

Narendra Modi's U.K. visit in April signals new goals

'Bharat ki baat, sabke saath' event on April 18



Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting UK in April. Preparations are on to give him a rousing welcome. This poster was put up by Shree Kutch Leva Patel Community (UK) during Modi's 2015 visit to UK
Photo courtesy: Shree Kutch Leva Patel Community (UK)

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second visit to the U.K. in less than three years is due to take place in April, with a community event in central London planned alongside bilateral engagements, and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

A publicity campaign for the 'Bharat ki baat, sabke saath' event on April 18 kicked off on Wednesday, March 28. "A unique niche event... it will be a one of its kind live interactive conversation," tweeted the BJP's Vijay Chauthaiwale. The event will be held in central London, as against the Wembley Stadium, where Mr. Modi

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It's Tit for Tat: Russia to expel 60 US diplomats, close US consulate in Saint Petersburg

MOSCOW (TIP): Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Thursday, March 29, that Moscow would expel 60 U.S. diplomats and close its consulate in Saint Petersburg in a tit-for-tat expulsion over the poisoning of ex-double agent Sergei Skripal.

Mr. Lavrov said the U.S. ambassador had been informed of "retaliatory measures", saying that "they include the expulsion of the equivalent number of diplomats and our decision to withdraw permission for the functioning of the U.S. consulate general in Saint Petersburg".

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In a retaliatory action to US expulsion of Russian diplomats, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced, March 29, Russia will expel 60 US diplomats and close US Consulate in St. Petersburg



In yet another ouster, Trump fires Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin



In yet another ouster, Trump showed the door to Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin, March 28

getting passed. He has been a great supporter of veterans across the country and I am grateful for his service," Trump said in a later statement. Early this month,

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WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, March 29 fired his Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and nominated White House physician, Admiral Ronny Jackson as his replacement.

Trump made the announcement on Twitter and later issued a separate statement thanking Shulkin for his services.

"I am pleased to announce that I intend to nominate highly respected Admiral Ronny L. Jackson, MD, as the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs....," Trump wrote on Twitter.

"I appreciate the work of Dr. David Shulkin and the many great things we did together at Veterans Affairs, including the VA Accountability Act that he was helpful in

SHEKHAR KAPUR TO HEAD THE JURY FOR 65TH NATIONAL FILM AWARDS



Veteran director Shekhar Kapur has been appointed chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards

NEW DELHI (TIP): Veteran director Shekhar Kapur has been appointed chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards, sources in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said on Wednesday, March 28.

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East Coast, Texas employ highest number of H1B workers: Report



The figures were obtained by the center through a public records request.

WASHINGTON (TIP): East Coast and Texas metro areas in America employed the highest number of H-1B visa workers, majority of them Indians, between 2010 and 2016, a Pew report has said, debunking the popular presumption that the Silicon Valley had such a distinction.

According to the Pew Research Centre, an American think-tank, about 247,900 H-1B visa approvals-29 per cent of the nation's total-went to employers in the New York City metro area from fiscal 2010 to 2016, the most in recent years for which data are available at the metropolitan level. *contd on Page 20*

India's Reliance Sells Texas Shale Assets For \$100MM



Reliance Industries Limited

MUMBAI (TIP): Reliance Industries Ltd said on Tuesday, March 27, its unit would sell some of its shale assets in the United States to privately held Sundance Energy Inc for \$100 million, as the Indian oil-to-telecom conglomerate moves closer to exit U.S. shale investments. The sale includes Reliance's interest in the assets in the Eagle Ford shale in Texas, it said in a statement.

U.S.-based Pioneer Natural Resources Co, which was a partner in the asset, also exited the blocks. In November 2014, Reliance and Pioneer announced exiting their stake in shale oil and gas transportation and distribution joint venture, which analysts had said was a precursor to Reliance's move to exit U.S. shale operations. The deal, which is expected to close in the first quarter of fiscal 2019, is the second such sale by the Mukesh Ambani-backed Reliance in the United States. In October, the Reliance sold a similar asset block in the Marcellus shale region in northeastern and central Pennsylvania.

Texas Gov. Abbott's 'historic' talk with Indian prime minister includes defense, health care, energy

NEW DELHI (TIP): Gov. Greg Abbott met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for an hour and five minutes on March 28 at Modi's official residence.

Abbott later said the two leaders discussed numerous subjects, including defense, terrorism, energy, technology, trade and health care.

The Republican governor called it a "historic meeting." In

Modi's nearly four years in office, he had not met before Wednesday with a sitting U.S. governor, Abbott's office has said. "I just got through with a historic meeting with Prime Minister Modi here in New Delhi, getting to visit about an array of topics," Abbott said at a gaggle with his traveling press pool, conducted across the road from the spacious grounds of Modi's residence. The complex was heavily fortified, and security was tight.

"Frankly, the conversation was historic in the sense of the length of time," Abbott said. "According to the diplomat in charge, it was the longest meeting that he'd had with a guest visitor from a foreign country like that." He was referring to Marykay L. Carlson, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. "I was shocked" that Modi carved out so much time, Abbott said.

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Gov. Greg Abbott received a warm welcome from the prime minister of India, marking the first time Narendra Modi has met a U.S. governor.

THE INDIAN AMERICAN IMPACT FUND ENDORSES SRI PRESTON KULKARNI AND HIRAL TIPIRNI



DALLAS (TIP): The Indian American Impact Fund has endorsed Sri Preston Kulkarni and Dr. Haral Tipirneni, two Indian American Democrats running for the United States House of Representatives.

Kulkarni, who finished first in the Democratic primary in Texas's 22nd Congressional District with nearly 32 percent of the vote, will be facing fellow Democrat Letitia Plummer in the May 22 runoff. If he wins, he will challenge the incumbent Republican Pete Olson.

A majority-minority district, the Texas 22nd also includes the Houston suburb of Sugar Land, which is home to a large Indian American community.

Dr. Tipirneni, who won Arizona's 8th Congressional District special primary election with 60% votes in February, is running to fill the seat vacated by former Rep. Trent Franks in the elections to be held on April 24th.

Tipirneni is an emergency room physician, cancer research advocate, and community leader. Last month, she won her primary decisively with 60% of the vote.

"In an incredibly competitive year for Congressional candidates, Sri and Hiral have demonstrated the passion, tenacity, and drive it takes to run, win, and lead," said Raj Goyle, co-founder of Impact and a former member of the Kansas House of Representatives. "Now it's up to all of us to help them across the finish line."

The Impact Fund had earlier endorsed two other Indian American candidates - Aftab Pureval in Ohio and Aruna Miller in Maryland.

According to an official release from Impact Fund, it continues to closely monitor the campaigns of over 60 Indian Americans on the ballot in 2018 and will issue further endorsements in coming weeks.

"As a community, we are extraordinarily proud of the four Indian Americans already serving in the House of Representatives," said Deepak Raj, co-founder of Impact and chair of the Impact Fund. "By electing Sri and Hiral, in addition to Aftab and Aruna, we will double our ranks in Congress this November and send a powerful signal that the Indian American community has truly arrived."

A political action committee, Impact Fund works with experienced operatives, campaign strategists, and donors to endorse candidates based on their viability and commitment to advocating for the needs and values of the Indian American community.

Last week, the Fund celebrated its first victory of the 2018 cycle when its endorsed candidate Ram Villivalam won his primary for the Illinois State Senate.

INDIAN AMERICAN RESTAURANT CHAIN DHARANI EXPANDS TO NEW JERSEY AND VIRGINIA

WESTBOROUGH, MA (TIP):

Indian American Dharani has opened two new outlets in New Jersey and Virginia,

expanding its presence to seven states across the nation.

Dharani opened its latest dine-in and takeout restaurant on Oak Tree Road in Edison, New Jersey on March 24, it said in a press release. Two more are scheduled to open in the coming days in Dayton and Spotswood, respectively.

Dharani opened its Virginia location in Herndon last month.

"My team is very excited for this opportunity to bring our time-tested recipes to New Jersey and Virginia," said Bhasker Rednam, CEO of Westborough, MA-based Dharani. "We have successful operations in many locations in the northeast and with expected success in New Jersey and Virginia, we will expand our operations to other areas."

He added that the restaurant is "customer-focused" and "will remain customer-focused." "We take on the challenge to cater to our customers' needs with pride, to provide cuisine from any part of India," he said.

Read Full story on www.theindianpanorama.news



Indian American passengers allege discrimination by Aeroflot staff at Moscow airport

NEW YORK (TIP): According to the complaint filed by Indian American passengers Marc Fernandes, Shahana Islam, Sabiha Islam, Bakiul Islam, and Anshul Agrawal, they were stranded during a stopover in Moscow when their connection Aeroflot flight to JFK got canceled due to heavy snowfall in New York. A complaint was filed on March 22 before the Department of Transportation Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings in Washington, DC.

They allege that while rest of the passengers - mostly White Americans - were transported to their destination in an alternate flight, approximately 20-25 South Asian passengers, many of them young children and babies, were asked to board a flight back to Delhi by an Aeroflot official, saying that they have no alternate arrangements.

The complaint filed by the passengers says an Aeroflot representative named Mikhail, informed them that no seats were available on alternate flights and that the airline would not be issuing them transit visas, which means the travelers will have to leave Moscow within 24 hours.

He instructed them to fly back to India on the next flight and threatened with deportation back to India if they fail to accept his terms.

The complainants allege that despite them showing their American passports, the Aeroflot representative addressed them as Indians and threatened with civil and criminal sanctions, including forfeiture of their Aeroflot tickets if they don't accept they are Indians.

Another Aeroflot employee, who has been identified by the name tag "Kitora", in the absence of Mikhail, told the Indian



American passengers that other passengers who were stranded have been provided with an alternate route that would fly them to JFK in return flights via Europe. She also assured them that US citizens will not be deported to India and also assured that they will get priority on the next available flight. But, as she continued speaking with the passengers, Mikhail appeared and handed them their boarding passes to India.

When they tried to reason with him he apparently got furious and rude to the passengers.

Concerned about the situation, the passengers frantically called the United States embassy in Moscow but the Aeroflot employees refused to speak to them and yet again threatened them with deportation and a heavy fine.

The embassy officials on the phone advised the passengers to take any step to avoid deportation as it could have serious legal ramifications.

On landing in Delhi, the complaint says the passengers were not assisted by a

single Aeroflot staff on what alternate arrangements have been made. On reaching the office of Aeroflot in Connaught Place, an employee told the passengers that Aeroflot would only refund half the cost of the tickets and that flights booked through non-Aeroflot airlines would not be reimbursed at all.

As the next Aeroflot flight to Washington, DC, or New York was not available until January 15, passengers flew on another carrier, by paying close to \$1,000 per ticket.

The complaint questions Aeroflot's actions stating that airline employees repeatedly and systematically targeted and discriminated against the South Asian travelers, in clear violation of federal law. It also requests the DOT to conduct a full and thorough investigation into Aeroflot's actions to ensure that the airline be held accountable for its mistreatment of US citizens.

The complaint was filed by Muslim Advocates and Lewis Baach Kaufmann Middlemiss PLLC.

Indian Origin Man in UK Sentenced for 13-Years for Killing 3 Teenage Boys

LONDON (TIP): Indian origin Jaynesh Chudasama, drunk-driver in the UK, who hit and killed three teenage boys as they walked to a birthday party in London, has been sentenced for a 13-year jail term. The victims' parents, reacting to the sentencing, said the jail term was "an insult to the lives of their children".

Jaynesh Chudasama, 28, had admitted to driving at more than two-and-a-half times over the alcohol limit on January 26 when the fatal collision occurred near a bus stop at Hayes, West London.

The court heard that traces of cannabis had also been found in his car hire worker's system.

Chudasama had pleaded guilty to charges of three counts of death by dangerous driving after the road collision that killed three teenage boys.

Harry Rice, 17, George Wilkinson and Josh McGuinness, both 16, were instantly killed as they were hit by Chudasama's speeding car.

"It is obvious that nothing any court can do can measure the loss of Josh, Harry and George for the obvious reason that their loss is immeasurable," said Judge



Jaynesh Chudasama was travelling at 71mph on a 60mph road when he hit the teenagers.

Photograph / Courtesy Metropolitan Police/PA

Wendy Joseph, during the sentencing hearing.

