at age 15. Impressed with his academic record, the Navy sent him to the Indian Institute of Technology (Delhi), where he earned a Ph. D for advances to signal filtering theory.

He served the Indian Navy for 25 years where he led the development of the world-class APSOH sonar, one of India's

most successful military development projects.

He also founded three national laboratories spanning High Speed Computing, AI and Robotics and Military Electronics.

He joined Stanford University in 1992 where he did all of his work on MIMO. Currently professor emeritus at Stanford, Paulraj holds 79 patents and has won several global distinctions.

These include both the two top global honors for telecom pioneers the 2011 IEEE Alexander Graham Bell Medal and 2014 Marconi Prize and Fellowship. In 2010, he was awarded with Padma Bhushan. Mitra, 69, has been inducted for invention and US patents for the noncomposite dental filling material Filtek Supreme Restorative, used in over 600 million procedures so far.

In the late 1990s, Mitra, a chemist at 3M Oral Care, the dental products division of 3M Company, invented the first dental filling material to include nanoparticles.

The new composite filling material, called Filtek Supreme Universal Restorative, is a versatile material that could be used for restoring teeth in any area of the mouth; mimicked the beauty of natural teeth; had better polish retention; and exhibited superior strength than existing dental composites.

Mitra holds 98 US patents and their international equivalents. Her inventions have led to a number of breakthrough dental technologies, including nanocomposites, resin-modified glass ionomers and dental adhesives.

Other products that have resulted from her innovations include Vitermer and Vitrebond Resin-modified Glass Ionomers, RelyX Luting Cements, Scotchbond Multipurpose Adhesive and APC Orthodontic Bracket Adhesive.

She earned her BS in chemistry from India's Presidency College, her MS in organic chemistry from the University of Calcutta and her PhD in organic/polymer chemistry from the University of Michigan. Mitra retired in 2010 after more than 30 years with 3M, and now runs Mitra Chemical Consulting LLC with her husband. A former Science Coach for the American Chemical Society, she also maintains a close relationship with the Minnesota Dental Research Center for Biomaterials and Biomechanics at the University of Minnesota of which she was Industrial Director for nearly ten years.

Indian Origin Techie Found Dead in Apartment in Dallas

Venkannagari Krishna Chaitanya, who came to the US three years ago, was working on a project with a well-known multinational software company, according to reports. He was staying as a paying guest in Arlington.



ARLINGTON, DALLAS (TIP): An Indian Origin software engineer from Telangana was found dead at his apartment in Dallas, on the weekend. Venkannagari Krishna Chaitanya, 30, did not come out of his room on Friday, January 26. The next day, his landlord called the police, who broke into the room and found him dead on his bed.

Chaitanya, who came to the US from Telangana's Siddipet three years ago, was working on a project with a well-known multinational software company, according to reports. He was staying as a paying guest in Arlington.

His family has been informed about his death; the police are yet to establish how he died. Chaitanya's father, Srinivasulu, is a senior bank officer in India.

The family met with Siddipet lawmaker T Harish Rao, who is a state minister, asking for help to bring the body back. The Telangana government has reportedly written to the Indian Consul General in Houston and also requested the central government to facilitate faster return of Chaitanya's body.

Indian American 'Dreamer' the first such to join New Jersey Bar Association

NEW JERSEY (TIP): Lawyer Parthiv Patel, an Indian American recipient of the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals Act (DACA) became the first such individual to be admitted to the New Jersey Bar Association. He had come to the United States from India at the age of 5 years.

New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, the first Sikh to hold this position in the United States, administered the oath of office on Jan. 24 to Parthiv Patel, who had passed the bar exams of New Jersey and Pennsylvania in 2016. He was initially denied membership to the bar but was admitted later after a successful appeal with the help of American Civil Liberties Union.

"We're making it absolutely clear today that we will use all of the tools of the attorney general's office to protect the rights of 'Dreamers' like Parthiv, to enjoy that American dream, and to ensure the safety and well-being of all New Jerseyans regardless of their immigration status," Grewal said at the inauguration attended by New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy.

Murphy announced that New Jersey would be joining a multi-state lawsuit challenging President Donald Trump's decision to end the DACA Act.

"Today I stand here with one message: Dreamers are Americans. We are fifth-graders alongside your children in the school play. We are your friends and your colleagues. And we are your doctors and your accountants and now in New Jersey, your lawyers," Patel said, according to PTL. "The process of getting admitted to practice law has been daunting, but today's ceremony is a reminder of the reason I've strived so hard to become a lawyer: to use my training and abilities to uplift others. In a climate of anxiety, it's a comfort to know that we 'Dreamers' are not alone in this fight."

ACLU-NJ Senior Supervising Attorney Alexander Shalom said: "Parthiv's long wait for bar admission shows the type of obstacles that 'Dreamers' are up against, and at the same time, his determination and altruistic spirit in the face of uncertainty demonstrate the best that New Jersey and America have to offer."

The DACA or Dreamers program protects around 800,000 people from being deported. It covers people who were brought to the United States illegally as children. In New Jersey alone, there are



Lawyer Parthiv Patel was administered the oath of office on Jan. 24 by New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, the first Sikh to hold this position in the United States. Patel was earlier denied membership to the bar because of his immigrant status.

around 22,000 DACA members who could lose their employment and homes if the program is ended. Corporations, tech lobbies, and several states in America have appealed towards continuing the Obama-era program.

Trump recently said, "Tell them not to worry. We are going to solve the problem. It's up to the Democrats, but they should not be worried. We're going to morph into it. It's going to happen." Trump added that DACA recipients could become citizens "at some point in the future, over a period of 10 to 12 years."

After a federal judge ruled that applications should be renewed until the litigation is continuing, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) resumed the renewal process. However, those who have never applied still have no reprieve.

Indian American Ben Rekhi's film to be screened at Cinequest festival

TWO INDIAN FILMS WILL ALSO FEATURE AT THE SILICON VALLEY FILM FESTIVAL, WHICH WILL BE HELD FROM FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 11.

SAN JOSE (TIP): Indian American filmmaker Ben Rekhi's movie *The Ashram* will be screened at the upcoming Cinequest film and VR festival to be held in the Silicon Valley from February 27 to March 11.

The 28th edition of the festival will also screen two Indian films, *Love and Shukla* and *Purdah*.

The Ashram revolves around the life of Jamie, an American skeptic, following the trail of his lost girlfriend to a mystical Himalayan community. His quest to find Sophie leads him to an ashram where an evocative cast of characters, including Nitin (played by Kal Penn), awaits. He has reason to suspect everyone but needs to trust each to help him.

Besides Penn, the film features several prominent actors, including Sam Keeley, Hera Hilmar, Oscar winner Melissa Leo and Indian actress Radhika Apte. Shot in various locations in India, the screenplay was written by Binky Mendez and Rekhi.

Rekhi, son of noted venture capitalist Kanwal Rekhi, graduated from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. His *Waterborne* had won a Special Audience Award at the 2005 SXSW Film Festival. He is a producer of and director of photography of *Bomb the System* (2002).

Indian filmmaker Siddhartha Jatla's *Love and Shukla* portrays the life of a rickshaw driver in Mumbai, the country's financial capital.

Shukla, a rickshaw driver, deals with a



Ben Rekhi
(image via YouTube screen capture)

multitude of passengers on the roads of city. Some of them take advantage of him, but they can't rob him of his prized possession - his decency. A new marriage and a pretty bride bring up many unanticipated challenges. Before *Shukla* can get lucky, he has to grab life by the horns.

Saharsh Kumar Shukla and Tanea Rajawat play the lead roles in the Hindi drama penned by Siddhartha Jatla and Amanda Mooney.

Purdah, a documentary directed by Jeremy Guy, portrays the struggles of 20-year-old Kaikasha and her two sisters, who are

Muslims.

Their father wants them to wear burkas and to have arranged marriages, but these determined young women have dreams of their own. This beautiful and rousing story follows Kaikasha in her quest to be the first Muslim on the Mumbai women's cricket team and then follows her into a corridor of uncertainty after a shocking turn of events changes the fate of her family.

The 13-day festival will screen 258 film and virtual reality works from 45 countries. The invitees and attendees will also get a chance to experience virtual reality as a new medium of story-telling at its curated VR Cinema and VR Experience Lounge.

This year's program includes 74 World and 55 US premiering films, starring award winning actors including past Maverick Spirit Award winners William H. Macy, Rosario Dawson and Peter Fonda, as well as Kal Penn, Michelle Pfeiffer, James McAvoy, Hilary Swank and Stanley Tucci.

"We've seen the power of film to not only delight and entertain, but spark awareness, create connections and galvanize communities," Halfdan Hussey, co-founder of Cinequest said in a statement.

"Our theme for this year's festival is 'Impact', reflected by the exceptional films, VR, and interactions with the torchbearers in entertainment and technology-programmed to give our audience a venue for engagement and empowerment," he added.

Indian American woman sues Movie Producer for sexual harassment



Disgraced mogul movie producer Harvey Weinstein finds yet another woman to sue him for sexual harassment. This time it is an Indian American Sandeep Rehal, his former personal assistant

NEW YORK (TIP): Disgraced mogul movie producer Harvey Weinstein has been sued by his former Indian American personal assistant who has alleged that she was subjected to sexual exploitation and a "sexually hostile" work environment while working for him.

Sandeep Rehal, who was Weinstein's personal assistant for two years from 2013 to 2015, has sought trial by jury in an 11-page lawsuit.

For over two years Rehal was "forced to work in a pervasive and severe sexually hostile" work environment at Weinstein's company and "defined by endless offensive, degrading, and sexually harassing actions, statements, and touching at the hands of her boss," alleges a lawsuit filed in the Southern District Court of New York on January 25.

A day later, on Friday, the court issued summons to Weinstein and his company to respond to the charges within 21 days.

The 65-year-old film producer has been facing a number of other sexual allegations, many of whom have been widely reported in the US media including in the New York Times.

The lawsuit alleged that Rehal "had to pick up Harvey Weinstein's used Caverject shots, which he tossed on the floor in his office, hotel rooms and his apartment".

She also had to "pick up his used condom and clean up rooms" and semen off his couch, before housekeeping personnel would do their work, the lawsuit charges.

"Rehal was required to be involved in and aware of the preparations for, and clean up after, Harvey Weinstein's extremely prolific sexual encounters," it alleged.

"Throughout her employment with Defendants Ms Rehal was required, as a condition of her employment, to work with Harvey Weinstein when he was naked. On an almost weekly basis, she was required to take dictation of emails from him while he was naked," the lawsuit alleged.

Weinstein subjected Rehal to "unwelcome touching", the lawsuit alleges.

Almost every time she accompanied Weinstein in his chauffeured Lexus SUV, he made her sit in the back with him and touched her thigh.

"After Ms Rehal started wearing pants instead of skirts, Harvey Weinstein would rub between her thighs. When Ms Rehal sat crosslegged in an attempt to prevent him from being able to touch her thigh, Harvey Weinstein would touch the back of her legs and butt," the lawsuit alleged.

Indian American CEOs attend Trump's Davos dinner

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND (TIP): Two Indian American CEOs were among the delegation of business leaders who attended a dinner hosted by President Donald Trump in Davos, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, on Thursday, January 25th.

Vas Narasimhan, Global Head of Drug Development and Chief Medical Officer for Novartis, and Punit Renjen, CEO of Deloitte, were among the 15-member European business delegation that attended the dinner.

Narasimhan has been Global Head of Drug Development and Chief Medical Officer for Novartis since February 2016. He is a member of the Executive Committee of Novartis. One February 1, 2018, he will become Chief Executive Officer of the company.

Narasimhan previously was Global Head of Development for Novartis Pharmaceuticals, overseeing the entire general medicines pipeline.

He has also served as Global Head of the Sandoz Biopharmaceuticals and Oncology Injectables business unit, Global Head of Development for Novartis Vaccines, North America Region Head for Novartis Vaccines, and United States Country President for Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics. Before joining Novartis in 2005, he worked at McKinsey & Company.

Renjen is in his 31st year with the Deloitte organization and became the CEO of Deloitte Global in June 2015. He is also a member of the Deloitte Global Board of Directors. He has also served as Chairman of Deloitte LLP (US member firm) from 2011-2015.

Outside of Deloitte, Punit is a member of the boards of directors at United Way Worldwide (chairman), U.S.-India Business Council (vice chairman), and Japan Society; and is a founding member of the Lincoln Center India Advisory Council.

Rajeev Suri, who is the CEO of Nokia, was also present at the dinner.

The US delegation was attended by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielson, National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster, and Gary Cohn, director of the National Economic Council.

Trump thanked all the business leaders and urged them to invest in the US. The guests praised Trump for passing the GOP tax cut bill.



Two Indian American CEOs were among European Business Delegation Trump hosted to a dinner on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum

Indian American Tech Firm Owner Indicted for Bribing US Official

The indictment alleges that Parimal Mehta paid bribes to Charles Dodd in exchange for preferential treatment for his company, FutureNet, which received approximately \$7.5 million from Detroit in 2015 and 2016.

MICHIGAN (TIP): An Indian American and former CEO of an IT company based in Detroit, has been indicted for his alleged role in orchestrating a scheme to bribe a city official in lieu of benefits, the Department of Justice said.

According to the 11-count indictment filed in the Eastern District of Michigan, Parimal D Mehta, 54, made multiple cash payments to Charles Dodd, former Director of Detroit's Office of Departmental Technology Services between 2009 to 2016.

This included two cash bribes hand delivered by Mr Mehta to Mr Dodd in the restrooms of restaurants in the Detroit-area in 2016, the DOJ alleged.

Mr Mehta also allegedly employed Mr Dodd's family members at FutureNet and its subsidiaries. Mr Dodd previously pleaded guilty to bribery on September 27, 2016.

The indictment alleges that Parimal Mehta paid these bribes to Charles Dodd in exchange for preferential treatment for his company, FutureNet, which received approximately \$7.5 million from Detroit in 2015 and 2016.

According to the indictment, Mr Mehta and FutureNet benefitted from Mr Dodd's influence over the administration of city contracts, expenditures under those contracts, and the hiring and selection of contract personnel.

Parimal D Mehta obtained confidential information about Detroit's internal budgets for specific technology projects, the indictment alleges. (Source: DOJ)



Parimal Mehta indicted

Afghanistan says it has proof attackers trained in Pakistan

KABUL (TIP): Afghanistan says it has given neighbouring Pakistan confessions and other proof that the terrorists who carried out a recent series of attacks were trained in Pakistan and that Taliban leaders there are allowed to roam freely.

At a news conference in Kabul on Thursday, Interior Minister Wais Ahmed Barmak said the evidence was presented at a meeting a day earlier in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad. Afghanistan's spy chief, Masoom Stanikzai, also attended the meeting, along with senior Pakistani military and intelligence officials.

Nearly 200 people have been killed over the past month in attacks claimed by the Taliban and a rival Islamic State affiliate. Afghan authorities say they detained one of the gunmen who attacked a military academy on Monday, killing 11 people in an assault claimed by IS. (AP)

After 24 surgeries, Bangladesh 'tree man' relapses

DHAKA (TIP): A year ago Abul Bajandar, a Bangladeshi rickshaw-puller dubbed "tree-man" for the bark-like growths that once covered his body, appeared to have made a full recovery from the rare condition that has afflicted him for a decade.

But twelve months after doctors declared him all but cured following 24 surgeries, Bajandar's hands are once again covered in the growths that characterise his rare condition. Surgeon Samanta Lal Sen, who last year hailed his cure as a milestone in medical history, now admits Bajandar's case may be more complicated than first thought.

His patient, who has been unable to work for years and whose young family lives in the hospital, says he fears he will never be cured.

"I am scared to have any more surgeries. I don't think my hands and feet will be okay again," the 27-year-old told AFP at the Dhaka hospital where he first came for treatment in January 2016.

Bajandar suffers from epidermodysplasia verruciformis, an extremely rare genetic condition known as "tree-man disease".

Intrigued by his condition, doctors at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital treated him for free, surgically removing more than five kilos (11 pounds) of growths from his hands and feet.

He has been there ever since with his wife and family, who live together in a small room in the hospital.

"We thought we had achieved (a cure). But now it seems to be a time-consuming case," surgeon Sen told AFP.

"We will keep on investigating to reach the ultimate success, though it's tough to say how long it will take." This week Bajandar underwent his 25th surgery to remove some of the growths from his hands.

For his wife Halima Khatun, life is on hold as she tends to her husband and looks after their four-year-old daughter. "We're grateful for the free treatment, we couldn't have afforded to pay for it," said Khatun, who passes her time in the ward making jewellery for a little cash.

Fewer than half a dozen people worldwide have epidermodysplasia verruciformis, according to Sen. Last year the Dhaka Medical College Hospital treated a young Bangladeshi girl suffering from the condition. Doctors declared surgery to remove the growths a success, but her father later said they had grown back in even greater numbers. (AP)

US wants Pakistan to act against terrorist sanctuaries: Official

WASHINGTON / ISLAMABAD (TIP): The United States has made it clear that it expects Islamabad to take action against terrorists in sanctuaries inside Pakistan, a top American diplomat has said.

Deputy secretary of state John J Sullivan, who recently returned from a visit to Afghanistan, said the US also expects Pakistan to contribute to a lasting and enduring peace in the region.

"That was certainly part of my conversations with the Afghan leadership," Sullivan said in a briefing with reporters on his return.

"We have made clear to the Pakistani government our expectations for them to take action against terrorists that are in sanctuaries in Pakistan, to reduce the pressure and the threat of violence in Afghanistan," he said.

The trip to Afghanistan, Sullivan said, was an important opportunity for him to reaffirm the US' commitment to strengthening its partnership with the country.

He met with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, foreign minister Salahuddin Rabbani and other government leaders during the visit.

"During each of these meetings, Afghanistan's leadership made it clear to me that despite the recent tragic events, the Afghan government will continue to work to create the necessary conditions to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table, and establish an environment for a sustained piece," Sullivan said.

"We applaud this conviction, as the path to peace and reconciliation must be an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process, as we have laid out in the president's South Asian strategy,"



he said.

Sullivan rued that despite everyone wanting peace at this stage, the Taliban still seemed unwilling to come to the negotiation table.

