

MUELLER SUBPOENAS TRUMP ORGANIZATION FOR DOCUMENTS IN RUSSIA PROBE



Special counsel Robert Mueller, the man in charge of Russia Investigation

WASHINGTON (TIP): Special counsel Robert Mueller has subpoenaed the Trump Organization for business documents, CNN reported, quoting a source, on March 15.

The New York Times, which first reported the development, said the subpoena included documents related to Russia. The reports mark the first publicly known time that Mueller has

contd on page 32

Trump ousts Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, brings in Mike Pompeo

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Trump has removed Rex Tillerson as secretary of state and replaced him with current CIA Director Mike Pompeo, after months of speculation surrounding Tillerson's role in the Trump administration, a fact Tillerson only learned was official when the announcement was made on Tuesday, March 13 morning.

Mr. Trump announced the news of Tillerson's ouster on Twitter, thanking him for his service. The Washington Post first reported news of Tillerson's firing, shortly before the president's tweet. Mike Pompeo, Director of the CIA, will become our new Secretary of State. He will do a fantastic job!

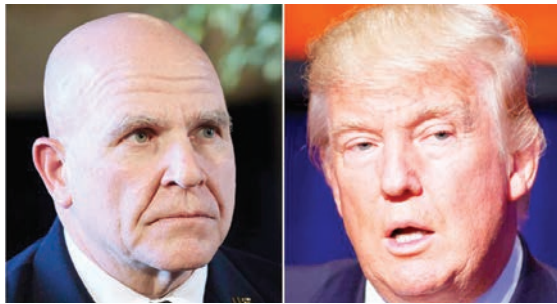
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RexTillerson (left)is replaced with Mike Pompeo, the 6th Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (right) Tillerson pic courtesy CBS. Pompeo / official portrait

Trump has decided to remove his national security adviser, says Washington Post

Trump has complained that H.R. McMaster, a three-star Army general, is too rigid and that his briefings go on too long and seem irrelevant, the Post reported.



H.R. McMaster (screenshot)/Photo of Donald Trump
Flicker photo

WASHINGTON (TIP): U.S. President Donald Trump has decided to replace his national security adviser, H.R. McMaster, but the move is not expected to be made immediately, the Washington Post reported on Thursday, March 15.

Citing five people with knowledge of the plans, the Post said Trump was considering several possible replacements, including former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton and Keith Kellogg, the chief of staff of the National Security

Council. On Tuesday, Trump fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and the president has

contd on page 32

UK snaps diplomatic ties with Russia: 23 Russian officials told to leave in a week

British PM May says Moscow behind murderous bid

LONDON (TIP): British Prime Minister Theresa May, on March 14, held Russia responsible for the nerve agent attack against a former Russian spy and his daughter as she expelled 23 Russian diplomats and suspended high-level bilateral contact.

Former Russian spy Sergei Skripal, 66, and his daughter Yulia, 33, were found collapsed after being poisoned last week. Both remain in a serious condition along with a police officer who came in contact with the same substance.

Russia denies being involved in the attempted murder of the former spy and his daughter. "The Russian state was culpable of the attempted murder" of spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, May told lawmakers. She said Britain will suspend high-level bilateral contact

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British Prime Minister Theresa May said on Wednesday, March 14, she had come to the conclusion that Russia was culpable for the attempted murder of Sergei Skripal Screenshot

MANGANO, LINDA, VENDITTO TRIAL: HARENDRA SINGH TESTIFIES

HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP): Restaurateur Harendra Singh said he saw his long-time friend Mangano as a "connection" that would help his businesses flourish. Singh has pleaded guilty to bribing Mangano. The prosecution established that Singh helped Mangano financially throughout his rise in politics, donating thousands of dollars to his campaigns and catering food to his staff, volunteers and friends.



Singh said he did it to make sure he would have Mangano's support in his restaurant dealings. Singh told the court Thursday, March 15, he rented a building to the Republican at a discount, gave his office free food and bought him a \$3,000 office chair.

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Harendra Singh said he saw his long-time friend Mangano as a "connection" that would help his businesses flourish File photo

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Eminent Women deliver Message on International Woman's Day celebration at Indian Consulate in New York

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): A grand program for Woman's Empowerment was planned by the FIA at Indian Consulate, New York on March 8. Five prominent women addressed more than 100 guests. Women from social, economic, industrial, music and educational fields as well as some successful women who created their own place in communities graced the occasion.

The program started with lighting of the lamp by FIA Chairman Ramesh Patel, President Srujal Parikh, TV anchor Nisha Mathur, writer Mayra Godfrey, social worker Ishita Chakrabarti, musician and successful Industrialist Chandrika Tandon, celebrated professor Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, violinist Daisy Joplin, and Consul General Sandeep Chakraborty and his wife Dr. Taruna Chakraborty.

Miss India USA, women pilots and co-pilots from Air India were also invited specifically to attend this program. Women who created their unique place in different fields were honored by Ambassador Sandeep Chakraborty.

The program organizer and president of FIA Srujal Parikh, addressing the gathering said, "I am surrounded by women with strong talent every day- my mother, my wife, my daughter, and my friends." He thanked the women brigade of FIA in particular for making it possible for FIA to organize the Woman's Day celebrations.

Consul General Sandeep Chakraborty introduced the panel and talked about impressive percentage of women employees at the consulate. He also mentioned about Air India employing one eighth of woman pilots as compared to one in twenty in the industry. 8 woman pilots of Air India were also present at the event. Ambassador Chakraborty said: "I want to congratulate every woman on this special day, who has made her own special place with her hard work and courage."

Speaking on the occasion, Nisha Mathur, a TV producer said, "Whether you are a man or woman, we all have the ability to share and inspire"

Myra Godfrey shared her struggle on various fronts. She found a way to heal herself through understanding herself in totality. Her spiritual understanding of life helped her regain her strength and positive perception of life. She said, negative thinking affects digestion; our mental health demands taking care of emotions.

Ishita Chakrabarti opined that political empowerment is necessary. Only about a quarter of the positions belong to women. Women of Indian origin have not been represented, and upholding right values requires that we assimilate with main stream.

"If we women put our minds together we



can make a difference. We should initiate change towards global empowerment of women."

Daisy Jopling said, "When a woman lights

up, she lights up the whole world".

She played violin, energetic and full of joy. She uplifted the packed hall by her music with complete absorption.

Chandrika Tandon, a philanthropist, said: "We have 41 percent of women in the engineering class of NYU Tandon school of engineering"

She talked about the usual way that prevents people from realizing their dreams. She talked about how she overcame her fears. She said, we need to break free from low self-esteem.

Her single message was "I am perfection, you are perfection, we all are perfection." "I salute feminine energy in the form of love, in the firm of peace", she added.

Padma Bhushan Prof Gayatri Chakravorty said: "I am a hand in activist with very poor woman. I am 76-year-old, happy old lady but I try to bring top and bottom together. I tell my students that in order to save the world, we have to work. Gender equality need not be confused with

sameness. "Ya Devi Sarvi bhuteshu..." "Feminism forever is my title, not because of race and class but this work has to be approached with newness by every generation. I work all over the world, feminism is education strategy against prism of truth. We must learn that we don't represent all women. She talked about tape culture and bribe culture. She drew attention towards people who are still facing discrimination based on gender.

She said, Enforcement and punishments alone don't lead to just society; feminist education should be forever. It is an important part for creating social justice. Our world is full of hope. She remembered her mother and her social work. It is in her memory that I shall remain fearless and mention unpleasant facts."

Those recognized on the occasion included Shashi Vishnu of Manaviand Dr Raman Kaul of AWAKE.

Miss Uma Narayan of Sneha could not come from Connecticut to receive her award.

(With inputs from Ashok Vyas and FIA)



MISS WORLD MANUSHI CHILLAR presents South Asian Empowerment Awards



Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar honoring Meera Gandhi CEO Founder Giving Back Foundation for Up lift and Empowering young women and Children through Education

Photo /Mohammed Jaffer-SnapsIndia

NEW YORK (TIP): At a glittering ceremony held at Leonards in Great Neck, New York, Twelve South Asian women who have achieved extraordinary success against insurmountable odds received honors from current Miss World Manushi Chhillar. The 1st such South Asian Women Empowerment Gala dinner to be held in USA was attended by 300 guests from New York despite an unprecedented snow storm. The grand event marked the International



Neeta Bhasin, the CEO and President of ASB Communications and EVENTGURU Inc. receiving the South Asian Empowerment Award from Miss World 2017 Manushi Chhillar

Women Empowerment year.

The event that was organized by Miss Bindu Kohli, a well-known promoter and television host from New York left an indelible mark in the minds of guests from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepali and Caribbean community.

The evening started with Mr Chintu Patel's Welcome address and an introduction of Miss Manushi Chhillar from India who won the much-coveted title of Miss World 2017. This feat was accomplished by an Indian after seventeen years when Miss Priyanka Chopra had won it last. A medical professional from Sonapat near New Delhi, Manushi stunned the audience when she walked in and received standing ovation. She was received by Miss Bindu Kohli who hosted the evening with support from Prashant Gupta, a film star and a native of Long Island in New York. Miss Chhillar was presented a bouquet of flowers by Mrs. Falguni Patel. The first of its kind set up by Bindu Kohli Entertainment with a LED projection screens, beautifully decorated tables and guests who had



Sunil Hali (second from left) contributed hugely to the success of the event

dressed for the evening made a perfect setting for a glamorous event.

Miss Kohli kicked off the evening with a QA and interactive with Miss Chhillar to unfold her story. This was followed by a presentation of plaques to patrons by Miss Chhillar. The grand patrons included Chintu and Falguni Patel of Irada Foundation, Deepak Verma of Amba Jewelers, and Pemal Badiani. This was followed by a presentation of honors to twelve individuals who presented a unique story of success which was shared on audio visual setup by Sam Tristar of Media Logistics and designed as well as created by Shitiz Sehgal.

Each honoree was introduced by Miss Kohli. The honoree accepted the honors and briefly narrated their struggle with an audience that listened with rapt attention. Honorees were also presented with Proclamation from New York Senate by Mr Dilip Chauhan, former Deputy Comptroller of Nassau County in New York.

Miss Bindu Kohli thanked Mr Sunil Hali, publisher and Promoter for his achievements and contribution to the event to make it a success. Mr Hali congratulated Miss Chhillar for making India and Indians proud worldwide, especially NRIs since she won the title in a

SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN HONORED

- 1) CHANDRA DA SUGRIM
- 2) JAWERIA AFZAL KHAN
- 3) LAKHWINDER KAUR
- 4) MEERA GANDHI
- 5) MUKTA SINGH
- 6) NEETA BHASIN
- 7) POONAM KHUBANI
- 8) RAFEYIA HUSSAIN
- 9) SHANTI AMMAR
- 10) SHEHLA IFTEKAR
- 11) SHREE SAINI
- 12) SONIA ADNAN MUNAWER

AMERICAN WOMEN HONORED

- 1) TINAMARIE FRANZONI
- 2) CHRISTINE SCHAFFER
- 3) VIVIANNE KIONG

competition where contestants were from all over the world.

The evening included with a dance performance and a fashion show by Sunny Gill.

Rang Darpan: Celebration of Creativity and Harmony in Hindi

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Insight for Creativity attained another milestone in the journey of its creative and constructive offerings by organizing a unique literary and cultural evening with the Indian Consulate in New York. It was aptly titled 'Rang Darpan' by Ashok Vyas, who roped in poets as well as essayist, story writer and theatre artists for a meaningful sharing of Hindi literature at the historical venue.

This literary evening 'Rang Darpan' happened by encouraging support of Consulate General Sandeep Chakravorty and the team of consul staff. Jaideep, consul (Cultural) and Vipul Mesaria, Consul (Political) worked closely with Insight for creativity and hosting this poetic evening.

This 'Rang Darpan' evening began by invoking 'Saraswati Mata', Goddess of Knowledge, through a short and sweet classical dance by Pt Satya Narayan Charka Saraswati Mata, mother Goddess for knowledge and creativity.

Consul General talked about various initiatives that are being taken by the govt of India to promote Hindi. Jaideep shared a poem that highlighted the significance of innocence. Yogacharya Dr Daya Shanker Vidhyalankar recited his poem and also wonderfully recited a poem of former PM of India Atal Bihari Vajpeyee.

contd on page 30



Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty spoke about various initiatives that are being taken by the govt of India to promote Hindi



Lighting the lamp



Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty with Consuls and organizer Ashok Vyas and Mrs Vyas

Indian American Renu Khator Awarded for her Role in Mentoring Professionals in US



American Council of Education (ACE) on March 12th awarded Indian American Renu Khator with the 2018 Council of Fellows/Fidelity Investments Mentor Award during its 100th Annual Meeting.

HOUSTON (TIP): A top Indian American woman academic, Renu Khator, has been awarded by American Council in Education for her role as a mentoring professional.

Ms. Khator, 62, Chancellor of University of Houston System and President of University of Houston (UH), awarded the 2018 Council of Fellows/Fidelity Investments Mentor Award during the opening plenary of American Council in Education's 100th annual meeting.

The award is bestowed annually to acknowledge the substantial role of mentors in the success of the council's fellows program participants.

Ms. Khator, who was born in Uttar Pradesh and educated at the University of Kanpur, is the UH System's first woman chancellor, UH's first foreign-born president, and the first ever Indian immigrant to lead a comprehensive research university in the US.

Ms. Khator assumed her current post in January 2008. She now oversees a four-university system that serves nearly 71,000 students.

Indian Origin Jay Shetty Goes to US for Potentially Path-breaking Autism Treatment



Jay will be in the US for the treatment for a week

LONDON (TIP): Jay Shetty, a seven-year-old Indian origin, suffers from a debilitating form of cerebral palsy and autism since he was a baby, which means he cannot walk, talk or sit up unaided. He left with his family for the US on March 11th for a revolutionary treatment that has the potential to improve the quality of his life and give hope to others with neurological disorders.

He is now set to undergo a pioneering clinical trial at Duke University Medical Centre in North Carolina, which relies on the infusion of his younger brother's umbilical cord blood frozen at birth. "After a lot of research on stem cells, we had decided before I got

contd on page 13

Indian American Ram Villivalam running for Illinois state Senate

CHICAGO(TIP): Indian American, former congressional aide Ram Villivalam is challenging 20-year incumbent Ira Silverstein in the next week's Democratic primary for the Illinois state Senate 8th district.

If he wins, Villivalam will be the first Indian American elected to the Illinois statehouse.

The primary will be held on March 20, next Tuesday.

The 8th Senate district has the highest concentration of Asian Americans in Illinois. It includes 21 Chicago neighborhoods, among them, all of Devon Ave.'s business district - which is known as a "Little India" - and the suburbs of Lincolnwood, Skokie, Morton Grove, Niles, Des Plaines and Glenview.

Villivalam, whose parents immigrated from India in the 1970s, believes Illinois needs more diversity in government and a new generation of elected officials like him to lead on challenging issues it faces at the moment.

Villivalam was born and raised on the Northwest side of Chicago, where he continues to live. The area is part of the 8th district.

"As the son of Indian immigrants who came to this country to seek out a better quality of life and opportunities for their children, I feel the responsibility to step forward and speak out on the important issues that working and middle-class families are experiencing every day," said Villivalam.

He added that his parents, who were professionals in India, had to work minimum wage jobs before going back to school. They retired with a combined 50 years in public service.

Villivalam said, based on his own family's experience, he believes in lowering taxes for middle-class families



If he wins, Villivalam will be the first Indian American elected to the Illinois statehouse.

while raising them for millionaires and billionaires, reducing gun violence, equitably funding public schools, and ending discrimination based on race, gender and religion.

He pointed out that, his opponent, Silverstein, was reprimanded by an independent inspector general for violating the legislative ethics act and behaving in a manner "unbecoming of a legislator."

The taxpayers of the 8th state Senate district deserve a senator who is solely focused on effective representation, he said. The candidate said he has both the advocacy and legislative experience to make progress on his agenda in Springfield.

His experience includes working as a legislative coordinator for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), where he fought to protect home care for seniors and people with disabilities, child care for working families, and Medicaid for those in need.

Prior to that, Villivalam was the Outreach Director for Rep. Brad Schneider, D-IL, where he signed people up for the Affordable Care Act and put on job fairs.

Villivalam said he has built a broad coalition of support, including from four members of the Illinois' Democratic congressional delegation - Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, Jan Schakowsky, Mike Quigley and Brad Schneider. He also has the endorsement of the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, and the Indo-American Democratic Organization. These elected officials and organizations trust his to be the effective, proactive, and truly progressive our community deserves, said Villivalam.

"As I knock on doors to speak with voters about the challenging issues we face, I hear the frustration people have with business as usual in Springfield," he said. "Voters want a change. We can't expect different results if we keep sending the same people down there."

Indian American Nikesh Patel sentenced to 25 years for fraud

ORLANDO (TIP): Indian American, Nikesh Patel has been slapped with a 25-year jail term after he was found impersonating as a bank executive to fund his escape to Ecuador to evade a conviction for swindling \$179 million worth of fake loans to a Milwaukee investment firm.

According to the Justice Department, Nikesh Patel was the CEO of First Farmers Financial LLC from 2012 to 2014, during which the company sold close to \$179 million worth fabricated loan to a Milwaukee investment firm and \$20 million to another investment firm based in Tennessee.

Court documents state that during the period of defrauding, Patel created false documents in favor of his company to submit before the Milwaukee investment firm showing that his company had lent money to borrowers in Florida and Georgia.

He also made false claims that a portion of the loans were guaranteed by the federal government.

In October 2014, Patel, 30, who had then launched a hotel redevelopment company, Alena Hospitality, was arrested by federal authorities on fraud charges.

He pleaded guilty in 2015 but requested to allow him to remain free on bail till his sentencing so that he would help authorities recover funds to repay his victims.

Patel deceived the court by not making



Judge Kocoras announced his 25-years prison sentence calling him "a certain diabolical genius"

any effort to repay the defrauded; instead, he spent huge amounts on luxury trips and hosted a \$30,000 birthday celebration for his one-year-old daughter.

He funded his trips and expensive events by once again involving in a swindle, posing as a VP of Banco do Brasil. Using a con name "Ron Elias," he sold more than \$19 million bogus loans to different investors in Iowa.

To add authenticity to his illicit deals, Patel created a phony website and sent emails to convince the victims that his loans were legitimate.

"There's a certain diabolical genius to what he did here," Judge Charles Kocoras said at sentencing.

"It's a little insulting," Kocoras said adding that "His (US) citizenship was the gift of his birth, yet he's so quick to throw it away because he doesn't want to face the piper."

Patel is a former executive of Fifth Third

Bank, Beach Business Bank and Comerica Bank. He has also been involved in restaurant businesses, including part ownership of downtown Orlando's Mingos.

There are also reports that Patel was a spendthrift who had an addiction to latest luxury cars. As per reports, the prosecutors made the court aware that he owned a Rolls Royce, a Lamborghini and other high-end cars.

He also reportedly wore custom-made jewels and flew around the world in private jets with Panama being his favorite holiday getaway where he "blew off steam" at brothels, according to the prosecutor.

An influential political donor, Patel funded Florida Gov. Rick Scott and Florida's Republican Party during his prime years, and both gave all of Patel's donations to charity after the FBI booked him for fraud.

Hundreds of public school districts, parks departments and other public entities, including Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund, became the victims of Patel's bogus loans, which had taxpayer dollars invested in Pennant through management funds. According to reports, after Judge Kocoras announced his 25-years prison sentence calling him "a certain diabolical genius," a sobbing Patel reportedly told the court that "Greed and selfishness may have a short-term benefit, but in the long run it only hurts those closest to you." *(Source: DOJ)*



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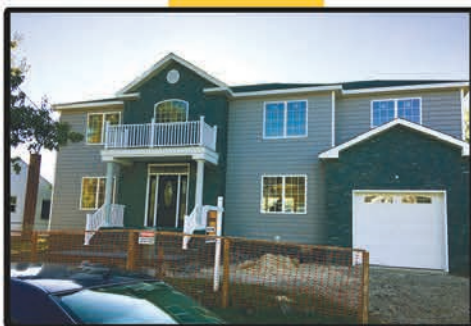
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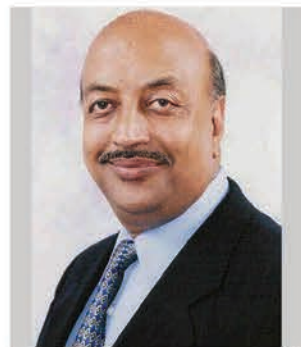


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Indian American Senator Vin Gopal introduces Fire arms Restrictions Bill Package

Bills concern those convicted of animal cruelty, safe storage of firearms, and seizure of firearms from those considered a threat

TRENTON, NJ (TIP): Senator Vin Gopal introduced, March 7, three pieces of legislation to better regulate firearms in the wake of the tragic Parkland, Florida, shooting that claimed 17 innocent lives and the subsequent national outcry for more stringent gun laws.

The three-part bill package includes a bill that prohibits an individual who has been convicted of animal cruelty from possession or purchasing a firearm; a bill requiring the safe storage of a firearm and establishing penalties for improper firearm storage; and a bill which establishes a process by which a family or household member, law enforcement agency, or an employee of a high school or institution of higher education may petition a court to have a person's firearms temporarily seized upon finding that the person poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others.

"These are common sense measures designed to keep gun owners, their families and their fellow New Jersey residents safe," Sen. Gopal said.