The judge also disqualified Chudasama from driving for 13 years and six months.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said the drunk-driver had refused to say what he had been drinking but was estimated to have had a blood alcohol concentration of about 213 milligrams per

100 milliliters at the time of the crash. The legal limit for driving in the UK is 80 milligrams per 100 milliliters of blood.

"The decision by Jaynesh Chudasama, to drink far in excess of the legal limit and then drive his car at such a speed, needlessly ended the lives of three young men," said Sally-Anne Russell of the CPS.

"Anyone who drives a motor vehicle whilst under the influence of excess alcohol should know they are putting not only their own lives at risk, but those of other motorists and pedestrians too. Chudasama faces the consequences of causing the fatal collision," she said.

Chudasama was driving at 71 mph in a 60 mph zone and ended up mounting the pavement in his car as he attempted a dangerous man oeuvre to overtake another vehicle, killing the three teenagers walking home with five other friends from a birthday party.

The grieving families are planning online petitions to demand the conviction be reconsidered and a charge of murder applied to the dangerous driving charge, which would involve a tougher sentence.

Frisco Native American Museum & Natural History Center



By Surinder Dhillon

In the museum there are many displays which show the way of life for Native Americans. Displays like; art work, pictures of animals, weapon and combat, natives and food, dresses, police and peace medals, pottery, code talkers, weaving, canoes and kayaks and much more. There is a gift shop in the museum which is called, Now Natural History Center. It features work from over 30 Native American artists and from where you can buy unique handmade crafts. They ship all over the world. There is a natural trail in the facility too.

Frisco Native American Museum & History Center is a non-profit educational foundation created for the purpose of preserving Native American artifacts, art, culture, and language. It can also teach people about native perspective and how to treat the Earth, said MS Ronnie Francisco, Assistant director of the museum. This Museum is located on Hatters Island on the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

When you enter the museum, the message is on the wall in the



shape of a poster entitled "The Earth on Turtle's Back". Many Native Americans refer to North America as Turtle Island, which comes from the belief that all of the Earth was water until a large turtle emerged to support plant and animal life on its back. This teaching tells us, "where Turtle goes, there is life and water is precious". Since we are dependent upon the earth, we must treat our 'Island' home with respect and honor all of the beings in the



natural world. As you walk the exhibits, look for teachings from "Turtle Island" indicated by the turtle symbol.

According to MS Ronnie, the museum had its beginning over seventy years ago. It started in the heart of museum founder, Carl Bornfriend, when he was just a young boy. When many people did not realize the importance of preserving native artifacts, Carl frequently saw beautiful items carelessly treated. Though his own resources were limited, he often made sacrifices to become a keeper of the heritage. When Carl moved to Hatters Island he met



Joyce and they discovered a mutual love for historical preservation. They married in 1986, and they brought more than a half century of experience as educators to the task of creating the museum, MS Ronnie said. Carl was a full-time teacher; but, he



In the museum there are many displays which show the way of life for Native Americans. Displays like; art work, pictures of animals, weapon and combat, natives and food, dresses, police and peace medals, pottery, code talkers, weaving, canoes and



used every spare moment developing exhibits. He opened the museum in 1987 as a non-profit educational foundation.

MS Amber Roth of the museum said, "We have a lot of visitors that say we have a completely different feel. Instead of it being a very sterile, far away from you feel, the culture feels more alive. When you are here, you can reach out and feel that you are being embraced with it and from it. Rather than it just being distancing over here and not really there anymore. We bring more culture to life."

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The earlier inhabitants of the North Carolina Outer Banks were Hatters Indians tribe of Native Americans.

(The author is Chesapeake VA based journalist. He can be reached at sdhillon@hotmail.com)

Frustrated with Donald Trump, green group goes local with clean energy campaign

NEW YORK (TIP): US environmental group the League of Conservation Voters on March 29 launched a \$2 million campaign to press this year's candidates for state and local office to embrace clean energy, citing a lack of leadership on the issue in Washington.

The effort seeks to tap into increasing local-level leadership on climate change since President Donald Trump took office on a vow to roll back environmental regulation and promote fossil fuels production.

"Change is happening at the state level," Bill Holland, state policy director for the League of Conservation Voters (LCV), said in an interview. "What we want to do is get elected officials and local officials committed to big clean energy plans."

Holland said the "Clean Energy for All" campaign will seek to secure commitments from local candidates for office to move their states to 100 per cent clean energy, and support ballot initiatives to expand their renewable energy portfolios.

Many US mayors and governors are already implementing climate-friendly policies to counterbalance the Trump administration's rejection of Obama-era initiatives to curb carbon emissions - which Trump has said would cost trillions of dollars with little tangible benefit.

LCV said its local-level strategy appeared to work last year, when it pushed New Jersey candidates for governor to make clean energy commitments. Democrat Phil Murphy, who ultimately won, committed during the campaign to move the Garden State toward 100 per cent clean energy.

Holland said the clean energy effort is also aided by the fact that the cost of wind and solar energy has fallen in recent years, making those technologies competitive with electricity fueled by coal or natural gas.

"We are in this whole new world where clean energy makes sense regardless of your politics and regardless of the discussion around climate," Holland said.

The clean energy push comes in addition to LCV's previously announced decision to spend some \$20 million on state-level races this election cycle to push its broader environmental agenda - a figure that is nearly double its previous record for investment in local elections.

The Washington-based group said it will leave it up to individual state organizations to define what precisely falls under the umbrella of "clean energy" - though fossil fuels including natural gas will be excluded. (Reuters)

Saudi Arabia must face US lawsuits over September 11 attacks

NEW YORK (TIP): A US judge on Wednesday rejected Saudi Arabia's bid to dismiss lawsuits claiming that it helped plan the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and should pay billions of dollars in damages to victims.

US District Judge George Daniels in Manhattan said the plaintiffs' allegations "narrowly articulate a reasonable basis" for him to assert jurisdiction over Saudi Arabia under the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA), a 2016 federal law.

The Saudi government has long denied involvement in the attacks in which hijacked airplanes crashed into New York's World Trade Center, the Pentagon outside Washington, D.C., and a Pennsylvania field. Nearly 3,000 people died.

Lawyers for Saudi Arabia did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the decision. At a Saudi stock market event in New York, asked whether the court decision would have a negative impact on Saudi investment in the United States, Capital Market Authority Chairman Mohammed A. ElKuwaiz declined to comment, saying he had not seen the news.

Daniels' decision covers claims by the families of those killed, roughly 25,000 people who suffered injuries, and many businesses and insurers.

The judge also dismissed claims that two Saudi banks, National Commercial Bank and Al Rajhi Bank, and Saudi Binladin Group, a construction company controlled by the bin Laden family, provided funds and financial services for the attacks, saying he lacked jurisdiction.

Saudi Arabia had long had broad immunity from Sept. 11 lawsuits in the United States.

That changed in September 2016, when the US Congress overrode President Barack Obama's veto of JASTA, allowing such cases to proceed. (Reuters)

US withdrawing from Syria 'very soon': Donald Trump

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Donald Trump on March 29 said the US troops would withdraw from Syria "very soon" as he lamented that America has wasted \$7 trillion in wars in the Middle East.

At the same time, he said the US was using all its resources to defeat ISIS and drive them out of the captured territory. "We're knocking the hell out of ISIS. We'll be coming out of Syria, like, very soon. Let the other people take of it now," Trump said in Ohio where he had gone to deliver a speech on infrastructure.

"Very soon we're coming out. We're going to have 100 per cent of the caliphate, as they call it -- sometimes referred to as "land" -- taking it all back quickly, quickly. But we're going to be coming out of there real soon. Going to get back to our country, where we belong, where we want to be," he said.

"We spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East. We'd build a school, they'd blow it up. We'd build it again, they'd blow it up. We'd build it again -- hasn't been blown up yet, but it will be. But, if we want a school in Ohio to fix the windows, you can't get the money. If you want a school in Pennsylvania or Iowa to get federal money, you can't get the money," he said.

"We spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East. What we have for it? Nothing. Remember I used to say 'keep the oil' as a civilian. We never kept the oil. If we kept the oil, we would have been OK. If we kept the oil, we wouldn't have ISIS. Because you know who kept a lot of the oil? ISIS. That's how they funded themselves. They kept the oil. We didn't keep the oil. Stupid, stupid," he said.

As a result, Trump said, the US has little money for its infrastructure.

"We have to fight for our military. But we're becoming so strong again. And you watch -- not going to take very long. I've asked Republicans and Democrats in Congress to come together and deliver the biggest and boldest infrastructure plan in the last half



century. I don't think you're going to get Democrat support very much. And you'll probably have to wait until after the election, which isn't so long down the road," he said.

Earlier in the day, Defense Department Spokesperson Dana White said while the coalition has significantly degraded ISIS, the important work remains to guarantee the lasting defeat of the extremists.

"Our commitment to win must outlast the so-called physical caliphate, and the warped ideas that guide the calculated cruelty of ISIS," she said.

This is a group that plots and launches terror attacks globally, White said, adding that they have no regard for anything decent or valuable in life.

"As long as they exist and bring death and destruction around the world, we will continue to degrade, destroy and ultimately defeat ISIS," she said.

"We cannot allow our focus to deviate from the most important task of eliminating ISIS from the region. The ISIS terrorist network is more fragile than it was one year ago, but it still presents a capable and committed threat. ISIS is taking full advantage of

any opportunity to regain momentum. We must not relent on ISIS or permit these terrorists to recover from their battlefield losses," White said.

Noting that the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have repeatedly shown that they are a capable force on the ground to defeat ISIS, she said the US will continue to support the SDF in their fight against the extremists.

At a separate press conference, the US State Department alleged that Russia was not doing anything to help in Syria.

"Russia is the huge part of the problem for the tens of thousands of innocent civilians who have been killed and are still being killed each and every day as we look at the video that's coming out of Eastern Ghouta. Russia is responsible for that," State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert said.

"Russia is directly responsible for propping up Bashar-al-Assad, who has been killing his own people for far, far too long -- Iran also responsible. We don't anticipate that Russia is going to - based on their actions -- to help right now," she said. (PTI)

Pakistan PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi frisked at US airport

WASHINGTON (TIP): Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on a 'private trip' to the US to visit his ailing sister was reportedly frisked at the US airport, causing yet another embarrassment to the country and further straining its relations with Washington.

Abbasi was forced to undergo a routine security check at the US airport, a video of which has since then gone viral.

The video shows Abbasi dressed in a maroon polo tee shirt and black trousers putting on his belt and picking up his coat and bag after clearing the security, and walking away moments later.

The incident took place last week at the JFK airport in New York, amidst reports that Trump administration is considering banning visas and other sanctions on people in the Pakistani government.

Abbasi, although on a private trip to

visit his ailing sister, however, met US vice-president Mike Pence in what was also an unscheduled meeting.

Abbasi, was bluntly told that Pakistan has to contribute and engage further in addressing worldwide concerns about its nurturing of terrorist groups, reported The Times of India.

The incident has infuriated Pakistani media, which also slammed Abbasi for not lodging any protest or complaints of sorts with the US authorities' treatment meted out to him and letting the people of the country down.

The incident also coincides US move to place seven Pakistani companies under sanctions, putting them on its "Entity List" - which makes it harder for them to operate in the country, regarding their alleged links to nuclear trade.

Since January 2018, the US administration under President Donald Trump suspended funding worth nearly \$2 billion to Pakistan.

The US has been increasing pressure on Pakistan since last year when Trump announced his new South Asia policy, demanding that Pakistan take action against safe havens for terrorists on its soil, which the US claims is affecting the war efforts in Afghanistan and the peace in the overall region.

According to US's Foreign Policy magazine, the Trump administration is 'weighing unprecedented political penalties' on Pakistan for harbouring Afghan militants waging war on the US-backed government in Afghanistan.

"The options under consideration include revoking Pakistan's status as a major non-NATO ally, permanently cutting off the US military aid that was suspended two months ago, and even imposing visa bans or other sanctions on individuals in the Pakistani government deemed responsible for providing support to the militants," the publication said. (PTI)

US Senate committee summons FB, Google, Twitter CEOs to testify on data misuse

WASHINGTON (TIP): A powerful Congressional committee has summoned the CEOs of the top three tech giants - Facebook, Twitter and Google - to testify next month about UK communications firm Cambridge Analytica's misuse of private data from up to 50 million user profiles.

Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook, Indian-American Sunder Pichai of Google and Jack Dorsey of Twitter have been invited to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee scheduled for April 10 by the Committee's Chairman Chuck Grassley.

In a statement, Grassley said yesterday that Zuckerberg had been invited to discuss the company's past and future policies regarding the protection and monitoring of consumer data.

The hearing will broadly cover privacy standards for the collection, retention and dissemination of consumer data for commercial use.

"It will also examine how such data may be misused or improperly transferred and what steps companies like Facebook can take to better protect personal information of users and ensure more transparency in the process," a statement said.

Grassley also invited Pichai and Dorsey to discuss the future of data privacy in the social media industry and how to develop "rules of the road" that encourage companies to develop tailored approaches to privacy which satisfy consumer expectations while maintaining incentives for



innovation.

Senator Mark Warner also sought answers from the tech companies on data protection.

"I celebrate the success of Facebook, Google & Twitter; but with their power comes responsibility that they must acknowledge. This isn't a Russia problem. If we value civic discourse and fair elections, they have to step up and answer to more than their shareholders," he said.

Senator Ed Markey said Facebook's failure to protect millions of Americans' private information in the Cambridge Analytica breach showed "why we cannot rely on corporations" to police themselves.

"We need laws that prevent corporations from abusing Americans' privacy rights," said Markey.

Meanwhile, online news publication

'Intercept' reported that the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement used backend Facebook data to locate and track immigrants that it is working to round up.

Congressman Bobby L Rush has introduced a legislation that would require the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to issue regulations requiring companies like Facebook that own or possess data containing personal information to establish specified security policies and procedures to treat and protect such information.

The FTC confirmed last week that it had opened an inquiry over the alleged misuse of data by the UK consulting group Cambridge Analytica, the scandal-hit communications firm at the heart of the Facebook data scandal. (PTI)

Porn star sues Trump's personal lawyer for defamation

WASHINGTON (TIP): Stormy Daniels sued Donald Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen on March 25 for defamation, according to court documents, escalating a legal battle between the American president and the porn star that the White House was struggling to contain.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, made the claim a day after her widely watched TV interview on "60 Minutes" on CBS. Daniels said she was threatened with violence to keep quiet about her alleged 2006 tryst with Trump.

At the White House, a spokesman in a briefing with reporters cast aspersions on her account. The White House has denied allegations that Trump had a sexual relationship with Daniels.

CBS Corp said the show drew its biggest audience in more than eight years, with 21.3 million Americans tuning in, more than double the previous week's edition of "60 Minutes."

Presidential spokesman Raj Shah told the briefing, "The president doesn't believe any of the claims Ms. Daniels made in the interview last night were

accurate."

Asked if Trump believed Daniels was threatened, Shah said, "No, he does not. ... There's nothing to corroborate her claim."

Daniels' "60 Minutes" appearance also drew a denial from the president's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, that he was involved in the alleged threat of violence against her.

Daniels originally sued Trump on March 6, saying he never signed an agreement for her to stay silent about what she called their "intimate" relationship. Monday's filing in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles amended the original lawsuit to say Daniels was defamed.

Her attorney, Michael Avenatti, said Cohen "meant to convey that Ms. Clifford is a liar; someone who should not be trusted, and that her claims about her relationship with Mr. Trump" were not true.

Daniels' defamation allegation was based on a Feb. 13 statement by Cohen that she said hurt her reputation.

The latest filing also said \$130,000 Cohen paid Daniels in October 2016 just

before the presidential election to secure her silence amounted to an illegal campaign contribution, and that the agreement should be declared void.

Cohen has said he paid Daniels out of his own pocket, but has not explained why or if Trump was aware of the payment.

In filings with the Justice Department and Federal Election Commission, watchdog groups have said the \$130,000 may have exceeded campaign contribution limits, violating U.S. law. Cohen has denied this.

California attorney Michael Overing, who specializes in defamation law, said it would be difficult for Daniels to prevail on her defamation claim because she is a public figure.

To prove libel, she would have to show that a false statement was made with either reckless or purposeful disregard for the truth, Overing said.

Trump attorney Cohen's denial of involvement in the alleged threat against Daniels came in a "cease-and-desist" letter sent to Avenatti shortly after "60 Minutes" aired that demanded a retraction and an apology. (Reuters)

US: We won't pay over 25 percent of UN peacekeeping anymore

UNITED NATIONS (TIP): The United States is saying it will no longer shoulder more than a quarter of the multibillion-dollar costs of the United Nations' peacekeeping operations.

US Ambassador Nikki Haley said so March 28 at a Security Council debate on peacekeeping reform.

The US is the biggest contributor to the UN's 15 peacekeeping missions worldwide. Washington is paying about 28.5 percent of this year's \$7.3 billion peacekeeping budget.

President Donald Trump's administration has complained before that the budget and the US share are too high. At Washington's urging, the current budget is \$570 million below last year's.

Haley said the US will work to make sure cuts in its portion are done "in a fair and sensible manner that protects UN peacekeeping."

The General Assembly sets the budget and respective contributions by vote. (AP)

Trump says 'good chance' Kim will give up nukes

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump, who has agreed to meet with Kim Jong Un, said on March 28 there is now a good chance the North Korean leader will give up his country's nuclear weapons. "For years and through many administrations, everyone said that peace and the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula was not even a small possibility," Trump wrote in an early morning tweet. "Now there is a good chance that Kim Jong Un will do what is right for his people and for humanity. Look forward to our meeting!," Trump added.

His comments came as Kim completed a secretive and unprecedented visit to Beijing on Wednesday as the two countries seek to repair frayed ties before Pyongyang's landmark summits with Washington and earlier with South Korea.

On his first trip abroad since taking power, Kim and his wife were greeted by an honor guard and a banquet hosted by President Xi Jinping, according to state media, which confirmed the three-day visit on Wednesday only after Kim had returned by train to North Korea.

The two men held talks at the Great Hall of the People and Kim pledged he was "committed to denuclearization" on the Korean peninsula, according to China's Xinhua news agency.

Kim also expressed willingness to hold the summits with Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in, it said.

Analysts said Xi likely wanted to see Kim in order to ensure North Korea does not cut a deal with Trump that hurts Chinese interests during their summit, expected to be held in May. (AFP)

contd from Page 1

Texas Gov. Abbott's 'historic'... talk with Indian prime minister includes defense, health care, energy

Until early this week, Abbott's aides were unsure if the meeting would come off.

"You have a busy man who has a lot to do," Abbott said of Modi.

He said the prime minister opened their talk by mentioning anxiety India felt for the people of Indian heritage who live in parts of Texas that were ravaged by Hurricane Harvey last August.

Modi spoke of "gratitude that he had for Texans' doing such a great job of helping the Indian-American community in the region respond to the challenges they were facing."

Abbott said he assured Modi, "We will take care of the Indian Americans." In facing hardship, Texans and Indians exhibit "a similar resiliency," he said.

As he has throughout his entire nine-day, business-recruitment trip, Abbott touted how India and Texas are connected not only because many Indians have emigrated to the state but also because the two places share many traits.

"We're focused on the same concepts such as entrepreneurship ... a vibrant, strong and growing economy ... empowering the private sector ... being democratic countries based on value systems," Abbott said.

GSAT-6A COMMUNICATION SATELLITE SUCCESSFULLY PUT IN ORBIT



ISRO Satellite Launch From Sriharikota.

SRIHARIKOTA (TIP): India's latest communication satellite GSAT-6A was on March 29 launched onboard Geosynchronous rocket GSLV-F08 from the spaceport here and successfully placed in the designated orbit, in yet another achievement for the ISRO.

The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F08), fitted with indigenously developed cryogenic third stage, injected the satellite into orbit about 18 minutes after its lift off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here.

The satellite would provide a thrust to mobile communication through multi-beam coverage facility, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said.

ISRO Chairman K Sivan described the mission as a success and congratulated the scientists behind the mission.

Sivan said the communication satellite was successfully placed in the designated orbit.

This marks the 12th flight of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F08 and sixth flight with indigenous Cryogenic upper stage.

GSAT-6A, is similar to GSAT-6, a high power S-band communication satellite built on I-2K satellite bus with a mission life of about ten years, the ISRO said. *Source: PTI*

SC/ST ACT: GOVT TO FILE REVIEW PLEA NEXT WEEK



NEW DELHI (TIP): The government has decided to file a review petition before the Supreme Court next week, challenging its order banning automatic arrest and registration of cases for alleged harassment of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Sources in the Ministry of Law and Justice said the government's senior law officers were holding a series of consultancy sessions with the ministry officials to prepare a credible review plea. A top ministry official said: "The review will likely be filed by Wednesday as by then the grounds for the review will be ready."

Briefing mediapersons, Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the government had taken note of the Supreme Court judgment about laying down new norms about the SC/ST Act. "I have already instructed my ministry to consider the desirability of filing a review. Appropriate follow-up action is being taken," he said.

The top court had recently banned automatic arrests and registration of criminal cases under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989. The law protects the marginalised communities against discrimination and atrocities.

A delegation of NDA's SC and ST MPs, led by LJP chief Ram Vilas Paswan and Union Social Justice Minister Thawarchand Gehlot, had yesterday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss the apex court judgment diluting provisions of the SC/ST Act. *Source: The Tribune*

Unemployment major challenge for India: IMF

Noting that India has been one of the fastest growing large economies in recent times, Gerry Rice said this has led to improvement in reducing poverty and improvements in living standards.



WASHINGTON (TIP): Acknowledging that unemployment is a major challenge that India is facing currently, the IMF today exuded confidence that the reforms being carried out in India in the last few years would end up creating new jobs in the country.

"Clearly India faces a challenge in terms of providing sufficient employment for a number of people looking for work and particularly young people. But yes, the measures and the reforms that India is undertaking will over medium term create jobs," the International Monetary Fund spokesperson, Gerry Rice, told reporters at a news conference here.

Noting that India has been one of the fastest growing large economies in recent times, he said this has led to improvement in reducing poverty and improvements in living standards.

"Our view is that recent reforms,

particularly the implementation of GST, national goods and services tax, should help boost efficiency and productivity and over time will contribute to help them create jobs in the formal sector," Rice said when asked if India is experiencing jobless growth.

In addition, the government recently took steps towards labour market flexibility by modifying labour rules. "We think that these reforms will help to increase employment, perhaps not overnight but over the medium term," he said.

And the continuation of micro economic policies, structural forms including reforms in the labour market, will not only boosts India's long-term growth but create jobs as well, Rice said.

"So we think, all of this will help to spur India's continuing catch up with advanced economies and create many jobs that are needed to employ people who are going to labour force," Rice said.

Source: PTI

Mehul Choksi's Gitanjali Gems defrauds Karnataka Bank of Rs 86.5 cr



BENGALURU (TIP): Privately-run Karnataka Bank Ltd has informed the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that Gitanjali Gems of scam-hit Mehul Choksi had committed a Rs 86.5 crore fraud in the fund-based working capital.

"We have reported a fraud to the RBI amounting to Rs 86.47 crore in the fund-based working capital facilities extended to Gitanjali Gems Ltd on account of non-realisation of export bills and diversion of funds," said the Mangaluru-based bank in a regulatory filing on the BSE late on Wednesday night.

The scheduled commercial bank, however, clarified it does not have any Letter of Understanding (LoU) exposure in Choksi's company.

"The working capital facilities were extended by the bank under consortium arrangement and provisions will be made as per the RBI guidelines," the bank's Company Secretary Prasanna Patil said in the filing. Choksi and his nephew Nirav Modi are already facing investigation in the Rs 13,540-crore fraud they committed on the state-run Punjab National Bank's Mumbai branch, which came to light after they left the country in early January.

Source: IANS

India voices serious concern over growing IED attacks on UN peacekeepers

UNITED NATIONS (TIP): India voiced serious concern over the growing IED attacks against UN peacekeepers, calling for concerted efforts to upgrade the security infrastructure and resources to help missions counter such threats.

In the last four years, of the 176 fatal casualties due to acts of violence against UN peacekeeping missions, 43 were due to Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) attacks, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Tanmaya Lal said during an open debate in the Security Council on the collective action to improve UN peacekeeping operations.

Voicing "very serious concern" over the increasing loss of lives of UN peacekeepers due to attacks on the peacekeeping missions, Lal yesterday said that missions facing IED threats should have dedicated resources for countering such threats.