"The Taliban's reprehensible attacks targeting innocent civilians demonstrate that they are not ready to enter into good faith peace negotiations," Sullivan said.

"The US will continue to support its Afghan partners to defeat the ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and other terrorist groups in Afghanistan, and deny them and their affiliates safe haven and material support," he said.

Sullivan said he discussed security cooperation, and the importance of holding timely, credible and inclusive parliamentary

and presidential elections with the Afghan leaders.

"During an executive committee meeting of the Afghanistan compact, we reviewed Afghanistan's progress in the areas of security, governance, rule of law, economic development and peace and reconciliation," Sullivan said.

Responding to a question, Sullivan said President Donald Trump's recent comments ruling out talks with the Taliban is a reflection of the ground realities.

"Our policy is to continue to put pressure on the Taliban to bring them, eventually, with patience and perseverance, to peace talks that are Afghan-led and Afghan-owned," he said. (PTI)

NEPAL LOSING OUT TO CHINA AS EVEREST OPERATORS CROSS MOUNTAIN

KATHMANDU (TIP): Poor regulation and overcrowding are pushing Everest climbers away from Nepal to China, which is investing millions to boost a rival path to the top of the world.

Veteran climbing outfits, fed up with what they regard as a lax attitude to safety on Nepal's southern flank of the 8,848 metre (29,029-foot) peak, are starting to shift operations to Everest's north side in Tibet.

"The south side is way too overcrowded with inexperienced people," Phil Crampton, a seasoned Everest hand who announced in January his company Altitude Junkies would shift to China, the third such outfit to abandon Nepal in recent years.

The exodus could dent a long-standing source of revenue for the cash-strapped Himalayan nation -- Kathmandu raked in more than \$4 million in Everest permits fees alone in 2017.

A growing chorus of foreign-led Everest operators in Nepal are demanding greater scrutiny of low-cost outfits that have mushroomed in recent years, offering cheap expeditions up the fabled summit.

These budget players are luring hordes of amateur climbers chasing the thrill of Everest but also risking death and injury, climbing experts say, warning that some expedition leaders are ill-equipped to tackle the peak.

Seven of the 10 climbers who died on Everest's south in the last two years were summiting with budget operators, according to information from the Himalayan Database.

"What has happened over the last few years on the south side is absolutely intolerable," said Lukas Furtenbach, whose company Furtenbach Adventures relocated to China last year citing safety concerns. Those pushing for change want to see permit numbers curbed and greater oversight of guides and operators.

Nepal introduced new laws in late December barring solo climbers, blind mountaineers and double amputees from scaling Everest, restrictions it said would make the peak safer.

But many mountaineers say the rules miss the mark.

"Nepal needs mountaineering rules and regulations. But for the operators, not for the climbers," said Furtenbach. Nepal has been criticised as reluctant to introduce much-needed regulations because it fears harming an industry that spins money for the impoverished nation. Meanwhile, China is sending a message that Everest's north is open for business, investing in climbing infrastructure vital for a safe ascent to the summit.

It is building a mountaineering training centre in Lhasa and plans to allow helicopter rescues on Everest's north from 2019, according to Chinese state media. Currently helicopter rescues are only possible in Nepal.

It also fixes ropes to Everest's summit at the beginning of each climbing season, an industry standard on most major peaks around the world -- but missing on the southern face in Nepal.

"China is addressing the issues in a way that Nepal has just struggled to... There is no system in place to actually enforce the rules," said Adrian Ballinger, who was the first operator to move exclusively to Everest's north in 2015. (AFP)

Petrol bomb thrown at Suu Kyi's lakeside villa: Myanmar govt

YANGON (TIP): A petrol bomb was thrown at the lakeside Yangon compound of Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi on Thursday while she was away from her home, a government spokesman said.

"It was a petrol bomb," spokesman Zaw Htay confirmed to AFP, without giving further details on a possible motive for a small but rare attack targeting the Myanmar democracy heroine. (AFP)

Afghan President refuses condolence call from Pakistan PM

KABUL (TIP): Afghan President Ashraf Ghani refused to speak to Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi when the latter telephoned to offer condolences following a devastating terror attack in Kabul, the media reported.

TOLO News said Abbasi telephoned Ghani "in connection with the spate of recent attacks in Afghanistan."

The Afghan daily said Ghani had sent a delegation to Islamabad "to hand over evidence related to recent attacks in Kabul" to be shared with the Pakistan Army. Kabul accuses Islamabad of backing terrorist groups in Afghanistan. (IANS)

Indian Origin techie Kuchibhotla's widow attends Trump's State of the Union Address



Sunayana Dumala, the widow of Indian engineer Srinivas Kuchibhotla who was shot dead in a suburban bar in Olathe city in the US, attended President Donald Trump's first State of the Union Address. Photo / courtesy Socialnews

WASHINGTON (TIP): Sunayana Dumala, the widow of Indian origin engineer Srinivas Kuchibhotla who was shot dead in a hate crime shooting in Kansas last year, attended President Donald Trump's first State of the Union Address.

Sunayana, 32, was invited as a guest by Congressman Kevin Yoder to attend the event.

Kuchibhotla was shot dead while his colleague, also an Indian, sustained bullet injuries after an American navy veteran opened fire in a crowded suburban bar in Olathe city in February last year.

The shooter thought they were Middle Easterners and was heard telling them to "get out of my country" at the time of the shooting.

Earlier on Tuesday, Sunayana met a number of Congressional leaders, including House speaker Paul Ryan. The speaker said he knows Sunayana's story and remembers her.

Yoder said he asked Sunayana to be his guest as a recognition for her tireless efforts to promote peace, and as a message to the Indian community that the US is a nation of immigrants and they are welcome here.

"Each year, I have the privilege of inviting one guest to attend the president's State of the Union address. This year, I invited Sunayana Dumala, widow of Srinivas Kuchibhotla, the Indian immigrant who was tragically killed in the hate crime shooting last year at in Olathe," Yoder said.

The Indian American community appreciated the move.

Brijpal Singh, the chairman of the India Association of Kansas City, said in a letter to Yoder, "This further strengthens our belief and confidence in the American system and its Constitution where everyone is respected, loved and is welcome."

The State of the Union Address is a traditional annual speech of the US president to a joint session of the Congress where he gives an account of the situation in the country.

US STATE DEPARTMENT DESIGNATES HAMAS LEADER ISMAIL HANIYEH AS TERRORIST

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US State Department said on Wednesday, January 31, it had designated Ismail Haniyeh, leader of the Islamist Palestinian group Hamas, as a terrorist.

The State Department said in a statement that Haniyeh, along with two Islamist groups active in Egypt and one in the Palestinian territories, were listed as specially designated global terrorists.

It quoted Secretary of State Rex Tillerson as saying the designations "target key terrorist groups and leaders - including two sponsored and directed by Iran - who are threatening the stability of the Middle East, undermining the peace process, and attacking our allies Egypt and Israel."

In Gaza, Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told media: "We reject and condemn the decision and we see it as a reflection of the domination by a gang of Zionists of the American decision." "The decision is worthless," he added.

Hamas, which dominates the Gaza Strip, advocates Israel's destruction and is designated as a terrorist group by the United States and some other Western countries.

In December, after US President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, Haniyeh told a rally in Gaza marking the 30th anniversary of Hamas's founding: "We will knock down Trump's decision. No



The group had recently launched an electronic guidebook to educate journalists who report on Sikhism

superpower is capable of offering Jerusalem to Israel, there is no Israel that it should have a capital named Jerusalem."

The three groups designated by the State Department are:

- Harakat al-Sabireen, which the statement said is backed by Iran, operates primarily in Gaza and the West Bank, and fired rockets into Israel;
- Liwa al-Thawra, which it said has

claimed responsibility for killing an Egyptian army general in Cairo in 2016 and a bombing in 2017;

- Harakat Sawa'd Misr (HASM), which it said claimed responsibility for killing an Egyptian security officer and other attacks.

The State Department designations deny Haniyeh and the three groups access to the U.S. financial system.

Free Karachi Campaign Launches its Next Phase in the USA

#FreeKarachi Ads Appear on Massive Digital Billboards in Los Angeles

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): The Free Karachi Campaign has launched its next phase in the U.S.A. with billboards advertisements. As part of the campaign, "#FreeKarachi and Urban Sindh from State Atrocities in Pakistan" advertisements have appeared on several highway billboards in the U.S. West Coast city of Los Angeles.

The Free Karachi Campaign had started on 15 January in the U.S. capital Washington, D.C. when a number of taxis and cars with #FreeKarachi banners participated in the city's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade.

The Washington Post, one of the most prominent newspapers of the U.S., had also published a special supplement that had carried details of the injustices that Sindh Province's people, Urdu-speaking Mohajirs in particular, have been facing in Pakistan. A digital advertisement of Free Karachi is still running on the official website of the Washington Times.

Commenting on the latest phase of the campaign, Free Karachi spokesperson Nadeem Nusrat said that "Karachi is Pakistan's most secular city where religious extremists have always failed to develop a stronghold. Pakistan's Punjabi-dominated deep-state, however, is trying to change this great, tolerant trait of this city by promoting



A billboard in Los Angeles

forces of religious extremism."

"While Dr. Shakil Afridi languishes in prison and thousands of Mohajirs and Balochs gone missing after being taken into custody by Pakistani security forces, the UNO and U.S.-designated terrorists are allowed to hold rallies in Karachi. This clearly proves why Free Karachi is necessary", added Mr. Nusrat.

"The taxes paid by Karachi and other areas of urban Sindh run Pakistan's economy. Karachi alone pays over 90 percent taxes for

the treasury of Sindh Province, but it has no representation in the federal as well as the provincial governments. Karachi is ranked by most independent organizations as the second most populace city in the world, but its population is always reduced in the official census figures by both Larkana-based Sindh and Islamabad-based federal government," said Mr. Nusrat.

Criticizing Pakistani judiciary, Mr. Nusrat said that "while Pakistani supreme courts are known for taking suo-moto action over petty

issues, they have failed to take notice of the brutal murder of Harvard-educated, elderly Professor Hasan-Zafar Arif who was abducted and killed recently in Karachi."

"Mohajirs -those whose ancestors had migrated from India to Pakistan in 1947 - are the ones whose forefathers not only made Pakistan a reality but also played a key role in sustaining Pakistan in its most turbulent times. These Mohajirs have now been barred from governments jobs and security institutions. Their young generation is blatantly admission in public-funded professional educational institutions and government jobs. As recently as last week, over one thousand Karachi students were denied admission at Karachi University and the seats were instead given to students from rural Sindh." Mr. Nusrat continued.

"It is not possible for Mohajirs to raise their voice against state-sponsored injustices in Pakistan. Political offices of Mohajirs' mainstream political party, MQM, have been illegally demolished in Pakistan and the party is facing an illegal, unannounced ban. The Mohajirs living overseas now have to highlight the brutal and undemocratic policies of Pakistani State at every possible international forum," Mr. Nusrat added.

(Press Release)

What's costlier & what's cheaper

NEW DELHI (TIP): In order to push government's 'Make in India' initiative further, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley today hiked duties on a vast list of imported items, including mobile phones, automobiles, gold, diamond, fruit and vegetable juices, and perfumes.

Customs duty on completely knocked down imports of motor cars and motor cycles has gone up from 10 per cent to 15 per cent. Customs duty on completely build units imports of motor vehicles has gone up to 25 per cent from 20 per cent.

Imported mobile handsets will become costlier as customs duty has been increased from 15 per cent to 20 per cent while some of their parts and accessories will now attract duty of 15 per cent.

Imported items dearer

- Cars and motorcycles
- Mobile phones
- Silver
- Gold
- Vegetable, fruit juices
- Sunglasses
- Perfumes, deodorants
- Sunscreen
- Pre-shave, after-shave preparations
- Truck and Bus
- Radial tyres
- Silk Fabrics
- Footwear



- Coloured gemstones
- Diamonds
- Imitation jewellery
- Smart watches/wearable devices
- LCD/LED TV panels
- Furniture
- Mattresses
- Lamps
- Wrist watches, clocks
- Tricycles, scooters, wheeled toys, dolls, puzzles of all kinds
- Video game consoles

- Sport articles and equipment
- Cigarette, lighters, candles
- Kites
- Edible oils

Customs duty slashed on select items

- Raw cashew nuts
- Solar tempered glass
- Raw materials, parts or accessories used in making cochlear implants

Rs 2.95 lakh crore allocated for defence budget

NEW DELHI (TIP): An outlay of Rs 2.95 lakh crore was on Thursday set aside for the defence budget for the next fiscal which is an increase of 7.81 per cent over last year's Rs 2.74 lakh crore.

Out of the total allocation, the capital outlay for the three defence services for purchase of new weapons, aircraft, warships and other military hardware has been pegged at Rs 99,947 crore.

The outlay for defence budget amounted to 12.1 per cent of the total budget of Rs 24,42,213 crore for 2018-19.

In his budget speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley appreciated the role played by the armed forces in meeting challenges on the country's borders as well as in managing the internal security environment, both in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.

He said the government would develop two defence industrial production corridors and bring out an industry-friendly military production policy to promote the domestic defence industry.

Compared to revised estimate of Rs 2.79 lakh crore for the defence budget in 2017-18, the increase in allocation has been 5.91 per cent but compared to the budget outlay of Rs 2.74 lakh crore, the hike is 7.81 per cent.

Out of Rs 2,95,511 crore allocated for the financial year 2018-19, Rs 99,947 crore has been pegged for capital outlay which includes expenditure on modernisation of the three forces, according to the defence ministry.

The revenue expenditure, which covers payment of salary, maintenance of establishments and other related expenditure, has been pegged at Rs 1,95,947 crore.

A separate amount of Rs 1,08,853 crore has been set aside over the above the total allocation for the paying pension to defence personnel.



Railways allocated Rs 1.48 lakh crore

NEW DELHI (TIP): Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday announced a capital expenditure of Rs 1.48 lakh crore for the Indian Railways in his Budget 2018 speech.

Most of this money will be spent on capacity expansion, since it is a priority for the national transporter, Jaitley said while presenting the Union Budget.

"Over Rs 1.48 lakh crore to be allocated for the Railways in next fiscal," Jaitley said.

He proposed a target of doubling 18,000 km of lines and said gauge conversion is under way to eliminate capacity constraints.

The minister said 36,000 km of rail track renewal has been targeted in the coming year while 4,267 unmanned railway crossings on broad gauge routes are to be eliminated in the next two years.

New world-class train sets are being manufactured, dedicated freight corridors are coming up and electrification being taken up as a priority task for which Indian Railways is expected to explore other avenues to raise funds, the finance minister said.

The amount for defence pension is an increase of 26.6 per cent over the allocation of Rs 85,740 crore last year.

In his address, Jaitley said a lot of emphasis had been laid on modernising and enhancing the operational capability of the defence forces in the last three-and-half years.

"The government will take measures to develop two defence industrial production corridors in the country," he

said.

Jaitley said the government would also bring out an industry-friendly "defence production policy 2018" to promote domestic production by the public sector, private sector and MSMEs.

He said a number of initiatives had been taken to develop and nurture India's intrinsic defence production capability to make the nation self-reliant on its defence needs. *Source: PTI*

BUDGET IN A NUTSHELL



- No change in personal income tax slabs and rates
- Surcharge of 10% on income above Rs 50 lakh but less than Rs 1 cr, 15% on income above Rs 1 cr to continue
- Standard Deduction returns after a decade; Rs 40,000 to be allowed in lieu of transport allowance and medical expenses
- Economic growth pegged at 7.2-7.5% for H2 FY18
- India's average growth in first 3 years of NDA govt 7.5%
- Indian economy size USD 2.5 trillion; 7th largest in world
- India is expected to be 5th largest economy very soon
- Revised Fiscal Deficit estimate for 2017-18 is Rs 5.95 lakh crore at 3.5% of GDP
- Fiscal Deficit for FY '19 estimated at 3.3% of GDP
- Govt's market borrowing estimated at Rs 4.07 lakh cr in FY '19 versus Rs 4.79 lakh cr estimated in 2017-18
- MSP of all kharif crops to be hiked to at least 1.5 times of their production cost
- Institutional mechanism proposed to develop policies and practices for price and demand forecast
- Rs 2,000 cr fund for developing and upgrading agri marketing infra in 22,000 Grameen Agri Markets and 585 APMCs
- Allocation for food processing ministry doubled from Rs 715 cr in RE FY '18 to Rs 1,400 cr in BE FY '19
- Kisan Credit Cards extended to fisheries and animal husbandry farmers
- Agriculture credit disbursal target increased to Rs 11 lakh crore from Rs 10 lakh crore in 2017-18
- Steps announced to deal with air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region
- 2 crore more toilets to be built under Swachh Bharat Mission
- Substantial increase in allocation of National Rural Livelihood Mission to Rs 5,750 cr in FY '19
- Govt announces 2 major initiatives under Ayushman Bharat programme
- Govt to launch a flagship National Health Protection Scheme to cover over 10 cr poor families providing coverage up to Rs 5 lakh per family every year for hospitalisation
- Govt earmarks Rs 56,619 cr for SCs and Rs 39,135 cr for STs in FY '19
- Sets target of Rs 3 lakh crore for lending under MUDRA
- Govt to contribute 12% of wages of the new employees in EPF for all sectors for 3 years
- Facility of fixed-term employment will be extended to all sectors
- Outlay of Rs 7,148 cr for textiles sector in 2018-19
- FinMin to leverage India Infrastructure Finance Corporation to help finance major infrastructure projects
- Redevelopment of 600 major railway stations being taken up
- Suburban network of 160 km in Mumbai at an estimated cost of Rs 17,000 cr being planned
- Gross budgetary support for Railways hiked to over Rs 3 lakh crore in 2018-19 from Rs 2.73 lakh crore in 2017-18
- Plans to expand airport capacity more than 5 times to handle a billion trips a year
- SEBI to consider mandating, beginning with large firms, to meet about 1/4th of their financing needs from bond market
- Allocation on Digital India scheme doubled to Rs 3,073 cr
- Rs 10,000 cr for creation and augmentation of telecom infra

RS 10 CRORE ALLOCATED FOR ENHANCED COMPENSATION TO 1984 RIOTS VICTIMS



Anti Sikhs riots 1984 victims protest government apathy.