"Animal abuse and human violence tend to be linked. The FBI sees animal cruelty as a predictor of violence against people and considers past animal abuse when profiling serial criminals. In assessing youth at risk of becoming violent, the U.S. Department of Justice stresses a history of animal abuse.

"There is absolutely no reason for individuals with violent histories towards animals to obtain the weapons necessary to continue their acts of violence against humans.

"In the Parkland, Florida, shooting, there were multiple institutional failures and as a result, we have seen a national call for increased preventative measures. In keeping weapons out of the hands of individuals who have proven their propensity for violence, or who pose a threat to the safety of others, it is my hope that we can prevent future tragedies and save innocent lives.

"I implore New Jersey firearms owners to embrace the tenets of responsible gun ownership and keep all weapons stored securely.

"This is a simple, common sense measure that can and will go a long way in keeping gun owners, their families and their communities safer. If a firearm is not in use, there is no reason for it to be left out and accessible. Responsible gun ownership extends beyond when a weapon is in use. New Jersey gun owners must take responsibility for keeping their firearms secure at all times to prevent unnecessary accidental discharges and the resulting injuries or fatalities."

"As we saw in Parkland, school district officials, law enforcement officials, students and staff members were aware of the shooter's propensity for violent outbursts and troubling behavior. In establishing a process by which those closest to a dangerous individual can petition a court to remove their weapons, citizens are empowered to speak out. If a troubled individual even makes it on to school property with a weapon, we have already failed. By removing a weapon from a troubled individual with a documented history of violence or



Senator Vin Gopal introduced, March 7, three pieces of legislation to better regulate firearms in the wake of the tragic Parkland, Florida

concerning behavior, we are significantly reducing the likelihood of that individual carrying out a violent attack on a large scale.

Prohibiting Possession and Purchase of Firearms by Individuals Convicted of Animal Cruelty

Bill S2239 prohibits a person convicted of animal cruelty from possessing a firearm and from being issued a firearms purchaser identification card or a permit to purchase a handgun.

Current law provides that a person who is convicted of certain crimes is prohibited from purchasing, owning, possessing, or controlling a firearm. These offenses include, but are not limited to, aggravated assault, arson, burglary, homicide, robbery, aggravated sexual assault, and certain animal cruelty crimes, such as dog fighting, harming or killing a law enforcement animal, and harming or killing a service animal or guide dog.

The bill provides that a person who has been convicted of any animal cruelty offense also would be prohibited from possessing a firearm. A violation of the bill's provisions would be a fourth degree crime. Fourth degree crimes are punishable by a term of imprisonment of up to 18 months, a fine of up to \$15,000, or both. Additionally, the bill disqualifies a person who has been convicted of an animal cruelty offense from being issued a firearms purchaser identification card or a permit to purchase a handgun.

Safe Storage of Firearms

In New Jersey, there are storage requirements and penalties that protect minors from accessing loaded firearms when they are not in use in the home. However, there currently are no general requirements for storing firearms when they are not in

use.

Bill S2240 requires a legal owner of a firearm that is not in use at a premises under the owner's control to store the firearm: in a securely locked box or container; in a location which a reasonable person would believe to be secure; or to secure the firearm with a trigger lock. If the owner of the firearm fails to properly store the firearm as required under the bill, the owner will be guilty of a disorderly person's offense punishable by up to six months imprisonment, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both.

Under current law, the legal owner of a firearm is authorized to lawfully keep or carry a firearm at the owner's place of business, residence, premises, or other land owned or possessed by the owner, and is permitted to transport the firearm under limited circumstances, as specified under current law. The bill clarifies that these provisions of current law regarding a legal owner's right to keep or carry a firearm are not modified by the bill. Current law also provides that the legal owner of a firearm may temporarily transfer a firearm to another person under certain circumstances, whether or not that person has a firearms purchaser identification card or a permit to carry a handgun. The bill clarifies that its provisions do not apply to or modify current law regarding the temporary transfer of a firearm.

Process for Seizure of Firearms

Bill S2238 establishes a process by which a family or household member, law enforcement agency, or an employee of a high school or institution of higher education may petition a court to have a person's firearms temporarily seized upon finding that the person poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others.

Under the bill, a family or household member, law enforcement agency, or school employee would be permitted to petition the court for an extreme risk protection order which would allow a law enforcement agency to hold a person's firearms for one year.

The bill requires a court to hold a hearing and issue an extreme risk protection order upon a finding by a preponderance of the evidence that the person poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to self or others by having a firearm in the person's custody or control, or by purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm. In determining whether grounds for an extreme risk protection order exist, the court may consider: a recent act or threat of violence by the person against self or others, whether or not the act or threat of violence involves a firearm; a pattern of acts or threats of violence by the person within the past twelve months; any dangerous mental health issues of the person; and other factors.

Under the bill, a family or household member, law enforcement officer or agency, or school employee, by motion, may request a renewal of an extreme risk protection order at any time before the order expires.

INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PARTY PLENARY SESSION TO TAKE PLACE FROM MARCH 16

George Abraham and Mohinder Singh Gilzian from New York are special invitees to the Congress Party Plenary session

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian National Congress will hold its plenary session to discuss and evolve the party's future strategy in Delhi on March 16, 17 and 18.

George Abraham, Vice-Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA and Mr. Mohinder Singh Gilzian, President of the INOC have been invited to attend the 84th plenary session of the Indian National Congress.

This will be the first Congress Plenary session after the election of Rahul Gandhi as the President of the Indian National Congress. The leadership of the party from all states is expected to participate.

George Abraham is the Founder-General Secretary of Indian National Overseas Congress and served as its President and Chairman. He is a former Chief Technology Officer at the United Nations and regularly

writes on the political dynamics in India.

Mohinder Singh Gilzian served as its Vice-President before assuming the post of the President.

AICC recently has appointed Mr. Sam Pitroda as the Chairman of the newly created Overseas Congress department who also act as the Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, the newly reorganized wing of Congress Party in the USA.



Congress Steering Committee meeting discussing arrangements for Plenary Session

Photo courtesy / Randeep Surjewala

Uplift Humanity Celebrates Transforming the Lives of Over 1,000 Juveniles & Orphans in India

The organization is hosting SHAKTI, a soiree in New York City on April 14th

NEW YORK CITY, NY (TIP): Uplift Humanity, founded in 2010, is a New York-based organization whose mission is to use disruptive and innovative curriculums to empower detained juveniles and orphans in India to achieve their full potential through education. The organization's goal is to ensure that these children successfully assimilate back into society and have higher career prospects once released, ultimately reducing recidivism rates.



Anish Patel founded Uplift Humanity at the age of 16

fundraising to fuel its programs in India, instead of high-net-worth donors and corporations like most nonprofits.

"I think that we have one of the most amazing teams here at Uplift. Our team comes from such amazing and diverse backgrounds that it enables us to develop effective state-of-the-art curriculums. In fact, just within 5 months of us implementing our Academic Program curriculum, we're seeing results: students are now actually starting to speak



Students

Uplift Humanity, which was founded by Anish Patel, who was 16 years-old at the time, has now launched four locations throughout India: Gujarat, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and the newest this year in Delhi. Over the past eight years, Uplift Humanity has contributed over 250,000 hours of volunteer work and brought over 500 Americans to volunteer in India. This month, the organization celebrates transforming the lives of over 1,000 students in India.

The organization delivers through three key programs:

The Summer Program:

A yearly program in July whereby hundreds of American teenagers travel to India for an 18-day volunteer excursion. These students undergo a rigorous application process to volunteer in either of the organization's programs in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Gujarat, and Delhi. The purpose of this program is to provide ostracized students in India with life and behavioral skills ranging from anger management to public speaking - taught by like-minded American teenagers.

The Academic Program:

Perhaps the most crucial element of the on-site work done at the juvenile centers, this is a daily program where juveniles and orphans are taught English-speaking skills by local teachers. This program is intended to equip students with the right skills they will need to secure employment once released. By providing these students with these core-skills, it reduces the probability that juveniles and orphans will resort to crime once released, thereby building safer communities.

The Health and Wellness Program:

Launched this month, the health and wellness program is designed to empower kids to learn about themselves and explore their identities. Lessons range from hygiene to mental health and are delivered through hands-on activities and games. The objective of this program is to normalize educating youth about complex topics like mental disorders and puberty, enabling them to be more mature and understanding individuals.

These programs are all developed in-house by Uplift Humanity's team, which is one of the youngest teams in the nonprofit space. In fact, the average age of an Uplift employee is 26. Because the team is so young, the organization heavily relies on creative grassroots



Motherly care



Anish Patel with a student

English" says Founder & CEO Anish Patel

To celebrate the success of educating 1,000 students, Uplift Humanity is hosting SHAKTI, a soiree in New York City on April 14th. Uplift Humanity along with co-host Zee TV will have an evening of food, drinks and entertainment at Manhattan's Distilled Lounge. Tickets can be purchased on: <http://bit.ly/2D2J4QP>

For more information on Uplift Humanity, please visit: www.uplifthehumanityindia.org

New York State Catholic Conference Blocks Access to Justice for Sex Abuse Survivors

Testifies at budget hearing on Child Victims Act, opposes look-back window for survivors

A February 15 Quinnipiac poll finds that 90% of New Yorkers support the Child Victims Act

NEW YORK (TIP): The New York State Catholic Conference just released its testimony from the joint Legislative Hearing regarding the 2018-2019 Public Protection Budget, which addressed the Child Victims Act (CVA).

While the Conference supports a prospective extension of criminal statute of limitations for survivors, it hypocritically continues to reject providing any avenue of relief for survivors over the age of 23 whose claims have expired, claiming:

"This extraordinary provision would force institutions to defend alleged conduct decades ago about which they have no knowledge, and in which they had no role, potentially involving employees long retired, dead or infirm, based on information long lost, if it ever existed. To be clear, this provision would allow claims from even the 1940s or 1950s to be resurrected. Statutes of limitation are an essential protection of American law because they ensure that claims can be fairly adjudicated in a timely manner based on credible evidence."

OFFICIALS TO MTA: RESTORE ORIGINAL "FREEDOM TICKET" PLAN

Electeds Say Eliminating Proposed Discounted LIRR Fare Between Southeast Queens and Penn Station Renders Freedom Ticket Pilot "Inferior" and "Set Up For Failure"

QUEENS, NY (TIP): In advance of the upcoming Board Meeting of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), Borough President Melinda Katz, U.S. Representatives Gregory Meeks, Senators Leroy Comrie and James Sanders, Assemblymember Alicia Hyndman and Clyde Vanel and Councilmembers Adrienne Adams and Daneek Miller in a joint letter to MTA Chairman Joe Lhota expressed their opposition to the MTA's proposed revision to the "Freedom Ticket" plan, which would force Freedom Ticket riders seeking to get to and from midtown Manhattan to first transfer at Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn.

The proposed revision would eliminate the discounted LIRR one-way \$6.50 Freedom Ticket fare originally proposed in 2015 between six southeast Queens stations (Rosedale, Laurelton, Locust Manor, St. Albans, Hollis and Queens Village) and Penn Station in Manhattan or Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn. Currently, the \$10.25 one-way peak weekday fare is cost prohibitive for many between the Queens stations and Penn Station or Atlantic Terminal.

"As you know, we have been avid supporters of the 'Freedom Ticket' plan put forward by the New York City Transit Riders Council (NYCTRC) in 2015," the elected officials wrote in a joint letter this week to Chairman Joe Lhota. "The inferior Freedom Ticket pilot program now under consideration, however, would force users... a transfer that would substantially increase their commuting times... Given this significant limitation, without the option of Penn Station, I expect few southeast Queens residents would use Freedom Tickets if the pilot program is implemented in its current state. The pilot is therefore being set up for failure, an outcome that is unacceptable, as it will not properly serve SEQ residents, allow for sufficient outreach in the community, nor gauge their use of a long term program."



**GUEST
COMMENT**

Rex Tillerson sacking: Rexit and beyond

More proof that propriety, protocol, punditry no longer hold sway in the U.S. administration

Even by his standards for unexpected diktats, U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to fire his Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, and replace him with CIA Director Mike Pompeo, came out of the blue. Mr. Tillerson, who was the CEO of ExxonMobil Corporation before taking up the role, did not agree with Mr. Trump on fundamental policy matters, the President said. This is widely seen as an allusion to Mr. Tillerson's preference, contra-Trump, for diplomacy as a means of defusing the North Korean crisis. Also implied was a widening chasm between the two men on the merits of the Iran nuclear deal. With Mr. Tillerson's departure, the number of senior officials exiting the Trump administration after a little more than a year has reached at least 24. Less than a week before the long-rumored "Rexit", White House Chief Economic Adviser Gary Cohn, formerly a Wall Street banker, quit his post over his opposition to Mr. Trump's proposal to levy hefty steel and aluminum tariffs. And, less than a week before Mr. Cohn, White House Communications Director Hope Hicks resigned after admitting to a Congressional panel investigating Russian influence on the 2016 election that she had occasionally told "white lies" on Mr. Trump's behalf. Rumors now swirl that National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster may also soon be ousted. The question at this point is: does the existing coterie of senior White House officials enjoy the confidence of their President to a sufficient magnitude as to ensure that policies can be executed in a meaningful way?

In one sense, there does not appear to be cause for alarm over the incessant departures from the White House. It is quite possible that Mr. Trump has used his first year in office to consolidate his vision and attract the right talent to realize his governance paradigm, essentially rooted in a nationalistic, or "America First", world view. Take the case of Mr. Pompeo: he is far more aligned with Mr. Trump's hawkish approach towards the Kim Jong-un regime than Mr. Tillerson was. There is a case to be made that Mr. Trump's hardline stance is what is ultimately bringing the North Koreans to the negotiating table. Mr. Tillerson, insistent on talks, was likely to have been an impediment to this strategy. The deeper message is that the liberal order of the Obama years is gone. Propriety, protocol and punditry no longer hold sway - Mr. Trump had no quarrel with Mr. Tillerson over the Secretary leaving numerous senior State Department posts vacant, but only cared about the top diplomat's concurrence with his strategy. The President will likely apply this principle - and find himself the right people - in other policy areas as well, such as trade and immigration. Nations that engage with America may glean valuable lessons from this churn.

(The Hindu)

AS I SEE IT

Democracy put to test: Change in paradigms of contemporary polity



By KC Singh

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi accompanied visiting French President Emmanuel Macron on the Ganges at Varanasi, at times hand-in-hand, for an iconic view of the Ghats, India hovered over multiple domestic inflexion points. While agreements were signed with France for strategic engagement, either by "reciprocal logistics" to enable mutual utilization of military facilities in the Indian Ocean or by advancing opaque defense purchases like the Rafale deal, or the kick-starting of the stalled giant nuclear project at Jaitapur, promising untested EPR design reactors; farmers marched, many barefooted and hungry, towards the center of India's financial capital Mumbai. Rural India, where still a majority of Indian voters reside, was signaling that India could not become a great power by lopsided growth and mere promises of achhe din.

The Modi government has, at best, just a year left or less, if early Lok Sabha elections are held, in tandem with the crucial state elections, due by December, in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, where the BJP faces anti-incumbency. But the Modi slogan of a corruption-free India is no longer paraded. The Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi duo fleeing after swindling Punjab National Bank of over Rs 13,000 crore have dented the government's reputation. A photo of Nirav amid top Indian businessman with PM Modi, and a video with prominent jewelers where the PM identifies "Mehul Bhai" by name while speaking, are seen as clues to their coziness with the regime.

The BJP's poor performance in the recent bypolls in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and even Uttar Pradesh fuel the debate that the re-election of Modi, taken as a given months ago, may no longer be certain. The debate now veers around the reliability of the EVMs. Would they be the determinant of victory rather than public's will? Two recent books and a Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, report on the risks to democratic elections of cyber attacks and information operations raise some uncomfortable questions. How Democracies Die by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt and People v. Democracy by Yascha Mounk debate the direction of democracy globally. The lessons apply to India under Modi.

Levitsky-Ziblatt argue that in the 21st century democracies are endangered, not so much by military coups, like in the 20th century South Asia, or by younger hereditary rulers in the Gulf or by clerical rule (supreme leader in Iran), but the election of populist autocrats. The playbook is old, as Mussolini and Hitler also took the electoral route, albeit laced with threat of street violence, but the methodology is now

"The debate now veers around the reliability of the EVMs. Would they be the determinant of victory rather than public's will? Two recent books and a Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, report on the risks to democratic elections of cyber attacks and information operations raise some uncomfortable questions. How Democracies Die by Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt and People v. Democracy by Yascha Mounk debate the direction of democracy globally. The lessons apply to India under Modi".



People's voice In India, as across the world, democracy as a concept is losing favor.

subtler. The elected leader debases state institutions by weakening the judiciary, putting compliant appointees in control of the Election Commission, handing over investigative agencies to reliable and ruthless protégés for targeting businessmen and opposition figures, emasculates Parliament by negating its checks and balances. Intelligence agencies are co-opted or devalued, as Trump does regularly, and media bought or bludgeoned into submission.

The Mounk book explores flagging interest in democracy amongst youth and the millennials. While 71 per cent of those born in the 1930s in Europe and the US value living in a democracy, only 29 per cent of those born in the 1980s are so inclined. In fact, a quarter of the millennials think democracy is a bad way to run a nation. In polls in India, there is a tendency to favor authoritarian rulers, something that feeds Modi's persona as a leader unmatched by his peers. Social media algorithms entrap users in vacuum chambers of similar prejudices and thus curtail debate. The leaders use the reach of Twitter and Facebook to perpetuate their skewed thoughts and browbeat opponents directly, or by their armies of bots. President Donald Trump routinely terms independent news outlets as "fake news". A former Indian Army Chief, and now minister of state in the Modi government, coined the phrase "presstitutes". As Rudyard Kipling wrote: "For the colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady, Are sisters under their skins". It seems so are the new breed of populist, rabble-rousing politicians across all continents.

The Belfer report is more worrisome as it reflects a debate in India that the Aam Aadmi Party initiated but was ignored - the possibility of integrity of EVMs being compromised - and thus the electoral process itself getting hijacked by the ruling party. In the US, the states have greater control over the electoral process, but two methods are used for vote

casting. One, is optical scanners (OS), where voters cast a ballot by traditional pen and paper, or electronic ballot marking device, and then, the ballot is run through scanning machines. Thus, while an electronic tabulation is retained in the machine, so are the original paper ballots as physical record for subsequent audit or vote verification. Two, is direct recording electronic (DRE), as is done in India with option, as now proposed, of voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT). The problem is that the test audit of VVPATs by the Election Commission is of small samples and in a few constituencies.

The Belfer report concludes that "voting machines can be compromised via physical tampering (including using removable media) or through external connectivity (e.g. WiFi)". It recommends that the OS method is safer than the DRE machines, including with VVPATs. This is a matter that needs debate in India, as a second time, after Indira Gandhi in the 1970s, a powerful Prime Minister is bending institutions to his own will. Therefore, the integrity of the electoral process needs to be not only safeguarded against the slightest doubt, but also done so publicly.

The next year is critical for Indian democracy, as indeed the idea of India as enshrined in the Constitution. While in 1975-77, when the Emergency was declared, the world was still mired in Cold War and democratic rule had not flowered globally. Now even the US and its Western allies are casting doubts on the efficacy of its functioning. President Xi Jinping having seized almost total power from the party and the military posits the Chinese model of economic success via authoritarian structures. Can India keep the flame of democracy and liberalism alive in Asia as a counterpoint? That is the drama that is about to unfold in coming year.

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

THE INDIAN PANORAMA

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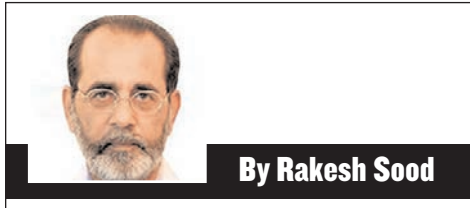
E-mail tipdallas01@gmail.com; Phone: 646-247-9458
www.theindianpanorama.news
Published by Prof. Indrajit Saluja

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THE FRENCH CONNECTIONS

The Macron visit underlined the growing strategic convergence that draws India and France together



By Rakesh Sood

“The slew of bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding signed, the detailed 'joint statement' and accompanying 'vision statements' on cooperation in space and the Indian Ocean Region, the boat ride in Varanasi, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's warmly reciprocated diplohugs indicate that the relationship has received a momentum that gives it critical mass and greater coherence”, says the author.

With French President Emmanuel Macron's recent visit to India, the India-France Strategic Partnership launched in 1998 seems finally to have come of age. In these two decades, both sides have gradually enhanced cooperation in diverse fields covering civil nuclear, defense, space, counter-terrorism, education, research and development in science and technology, culture, urban development, climate change, trade and economics and people-to-people contacts. The slew of bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding signed, the detailed 'joint statement' and accompanying 'vision statements' on cooperation in space and the Indian Ocean Region, the boat ride in Varanasi, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's warmly reciprocated diplohugs indicate that the relationship has received a momentum that gives it critical mass and greater coherence.

A shared worldview

As a country that has prided itself on its 'exceptionalism', France has always been sympathetic to similar Indian claims based on its ancient civilization. This is why both countries were quick to voice support for global multi-polarity once the Cold War ended. French discomfort with the U.S.'s unipolar moment in the 1990s was evident when it described it as a 'hyperpower'.

Defense cooperation with France began in the 1950s when India acquired the Ouragan aircraft and continued with the Mystères, Jaguar (Anglo-French), Mirage 2000, Alizé planes and the Alouette helicopter. Joint naval exercises, later christened Varuna, date back to 1983.