He stressed the need for concerted efforts to upgrade the security infrastructure of the camps as well as providing capabilities to ensure timely and reliable medical evacuation and casualty evacuation.

The use of helicopters with night flight capability and night retrieval



India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Tanmaya Lal. Photo courtesy Twitter handle: @IndiaUNNewYork

operations is "absolutely essential", he said.

"To respond in a timely manner to crisis situations or accidents, force commanders should be given a direct authority for commanding such air assets in the mission," Lal said.

Lal said the Council meeting comes against the backdrop of a year which saw the highest number of fatalities among UN peacekeepers since 1994 caused due to attacks on them.

India is the largest cumulative troop contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, having provided almost 200,000 troops in nearly 50 of the 71 peacekeeping missions mandated over the past six decades, including 13 of the current 16 missions.

About 168 Indian personnel have laid down their lives in the life of duty, he said.

India, with its long experience in UN peacekeeping, believes that the success of UN peacekeeping should be judged by the capability of missions to sustain peace by enabling political solutions through integrated responses, Lal said.

This is, of course, the shared responsibility of the UN Secretariat, the Security Council and Troop and Police Contributing Countries, the envoy said.

Listing the growing challenges faced by UN peacekeeping, Lal said that besides the changing nature of armed conflicts themselves, there are serious chronic shortcomings of the lack of clarity of mandates, mismatch with resources available to peacekeepers, lack of consultations with troop contributing countries and lack of focus on political solutions to building and sustaining peace. *Source: PTI*

CBSE Class 10, 12 paper leak: 18 students, five tutors quizzed

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Delhi Police Crime Branch on March 29 questioned 18 students and five private tutors in connection with the CBSE paper leak and formed 10 teams to trace the leak trail, even as angry students gathered at Jantar Mantar, protesting the CBSE decision to hold a re-examination for Class X (maths) and Class XII (economics).

They demanded either a re-exam for all subjects or none at all. "The CBSE should re-schedule all exams because multiple papers have been leaked, or apprehend the ones involved and not hold any re-exam. Also, there is no guarantee the re-examination papers won't be leaked," said one of the protesters.

Targeting the BJP government for "consistent leaks across all spheres", the Congress demanded that HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar and CBSE chairperson Anita Karwal be sacked and a probe by a High Court judge be ordered. Karwal said the decision was in favour of students. Congress' Randeep Surjewala alleged that an exam mafia was being "promoted by the government". He referred to the Short Service Commission exam papers similarly leaked.

Javadekar called the paper leak



The shrill cries of 'we want justice' pierced the serene morning air at Jantar Mantar on March 29 as hundreds of students gathered in Delhi, protesting against the re-examination of Class 10 Mathematics and Class 12 Economics papers. Pic courtesy: PTI

"unfortunate" and said the culprits would not be spared. He also said the exam system would be made "foolproof."

Meanwhile, the police have scanned 40 mobile numbers on which the question papers were sent. A private tutor, who runs a coaching centre, said the leaked maths paper was shown to him by a student so he instructed them to prepare

accordingly.

DCP Joy Tirki said the Class X (maths) paper was sent to 24 students of government and private schools on WhatsApp. Special Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) RP Upadhyay said: "Both Class X (maths) and Class XII (economics) papers were available before the exam dates." Source: PTI

SUSHMA SWARAJ HOLDS 'PRODUCTIVE' TALKS WITH JAPANESE COUNTERPART



External affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono.

NEW DELHI (TIP): India and Japan on March 29 held the ninth round of Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue in Tokyo.

Co-Chaired by Sushma Swaraj and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono, the talks focused on increasing cooperation on bilateral and multilateral forums. "Our special strategic and global partnership has acquired a broader significance in the current global context. Our growing convergence on economic and strategic issues is important for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region," Sushma Swaraj said.

Kono called India the most important partner for Japan in its free and open Indo-Pacific strategy.

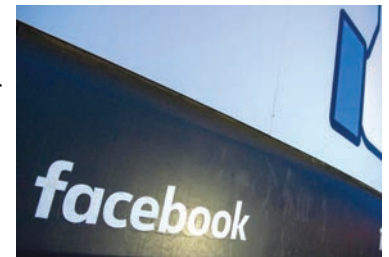
The respective envoys signed and exchanged notes concerning the provisions for four Yen-loan projects.

The Japanese Overseas Development Assistance for the projects includes loans to build Mumbai Metro Line 3, develop a seawater desalination plant in Chennai, plant trees in Himachal Pradesh to maintain its ecosystem and install intelligent transport systems in Chennai.

After Cambridge Analytica row, Election Commission to review ties with Facebook

NEW DELHI (TIP):

The Election Commission (EC) is in the process of reviewing its engagement with social media company Facebook Inc., with which it partners on voter awareness initiatives, although the two have no formal agreement in place.



EC and Facebook began engaging with each other in 2017 without any legal framework defining the partnership, an EC official said, asking not to be identified.

There is now a view within the poll panel that it should not partner with any social media platform until a strict code of conduct defining the scope and nature of such partnerships is drafted. On March 27, the commission asked its social media cell to prepare a model code of conduct.

Earlier this week, chief election commissioner OP Rawat told reporters that the commission would continue to partner with Facebook on awareness initiatives, but with "safeguards" in place.

Concerns arose about EC's partnership with Facebook after allegations surfaced of Facebook data harvesting by political marketing firm Cambridge Analytica. Although the commission has maintained that it did not share any data from the electoral rolls with Facebook, it is now reviewing whether its association with the company could have been misused in any way, a second EC official said, also on condition of anonymity.

"There is no formal agreement or legal agreement or Memorandum of Understanding between EC and Facebook. Facebook does not have any access to EC's database of voters. The EC database is highly secure and is hosted on NIC and BSNL servers with multiple security walls and periodic security audits," former chief election commissioner Nasim Zaidi said.

NIC is short for the National Informatics Centre and BSNL for the Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd, the state-owned telecom company. Source: HT

Judiciary-govt bonhomie will be death knell for democracy: Justice Chelameswar

NEW DELHI

(TIP): Justice J Chelameswar of the Supreme Court has criticised the chief justice of the Karnataka high court for initiating an inquiry against a district judge, who was cleared for elevation by the Supreme Court collegium, allegedly at the Centre's behest, and suggested that he was "more loyal than the king".



In a letter dated March 21, sent to Chief Justice Dipak Misra with copies to all the judges of the Supreme Court, Justice Chelameswar also questioned why the Karnataka high court Chief Justice, Dinesh Maheshwari, did not inform the Chief Justice of India about the probe.

"The Chief Justice (Maheshwari), establishing himself to be more loyal than the King, acts on it (Centre's request), convenes a meeting of the Administrative Committee, and decides to reinvestigate the issue, thus burying the previous Chief Justice's findings on the same issue, given at our asking. He has been gracious enough to inform us, at least now," read Justice Chelameswar's letter.

Justice Chelameswar, the second senior-most judge in the top court, also cautioned in the letter against the "bonhomie between the judiciary and the government" and said it "will be the death knell of democracy". Source: HT

India aims to conclude S-400 deal with Russia during Sitharaman's Moscow visit

NEW DELHI (TIP): A nearly Rs 40,000 crore deal to procure S-400 Triumph air defence missile systems from Russia is yet to be concluded mainly due to differences over price which India would look to sort out during Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's upcoming visit to Moscow, official sources said. India wants to procure the long-range missile systems to tighten its air defence mechanism, particularly when China has been ramping up its military manoeuvring along the nearly 4,000 km Sino-India border.

In 2016, India and Russia had signed an agreement on "Triumph" interceptor-based missile system which can destroy incoming hostile aircraft, missiles and even drones at ranges of up to 400 km. S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system. China was the first foreign buyer to seal a government-to-government deal with Russia in 2014 to procure the lethal missile system and Moscow has already started delivery of unknown number of the S-400 missile systems to China.

The sources said Sitharaman will travel to Moscow within the next six weeks and she may push for sealing the long-pending deal at the earliest. "Sealing the S-400 deal will be a major focus of Sitharaman's visit to Russia," said a source familiar with the deal,



which would be one of biggest with Russia in recent years.

Negotiators from both countries have been in talks for over one and half years for the purchase of at least five systems of S-400 which are capable of firing three types of missiles, creating a layered defence. The S-400 is an upgraded version of the S-300 systems. The missile system is manufactured by Almaz-Antey and has been in service in Russia since 2007.

The sources also said that no decision could be taken on the long-pending fifth-generation fighter jet project with Russia due to the high cost involved in it. A high-level committee set up by the government to examine various aspects of the project had submitted its report last year and the defence ministry is likely to take a call on it soon. Source: PTI


**GUEST
COMMENT**

Kim in Beijing: His visit strategically brings China into North Korea's hectic diplomatic calendar

The timing of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's visit to China, his first foreign trip after assuming power in 2011, is not lost on anyone. After travelling to Beijing this week in an armored train, he held talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and re-emphasized his commitment to the "denuclearization" of the peninsula, weeks before his scheduled April 27 summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. In May, Mr. Kim and U.S. President Donald Trump are expected to meet for a historic summit. By visiting Beijing now, Mr. Kim is sending a clear message: that he is serious about his offer of talks. The visit has also helped repair relations between Pyongyang and Beijing, which had come under some strain. China was not particularly happy with the North's nuclear tests. Mr. Xi was under pressure from the West to exercise influence on Mr. Kim's regime. And Beijing's support for stringent UN sanctions on North Korea that have cut its exports of coal, seafood and other goods to China has dealt a blow to its already isolated economy. Mr. Kim reportedly rejected overtures from Beijing and purged officials who had close ties with the Chinese. But now, both leaders appear to have decided to set aside their differences.

China has historically played a role in inter-Korean relations. In 2000, Mr. Kim's father and predecessor, Kim Jong-il, had visited China shortly before a summit with South Korea. In 2003, China launched the Six-Party Talks aimed at peacefully resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis, which eventually failed. Mr. Kim's visit to Beijing has reinstated China's central role in talks over the Korean crisis, which both countries see as mutually beneficial. For the Kim regime, China's experience and guidance could come in handy when it is preparing to engage with two of its biggest rivals. China, for its part, would not like to be bypassed by the U.S. and the North in any diplomatic process. If the Kim regime's fundamental objective is its own survival, China's interest lies in a peaceful resolution to the crisis in a stable political environment in its neighborhood. This enables convergence of interest for both in the diplomatic process. But there is still much uncertainty over the peace process. Mr. Trump may have agreed to meet Mr. Kim. But since then he has inducted into his team two officials with hawkish views on North Korea - Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State and John Bolton as National Security Adviser. As of now, it is anybody's guess what the U.S. would do next if the Trump-Kim summit fails to produce a breakthrough. In such a volatile context, robust multilateral intervention would be needed to stay the diplomatic course. The Xi-Kim meet could be a step in that direction if China agrees to be a balancing force and a facilitator of talks between the North and the U.S.

(The Hindu)

AS I SEE IT

INDIA IN TRUMPLAND NEEDS TO CUT TRADE DEALS WITH US TO KEEP AFLOAT

'The businessman-author of The Art of the Deal, who looks at every issue as a transaction, would also be in no hurry to tear up the Iran nuclear deal, Pompeo or no Pompeo. For him, threat is a negotiating tactic. So, India has little to lose sleep on this count'.

BY ARUN KUMAR

Washington is said to be in turmoil sending shock waves across the world from New York to New Delhi, with a mercurial President Donald Trump firing aides left and right and courting controversy with his fiats.

Will his new incoming hawkish National Security Adviser John Bolton, who has in the past advocated military strikes against both Iran and North Korea, push his boss into another war and upend the proposed summit between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un? Or would CIA director Mike Pompeo, another hardliner set to replace moderate Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, spur the President to make good on his campaign promise to tear up the "disastrous" Iran nuclear deal forcing nations like India into yet another balancing act?

And would Trump's imposition of steel and aluminum tariffs, essentially aimed at China, set off a trade war catching India in the crossfire? Or perhaps the brash billionaire would implode in a clash of wills with special counsel Robert Mueller, former FBI director, probing alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and any collusion with the Trump campaign? Or maybe the juicy tales of alleged dalliances with a porn star and a Playmate would finally prove the undoing of "The Donald", as the first wife of the thrice married former reality TV star lovingly called him?