NEW DELHI (TIP): A modest Rs 10 crore has been earmarked for handing out enhanced compensation to victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in the Budget 2018-19.

The amount was allocated in the Budget, presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in Parliament on Thursday, February 1, and it would be distributed among victims of the riots. The riots broke out following the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984.

Of the 3,325 victims, 2,733 were killed in Delhi while rest of the victims were from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and other states.

Soon after the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, it had announced an additional compensation of Rs 5 lakh each to the next of kin of victims of the anti-Sikh riots. The amount in the 2017-18 Budget was Rs 15 crore.

Some of the anti-Sikh riot cases are still continuing in courts and many Sikh organizations have alleged that the key conspirators of the violence were at large, and victims have not yet got justice. *Source: PTI*

Jaitley's budget proposes road, infrastructure cess on fuel

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Budget has proposed a levy of road and infrastructure cess of Rs 8 per litre on petrol and high-speed diesel oil while abolishing an additional duty of excise of Rs 6 on the same account but officials said it would have no impact on the fuel prices for the end user. The basic excise duty on unbranded petrol was slashed by Rs 2 from Rs 6.48 per litre and on branded petrol from Rs 7.66 per litre. *IANS*

Chidambaram slams budget, terms mega healthcare scheme a 'jumla'

NEW DELHI (TIP): Congress leader and former finance minister P. Chidambaram on Feb 1 slammed the Union Budget, terming the promise of Rs 5 lakh for health care for poor families as "a big jumla", and said there was "tokenism" on creating jobs and nothing to indicate rise in farmers income.

There was also no tax relief to the average tax payer and no measures to boost exports while expressing his disappointment about some major schemes having reduced outlays.

"It is the last full budget of this government, and I should add 'thank god for that,' the former Union Finance Minister told reporters here.

Referring to the proposed national health protection scheme, he said it will entail huge expenditure but no money has been provided for it.

"The promise of Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary healthcare is a big 'jumla'. The target group is 10 crore families. Assuming each family will avail of Rs 50,000 - one tenth of Rs 5 lakh - the amount required per year will be Rs 5 lakh crore," he said.

He said if the insurance companies will foot the bill, the estimated premium at Rs 5,000 to Rs 15,000 per family will require an outgo from Rs 50,000 crore to Rs 1.5 lakh crore per year. "Is the Finance Minister serious?" he asked.

The Congress leader said he did not hear any measures to boost exports. On the promise to increase the minimum support price (MSP) of crops 1.5 times, he said there were no details.

"There is nothing to indicate that farmers real income will rise. The agriculture distress will continue and deepen," he said.



4 years gone; still promising FARMERS a fair price. 4 years gone; FANCY SCHEMES, with NO matching budgets. 4 years gone; no JOBS for our YOUTH. Thankfully, only 1 more year to go. *Rahul Gandhi on Twitter*



I do not think I can blame the Budget for being motivated by scoring points in elections, but what worries me is that the fiscal arithmetic is at fault.

Manmohan Singh, former PM

Stressing jobs were not being created, Chidambaram said that Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had no new ideas and "has fallen back on tried and failed Mudra scheme".

"Jobs are not being created. Industry, especially MSMEs, create jobs. Industrial GVA (Gross Value Added) growth has declined from 9.8 per cent in 2015-16 to 6.8 per cent in 2016-17 to 2.7 per cent in 2017-18," he said.

He said all fiscal deficits have crossed the budget estimates, while there was nothing in the Budget to boost private investment.

Chidambaram said there is no tax relief to the average tax payer and only corporates with income up to Rs 250 crore get tax relief of five percent. For individuals, standard deduction is back but long term capital gains tax is also

back," he said.

"For the middle class earner and saver, one cancels the other. Actually, by way of long term capital gains tax and four per cent cess, the tax payers will pay the government Rs 31,000 crore more whereas the gain through standard deduction will only be Rs 8,000 crore," he added.

"...the budget proposals should have been bold and radical. Unfortunately, they are a big let down... It is a defeatist budget."

Asked about the proposal to consolidate insurance companies, Chidambaram said he had no quarrel with that. "But let us go back to disinvestment - the ONGC purchase of HPCL is not strategic disinvestment. It is simply an accounting gimmick," he said. *Source: IANS*

INDIA

Aadhaar, India: Personal data of about a billion people sold online for \$8

NEW DELHI (TIP): Personal information from Aadhaar cards (personal identification card) of more than a billion Indians stored in the world's largest biometric database was sold online for less than \$8, according to a report by an Indian newspaper.

An investigative story by The Tribune revealed that it is possible to buy login credentials of the Aadhaar database, which can collect the photographs, thumbprints and other identifying details of every citizen. It further added that fake Aadhaar cards can be generated by purchasing software online and that the publication also bought access to such database by merely paying \$7.89 on a WhatsApp group.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which controls the Aadhaar system said that the "case appears to be an instance of misuse."

UIDAI said that it has filed a police complaint against the people responsible for misusing the access but



did not identify them.

A follow-up story by The Tribune mentioned that the agency has denied any misuse of data. "UIDAI reassures that there has not been any data breach of biometric database which remains fully safe and secure with highest encryption at UIDAI and mere display of demographic information cannot be misused without biometrics," it added. "Claims of bypassing or duping the Aadhaar enrolment system are totally unfounded." This kind of problems in a program facing increasing scrutiny over

privacy concerns will ask more questions about data safety.

The current administration, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had also made it mandatory for individuals to link Aadhaar to private and public services. Now India's Supreme court is holding hearings to decide whether the decision made by Modi will affect the privacy rights of individuals or not.

Several national leaders in India have expressed concerns over the safety of private information.

Sitaram Yechury, a leader of a communist party in India, tweeted, "The Perils of making Aadhaar mandatory and linking it to bank accounts, as insisted upon by the Modi government, are visible here."

Last month, the telecom firm Bharti Airtel was barred by the agency for using Aadhaar details to verify customers identities because the facility was being misused to open accounts on its payment platform.

Castration case: CBI files chargesheet against Ram Rahim

PANCHKULA (TIP): The CBI filed a chargesheet against Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh and two doctors in the court of special judicial magistrate Kapil Rathi here on February 1 in connection with castration of dera followers.

The dera chief was charged as prime accused in the case along with two aides, Dr MP Singh, alias Mahender Insan, and Dr Pankaj Garg. They were accused of castration of around 400 dera followers.

On December 23, 2014, the High Court ordered a CBI probe into the charges of forced castration of dera followers after hearing a petition filed by Hansraj Chauhan.

Chauhan had recently told mediapersons in Chandigarh that he was castrated. In a petition in July 2012, he had claimed that he and 400 others were lured into getting their testicles removed on the pretext of an opportunity to meet God.

SIT found two top dera functionaries castrated

After dera violence in Panchkula in August last, the special investigation team (SIT) had arrested top dera functionaries, Daan Singh and Rakesh Kumar. During investigation, the police had found that they did not have testicles.

The SIT members were not sure whether their testicles had been removed surgically or they had some problem. Their castration case was later handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation.



Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh


**GUEST
COMMENT**

New American Moment

American State of the Union address to the Congress has conventionally been designed to enable the President to spell out his grand agenda for audience at home and abroad. Donald Trump's State of the Union performance on Wednesday turned out, mostly, to be a sum total of all the tweets and other verbal fusillades he had fired. He declared, in a self-satisfying manner, that there was a "new American moment" and that he had restored American "greatness" and "strength." In particular, he was uncompromising in what he calls "America first" stance, which turns out to be a call to return to protectionist policies as well as a litany of complaints about unfair and unequal global trade practices and deals. Like an accomplished demagogue, he invokes the American farmer, the American taxpayer and the American consumer. His implicit message was that the world must reorient itself to his understanding of fairness and reciprocity.

On the domestic front, President Trump largely stood his ground on immigration, hinting broadly at tweaking some rules, without diluting his rant against the "illegal" immigrant. He reiterated his solution of building a wall to keep the undesirable and the unwanted immigrant out. He chanted the mantra of homeland security, declared that Guantanamo Bay base would not be closed down, and that the United States would "annihilate" terrorism and was more than ready to deal with pinpricks from North Korea or the ISIS.

In this longish State of the Union, President Donald Trump failed in his endeavor to sound presidential; he remains miles away from gravitas. And, given the fact that he is an addictive Twitter-junkie, the quasi-sobriety of the Union address will evaporate next week. And, though Donald Trump tried to suggest that as the President of the United States he was committed to the "citizens of every background, color and creed", his first year in the White House has left America a deeply fault-lined country. There is lesson for demagogues all over the world: it is easy to divide but very difficult to heal; it is easier to be partisan than to elicit cooperation and bi-partisanship.

(The Tribune, India)

AS I SEE IT

HOW TRUMP IS MAKING CHINA AND INDIA GREAT AGAIN



By Vivek Wadhwa

Thank you for what you are doing for America; your successes have put India in very positive light and shown us what is possible in India" said Atal Behari Vajpayee to me in a one-on-one meeting during his visit to the White House in September 2000. He added that he would love to see Indian-American entrepreneurs return home to help build India's nascent technology industry.

Bill Clinton and George W. Bush granted him his wish with their flawed immigration policies. The U.S. admitted hundreds of thousands of foreign students and engineers on temporary visas but did not have the fortitude to expand the numbers of green cards. The result was that the waiting time for permanent resident visas began to exceed 10 years for Indian and Chinese immigrants. Some began returning home.

Now with his constant tirades against immigrants, particularly from what he calls "shithole countries", Donald Trump is giving many countries the greatest gift of all: causing the trickle of returning talent to become a flood.

For India, the timing could not be better. With hundreds of millions of people now gaining access to the Internet through inexpensive smartphones, India is about to experience a technology boom that will transform the country itself. And with the influx of capital and talent, it will be able to challenge Silicon Valley-just as China is doing.

This is the irony of America's rising nativism and protectionism.

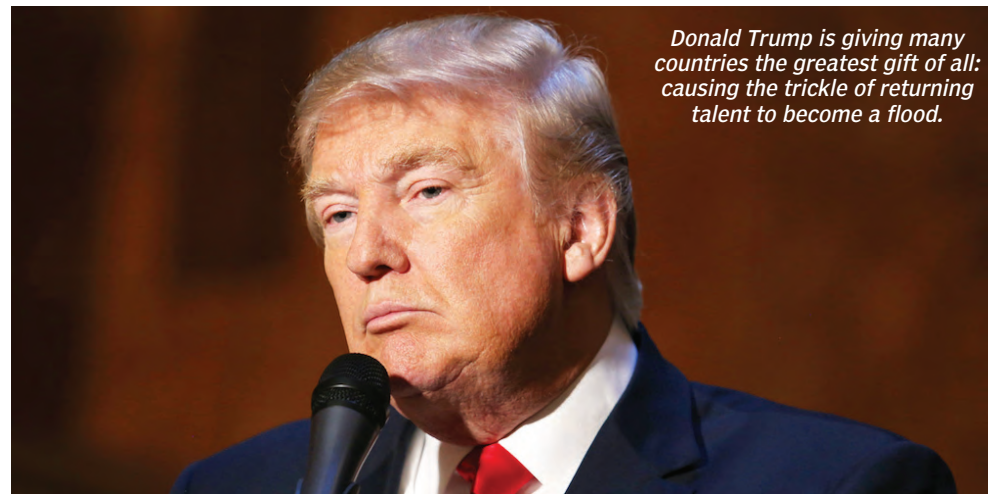
When I met Prime Minister Vajpayee, I was the CEO of a technology startup in North Carolina. Later, I became an academic and started researching why Silicon Valley was the most innovative place on this planet.

I learnt that it was diversity and openness that gave Silicon Valley its global advantage; foreign-born people were dominating its entrepreneurial ecosystem and fueling innovation and job growth. My research teams at Duke, the University of California at Berkeley, New York University, and Harvard documented that between 1995 and 2005, immigrants founded 52% of Silicon Valley's technology companies. The founders came from almost every nation in the world: Australia to Zimbabwe. Immigrants also contributed to the majority of patents filed by leading US companies in that period: 72% of the total at Qualcomm, 65% at Merck, 64% at General Electric, and 60% at Cisco Systems. Surprisingly, 40% of the international patent applications filed by the US government also had foreign-national authors.

Indians have achieved the most extraordinary success in Silicon Valley. They have founded more start-ups than the next four immigrant groups, from Britain, China,

At the same time, I also realized that protectionist demands by nativists were causing American political leaders to advocate immigration policies that were (and are) choking US innovation and economic growth. The government would constantly expand the number of H1-B visas in response to the demands of businesses but never the number of green cards, which were limited to 140,000 for the so-called key employment categories. The result? The queues kept increasing. I estimate that today there are around 1.5 million skilled workers and their families stuck in immigration limbo, and that more than a third of these are Indians", says the author.

“With his constant tirades against immigrants, particularly from what he calls "shithole countries", Donald Trump is giving many countries the greatest gift of all: causing the trickle of returning talent to become a flood”.



Donald Trump is giving many countries the greatest gift of all: causing the trickle of returning talent to become a flood.

Taiwan, and Japan, combined. Despite comprising only 6% of the Valley's population and 1% of the nations, Indians founded 15.5% of Silicon Valley startups and contributed to 14% of US global patents.

At the same time, I also realized that protectionist demands by nativists were causing American political leaders to advocate immigration policies that were (and are) choking US innovation and economic growth. The government would constantly expand the number of H1-B visas in response to the demands of businesses but never the number of green cards, which were limited to 140,000 for the so-called key employment categories. The result? The queues kept increasing. I estimate that today there are around 1.5 million skilled workers and their families stuck in immigration limbo, and that more than a third of these are Indians.

Meanwhile, I have witnessed a rapid change in the aspirations among international students. The norm would be for students from China and India to stay in the US permanently because there were hardly any opportunities back home. This changed.

My engineering students began to seek short-term employment in the US to gain experience after they graduated but their ultimate goal was to return home to their families and friends. Human resource directors of companies in India and China increasingly reported that they were flooded with resumés from US graduates.

For students, the prospect of returning home and working for a hot company such as Baidu,

Alibaba, Paytm, or Flipkart is far more enticing than working for an American company. You cannot blame them, especially given that delays in visa processing will lock them into a menial position for at least a decade during the most productive parts of their careers.

This has been an incredible boon for China. One measure of the globalization of innovation is the number of technology startups with post-money valuations of \$1 billion or higher. These companies are commonly called "unicorns". As recently as 2000, nearly all of these were in the US; countries such as China and India could only dream of being home to a Google, Amazon, or Facebook.

Now, according to South China Morning Post, China has 98 unicorns, which is 39% of the world's 252 unicorns. In comparison, America has 106, or 42%, and India has 10 unicorns, 4%. An analysis by the National Foundation for American Policy revealed that 51% of the unicorns in the US have at least one immigrant founder. It is clear how shortsighted the US government has been.

With the clouds of nativism circling the White House, things will only get worse. America's share of successful technology startups will continue to shrink and Silicon Valley will see competition like never before.

America's loss is India's gain.

(The author is a Distinguished Fellow at Carnegie Mellon University at Silicon Valley and author of *The Driver in the Driverless Car: How Our Technology Choices Will Create the Future*)

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EMERGENCY AND NOW



By MG Devasahayam

The author was District Magistrate of Chandigarh when Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan was incarcerated at PGI during Emergency. Over a time, he became an admirer of Lok Nayak and the two exchanged views quite often. -EDITOR

As I sat glued to the 'idiot box' watching the 'historic' event of four senior most judges of the Supreme Court 'paying their debt to the nation' and placing their case before 'We, the People', I was touched by two poignant references by Justice Jasti Chelameswar: "We are all...four of us are convinced that unless this institution is preserved and it maintains its equanimity, democracy will not survive in this country." And: "We are left with no choice except to communicate it to the nation that 'please take care of the institution and take care of the nation'... I don't want another 20 years later some very wise men in this country blame that Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph sold their souls and didn't take care of this institution, they didn't take care of the interest of this nation."

My thoughts went back to the special ward in the PGI, Chandigarh, and my conversations with Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan (JP) who was incarcerated there during the Emergency. It was August 6, 1975. As was my wont, I had gone to see JP that morning. He asked me what the date was and I told him. He mumbled to himself that the Supreme Court hearing of the Prime Minister's appeal against her disqualification by the Allahabad High Court was on the 11th. He asked me about the report of the case. He also asked me as to what was happening in Parliament.

I could not mislead him by saying that there was nothing special. Hence, I told him about the amendments to the Representation of the People Act by Parliament the day before. He was upset as I narrated one by one the six amendments that had been made. The most prominent was the amendment granting immunity to the PM's election from being challenged in a court of law. He looked sad and said with a deep sigh that there was no hope now. "Everything is finished. She will be there forever."

I also informed him of the convening of the state assemblies on August 8 and 9 and also the likely amendment of the Constitution rendering the elections of President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and Speaker of the Lok Sabha non-justiciable. He was more upset now. He said in a very sad tone: "Democracy is finished completely," and after a pause, "at least for the present." He said that his only hope was in the Supreme Court and that too had been shattered. "Now there is nothing to hope for and nothing to live for. This lady has demolished the very edifice of democracy so painfully constructed by her father and myriad others." I was touched by his sentiments and the way he expressed it. I told him that this was inevitable and one could see it coming.

But JP did not take it lying down. On August 10, he addressed

“As the four senior most judges of the Supreme Court flagged their concern about the institution, it was reminiscent of the Emergency. Most people are these days moving in hushed silence, stunned and traumatized by the goings-on.”



JUDGES' PLEA TO THE NATION: 'Please take care of the institution and take care of the nation.'

Photo / Courtesy PTI

a letter to the Prime Minister which was delivered to me around noon. In the letter, he had declared that from August 25, he would start a fast-unto-death unless the Emergency was revoked and all detainees released within two weeks. He would not take anything, except water, sour lemon and medicine meant only for ill health. Realizing its disastrous consequences, I rushed to JP immediately and after a sharp wordy duel lasting over two hours, dissuaded him from taking this extreme step. But not before he said these extremely anguished words: "I do not want to live to see the death of democracy before my very eyes. The least I could do would be to deny me that unparalleled agony and die before democracy is dead."