Cooperation in the space sector has continued since the 1960s when France helped India set up the Sriharikota launch site, followed by liquid engine development and hosting of payloads. Today, it is a relationship of near equals and the 'vision statement' refers to world class joint missions for space situational awareness, high resolution earth observation missions with applications in meteorology, oceanography and cartography. Inter-planetary exploration and space transportation systems are cutting edge science and technology areas that have also been identified.

Yet the Cold War imposed limitations on the partnership. After the Cold War, France decided that its preferred partner in the Indian Ocean Region would be India. In January 1998, President Jacques Chirac declared that India's exclusion from the global nuclear order was an anomaly that needed to be rectified. After the nuclear tests in May 1998 when India declared itself a nuclear weapon state, France was the first major power to open dialogue and displayed a far greater understanding of India's security compulsions compared to other countries. It was the first P-5 country to support India's claim for a permanent seat in an expanded and reformed UN Security Council.

Building a partnership

With the establishment of a Strategic Dialogue, cooperation in defense, civil nuclear, space, intelligence sharing, and counter-terrorism has grown. An agreement for building six Scorpène submarines in India with French help was signed in 2005. Similarly, technology sharing, and acquisitions of short range missiles and radar equipment were concluded. Joint exercises between the air forces and the armies were instituted in 2003 and 2011, respectively. The government-to-government agreement for 36 Rafale aircraft, salvaged out of the prolonged negotiations for the original 126 which were at an impasse, was as much driven by technical requirements as



The diplohug. Indian Prime Minister Modi hugs French President Emmanuel Macron

Image tweeted by @PMIndia

by political considerations. The ambitious offset target of 50% (nearly ₹25,000 crore), properly implemented, can help in building up India's budding aerospace industry.

In the nuclear field, an agreement was signed about a decade ago for building six EPR nuclear power reactors with a total capacity of 9.6 GW for which negotiations have been ongoing between the Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) and Areva, and now EdF. Terror strikes in France in recent years by home-grown terrorists have enlarged the scope of counter-terrorism cooperation to include cyber security and discussions on radicalization.

Even though these areas provided a robust basis for engagement, it remained primarily at a government-to-government level. In recent years, it was clear that for a wider partnership, strengthening business-to-business and people-to-people relationships was essential. Climate change and renewable energy resources, particularly solar, soon emerged as a new plank, reflected in the multilateral initiative of the International Solar Alliance. Another area identified was urban planning and management of services like housing, transport, water, sanitation, etc. using the public private partnership model which the French have employed successfully. Mr. Macron's visit has enabled progress to be registered across a variety of sectors including the strategic partnership areas.

There has been a growing convergence of interests in maritime cooperation. Like India, France has expressed concern about China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean Region. French overseas territories in the Indian and the Pacific Oceans provide it with the second largest exclusive economic zone globally. It has long maintained bases in Reunion Islands and Djibouti and established one in Abu Dhabi in 2009. This regional dimension is reflected in the Vision Statement on cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.

The signing of MoUs regarding the provision of reciprocal logistics support to each other's armed forces, exchange and reciprocal protection of classified information and developing shared space studies and assets for maritime awareness provide the basis on which to strengthen joint naval exercises. With the U.S., naval cooperation has been easier with the Pacific Command which covers China and the region up to the Bay of Bengal but more difficult with the Central Command which covers western Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea because of Central Command's privileged relationship with Pakistan. Therefore, strengthening cooperation with France, particularly in the western Indian Ocean Region makes eminent strategic sense even as India develops its

presence in Oman (Duqm) and Seychelles (Assumption Island).

The agreement on the industrial way forward between NPCIL and EdF affirms that work at Jaitapur will commence before the end of 2018. Equally significant are the two agreements signed between EdF and other French entities and L&T and Reliance, respectively, reflecting the engagement of Indian industry.

Trade has grown in recent years but at \$10 billion is half of the trade with Germany. The signing of nearly \$16 billion worth of agreements at the business summit indicates that private sectors in both countries are beginning to take notice. There are nearly 1,000 French companies present in India including 39 of the CAC 40 while over a hundred Indian businesses have established a presence in France. In the past, Indian companies saw the U.K. as the entry point for Europe; now with Brexit approaching, Mr. Macron has cleverly pitched that India should look at France as its entry point for Europe and Francophonie! The flagship program of Smart Cities in which France is focusing on Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry is taking shape as more than half the business agreements signed related to electric mobility, water supply, waste management and smart grids.

Educational links

Potentially, the most significant was the focus on youth and student exchanges. Currently about 2,500 Indians go to France annually to pursue higher education, compared to more than 250,000 from China. A target has been set to raise it to 10,000 by 2020. The agreement on mutual recognition of academic degrees and the follow-on Knowledge Summit, where 14 MoUs between educational and scientific institutions were signed, is a welcome move.

Tourism is another area that has received attention. A target of a million Indian tourists and 335,000 French tourists has been set for 2020. Given that France receives over 80 million tourists a year and India around nine million, these targets may seem modest but reflect that while there are only about 20 flights a week between India and France, there are four times as many to Germany and 10 times as many to the U.K.

The Strategic Partnership has already created a solid foundation; other aspects have now received the much needed focus and with proper implementation, it can add to the growing strategic convergence that draws India and France together.

(The author is a former Ambassador to France and currently Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation. E-mail: rakeshsood2001@yahoo.com)

Chahbahar and Gawadar are sister ports: Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan today said Chahbahar and Gawadar are sister ports and complement each other in promoting future trade, transit and connectivity.

Chahbahar, the port in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich nation's southern coast is easily accessible from India's western coast and is increasingly seen as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which is being developed with Chinese investment and is located at distance of around 80 kms from Chahbahar.

Foreign Office spokesman Dr Muhammad Faisal said Chahbahar and Gawadar are sister ports and complement each other in promoting future trade, transit and connectivity.

"Our Minister of Maritime Affairs participated in the inauguration of a part of the Chahbahar port. We will continue to work with Iran for deepening connectivity between the two ports," he said.

The spokesman also said Iranian Foreign Minister, who visited Islamabad this week, discussed the idea of Iran's participation in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. (PTI)

Pakistani court charges deputy minister for insulting judges

ISLAMABAD (TIP): A Pakistani court has charged the country's deputy interior minister with insulting judges and set a hearing date for his testimony later this month. The official, Talal Chaudhry, pleaded not guilty during an appearance before the court on Thursday.

Chaudhry is alleged to have insulted judges in a speech he made after the judiciary disqualified former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office last July.

The court set a hearing for March 27 for Chaudhry to testify. Sharif, dismissed for concealing financial assets abroad, has also criticized judges but his criticism has not led to any indictment so far. He is currently facing trial on corruption charges. The Supreme Court on Tuesday indicted another official, Minister for Privatization Danyal Aziz, in a contempt case for making critical speeches against judges. (PTI)

7 killed in blast near Sharif's residence in Pakistan

LAHORE (TIP): A powerful blast tonight near the residence of Pakistan's ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif here killed at least seven persons, including three policemen. The blast took place close to a police check post, a few kilometers from the palatial residence of the Sharif family and close to the congregation of the Tableeghi Jamaat. "Seven persons have been killed in the blast. Some seven policemen among the 20 or so suffered injuries. The condition of four policemen is stated to be critical," Rescue 1122 spokesman Jam Sajjad told PTI.

He said the Rescue ambulances are shifting the injured to the Sharif medical complex and other nearby hospitals.

Deputy Inspector General Police Lahore Dr Haider Ashraf told reporters that three policemen were among the dead. "The condition of some policemen is critical," he said. "It is not confirmed yet whether it was a suicide blast or planted device," he said, adding "police personnel" were the target of the blast. (PTI)

CHINA GIVES RS 48 MILLION ASSISTANCE TO NEPAL

KATHMANDU (TIP): China today agreed to provide Rs 48 billion assistance to Nepal for development, including post-disaster recovery plan for the strategic Tatopani border point that was damaged in a devastating earthquake in 2015.

China and Nepal have been stepping up efforts to improve road connectivity while speeding up plans to build a railway line connecting to Nepal's border after a Transit Trade Treaty was signed in 2016 with Beijing.

The Government of China has agreed to extend the assistance to Nepal for the projects on post-disaster recovery for Tatopani border point, the hospital reconstruction in Sindhupalchowk and reconstruction of Jiri Secondary School, the Nepal's Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

The Tatopani border point, a major trade route between Nepal and China, has remained closed since the 2015 earthquake, that killed nearly 9,000 people and injured nearly 22,000, after it suffered massive damage.

Since Tatopani could not function, the Kerung port, also known as Rasuwagadhi, has been in operation for the cross border trading and tourism.

The project includes repairing of buildings, establishing protection measures to prevent from secondary disasters, including debris flow and landslide, and improving trade clearance capabilities.

The Chinese government has pledged to provide Nepalese Rupees 48 billion in grants for the purpose and an agreement was signed today, the Ministry said in a statement.

Finance Secretary Shankar Prasad Adhikari and Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Yu Hong signed the agreements on behalf of the government of Nepal and the Chinese



governments.

"I am confident that the economic cooperation between Nepal and China will help especially to overcome our infrastructure bottleneck and improve connectivity," Adhikari said.

"The Chinese government has been making positive effort to reopen the Tatopani port. We will carry out work of disaster treatment and road repair on the Chinese side. Considering the construction of border inspection station, both the countries have been discussing reconstruction of the border bridge," Yu was quoted as saying by China's state-run Xinhua news agency.

For the resumption of the border point, the budget would be used for the renovation of

the building and establishment of protection measures, so that trade clearance capabilities would be improved.

In Sindhupalchowk, a middle-sized hospital equipped with facilities like 39 beds capacity would be constructed and the school reconstruction is aimed at recovering and improving school facilities and functions.

Post earthquake, China had pledged to help Nepal with post-disaster reconstruction in five areas - infrastructure, livelihood recovery in hilly regions, cultural heritage renovation, capacity building of disaster prevention and health.

Till now, 22 China-Aid projects have been already initiated and are in the process of implementation. (PTI)

Sri Lanka lifts ban on Facebook after assurance from social media giant

COLOMBO (TIP): The Sri Lankan government today lifted a week-long ban on access to the Facebook, after officials from the US social media giant agreed to step up efforts to remove hate speech posted on its platform during the anti-Muslim violence in Kandy district.

The government imposed a state of emergency March 6 and blocked Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media sites following anti-Muslim violence in the island's central hills Kandy and Ampara districts.

It restricted the use of social media after police claimed that they were being used to spread hatred against the minority community.

The nationwide restrictions, however, on image and video sharing on messaging apps WhatsApp and Viber were lifted yesterday.

President Maithripala Sirisena ordered the telecom regulator to lift the ban following talks between the government, led by his Secretary and head of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Austin Fernando and Facebook officials here.

"My secretary has discussed with officials of Facebook, who have agreed that its platform will not be used for spreading hate speech and inciting violence," the president, who is currently touring Japan, said on Twitter. (PTI)

Bidya Devi Bhandari re-elected President of Nepal

KATHMANDU: Nepal's first woman president Bidya Devi Bhandari was on Tuesday re-elected for a second term in office.

Incumbent President Bhandari defeated Nepali Congress leader Kumari Laxmi Rai with an overwhelming majority in the presidential election.

Bhandari, 56, won since her nomination was backed by the ruling Left alliance of the CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Centre), the Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum-Nepal and other fringe parties.

She became Nepal's first woman president in 2015.

With 148 lawmakers in the Federal Parliament and 243 in Provincial Assemblies, the CPN-UML commands a total vote of 23,356.

CPN (Maoist Centre) has 65 lawmakers in parliament and 108 in provincial assemblies, which account for 10,319 votes.

The Nepali Congress, which has 76 seats in parliament and 113 in provincial assemblies, has a total vote of 11,428.

As Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum-Nepal and other fringe parties also deciding to support Bhandari, she could easily garner 26,921 votes for her re-election.

An electoral college, including members of parliament and provincial assemblies, will vote in the election. (PTI)

Bangladesh court sentences 39 ruling party activists to death

DHAKA (TIP): A court in southeastern Bangladesh today sentenced to death 39 activists of the ruling Awami League for brutally killing a fellow local level party leader four years ago.

Ekratul Haque, the upazila Awami League president, was hacked, shot and burnt alive by miscreants inside his car in broad daylight in Feni town's Academy area on May 20, 2014.

"The court handed down the death penalty to 39 people in this single case," a prosecutor told PTI over telephone from Feni.

"All the convicts were local leaders and activists of Awami League," he added.

He said the district judge's court, however, acquitted 16 people, one being a local leader of the main opposition BNP, though initially he appeared to be the prime accused in the case.

Haque's brother Rezaul Haque Jasim had filed the murder case accusing BNP leader Minar and 30-35 unidentified people.

A total of 44 arrests were made over the years and 15 of them confessed in court. (PTI)

No need to extend 'State of Emergency' in Lanka: Govt

COLOMBO (TIP): The Sri Lankan government is unlikely to extend the 10-day nationwide state of emergency imposed after communal riots erupted in Kandy district, as no fresh incidents of violence has been reported from anywhere in the country, the new Law and Order Minister has said.

Also, the government said that the restriction on the use of social media, including the Facebook would be lifted by Friday. (PTI)

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AAPI Legislative Day on April 12th

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): The growing influence of doctors of Indian heritage is evident, as increasingly physicians of Indian origin hold critical positions in the healthcare, academic, research and administrative positions across the nation. With their hard work, dedication, compassion, and skills, they have thus carved an enviable niche in the American medical community. AAPI's role has come to be recognized as vital among members and among lawmakers.

In this context, as the nation continues to be divided on the health reforms, AAPI's legislative day planned for next month on capitol and is expected to be addressed by dozens of US lawmakers from both the major parties, comes to be a vital part of AAPI's growing influence and having its united voice heard in the corridors of power. "We are excited to announce that our next Legislative Day is on April 12th on capitol Hill in Washington, DC," said Dr. Gautam Samadder, President of AAPI.

"Our daytime program begins at 09:00 am and will include lunch on the Capitol in the Rayburn Building. We will conclude in the afternoon, giving participants the opportunity to meet their own Congressman on their own time. That evening, we are planning for a reception and dinner with several dignitaries at the Indian Embassy," summarized, Dr. Samadder.

Describing that AAPI is a non-political umbrella organization which has nearly 90 local chapters, specialty societies and alumni organizations. Almost 10%-12% of medical students entering US schools are of Indian origin. AAPI represents the interests of over 60,000 physicians and 25,000 medical students and residents of Indian heritage in the United States, Dr. Samadder, a prominent physician with decades of service to the country, said, "The mission AAPI, the largest ethnic organization of physicians, is to provide a forum to facilitate and enable Indian American physicians to excel at inpatient care, teaching and research, and to pursue

their aspirations in professional and community affairs. The Executive Committee is working hard to ensure active participation of young physicians, increasing membership, and enabling AAPI's voice to be heard in the corridors of power, and thus taking AAPI to new heights."

There are many issues affecting our community. An important debate is about the merits of doing away with the individual mandate. "As Congress has now passed a repeal of this part of the Affordable Care Act, which takes place in 2019, what does this mean for the average physician practice if patients drop their health care coverage and how will this impact premiums?" Dr. Naresh Parikh, President-Elect of AAPI, asks.

"Now is the time to ensure our voices are heard on these vital issues. Additionally, those with good contacts with their own congressman, should reach out to his/her office and ask them to join us at our program in the Rayburn Building, banquet room B-338, between 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. If your congressman would like to speak, we can arrange their participation," Dr. Ashok Jain, BOT chair, said.

According to AAPI Legislative Chairman, Dr. Vinod K. Shah, AAPI's legislative initiatives for 2017-18 include, addressing Physician Shortage, and urged the Congress to increase Residency Positions across USA. "Our nation is currently experiencing a physician shortage, which will be exacerbated by retiring baby boomers. The result of such a shortage may affect thousands of patients' access to a physician, and ultimately the health care they need. The only way to address this future crisis is to increase the number of residency positions available for future physicians to get trained, so that our nation can effectively manage the need for increased patient care. Increasing the size of medical school classes is not enough. There must be a simultaneous increase in the size of residency positions to train these future doctors. As Congress capped the number of

residency positions in 1997, it is time for Congress to act NOW to remedy this critical situation. AAPI believes that all Americans have the right to see a physician."

AAPI Legislative Co-Chair, Dr. Sampat Shivangi, pointed to some of the other initiatives that are being presented to the Congressmen. "They include: Lowering the Cost of Prescription Drugs; Immigration Reform: H-1 and J-1 visas are used by many Indian American physicians, playing an important role in providing critical health care across the country. Combined with the Green Card backlog consisting of more than 4 million people, AAPI members are very concerned about the impact immigration reform will have on the Indian American community."

Dr. Samadder pointed to Medicare and Medicaid Reimbursements. He said, "These programs have not kept up with the cost of care and the growing populations utilizing them. It is critical that Congress review reimbursement schedules; otherwise, patients may not be able to find a physician in their community who accepts Medicare and/or Medicaid patients."

AAPI has been urging the Congress to enact Tort Reform: In order to reduce the practice of defensive medicine, bring down the overall cost of health care, and limit the number of meritless lawsuits, tort reform will bring fairness into the court system and better serve both the doctor and patient communities.

AAPI supports federal and state legislation that places effective caps on non-economic damages, limits the use of joint-and-several liability, provides physicians with flexibility to negotiate settlements with medical insurers and further limits the statute of limitations for filing medical malpractice claims.

Pointing out that from 1980-2005, while medical school enrollment remained flat, the U.S. population increased by more than 70



"We are excited to announce that our next Legislative Day is on April 12th on capitol Hill in Washington, DC," said Dr. Gautam Samadder, President of AAPI

million people. Because the percentage of baby-boomer generation doctors (55 and older) rose from 27 percent to 34 percent during this time, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) predicts that America will need 90,000 physicians by 2020, Dr. Ashok Jain, said, the number of physicians needed by 2025 according to the AAMC will reach a staggering 130,000. One way to address this shortage is to increase medical school class sizes to meet this future health care need. This issue is vital as it pertains to health care reform, as more physicians will be needed to provide quality health care to our nation's uninsured patients.

"In order to raise our voices together and to have our voices heard on Capitol Hill, we look forward to seeing you on Capitol Hill on Thursday, April 12th, for our Legislative Day," Dr. Samadder added. For more information on AAPI and its programs and initiatives, please visit: www.aapiusa.org

(Based on a Press Release)

Hindus commend Emory University for Ramayana exhibition curated by students

ATLANTA (TIP): "Tell the Whole Story from Beginning to End." The Ramayana in Indian Painting- exhibition has been launched at Michael C. Carlos Museum of Emory University (Carlos Museum), which will continue till May 20.

Claimed to be first-of-its kind art exhibit which was curated, organized and researched exclusively by Emory students; uniting artwork and classwork; in the class "The Art of an Hindu Epic"; which was taught by professors Ellen Gough and Marko Geslani from Emory's Department of Religion.

The paintings in this exhibition are reportedly dated between the 17th and 19th centuries, including "The Coronation of Rama" (1840). Students included Darby Caso, Parth Goyal, Kristin Kimberlain, Saayli Kokitkar, Marshall Kupka-Moore, Elizabeth Muse, Thomas Shen, Tarun Swaminathan; most of whom had little background in art history; reports suggest.

Hindu statesman Rajan Zed commended Emory University for highlighting Hindu heritage through Ramayana exhibition.

Rajan Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism, urged major universities of the world; including Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, Cambridge, Princeton, UC Berkeley, Yale, Columbia, Toronto, Tokyo, Melbourne, etc.; to frequently offer Hinduism



"Tell the Whole Story from Beginning to End"

THE RAMAYANA IN INDIAN PAINTING

JANUARY 13 – MAY 20, 2018

The paintings in this exhibition are reportedly dated between the 17th and 19th centuries, including "The Coronation of Rama" (1840). Students included Darby Caso, Parth Goyal, Kristin Kimberlain, Saayli Kokitkar, Marshall Kupka-Moore, Elizabeth Muse, Thomas Shen, Tarun Swaminathan; most of whom had little background in art history; reports suggest.

focused classes and exhibitions, thus sharing rich philosophy-concepts-symbols-traditions-art of this oldest religion with the rest of the world. If they needed any assistance, he or other Hindu scholars would gladly help, Zed added.

Carlos Museum, founded in 1919, "collects, preserves, exhibits, and interprets art and artifacts from antiquity to the present". Its collections include some 17,000 artifacts. Bonnie Speed is the Director.