As pundits on either side of the political divide fill the airwaves with such kite flying, "There is no news anymore. It's all Trump," as noted TV host Larry King lamented ripping into TV channels going after eyeballs and newspapers savoring the circulation windfall. With Trump setting the agenda, there is hardly any attempt to look at the issues dispassionately and give the devil his due. For instance, when the President ordered the expulsion 60 Russian diplomats in response to nerve agent attack on a former Soviet spy in Britain, Los Angeles Times, among others, had a different take.

"Trump quiet as US expels 60 suspected Russian spies," read the Times' headline, even as the liberal daily acknowledged lower down that it was the "most aggressive diplomatic slap down since the end of Cold War". Thus, contrary to instant analysts' fears there is little danger of Trump, who in 2004 described the Iraq war as a "big fat mistake", leading the US into another conflagration as his "America First" policy leaves no room for "regime change" or "nation building" abroad.

The businessman-author of The Art of the Deal, who looks at every issue as a transaction, would also be in no hurry to tear up the Iran nuclear deal, Pompeo or no Pompeo. For him, threat is a negotiating tactic. So, India has little to lose sleep on this count. North Korea too would likely be a different story. Trump has often been painted as getting his strategic advice from TV shows, particularly Fox News, and influenced by the last man he sees before making up his mind. But contrary to conventional wisdom, the President keeps his own counsel. Witness the number of men who have been shown the door. These include Steve Bannon, his former chief strategist, who was once portrayed by influential Time on its cover as "The Great Manipulator" and "The second most powerful man in the world".

Trump surprised the world by accepting an invitation for nuclear talks with Kim in May after trading childish barbs with the "little rocket man" about the size of their nuclear buttons as he threatened to respond with "fire and fury" to any provocations from Pyongyang. Ahead of the crucial summit that he agreed to despite telling Tillerson that "our wonderful Secretary of State was wasting his time trying to negotiate" with Kim, Trump has scored his first victory on the tariff issue with South Korea.

Under the significant one-on-one deal, Seoul has agreed to limit its steel exports to the US and ease US auto imports. Pundits concede that Trump might well pull a rabbit out of his hat at the summit. Henry Kissinger, the legendary architect of Richard Nixon's opening up to China, has endorsed the summit attributing it to Trump's unique style. As he told the New York Times that it



Is Modi hug warm enough to tame the unpredictable Trump?

may not be what "we traditionalists would have recommended in the first place" but "it could restore a political initiative to us, and could compel a conversation with countries (who may not otherwise want one)." During the presidential campaign, Trump had vowed to be a "true friend" to and "best friends" with India.

But that has not prevented him from slamming India's "high" import duties on Harley-Davidson bikes. His administration has also taken India, which has a \$24 billion trade surplus with the US, to the WTO, challenging export subsidies that benefit \$7 billion Indian exports. But given Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bonhomie with Trump, they too could well work out a deal like South Korea. Indians are also concerned about the Trump administration's plans to restrict H-1B visas for professionals, which are largely cornered by Indians, and limiting visas to relatives to immediate family. But his plans to introduce a point-based merit system for immigration may well work to the advantage of Indians in the long run.

Other than that, thanks to bipartisan political support, Trump has continued to consolidate ties with India that have been growing stronger under three previous Presidents - Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama. As he told Modi last June, "The relationship between India and the United States has never been stronger, never been better." His national strategy unveiled last January also welcomes "India's emergence as a leading power and stronger strategic and defense partner" as a counterbalance to China in the Indo-Pacific Region.

With the fight against terrorism emerging as an important area of convergence, the Trump administration also did something unprecedented in suspending security assistance to Pakistan after several warnings to Islamabad to stop supporting terrorists fell on deaf ears. Indian interests may be safe in Trumpland, but the ongoing Russia probe has been hanging like a cloud on Trump with all his Russia-related actions viewed as suspect. He has been itching to fire Mueller to end what he deems as the "single greatest witch-hunt in American political history".

Republican leaders have cautioned him against sparking a constitutional crisis by firing Mueller with Lindsey Graham, former Republican presidential rival turned supporter, warning that it would be "the beginning of the end of his presidency". But Trump being Trump, he may well do the unthinkable - and yet survive!

(The author is an expert on India-US relations)

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DEFENSE OUTSOURCED



Buying weapons to protect over 1.34 billion people and secure borders with seven nations - with a land frontier of over 15,000 km and a coastline extending to over 7,500 km - is a good idea. But the thought to be dependent on foreign defense supplies (India imports some 70 per cent of its equipment) is unsettling, self-defeating even.

Assessing national data as to how we acquire the high-tech weapons and meet our defense needs could be a daunting task, given veils of secrecy. Yet an international resource on global security, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), regularly comes out with general figures indicating, among others, the scale to which our defense import has risen. On March 12, SIPRI released its data, reconfirming that India, yet again emerged as the biggest importer of weapons in the world. Clearly, there is a lack of 'strategic autonomy' ideally desired by a nuclear armed nation with the third largest armed forces.

The SIPRI's annual report 'Trends in international arms transfers' makes an assessment for a five-year block (2013-2017). It said: "India was the largest importer of major arms and accounted for 12 per cent of the global total." SIPRI has been studying the conflict and arms sales for over 50 years. It compared this five-year block with the previous 2008-2012's to conclude: "India's imports increased by 24 per cent".

That means New Delhi was importing 24 per cent more military equipment, pointing at the sluggish 'Make in India' besides the failure to make its own cutting-edge weapons, equipment and war-fighting arsenal.

For defense experts, that foreign component accretion over the decade is 'inglorious.' Amit Cowshish, former financial advisor, Ministry of Defense, says "It will keep on happening till India can have its own capacity to produce equipment."

Ambitious plans & realities

On March 22, the Ministry of Defense laid out a draft defense production policy. It is ambitious at its best as it talks about making India among the top five countries in aerospace and defense industry.

It also talks about self-reliance in key technologies by 2025 and puts India on the exporter-track. It sets a target of Rs 1,70,000-crore (\$26 billion approx) turnover in defense goods and services involving additional investment of nearly Rs 70,000 crore (US \$10 billion approx). It looks at achieving exports of Rs 35,000 crore (US \$5 billion approx) by 2025. Commodore C Uday Bhaskar (retd), now director, Society for Policy Studies, terms this plan as "incongruous," saying "India is living in a make-believe world."

Domestic defense production for 2016-17 stands at Rs 55,894 crore, up from the Rs 43,746 crore in 2013-14. Efforts, so far, to make a military-industrial base have remained sluggish, hampered by budgets and a lack of cutting-edge technology. Lt Gen KJ Singh (retd), a former Western Army Commander avers: "It appears everyone has good intentions, sadly, that is not translating into action."

Successes & ironies

There are a few, take a look:

Nuclear submarines of the Arihant class, made from scratch, in India; or the Scorpene class submarines made at Mazagon Docks Limited Mumbai.

Supersonic BrahMos, Agni, Akash or the Prithvi missiles.



Strangely, the country is struggling to produce a good rifle. Some 11 lakh of various types are needed for which Indian private companies have been allowed to have a tie-up with foreign partners and put up their proposals. Light combat aircraft Tejas faces delays and slow production rates (Only 6-8 planes are produced per annum, the need is for 16-20).

Artillery guns produced jointly by the Defence Research and Development Organization and private companies - Tata Power SED and Bharat Forge - have been a success.

The next version of the Arjun tank needs modifications, but the delay is due to the Army frequently changing the requirements.

The Dhruv helicopter and its variants have finally been accepted as 'superb' machines.

Budget pains

In a report on March 13, a parliamentary panel said the defence budget for the year 2018-2019 was 'inadequate' and 'barely enough' to cater for inflation. Maj Gen BC Khanduri (retd), a BJP MP from Uttarakhand, heads the panel. "Capital budget allocation for the Army had dashed hopes as it was barely enough to cater to the rise in expenses on account of inflation, and did not even cater for the taxes," the Vice Chief of the Army told the panel.

For 2018-19, the Army projected a need for Rs 44,572 crore, it got Rs 26,815 crore. The Navy wanted Rs 35,695 crore but got only Rs 20,003 crore. The IAF is managing with Rs 35,770 crore against its need for Rs 77,694 crore.

The Army today has 68 per cent of equipment in the 'vintage category.' Around 25 projects identified under Make in India may be foreclosed due to inadequate budget, the report said.

"For a country that seeks strategic autonomy, the tag for being the largest importer of weapons and equipment is a contradiction," says Commodore Bhaskar.

The government has lined up a mix of private-public sectors. The hint lies in the numbers and the expansion of the nine defence public sector undertakings (DPSUs). In the financial year ending March 31, 2017 these companies collectively made a profit of Rs 5,482 crore. A report of the parliamentary panel says, "no budgetary support is being given to the DPSUs." These nine companies are being modernized.

"The best way to break the mould is to move away from the existing procedures of acquisition," says Lt Gen KJ Singh

Private sector potential

To give a hint at the potential, the hull of the nuclear submarines series is being made by L&T. Amit Cowshish, former financial advisor, Ministry of Defence, has a word of caution: "The new draft production policy merely talks about private and public participation. In reality, it could take years for it to get rolling."

The Modi government has liberalized FDI and touted it as a major policy-shift to okay up to 49 per cent stake for foreign companies when partnering Indian companies. Now another tweak to the FDI is coming up. The Draft DPP-2018 says: "FDI regime in defence will be further liberalized. The FDI up to 74% under automatic route will be allowed in niche technology areas."

India needs...
400 fighter jets
1,700 tanks
800 helicopters
18 more

Indigenously produced

Tejas:

HAL is making the first 40 Tejas. Upgraded 83 Tejas too will come. Another 201 Tejas Mark II are on the drawing board

Artillery guns:

The Dhanush gun is a copy of the Bofors gun, will go for final user trials in May. Both will fill the need for more than 2,700 guns over the next decade

Copters:

The biggest success story. Forces need some 800 copters. Some 200, Advance Light

Helicopters,

the Dhruv, are flying

Arjun Mark-II:

Two regiments of Arjun tanks were inducted. The Army wanted 93 improvements. Arjun Mark II is an improved version

Aircraft carrier Vikrant:

It is set to be commissioned 2020. The making of the ship takes the country into an exclusive league of nations

BrahMos/Agni:

The BrahMos is an Indo-Russian venture that adorns lead warships of the Navy. It's deployed along Pak border. N-tipped Agni missiles have propelled India into the exclusive club of countries - US, UK, Russia, France & China



DESPITE VARIOUS GOVTS GOING SLOW ON HI-TECH DEFENCE ACQUISITIONS, IT NOW EMERGES THAT INDIA IS THE LARGEST WEAPONS IMPORTER. THIS IS 'INGLORIOUS' IN THE FACE OF STRIDENCY OVER 'DESI' PRODUCTION. AND AS WE STRUGGLE, OUR NEIGHBORS FIND WAYS TO FORGE AHEAD WITH NEW DEFENCE PARTNERS, A FACT WE CAN IGNORE TO OUR PERIL



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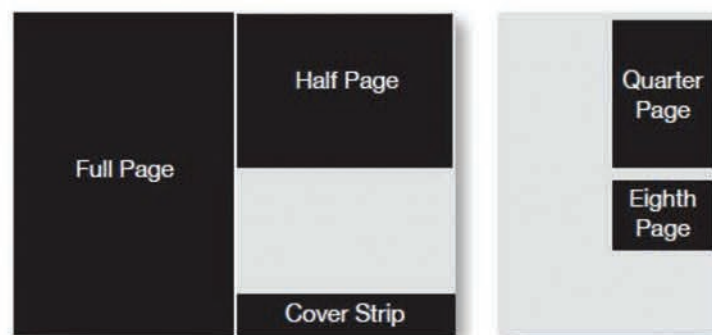


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ASIAN INDIANS in NEW YORK-
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Average Household
Income

The Indian Panorama is a South-Asian English newspaper with print editions in New York City, the Tristate area and now also as the first English Asian Newspaper from Dallas, printed weekly every Friday.

British PM Theresa May aims for national unity, one year from Brexit

LONDON (TIP): Prime Minister Theresa May jetted off on a frantic national tour on March 29 as Britain starts the one-year countdown to Brexit, seeking UK unity as its EU departure looms.