Be that as it may, the accuracy of JP's prediction about the Supreme Court is narrated by Nayantara Sahgal in her book 'Indira Gandhi's Emergence and Style': "The essence of Emergency was the pinnacle-power - a position above the multitude, unaccountable and unchallengeable - it sought to guarantee the Prime Minister. This was accomplished by three amendments to the Constitution and an Act of Parliament. The

38th Amendment put the declaration of Emergency beyond the scrutiny of the courts. The 39th Amendment made election disputes relating to the Prime Minister, President, Vice President and the Speaker non-justiciable. This wiped out the Allahabad High Court judgment with retrospective effect and ensured a Supreme Court judgment in her favor. On 7 November 1975, a 5-judge bench of the Supreme Court upheld the amendments and Indira's 1971 election to Parliament."

Supreme Court judges then had not 'taken care of the interest of the nation' and some of them perhaps had 'sold their soul'. This judgment shattered JP's will to live and under intense agony and mental pressure, his kidneys, which were already under stress, failed. He took seriously ill which could have been life-threatening. Realizing the enormity of the situation, I initiated a 'pincer movement' to pressure the Union Home Ministry and PMO, got JP released on November 12 and sent him post haste to Bombay's Jaslok Hospital just in time for his kidneys to be treated and life saved. JP lived for four more years, defeated the Emergency and returned India back to democracy.

Since then, democracy has been limping and in recent years, again in dire danger. Basic violations of the democratic spirit and the crude attempts to legitimize a new type of regime and new criteria of allocation of rights and obligations continue unabated. There is no sense of boundary or restraint in the exercise of power, and there is a striking growth of arbitrariness and arrogance with which citizens are being turned into subjects, meekly accepting party/government diktats. Polarizing agenda, communal hatred, violence, demonetization and Aadhaar are the tools used.

Reminiscent of the Emergency, most people are moving in hushed silence, stunned and traumatized by the goings-on. There is fear and anxiety all around. Across the nation, groveling administrators, media anchors, academicians, advocates and accountants are vying with each other to sing paeans to the rulers. The bulk of the civil service is crawling when only asked to bend. Higher echelons of the judiciary bow to the rulers and are willing to decree the way they want. Politicians of all hue and color, barring honorable exceptions, lay supine and inactive.

In the event, India's precious democracy is in peril again as openly stated by the four wise men of the highest court of the land. As an ordinary citizen, all I can do is to wail in the manner of our forefathers: "Democracy is in peril, defend it with all your might." And, also salute these four men who have stood high and tall when most others have fallen asunder!

(The author is a Former IAS officer and District Magistrate, Chandigarh)



By Chanceller Carmen Fariña

Expanding Bilingual Programs for Our Youngest Learners

When it comes to our children's education, the sooner we start the better. An extra year of education can change the course of a young life. Children absorb a great deal of information in the first several years of their lives - they're like sponges, soaking up all the words they hear, the interactions they have, and the many things they see. The learning they do in their earliest years is the building block for success in school and in life. If we don't reach them when they're three and four years old, we've missed the opportunity to support the development of important skills, particularly the ability to learn a second language. We've also missed an opportunity to bring families into the classroom.

That's why New York City has built Pre-K for All - providing free, full-day high quality pre-K for every four-year-old. That means nearly 70,000 four-year-olds are getting that critical foundation - like learning 1,000 new words, experiencing how to interact and play well with

others, and getting ready for kindergarten. Now, we're expanding our investment in early learning through 3-K for All, which will bring free, full-day education to every three-year-old in the City.

Every time I visit an elementary school across the City I ask to see the pre-K classrooms. I see children working in centers around the classroom, doing art and science projects and even practicing a second language.

This year, there are 30 Dual Language Pre-K programs, setting some of our City's youngest learners on the path to success in a multilingual, multicultural world. I'm thrilled that next year, we are doubling that number to 63 programs that will be available in Spanish, Bengali, Chinese, Russian, and Italian this fall across all five boroughs.

In a Dual Language classroom, half of the students in the classroom speak the language the class is learning, and half are English-proficient. Students receive instruction in English and a second language with the goal of becoming bilingual and biliterate. Dual Language classes foster a learning environment that encourages sharing of vocabulary, cultures and traditions.

Being able to speak and read in a different

language - and understand a different culture, too - is a game-changer for our students and families. As a first-generation American who started school without speaking English, I know firsthand the struggles many of our English Language Learners face when they first step foot in a classroom. But they pale in comparison to the many benefits that growing up bilingual brought me, and continue to bring me as an educator, mother and grandmother, and especially as a leader. In a global City and a global society, our next generation of leaders - in business and in our government - will need to know and understand more than just one language and culture.

Dual Language education also brings parents into the classroom. Each month, families come together to learn what is happening in school and share ideas of how they can better support their child at home. Pre-K also has given tens of thousands of parents the opportunity to go back to work while saving money that would have been spent on child care. This is a win-win for students and families.

As I visit schools across the City, I often hear from families asking for new Dual Language programs, including in pre-K. By doubling our Dual Language Pre-K programs, more families



Pre-K students

will see the benefits of Dual Language sooner in their child's academic career than ever before. And our children will get that critical early education foundation in two languages, rather than just one.

Expanding Pre-K Dual Language education is an important part of the work we're doing across New York City schools - embracing the diversity of our students and families, making the right investments in early childhood education, and preparing our students for success in college and careers. Now, more of our City's future leaders than ever before will get a head start on becoming global citizens.

(The author is the New York City Schools Chanceller)

TURNING THE DIPLOMATIC PRISM

Dealing with Pakistan; renewing ties with Canada



By KC Singh

“Pakistan, Trudeau and Khalistanis need to be engaged not pilloried, while detoxifying the nation of bigotry and falsehood”, says the author.

“The one issue that still rankles bilateral relations is the activities of "Khalistani" elements in Canada and their links, if any, with Pakistan's ISI. It played last year into the visit of Canadian defense minister, Lt Col Harjit Sajjan, when Capt Amarinder Singh literally boycotted him, piqued over the Canadian government denying him a visa before the Punjab election last year."

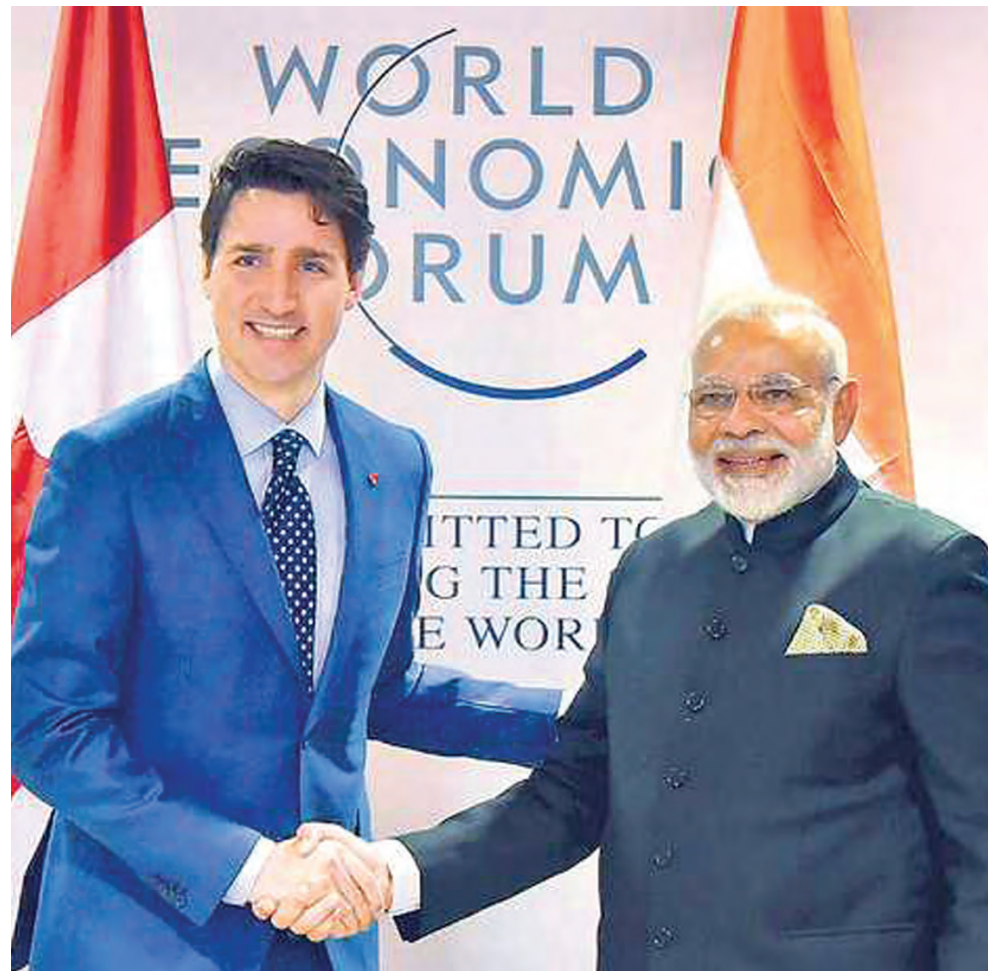
India-Pakistan relations under the Modi government are in a cryogenic state. A muscular response, advocated by PM Narendra Modi, has become not a means, but an end in itself. Despite "surgical strikes" and periodic cease-fire violations, the Pakistan army remains defiant. With elections around the corner in Pakistan and rumors Modi may advance the Lok Sabha elections, the scope for any meaningful dialogue appears bleak.

India draws much solace from President Donald Trump's periodic verbal assaults on the duplicity of Pakistani state and military. The US withholding military aid, amounting to \$2 billion, including \$900 million in coalition support funds to compensate Pakistan for its counter-terrorism operations along the Durand Line (Pak-Afghan border), is a first step to ratchet up pressure on Pakistan. US government sources are telling the media that there is an escalation plan if Pakistan does not heed the warnings. The action that the US seeks is Pakistan severing links with the Taliban and the deadly Haqqani network. The same source told Washington Post that there was "immense" frustration over Pakistan continuing to deny that there were any Pakistani safe havens for these groups.

Senior US officials touring India recently displayed guarded optimism over change in Pakistani attitude. They take the cue from Pakistan not threatening to disrupt US supply routes via Pakistan. But recent terror attacks in Kabul, where an ambulance bomb caused severe casualties, negate that finding. Earlier a hotel was attacked, frequented by Afghan government officials and foreigners, in which among others, a senior police commander and a member of the High Peace Council were killed. The hotel attack on the topmost floor indicated that the attackers were well briefed as that floor normally is reserved for officials holding sensitive positions.

Meanwhile, Pakistan blocked access to Hafiz Saeed when a team deputed by the UN Security Council sanctions committee arrived to assess Pakistan's handling of a listed terror mastermind. Reports keep resurfacing that Pakistan was in the process of allowing the India-specific terror syndicates to enter the political field. This could be a double-edged sword to both legitimize the groups and undercut the Sharif brothers, who control the Pakistan Muslim League (N), in the forthcoming parliament election. China has been more forthrightly defending Pakistani credentials as a nation fighting terror and not abetting it.

Against this background, two events invite attention. First, the Economist carried a story earlier this month on the reform of Pakistan's school education. This has gone unnoticed in India as the dominant narrative is that Pakistan is a collapsing state which will soon end up in a big Islamic heap. The story holds a lesson for our Punjab. Under the direct leadership of chief minister Shahbaz Sharif, a private-public partnership (PPP) has successfully developed to rectify the skewed school completion data. The richest Pakistanis have 60 per cent completing nine years of schooling. For the poor, the number is 5 per cent and for the middle income group, a mere 25 per cent. A donation-based citizens' foundation today has over 2 lakh students in its schools. Similarly, the Punjab Education Foundation, a quasi-independent body, is



Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the sidelines of World Economic Forum at Davos and raised the issue of Khalistanis operating from Canadian soil

doing the same work even on a larger scale.

The PPP works with the Shahbaz government handing over public schools to private partners and then closely monitoring their work while providing some subsidy. A Harvard University study shows that village schools saw 30 per cent higher enrolment after private parties were brought in. It has also been discovered by other studies that teachers on contract, who are paid less, produce as good or better results. A similar revamp of the primary and secondary school education in our Punjab is long overdue. CM Shahbaz takes a three-monthly meeting of all stakeholders to monitor the progress of this reform. Can the Punjab CM, Capt Amarinder Singh, do likewise?

The other event is the expected arrival of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on a five-day visit on February 17. Among other cities he would be visiting Amritsar. The one issue that still rankles bilateral relations is the activities of "Khalistani" elements in Canada and their links, if any, with Pakistan's ISI. It played last year into the visit of Canadian defense minister, Lt Col Harjit Sajjan, when Capt Amarinder Singh literally boycotted him, piqued over the Canadian government denying him a visa before the Punjab election last year.

Trudeau's visit provides a good opportunity for Capt Amarinder to bury the past. Sikhs constitute almost 40 per cent of the total population of Indian diaspora in Canada which numbers over a million. That huge number needs to be engaged and their energies channelized to contribute to Punjab's development. The population profile of the Canadian Sikh diaspora is different from that in the US. The Canadian Sikhs are more closely linked to peasantry in Punjab. A

number of episodes have riled Delhi as the Canadian government is seen as handling mischief-makers with kid gloves. When I dealt with them in 2006-07, the Canadian explanation was that they monitor the goings-on but would only step in if violence or terrorism was imminent. Slogans in favor of Khalistan are really solitary cries for attention. The Canadian Sikh fringe needs to be politically dealt with. Banning their entry into India will only exacerbate the situation.

If Punjab was the laboratory of the Green Revolution, it now needs to reinvent itself. A revamped education system, a shift away from the rice-wheat agrarian model, laying of food-chain supply network and conservation of water aquifers and adoption of sustainable development goals. It is not a surprise that a recent study showed that South Indian states, which have the advantage of coastlines for connectivity, have cornered the export businesses of India. A new Punjab model could become the 21st century template for the land-locked and largely agrarian economy states of the North.

The Modi government, having largely ignored rural distress, has awakened post-Gujarat election. Udayan Mukherjee wrote in another newspaper that the Modi government's strategy was: "more wealth for the rich, Hindutva for the poor". Religion may be, as Karl Marx quipped, the opiate of the masses. But when used to polarize for electoral gains it can be catastrophic. Thus Pakistan, Trudeau and Khalistanis need to be engaged not pilloried, while detoxifying the nation of bigotry and falsehood.

(The author is a former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs)

Justice for Sreejith: Indian ends protest after 782 days



SR Sreejith was demanding an independent inquiry into the death of his brother.

THIRUVANANTHURAM (TIP): A man from the south Indian state of Kerala has ended a 782-day protest after a federal agency began investigating his brother's death.

SR Sreejith alleges his brother was murdered by police who arrested him on the charge of stealing a mobile phone.

His demand for an independent inquiry into his brother's death picked up in recent months through the social media movement #JusticeforSreejith.

He ended the protest after federal investigators recorded his statement.

In the face of mounting public pressure, state lawmakers ordered an internal police investigation into his brother's death. But Mr Sreejith refused, insisting that the case be transferred to India's federal investigation agency, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Police had said Sreejeev, 26, committed suicide in custody after he was arrested, but his family says he was killed because he was in love with a woman who happened to be related to one of the police officers.

He was arrested one day before she was scheduled to get married to someone else. He died in hospital the following day where he was admitted as a result of the "suicide attempt".

Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in an August report on India that suicide and illness are common causes listed by authorities to cover up deaths likely caused by police torture.

In a country only too familiar with police brutality and custodial deaths - India's National Crime Records Bureau says 591 people died in police custody between 2010 and 2015 - his protest generated particular resonance.

In the past few weeks and months, pictures of him and his protest have been shared widely on Facebook and Twitter along with messages of solidarity, including from some very high profile figures in the state. *Source: BBC*

Salaries of Prez, VP, Guvs hiked

New Delhi (TIP): The salaries of the President and the Vice-President have been increased to Rs 5 lakh and Rs 4 lakh per month, respectively, in a rectification of an anomaly.

Announcing the hike in their salaries in his Budget speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the emoluments of the President, the Vice-President and the Governors were last revised with effect from January 1, 2006.

"These emoluments are proposed to be revised to Rs 5 lakh for the President, Rs 4 lakh for the Vice-President and to Rs 3.5 lakh per month for the Governors," he said, amidst thumping of desk by the members in the Lok Sabha. As of now, the President gets Rs 1.5 lakh per month, the Vice-President Rs 1.25 lakh and a Governor of a state Rs 1.10 lakh.

Till now, the President, the Vice-President and the Governors continued to get less salaries as compared to the top bureaucrats and service chiefs since the laws were not amended to rectify an anomaly with the implementation of the 7th Pay Commission's recommendations two years ago.

After the implementation of the 7th Pay Commission's awards on January 1, 2016, the Cabinet Secretary, who is the top-most bureaucrat in the country, gets Rs 2.5 lakh per month and a Secretary in the Union government draws Rs 2.25 lakh per month.

The President is also the supreme commander of the three armed forces — the Army, Air Force, and Navy. However, the President's current salary was less than the Chiefs of the three armed forces, who draw a salary equivalent to the Cabinet secretary. *Source: PTI*

contd from page 1

India's Budget focuses on farm sector, gives little to middle class

With chaotic implementation of the Goods and Services Tax and demonetization causing distress in the economy, Jaitley announced massive spending on rural and urban infrastructure as also lower tax rates for small and medium enterprises.

While continuing the 10-15 per cent surcharge on super-rich, he raised the health and education cess, levied on all taxable income, to 4 per cent from 3 per cent at present.

Keeping the income tax rates and slabs unchanged, he introduced a Rs 40,000 Standard Deduction for salaried employees and pensioners in lieu of the present exemption in respect of transport and medical expenses.

Presently, no tax is applicable on Rs 19,200 of transport allowance and medical expenditure of up to Rs 15,000. This has now been subsumed into the new Standard Deduction of Rs 40,000 which may mean very little benefit in tax saving considering that health and education cess has gone up.