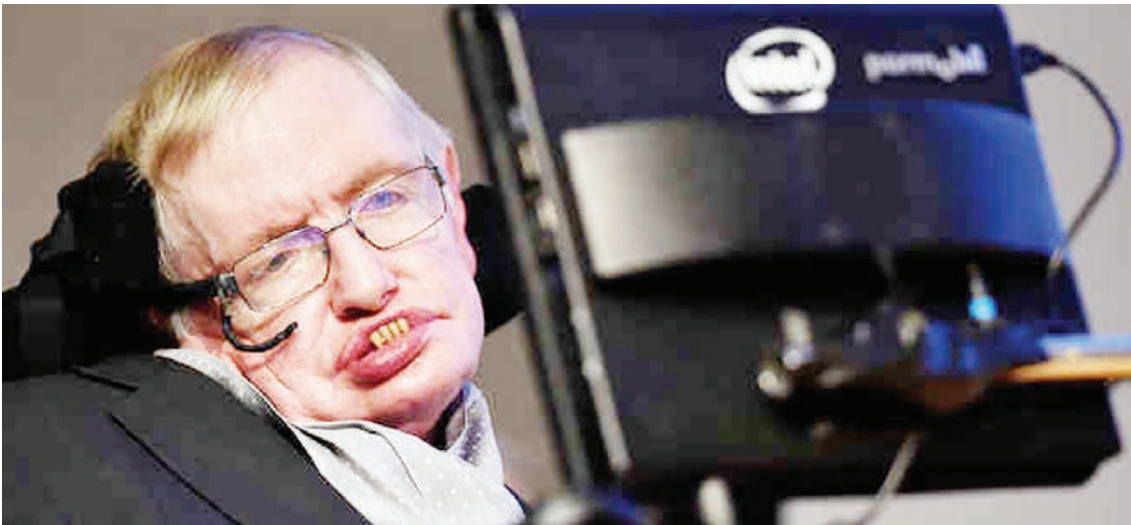
Internationally recognized Emory

University in Atlanta (Georgia), one of the world's leading research universities, was founded by Methodists (university maintains a formal affiliation with the United Methodist Church) in 1836. It serves about 15,252 students with about \$5.4 billion annual operating budget and has been ranked among top in most beautiful campuses and happiest colleges. Dr. Claire E. Sterk is the President, while Robert C. Goddard III is its Trustees Chair.

Hinduism, third largest religion of the world, has about 1.1 billion adherents and moksh (liberation) is its ultimate goal. There are about three million Hindus in USA. Ramayana, a narrative poem of about 25,000 slokas beginning in BCE period is divided into seven kandas.

TRIBUTE

STAR SCIENTIST HAWKING JOINS THE STARS



Stephen Hawking died Wednesday, March 14, at the age of 76 from complications due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a progressive neurodegenerative disease

Perhaps by now, Stephen Hawking, who spent a lifetime studying physics and cosmology, has already unlocked the mysteries of the universe. That is, if we go by the theory of God's existence and the common belief that we get to meet the Creator after death. Or, perhaps, he's nothing now, after having lived for 76 years. That is, if we go by Stephen Hawking's conviction that the brain is akin to a computer and you just cease to exist when its parts fail. There is no heaven or afterlife. So, how did the universe come into being? Professor Hawking believed: "Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something." Both points of view are unsubstantiated. The curiosity to fathom the depth of the universe has been eternal: where do we come from?

It is this quest to know why the universe is as it is and why it exists that had led Hawking to trailblazing breakthroughs in the deep dark world of the cosmos. He earned a name for himself in the scientific community that often regarded him in the same league as Newton and Einstein. This distinction came from the British professor's theoretical prediction that black holes are not so dense that things cannot escape their gravity, thus debunking the earlier theory on these objects. Scientists christened the thermal radiations theoretically emanating from the black holes as "Hawking radiation". To explain the origins of the world, the physicist worked on uniting two theories: theory of relativity (the nature of space and time) and quantum theory (how the smallest particles in the universe behave). The common man connected with Hawking's book, *A Brief History of Time* (1988), that delves into the ways of the space without jargon. It is an enduring bestseller.

Hawking became a star, with the brilliance of his mind that dazzled, more so because it incredibly overcame a debilitating progressing disease; one that left him wheelchair-bound and paralyzed for most of his life. A true tribute to the genius who pushed the limits of widely accepted truths about our universe as also the daunting diagnosis would be to follow his advocacy: use technology towards a more equitable world order. Meanwhile, the eternal question remains: Where do we come from?

(Tribune, India)

Mohajirs welcome India's statement in UN Human rights session: Nadeem Nusrat

WASHINGTON DC (TIP): Mohajirs have welcomed India's statement in United Nations human rights session on state atrocities committed by Pakistan in Sindh, Baluchistan and KPK. This was said in a statement sent to The Indian Panorama on March by Nadeem Nusrat, Spokesperson of 'Free Karachi' Campaign and former Convener of MQM.

Nadeem Nusrat said that the inclusion of the name of Sindh in India's statement on human rights violations is an important and encouraging development for 70 million Mohajirs.

The people of Karachi and Urban Sindh are grateful to Indian government for raising voice on the plight of Mohajirs in Pakistan.

Nusrat further said that Sindh, especially Karachi and Urban centers of Sindh province had been neglected previously by world

community while highlighting persecution of ethnic groups in Pakistan. More than 25,000 innocent Mohajirs have been brutally killed in Army and para military operations in Karachi since 1992. Enforced disappearances, abductions and extra judicial killings are on the rise in Pakistan's port city of Karachi since the latest phase of operation in 2013.

Highlighting the issue of terrorism, Mr. Nusrat said that religious extremism, fanaticism and terrorism is being nourished by the state of Pakistan which has put peace and security of the region at stake. Pakistani soil has been used to plan and launch major terror attacks in the region. The providers and facilitators of terror sanctuaries in Pakistan must be held accountable by United Nations and all peace-loving Nations.

He further added that 'Free

Karachi' Campaign has been drawing world's attention towards the state atrocities of Pakistan on Mohajirs, Balochs, Pashtuns and other religious minorities.

Nusrat said that 'Free Karachi' team is approaching international community, lawmakers, decision making bodies, human rights groups and is getting tremendous support from all quarters.

Nadeem Nusrat urged all the major regional powers of South Asia and international powers to put pressure on Pakistan to end crimes against humanity in Karachi and urban centers of Sindh along with Balochistan, KPK and FATA.

'Free Karachi' Campaign was launched on January 15th on the eve of Martin Luther King Day to raise global awareness on human rights violations in Karachi and Urban Sindh.

TRUMP SETS NOV 11 AS DATE FOR MILITARY PARADE

No Heavy Tanks, but heavy air component

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Trump is believed to have decided on the date of his Parade. It is Nov 11 or Veteran's Day. However, according to a Pentagon memo, the spectacle won't include tanks, to "minimize the damage done to local infrastructure," Al Jazeera reported.



President Trump wants a military parade which outshines all parades and displays the might of USA

Trump asked the Pentagon to plan a parade in February after he visited France in July for Bastille Day festivities.

Per the Pentagon memo, which released on Friday, March 9, the parade will travel from the White House to the Capitol in Washington D.C. Instead of tanks, the show will end with a "heavy air component," which will incorporate older aircraft. While the memo didn't reveal the parade's cost, it did mention that it will "highlight the evolution of women veterans from separate formations in World War II to today's integrated formations."

Military parades are unusual in America; the last time we had one was in D.C. in 1991, after the Gulf War. That parade cost \$8 million and would cost considerably more today. According to White House press secretary Sarah Sanders, Trump's goal is to have "a celebration" of the military. People have criticized Trump for the idea, comparing the parade to those that occur in China and North Korea.

And speaking of North Korea: A couple of days after news broke that Trump wanted to plan a military parade, Kim Jong-Un executed his own on Feb. 8, the eve of the opening ceremony of South Korea's Winter Olympics. Kim's celebration included troops, missiles, and tanks, the entirety of which traveled to Kim II Sung Square in a large choreographed military display. An estimated 50,000 people assembled to watch the parade, 13,000 of which were troops.

contd from page 4

Indian Origin Jay Shetty Goes to...

pregnant with Kairav, our younger son, that we would save our child's cord blood. Then towards the end of the pregnancy in 2015, I got in touch with Duke University and they were planning on doing a sibling cord blood therapy trial", said Jay's mother Shilpa.

She and husband Raj had the umbilical cord blood of their younger child frozen and stored by UK-based blood bank Cells4Life.

Umbilical cord blood is rich in a kind of stem cell that can, in theory, help heal most parts of the body, either by stimulating growth or by transforming into the required type of mature cell.

These can then be put back into the body, even many years later. It relies on a close tissue match for the recipient, to lower the odds of the body rejecting it.

When the Shettys contacted Duke University, they were told that Kairav's blood was a match for Jay's raising the prospect of the UK's first such sibling cord blood therapy on Jay.

Stem cell is a cure for some and improvement for all, so we are pretty sure it will definitely have some improvement in Jay's life, said Shilpa.

The family from Maharashtra, who have been based in London for over 15 years, are determined not to be put off by some dissenting voices within the medical community who cast doubts on the rare procedure.

According to Shilpa, because it is not an invasive therapy, they want to go into it with a positive nothing to lose attitude.

It is in its early stages and it has always been the norm that people will doubt treatments which have not been proved yet. But stem cells in general after years of proven research are known to have the ability to reach the damaged organ and regenerate new cells, she said.

Claudia Rees, Operations Director at Cells4Life, describes the procedure as a cutting-edge treatment, considered a cornerstone of a relatively new area of science known as regenerative medicine.

Stem cells and cord blood have already been used to cure diseases such as leukemia, lymphoma and testicular cancer; in the near future it is likely that these treatments will provide hope for common and often life-threatening conditions such as heart disease, Alzheimer's and diabetes, said Rees.

Jay will be in the US for the treatment for a week and undergo rehabilitation in the UK after the cord blood transfusion procedure. The family have managed to raise nearly 26,000 pounds through fundraising to assist with the massive costs involved.

Jay cannot express and communicate much but we are pretty sure he knows what's going on as he is pretty bright.

Kairav is two and half, so doesn't know much. But he knows a lot of travelling revolves around Jay for therapies. So, he is used to it, said their mother, who believes even a small improvement in Jay's quality of life as a result of the therapy would be a success story for their family.

RAHUL MAY UNVEIL BLUEPRINT FOR CONGRESS REVIVAL AT THREE-DAY PLENARY

NEW DELHI (TIP): Is the Congress ready to shed its status quoist tag and take hard decisions as it prepares to fight a rampant BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections? The answer may lie in Rahul Gandhi's choice of candidates for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections.

Selecting the "right" candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections was a key test for the 47-year Gandhi, who took over the reins of the grand old party from his mother Sonia Gandhi two months ago.

Gandhi nominated local leaders as the party's candidates, ignoring, in the process, some well-entrenched Congressmen. The move has rekindled hopes among Congress workers that Gandhi may be willing to take tough decisions in the party's interest.

Sonia Gandhi would try not to antagonise the "Delhi coterie" and at times ignore the aspirations of regional leaders.

"Rahulji's decision to field local leaders in Rajya Sabha elections has gone down well within the rank and file. It marks a significant shift in the party's policies when it comes to rewarding hard working local workers," senior Congress leader from Bihar Kishore Kumar Jha said.

"I am confident this will also check the growth of paratroopers and opportunists who seek all the benefits and then desert the party at critical times. The move will also encourage regional leaders to put in more effort on the ground and work for the party's revival across the country," he added.

Commenting on Rahul's style of functioning, Sonia Gandhi said last week at an event that every person has a particular style of working. *Source: HT*

Media should not act like popes sitting on pulpit delivering sermons: CJI Dipak Misra

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court today heard a petition filed by journalist Rohini Singh for the news website The Wire seeking quashing of the defamation proceedings against the website initiated by Jay Shah.

During the hearing the court called for greater responsibility from the press and media.

The case pertains to an article published by the website against Jay Shah, son of BJP president Amit Shah. The article raised questions on the disproportionate rise of Jay Shah's company's income in the past two years.

The defamation case is currently pending at a magistrate court.

The Supreme Court has not technically granted a stay as Jay Shah's lawyers assured the court that they won't proceed with the case at the magistrate court till the Supreme Court is seized of the matter. The case is due to be next heard on April 12.

During the hearing Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra said that a section of the media and especially "some electronic media channels" have become "popes sitting on pulpit delivering sermons".

The court said it did not wish to name the channels but their conduct has been against the culture of journalism.

CBI registers fresh case related to Rs 9 cr fraud at PNB branch

NEW DELHI (TIP): The CBI has registered a fresh case relating to "fraudulent" issuance of Rs 9 crore of LoUs to Chandri Papers and Allied Products by PNB's Brady House branch, at the centre of a storm over a similar fraud by jewellers Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

Retired PNB employee Gokulnath Shetty and single-window operator at the branch, Manoj Kharat, who are facing the CBI probe in the Modi-Choksi case, had been booked by the agency in the fresh FIR registered by it, the officials said. The agency had also named the company and its directors as accused in the case, they said.



UTTAR PRADESH BY-ELECTION

Samajwadi Party wins Yogi Adityanath's Gorakhpur, UP CM says result 'unexpected'

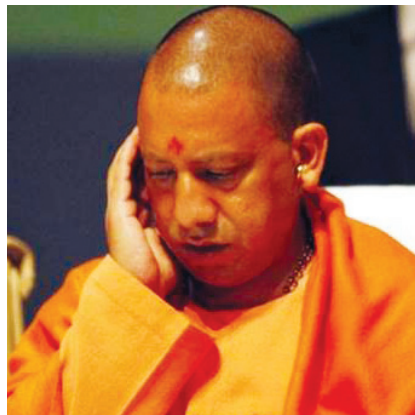
LUCKNOW (TIP): Delivering a major blow to the BJP, the Samajwadi Party won Gorakhpur and Phulpur Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh by-election. Samajwadi Party's Nagendra Pratap Singh Patel defeated BJP's Kaushlendra Singh Patel by 59,613 votes in Phulpur. In Yogi Adityanath's bastion, SP's Praveen Kumar Nishad defeated BJP's Upendra Dutt Shukla by 21,000 votes.

Gorakhpur and Phulpur are high-profile constituencies as both the seats were represented by BJP's firebrand leader and current UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya respectively. Adityanath represented Gorakhpur five times in the Lok Sabha, and it went vacant in 2017 when he was elected to UP Assembly to take over as the Chief Minister of the state.

In 2014, BJP had won both the seats with over 3 lakh vote margin. In Gorakhpur, BJP's Yogi Adityanath had defeated SP's Rajmati Nishad by 31,2783 votes. And in Phulpur, BJP's Keshav Prasad Maurya defeated SP's Dharam Raj Singh Patel by 3,08,308 votes. However, currently the BJP is trailing on both the seats. Ten candidates are in fray from Gorakhpur and 22 candidates contested from Phulpur.

ALARM BELLS IN BJP

The defeat of the Bharatiya Janata Party in all six Lok Sabha seats where by-



elections were held this year has sounded alarm bells in the party in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the 2019 Parliamentary polls, while stoking speculation about the Opposition stitching an alliance together to take the BJP on after tasting success in the recent bypolls.

The BJP failed to break the jinx of repeated failures in Parliamentary by-elections in 2018 when it was defeated yesterday in Gorakhpur, the bastion of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and Phulpur, earlier held by deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya.

The ruling party's candidates in the two constituencies lost to the Samajwadi Party (SP), triggering a debate on whether political outfits opposed to the BJP could forge a mega alliance before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The SP, supported by the BSP, romped

home in the bypolls.

SPs Pravin Nishad defeated Upendra Dutt Shukla of the BJP by 21,961 votes in Gorakhpur, a seat which had been with the BJP since 1989. Nagendra Pratap Singh Patel of SP cornered the Phulpur seat, drubbing the saffron party's Kaushalendra Singh Patel by 59,460 votes.

As the results of the two by-election were declared yesterday, Adityanath said there was a "lesson" to be learnt from the outcome, and cited over-confidence and the inability to understand the implications of the pact between SP and BSP as the prime reasons for the BJP's defeat.

UP Congress spokesperson Ashok Singh told PTI the outcome had brightened the prospects of the formation of a "maha gathbandhan" (grand alliance) ahead of the 2019 polls to defeat the saffron party.

"We will ponder seriously about a larger alliance keeping the next Lok Sabha polls in mind," he said.

The Congress had contested the 2017 UP Assembly polls jointly with the SP and might want to tackle the polls together next year, too, another senior party leader told PTI, requesting that he not be named.

The outcome of the March 11 bypolls has sparked talk in political circles about a continuing pact between the SP and the BSP -- once bitter critics in Uttar Pradesh.

YSR Congress gives notice for no-confidence motion against govt

NEW DELHI (TIP): For the first time in its term, the Narendra Modi government may face a no-confidence motion on the floor of the house.

Andhra Pradesh's YSR Congress Party led by Jagan Mohan Reddy, has given a notice to move a no-confidence motion against the government in the Lok Sabha over the issue of not giving the so-called "special category" status to his state. But before any vote takes place, the notice needs the support of 50 MPs 'in an orderly house'. It is not clear the notice will get that.

With a comfortable majority in the house, the government is safe and will cruise through, even if the motion is admitted. The move is however expected to hasten the exit of The Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which pulled its ministers out of the Bharatiya Janata Party led government, from National Democratic Alliance. The YSRCP has nine MPs, but four have defected, leaving it with an effective strength of five; the TDP has 16 MPs, and it can't risk not supporting a motion that purportedly has the state's best interests in mind.

TDP MP Thota Narasimham told PTI that the party will also support the



TDP leaders hold placards and shout slogans demanding special status for Andhra Pradesh, during the ongoing budget session at Parliament House in New Delhi.

motion. Later, Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu too said the TDP would support the no-confidence motion.

"We will support a no-confidence motion, whoever moves it. We will be ready for that and our 16-17 MPs will fully support that. We will cooperate with whoever fights for the state's rights," Naidu told the state assembly, according to PTI. YSRCP MP YV Subba Reddy submitted a notice with the Lok Sabha secretariat, desiring to move a no confidence motion on Friday. Reddy has also written a letter seeking support from all non-NDA parties. The party initially planned to the motion on March 21, but advanced it amid apprehension that

Parliament might adjourn sine die early in the wake of disruptions.

It has also suggested that its MPs will quit from Lok Sabha at the end of the session if the demands are not met.

The budget session is scheduled to end on April 6. The Congress, with 48 MPs, and the Trinamool Congress, with 34, were yet to take a call on the no-confidence motion late on Thursday. "We will firm up our strategy by Friday morning," Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said. A TMC leader said the YSRCP had not reached out to the party yet. The Biju Janata Dal is unlikely to support the notice. A party leader said, "It is for a parochial issue. We may not support it."

Kejriwal apologises to Majithia over drugs charge; AAP's Punjab leaders term it 'meek surrender'

NEW DELHI (TIP): Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on March 15 apologised to former Punjab minister Bikram Singh Majithia for making "unfounded" allegations against him over his involvement in the illegal drug trade.

Majithia, a senior Shiromani Akali Dal leader, had filed a criminal defamation case against Kejriwal and two other AAP leaders for allegedly "tarnishing" his reputation by levelling "false, baseless and malicious charges". Following the apology, Majithia has decided to withdraw the court case against him.

However, the "meek surrender" drew flak from AAP Punjab unit leaders who termed Kejriwal's step a "letdown".

AAP leaders in New Delhi, however, said the move was to shed court cases, in which the party convenor finds himself mired, and hinted that a similar course could be adopted in the defamation case filed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

Kejriwal apology

"In the recent past, I made certain statements and allegations against you regarding your alleged involvement in drug trade. These statements became a political issue. Now I have learnt that allegations are unfounded," Kejriwal said in a letter addressed to Majithia.

"I hereby withdraw all my statements and allegations made against you and apologies for the same," the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief said.

The damage caused to your esteem, the hurt caused to you, your family, friends, well-wishers, followers and the loss caused to you is regretted, he said.

Former Punjab minister Majithia claimed he was grateful that truth had won and Kejriwal had realized his mistake. Since the AAP leader had "tendered his apology", he did not want to pursue the defamation case filed against him, Majithia said.

Accusing Majithia of playing with the youth of Punjab by "unleashing narco-terrorism in the state," Kejriwal had once declared that he would "drag" the then Punjab cabinet minister "by his collar" to jail for his alleged role in a



Arvind Kejriwal



Bikram Singh Majithia

multi-million rupee drug racket.

Majithia, who was once probed by the ED in connection with the alleged Rs 6,000 crore money laundering drugs racket case, had often been at the receiving end of Kejriwal's ire during the AAP convenor's rallies in Punjab in the run-up to the Assembly election last year. Drug abuse was a major issue in the high-octane Punjab Assembly elections last year and Kejriwal, who was leading the AAP charge, accused Majithia, then a minister in the state government, of being involved in narcotics trade.

Majithia had denied the charges against him.

In May 2016, he filed a criminal defamation case against Kejriwal, Sanjay Singh and Ashish Khaitan.

Majithia said Kejriwal, Singh and Khaitan have "made it a habit" to target their political opponents by resorting to statements "filled with lies with the sole motive of hoodwinking the people".

"I will not let anyone besmirch my and family's honour. Anyone doing so will have to face the consequences. I am determined to make them face trial and be punished for their misdeeds," the minister had said.

Majithia 'accepts' Kejriwal's apology

Talking to reporters, Majithia said he had accepted the apology.

"I thank Kejriwal for showing greatness in seeking apology for his remarks made against me. I have told my lawyers that from our side, this case ends

as Kejriwal has sought apology. I have asked my counsels to withdraw the defamation case. Person makes mistake and with the grace of God, if I have the ability to forgive and I will forgive," the SAD leader said.

Majithia had filed a defamation case against Kejriwal and Ashish Khetan in May 2015.

"I had said from the beginning that either he will say sorry or he will go to jail. Sending someone to jail is not my intention," he asserted.

It is indeed a historical moment that a sitting chief minister has submitted a written apology in court withdrawing all statements he made against me," said Majithia.

The SAD leader said although it was "very torturous journey" for him as he battled the allegations. "The AAP, however, did not benefit as their candidate lost his security forfeited in my constituency," he said.

Majithia said the entire controversy had taken a toll on his mother because she could not understand this kind of politics.