May was visiting Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales during her day-long tour, aiming to shore up support for the government's Brexit strategy, 12 months before Britain leaves the EU on March 29 next year.

Brexit remains a fractious topic in Britain, with former prime minister Tony Blair leading a push for second referendum as an escape door.

"Today, one year until the UK leaves the EU and begins to chart a new course in the world, I am visiting all four nations of the union to hear from people across our country what Brexit means to them," May said ahead of her trip.

After visiting a textile factory in Ayrshire, southwest Scotland, May will travel to Newcastle in northeast England to meet a parent and toddler group.

Northern Ireland will be her next stop, for lunch with farmers near Belfast before meeting Welsh business owners in Barry, then returning to London in time for tea with a Polish group.

"I am determined that as we leave the EU, and in the years ahead, we will strengthen the bonds that unite us," May said.

"I have an absolute responsibility to protect the integrity of the United Kingdom as a whole.

"Having regained control of our laws, our borders and our money, and seized the opportunities provided by Brexit, the UK will thrive as a strong and united country that works for everyone, no matter whether you voted Leave or Remain."

In a seismic referendum on June 23, 2016, 52 percent of voters in the UK opted for Britain to leave the European Union.



Most voters in England and Wales backed Brexit, while majorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland wanted the UK to stay in the EU.

There have been tensions between London and the devolved governments in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast over May's handling of the Brexit negotiations so far.

Scotland and Wales last week backed bills to ensure that powers brought back from Brussels go to their capitals.

But May insisted that the devolved administrations would see their decision-making powers increase as a result of Brexit. Another sticking point is the Irish border as Britain leaves the European single market and customs union. All sides in the Brexit talks want to avoid imposing checks at the frontier with the Republic of Ireland.

May has agreed to Brussels' plan to keep Northern Ireland in the customs union if no better solution is found.

However, the proposition is deemed unacceptable by the province's pro-

British and pro-Brexit Democratic Unionist Party, which props up May's Conservative minority government in the UK parliament.

Blair, who was Britain's premier from 1997 to 2007, believes Brexit to be a giant strategic mistake and is a leading advocate for giving voters an opt-out.

He argued that once the terms of its departure were known, voters should have the chance to choose whether they prefer that to EU membership.

"It's not too late until we leave," the former Labour leader told BBC radio.

"We keep this under debate until we actually see the terms of the new relationship and then we can decide whether those terms are better than what we have now."

A ComRes online survey of 2,019 British adults on Monday and Tuesday, published in the Daily Express newspaper, which is staunchly pro-Leave, found that 35 percent want a second referendum while 65 percent do not. (AFP)

France's Sarkozy to face trial for corruption, influence peddling

PARIS (TIP): Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy will face trial over charges he misused his influence to secure leaked details of an inquiry into alleged irregularities in his 2007 election campaign, a source close to the investigation said on Thursday.

Sarkozy's lawyers said he would appeal the decision to send him to court, initially reported by the daily Le Monde.

The case came about after investigators used phone-taps to examine separate allegations that late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi funded Sarkozy's campaign and began to suspect he had kept tabs on a separate case through a network of informants.

The development came just over a week after Sarkozy was told he was being formally treated as a suspect in the election campaign investigation.

Sarkozy was president from 2007 to 2012 but was defeated by Socialist Francois Hollande when he ran for re-election. He has since faced a series of investigations into alleged corruption, fraud, favoritism and campaign-funding irregularities.

Sarkozy's lawyers had previously argued that magistrates investigating the alleged secret Libyan funding exceeded their powers and went on a "fishing expedition" by tapping his conversations with them between September 2013 and March 2014, breaching lawyer-client privilege.

Based on the intercepts, Sarkozy is accused of having discussed offering a promotion to a prosecutor in return for tip-offs on an investigation into accusations that his former party treasurer and others exploited the mental frailty of France's richest woman, Liliane Bettencourt, to extract political donations in cash. (Reuters)

3 lakh troops cut completed, more reforms to follow: Chinese military

BEIJING (TIP): China's powerful military on Thursday said it has completed the target of laying off three lakh troops and hinted at more reforms to optimise the quality and combat efficiency of the now two-million-strong force.

"Our target of downsizing the military by three hundred thousand is basically achieved," Chinese Defence spokesman Col Ren Guoqiang told a media briefing here, terming it as an "important political decision and political declaration" made by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and the country.

The plan to downsize the world's largest army by three lakhs was announced by President Xi Jinping at a parade in 2015. The PLA which was 4.5-million strong till 1980 was first resized to three million in 1985 and later to 2.3 million.

China also hiked its defence budget this year to a whopping USD 175 billion, three times higher than that of India.

The PLA also announced last year that it would reduce its ground troops to less than a million as part of Chinese military modernisation plan under which the navy has been given greater role to expand China's global influence.

The troops cut also came in the backdrop of a massive anti-corruption drive carried out by Xi, who also heads the military in which over 3,000 personnel including over 50 top Generals were removed and punished.

Xi also carried out a massive restructuring plan integrating several commands and creating a Rocket Force and the Strategic Support Force for the missile launches.

Ren also hinted that reforms of the military will continue. "However, the comprehensive reform plan is still ongoing," he said, adding that the related information will be released in due course. The present military reform plan has made "very considerable arrangements to downsize the military", he said. (PTI)

Mayor of Libya's Tripoli kidnapped: authorities

TRIPOLI (TIP): Armed men have kidnapped the mayor of Libya's capital Tripoli from his home, authorities said March 29. Gunmen stormed Abdulraouf Hassan Beitelmal's house on Wednesday night and took him "by force of arms", the city council said in a statement. As of Thursday afternoon, the gunmen's demands were unclear.

The council urged Libya's internationally-recognised unity government to "immediately take all necessary measures" to ensure Beitelmal's release. (AFP)

68 dead after riot, fire at police station in Venezuela

VALENCIA (TIP): Venezuela's chief prosecutor reported late March 28 that 68 people died in a fire that swept through the cell area inside a police station, which townspeople said followed a disturbance by detainees being held there.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab said on his official Twitter account that nearly all the dead were prisoners. He said two women who were staying overnight at the station were also killed, but didn't provide any further details.

Saab said four prosecutors had been named to determine what happened at the state police headquarters in Valencia, a town in Carabobo state about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Caracas.

It was one of the worst jail disasters in a country where human rights groups complain about bad prison conditions. A fire at a prison in the western state of Zulia killed more than 100 inmates in 1994. Local authorities in Valencia had confirmed earlier only that there were fatalities, and said they were working to determine an exact number. (AP)

New Zealand bans entry to any Russian expelled by allies

WELLINGTON (TIP): New Zealand will not allow entry to Russian diplomats expelled by other countries in response to a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy in Britain, that Britain has blamed on Russia, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on March 29.

The attempted murder of Sergie Skripal, a former colonel in Russian military intelligence who betrayed dozens of Russian agents to Britain's MI6 spy service, has plunged Moscow's relations with the West to a new post-Cold War low.

After Britain expelled 23 Russians it said were spies working under diplomatic cover, Russia followed by throwing out 23 British diplomats. The United States and other Western countries, including most member states of the European Union and NATO, expelled more than 100 diplomats.

New Zealand has not expelled any Russians, which Ardern earlier justified by saying there were no Russian spies present at the Russian embassy in New Zealand for her government to expel, unlike the situation in other intelligence partners. She said on Thursday she would ask allies for the names of the Russians they expelled and they would not be allowed into New Zealand to protest against Russia's "inadequate response" to the attack in Britain.

"Those names will then be placed on a travel ban list to ensure that individuals who have been found to undertake activities incompatible with their diplomatic status in other countries do not enter New Zealand," she said in a statement.

Some politicians had earlier criticised Ardern for not taking a harder stance against Russia, and risking a rift with the Pacific nation's Western allies.

"The perception is that the original response wasn't strong enough and therefore they're trying to make up for it," Robert Ayson, professor of security studies at the Victoria University in Wellington, said of the travel ban.

"It does look like a bit of scramble." Rhys Ball, a Massey University security analyst who formerly worked for New Zealand's intelligence service, said the government's block on the expelled Russians was largely a gesture. (Reuters)



JACQUELINE DID 'FULL JUSTICE' TO 'EK DO TEEN', SAYS SALMAN

Superstar Salman Khan has praised Jacqueline Fernandez for her version of Madhuri Dixit's iconic song "Ek Do Teen".

The 52-year-old actor said his "Race 3" co-star Jacqueline has done "full justice" to the song from the 1988 film "Tezaab".

"Loved the song, Jackie has done full justice to the legendary moves of Saroj Khan. Difficult to match Madhuri. Nice to see Varun and Jackie to our songs makes us proud and keeps the songs alive and fans listening, dancing and having a blast. Makes me proud. Enjoy Karo! (sic)" tweeted Salman.

The rehashed song, which is part of Tiger Shroff-Disha Patani-starrer "Baaghi 2", was blasted by many on Twitter and was also labelled "crass" by "Tejaab" director N Chandra.

I MIGHT WRITE A BOOK ON MY BOLLYWOOD JOURNEY, SAYS KATRINA KAIF

She is one of the top stars in the Hindi film industry and now Katrina Kaif is planning to share her journey, which was full of ups and downs, in the form a book.

The actor, who made her Bollywood debut with 2003 film "Boom" was initially criticised for her acting abilities and dancing skills, but she has come a long way.

When asked how she handled herself in an industry which was alien to her, Katrina said she is saving the answer for now.

"I educated myself (about the industry) but I might write a book (on it), so I won't waste the answer now. I seriously might write a book," she told PTI.

Though the actor has had some of the biggest blockbusters to her credit, most recently being "Tiger Zinda Hai", she has also seen low phases in her career, spanning nearly 15 years.

Katrina, however, considers the setbacks as the stepping stones to her success.

"You need to have a balanced attitude to life, need to accept that failures, hardships and hard times -- for me definitely -- they are the biggest teachers. They (failures) are the biggest steps. Once you get there, then you reach higher. You need them. Hardship and failures taught me to evolve and reach the next step," she said.

"I am constantly trying to educate myself by reading about peoples' journeys, taking care of my mind and making sure I am evolving as a person and not just accepting whatever thoughts come to my mind," she added.

Katrina said she never had a plan B for her career as she always dreamt of being a movie star.

"There was no backup plan. Having a plan B



is like accepting failure. I have never had a plan B for anything. You can say that is not the correct way to go (about something) maybe," she said.

Katrina, who became the face of an NGO

supporting girls education, said there is a disparity in basic education between the privileged and the underprivileged.

"The more we ignore it, the more we are living in denial," she said. *Source: PTI*

Madhuri repalces Sridevi in Abhishek Varman's next, Janhvi thanks actor

Sridevi's daughter Janhvi Kapoor has confirmed that Madhuri Dixit will play the role initially offered to her mother Sridevi in Abhishek Varman film.

Sridevi's daughter, Janhvi, shared the news through an Instagram post, wherein she also mentioned that this film was very close to her mother's heart.

"Abhishek Varman's next film was very close to mom's heart ...Dad, Khushi and I are thankful to Madhuri ji for now being a part of this beautiful film...", Janhvi wrote alongside a picture of Sridevi and Madhuri.

Sridevi died of accidental drowning in Dubai last month at the of 54.

Last year in October, filmmaker Karan Johar announced he was reuniting with Abhishek on a project that would be co-produced by Sajid Nadiadwala.

No other detail, including the film's title and the primary cast, was, however, revealed.

The film is slated to release on April 19, next year. *Source: PTI*



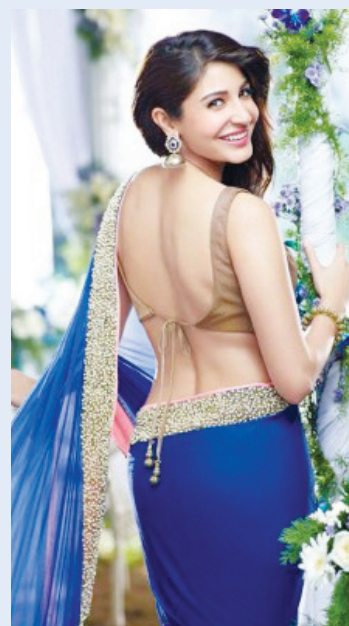
ANUSHKA SHARMA NAMED IN FORBES 30 UNDER 30 ASIA LIST

Bollywood actor-producer Anushka Sharma features in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2018 list, which includes innovators who are reshaping their industries and changing Asia for the better. Anushka, one of Indian film industry's highest paid female actors, is 29.