Senior citizens will get higher exemptions on income from interest on bank and post office deposits, health insurance premium and critical illness expense.

Jaitley, however, made import of a host of products - from cellphone to perfumes and toiletry, from watches to parts of automobiles, sunglasses to truck and bus tires, footwear to diamonds and edible oils to fruit juices - costly by raising customs duty.

Fourteen years after it was scrapped, he brought back tax on gains made from sale of shares to offset revenue losses.

Capital gains exceeding Rs 1 lakh from shares held for more than a year will be taxed at 10 per cent. Presently, gains from equity investments held for more than 12 months are exempt from tax.

In July 2004, the government had abolished long-term capital gains tax on shares and replaced it with the securities transaction tax (STT) - a same-day tax credit system that continues.

In the 110-minute speech, in which he kept switching from English to Hindi for wider mass appeal, Jaitley announced plans for agriculture, rural housing, organic farming, animal husbandry and fisheries with a total allocation of Rs 14.34 lakh crore.

"My government is committed for the welfare of farmers," he said announcing that his party's election promise of fixing a minimum support price (MSP) at 150 per cent of the cost will be implemented for all kharif crops this year.

Also, credit to agriculture would be raised to Rs 11 lakh crore in the coming fiscal from Rs 10 lakh crore and kisan credit card extended to fisheries and animal husbandry farmers. Rs 2,000 crore will be provided for development of agri market and export of agriculture commodities will be liberalized.

In a bid to provide universal healthcare, he announced a 'National Health Protection scheme', providing a cover of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year for second and tertiary care



Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley along with MoS Finance ministers Shiv Pratap Shukla, P Radhakrishnan and Economic Affairs Secretary Shaktikanta Das leaves the North Block to present the Union Budget at Parliament, in New Delhi on Feb 1. Finance Secretary Hasmukh Adhia and Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian are also seen. Pic courtesy: PTI

hospitalization to 10 crore poor and vulnerable family (about 50 crore beneficiaries).

This, Jaitley said, will be world's largest health protection scheme. He committed an expenditure of Rs 1.38 lakh crore on health, education and social protection.

But to fund these, he let go of the fiscal consolidation roadmap. As a result, fiscal deficit for the current fiscal will be 3.5 per cent of the GDP as against the previous target of 3.2 per cent, and 3.3 per cent in 2018-19, as opposed to 3 per cent set earlier.

Fiscal deficit in 2016-17 was 3.5 per cent of the GDP.

Jaitley, who had in 2015 promised to reduce corporate tax from current 30 per cent to 25 per cent over four years, proposed lower tax rate of 25 per cent for companies with turnover of up to Rs 250 crore in 2016-17.

The Union Budget 2018-19 was the last full budget before the general elections next year, when a vote on account would be presented. The next full budget will be presented by the new government.

With GST and demonetization pulling down GDP growth rate in Asia's third largest economy to its lowest level in three years, he said economic growth was picking up and "firmly on path to achieve 8 per cent plus growth soon".

Gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to grow at 6.5 per cent to 6.75 per cent in 2017-18.

"Indian economy is now USD 2.5 trillion - seventh largest in the world. India is expected to become the fifth largest economy very soon," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi termed the Budget as "development-friendly" and said it will strengthen the vision of a 'new India'.

The budget is "farmer friendly, common citizen friendly, business environment friendly" and will add to 'ease of living' and 'ease of doing business', Modi added.

A 100 per cent tax deduction will be given for the first five years to companies registered as farmer producer companies with a turnover of Rs 100 crore and above.

"While making the proposals in this year's budget, we have been guided by our mission to especially strengthen agriculture, rural development, health, education, employment, MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) and infrastructure sectors of Indian economy," Jaitley said.

He put revised expenditure for 2017-18 at Rs 21.57 lakh crore and projected Rs 24.42 lakh crore expenditure in 2018-19.

Railway capital expenditure has been put at Rs 1.49 lakh crore in 2018-19.

Gross market borrowing is seen at Rs 6.06 lakh crore and net borrowing at Rs 4.62 lakh crore in 2018. Government will also switch Rs 28,000 crore of bonds next fiscal.

Customs duty on import of mobile phones is proposed to be increased to 20 per cent from 15 per cent, on some of their parts and accessories to 15 per cent and certain TV parts to 15 per cent.

Jaitley said measures to address bad loans of small and medium enterprises would be announced soon. He proposed setting up Rs 3 lakh crore target for lending to small enterprises.

Three government-owned non-life insurers - National Insurance Co, United India Assurance Co and Oriental India Insurance Co -- will be merged into a single entity and listed subsequently.

The process of strategic sale in 24 state-run companies including privatization of Air India has begun and more exchange-traded fund offers including debt ETFs will come.

Special schemes for states around Delhi will be implemented to address air pollution, he said adding removal of crop residue will be subsidized in order to tackle the problem of pollution due to burning of crop residue. *Source: PTI*



DEEPIKA PADUKONE BEAMS WITH JOY ON MAGAZINE COVER

Deepika Padukone's latest magazine cover proves she is in seventh heaven post the release of her film *Padmaavat*. Donning a colourful bling jacket, the dimpled beauty beams with joy as she appears on the February Happy issue of *Vogue*.

The official Instagram account of the magazine shared the picture with the caption, "In our Happy Issue (out February 1, 2018), Deepika Padukone (@deepikapadukone) reveals the one project she is most excited about currently. "I'm thrilled... I'm so thrilled," says our cover star. Head to Vogue.in to find out what she's talking about.

Featuring Deepika in the lead, *Padmaavat* also stars Ranveer Singh, Shahid Kapoor, Jim Sarbh, Aditi Rao Hydari and Raza Murad.

The film is going strong at the box office. Till now, the movie has officially crossed the Rs. 100 crore mark at the box-office in four days, despite not releasing in some states and acts of vandalism across the country. *Source: ANI*

I NEVER TAKE SUCCESS & FAILURE SERIOUSLY: KAREENA KAPOOR

In her 15-year-long career, Kareena Kapoor Khan has seen both ups and downs, but the actor says her love for acting is what keeps her going.

She said the fact that she is getting the opportunity to do the work of her choice is her biggest achievement. "I've never taken my success and my failure too seriously. I'm fine with it all. If the movie is a success then great, if it's not that's also fine. I just love my job. The idea is in doing something that I love the most and that's acting and it is more important than success or failure. Most people don't get the opportunity to enjoy their job but I do and that is my achievement," Kareena said.

After giving birth to son Taimur in December 2016, Kareena went on a maternity leave. The star kid has already become a paparazzi favourite and the 37-year-old actor wants him to have a normal childhood. "I just don't want him to be looked upon as a star-kid. I want him to grow up as normally as possible. I want to let him be just the way he is," Kareena said.

The actor is now looking forward to her next movie *Veere Di Wedding* alongside Sonam Kapoor and Swara Bhasker. "The film is about four women and it's an easy chick flick. It's a kind of film I'd want to say yes to. I am hoping for the best," she said on the sidelines of noted designer Anita Dongre's campaign #ANDIRISE, which talks about young women achievers from different walks of life.

Kareena said the campaign is about celebrating women who are breaking stereotypes. "I feel the modern Indian woman plays diverse roles, lives her life to the fullest and fulfils her choice with confidence and style. She is the woman who creates her own destiny and is unstoppable. I believe in what I do and I have my own identity," she said.

The designer said she chose Kareena as her muse as the actor represents effortless style.

Source: PTI



MOVIE REVIEW

NIRDOSH

Cast: Arbaaz Khan, Manjari Fadnis, Ashmit Patel, Maheek Chahal and Mukul Dev

Director: Subroto Paul, Pradeep Rangwani

A whodunit top-lining Arbaaz Khan as the brutish investigating officer Inspector Lokhande who takes bombastic pride in being a sort of encounter specialist. He is the one assigned to solve the murder (of Mukul Dev) which has a Mumbai based Media professional, Shinaya Grover (Manjari Phadnis) arrested as prime suspect. Of course, his investigation is bound to throw up other possibilities. This one is as predictable as they come. It's constructed with generic implacability and has little in it for the audience to enjoy.

There's hardly any suspense or intrigue here. The director seems lost to the idea of building up tension and staccato framing with a distinct lack of guile shadow the run in painful disharmony. The writing is pedestrian, the story-telling - distinctly lacking in craft and the dialogues sound silly and defeating to the purpose of

mystery. With Arbaaz Khan hogging the show it's also stupid to expect any great acting chops. He is dashing looking but an expressionless wonder and would have been better suited to the modelling world. The rest of the cast have little to do and the technical specs are also not worthy of mention.

REVIEW: Punctuated by shoddy writing, collective bad acting, cliched dialogues and juvenile sub plots, this murder mystery is likely to push any unsuspecting viewer to stage a walkout even before the killer is revealed.

Of the unimpressive lot, it's only Chahal and Dev who try to inject some believability to their grey roles. But the murder mystery, laced with betrayal, blackmail and seduction, doesn't have enough teeth to grip us. There are no redeeming features in *Nirdosh*. Watch this at your own risk.

The murder happens right at the start but we are kept guessing for some time as to who actually is the victim, which is a smart idea. Unfortunately, this is the only positive aspect of the film. Right from the interrogation to the investigation to the final revelation, the film just doesn't make sense.

The narrative is guilty of a strange practice of revealing something and then spending a good amount of time elaborating it.





KATE WINSLET REGRETS WORKING WITH 'CERTAIN MEN OF POWER'

Actor Kate Winslet said she has bitter regrets over her decision to work with certain "men of power". The actor won an Oscar for Harvey Weinstein produced film, *The Reader* and worked with Roman Polanski in *Carnage* and Woody Allen in *Wonder Wheel*.

Weinstein has been accused of sexual harassment and in some cases of rape by multiple women in Hollywood. Allegations against him have been the catalyst for the #MeToo and Time's Up movements.

Polanski was charged with drugging and raping a 13-year-old girl and fled the US while Allen's adopted daughter with Mia Farrow has accused him of sexual assault while she was a child. She spoke out against Allen again in a recent TV interview.

Speaking at the London Critics' Circle Film Awards, where she was honoured with Dilys Powell Award for excellence in film, Winslet said, "There are directors, producers and men of power who have for decades been awarded and applauded for their highly regarded work by both this industry and moviegoers alike. Indeed, many actors have had flourishing careers due in part to roles played in their films. The message we received for years was that it was the highest compliment to be offered roles by these men."

Source: PTI

SHARON STONE: HARVEY WEINSTEIN SHOULD GO TO PRISON



Sharon Stone hopes disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein goes to jail. However, she said all men accused of sexual misbehaviour should not share the same fate.

"In every crime, there are misdemeanours and felonies, and I think if someone's committed a misdemeanour they can't be treated like they have committed a felony. You can't charge someone for murder when they have got a parking ticket," said Stone.

Her comments are the same as actor Matt Damon, who was criticised by #MeToo campaigners for saying there is a "difference between patting someone on the butt and rape or child molestation", reports Daily Mail.

Stone condemned Weinstein, saying: "I hope he goes to jail." She called him "coarse, mean, violent and abusive".

"He thinks he's a big martyr but he's a pisher, a nobody," she added.

On how women should deal with predatory men, Stone said: "We have two legs. You can leave a room. You can say 'stop it'. You have an opportunity not to participate."

"Harassment doesn't start when you get to Hollywood. It starts when you are little. Don't feel sorry for me. Feel sorry for the generations of women who came before us who no one stood up for at all," she said.

"Women like my grandmother who was beaten by her husband almost every day... I stand up for them," she added.

Source: IANS

MOVIE REVIEW



PHANTOM THREAD

Cast: Bern Collaco, Camilla Rutherford, Cedric Tylleman, Daniel Day-Lewis, Dave Simon, Dinah Nicholson, Elli Banks

Set in the glamour of 1950s post-war London, renowned dressmaker Reynolds Woodcock (Daniel Day-Lewis) and his sister Cyril (Lesley Manville) are at the center of British fashion, dressing royalty, movie stars, heiresses, socialites, debutantes and dames with the distinct style of *The House of Woodcock*.

Women come and go through Woodcock's life, providing the confirmed bachelor with inspiration and companionship, until he comes across a young, strong-willed woman, Alma (Vicky Krieps), who soon becomes a fixture in his life as his muse and lover. Once controlled

and planned, he finds his carefully tailored life disrupted by love.

For any cinephile, going to the theater to see the latest Daniel Day-Lewis movie is considered mandatory viewing. The same goes for director Paul Thomas Anderson, who, like Day-Lewis, opts for quality over quantity by selectively releasing a piece of work once every 3 to 5 years. When combined, as they've done with *'Phantom Thread'* (and the second such instance following 2007's *'There Will Be Blood'*), the necessity in seeing the film is given an order of magnitude greater importance.

At best, *'Phantom Thread'* stands to receive a polarizing reaction from viewers.

It's a fine (I'd say perhaps even exemplary) film within the drilled-down genre of "English-set period-piece romantic dramas." However, when judged from a broader perspective, the film is simply far less captivating than either Day-Lewis' or Anderson's prior work, and the rather esoteric ending leaves audience members wishing the two had dedicated their respective time and effort to another pursuit.

Indian Origin Head Teacher in UK dubbed 'Hitler' Over Hijab Ban



Indian Origin Neena Lall, head teacher of St Stephen's School in Newham, east London, was forced to reverse the decision after widespread criticism to impose a ban on the hijab for girls below the age of eight earlier this month.

LONDON (TIP) : Neena Lall, An Indian origin head teacher at one of the UK's leading state-funded schools has been branded as "Hitler" on social media over her efforts to ban the 'hijab' for very young students.

The Head teacher of St Stephen's School in Newham, east London, Lall was forced to reverse the decision after widespread criticism to impose a ban on the hijab for girls below the age of eight earlier this month.

A video, circulating on social media this weekend, January 27, portrays her as the German dictator Adolf Hitler and the school's former chairman of governors as Russian dictator Stalin, with other management team shown as Hitler's acolytes.

"It is a very good school. Neena is a very good head teacher," one of the school's governors told the Sunday Times' in defense of the head teacher.

At a meeting of the parents and the school management on Monday, Jan 29, attended by local Labour party MP Stephen Timms, Ms Lall was forced to apologize as she confirmed the reversal of the governing body's previously approved ban on hijabs for very young pupils.

"The school's uniform policy is based on the health, safety and welfare of our children. The school has taken the decision to make changes to this policy with immediate effect and this follows on from conversations with our school community," the school said in a statement.

"We will work with our school community to continue to review this policy going forward in the best interests of our children," it added.

The school, with a majority of pupils from Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds, had earlier urged the UK government to issue clear guidelines on the issue of hijab wearing and religious fasting relating to very young pupils to prevent a backlash from parents.

Arif Qawi, the chair of governors, had resigned from his post last week following offensive messages posted on social media against him and Ms Lall.

"The Sunday Times' indicated he is prepared to return as chairman if ministers give a clear signal that they will support the school's right to set policy, including a uniform code. Campaigners believe that making very young girls wear the hijab is wrong because it is traditionally not worn until puberty.

Under the UK's Department for Education guidelines, uniform policy is a matter for individual head teachers and their governing bodies. But it did express concerns over intimidation via social media.

"Intimidation or bullying towards school staff or pupils is unacceptable. Anyone who feels they are facing either should report it to police," a spokesperson said.

In November 2017, St Stephen's School had topped a prestigious primary schools league table published by the Sunday Times annually. It was listed as the best school in England in the 'Schools Guide 2018' for a strong teaching record.

Are you OK, Aunty May? China warms to British Prime Minister

SHANGHAI/BEIJING (TIP): British Prime Minister Theresa May landed in China earlier this week fending off questions about her future amid mounting accusations of poor leadership, boring policies, and weakness over Brexit.

By Friday the 61-year old leader was basking in a warm reception from the leaders of world's second-largest economy, while concerned Chinese citizens affectionately nicknamed her 'Aunty May' and worried if her legs were warm enough in the Beijing cold.

"What's past is prologue," said President Xi Jinping during his one-to-one meeting with May, quoting British playwright William Shakespeare to signal his hopes for strengthening ties.

The three-day trade visit has seen May earn assurances from China that Brexit will not affect the country's enthusiasm for the so-called "golden era" of relations and a promise to open up Chinese markets to new British business.

While words will mean little if not backed up with action, and there are scant details about the headline announcement of 9 billion pounds of trade deals signed during the trip, the mood music for May's visit pointed to a Chinese state seeking to rally support around her.

"Her political style is known for being pragmatic and strong and deft at decision making. She's Britain's Iron Lady," said the Hubei Daily, an official regional newspaper, referring to the nickname of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

There was no sign of a hangover from the 2016 diplomatic spat between the two nations caused by May's decision to delay a part Chinese-funded nuclear plant over concerns about foreign investment in key British infrastructure.

"China really respects Britain," said the influential Global Times tabloid - the same newspaper which in 2013 dismissed Britain as "just an old European country apt for travel and study" in a scathing editorial during a visit by May's predecessor David Cameron,



who had infuriated China by meeting the Dalai Lama.

One Chinese official remarked dryly to Reuters: "Nobody would call him Uncle Cameron".

Asked by Chinese state television about her new moniker - a common Chinese term of endearment for respected women - May said she was honoured, and her officials were privately thrilled that the name had stuck.

By contrast, the front page of this week's Spectator, a British political magazine, reads "Lead or go", above a stark, unflattering cartoon of May, hunched and bow-legged.

RIVAL SUITORS

But, Britain is not the only state looking to woo China.

Last month France's energetic young President Emmanuel Macron arrived in Beijing with an attention-grabbing gift, a rare horse, although his tough words over Xi's signature plan to create a trillion-dollar modern-day Silk Road raised eyebrows.

Diplomatic sources say while China has

expressed concern about Brexit, it has also been reassured by messages that Britain's door is wide open to Chinese investment - a marked contrast to the suspicious reception Chinese companies have recently received in Germany.

May brought up awkward issues like democracy in Hong Kong, human rights and ethical concerns about Xi's Belt and Road initiative, but was praised as "pragmatic" by the Global Times for not pressing the issue in public. "For the prime minister, the losses outweigh the gains if she appeases the British media at the cost of the visit's friendly atmosphere," the paper wrote in an editorial on Friday.