"My wife also went through a difficult phase, I thank the almighty that this chapter has ended and truth has prevailed," he said, adding, "If my two little kids were asked in school that your father does such things, you can imagine what could have been my position. What answer I could have given to them." AAP leader Ashish Khetan had apologized as well, he added.

PAK CALLS ENVOY HOME, INDIA SAYS ROUTINE

NEW DELHI (TIP): The bickering between India and Pakistan over alleged harassment of each other's diplomats took a new turn after Islamabad called its High Commissioner home for consultations, which was termed by India as "routine" and "normal".

Pakistan said it has called home its envoy Sohail Mahmood for consultations after repeated incidents of "harassment" of its diplomatic staff in New Delhi.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said the Indian High Commission in Islamabad was also facing a "litany of issues" that have not been resolved for several months.

"It is pretty normal and routine for any country to call its envoy for consultations," Kumar said. *Source: PTI*



Sohail Mahmood

DHINAKARAN NAMES PARTY AFTER JAYALALITHAA

MADURAI (TIP): Rebel AIADMK leader TTV Dhinakaran on March 15 floated a new political party — Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam — named after late Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa.

"From today, we will function with a name to retrieve the great movement of AIADMK from the betrayers," Dhinakaran told a gathering on the occasion, challenging the ruling dispensation in the state. Dhinakaran and his followers often use the word "betrayers" to refer to the ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, led by CM K Palaniswami and his deputy, O Panneerselvam. The party's name roughly translates to "Amma's party for people's development".



Source: PTI

Judgement in fourth fodder scam against Lalu deferred

RANCHI (TIP): The judgement in the fourth case of multi-crore fodder scam against former Bihar chief ministers Lalu Yadav and Jagannath Mishra was deferred on March 15 by a CBI special court after the RJD leader's counsel filed a plea.

No date has been fixed yet for the pronouncement of judgement in the case which is related to fraudulent withdrawal of Rs. 3.13 crore from Dumka Treasury.

Special CBI Judge Shiv Pal Singh put off the judgement in view of the counsel for Lalu Yadav on Wednesday filing a petition under 319 CrPC, asking that the then three officials of the Accountant General of Office in the 1990s be made a party to the case under 319 CrPC.

Two more Bills passed in Lok Sabha amid din

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Lok Sabha (LS) on March 15 passed two Bills on minority educational institutions and energy conservation without discussion amid ruckus over Trinamool Congress MP Sudip Bandopadhyay's allegedly un-parliamentary remarks against Basudeb Acharya of the CPI (M).

With the protesting leftist MPs staging a sit-in-demonstration in the well of the House and demanding apology from Bandopadhyay; the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (Amendment) 2009 and Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill 2010 were put to vote and passed. The BJP MPs protested the way the Bills were passed without any discussion.

The LS had also passed three Bills — Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill 2010, Employees State Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2009 and the Clinical Establishment (Registration and Regulation) Bill 2010 — without discussion on Monday, as the MPs of the AIADMK and other opposition parties created ruckus over alleged corruption in allocation of 2G Spectrum.

"This is murder of democracy," the BJP MPs, led by Gopinath Munde and Shah Nawaz Hussain, shouted slogans as the Bills on minority educational institution and energy conservation were passed without discussion on Tuesday.

Speaker Meira Kumar requested the Left MPs to maintain order in the House, but they did not relent.



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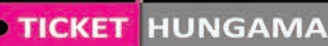
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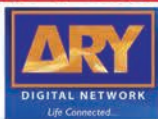


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PARINEETI CHOPRA REFUTES CLAIMS OF SIGNING HOUSEFULL 4

Bollywood actor Parineeti Chopra has put an end to the speculations doing rounds that she will be a part of the next instalment in the Housefull franchise, Housefull 4.

In her tweet, the Ishaqzaade star rebuked the tabloid which released the story speculating her involvement in the movie and tagged its Twitter handle.

The 29-year-old actress' official spokesperson also negated the claims, "Parineeti Chopra hasn't been approached for Housefull 4. So the rumours doing the rounds are absolutely untrue".

Despite the mix-up, Parineeti has a good line-up of films in her future. She will be soon seen in Namaste England, Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar, and Kesari in the near future.

Source: ANI

RICHA CHADHA TO PLAY ADULT FILM STAR SHAKEELA IN BIOPIC



Actor Richa Chadha will play the role of real-life adult film star Shakeela in her biopic which will be directed by Indrajit Lankesh.

Shakeela is one of the biggest stars of the 90s from Kerala and has acted in several adult films in languages spanning Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada.

The film will go on floors next month

and will chronicle the life of Shakeela who entered the film business at the age of 16 and traces her life journey from there.

"The film is the story of Shakeela, one of the most famous actors from Malayalam cinema from the 90s who rose to a spectacular amount of fame. Her fans were spread across Asia and she earned

fanfare as a woman which back then was unheard of," said a spokesperson for Richa.

"The film's script was exciting and is a great story to tell and the story will make for a great watch for the audience. The preparations will begin soon and the film should be going on floors in end April or May," he added.

Source: PTI

JACQUELINE FERNANDEZ LEARNS MIXED MARTIAL ARTS FOR RACE 3

Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez is going through an extensive training in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) to shoot action sequences in her upcoming film Race 3, opposite Salman Khan.

Talking about her training, her fitness trainer Kuldeep Sashi said: "Jacqueline is someone who has an athletic body type, so she does not require any special regime to tone up herself. However, as a requirement to her character, she is undergoing extensive MMA training, focusing towards kicking and punching."

"The action sequences that Jacqueline has to perform are very demanding. They require application of the right techniques. As she has never performed hand-to-hand combat or martial arts before, getting the style and techniques right is our only focus."

Her diet has also changed. Kuldeep said: "There has been a lot of additions to Jacqueline's diet. She is consuming more calories these days owing to the extensive



action sequences she has to deliver onscreen."

The upcoming schedule of the film will be shot in mid-March in Abu Dhabi.

Race 3, being produced by Salman Khan and directed by Remo D'Souza, is slated to release on June 15.

Source: IANS

Sonam Kapoor's 'The Zoya Factor' to release in April

Actress Sonam Kapoor-starrer 'The Zoya Factor' is scheduled to release on April 5 next year. The project will also feature Malayalam actor Dulquer Salmaan.

The two actors will be seen together for the screen adaptation of Anuja Chauhan's best-selling novel by the same name. Sonam announced the news on Twitter on Tuesday along with a photoshoot image.

"Super happy to be a part of this unique story 'The Zoya Factor' an adaptation of Anuja Chauhan's bestseller. Releasing on April 5, 2019! Directed by Abhishek Sharma, co-starring Dulquer, Fox Star Hindi, Adlabs Films," she posted.

In the photograph shared by Sonam, she and Dulquer are posing with a copy of the novel with the name of their characters mentioned on it. Dulquer also shared the image with the caption "Now this one is really special for me! Introducing 'The Zoya Factor', a movie based on Anuja Chauhan's bestseller."

Source: IANS





MICHELLE COLLINS HATES BEING CALLED COUGAR

British actress Michelle Collins, 56, said she hates being labelled a 'cougar' over her relationship with Mike Davison, who is 22 years her junior and is tagged her 'toyboy'.

Collins has been dating Davison, 34, for over five years.

Reportedly, she expressed his angst to Daily Star about it.

She said: "Mike is 22 years younger than me and I'm regarded as a predator. It drives me mad. People call him my toyboy beau. He's nearly 35, for God's sake. He turned to me the other day and said, 'Surely I'm not still your toyboy, am I?'"

"I laugh about it now but it is annoying. And I hate that word cougar. I can't stand it. I find it so demeaning. A cougar is a predator going around looking for young flesh. I'm certainly not like that. But then, women are judged far more harshly than men. And, funnily enough, often by other women.

"If people think I look old enough to be his mum then let them! There's nothing I can do about it. It's one of the downsides, I suppose, of being in the public eye."

Collins also questioned the double standards when it comes to age-gap relationships, saying that no one questions when the man is older than the woman.

Source: IANS

MILEY CYRUS SUED FOR \$300 MILLION FOR ALLEGEDLY STEALING 'WE CAN'T STOP'

Miley Cyrus was sued for \$300 million on Tuesday by a Jamaican songwriter who said the pop singer's 2013 smash "We Can't Stop" closely resembles a song he recorded 25 years earlier, and that she is infringing his copyright.

Michael May, who performs as Flourgon, said his 1988 song "We Run Things" has been "a favourite for lovers of reggae music worldwide" since reaching No. 1 in his home country, and that about 50 percent of "We Can't Stop" comes from him.

He accused Cyrus and her label RCA Records, owned by Sony Corp, of misappropriating his material, including the phrase "We run things. Things no run we," which she sings as "We run things. Things don't run we."

Representatives for Cyrus, 25, did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A spokeswoman for Sony did not immediately respond to a similar request.

May said he sought to protect his work last year with the US Copyright Office, and in November won "formal copyright protection" for all musical arrangements in "We Run Things."

He said Cyrus' song "owes the basis of its chart-topping popularity to and its highly-lucrative success to plaintiff May's protected, unique, creative and original content."

The Kingston, Jamaica resident is also seeking a halt to further sales and performances of "We Can't Stop," according to his complaint filed with the US District Court in Manhattan.

While the complaint did not specify damages, May's lawyers in a press statement described it as a \$300 million case.

"We Can't Stop," from Cyrus' album "Bangerz," peaked at No. 2 on the Billboard



Hot 100 in August 2013.

It was kept from the top by Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines," itself the subject

of a high-profile copyright case over its resemblance to a 1977 Marvin Gaye song.

Source: Reuters

IT DRIVES ME NUTS WHEN PEOPLE TELL ME TO RELAX: ANGELINA JOLIE

Actor Angelina Jolie said she does not take time out to relax and gets irritated when people ask her to do so.

The 42-year-old actor-director said many mothers, like her, "find pleasure" in being on their toes most of the time.

"I really don't (relax). I'm one of those people. It drives me nuts when people tell me to relax. I think a lot of moms don't really rest. And somehow we find a real pleasure in that.

"I mean, even if I try to take a bath, I'll end up with at least two of my kids in there with me, which is lovely. I wouldn't trade it at all," Jolie told HELLO! magazine.

The actor said, as a parent, she believes empathy is the most important lesson that needs to be taught to children.

"To value others. If you live life and walk around thinking of yourself and your own needs and desires then not only is it a selfish life, but it ends up being quite an unhappy life, I imagine. And that's where everything goes wrong. The wars and hostility, the ugliness and inhumanity in this world comes from this lack of being able to have real empathy for someone else.



"If you can value others, I think things naturally balance out in your own life. When you don't live with ignorant perceptions and that smallness, you open up in a beautiful way," she said.

Source: PTI

Cameron Diaz not retiring from acting

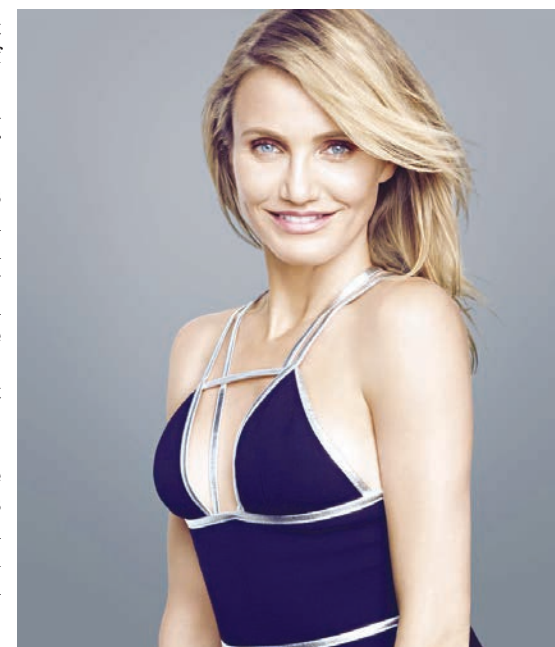
Actress Cameron Diaz is not retiring from the world of acting.

The news was confirmed by a publication which had taken her spokesperson's interview earlier.

In an interview, Diaz's spokesperson Selma Blair had joked that Diaz was done with acting. It was taken seriously by many as Diaz has not been seen in a single movie in the last five years, reports metro.co.uk.

Blair made a clarification about her statement via a tweet.

The post read: "Breaking news. Guys please, I was making a joke in an interview. Cameron Diaz is not retiring from anything. And for more breaking news -- I am now retiring from being Cameron Diaz's spokesperson."





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UK, US, France, Germany jointly condemn chemical attack on ex-spy

LONDON (TIP): The leaders of France, Germany, Britain and the United States issued a joint statement on Thursday condemning a chemical attack on a Russian former double agent in England and blaming Moscow for it.

Moscow has denied any responsibility for the attack on Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia. Britain has expelled 23 Russian diplomats, and Moscow is expected to retaliate.

"We, the leaders of France, Germany, the United States and the United Kingdom, abhor the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury, UK, on 4 March 2018," the statement said.

"This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War.

"It is an assault on UK sovereignty and any such use by a State party is a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and a breach of international law. It threatens the security of us all."

The four nations called on Russia to provide full and complete disclosure of its Novichok nerve agent programme to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (Reuters)

Slovak Prime Minister Fico resigns, successor named

BRATISLAVA (TIP): Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico resigned on March 15 after more than two weeks of political turmoil and public protests sparked by the murder of an investigative journalist in late February.

President Andrej Kiska accepted Fico's resignation at a ceremony and mandated his deputy, Peter Pellegrini, to form a new government. (Reuters)

China ramps up security presence in Tajikistan: Report

BEIJING (TIP): An independent think tank says China's military is ramping up its security presence in Tajikistan with troop deployments amid fears that militants based in nearby Afghanistan could strike at western China.

The International Crisis Group said in a report Wednesday that China has deployed soldiers and built a "counter-terrorism center" in Tajikistan near the three-way border of Tajikistan, China and Afghanistan.

China has repeatedly warned about ethnic Uighur militants who have left their homeland in western China to join extremist groups such as the Turkistan Islamic Party, a predominantly Uighur group that has bases in Syria and Afghanistan and is allied with al-Qaida and the Taliban.

The Chinese defense ministry did not immediately respond to a fax seeking comment. (AP)

Turkey raps European Parliament over call to halt Afrin offensive in Syria

ANKARA (TIP): Turkey slammed a motion approved by the European Parliament on March 15 that calls for a halt to Ankara's military offensive in northern Syria's Afrin region, saying it demonstrated "clear support" for militants.

The non-binding motion also urges Turkey to remove its troops from Afrin, where Ankara is targeting the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia in an offensive launched nearly two months ago. The Parliament's motion stressed "the need to focus on defeating the U.N.-listed terrorist organisations", a reference to Islamic State and other militant Islamist groups operating in Syria. Turkey considers the YPG a terrorist organisation that is a Syrian extension of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade against the Turkish state. The PKK is deemed a terrorist organisation by the European Union and the United States as well as by Turkey.

"The latest decision is the most visionless decision the European Parliament has taken in recent years... Calling on Turkey to withdraw its troops is a clear support for terrorist organisations," Turkey's minister for EU affairs, Omer Celik, told reporters. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan also dismissed the motion. "Don't get your hopes up, we will not leave there until the job is done. The European Parliament has nothing to say to Turkey and whatever it has to say on this issue will go through one ear and out the other," he said. (Reuters)

Theresa May visits city where Russian double agent was poisoned

SALISBURY (TIP): British Prime Minister Theresa May visited Salisbury on March 15, the elegant cathedral city which became the unlikely backdrop to a chemical attack against a Russian former double agent this month.

Dominated by its 13th Century cathedral with England's highest spire, Salisbury has witnessed dramatic scenes since the attack as soldiers in chemical suits and gas masks conduct forensic searches.

Dozens of passersby and schoolchildren crowded outside the city's Guildhall to get a view of May as she met emergency service workers, police and local politicians.

Most locals who have spoken to reporters have welcomed her tough stance against Russia in the affair but some worry about the effect on tourism and possible lingering health dangers.

Sergei Skripal, 66, and his daughter Yulia, 33, were found unconscious on a bench outside a shopping centre on March 4 after being exposed to what the British authorities have identified as a military-grade, Soviet era Novichok nerve agent. They remain critically ill in hospital.

The pair had visited a pizzeria and a pub before collapsing and although officials have said there is no public health danger, they have advised anyone who was in the vicinity to wash their clothes and clean all jewellery, mobile phones and spectacles with antiseptic wipes.

"I don't think these things can ever be investigated quickly, but there's sort of mixed messages," said Tommy Roberts, 50, who runs a nearby bar and hotel.

"First there is no risk to the public



health, then there's a little bit, then it's 'make sure you wash everything'."

FALLING TRADE

Several local traders have noticed a drop in custom since the incident and May made a point of meeting some of them.

She visited a small clothes boutique, speaking to shop owner Sarah Haydon, who welcomed her arrival.

"We just need people to come back to the city," Haydon told reporters after May had left. "I love the city and we should promote that the city is fine."

May has blamed President Vladimir Putin for the attack and on Wednesday announced Britain would expel 23 Russian diplomats she said were intelligence agents. Russia denies any involvement.

"I was surprised at how tough she's been. I thought she might pussyfoot

around, but she hasn't," said Samantha Smith, 22 who works for a product design firm in Salisbury.

May said her visit was to thank emergency and health services and reassure the public about their safety.

"It's been great to meet some tourists here in Salisbury, people coming to Salisbury, still enjoying this great city," she said.

Sergei Skripal, a former colonel in Russia's GRU military intelligence service, betrayed dozens of Russian spies to British intelligence before he was arrested in Moscow in 2004.

He was given a lengthy jail term in 2006 but was released four years later as part of a swap for 10 Russian spies caught in the United States.

Since arriving in Britain, he had lived modestly in Salisbury, keeping out of the spotlight until earlier this month. (Reuters)

German President Steinmeier to visit India from March 22

NEW DELHI (TIP): German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier will visit India from March 22 to 25 with an aim to strengthen bilateral ties.

It will be his first visit to India as the German President.

"The visit is significant as it will be the President's first visit after the new German government was sworn in yesterday," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

Apart from his engagements here, Steinmeier, who will be accompanied by a delegation of top German businessmen and indologists, will visit Varanasi and Chennai.

He had visited India several times in his former capacity as the Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor of Germany.

The last German President to visit India was Joachim Gauck in February 2014.

"India's relationship with Germany is amongst our foremost relations, bilaterally and in global context. After having established strategic partnership since 2000, successive governments on the two sides have endeavoured to broaden and deepen this relationship," the Ministry of External Affairs said in



a statement. Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe and the sixth largest trading partner in the world. India was ranked 24th in Germany's global trade. "India's current priorities in most areas match with German expertise, such as renewable energy, skills development, smart city, water and waste management," the MEA said.

In 2016-17, the bilateral trade turnover

was USD 18.76 billion. In 2016-17, India exported goods worth USD 7.18 billion to Germany and imported goods worth USD 11.58 billion.

Germany is the 7th largest foreign direct investor in India and the cumulative German FDI in India from April 2000 to December 2017 is USD 10.71 billion or 2.91 per cent of total FDI, according to official figures. (PTI)

Vladimir Putin rides 'Russia First' wave towards election victory

MOSCOW/YEKATERINBURG: (TIP) - Russian voters are set to propel Vladimir Putin to another term as president in an election on Sunday, giving him credit for standing up for Russia against Western governments that view him as a dangerous autocrat.

Opinion polls show Putin, 65, with a commanding election lead, all but guaranteeing him another term that will take him to nearly a quarter century in power — a longevity among Kremlin leaders second only to Josef Stalin.

The only thing that could dampen Putin's poll triumph is if voter apathy at a predictable contest leads to a low turnout, or if the minority of Russians who vocally oppose him take to the streets to protest against what they see as an undemocratic farce.

In an election campaign where Putin has benefited from glowing coverage on mainstream television, he has cast himself as the only person who can defend Russia's national interests in a hostile world.

"We will withstand this onslaught," Svetlana Andrus, a ribbon round her neck in the colours of the Russian flag, said during a rally in Moscow in support of Putin. "We will support our country and Vladimir Vladimirovich (Putin)."

Putin's supporters point to Russia's military intervention in Syria and its annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region in 2014 as proof of his patriotic credentials. They say US and European sanctions imposed over the Ukraine crisis are a price worth paying.

A row with Britain over allegations the Kremlin used a nerve agent to poison a Russian double agent in a sleepy English town — denied by Moscow — has not dented his standing.

BOYCOTT CAMPAIGN

A March 9 survey by state-run pollster VTsIOM gave Putin, who was first



elected president in 2000, support of 69 percent. His nearest rival Pavel Grudinin, the Communist Party's candidate, is on just 7 percent.

Another candidate, Ksenia Sobchak, a TV presenter and family friend of Putin, has upended expectations by robustly criticising the Kremlin, but she has only 2 percent support, the same survey showed.

Kremlin officials acknowledge that Putin's dominance could turn people off voting. A low turnout would dent his legitimacy within the ruling elite, founded in part on his ability to command popular support.

In Yekaterinburg, an industrial city in the Ural mountains, unemployed 38-year-old Sergei Khaziev described the election as a "circus performance which for some reason is described as elections... I won't turn out this time."

The first politician in years to challenge the Kremlin's grip on power, Alexei Navalny, is not on the ballot. He was barred because of a corruption conviction he says was fabricated by the Kremlin.

Navalny, who uses social media to whip up anger among his mainly young

followers over official corruption, is pushing an election boycott.

"Our boycott campaign is working," he said this week. As evidence, Navalny pointed to a drive by officials to encourage people to turn out to vote by offering discounted food at polling stations. He also said state officials were applying pressure on civil servants and students to vote.