She started out her career as a model in 2007, making her acting debut in 2008 in the hugely successful Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi, which won her a Filmfare award for Best Actress.

She has since acted in movies such as Band Baaja Baaraat, Jab Tak Hai Jaan, PK, Bombay Velvet, Dil Dhadakne Do, Ae Dil Hai Mushkil and Jab Harry Met Sejal.

As a producer, Anushka, who is married to cricketer Virat Kohli, has made films such as NH10, Phillauri and Pari under her banner Clean Slate Films. She also starred in all three films. *Source: IANS*





REESE WITHERSPOON LOOKS FOR STORIES THAT ARE 'UNIVERSAL AND RELATABLE'

Actor-producer Reese Witherspoon has said that she wants to explore different aspects of "female experience" in her films.

The *Big Little Lies* star, who has produced projects such as *Gone Girl* and *Wild*, said she looks for stories that are "universal and relatable", *FemaleFirst* reported.

"I try to find things that are universal and relatable. My main directive has been, have a woman at the centre of it telling another aspect of the female experience. *Gone Girl* was like, 'Is she psychotic? I don't know.' But it's something that took an idea of the perfect girl and flipped it on its head," Witherspoon said.

"With *Wild*, I loved the idea of a woman versus nature, you see man versus nature all the time," she added.

The 42-year-old actor believes that it is still difficult for women to front films in Hollywood.

"I have to say, when I started it was a good time for women's movies too. Women were the stars of their own movies. I got in a window where I made *Legally Blonde* and *Sweet Home Alabama*.

Source: PTI

EMILY BLUNT IS ALL UP FOR DEVIL WEARS PRADA SEQUEL: IT WOULD BE COOL

Actor Emily Blunt is up for reprising her role of Emily Charlton in 2006 film *Devil Wears Prada*. It was a breakout role for Blunt and she is not averse to revisit it provided co-star Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway also agree to return.

"I mean if everyone wanted to do it, it would be cool... I'd be down," Blunt told ET.

Blunt reunited with Streep and Stanley Tucci, who is now her brother-in-law, last week at a screening of Tucci's film *Final Portrait*.

"It's so funny because, you know, we don't tend to talk about work that much. You know, actors don't end up talking about work that much," she said.

Blunt said Tucci finds the film funny.

Devil Wears Prada author Lauren Weisberger has written a sequel to the original book. Her upcoming novel *When Life Gives You Lululemons*, in fact, focuses on Emily Charlton.

Blunt played the assistant to Streep's icy fashion magazine editor Miranda and she joked that they would never pair up for a friendly role. Streep has a cameo in *Mary Poppins* but again they are not friendly.

"We have really set a tone that we never play characters that like each other very much. And so we are continuing with that tradition in this. I don't know if we could ever play like best pals in something. It's just not what works for Meryl and I."

The fact that Blunt would happily return to play her character from *The Devil Wears Prada* brings us one step closer to finally getting the sequel we've always hoped for. Because the first movie featured Blunt's breakout performance, it's only fitting that the second film would follow her journey.

Source: PTI



Angelina Jolie dating 'older' real estate agent while Brad Pitt reconnects with Jennifer Aniston?

Angelina Jolie is reportedly dating a non-celebrity real estate agent, according to a new report. *Entertainment Tonight* quotes an anonymous source as saying that while Jolie isn't ready to start dating 'seriously' again, she has been seeing a 'handsome, older looking man'.

"Brad and Angie are both very secretive about their dating life. Angie has told some friends she isn't ready to date, but she has been seeing a handsome, older-looking man who is a real estate agent. He isn't a celebrity or high profile in any way," *Entertainment Tonight's* source said.

According to the source, "Angie was in a very bad place after (her) split," and is "just having another adult to spend time with has been helpful."

Jolie and Pitt abruptly announced their separation at the end of 2016. The split



Source says that Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie 'can barely sit in the same room together'

was followed by intense media speculation - rumours of child abuse and negligence were floated and there was an acrimonious custody battle over the couple's six children.

According to the source, things are still not quite sorted between the two and they 'can barely sit in the same room together' even though they've attended joint therapy sessions with the kids.

Refuting recent reports that Pitt had reunited with his ex-wife, Jennifer Aniston, the source said that while the star 'had been casually dating' he isn't seeing 'anyone in the public eye.'

Source: HT

Nobel winner Malala meets Pakistan PM on first trip home since being shot

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai returned to her native Pakistan on March 29, six years after she was shot in the head by Taliban gunmen for advocating greater education of girls.

Yousafzai and her family met Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in the capital, Islamabad, on her first visit to her homeland since she was airlifted for medical treatment in Britain in 2012.

Clad in a traditional shalwar kameez outfit with her head covered with a red and blue duppata scarf, Yousafzai also met several female Pakistani ministers in the prime minister's office.

But she is unlikely to travel to her home region of Swat in northwestern Pakistan due to security threats against her, a relative and security sources told Reuters.

"It's been long-held desire of Malala Yousafzai and her parents to visit Swat and see her relatives and friends. But she was not given permission due to security concerns," said one relative, who declined to be identified.

Earlier, Pakistan's Geo TV showed footage of Yousafzai after she arrived at Islamabad airport, walking to a car escorted by security officials.

At the age of 17, Yousafzai became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for her education advocacy.

In October 2012, masked gunmen stopped a bus taking Malala and some friends home from school and shot her. Two of her friends were also wounded.

Last week, on Twitter, Yousafzai, who is now 20, expressed a longing for her homeland. She now lives in Britain and is studying at Oxford University.

"On this day, I cherish fond memories of home, of playing cricket on rooftops and singing the national anthem in school. Happy Pakistan Day!" she wrote on March 23.

After surviving the attack, Yousafzai was airlifted abroad and underwent surgery.

The Pakistani Taliban, who seized control of her hometown in Pakistan's Swat Valley before being pushed out by the army in 2009, claimed the attack in response to her blog for the BBC Urdu service advocating girls' education.

The hardline Islamist movement blew up girls' schools and imposed a strict interpretation of sharia Islamic law during their rule over Swat.

The Taliban also accused her of promoting Western values in Swat, which is a staunchly conservative parts of the mainly-Muslim nation.

Unable to return to Pakistan after her recovery, Yousafzai moved to Britain, setting up the Malala Fund and supporting education advocacy groups with a focus on Pakistan, Nigeria, Jordan, Syria and Kenya.

This month, a new girls' school built with her Nobel prize money opened in Shangla, near her home district of Swat. During her trip to Pakistan, which is expected to last several days, Yousafzai is expected to stay in Islamabad and meet friends and family at a hotel in the capital, her relatives said. (Reuters)

Afghan women launch rare protest for peace in Taliban stronghold

LASHKAR GAH (TIP): Dozens of peace activists, including women, have set up tents in the Afghan province of Helmand, after a car bomb killed more than a dozen people outside a sports stadium last week. In a rare development, women from the ethnic Pashtun-dominated region began protesting alongside men in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah on Tuesday, saying that they would later march to a Taliban-controlled district to demand an end to the war. "I lost my son in one of these explosions and his family are without any support. I am asking the Taliban to accept our demand for peace," said Khial Bibi, one of the participants at the women's tent.

The protest did not involve government officials or politicians and was a "pure people's movement", said Qais Hashemi, a male protester. The car bomb exploded on Friday as a wrestling match ended in Lashkar Gah, killing at least 14 people and wounding at least 47. No group has claimed responsibility. The attack underlined the continued threat of violence across much of Afghanistan with the approach of spring, when fighting tends to pick up. (Reuters)

Close ties between China, Pak armies will help maintain regional peace: PLA

BEIJING / ISLAMABAD (TIP): Close ties between militaries of China and Pakistan will not only help maintain an all-weather partnership between the two countries but also the regional peace and global stability, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) said on Thursday.

China's 2.3 million-strong military is the world's largest, and Pakistan has emerged as the biggest consumer of the China-produced military hardware. In the past five years, Pakistan has bought 41 per cent of China's exported weapons, according to analysts.

Pakistan is seeking to make China its main supplier of military hardware, partly due to the looser financial terms offered by Beijing, replacing traditional suppliers from the west.

"China and Pakistan share all-weather partnership. We have maintained very high level of defence exchange and cooperation," Chinese military spokesman, Col Ren Guoqiang told a media briefing here.

"At the same time, I am very confident that military cooperation will help facilitate our state to state relationship and also in maintaining regional peace and international stability", he said.

Guoqiang's comments came in the backdrop of China selling a powerful tracking system in an "unprecedented deal" which could speed up the development of multi-warhead missiles by Pakistan.

Zheng Mengwei, a researcher with the state-run Chinese Academy of Sciences



(CAS) Institute of Optics and Electronics in Chengdu, Sichuan province recently.

The researchers told the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post that Pakistan had bought a highly sophisticated, large-scale optical tracking and measurement system from China and deployed it "at a firing range" for use in testing and developing its new missiles.

China was the first country to export such sensitive equipment to Pakistan, CAS said.

The Post report attributed the sale of the equipment to Pakistan to India testing the most advanced nuclear-ready intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Agni-V with a range long enough to hit Beijing or Shanghai.

Chinese authorities declassified

information about the sale of the tracking system yesterday.

While India's single-warhead missiles are bigger and cover longer distances, Pakistan has focused its efforts on developing multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), a type of missile carrying several nuclear warheads that can be directed towards different targets, the report said.

Unlike the US, which accounts for one-third of exports and supplies at least 100 countries, China delivered major arms to 44 countries, mostly in Asia and Africa.

More than 60 per cent of China's exports went to Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar and another 22 per cent went to Africa, a recent study report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said. (PTI)

Myanmar clears some Rohingya for return but no date on horizon

DHAKA (TIP): A Bangladesh official said on March 30 that Myanmar had approved several hundred Rohingya from a list of thousands to return to their homeland, but provided no indication of when the long-delayed process would begin.

Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed in November to repatriate three-quarters of a million Rohingya but the deal has stalled indefinitely, with each side blaming the other for a lack of preparation.

Myanmar has so far approved fewer than 600 names from a list of more than 8,000 refugees provided by Bangladesh. The impoverished South Asian nation is housing nearly a million Rohingya in squalid camps along its southeastern border with Myanmar.

Mohammad Abul Kalam, Bangladesh's top official overseeing the repatriation deal, said Myanmar had given no details about when or if the controversial process was expected to begin.

"No date has been fixed yet," he told reporters. Asked when the process would begin, Kalam said he had "no idea".

The controversial agreement was supposed to start in January but missed the deadline and has dragged since.

It has attracted a firestorm of criticism from rights groups concerned that the persecuted Muslim minority will not be safe in Myanmar.

Under the agreement, refugees given the green light to return must do so voluntarily but many displaced in Bangladesh have rejected the prospect of returning to Myanmar's strife-torn Rakhine state.

Rohingya have been persecuted in Rakhine for generations and fear the cycle of violence that has driven them into Bangladesh could repeat.

Kalam said Bangladesh would send another list of around 10,000 refugees to Myanmar in coming weeks for verification. Officials from each country are due to meet in April to discuss the process, he added.

But there is scepticism in Bangladesh, and elsewhere, that repatriation will succeed.

Myanmar has long marginalised the Rohingya as illegal immigrants and the key infrastructure required for the huge endeavour is yet to be constructed.

Bangladesh and Myanmar had agreed to complete the huge process by November. (AFP)

Sri Lanka president cuts PM Wickremesinghe's duties in power struggle

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena on March 27 reduced the responsibilities of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as a power struggle worsened within their uneasy coalition.

Sirisena took away the central bank, the policy-making National Operations Room and several other institutions from the control of Wickremesinghe, who had held them since coming to power in January 2015.

The changes were published in a government gazette notice issued Wednesday which transferred the responsibilities to Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera.

There was no official explanation for why the Central Bank of Sri Lanka had been taken away from the prime minister's control. In 2015 a central bank governor appointed by Wickremesinghe, Arjuna Mahendran, was accused of insider trading.

Sirisena appointed a special inquiry which cleared Wickremesinghe of any wrongdoing. But Mahendran was held responsible for passing sensitive information to his bond-dealer son-in-law Arjun Aloysius to make \$75 million in undue profits.