On Chinese social media, concern about May's visit focused on less weighty issues - like whether her exposed legs were warm enough after a photograph of her with husband Phillip inside Beijing's Forbidden City. "Theresa, you really know how to stand up to the cold," wrote one of over 17,000 users to comment on her official Chinese-language Weibo account. (Reuters)

British Minister offers resignation for arriving late

LONDON (TIP): A British member of the House of Lords offered his resignation at the despatch box because he arrived late to the chamber.

According to CNN, International Development Minister and former Conservative MP Lord Bate, who was meant to be in the House of Lords chamber for the start of oral questions at 15:00 GMT said, "I'm thoroughly ashamed at not being in my place and therefore I shall be offering my resignation to the Prime Minister with immediate effect. I do apologize."

"I wonder if you permit me to offer my sincere apologies to Baroness Lister for my discourtesy in not being in my place to answer her question on a very important matter," Lord Bates said shortly after arriving at his place.

Peers urged him in vain not to go, and Labour's leader in the Lords said an apology would have sufficed. Peers cried "no" as he walked past them on his way out of the chamber, leaving puzzled looks in his wake.

Opposition leader in the House of Lords, Baroness Smith of Basildon, stated, "An apology is sufficient for a minor discourtesy."

However, British prime minister Theresa May rejected Bates' resignation dubbing it as "unnecessary."

"His resignation was refused as it was judged this was unnecessary. As a hard-working and diligent minister, it is typical of his approach that he takes his responsibilities to Parliament so seriously," a spokesperson for Prime Minister Theresa May said. (ANI)

EU seeks powers to curb post-Brexit UK trade breaches

BRUSSELS (TIP): The EU fears international rules are inadequate for post-Brexit Britain and is weighing new methods to crack down if the UK adopts unfair practices to boost its economy, said an official document seen by AFP Thursday.

European Union negotiators made their warning last week in a seminar to diplomats from the 27 remaining member states, which was devoted to how to maintain a "level playing field" after Britain leaves the bloc's single market.

"International rules do not adequately address the (potential) distortive effects of subsidies on investment, trade and competition," said a presentation to the diplomats by the European Commission, the EU's executive arm.

This means "the EU-UK agreement will have to include robust provisions on state aid to ensure a level-playing field with the member states," it added.

EU rules prevent governments subsidising companies or sectors of the economy -- so-called "state aid" -- saying it prevents fair competition.

Under the stewardship of chief negotiator Michel Barnier, the European Commission is handling negotiations with Britain for the other 27 countries.

Britain has said it will leave the EU's single market and customs union and the document is the clearest indication yet that Europe is seeking unique methods to deal with Britain on trade matters after the EU.

Concern is high among the EU 27 that London will use its divorce from the bloc to unfairly attract international investment by slashing tax and regulations as well as by breaking the bloc's strict rules against subsidies.

Free trade deals or seeking arbitration at the World Trade Organization were too cumbersome and slow to address potential issues, the commission said, especially given the deep ties linking the EU and UK economies.

On taxation, the commission warned diplomats that Britain was "likely to use tax to gain competitiveness" and that Europe had "very limited" legal avenues to prevent this.

The EU pointed out that its recently adopted tax haven "blacklist" -- that includes Namibia and Guam -- could be used if Britain lowered standards. (AFP)

GOA BECKONS TO ICONIC CARNIVAL FROM FEB 10 TO 13

During Goa carnival, every year a person from the state is chosen to play King Momo – a mythological character who symbolically rules the state during the carnival time and leads the float parades held across Goa

PANAJI (TIP): Goa is a state in western India with coastlines stretching along the Arabian Sea. Its long history as a Portuguese colony prior to 1961 is evident in its preserved 17th-century churches and the area's tropical spice plantations. Goa is also known for its beaches, ranging from popular stretches at Baga and Palolem to those in laid-back fishing villages such as Agonda.

The popular annual Goa Carnival will be held across the coastal state from February 10 to 13. The main float parade of the festival will be held in the state capital Panaji on February 10 and "King Momo" will lead the float parades in all the major cities of the state.

Every year, a person from the state is chosen to play King Momo—a mythological character who symbolically rules the state during the carnival time and leads the float parades held across Goa.

This year, Bruno Azaredo (57), from Utorda village in South Goa district, has been selected to play the role of King Momo and lead the float parades, a spokesman of the state tourism department said.

State tourism minister Manohar Ajaonkar earlier took stock of the preparations, including security and traffic arrangements, for the four-day festival. The float parades will be held in Margao and Ponda on February 11, Vasco and Curcholem on February 12 and in Mapusa and Morjim on February 13, he said.

The carnival committees, set up by the tourism department, have been asked to encourage participants to promote the state's culture and traditions in the festival and minimize the commercialization of floats, he said.

"The vehicles which cause pollution will not be allowed in the parades. The consumption of liquor and carrying of weapons will also not be permitted during the event," the spokesman said.

The carnival is being celebrated in Goa since the 18th century and is meant for enjoyment and merry-making, just before the 40 days of Lent, which is the time of abstinence and spiritual preparation for Easter, one of the organizers said.

The festival was introduced by the Portuguese, who ruled Goa for over 500 years, he added.

HISTORY OF CARNIVAL

Goa carnival was brought to India by Portuguese during the time they ruled here and approximately 500 years ago the first every carnival was organized in the state. But it was not the Portuguese originally who had these kind of exuberant riotous celebrations, the culture actually came from ancient Rome and Greece and spread to Spain and Portugal eventually. This quite explains that when Portuguese colonized Goa they wanted their culture to be dominant here and hence this carnival was organised. It had a Portuguese flavour to it earlier but with time the celebrations have taken up the essence of Goan culture and thus people identify with the festivities and take part in the carnival in crazily large numbers.

ENTRY TO GOA CARNIVAL

There are no entry tickets for the carnival and you just have to come and take part in the celebrations. Everyone is invited with open arms to join in and revel in the four days of exhilaration and unmatched exuberance.

GOA CARNIVAL CELEBRATIONS



There would be no doubt in your mind by now that Goa Carnival is the most awaited event in the state. You can get this from the fact that preparations start in December to make the carnival a roaring success! Music, dance and entertainment are the shining features of the carnival and along with these there are plays of a short length which portray the Goan traditions and culture very beautifully.

It is organized before the month of Lent is going to begin when people would have to completely abstain themselves from the consumption of meat. Starting with a grand procession on the Fat Saturday evening, the parade is lead by King Momo who sets out with his entourage of dancers, bands, clowns, acrobats and other entertainers to spread the message of merry making across the state.

The parade moves down through the main street of Panaji, the capital city of Goa, to come to rest after some hours of what seems like "endless gaiety". The festivities end with red and black dance where women and men dresses in red colored upper garments and black colored lower garments dance to the beats of the bands in a festooned procession. Ash Wednesday as it is called is the last day of the carnival when the month of Lent begins. One thing to note is that



the feasting is a major part of the festivities and hence this is time for the foodies to venture out and taste some of the best cuisines, drinks and wines here. Pure indulgence, we must say!

IMPORTANT TIPS

Booking hotels and travel tickets well in advance will be of huge benefit because you might get your hands on attractive discounts with

early booking. Also, advance planning and booking will be good because you would not like to get stuck in the rush hour as Goa is flooded with tourists during the time of carnival.

Take your best clothes with yourself and get ready to rock the carnival and also don't wear any shoes that are uncomfortable or may give you a shoe bite as there are a lot of street activities which you may be taking part in.

MAKE SOMEONE FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU

Sometimes we meet someone and we just know: it's love. However, it isn't always easy to see the wonderful qualities of the people right there in front of us. Therefore, it is good to know about some of the strategies that can make it more likely that someone will fall in love with you. Just remember that there is no way to make someone fall in love with you. All you can do is try to create the right conditions and see what happens.

Take good care of yourself

Physical appearance plays a huge role in whether or not someone will be attracted to someone else. How well you care for your physical health and appearance is something that people can see right away, so it is worth putting some extra time and energy into while you are trying to attract someone. People will notice if you don't care for yourself and this may make someone lose interest.

To ensure that you look your best, exercise, eat right, practice proper hygiene and wear clean, flattering clothing. Don't be afraid to capture attention.

Make a name for yourself

Do something that they will remember and show them that there is so much more to you than just a pretty smile. Make sure that your personality shines through and he/she knows about your likes and dislikes. Being passionate about something is very attractive and others will take notice.

Be proud of your accomplishments and confident in your abilities. Confidence is something that people admire, so don't be shy about what you have accomplished.

Be kind

Treat others the way you want to be treated. It may sound cheesy, but it's



true. If you want others to treat you with care and respect, you should start treating others this way, too. People are more likely to fall in love with other people who have great personalities, who are polite, and who are kind to others.

Show your flaws

Let him or her see how far you've come. For example, if you are fit and active now, but you used to be a couch potato, tell the person about your transformation. Revealing some of your past shortcomings to someone will allow him or her to see the real you and appreciate you even more.

Don't act like you're not bothered

So many people do this. Pretending that you don't care or aren't bothered about the relationship does NOT help and makes the other person feel a burden and this will NOT work.

Be emotionally available

Relationships are hard. Before trying to get someone to fall in love with you, be sure that you are ready for one. If you are too hung up on a past relationship, are more interested in dating someone else, or just not ready for commitment, don't try to get someone to fall in love with you.

Treat the person like a hero

Make your significant other feel like your hero/heroine when they're around you. Let him or her help you with schoolwork (to make him or her feel smart), ask for personal advice (to make him or her feel wise), and ask for help or advice on subjects that are particularly important to the person (to give him or her a chance to demonstrate expertise). Asking for clothing advice or help reaching or opening containers are also ways that you can make your significant other feel useful and capable.

5 NUTS THAT ARE A MUST FOR HEALTHY AND GLOWING SKIN



Walnuts

They may be slightly bitter in flavour, but they are known to have anti-inflammatory properties, thanks to the omega-3 fatty acids. A handful of these nuts can boost vitamin B levels that are particularly responsible for boosting your skin health by keeping age related fine lines and wrinkles at bay.

Almonds

Almonds are used almost everywhere, from savouries to snacks and desserts, after all they are packed with essential fatty acids, protein, and fiber. Almonds also provide vitamin E that keeps the blood vessels dilated in order to keep the skin hydrated and further defend the skin against certain disorders like acne, eczema and dark spots.

Cashews

Cashews are known as acne-fighting nutrients. These nuts are high in selenium, which acts as an antioxidant with vitamin E, leaving a hydrated skin and reduced inflammation. The presence of zinc promotes immune function for healing and cell growth that can renew and replenish infected or damaged acne zones.

Pistachios

Pistachios are best known for weight control, but they are also filled with heart healthy fats that promote good cholesterol. The antioxidants in pistas help decrease acne growth by controlling blood sugar levels that circulate the acne-causing hormone androgen.

Brazil nuts

Power-packed with omega-3 fatty acids, these nuts are a great source of selenium, which is responsible for improving skin's elasticity and relieving inflammation like pimples and acne. It also reduces the growth of free radicals and keeps the skin hydrated, thanks to the production of glutathione that is known to keep your skin healthy.

Add a handful of nuts or 30 grams of these delights every day in your diet and see your skin glowing naturally.

FOOD CORNER

CHICKPEA CURRY

Ingredients

2 tablespoons vegetable oil, 2 onions, minced 2 cloves garlic, minced 2 teaspoons fresh ginger root, finely chopped 6 whole cloves 2 (2 inch) sticks cinnamon, crushed 1 teaspoon ground cumin 1 teaspoon ground coriander salt 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper 1 teaspoon ground turmeric 2 (15 ounce) cans garbanzo beans 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro.

Method

- Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat, and fry onions until tender.
- Stir in garlic, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, cumin, coriander, salt, cayenne, and turmeric.
- Cook for 1 minute over medium heat, stirring constantly. Mix in garbanzo beans and their liquid.
- Continue to cook and stir until all ingredients are well blended and heated



- through.
- Remove from heat.
- Stir in cilantro just before serving, reserving 1 tablespoon for garnish.

ALOO PHUJIA

Ingredients

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 pound potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tomatoes, chopped.

Method

- Lightly brown onion in oil in a medium size skillet.
- Stir in salt, cayenne, turmeric and cumin. Add potatoes and cook 10 minutes stirring occasionally.
- Add tomatoes, cover pan and cook until potatoes are soft, about 10 minutes.



CONSUMING TURMERIC IMPROVES MEMORY AND MOOD: STUDY

LOS ANGELES (TIP): Eating turmeric daily may boost your memory and uplift your mood, a study suggests. Found in turmeric, curcumin has previously been shown to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

It also has been suggested as a possible reason that senior citizens in India, where curcumin is a dietary staple, have a lower prevalence of Alzheimer's disease and better cognitive performance.

"Exactly how curcumin exerts its effects is not certain, but it may be due to its ability to reduce brain inflammation, which has been linked to both Alzheimer's disease and major depression," said Gary Small, from the University of California, Los Angeles in the US.

The study, published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry, involved 40 adults between the ages of 50 and 90 years who had mild memory complaints.

They were randomly assigned to receive either a placebo or 90 milligrammes of curcumin twice daily for 18 months.

All 40 subjects received standardised cognitive assessments at the start of the study and at six-month intervals, and monitoring of curcumin levels in their blood at the start of the study and after 18 months.

Thirty of the volunteers underwent positron emission tomography, or PET scans, to determine the levels of amyloid and tau in their brains at the start of the study and after 18 months.



Have Turmeric Milk Daily

- Having haldi doodh at night is anyway beneficial for health and it induces good sleep. When teamed with turmeric, it also acts as an anti-ageing tonic.
- Turmeric milk fastens the recovery from an injury. Most people drink haldi doodh after a physical trauma, sickness or surgery to speed up the healing.
- Turmeric has antiseptic, anti-inflammatory properties, anti-microbial, anti-allergic properties.
- Having turmeric milk is also beneficial in treating joint and bone issues, including arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

The people who took curcumin experienced significant improvements in their memory and attention abilities, while the subjects who received placebo did not, Small said.

In memory tests, the people taking curcumin improved by 28 per cent over the 18 months.

Those taking curcumin also had mild improvements in mood, and their brain PET scans showed significantly less

amyloid and tau signals in the amygdala and hypothalamus than those who took placebos.

The amygdala and hypothalamus are regions of the brain that control several memory and emotional functions.

Four people taking curcumin, and two taking placebos, experienced mild side effects such as abdominal pain and nausea, the researchers said.



'HEAVY PERIODS COULD SOON BE A THING OF PAST'

LONDON (TIP): Scientists have uncovered a cause of heavy menstrual bleeding—a finding that offers hope for a new treatment for women living with the painful condition.

Researchers from the University of Edinburgh in the UK identified a key protein called HIF-1 that could explain why heavy bleeding occurs.

They studied the womb lining, known as the endometrium. This is shed during menstruation, leaving behind a wound-like surface that must heal to limit blood loss.

The team discovered that lowered levels of oxygen—known as hypoxia—stimulates production of HIF-1, which drives repair of the womb lining.

Women with heavy periods had reduced levels of HIF-1 compared with those with normal blood loss, researchers said.

Tests on mice using a drug to boost levels of HIF-1 led to improved tissue repair and reduced blood loss. The results offered hope for therapies, they said.

"Our findings reveal for the first time that HIF-1 and reduced levels of oxygen in the womb are required during a period to optimise repair of the womb lining," said Jackie Maybin from the MRC Centre for Reproductive Health at the University of Edinburgh.

"Excitingly, increasing levels of the HIF-1 protein in mice shows real promise as a novel, non-hormonal medical treatment," said Maybin, lead author of the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

Heavy menstrual bleeding is one of the most common reasons for visiting the gynaecologist—about 20 to 30 per cent of pre-menopausal women deal with heavy bleeding, according to the researchers.

Diagnosing heavy menstrual bleeding can be subjective, but the medical community defines it as blood loss of more than 80 millilitres per menstrual cycle.

The condition can lead to severe anaemia—where there are not enough red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body.

It can lead to severe abdominal pain and disrupt daily life, as well as giving rise to other symptoms, such as bloating, unscheduled bleeding, and fatigue.

Current therapies to ease heavy bleeding are hormone-based and often prevent pregnancy.

The researchers say there is a "clear, unmet" need for treatment that does not tamper with hormones and fertility.

"This research lays the much needed groundwork to developing new treatment options for women grappling with this condition," said Neha Issar-Brown, Head of Population and Systems Medicine at the MRC. "The fact that preliminary results suggest no interference with fertility makes it even more promising," she said. *Source: PTI*

Vitamin D3 can help heal damaged heart

WASHINGTON (TIP): Scientists have found that a little more sunlight might help restore damage to your cardiovascular system.

The study, done by Ohio University, shows that vitamin D3 could help restore damage to the cardiovascular system caused by diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

Dr Tadeusz Malinski, lead author of the study said, "Generally, vitamin D3 is associated with the bones. However, in recent years, in clinical settings people recognize that many patients who have a heart attack will have a deficiency of D3. It doesn't mean that the deficiency caused the heart attack, but it increased the risk of heart attack." He added, "We use nanosensors to see why vitamin D3 can be beneficial, especially for the function and restoration of the cardiovascular system".

The team has developed unique methods and systems of measurements using nanosensors, which are about 1,000 times smaller in diameter than a human hair, to track the impacts of Vitamin D3 on single endothelial cells, a vital regulatory component of the cardiovascular system.

A major discovery from this study is that vitamin D3 is a powerful stimulator of nitric oxide (NO), which is a major signalling molecule in the regulation of blood flow and the prevention of the formation of clots in the cardiovascular system.

Additionally, vitamin D3 significantly reduced the level of oxidative stress in the cardiovascular system.

The research, performed on cells from Caucasian Americans and African Americans, yielded similar results for both ethnic groups.

Malinski noted, "There are not many, if any, known systems



which can be used to restore cardiovascular endothelial cells which are already damaged, and Vitamin D3 can do it. This is a very inexpensive solution to repair the cardiovascular system. We don't have to develop a new drug. We already have it."