BURDENS OF OFFICE

Though winning another term is virtually assured, governing Russia for another six years will throw up plentiful challenges.

Buffeted by lower oil prices and the effect of Western sanctions, Russia's gross domestic product expanded by only 1.5 percent last year, well below the robust growth Russians had come to expect in the earlier years of Putin's rule.

Putin has spoken of the need to revive economic growth but the steps that many economists prescribe - especially shrinking the state's role in the economy - are resisted by those in the president's circle who owe their status and wealth to the state (Reuters)

Wang Yang elected chief of China's top political advisory body

BEIJING (TIP): Vice Premier Wang Yang was on March 14 elected as the chairman of China's political advisory body - the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC).

The CPPCC is largely a ceremonial body of over 2,100 members who included film star Jackie Chan. It meets annually once along with the rubber-stamp parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC). Both are currently under session.

Wang, 63, was elected to the powerful seven member Standing Committee of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) during the once-in-a-five-year Congress of the party last October apparently with the support of the group belonging to former Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, 64, who is ranked second in the leadership hierarchy after President Xi Jinping, too belonged to Hu's group of Chinese Communist Youth League.

Another Standing Committee



member Han Zheng, 63, is reported to have been backed by another former president, Jiang Zemin, 91.

Both Hu and Jiang retired but continue to have support base in CPC.

Li, Wang and Han who were all elected

to the powerful Standing Committee, which rules China, were part of what was previously stated to be collective leadership system.

However, CPC's leadership orientation has changed this month with elevation of Xi as the core leader by the CPC, making him a leader ranked above others in the party.

Xi further consolidated his hold on March 11 when the NPC ratified a constitutional amendment to remove two-term limit for the president.

This made Xi as the only leader after party founder Chairman Mao Zedong to continue as China's leader for life.

Wang's appointment to head the advisory body was seen as further consolidation of power by Xi in CPC's hierarchy.

NPC is set to ratify the names of all top positions in the next few days.

While Xi was expected to remain head of the CPC, the military and presidency, Premier Li who maintained a low profile in the last five years was expected to retain his post. (PTI)

Saudi Arabia crown prince says will develop nuclear bomb if Iran does

RIYADH (TIP): Saudi Arabia will develop a nuclear bomb if its arch-rival Iran does so, the kingdom's 32-year-old crown prince said in a preview of a television interview released on Thursday.

"Saudi Arabia does not want to acquire any nuclear bomb, but without a doubt if Iran developed a nuclear bomb, we will follow suit as soon as possible," Prince Mohammed bin Salman told CBS in an interview that will air on Sunday.

The kingdom, locked in a tussle for influence with Iran across the Middle East and beyond, is stepping up plans to develop a nuclear energy capability as part of a reform plan led by Prince Mohammed to reduce the economy's dependence on oil.

The United States, South Korea, Russia, France and China are bidding on a multi-billion dollar tender to build Saudi Arabia's first two nuclear reactors.

The world's top oil exporter has previously said it wants nuclear technology only for peaceful uses but has left unclear whether it also wants to enrich uranium to produce nuclear fuel, a process which can also be used in the production of atomic weapons.

The government approved a national policy for its atomic energy program on Tuesday, including limiting all nuclear activities to peaceful purposes, within the limits defined by international treaties.

Reactors need uranium enriched to around five percent purity but the same technology in this process can also be used to enrich the heavy metal to a higher, weapons-grade level. This has been at the heart of Western and regional concerns over the nuclear work of Iran, Saudi Arabia's arch-rival which enriches uranium domestically. (Reuters)

Iran and Russia sign deal to develop two oilfields - Iranian state TV

BEIRUT (TIP): Iran and Russia signed a deal on Wednesday to develop two oilfields in Iran, according to Iranian state TV.

The National Iranian Oil Company signed a deal with Russia's Zarubezhneft to develop the fields, according to SHANA, the news site of the Iranian oil ministry.

The Aban and Paydar-e Gharb fields are both in western Iran and jointly owned by Iran and Iraq, according to SHANA. Their combined oil output is currently 36,000 barrels per day.

The 10-year agreement is intended to boost the production of the fields to 48,000 bpd. The fields are expected to produce 67 million barrels of oil during the ten years, SHANA reported.

Zarubezhneft has an 80 percent share in the deal and its Iranian partner, Dana Energy, the remaining 20 percent.

The cost of developing the fields is estimated at \$674 million, with an additional \$68 million in indirect costs, according to SHANA. (Reuters)

South Korea fuel oil imports soar as coal, nuclear plants shut

SINGAPORE/SEOUL (TIP): South Korea's move to shut coal-fired generators to control air pollution at the same time as nuclear reactors are going into scheduled maintenance is resulting in surging fuel oil imports, as utilities burn the dirty feedstock to meet power demand.

South Korea's trade ministry said in February it would suspend five coal-fired power plants, with a combined capacity of 2.32 gigawatts (GW), from March to June, part of a broad campaign to reduce pollution.

That plan may backfire, at least in the short-term. A cold winter has raised power and heating demand, forcing utilities to burn more fuel oil in order to meet demand.

A by-product of the crude oil refining process, fuel oil's biggest use ahead of power generation is as a shipping fuel.

"In the near-term, fuel oil imports will increase to make up for the shortfall in coal-fired generation capacity," said Pat Markey, managing director of consultancy Sierra Vista Resources. Fuel oil imports by power producers into Asia's fourth largest economy have jumped to 200,000 tonnes in March so far, up from 92,000 tonnes in February, tender data compiled by Reuters showed. (Reuters)

IT'S OKAY TO BE A LITTLE SELFISH IN LOVE

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud..." We've all heard this reading before. It is one of the most common quotes on love we often hear: "Love is patient, love is kind."

Is it as true as we've been led to believe? Is love all of these things? Not really.

Love can be impatient. Love can be jealous. Love is beautiful, but love is not perfect. I believe love is self-seeking; love is selfish.

When you love someone, you want that person to love you and only you, to love you fiercely and to stay forever. That sounds selfish to me. There's good selfish, and there's also too much selfish, so how do we learn what selfish should look like?

SELFISH DOES NOT MEAN EVERYTHING IS ABOUT YOU

When you love someone or you're in a relationship with someone, you commit to that person, and all of the hardships that come with commitment. Other things can come first, but they cannot always come first. There has to be a balance.

You have to evenly distribute your selfishness and selflessness when you have someone who is depending on you to do this. You can be career-focused, but you cannot be career-consumed. Careers are important, but so is love, and a balance needs to be struck between the two.

Love your career the way you love your partner; both need a lot of attention, but sometimes, they need space in order to continue loving you back.

CAREER COMES FIRST ALWAYS

Selfish is not always putting someone else's needs before your own.

The person you are with is so important, but so are you. Occasionally, you need to be able to say, "Hey, I know



you need this, but I need something different." You may need to compromise.

Sometimes, you're with someone who needs very different things than you do. You must never ignore your own needs or give up something you need in order to accommodate someone else.

If there cannot be compromise, there cannot be love. We cannot be completely selfless. We need a little selfish in our lives, too.

Selfish is knowing when it's too much. This person lives far away and the distance is weighing down on you. This person does not value sex in a relationship in the same way you do and cannot give you what you need. This person loves you more than you know how to love in return.

Selfish is knowing that sometimes, there are things on which we just can't compromise. We need to take care of ourselves, too. The things that have always been important to us are important for a reason. We cannot give those up.

If it's too much, we need to accept that. We can't keep going if it's bringing us down. Someone can be so important to us, but not right for us, and we need to know when to be selfish

enough to admit that.

Selfish is not to be used as an excuse.

"I need to be selfish today" should not be a phrase used to get out of things or excuse bad behavior.

We cannot use selfishness when we feel like being lazy or don't want to stick to a commitment we made. If we are sick or desperately need a mental health day, we get to be selfish because that's not an excuse; it's necessary.

Using selfish as an excuse devalues it. It turns it back into the horrible trait people make it out to be. Don't taint the word, and try to be honorable in your selfishness.

SELFISH IS KNOWING WHEN, MAYBE, IT ISN'T LOVE

If you know you can't see yourself with someone forever, for whatever the reason may be, don't let him or her stay. Don't be that kind of selfish.

If you can't see a forever, please, let that person go.

Everyone will see selfish the way they want to. They will justify their selfishness away; be aware of it. Be conscious of the way you are being selfish. Do not let it overcome you, but do not let it leave you completely, either.



How to wake up with glowing skin

Remove all that makeup

Yes, we know you have heard it before, but do you always remove all your makeup before you go to bed? Sleeping with makeup on your face will clog up your pores and it will cause acne and blemishes. You can't even think of waking up to glowing skin, if you went to bed with your makeup still on.

Exfoliate regularly

Regular exfoliation is one of the keys to glowing clear skin; it removes dead skin cells from the surface of your skin and it will help to keep the pores in your skin clear. How often you exfoliate will depend on your own skin type, but usually, three times a week will be enough. Exfoliating your skin should make it feel soft and smooth, not sore. If your skin starts to get red and sore, you are exfoliating too much.

Wash your face both in the morning and at night

According to one survey, only around fifty percent of women actually wash their face often enough. Wash your face at night, to remove any makeup residue that may be left, and first thing in the morning, to clean up any excess oil and sweat that may have accumulated on your skin overnight. This regular routine will help you wake up with fresh and clear skin every morning.

Drink a glass of water before you go to bed

You do get dehydrated when you sleep, and that can show on your skin. Drink a glass of water before you go to bed and that will help keep you hydrated through the night. Proper hydration is more important for healthy looking, glowing skin than you might think. If you do become dehydrated, one of the very first things you will notice is that your skin loses some of its colour and life.

FOOD CORNER

MALAI KOFTA

Ingredients

4 Large Potatoes, boiled, 250 Gram Paneer (cottage cheese), 50 Gram Maida, 1 Tbsp Coriander leaves (chopped), 3 Onion, 1 Tbsp Ginger-garlic paste, 2 Tomatoes, 200 Ml Malai or cream, 2 Tbsp Raisins and cashew nuts, 50 Gram Cashew nuts paste, 1/2 tsp Haldi, 1/2 tsp Red chilli powder, 1/2 tsp Kitchen king masala, 1 Tbsp Kasuri methi (dry fenugreek), To taste Salt, 1 Tbsp Sugar

Method

- Refrigerate the boiled potatoes for 4 to 6 hours as this makes it easy to cook koftas.
- Mash the boiled potatoes and paneer along with maida. The mix should not be too hard or too soft. Add salt, chopped coriander leaves and mix well.
- Cut the raisins and cashew nuts into very small pieces and add 1/2 teaspoon of sugar to the mix.
- Heat up the oil for deep frying.
- Roll out the balls from the dough you prepared and stuff the dry fruit mix in the center. Fry the koftas and if they break in hot oil then dust them with dry maida before putting them in.



- Fry some onion, ginger-garlic paste and tomato paste.
- Mix the cashew nut paste with 2 tablespoon of warm milk and pour it into the paste.
- Except for kasuri methi, add all the dry masala into the paste and saute till the oil separates itself.
- Add half a cup of water and simmer the gravy till it's done.
- Add cream/malai along with a tablespoon of sugar and kasuri methi.
- Simmer the gravy till the oil starts separating and once it's done, put the fried koftas into the gravy.
- Serve hot with chapatis.

PANEER BESAN CHILLA

Ingredients

1 Cup Besan, 1/2 tsp Salt, 1 tsp Black Pepper, 1 Onion, chopped, 1/2 Cup Paneer, grated, 1 Tomato, 2 Green Chillies, 1/2 tsp Ajwain, 1/2 Cup Coriander Leaves, 1 Cup Water.



Method

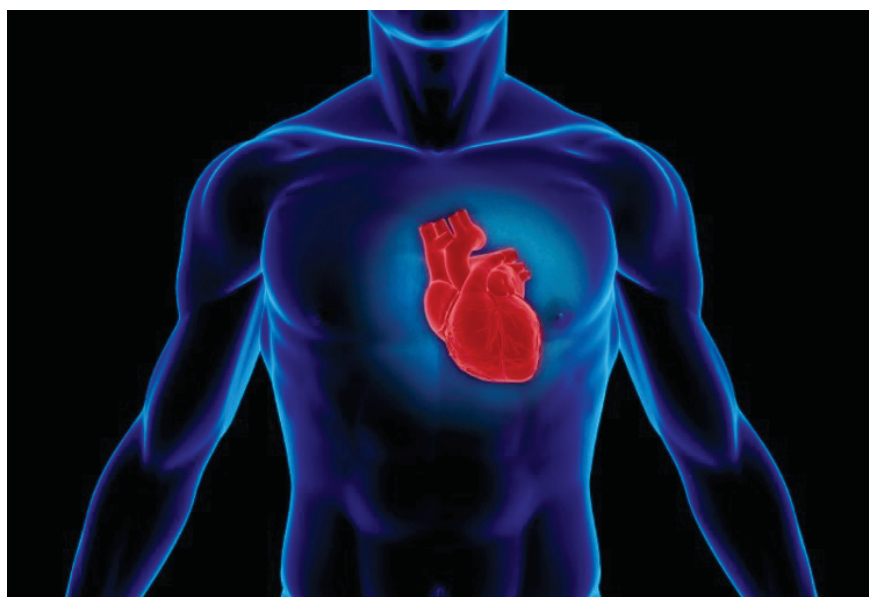
- Take besan in a bowl, add salt, black pepper, onion, grated paneer, tomato, green chillies, ajwain and coriander leaves.
- Whisk all the ingredients together in the bowl along with water to make a mixture.
- Add more water to make its consistency light.
- Now take a pan and put some amount of the besan mixture to pan fry it.
- Fry till it turns solid, crispy and golden brown.
- Put some grated paneer, onion, black pepper and coriander leaves over.
- Fold it and serve hot with red chilli chutney.

SCIENTISTS IDENTIFY 36 NEW GENES THAT PLAY A ROLE IN CARDIAC DISEASE

Researchers have identified 36 new genes that play a causal role in cardiac hypertrophy -- abnormal thickening of the heart muscle -- which can lead to heart failure. "This is an exciting direction for personalised medicine, and also for identifying genes and therapeutic targets for complex diseases that involve many genes," said co-author of the study Alain Karma, professor at the Northeastern University. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four deaths in the US each year are due to heart disease.

"The framework described in the paper can also be used to predict whether individuals suffering from a particular disease will respond to a given drug treatment," said lead author Marc Santolini, a postdoctoral research associate at Centre for Complex Network Research. For the study, published in the journal *npj Systems Biology*, the researchers took an entirely different approach -- using the Hybrid Mouse Diversity Panel, a collection of 100 genetically different strains of mice that can be used to analyse the genetic and environmental factors underlying complex traits. Within each strain, the mice are inbred, making them all identical twins on a genetic level.

Researchers took two mice from the



same strain and gave one of them a stressor drug that induces heart failure. They then compared the stressed mouse's gene expression with its non-stressed twin. Since the mice have the same genome, they were able to pinpoint individual genes that changed expression as a direct result of the heart stressor. Among the identified 36 such genes, many of these genes were previously unknown to be implicated in heart failure, the researcher said.

They mentioned that one of them is known as a transcription factor, meaning it controls the expression of many other genes. They confirmed the gene's role by using molecular biology techniques to silence it and observe the resulting changes of expression. They found the transcription factor gene was directly connected to a whole network of proteins known to play a role in cardiac hypertrophy. *Source: IANS*



LOW-DOSE 'TRIPLE PILL' LOWERS BLOOD PRESSURE BETTER

MELBOURNE (TIP): Triple pill - a drug combining doses of three blood pressure-lowering medications - can significantly increase the number of patients reaching their healthy BP targets, a study has found.

Despite the availability of effective blood pressure-lowering drugs, high blood pressure remains a major problem around the world, researchers said.

Effectively treating high blood pressure can help to prevent heart attacks, strokes and kidney problems.

Globally, however, many people with high blood pressure receive no treatment, and only about a third of those who are treated achieve recommended reductions in blood pressure.

Achieving desired reductions in blood pressure often requires treatment with more than one medication, which increases the complexity of treatment, and patients often have difficulty adhering to regimens that involve taking multiple pills every day.

"Most people - 70 per cent - reached blood pressure targets with the Triple Pill," said Ruth Webster, from the University of New South Wales in Australia.

"The benefits were seen straight away and maintained until six months, whereas with usual care control rates were 55 per cent at six months and even lower earlier in the trial," said Webster.

"Based on our findings, we conclude that this new method of using blood pressure-lowering drugs was more effective and just as safe as current approaches," she said.

The study was the first large trial designed to test the theory that starting treatment with low doses of three drugs could achieve better blood pressure control compared with usual care and that combining these drugs in a single pill would make it easier both for doctors to prescribe treatment and for patients to adhere to it.

The trial conducted in Sri Lanka enrolled 700 patients whose average age was 56 years, 58 per cent of whom were women.

Over half (59 per cent) were receiving no treatment for high blood pressure before they enrolled in the trial. In addition to high blood pressure, 32 per cent of participants had diabetes or chronic kidney disease.

Patients were randomly assigned to receive either the combination pill or usual care. The Triple Pill consisted of the blood pressure medications telmisartan (20 mg), amlodipine (2.5 mg) and chlorthalidone (12.5 mg).

These medications use different mechanisms to reduce blood pressure by relaxing the blood vessels, so the heart does not need to pump as hard to send blood throughout the body. *Source: PTI*

Smokers are at a greater risk of hearing loss, according to a study.

The research was conducted on over 50,000 participants over a span of eight years. Researchers analysed data from annual health checkups, which included audio testing performed by a technician and a health-related lifestyle questionnaire completed by each participant.

They examined the effects of smoking status (current, former, and never), the number of cigarettes smoked per day, and the duration of smoking cessation on the extent of hearing loss.

While the association between smoking and high-frequency hearing loss was stronger than that of low-frequency hearing loss, the risk of both high- and low-frequency hearing loss increased with cigarette consumption. The increased risk of hearing loss decreased within 5 years after quitting smoking.

"With a large sample size, long follow-up period, and objective assessment of hearing loss, our study provides strong evidence that smoking is an independent risk factor of hearing loss," said the study's lead author Dr. Huanhuan Hu of Japan's National Center for Global Health and Medicine.

"These results provide strong evidence to support that smoking is a causal factor for hearing loss and emphasize the need for tobacco control to prevent or delay the development of hearing loss." The study has been published in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco*

Smoking linked with increased risk of hearing loss



Research.

Benefits of kicking the butt

- Cutting down on risk of skin diseases
- Healthier lungs
- Decreased risk of heart related problems
- Lowering risk of Age-related Macular Degeneration
- Getting back your virility
- Stronger bones

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NASA'S HUBBLE FINDS 'RELIC GALAXY' NEAR MILKY WAY



LONDON (TIP): Using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, astronomers have unearthed a "relic galaxy" in the Milky Way's backyard.

The galaxy NGC 1277 lies near the centre of the Perseus cluster of over 1,000 galaxies located 240 million light-years away.

The findings, published in the journal *Nature*, showed that the relic galaxy has twice as many stars as our Milky Way, but physically it is as small as one quarter the size of our galaxy.

Essentially, NGC 1277 is in a state of "arrested development".

Further, the scientists found that NGC 1277 does not have the same kinds of globular clusters that other large galaxies have.

While massive galaxies tend to have both metal-poor (appearing blue) and metal-rich (appearing red) globular clusters, NGC 1277 is almost entirely lacking in blue globular clusters.

This suggests that NGC 1277 never grew further by gobbling up surrounding galaxies.

"I've been studying globular clusters in galaxies for a long time, and this is the first time I've ever seen this," said Michael Beasley, of the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias at the University of La Laguna, Spain.

NGC 1277 started its life with a bang long ago, ferociously churning out stars 1,000 times faster than seen in our own Milky Way today.

But it abruptly went quiescent as the baby boomer stars aged and grew ever redder.

The very rare and odd assemblage of stars has remained essentially unchanged for the past 10 billion years, scientists said.

In addition, NGC 1277 also has a central black hole that is much more massive than it should be for a galaxy of that size.

This reinforces the scenario that the supermassive black hole and dense hub of the galaxy grew simultaneously, but the galaxy's stellar population stopped growing and expanding because it was starved of outside material, the study showed.

While Hubble has spotted relic galaxies before, but this one is by far the closest.

"We can explore such original galaxies in full detail and probe the conditions of the early universe," said Ignacio Trujillo, from the varsity.

For the study, the team started looking for "arrested development" galaxies in the Sloan Digital Sky Survey and found 50 candidate massive compact galaxies. *Source: IANS*

GOOGLE SAID TO PRIORITISE STORIES FOR PAPERS' PAYING SUBSCRIBERS

Google users who subscribe to newspapers will find articles from those publications appearing higher in their search results, part of the tech giant's efforts to help media companies find and retain paying readers, according to people familiar with the matter.

The Alphabet unit will also begin sharing search data that show who's most likely to buy a subscription, said the people, who asked to be anonymous because they weren't authorized to speak publicly. Google executives plan to disclose specific details at an event in New York on March 20, according to the people. Google declined to comment.

The moves could help publishers better target potential digital subscribers and keep the ones they've already got by highlighting stories from the outlets they're paying for. The initiative marks the latest olive branch from Silicon Valley in its evolving relationship with media companies.

Several publishers, including the Wall Street Journal, New York Times and the Washington Post, are focusing on getting readers to pay for their content as it becomes more difficult to support newsrooms with advertising revenue. Many have been pushing Google and Facebook for new tools to drive subscriptions, arguing they should help support trusted journalism at a time when their platforms have been exploited to publish fake news.

Facebook recently made major changes to its News Feed algorithm that are expected to shrink publishers' online audiences. But it's helping publishers in other ways. In October, the company began a test to support paywalls in Instant Articles, letting publishers process payments directly and keep all of the revenue. In February, Facebook announced a program to help metro papers build subscriptions.

Apple, meanwhile, bought Texture, a digital magazine service, this week in what the company said was a sign that it's committed to supporting quality journalism.

Last year, Google changed its "First



Click Free" policy that led some media outlets with strict online paywalls to appear lower in search results. Now, instead of requiring publishers with paywalls to provide at least three free articles per day, media companies can decide how many articles to let Google users read without paying.

Google image search is changing on your phone

Search giant Google has rolled out a new update to its mobile search. The company is adding captions to images to give them more context. After the update the image searches done on smartphones on Google will offer users better visual discovery with added context.

The company revealed that the images searched using Google will now include captions in bold along with the title of the web page. The company said in a

blog post, "This extra piece of information gives you more context so you can easily find out what the image is about and whether the website would contain more relevant content for your needs."

The image results offer visual confirmation that the search result is accurate and the caption provides additional context to the search. For example, users can also learn that this fruit is called carambola or starfruit, and that it's popular in China. This also helps you choose the result page to click and explore further.

Robot solves Rubik's cube in 0.38 seconds

BOSTON (TIP): Scientists have created a robot that has possibly set a new world record by solving the Rubik's cube in 0.38 seconds.

The current Guinness World Record for a Rubik's cube solved by a robot is 0.637 seconds.

The robot was built by Ben Katz, a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and software developer Jared Di Carlo, who posted the video of the robot in action.

"The machine can definitely go faster, but the tuning process is really time consuming since debugging needs to be done with the high speed camera, and mistakes often break the cube or blow up the transistor," Katz wrote in the blog post.

"We noticed that all of the fast Rubik's Cube solvers were using stepper motors and thought that we could do better if we used better motors," Di Carlo wrote in a separate blog post.

The 0.38 seconds starts from the moment the keypress is registered on the computer, to when the last face is flipped, Katz said in his blog. It includes image capture and computation time,



A robot that can solve a Rubik's cube puzzle in 0.38 seconds has been developed by two researchers in the US. The current world record is 0.637 seconds, which was set by German engineer Albert Beer and his robot Sub1 Reloaded.

as well as actually moving the cube. The motion time is about 335 millisecond, and the remaining time is that of image acquisition and computation. The robot had difficulty identifying the difference between the red and orange sides of the cube, so the researchers blackened the orange squares with a marker pen.

"For the time being, Jared and I have both lost interest in playing the tuning game, but we might come back to it eventually and shave off another 100 ms or so," Katz said.

As of now, the record has not been independently verified by Guinness, so the title for the fastest robot to solve a Rubik's Cube remains with 'Sub1 Reloaded' built by Albert Beer of Germany.

World Bank report projects India's FY19 GDP growth at 7.3%

NEW DELHI (TIP): The World Bank on March 14 projected India's GDP growth at 7.3% for the next financial year, and accelerate further to 7.5%, in 2019-20.

The World Bank's biannual publication, India Development Update: India's Growth Story, expects the economy to clock a growth rate of 6.7% in the current fiscal ending March 31.

The report, however, observed that a growth of over 8% will require "continued reform and a widening of their scope" aimed at resolving issues related to credit and investment, and enhancing competitiveness of exports.

"The Indian economy is likely to recover from the impact of demonetisation and the GST, and growth should revert slowly to a level consistent with its proximate factors -- that is, to about 7.5% a year," the report said.

In November 2016, the government had scrapped high value currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 in a bid to check black money, among others.

Later, India implemented its biggest indirect tax reform -- Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Both of these initiatives had impacted the economic activities in the country in



short run.

India's economic growth had slipped to a three year low of 5.7% in April-June quarter of the current fiscal, though it recovered in the subsequent quarters.

The economy is expected to grow at 6.6% in the current fiscal ending March 31, as per the second advanced estimates of the Central Statistics Office (CSO), compared to 7.1% in 2016-17. The earlier estimate was 6.5%.

The Economic Survey tabled in Parliament has projected a growth rate of 7 to 7.5% in the 2018-19 financial year.

The World Bank report further said that accelerating the growth rate will also require continued integration into global economy.

It pitches for making growth more inclusive and enhancing the effectiveness of the Indian public sector.

Source: PTI

FRANCE TO SUE GOOGLE, APPLE FOR 'ABUSIVE' PRACTICES



PARIS (TIP): France will take legal action against Google and Apple for "abusive business practices", Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said today as transatlantic ties threaten to be riven by a trade war.

"I believe in an economy based on justice and I will take Google and Apple before the Paris Commercial Court for abusive business practices" against French start-ups, Le Maire said on RTL radio.

He said startups face conditions imposed on them when selling their apps on Google and Apple which "also gather data" and "both can unilaterally modify contracts." The minister said the situation is unacceptable.

"I consider that Google and Apple, as powerful as they are, shouldn't treat our startups and our developers in the way they do today," said Le Maire.

The action against the firms comes as US President Donald Trump has moved towards imposing a 25% tariff on imported steel and 10% tariff on import of aluminium. It is unclear if European nations will obtain waivers, with Trump having singled out the EU as treating the US badly in trade ties and threatening to tax cars as well.

Le Maire has previously threatened to tax the two firms based on their sales in France, denouncing the legal strategies they use to pay taxes at lower rates in other EU countries.

Source: AFP

Trump blocks Broadcom's \$117-bn bid to buy Qualcomm

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump blocked an unsolicited \$117-billion takeover bid of American chipmaker Qualcomm by Singapore-based rival Broadcom citing national security reasons, scuttling what would have been the biggest technology deal ever amid concerns that it would allow China to take the lead in the booming chip market.

Trump, in his executive order, said there is "credible evidence" that leads him to believe that if Broadcom



Limited took control of the San Diego-based Qualcomm it "might take action that threatens to impair the national security of the US".

As such, Broadcom and Qualcomm "shall immediately and permanently abandon the proposed takeover", Trump ordered.

"The proposed takeover of Qualcomm by the Purchaser is prohibited, and any substantially equivalent merger, acquisition, or takeover, whether effected directly or indirectly, is also prohibited," Trump said in the executive order. Source: PTI

Google to ban ads promoting cryptocurrency

Google will ban online advertisements promoting cryptocurrencies and initial coin offerings starting in June, part of a broader crackdown on the marketing of a new breed of high-risk financial products.

Alphabet Inc.'s Google announced the decision Wednesday night in an update to its policy, which says it will begin to block ads for "cryptocurrencies and related content." Facebook Inc. took a similar step in January, leaving the two

largest web-ad sellers out of reach of the nascent digital-currency sector.

Bitcoin, the largest cryptocurrency by market value, pared an advance of about 2% after Google's announcement, trading little changed at \$9,099 as of 1:04 p.m. in Hong Kong. Rival coins Ripple and Ether also pared gains.

The internet-search giant is also restricting ads for financial products including binary options, a risky derivative with an all-or-nothing payoff.



INFOSYS APPROVES UP TO RS 13,000 CR BUYBACK OFFER

MUMBAI (TIP): The Infosys Board on Saturday announced a share buyback programme of up to Rs 13,000 crore, a day after Vishal Sikka resigned as chief executive after a long-running feud with the company's founders.

The Bengaluru-headquartered Infosys, India's second biggest IT firm, said it would buy back shares up to Rs 13,000 crore at a fixed price of Rs 1,150 each. The company plans to buy back 113 million shares, or 4.92% of its equity capital, moneycontrol.com reported.

The free fall in Infosys stock had erased Rs 27,000 crore of shareholder value on Friday as investors dumped the stock and headed for the exit doors. The fall in the scrip had topped 10% and broke the lower circuit, which stopped the trade of Infy shares on the exchange briefly.

The company said given the significant shareholding of the US residents by way of ADS' and equity shares, it was necessary to obtain exemptive relief from the American market regulator US SEC on certain aspects of the tender offer procedures.

This is due to conflicting regulatory requirements between Indian and US laws for tender offer buybacks and the same has been obtained, Infosys explained.

The share buyback — the first in the company's 36-year history — has been a long-standing demand by some of the founders and high-profile former executives, who have been pushing Infosys to return surplus capital to its shareholders.

While Pravin Rao, currently chief operating officer, has been named interim CEO, Sikka will become executive vice-chairman and will be paid \$1 in annual salary. Sikka will help the company search a new MD and CEO and the deadline has been set for March 31, 2018.

PROPOSAL TO SELL 51% STAKE OF AIR INDIA

NEW DELHI (TIP): A proposal to revive Air India by selling 51 percent stake within five years might be on the cards. As per sources, the talks are at an initial stage between interested parties and the finance ministry as well as prime minister's office

The former carrier has undergone the woes facing cutthroat competition from domestic airlines and burdened by a debt of \$7 billion that has been unprofitable since 2007.

In the past six years \$3.6 billion have been contributed Indian taxpayers following a bailout plan.

The finance ministry would only be announcing the offer after all detailed discussions have been conducted to ensure there are takers for the offer.

The Air India share has declined to 14 percent in the local market while a decade ago it was 35 percent.

India, Germany collaborate to develop infra worth 1 lakh crore

NEW DELHI (TIP): India looks poised to augment its infrastructure by collaborating with Germany for projects worth Rs 1 lakh crore, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said.

Gadkari met with a German delegation led by Transport Minister Alexander Dobrindt and had a detailed discussion on developing infrastructure for port rail connectivity for efficient cargo release and reduction of logistics cost.

"We have sought Germany's co-operation to sync up our ports with railway connectivity through projects worth Rs 1 lakh crore which will be undertaken by Indian Port Rail Corporation Ltd (IPRCL)," Gadkari said.

The development came after a pact between German Railways Deutsche Bahn (DB) and IPRCL during the Maritime India Summit held earlier this year for carrying out 22 different projects under the Union Government's esteemed Sagarmala Project.



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 MARCH 19 - MARCH 25, 2018

Aries:

Ganesha says as the period dawns, your attention will be drawn towards laying strong foundations for your finances. Though you are in a stable financial position, you realize that you need to make more money and make your family more secure. Dig the well before you need the water - this proverb could aptly describe your mindset as you explore investment options that will give you lucrative returns.

Taurus:

You continue to make determined efforts towards strengthening your financial position and explore every investment opportunity. You are generally restless and are always on the lookout for action of some kind. Travelling for work / higher studies / business is a possibility this period. You are always open to learning new strategies that could help you in your career and yet also indulge in play in equal measure. Your industrious, result-oriented nature finds approval from your boss.

Gemini:

You have been involved, till now, in seriously and conservatively building your family's nest-egg. You have been a responsible child / parent / spouse / friend / employee and have won kudos for your cool, caring and calm nature. Now, at this phase, you could feel an upsurge of emotional energy which could cause restlessness and loneliness. You may indulge in disruptive and decadent behavior and shock your loved ones.

Cancer:

Your reckless behavior is under control as you knuckle down to the sedate job of making a living and creating wealth. You are interested right now in fulfilling your professional and personal obligations. You determinedly slog away at your routine chores, commitments. There could be some problems at work which you will have to resolve, and accusations from the home front of being a workaholic could cause added stress. It will be a good idea to find a balance and spend more time with your family / loved ones.

Leo:

You have been devoting to much of your energies to work and this has been causing difficulties in your relationships. You are benefitted too as improved ties and bonds give you great joy and harmony. Besides your close family, you show interest in the activities of your local community and even volunteer to help out. There could be collaborations with international partners / job opportunities in a multi-national company, and your reputation at work receives a huge boost. You earn applause and are the toast of all.

Virgo:

Your natural inclination is towards spirituality and you involve yourself in studying the scriptures / visiting holy and sacred shrines / meditation / chanting. Finances continue to occupy your attention but Ganesha advises you to stay alert in all money matters. This is the right time for parking your money in safe and stable investments and not risking or squandering it away in get-rich-quick schemes.

Libra:

You are on a high as you involve the 3 Cs - communication, contacts and correspondence - to take your career / business up the next rung of success. Your stupendous inter-personal skills attract attention and just dividends. You could be tempted to venture into risky territory; the indications are all there and you will have to control yourself. Ganesha advises caution in money matters, love affairs and in over-indulgence.

Scorpio:

Money matters continue to demand attention. But along with that, friends / loved ones / extended family demand your attention and you do not hold back as you respond. You overextend yourself to bring peace and harmony in all your relationships, both professional and personal, and the results are spectacular. Ganesha blesses you with happy bonding. You have pleasurable moments with your lover and, if a parent, great times with your kids.

Sagittarius:

You have an inherent edge in communicating with people and so any relationship issues with children / family elders / siblings can be sorted out by talking. Friends are the source of fun and frolic and you will enjoy partying virtually all period. You manage to give equal and quality time to both your career and your children. Spirituality and religious matters also interest you.

Capricorn:

The Moon gives you significant gains especially in relationships. The trend of the past period continues, and you put in dedicated efforts in all your projects and initiatives. The focus has shifted from work to home and this requires detailed planning. All issues related to the home and highlighted; from restorations / renovations / additions to investments in property, land, leases and loans. Tact and diplomacy are required to tackle awkward issues and to resolve them to everyone's satisfaction.

Aquarius:

The 3 Cs - contacts, communications and correspondence - are this period's theme and there will be a flurry of letters, e-mails, SMS as well as travel and trips. You will be in touch with the world and there will be many new work projects. A personal situation / work issues could put you in a dilemma, but you manage to come through unstuck with some deft maneuvering. There is a good chance to meet up with extended family and friends in religious functions / family, get-togethers / celebrations.

Pisces:

You have continued to work hard and diligently even in the midst of all the interpersonal drama in your private life, winning approval with your superiors. Your reputation will soar. Prestige, promotions and pelf are the results of your own hard work and dedication and you deserve it. As your self-esteem and self-confidence, along with your social standing, soar you manage to, thankfully, retain your helpful and gracious attitude with all and sundry irrespective of their status in life.

CHAITRA NAVRATRI: NINE NIGHTS OF THE DIVINE FEMININE

Navratni is a Hindu festivals that is dedicated to the worship of Goddess Durga and her nine divine avatars for a period of nine days. Some of you would be surprised to know that there are 4 Navratni in a year but only two of them Chaitra Navratni and Sharad Navratni are celebrated widely across the country. This year Chaitra Navratni would begin from 18th March and go on till 26th March. Chaitra Navratni is celebrated in the Hindu month of Chaitra that falls usually around March and April.

The period of nine days of Navratni is considered to be very holy for Hindus, as they do all that they can to appease their beloved deity. People wake up and bathe early morning and pray to the Goddess. They perform special poojas and havans to welcome Goddess Durga to take shelter in their homes. Offerings in terms of delicious bhog, fruits and flowers are also made to the deity. Devotees also observe ritualistic fasts as a mark of showing their devotion for the goddess. Both Chaitra Navratni and Sharad Navratni fall around two major seasonal change of the year. Chaitra Navratni marks transition from spring to summer, while Sharad Navratni falls around October-November marking the beginning of winter. During this time our immunities are most vulnerable and one is more prone to encounter a host of sickness and disease. Bingeing on oily, sugary or very heavy food could further take its toll on our dipping immunity levels, which is why it is advisable to eat light and clean. By fasting or eating sattvik food you are allowing your body to detox and fortify from within.

Around Navratni several delicious preparations like Kuttu Ki Puri, Singhade Ka Halwa, Singhare Ke Pakore, Sabudana Vadaand Sabudana Khichdi gain immense popularity amongst those who are fasting. Along with the special vrat ka khana, people also tend to load up on fruits and milk to keep themselves energized through the day.

During this period, the nine forms of Durga are worshipped. Here's taking a look at the significance of each of her avatars:

Shailputri

Shailputri, in Sanskrit means 'daughter of the mountains'. This form is the first one among the nine forms of the goddess and Shailputri is worshipped as the absolute form of Mother Nature. During the festival of Navratni, the goddess is portrayed with a half-moon on her forehead, a trident in her right hand along with a lotus in her left hand. She is seen mounted on the back of a bull.

The first day of Navratni is marked for the worship of Shailputri.

Brahmcharini

The 'charming' form of Durga, the idol of Brahmcharini is presented to her worshipers with a Kamandal in her left hand and jap mala in her right hand.

Brahmcharini, the unmarried form of the Goddess is worshipped on the second day of Navratni and is mostly known as the personification of love and loyalty.

Chandraghanta

Adorned with a bell shaped like a crescent moon in her hand, this form of Maa Durga is responsible for restoring justice and dharma in the world. On the third day of Navratni, goddess Chandraghanta is worshipped.

Kushmanda

This year, Chaitra Navratni will begin from March 18 and go on till 26th. Chaitra Navratni is celebrated in the Hindu month of Chaitra that falls at cusp of spring and summer



This form of Durga is believed to be the one that eliminates darkness from the world with her smile. Each idol of goddess Durga in this form is therefore carved with a smile on her face. On the fourth day of Navratni, devotees worship this manifestation of Maa Durga.

Skanda Mata

This form of the goddess is always accompanied by an infant form of Lord Skanda or Kartikeya. The goddess is portrayed with having four arms and three eyes. She is presented as sitting on a lotus and is worshiped on the fifth day of Navratni.

Katyayani

This incarnation of goddess Durga is the epitome of love and anger and the idols having this form are portrayed as having four arms and three eyes and are mounted on a lion. The sixth day of Navratni is dedicated to Katyayani form of goddess Durga.

Kalratri

This form of the goddess is famous in ancient Hindu literature as being the most violent one. Worshipped on the seventh day, this is the form that evokes fear in a devotee's mind. Kalratri is believed to be the destroyer of all demonic powers, i.e. kaal.

Maha Gauri

Diametrically opposite to Kalratri, this form of the goddess Durga is intelligent,

peaceful and calm. The 'extremely white' goddess is depicted in idols as such and is shown as wearing white clothes, mounted on a bull. Maha Gauri is worshiped on the eighth day of Navratni.

Siddhidatri

On the last day of Navratni, the form Siddhidatri of goddess Durga is worshipped. This is the form that is known for her wish-fulfilling capabilities and the goddess is believed to possess several types of healing powers.



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'If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it? If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it? Indian alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one.'

Indian Overseas Congress, USA condemns vandalizing of statues in India



IOC Vice Chairman George Abraham released to The Indian Panorama a resolution condemning vandalizing of statues in India

NEW YORK (TIP): The IOC Vice Chairman George Abraham, in a statement to The Indian Panorama said that the Indian Overseas Congress strongly condemned the vandalizing of statues in India.

"We strongly condemn the widespread vandalizing of statues across India to score cheap political points thereby exacerbating tension between communities and political parties' said George Abraham, Vice-Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA. 'attacking and defacing statues of Indian icons such as Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, and Periyar Ramasamy is a symptom of growing intolerance in the society that is anathema to the basic tenets of the democratic tradition' Mr. Abraham added. IOC also condemns the destruction of statues in Tripura and West Bengal and calls for the peaceful transition of power after an election.

"Undoubtedly, under BJP rule, a climate of division and intolerance has been fostered for political gains. It is to be noted that these acts of vandalism are primarily directed at figures mostly revered by Dalits, whom some of the BJP supporters disdain. Emboldened by the BJP victory in Tripura, the vandals appeared to have destroyed the statue of a Lenin and ransacked the offices of the Communist Party of India. While BJP is trying to woo the Dalits with their 'Hindu card' strategy, the true color of their attitude towards them is quite evident with their destructive and polarizing actions.

"We welcome the statement by the Prime Minister condemning these pernicious acts by a few and call upon the authorities to bring those who are responsible for to swift justice".

UPSET HINDUS SEEK APOLOGY AS BROOKLYN'S ETSY SELLS GANESH FLIP FLOPS AFTER REMOVING GANESH TOILET SEAT

NEW YORK (TIP): Upset Hindus are urging Brooklyn (New York) headquartered e-commerce company Etsy, Inc. for immediate withdrawal of flip-flops carrying image of Hindu deity Lord Ganesh; calling it highly inappropriate.

In July last, Etsy withdrew toilet seat carrying image of Lord Ganesh from its website within less than two hours after a protest spearheaded by Hindu statesman Rajan Zed on this product, which Hindus thought was highly insensitive.

Zed, who is President of Universal Society of Hinduism said that Etsy should have been enlightened by now that Lord Ganesh was highly revered in Hinduism and was meant to be worshipped in temples or home shrines and not to adorn one's feet. Hindus considered it a sacrilege to trample his image under one's feet. Inappropriate usage of Hindu deities or concepts for commercial or other agenda was not okay as it hurt the devotees.

Rajan Zed also urged Etsy and its CEO Josh Silverman to offer a formal apology, besides withdrawing Ganesh Flip Flops.

Hinduism was the oldest and third largest religion of the world with about 1.1 billion adherents and a rich philosophical thought and it should not be taken frivolously. Symbols of any faith, larger or smaller, should not be mishandled, Zed noted.

Rajan Zed further said that such trivialization of Hindu deities was disturbing to the Hindus world over. Hindus were for free artistic expression and speech as much as anybody else if not more. But faith was something sacred and attempts at trivializing it hurt the followers, Zed added.