This study is the first to identify the molecular mechanism of vitamin D3-triggered restoration of the function of damaged endothelium in the cardiovascular system.

The authors of the study suggest that vitamin D3 may be of clinical importance in the restoration of dysfunctional cardiac endothelium after heart attack, capillary endothelium after brain ischemia (stroke), hypovolemia, vasculopathy, diabetes and atherosclerosis.

The study was published in the International Journal of Nanomedicine. *Source: ANI*

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NASA SATELLITE MAPS GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CLOUD ICE



WASHINGTON (TIP): A bread loaf-sized satellite has produced the first map of the global distribution of atmospheric ice in the 883-Gigahertz band, an important frequency for studying cloud ice and its effect on Earth's climate, NASA said on Wednesday.

IceCube—the diminutive spacecraft that deployed from the International Space Station (ISS) in May, last year—has demonstrated in-space a commercial 883-Gigahertz radiometer capable of measuring critical atmospheric cloud ice properties at altitudes between five to 15 kilometres.

NASA scientists pioneered the use of submillimeter wavelength bands, which fall between the microwave and infrared on the electromagnetic spectrum, to sense ice clouds.

However, until IceCube, these instruments had flown only aboard high-altitude research aircraft. This meant scientists could gather data only in areas over which the aircraft flew.

“With IceCube, scientists now have a working submillimeter radiometer system in space at a commercial price,” said Dong Wu, a scientist and IceCube principal investigator at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre.

“More importantly, it provides a global view on Earth's cloud-ice distribution,” said Wu.

Sensing atmospheric cloud ice requires scientists deploy instruments tuned to a broad range of frequency bands.

However, it is particularly important to fly submillimeter sensors. This wavelength fills a significant data gap in the middle and upper troposphere where ice clouds are often too opaque for infrared and visible sensors to penetrate.

It also reveals data about the tiniest ice particles that cannot be detected clearly in other microwave bands. *Source: PTI*

Google removed 7 lakh malicious apps from Play Store in 2017



SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Google removed over seven lakh malicious apps from Play Store in 2017 that violated its policies — 70 per cent more than the apps it took down in 2016 — the company said on Wednesday.

“Not only did we remove more bad apps, we were able to identify and take action against them earlier,” Andrew Ahn, Product Manager, Google Play, said in a blog post.

In fact, 99 per cent of apps with abusive contents were identified and rejected before anyone could install them, he added. Google has developed new detection models and techniques that can identify repeat offenders and abusive developer networks at scale.

Google also took down 1,00,000 bad developers in 2017.

“This was possible through significant improvements in our ability to detect abuse — such as impersonation, inappropriate content, or malware — through new Machine Learning models and techniques,” the post read.

“Copycats” apps attempt to deceive users by impersonating famous apps. *Source: IANS*

New switch may make computers function like human brain

WASHINGTON (TIP): Scientists have developed a superconducting switch that 'learns' like a biological system and could connect processors and store memories in future computers operating like the human brain.

The switch called a synapse, like its biological counterpart, supplies a missing piece for so-called neuromorphic computers, said researchers at The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the US.

Envisioned as a new type of artificial intelligence, such computers could boost perception and decision-making for applications such as self-driving cars and cancer diagnosis, they said.

A synapse is a connection or switch between two brain cells. The artificial synapse — a squat metallic cylinder 10 micrometres in diameter — is like the real thing because it can process incoming electrical spikes to customise spiking output signals.

This processing is based on a flexible internal design that can be tuned by experience or its environment. The more firing between cells or processors, the stronger the connection.

Both the real and artificial synapses can thus maintain old circuits and create new ones. Even better than the real thing, the NIST synapse can fire much faster than the human brain — one billion times per second, compared



to a brain cell's 50 times per second — using just a whiff of energy, about one ten-thousandth as much as a human synapse.

“The NIST synapse has lower energy needs than the human synapse, and we do not know of any other artificial synapse that uses less energy,” NIST physicist Mike Schneider said.

The new synapse would be used in neuromorphic computers made of superconducting components, which can transmit electricity without resistance, and therefore, would be more efficient than other designs based on semiconductors or software.

Data would be transmitted, processed and stored in units of magnetic flux. Superconducting devices mimicking brain cells and transmission lines have been developed, but until now, efficient synapses — a crucial

piece — have been missing.

The brain is especially powerful for tasks like context recognition because it processes data both in sequence and simultaneously and it stores memories in synapses all over the system.

A conventional computer processes data only in sequence and stores memory in a separate unit.

The NIST synapse is a Josephson junction, long used in NIST voltage standards. These junctions are a sandwich of superconducting materials with an insulator as a filling.

When an electrical current through the junction exceeds a level called the critical current, voltage spikes are produced, researchers said.

The synapse uses standard niobium electrodes but has a unique filling made of nanoscale clusters of manganese in a silicon matrix. *Source: PTI*

Microsoft acquires gaming start-up PlayFab

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Microsoft has acquired gaming start-up PlayFab for an undisclosed sum and will integrate its services into Azure platform to help developers build better games.

PlayFab powers more than 1,200 live games and has served over 700 million players.

“Together, Azure and PlayFab will further unlock the power of the intelligent cloud for the gaming industry, enabling game developers and delighting gamers around the world,” Kareem Choudhry, Corporate Vice President of gaming at Microsoft, said in a blog post.

PlayFab technology is being used by entertainment companies like Disney, NBC Universal, Wizards of the Coast, Nickelodeon, Bandai Namco, Rovio and Capcom.

“Our platform of scalable game services, game analytics, and LiveOps tools are helping more than 3,000 studios progress from shipping static software to creating games that scale gracefully and evolve over time with new content, live events, and frequent updates,” PlayFab CEO James Gwertzman said in a post.

PlayFab claims to process more than 1.5 billion transactions a day, nearly 20,000 transactions a second.

“Microsoft, with its deep expertise in gaming and cloud computing, is a perfect home for PlayFab as we expand our platform and features,” the company said.

Facebook bans cryptocurrency ads on its platforms

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Facebook has banned ads that promote initial coin offerings (ICOs), cryptocurrency like Bitcoin and binary options trading from its platforms, including Instagram, Audience Network and Messenger.

The new policy prohibits ads that promote financial products and services that are frequently associated with misleading or deceptive promotional practices, Facebook said in a statement late on Tuesday.

“We want people to continue to discover and learn about new products and services through Facebook ads without fear of scams or deception.

“That said, there are many companies who are advertising binary options, ICOs and cryptocurrencies that are not currently operating in good faith,” said Rob Leathern, Product Management Director at Facebook.

The enforcement will begin to ramp up across Facebook platforms.

“We will revisit this policy and how we enforce it as our signals improve,” Leathern added.

The social media platform is asking its over two billion-



strong community to report content that violates its advertising policies.

“People can report any ad on Facebook by clicking on the upper right-hand corner of the ad,” Facebook said.

“Two of our core advertising principles outline our belief that ads should be safe, and that we build for people first. Misleading or deceptive ads have no place on Facebook,” the company added. *Source: IANS*

'Car imports from India to UK jumped by over 8 per cent'

LONDON (TIP): Car imports from India to the UK spiked last year with an 8.3 per cent hike in registration of Indian-built vehicles by buyers in Britain, authorities said on Wednesday.

While imports were strong, exports to India declined, according to the latest UK automotive industry figures released here.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) found that the popularity of Indian-built cars marked a spike in the UK last year, with buyers in Britain registering 34,149 cars imported from India.

This represents an 8.3 per cent hike as compared to 2016 imports, according to the industry figures.

The popular Indian-made models are Ford Ecosport, Ford KA+, Nissan Micra and Suzuki Baleno, the SMMT said.

However, India's rank came down from eighth in 2016 to 12th last year on the list of Britain's biggest Asian markets, as exports of cars to India from the UK declined by 66 per cent to 1,144 units as compared to 3,372 units in 2016.

The decline follows investment by some manufacturers in local assembly, shipping components to India rather than fully assembled vehicles to operations there.

"It reflects more investments being made in India and capacity expansion in the country. Most companies prefer to build close to where they sell," said Mike Hawes, chief executive of SMMT, one of the UK's largest trade associations.

Tata Motors-owned Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) continued to dominate the top five UK-based bestsellers in India with Range Rover Sport, Land Rover Discovery, Range Rover Velar and Range Rover occupying the key spots except MINI One, which proved the second most popular UK brand among Indians last year.

Reacting to news of JLR's recent announcement to temporarily cut its production schedule at Halewood in England's Merseyside from the second quarter of this year, Hawes said the Indian-owned luxury car-maker remains a "fantastic success story" which continues to invest in the UK.



"The UK and Indian automotive sectors have a rich heritage of partnership and investment, and deepening this relationship through mutually-beneficial trade deals is of high importance to both.

"Due to the highly integrated nature of the global automotive sector, it is vital we secure the right deals, both in Europe and globally, for the benefit of our respective industries, economies and consumers worldwide," he said.

Across the wider Asian region, demand for British-built cars rose by 10.4 per cent in 2017, with 200,280 motorists choosing a UK-made brand, up from 181,370 in 2016.

China, Japan and South Korea topped the UK's Asian export markets, taking more than three quarters (76.7 per cent) of all cars shipped to the region.

Overseas demand continued to dominate the industry, accounting for 79.9 per cent of all UK car output and Europe by far the UK's biggest trading partner.

Among other countries showing notable growth last year were Japan (24.5 per cent), China (19.7 per cent), Canada (19.5 per cent) and the US (7.0 per cent).

Overall, UK car production registered a decline in 2017, with 1,671,166 vehicles rolling off production lines—marking a 3 per cent decrease on 2016.

Exports also reflected a downward

trend of 1.1 per cent in 2017, prompting the SMMT to call for urgent clarity on the transition period to be triggered when Britain leaves the 28-member bloc European Union (EU) in March 2019.

"We urgently need clarity on the transitional arrangements for Brexit, arrangements that must retain all the current benefits else around 10 per cent of our exports could be threatened overnight," Hawes warned.

The latest figures also reflect a decline in UK automotive investment by 33.7 per cent to stand at 1.1 billion pounds in 2017, down from 1.66 billion pounds in 2016.

The industry blames a 9.8 per cent fall in overall output for the domestic market on declining business and economic confidence and confusion over the UK government's policy on diesel.

The SMMT sought to allay fears around diesel vehicles, saying the industry is already moving towards targets of creating more hybrid and zero emission vehicles.

Meanwhile, it claims the UK's reputation as a centre for excellence in engine design and manufacture was boosted in 2017, with demand for British-built engines growing at home and overseas.

Overall UK engine output rose 6.9 per cent to more than 2.7 million units—with 54.7 per cent destined for car and van plants around the world. *Source: PTI*

APPLE SOLD RECORD 22 MN HANDSETS IN US; IPHONE X STEALS THE SHOW



NEW YORK (TIP): Apple sold a record 22.39 million smartphones in the US in the holiday season last year, increasing its market share from 37 per cent to 44 per cent — the highest ever for Apple on home turf, a new report said on Jan 24.

Since its launch on November 3, with nearly eight million units sold, iPhone X outsold iPhone 8 and iPhone 8 Plus by a 2:1 margin in the US.

According to Counterpoint Research's "Market Pulse" programme, 51.2 million smartphones were sold during the holiday season quarter of 2017.

"Apple shipped a record 22 million iPhones for the first time ever in a quarter in the US which is an impressive feat because the Q4 promotional season was not nearly as aggressive as previous years," Research Director Jeff Fieldhack said in a statement.

"Apple was able to grow their sell through 20 per cent in a market that only grew 2 per cent compared to last year. This means Apple has been successful to take share away from Samsung in the premium segment," he added.

There are reports that iPhone X has disappointed on a global level, including in China, and the higher price ensured the demand remained softer than expected.

"But this has not been the case in the US market. The consumers, on an average, are probably on their third or fourth iPhone and are willing to pay for the Apple ecosystem which is much stronger in the US than, for example, in China," said Research Director Neil Shah. *Source: IANS*

DeMo led to more savings: Report

NEW DELHI (TIP): The demonetisation resulted in widening of taxpayers' base and rise in household savings, said the Economic Survey 2017-18 tabled in Parliament today.

The pre-Budget survey further said policy priorities over the short term focused on reviving investments by mobilising savings and encouraging the conversion of gold into financial savings.

"The share of financial savings is already rising in aggregate household saving —with a clear shift visible towards market instruments — a phenomenon that has been helped by demonetisation," said the document authored by a team led by CEA Arvind Surbramanian.

Source: PTI

Gold inches up as dollar eases ahead of Fed decision

NEW DELHI (TIP):

Gold prices edged up on Wednesday after hitting a one-week low in the previous session, with the dollar falling against a basket of major rivals and traders awaiting the outcome of the U.S.

Federal Reserve's two-day meeting.

Spot gold had risen 0.2 percent to \$1,341.15 per ounce by 0359 GM. In the previous session, it touched its lowest since Jan. 23 at \$1,334.10 an ounce.

U.S. gold futures for February delivery rose 0.4% to \$1,339.80 per ounce. "Yellen may deliver a hawkish surprise setting the stage for a possible policy pivot while trumpeting in the Powell era. Gold bears may take advantage of this move," said Stephen Innes, APAC trading head for OANDA.

A rate hike in March would not come as a surprise, but any change in the pace of hikes would pose a risk to gold's rally, Innes noted.



Samsung reaps \$39.30 bn net profit in 2017

SEOUL (TIP): South Korean technology giant Samsung Electronics achieved a net profit of \$39.30 billion, 85.6 per cent more than in 2016 thanks to the boom in the memory chip industry.

The company also earned a gross operating profit of 56.2 trillion won, 83 per cent higher than the previous year, the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

Its operating profit was 53.65 trillion won, a 83.4 per cent increase, supported by a turnover of 239.58 trillion won, which is 18.6 per cent higher than in 2016, Efe reported.

With respect to the fourth quarter of the year, the world's largest memory manufacturer saw its net profit increase 72.9 per cent year-on-year to 12.26 trillion won.

Its operating profit was 15.15 billion



won, a 64.3 per cent increase compared to the last quarter of 2016, and its sales totalled 65.98 billion won, a 23.7 per cent rise.

The company attributed the good performance in the fourth quarter to its component business unit, which manufactures the DRAM and NAND

memory chips that have strengthened the company's financial results throughout 2017.

Samsung said that "orders for high-performance memory products for servers and mobile storage were strong" during the October to December quarter.

The tech giant's dominance in the memory sector, coupled with the high demand because of the rise of big data and the Internet of Things (IoT), has boosted the prices of this type of products and greatly benefited the company.

Samsung expects this strong demand to remain stable throughout 2018 as a result of the need to supply of new data centers as well as high-end mobile manufacturers, and plans to continue to strengthen its production to meet the expected demand.

Source: IANS

contd from page 1

Trump calls for...

sound enthusiastic about working with Democrats. At times, the speech even took on the feel of a pep rally for America, with Republicans briefly chanting "USA!" as the president spoke.

"To every citizen watching at home tonight -- no matter where you have been, or where you come from, this is your time," Trump said. "If you work hard, if you believe in yourself, if you believe in America, then you can dream anything, you can be anything, and together, we can achieve anything."

At the top of the speech, Trump celebrated the booming economy, attributing the bullish stock market of recent months to his policies. He also took time to advertise the recent tax cuts championed by his administration, arguing that it would soon pay dividends for working Americans.

"And just as I promised the American people from this podium 11 months ago, we enacted the biggest tax cuts and reforms in American history," Trump said. "Our massive tax cuts provide tremendous relief for the middle class and small businesses. A typical family of four making \$75,000 will see their tax bill reduced by \$2,000 -- slashing their tax bill in half. This April will be the last time you ever file under the old broken system -- and millions of Americans will have more take-home pay starting next month."

As expected, the president also called for a massive infrastructure package, which he said he hopes will attract bipartisan support.

"America is a nation of builders," Trump said. "We built the Empire State Building in just one year - isn't it a disgrace that it can now take 10 years just to get a minor permit approved for the building of a simple road?"

"I am asking both parties to come together to give us safe, fast, reliable, and modern infrastructure that our economy needs, and our people deserve."

The tail end of the speech, which lasted over an hour, was devoted to military issues, with Trump calling for an end to spending caps for the military and the modernization of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. He also promised the final defeat of ISIS.

"We will continue our fight until ISIS is defeated," Trump said after touting recent victories in the war with the terror group.

Trump also discussed North Korea's nuclear provocations and its treatment of both its own citizens and Otto Warmbier, an American student who was arrested in the country. Warmbier was sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for allegedly taking a political sign from a hotel and died shortly after he was released from captivity.

Various polls post the address indicated that Trump's speech was well received by Americans. 72% Americans who watched the speech said they approved of it, with just over a quarter saying they did not.

The days ahead are quite crucial. The DACA issue, the impending release of Republican Memo on FBI and Department of Justice, the budget approval, Mueller investigation - are some of the knotty issues to be tackled. Given the tough postures adopted by both the Republicans and the Democrats,

the coming days indicate some interesting fireworks.

A Political Storm...

FBI Director Christopher Wray was going to resign in protest releasing the information, which is based on classified intelligence, would be unusual. The memo covers events during the 2016 campaign, when the FBI and the Department of Justice went to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISA) to get a warrant to monitor then-Trump campaign advisor Carter Page, who was suspected of having illegal contacts with Russian operatives.

The four-page memo, authored by Republican Rep. Devin Nunes, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, outlines alleged surveillance abuses. It has deepened a severe partisan divide.

Rep. Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the committee, says the document presents a distorted and unfair picture of how the FBI behaved, and jeopardizes the special counsel's Russia investigation.

"They ought to be sending the message instead to the White House that were the president to fire Bob Mueller or Rod Rosenstein, that would be considered obstruction of justice and it would bring down the administration," Schiff said, referring to the special counsel and the deputy attorney general, who is overseeing the Russia probe.

House Speaker Paul Ryan denied the memo is politically motivated.

"The memo is not an indictment of the FBI, the Department of Justice," Ryan said at a GOP retreat Thursday. "What it is, is Congress' legitimate function of oversight to make sure the FISA process is being used correctly."