Is offering products like Ganesh Flip Flops really matches Etsy's belief that "the power of business can create a better world", its claim to "Keep Commerce Human" and its stated Mission "to reimagine commerce in ways that build a more fulfilling and lasting world"? Zed asks.

Rajan Zed suggested that Etsy and other companies should send their senior executives for training in religious and cultural sensitivity so that they had an understanding of the feelings of customers and communities when introducing new products or launching advertising campaigns.

Item description of Ganesh Flip Flops states: "Traditionally, Ganesh is thought to provide prosperity, fortune and success. He is the Lord of Beginnings and the Remover of Obstacles of both material & spiritual kinds... Stand out from the crowd in these cute flip flops!" It sells for \$25.00.

Etsy, founded in 2005 in an apartment in Brooklyn and now headquartered in its Dumbo neighborhood with additional offices in France, Canada, Germany, United Kingdom, Ireland, San Francisco (California), Hudson (New York); describes itself as "a global creative commerce platform". It claims to have had annual gross merchandise sales of \$3.25B in 2017.

In Hinduism, Lord Ganesh is worshipped as god of wisdom and remover of obstacles and is invoked before the beginning of any major undertaking. There are about three million Hindus in USA.



Ganesh Flip Flops at Etsy

60-year-old dies after man he met for rendezvous bashed him in the head with dumbbell

MOHAMMED JAFFER

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): A Brooklyn man was bludgeoned to death with a dumbbell Wednesday, March 14, by a man he tried to put the moves on, police said.

Clifford Williams, 60, met the 21-year-old suspect on the street outside his apartment on Willoughby Ave. near Marcus Garvey Blvd. in Bedford-Stuyvesant shortly before 2 a.m., sources said.

The pair went up to Williams' fifth-story apartment, where Williams came on to the suspect, cops said.

The younger man allegedly grabbed a dumbbell and smashed Williams in the head.

Williams' stepfather, who also lives there, called 911.

The septuagenarian was rushed to Woodhull Hospital, where he died, according to authorities.

The suspect remained in the apartment, where cops took him into custody pending charges.

Rang Darpan: Celebration of Creativity and Harmony in Hindi

CONTD FORM PAGE 3

Indian American poets started off connecting with the audience through their poems ranging from humor to romance to pure philosophy. Bindeshwari Agrawal offered a sense of satirical humor through her poem about the exaggerated sense of freedom.

Prof Indrajit Saluja revived the tradition of essays in Hindi at the request of Ashok Vyas and shared his thoughts on 'Enthusiasm'.

Anoop Bhargav presented a sensitive poem about the impact of economic pressure on the sense of concern for each other. Poet after poet, audience was drawn towards the inexpressible space of raw emotions and longing for expansion in distinct way. Susham Bedi questioned the parameters of norms associated with love.

Seema Khurana conveyed a feel of mischievous and playful layer on the surface in her profound poem about different dimensions of a romantic relationship. Swadesh Rana imaginatively expressed the abandonment born out of pure commitment towards love. While arriving at the destination is important.

Dr Ram Das Singh 'Mahtaab' started with few lines in Punjabi and later he connected with the audience through his gazals.

A special issue 'Rang Darpan' was published by Jay Singh in his Hindi Newspaper 'Hum Hindustani', Hindi books of NRI authors were displayed on this occasion.

Ashok Vyas moderated this evening by making use of his own poems and poems of acclaimed poets. The poetry session culminated with his poems. Mr Vyas invoked a sense of oneness, peace and harmony through his poem. One of his poem was like a prayer, prayer with the desire of belonging to everyone with love.

Ameeya Mehta directed and presented Hindi Play 'Amrit Ke Khareedaar' with Himanshu Sharma and Deepak Gupta. Playwright Ashok Vyas personified "fear" and faith in the play, it was a play based on the inner working of human mind. The message of being truthful was artistically interwoven with dramatic elements in the play. Ashok Vyas expressed deep sense of gratefulness for Sandeep Chakravorty, Consul General of Indian in New York, consul staff, invited poets and artists.

(Press Release and photos by Ashok Vyas)



Ameeya Mehta directed and presented Hindi Play 'Amrit Ke Khareedaar' with Himanshu Sharma and Deepak Gupta. Ashok Vyas authored the play

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contd from page 1

Trump ousts Secretary of State...

Thank you to Rex Tillerson for his service! Gina Haspel will become the new Director of the CIA, and the first woman so chosen. Congratulations to all!

- Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump) March 13, 2018

As Mr. Trump departed for a California trip Tuesday, March 13 morning, he told reporters that he and Tillerson "disagree on things," and he singled out the Iran nuclear deal as an issue.

"Rex and I have been talking about this for a long time. We got along actually quite well, but we disagreed on things," he said. "When you look at the Iran deal - I think it's terrible. I guess he thought it was OK. I wanted to either break it or do something. And he felt a little bit differently. So we were not really thinking the same."

Mr. Trump released a statement shortly before leaving for his trip to California saying he was "proud" to nominate Pompeo to replace Tillerson.

"His experience in the military, Congress, and as leader of the CIA have prepared him well for his new role and I urge his swift confirmation," said Mr. Trump in a statement. He added, "I want to thank Rex Tillerson for his service. A great deal has been accomplished over the last fourteen months, and I wish him and his family well." According to the White House, Gina Haspel, the Deputy Director of the CIA, will be nominated to replace Director Pompeo. If confirmed, she would become the CIA's first female director. She was only recently named deputy director.

Pompeo said in a statement of the president's decision, "If confirmed, I look forward to guiding the world's finest diplomatic corps in formulating and executing the President's foreign policy."

He added, "In my time as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, I have worked alongside many remarkable Foreign Service officers and Department of State leaders serving here in the United States and on the very edge of freedom. I know I will learn from them and, as President Trump set out in his State of the Union Address, work hard to ensure that "our nation will forever be safe and strong and proud and mighty and free."

Mueller subpoenas Trump...

demanding documents related to President Donald Trump's businesses.

The subpoena is a sign that the Mueller investigation continues to pick up steam, even as Trump decries remaining questions about potential coordination between his associates and Russia and denies any wrongdoing. Trump has said he would view any investigation of his or his family's personal finances that didn't involve Russia as a "violation" by Mueller that crosses a red line.

CNN reported in January that the company had voluntarily provided documents on a range of events, conversations and meetings from Trump's real estate business to Mueller and congressional investigators, according to three people familiar with the matter. It will be interesting to watch how Trump reacts to this move of Mueller.

Trump has decided to remove...

signaled in recent days that a shake-up at the top levels of his administration was not over. "I'm really at a point where we're getting very close to having the Cabinet and other things that I want," Trump told reporters after Tillerson was fired.

McMaster is not expected to be ousted immediately, the Post reported. Trump is willing to take his time making the change to avoid humiliating McMaster and carefully choose a strong replacement, the Post said.

Trump never personally gelled with McMaster and the President recently told White House Chief of Staff John Kelly that he wanted McMaster replaced, according to the Post.

Trump has complained that McMaster, a three-star Army general, is too rigid and that his briefings go on too long and seem irrelevant, the Post reported. McMaster is Trump's second national security adviser, succeeding Michael Flynn who was dismissed a year ago for misleading Vice President Mike Pence about his contacts with the Russian ambassador to the United States.

UK snaps diplomatic ties with...

with Russia and revoke an invitation to Russian Foreign

Minister Sergei Lavrov to visit the UK.

The Prime Minister announced that Britain will expel 23 Russian diplomats, saying they have one week to leave the UK. She identified those diplomats as "undeclared intelligence officers", BBC reported.

Moscow, which had been given an ultimatum to provide a "credible response" over how a Russian-made nerve agent came to be used on British soil, had warned of "an equal and opposite reaction" against any UK reprisals.

The reprisals follow days of diplomacy since May first informed Parliament that there was enough evidence to conclude that it is "highly likely" that Russia is behind the poisoning of Skripal and his daughter in Salisbury on March 4.

"Russia's record of conducting state-sponsored assassinations; and our assessment that Russia views some defectors as legitimate targets for assassinations; the government has concluded that it is highly likely that Russia was responsible for the act against Sergei and Yulia Skripal," she had said.

"It was an indiscriminate and reckless act against the United Kingdom, putting the lives of innocent civilians at risk. And we will not tolerate such a brazen attempt to murder innocent civilians on our soil," she added, giving Moscow a Tuesday midnight deadline to respond on the circumstances surrounding the attack.

Downing Street said the British prime minister received the backing of Trump, who agreed in a phone call that Moscow "must provide unambiguous answers as to how this nerve agent came to be used". Skripal was convicted of treason in 2006 and jailed for 13 years for selling secrets to MI6, which had recruited him in the 1990s.

Meanwhile, France and Germany have also held Russia responsible for the murderous attempt in London.

Mangano, Linda, Venditto Trial...

It is learnt prosecutors have a long list of witnesses which includes a former Nassau County employee close to Mangano who frequently organized fundraisers for Mangano.

Between 2010 and last December, Mangano held the highest elected position in Nassau County.



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Exploring the rare wildlife in Indian woods has its own glee. From the regal beasts to the sweet chirping avifauna, the verdant beauty of this glorious country embraces everything that can rejuvenate and galvanise the senses of a nature aficionado. The national parks in India are certainly wonderful for wildlife buffs to scout the engrossing exquisiteness of nature.

All the protected regions in the country have beautiful vistas to offer. However, some of these protected areas are bejewelled with a number of inimitable features that make them unique. Here are some unique national parks of India that are popular among wildlife enthusiasts and nature buffs.

HEMIS NATIONAL PARK

This high altitude national park is located in eastern Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir. The north of this protected area is enclosed by the banks of the Indus River. The area is an abode to an immense population of snow leopards. It does not receive heavy amount of precipitation; therefore, the flora present in the park comprises arid woods of juniper, birch, fir, and Populus-Salix. Apart from snow leopards, the flora includes bharal, argali, Asiatic ibex, Eurasian brown bear, Tibetan wolf, red fox, etc. The Hemis National Park is the second largest contiguous protected region of the country after the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve. The park incorporates a trekking route that is one of the prime attractions for tourists. The factor that draws wildlife lovers the most is the sight of snow leopards. There are around 200 snow leopards in the region and witnessing them amid the fascinating snowy panorama gives great pleasure.

SUNDARBANS NATIONAL PARK

The Sundarbans National Park is a national park, biosphere reserve and tiger reserve located in West Bengal. The park is a part of Sundarban woods, extended on the Ganges Delta. The mangrove woods cover the delta and make it look verdant. The main attraction of this park is the dense population of tigers. Apart from tigers that can be witnessed here, the park is also home to fishing cat, macaque, leopard, Indian grey mongoose, wild boar, jungle cat, fox, pangolin, chital, flying fox, etc.

Sundarban is one of the largest reserves for tigers, boasting around 400 tigers. In 2012, the camera traps in the park snapped the picture of an unknown animal. It was a never-seen-before cat in Sundarbans. This cat was smaller than a leopard and bigger than a wild cat.

KEIBUL LAMJAO

Located in the beautiful state of Manipur, the Keibul Lamjao National Park stretches over 40 sq km of floating vegetation. Other than the rich topography and foliage, a major attraction that entices nature lovers to the park is Loktak Lake. It is the largest freshwater lake in the country. The park also embraces an immense assortment of exotic fauna species. The area is the preferred abode of the brow-antlered deer. The Keibul Lamjao National Park is considered unique as it is the only floating sanctuary in the world. The park has a 1.5-metre deep vegetation, which keeps floating, and this floating foliage is known as phumdi.

MARINE NATIONAL PARK

The Marine National Park is located seawards from the southern coastline of the Gulf of Kutch. It spreads over an area of 458 sq km, and comprises a group of 42 islands. Few of the popular islands among them are Poshitra, Pirotan, Karubhar and Narara. The exotic wildlife of the national park attracts every nature admirer. The fauna that can be witnessed in the park includes coral lichen, sea slug, painted storks, shelled molluscs, etc. This national park is the first marine wildlife sanctuary and the first marine national park in India. The impressive sea creatures such as jellyfish, octopus and sea cucumber make the trip to the park unique and gratifying.

EXPLORE THE WILDLIFE KINGDOM



JIM CORBETT NATIONAL PARK

Jim Corbett National Park is the oldest national park in India and was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park to protect the endangered Bengal tiger. It is located in Nainital district of Uttarakhand and was named after Jim Corbett who played a key role in its establishment. The park was the first to come under the Project Tiger initiative.

The park has sub-Himalayan belt geographical and ecological characteristics. An ecotourism destination, it contains 488 different species of plants and a diverse variety of fauna. The increase in tourist activities, among other problems, continues to present a serious challenge to the park's ecological balance.

Corbett has been a haunt for tourists and wildlife lovers for a long time. Tourism activity is only allowed in selected areas of Corbett Tiger Reserve so that people get an opportunity to see its splendid landscape and the diverse wildlife. In recent years the number of people coming here has increased dramatically. Presently, every season more than 70,000 visitors come to the park.

Corbett National Park comprises 520.8 km² (201.1 sq mi) area of hills, riverine belts, marshy depressions, grasslands and a large lake. The elevation ranges from 1,300 to 4,000 ft (400 to 1,220 m). Winter nights are cold but the days are bright and sunny. It rains from July to September.

Dense moist deciduous forest mainly consists of sal, haldru, peepal, rohini and mango trees. Forest covers almost 73% of the park, 10% of the area consists of grasslands. It houses around 110 tree species, 50 species of mammals, 580 bird species and 25 reptile species.

KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Kaziranga National Park is a national park in the Golaghat and Nagaon districts of the state of Assam, India. The sanctuary, which hosts two-thirds of the world's great one-horned rhinoceroses, is a World Heritage Site. According to the census held in March 2015, which was jointly conducted by the Forest Department of the Government of Assam and some recognized wildlife NGOs, the rhino population in Kaziranga National Park is 2,401.



It comprises 1,651 adult rhinos (663 male, 802 are females, 186 unsexed); 294 sub-adults (90 males, 114 females, 90 unsexed); 251 juveniles and 205 cubs. Kaziranga is home to the highest density of tigers among protected areas in the world, and was declared a Tiger Reserve in 2006. The park is home to large breeding populations of elephants, wild water buffalo, and swamp deer.

Kaziranga is recognized as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International for conservation of avifaunal species. When compared with other protected areas in India, Kaziranga has achieved notable success in wildlife conservation. Located on the edge of the Eastern Himalaya biodiversity hotspot, the park combines high species diversity and visibility.

T20 TRI-SERIES

Rohit hammers 89, takes India into final

COLOMBO (TIP): India's stand-in captain Rohit Sharma returned to form with a fine 89 to set up a 17-run victory over Bangladesh on March 14 and reach the final of the T20 tri-series.

Leading the side in the absence of rested regular skipper Virat Kohli, opening batsman Rohit hit five fours and an equal number of sixes in his 61-ball knock to guide India to 176/3 in their 20 overs.

Bangladesh, who also lost their first match of the tournament to India, managed 159/6 in reply. The winner of Friday's match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh will meet India in the final on Sunday.

Off-spinner Washington Sundar ran through the Bangladesh top order with the new ball, taking three wickets in his first spell of three overs. The 18-year-old finished with 3/22, his best figures in the format.

Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal was also economical in his four-over spell of 1/21.

Former captain Mushfiqur Rahim notched up his second consecutive fifty but his 72 not out in 55 balls was not enough.

Rohit's highest score in his previous six T20 matches, including the three-match series in



South Africa, was 21 and he opted to be watchful at the start of his innings after India were asked to bat. He added 70 with Shikhar Dhawan for the opening wicket before the latter was bowled by paceman Rubel Hossain for 35. Rohit then had another fruitful

partnership of 102 with Suresh Raina, who fell to Rubel in the final over of the innings after a 30-ball 47. The 30-year-old Rohit, who has two hundreds in the shortest format of the game, was run out on the final ball of the innings.

Source: Reuters

Washington Sundar relishing challenge of bowling in powerplays

Washington Sundar's performance in the powerplay during the Nidahas Trophy 2018 tri-series has been phenomenal. The 18-year-old Tamil Nadu offspinner displayed his skill yet again as he picked up three wickets and conceded just 22 runs to set-up India's 17-run win over Bangladesh and qualify for the Nidahas Trophy 2018 tri-series final. Speaking after the end of the match, Sundar said he is fortunate to have this skill and approach in this crucial period. "I have to admit I am fortunate to have this skill (bowling in powerplay). It is more of reading the batsmen's mind in the powerplays," Sundar said. "Every six balls, they will be looking to hit you at least for a four and six. It is important to read the mind. I myself am a batsman to an extent; I can suspect what he is thinking and where he is going to hit me," he added. The youngster picked up the wickets of Tamim Iqbal, Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar to wreck Bangladesh's top order and despite Mushfiqur Rahim's late blitz, Mahmudullah's side suffered their seventh-straight Twenty20 loss against India.

Kagiso Rabada to appeal guilty verdict and keep series hopes alive

CAPE TOWN (TIP): Kagiso Rabada is appealing the guilty verdict handed to him by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for breaching their code of conduct in a last-ditch bid to be able to play in the rest of the gripping test series against Australia.

Fast bowler Rabada was found guilty of "inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with a player" after leaning with his shoulder into Steve Smith when he dismissed the Australia captain in the first innings of South Africa's six wicket win in the second test in Port Elizabeth. The result levelled the four-match series at 1-1.

The 22-year-old, who took 11-150 in the game, was fined 50 percent of his match fee and given three demerit points, which took him past the tally of eight that triggers an automatic two-game suspension.

"ICC confirms that Kagiso Rabada has appealed against the level two breach following the incident with Steve Smith during the Port Elizabeth Test. ICC will now appoint a Judicial Commissioner at the earliest opportunity and hearing details will be confirmed in due course," the governing body said on Wednesday.

The ICC have 48 hours to appoint a commissioner and a hearing will be heard within a seven day period. Rabada will remain suspended unless the commissioner takes a decision to allow him to play in the third test in Cape Town starting on March 22.

Although there was contact made with Smith, Rabada maintains that it was accidental and at the time he was not even aware he had brushed against his opponent.

"If I knew I did it deliberately, I wouldn't have gone to contest (the charge)," Rabada told reporters after the game. "I didn't even feel contact in that moment because I was so pumped up."

Smith has suggested the Australian team wanted Rabada to play the remainder of the series as the seamer rose to the top of the test bowling rankings following his performance in Port Elizabeth.

"He's a world class bowler and you always want to come up against the best, that's for sure," Smith said. "He's right up there. He's unbelievable the way he's been bowling."

"If he's there, he's there... if he's not, he's not. It's our job to try and play some better cricket."

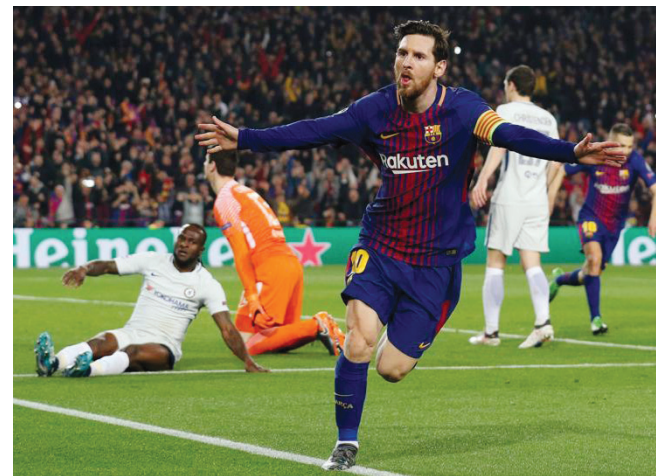
Rabada is the fifth player to be punished by the ICC in what has been a tempestuous test series so far along with Australians David Warner, Nathan Lyon and Mitchell Marsh, and South African Quinton de Kock.

Source: Reuters



Kagiso Rabada was found guilty of 'inappropriate and deliberate physical contact with a player' after leaning with his shoulder into Steve Smith when he dismissed the Australia captain in the first innings of South Africa's six wicket win in the second test in Port Elizabeth

LIONEL MESSI REACHES 100 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GOALS AS FC BARCELONA CRUSH CHELSEA FC



BARCELONA (TIP): Lionel Messi scored two brilliant goals and created another for Ousmane Dembele as Barcelona thrashed Chelsea 3-0 on March 14 to reach the Champions League quarter-finals 4-1 on aggregate.

Messi opened the scoring after two minutes and eight seconds, the quickest goal of his career, slipping the ball through Thibaut Courtois' legs from a tight angle.

The Argentine forward created the second with a blistering run from the halfway line which left three Chelsea defenders stumbling in his wake, before squaring the ball for Ousmane Dembele to rifle home his first goal for the club.

Marcos Alonso hit the post and Olivier Giroud was unfortunate not to be awarded a penalty for a tangle with Gerard Pique as Chelsea tried to launch a comeback, before Messi killed the tie with his 100th Champions League goal.

"To have Messi in the team is a luxury, he's such a good player that in any move he can create danger against you," Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said.

"Our attacking play goes through him and any move is improved by his touch."

Chelsea manager Antonio Conte said his side needed a perfect display to progress but they started disastrously at a packed Nou Camp when Luis Suarez teed up Messi, who squeezed a low strike through the legs of Courtois from a tight angle. The visitors responded well with Giroud and Willian, who scored in the 1-1 first-leg draw at Stamford Bridge, particularly bright in attack. A mistake from Cesc Fabregas on the halfway line allowed Messi to break in again after 20 minutes and the number 10 left the Chelsea backline in tatters to set up the second goal, expertly finished by Dembele.

Source: Reuters

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