Thursday evening, former FBI Director James Comey -- who was fired by the president -- weighed in:

James Comey

@Comey

All should appreciate the FBI speaking up. I wish more of our leaders would. But take heart: American history shows that, in the long run, weasels and liars never hold the field, so long as good people stand up. Not a lot of schools or streets named for Joe McCarthy.

5:51 PM - Feb 1, 2018

That is a reflection of how tense this controversy has become. (Source: CBS)

Indian American...

he proposed in the immigration framework released last week will be the only solution for ending the DACA crisis.

DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), allows individuals who entered the United States as minors and remained undocumented to get a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation. Those participating in the DACA program are called Dreamers.

Forty-five minutes into his highly stretched first State of the Union address, Trump said the open borders have resulted in the inflow of "drugs and gangs" into the country.

Trump said that slaying of Kayla Cuevas and Nisa Mickens, two teen girls in Long Island by MS-13 gang members, is the result of unchecked illegal immigrants crossing the national border. The parents of the victims were also present during the event.

Ironically, Sunayana Dumala, the wife of Srinivas Kuchibhotla, an Indian American tech professional who was shot and killed by a white supremacist in Kansas, was present during the State of the Union address as the guest of Rep. Kevin Yoder when Trump said immigrants were spreading violence in the United States.

Sen. Kamala Harris, who has been a strong advocate of Dreamers and immigrant, reacted strongly to the speech. "As the attorney general of California, my main area of focus was going after transnational criminal

organizations involved in trafficking guns, drugs, and human beings," speaking to MSNBC, she said. "MS 13 is one of the worst examples of criminal behavior. To equate that with dreamers and DACA was completely irresponsible and it was scapegoating, and it was fear mongering and it was wrong. It was wrong technically in terms of the nature and character of this populations and in terms of who they are and how they love their lives and that is wrong also because it not how leaders are supposed to do. We are not supposed to convince the American population a policy because we make them afraid and that is exactly what this president is doing."

During the President's speech, Harris tweeted, "Dreamers should not be used as a bargaining chip or held hostage in exchange for anti-immigrant policies."

Indian American Rep Pramila Jayapal, D-Washington, who boycotted the State of the Union, also ridiculed Trump's rhetoric on immigrants and hosted their alternative State of Our Union address at the National Press Club on Tuesday night.

Reacting to the president's comments on the immigrants Jayapal tweeted, "the president's rhetoric was absurd and more of the same. He wants to slash legal immigration and conflate immigrant families with terrorists and criminals and drains on our economy."

Speaking to MSNBC she said, "I came to this country as a 16-year-old and now I'm a United States Congresswoman, one among a dozen members of the Congress. But it is so insulting to see him (Trump) continually scapegoating immigrants, trying to make us the division, when we know that all of our ancestors have come here and helped build this country. For him to start with the MS 13 gang and that story and use that story in a way to say everybody is a criminal and therefore, we should cut family immigration to half and even safe family immigration. Even though he didn't say family migration and said chain migration, what he really means is family reunification - the corner of immigration in this country for the last fifty years. It was outrageous and I'm so glad that I was not there."

The Democrat also said that, by holding Dreamers in a hostage-like situation, Trump is asking for ransom, which is to end the legal immigration by half. She also pointed that Dreamers were enjoying legal status and were not deportable until Trump ended the program. Another Indian American Democrat, Rep. Ro Khanna of California, after listening to Trump's State of the Union address tweeted, "Tonight, Trump talked about immigration. His perception is flawed. Real lives are at stake, and I will not stop fighting for the 800,000 DREAMERS who deserve nothing less than a clean DREAM Act." "I will continue to be a voice for jobs and equality, full funding for CHIP, a clean DREAM Act, and necessary disaster relief funding, as well as long-term economic solutions for working families," he wrote in another tweet.

A press release issued Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi said: "I wish President Trump governed with the same tone of promise and cooperation that he used at times during his speech tonight. If only the first year of his presidency had focused on infrastructure, investments in workforce development, and career and technical education, what a different political moment we would all be living in today."

Voicing his support for the immigrants, Rep. Ami Bera invited a special guest for the State of the Union, Dr. Bennet Omalu, a Nigerian immigrant who has made groundbreaking discoveries in caring for brain injuries. "We are a nation of immigrants and that should be celebrated," Bera tweeted before leaving for the address. "I'm honored to have him join me at the State of the Union to reaffirm our American values," he said in another tweet.

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Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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 011-91-8141234275 www.bejandaruwalla.com

Weekly Horoscope: February 05 - February 11, 2018

Ganesha says in digital terms speed + space + spirituality + showmanship = Sagittarius.

Add to it the great divide between illusion / reality, evolution / revolution, freedom / captivity, knowledge / wisdom. The archer pierces the eye of the Sun and hits infinity.

Finally, Sagittarius is all about freedom. Sagittarius is both fast and furious.

Aries:

Ganesha says this period in your own sign brings many unusual aspects into the light of day. The period is slowly coming to a close and it is a good time for reflection. You started off with ambition and grand plans on the work front and then saw a platter full of goodies coming to you. There have been twists and turns ranging from strange esoteric pursuits, to flights of fancy, the supernatural and even the supra natural, interest in spirits, witches and other occult phenomena.

Taurus:

You have put in a lot in terms of ideas, effort and commitment and this is the time for reaping the harvest. You like the sweet sound of good money in the bank and the social standing and perquisites that come in the form of pleasing symbols of success. You enjoy it all without a second thought, and why not? They bring joy to you and your family. You look back on the period and even seek to expand on the good fortune coming to you from time well spent.

Gemini:

You are in an introspection mode. You even look at parapsychology and / or psychic insights and ability. Nursing, healing, welfare interests, medicare, healing minds and bodies, charities will take your time and energy and quite happily too. You have many desires to be fulfilled and are filled with a new mindset of inquiry. Right now, Ganesha gives you a time of calm, introspection, thought. There is a good chance that you will also be involved in trade and travel.

Cancer:

You are pressured by commitments to work and family. Both will need hard work and effort. There will also be investments and outlays, both financial and with time. You will have a lot of coping to do as they are all linked. It can be a heavy burden and so guard against overdoing it. But, whatever you do now, the results that follow will be pleasant. I must also tell you now that this is a special time and is filled with favours coming your way. No more guessing and hoping for the best.

Leo:

You are enriched and Ganesha's blessings are with you. Happy times are finally here and you are certainly on top of the world. Go for whatever you need but remember the saying: "There's no such thing as a free lunch". But don't let this deter you. Take your chances and plan for the future. Ganesha also tell you to read the fine print. There could be hidden clauses that could be less than favorable in the long run; watch out for deceit.

Virgo:

You are enthusiastic and energized with all that is happening in your life right now. You will be a human dynamo, a powerhouse of energy, ready to attain targets you've only been hoping to achieve. You make glorious plans for the future leading to great success and joy. There is new zest in your attitude to life itself, and you work exceptionally hard. You will achieve success in all spheres of life and will ride the wave. The world is your oyster, right now.

Libra:

There is free time and also a strong inclination to indulge in all kinds of mental activity. It will be back to mind games for you Librans, but of a very different sort. Once again, you look for fresh avenues of self-expression and of exploring new areas of both knowledge and experience. The family and work angles are both energized but there is a certain restlessness that might prove dangerous if it is not channelized properly. Despite it all, you do make sure that you manage all your commitments to the people who matter in your life.

Scorpio:

The trends are encouraging as the period draws to its end. You have had material rewards. Now you reach out for greater love and warmth in relationships and are appreciated, valued and cherished. Family life will be on a high and your children will give great joy. There is a good chance of an engagement or marriage happening in this period. It could be either yours or that of someone dear to you. You are in an adventurous mood and would like to try out new things. Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

Sagittarius:

The period may be approaching its end, but your energy remains undiminished. You are on the go all time and are filled with a sense of fulfilment and self-realization. Family and marital bonds are honored with deep commitment and genuine caring. You have introspected a lot and have arrived at this point in your life after a great deal of soul searching. Expenses continue to mount but you are not complaining, as you are confident you can cope.

Capricorn:

The tide changes here. Once again, from all the gusto and go, you get meditative. You look at the spiritual and the meditative areas with both sincerity and much commitment. Life's meaning and, strangely enough, law and the social order, research, philosophical pursuits and even questions of justice keep you busy through the remaining period. You will still mesh beautifully with others and make gains in other spheres of life. Your ideas, ingenuity will set the stage of for stupendous achievements.

Aquarius:

Your confidence and charisma - 2 great C's - will be at an all-time high. They will be reflected in your interactions, and your attitude to friends, colleagues, and family. Having achieved your targets, you look at the lighter, more pleasant side of life. You decide to have fun, relax, let your hair down. You dabble in the creative arts and make more contacts. Expression is the key word here and you also go all out to reach out to others. Your life is filled with an assortment of activities and you are enjoying them all.

Pisces:

You -----consciously go slow but can't escape the intensity of the period. Finance and family will be well looked after, but there may also be a new love interest that takes a lot of your time and energy. Don't overstep the line and hurt loved ones in the process. Tread softly, says Ganesha. It may just be a passing fancy and overindulgence may cost you dear. Don't rock the boat where family harmony is concerned. You will have visitors and a lot of merrymaking. You will be the force behind the social whirligig. Enjoy!

DURBAN (TIP): Captain Virat Kohli struck a stylish century to lead India to a comfortable six-wicket victory over South Africa in the first One-day International here today and end the hosts' 17-match winning streak on home soil.

India amassed 270/4 to reach their target with 27 balls to spare at Kingsmead after South Africa captain Faf du Plessis, who won the toss, scored 120 of his side's 269/8.

A record 189-run third-wicket partnership between Kohli, who made 112, and Ajinkya Rahane (79) set up India's victory at the start of the six-match series. Kohli reached his 33rd ODI ton off 105 balls, while Rahane's flamboyant knock came off 86 balls.

Their partnership was the highest for the third wicket in an ODI at the Durban venue, beating a two decade-old mark held by Pakistan, and ensured India eased to victory with wickets and overs to spare.

Du Plessis carried his side as his teammates were strangled by India's wrist spinners, slumping to 134/5 with Kuldeep Yadav the pick of the bunch as he finished with figures of 3/34 in an economical 10-over spell. Together with Chris Morris (37), Du Plessis piled on late runs to take South Africa to a better than expected total, and hand a sell-out crowd hope but still significantly short of a defensible target.

India have won eight of their previous nine ODIs chasing down a target and Kohli felt his side always in with a chance of doing so again.

"It was a special knock for me because the first game of a series is always important. When we restricted South Africa we knew we needed one partnership to effectively take us home," Kohli said.

Spin twins

The two wrist-spinners doing well in their first ODI in South Africa is good news, and Kohli must be delighted. "They help you in any conditions in the world," Kohli had said. "They

Kohli ton upstages Faf du Plessis knock as India beat South Africa in Durban



Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli acknowledges the crowd after losing his wicket during the first ODI against South Africa at the Kingsmead Stadium in Durban on Thursday. Pic courtesy: AP

can go for six an over but they will pick you three wickets as well, which is eventually the difference in the game."

For the record, Yadav's 3/34 is the joint second-best analysis by an Indian spinner

against South Africa on their pitches, after Harbhajan Singh's 3/27 in 2001. Yadav has become only the fourth Indian spinner after Venkatapathy Raju (in 1992), Harbhajan, and Yuvraj Singh (in 2011) to take three wickets in

an ODI against South Africa.

The second game of the series is at Centurion in Pretoria on Sunday. South Africa top the International Cricket Council's ODI team rankings with India second. Source: Agencies

MELBOURNE (TIP): The Indian U-19 cricket team has been a force to reckon with when it comes to big tournaments. The Men in Blue have won the ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup thrice and are a step away from becoming the only side to win four titles. To do so, they will have to ward off the final challenge in their path – Australia.

Both teams have squared off against each other on five instances in previous editions of the tournament, with India leading 3-2. Here is a look back at their previous encounters -

Australia Young Cricketers v India Young Cricketers at Berri - Feb 29, 1988

Their first encounter turned out to be a one-sided affair, with Australia sealing a comfortable seven-wicket win.

After being asked to bat, India were bundled out for 132, with Nayan Mongia scoring the most (46). Brian McFadyen was the pick of the bowlers for Australia, finishing with 4/20.

In reply, Stuart Law's unbeaten 72 guided Australia home with 64 balls to spare.

The Geoff Parker-led side continued its good form and went on to win the inaugural edition of the tournament.

Super League d'Oliveira Pool: Australia Under-19s v India Under-19s at Centurion - Jan 20, 1998

Another easy ride for Australia. It wasn't a one-man show this time around but a complete team effort which kept Amit Pagnis' side to 174 despite Mohammed Kaif's fighting 60.

James Hopes, who took two wickets, scored a fifty to help his side win the contest with more than 20 overs to spare.

It seemed Australia were following the lead of their senior team, thumping any opposition coming their way.

ICC UNDER-19 CRICKET WORLD CUP FINAL India hold edge over Australia

Semi-Final: Australia Under-19s v India Under-19s at Colombo (PSS) - Jan 25, 2000

It was India's turn to return the favour as opener Ravneet Ricky's masterful 108 guided his team to a thumping 170-run win.

His 108 included 12 boundaries. Though Yuvraj Singh grabbed some of the limelight with a blistering half-century, it was Ricky's century that provided India the platform to go for a win. In reply to India's 284/6, Australia could only manage 114.

Kaif's team then went on to beat Sri Lanka in the final to win its maiden title.

Final: Australia Under-19s v India Under-19s at Townsville - Aug 26, 2012

The young guns came out all blazing in the coastal Australian town of Townsville to beat hosts and holders Australia by six wickets, powered by captain Unmukt Chand's unbeaten 111 in a tense final on a bouncy pitch.

Wicketkeeper Smit Patel (62*) played a perfect supporting role and their unbroken 130-run stand saw India win the title for the third time.

Sent in to bat, Australia made 225/8, with captain William Bosisto scoring an unbeaten 87.

India started strongly but collapsed to 97-4 before Chand guided his team to victory with two overs to spare.

Chand's innings was the defining performance of the World Cup as it came in demanding conditions and against rivals who



India, coached by Rahul Dravid, have been dominant on their way to the final of the ICC U-19 Cricket World Cup.(ICC)

were high on confidence after staying unbeaten until the final.

7th match, Group B: Australia Under-19s v India Under-19s at Mount Maunganui - Jan 14, 2018

In an authoritative show, Indian crushed Australia by a massive 100-run margin with bowlers complementing a splendid batting

performance in Mount Maunganui.

Captain Prithvi Shaw led from the front with a 94-run knock and shared a 180-run stand with fellow opener Manjot Kalra (86) to power the three-time champions to a 328/7.

Kamlesh Nagrakoti (3/29) and Shivam Mavi (3/45) then impressed with their speed and shared six wickets between them to bowl Australia out for 228 in 42.5 overs.

Source: HT

FIA Chicago celebrates India's 69th Republic Day with Health and Wellness Camp



Dignitaries and the FIA Board members

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): The Federation of Indian Associations Chicago (FIA) celebrated India's 69th Republic Day by holding a Community Event at Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Itasca Illinois on Sunday, Jan 28, 2018. The event comprised of a blood Donation drive, a Health and Wellness Camp, Information on Medicare and Medicaid benefits, Information and advice on Taxation, College counselling, and Passport and Visa help.

The event attracted more than one thousand people from the community who took advantage of the various services offered. The Blood Collection Drive was conducted by Heartland Blood Centers. The Health and Wellness Camp saw more than 25 doctors in attendance comprising of dentists, Internal Medicine, Orthopedic, Optometric, Cardiologist, Chiropractors, Urologists, Physiotherapists and Podiatrists taking care of people. Around 325 people had their blood and other vitals checked, and more than 55 had an on the spot EKG taken for their heart issues, while others went on to see other doctors with their general and specific health issues starting from dental issues, general and specific health issues, orthopedic issues, heart issues, not to forget muscle and joint issues.

There were booths with experts and counselors giving people advice on Medicare and Medicaid, in home help for seniors, taxation advice, and college admission counseling and passport and visa advice booth with officers from the Indian Consulate in Chicago.

The event began with the American

National Anthem sung by Ashika Sachdev followed by the Indian National anthem sung by Geetanjali Maru. Sunil Shah, Founder President, in his speech welcomed the dignitaries to the event and appreciated volunteers who gave their valuable time for this event. Onkar Singh Sanga and Mukesh Shah (Past President) in their speeches welcomed and thanked the volunteers for showing up in large numbers for this community event, spending their valuable time to serve the community and welcomed all the dignitaries and the FIA Board on the stage.

"This type of event would be the ongoing theme for the FIA. We are opening of non-emergency FIA Toll Free number 1 (833) FIA CARE. I thank all the supporters, doctors and volunteers and dignitaries for joining us in an overwhelming majority at this event, said Neil Khot, the current FIA president.

FIA Executive Vice President Hitesh Gandhi quoted Sir Winston Churchill: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give", and added: "One nation, One Vision, One Identity, Freedom in mind, faith in words, Pride in our heart, Memory in our soul, lets salute nation. FIA team serves community with Wellness Camp and celebrates 69th Indian Republic Day".

Mayor McLeod and Senator Tom Cullerton handed over the proclamation to the FIA. The event was well attended by dignitaries, elected officials, politicians and respected people from all walks of life. The dignitaries were led by Ms. Neeta Bhushan, Consulate General of Chicago, Mr. Raja Krishnamoorthi, Congressman, Mr. Michael Fredrichs, Illinois



Dr Kamal Patel Checking Blood pressure for Ms. Neeta Bhushan, Consulate General of India in Chicago

the leaders of both the democracies. The FIA was praised by all the dignitaries for its growth over the last eight odd years. A progress that had put FIA in the forefront among Indian community organizations. Some even put FIA as the best organization amongst all other Indian community organizations.

This was followed by a patriotic song by Geetanjali Maru. Then all the volunteers were presented with appreciation plaques on behalf of the FIA. A vote of thanks was given on behalf of the FIA by Mr. Hitesh Gandhi Executive Vice President.

(PHOTOGRAPHS AND PRESS RELEASE BY: ASIAN MEDIA USA)



A view of the gathering

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