Sirisena joined hands with Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP) to oust strongman president Mahinda Rajapakse in January 2015 after a decade in power.

But since then their alliance has fractured, with Sirisena clashing with free-market champion Wickremesinghe over economic policy. (AFP)

HISTORICAL PLACES IN LUCKNOW

Explore Lucknow's golden past by visiting these fascinating heritage sites and monuments in the city. One of the most famous historical attractions here is the Bada Imambara (popularly known as Bhoorbhulaiya), built by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula in 1784. A reminiscent of the Mughal era, this intricately carved building is amongst the must-visit tourist attractions of Lucknow. Built in the 19th century, The Residency—witness to the inglorious Revolt of 1857 in India and the Constantia (now a part of La Martiniere College) from 1800s add to the architectural grandeur of the city. Some of the other famous heritage spots in Lucknow include Kaiserbagh Palace Complex, Rumi Darwaza, Chowk Bazaar and Chattrar Manzil.

BEGUM HAZRAT MAHAL PARK

Situated in the heart of the city, the Begum Hazrat Mahal Park was built in the memory of the beautiful Queen of Awadh, Begum Hazrat Mahal. Though the garden and monument were constructed by the Indian government to commemorate her contribution to the 1857 revolt, it is also immensely popular with couples now. This impressive garden in the Hazratganj region has striking wellsprings, beautiful trees and stone pathways. The greenery and serenity around the garden draws couples in large numbers.

RUMI DARWAZA

An exquisite example of Awadhi architecture, the Rumi Darwaza is a 60-foot-tall gateway located close to historical landmarks such as Bada Imambara and Chota Imambara in the city of Lucknow. The exquisite arch-shaped doorway is as central to Lucknow, as India Gate is to Delhi or Gateway of India is to Mumbai. Built in the 18th century, Rumi Darwaza is famed for its intricate carvings, architectural beauty and the vantage point on its top which offers panoramic views of the city (though entry to the topmost point is restricted mostly). This striking gateway is also known as the Turkish Gate, because of its resemblance with the entrance gate in Istanbul.

CONSTANTIA

Now a part of the famous La Martiniere College in Lucknow, the Constantia is a grand creation of a Frenchman called General Claude Martin. Martin started the construction of this structure in 1785, with the intention of building a palatial residence in India. However, he couldn't live long enough to live in the house and died in the year 1800. The construction could finally be completed only two years after his death. The building was named after the main principle of Martin's life, which was 'Labore et Constantia' (energy and persistence). Before he died, he made a will stating his desire to use the property as a centre of learning and thus, Constantia became an integral part of the college. The architectural grandeur of this majestic building will remind you of the bygone era.

KAISERBAGH PALACE COMPLEX

One of the most-visited tourist attractions in Lucknow, Kaiserbagh Palace complex is truly an architectural marvel. It was built by



the Nawab of Awadh Wajid Ali Shah between 1848 and 1850. In the later years, the palace acted as a stronghold of Begum Hazrat Mahal during the 1857 mutiny. A major part

of the palace was destroyed by the British forces after the Revolt of 1857. Though the palace is in ruins now, it remains a prime tourist hotspot in the city. Visitors can still see the pediments, lanterns, Moorish minarets and banisters here. Moreover, the tombs of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan (the fifth Nawab Wazir of Awadh) and his beloved wife Khursheed Zadi, rest on the northern terrace of palace's courtyard, which is another major highlight of the place. With its splendid architectural style, Kaiserbagh Palace is a must see attraction in the city.

JAMA MASJID

Built entirely in sparkling off-white sandstone, Lucknow's Jama Masjid is considered to be one of the most beautiful mosques in India. Constructed in the 15th century, this architectural wonder will leave you spellbound with the calligraphy on its walls, its picturesque domes and striking minarets. Standing tall with 260 pillars, the mosque has 15 arched domes complete with exquisite carvings and stone work. Still used for daily prayers, the mosque is decorated on special festivals such as Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Zuha. Located towards the north-west of Chota Imambara, the mosque is an important landmark in the city of nawabs.

CHATTRAR MANZIL

Situated on the banks of the Gomti River, the Chattrar Manzil or Umbrella Palace was built by Nawab Ghazi-ud-din Haider but was completed only after his death by his son, Nawab Nasir-ud-din Haider. One of the most imposing buildings in Lucknow, this palace is a fine example of the hybrid Indo-European-Nawabi architectural style. The most noticeable feature of this palace is the umbrella-shaped domes or chattris from which it derives its name. The Umbrella Palace was an important centre for the Indian rebels during the 1857 rebellion. It still retains its old world charm and now houses the office of the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI).

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR PARTNER BREAKS YOUR TRUST

Nothing hurts more than feeling betrayed by someone you love and trust. Betrayal can come in many forms, such as dishonesty, disloyalty, unfaithfulness, or withholding. Each of these feels like a moral violation that cuts to the core of your emotional soul and plunges you into a place of deep psychological distress.

Forgive yourself

An important part of the forgiveness process is forgiving yourself. When trying to understand a situation, we have a tendency to generate explanations for why things happen, even if they are irrational. We often blame ourselves: If I was a better person in some way, maybe this wouldn't have happened to me. If I was less gullible I would have seen this coming. We think if we can find the flaw and fix it, we might be able to prevent it from happening again. Self-forgiveness requires self-compassion and learning that, even with your flaws and vulnerabilities, you still have tremendous self-worth and deserve to be treated well. It is important to know that the behavior of the other person was his or her choice and reflects who they are, not who you are.

Forgive the other person

It is impossible to regain trust without first regaining control of your emotional well-being by finding your inner peace with the situation. Many people struggle with forgiveness because they don't want to let the other person off the hook for his or her bad behavior. It is important to realize though that forgiveness isn't about the other person but about your emotional freedom. Learning to forgive and make peace with things that happened in the past can happen more easily when you take your focus off of the specific events that occurred and instead try to see the perspective of the other person. Seeing someone else's perspective can help you understand the events that occurred and make them less personal. It can also be easier to forgive someone when you see them as a whole person. If you find yourself stewing in anger over a situation, try to pull back and remember the good qualities you know the other person has, and recognize that we all have flaws and make mistakes.

Trust yourself.

It is nearly impossible to trust someone else unless you first trust yourself. A good deal of the fear that people feel when they think about trusting someone who has betrayed them comes from the belief that they will not be OK if it happens to them again. They fear being emotionally devastated by loss, the shame and humiliation of being duped again, and the toll this would take on their self-esteem. The fear can be so unfathomable it needs to be avoided at any cost. This is where the work needs to be done. Instead of focusing on why you won't be OK, it is



important to know why you would be fine and still be able to live a good life without the other person. If you are like most people, you've probably already lived through several very difficult challenges—think about what strengths got you through those times.

Some people also fear that they are being weak for not leaving. If there is any type of emotional or physical abuse you should leave and get professional help if necessary. However, when there isn't abuse involved, in many situations it takes a good deal more strength to work through a difficult point in a relationship than it does to walk away from it. You need to believe that should it become apparent that it is time to separate from the relationship, you will be able to do so and still be a wholly functioning person. If finding this kind of trust in yourself seems very difficult on your own, consider working with a professional who can help you see the blind spots you can't see in yourself.

Trust the other person

The truth about trusting someone else is that the only

certainty is that there is no certainty.

There is always an element of faith in the trust we give to someone. After a betrayal, all you can do is assess the situation and make an appraisal about what you think is likely behavior in the future. Does the person seem sincerely apologetic and willing to make amends? Does the person act with integrity in other areas of their life? Were there circumstances that played a role, or does the betrayal seem to reflect their overall character? Has he or she broken your trust in similar ways in the past? In the big picture, is there more good than bad in the relationship?

If the answers to these questions affirm the positive, the choice in front of you is whether or not you can accept the flaws of the other person and again trust that they will act in the best interest of your relationship.

There are never any guarantees when it comes to other people. Only time will show whether trust is deserved. However, withholding trust out of fear or anger will prevent you from emotionally reconnecting with a person and keep your relationship from moving forward in a healthy way.

FOOD CORNER

LEMON CHICKEN

Ingredients

6 chicken thighs without skin,

For the base: 3-4 Tbsp refined oil, 2 tsp cumin seeds, 2 onions julienned, 6 cloves garlic chopped, 1/2 inch ginger chopped, 3-4 hot green chillies, 3/4 tsp turmeric powder, 1 tsp coriander powder, Salt to taste, 1 cup fresh lemon juice, 1/2 cup orange juice, 1/4 cup fresh sugarcane juice, Fresh coriander to garnish.

Method

- Heat a heavy cooking vessel on a high heat and once its hot, add the refined oil and swirl the pan to coat the base evenly. Once the oil is nice and hot, add the cumin seeds and saute them until crackling and fragrant.
- Now add the onions, garlic and ginger and sauté them gently until they take on a light golden brown color. Turn up the heat and then add the spice powders. Toast the spices on a high heat until they are intensely aromatic and well toasted. Then add a little water and bhuno the base ingredients repeatedly until the oil rises to the top and the masala is well cooked out.
- Add some salt and mix well, then add the chicken thighs to the pan. Turn up the heat and fry the chicken in the masala until it is evenly coated with the flavor of the base and is a very light yellowy golden brown in color.



- Now add the lemon and orange juice to the chicken and deglaze the pan well, scraping up the flavor packed pan deposits on the base of the pan. Stir everything together well to combine, then add a little sugarcane juice to balance the acidity of the lemon juice.
- Bring the chicken to a boil, then turn the heat to low, cover the pan and let the chicken simmer away until it is cooked to perfection and almost falling off the bone. Once the chicken is cooked, uncover the pan and simmer the light gravy until slightly reduced and concentrated in flavor.
- Turn off the heat, then garnish with fresh coriander and serve with hot rotis or rice.

DUM ALOO LAKHNAVI

Ingredients

1/2 kg potatoes, 100 gm mashed potatoes, 100 gm crumbled paneer, 1 tsp red chilli powder salt to taste, 1 tsp garam masala, 1 1/2 tsp kasoori methi, 3 Tbsp ghee, 1 Tbsp butter, 1 Tbsp cream, 200 gm onions, 1/2 tsp garam masala, Salt to taste, 1 tsp ghee, 200 gm fresh tomato puree.

Method

- Heat some ghee in a pan and saute all the ingredients. The onions should be nice and glossy. Keep aside.
- In another pan, heat some ghee and cook all the ingredients for a couple of minutes. Keep aside.
- Cut out the cores of the potatoes and deep fry the potatoes.
- While the potatoes cool down make the filling. Mix the mashed potatoes and paneer together. This is the filling. Stuff the fried potatoes with the filling and keep aside.
- Cook the onion and tomato gravies in oil until the oil separates. Add all the garama masala, chilli powder and kasoori methi. Mix. Cook for 1 minute.
- Stir in the butter and the cream. Mix well.
- Finally, add the potatoes and simmer for about 3-5 minutes.

THIS WEARABLE BRAIN SCANNER ALLOWS PATIENTS TO MOVE FREELY

British scientists recently unveiled a next-generation wearable brain scanner that can be donned like a helmet and allows patients to move freely while being scanned, potentially revolutionising neural care for children and the elderly.

Researchers hailed the “transformative” imaging set-up, which for the first time gave them access to brain activity while patients make natural movements, including nodding, stretching and even playing ping pong.

“It gives us a new kind of brain scanner that allows us to study things we’ve never been able to study before and people who have never been able to be scanned in a neuro-imaging environment -- patients from groups like children for example,” said professor Gareth Barnes from University College London, who worked on the project.

Current magnetoencephalography (MEG) scanners use sensors to measure the brain’s magnetic field that need to be kept extremely cold – minus 269 Celsius, or close to absolute zero – requiring bulky cooling technology.

They typically weigh around half a tonne and patients must remain perfectly still to not disrupt the brain images produced. This makes it hard to scan patients who are unable to stay



immobile for long periods, such as young children or those with movement disorders like Parkinson’s disease.

The new scanner, developed by researchers from UCL and the University of Nottingham, does away with the need for cooling by using state-of-the-art “quantum” brain sensors, which represent two giant leaps in scanning technology.

“These can be mounted directly onto the scalp surface so we can bring them

into much closer proximity to the brain and that increases the amount of signal that we get,” said Matthew Brookes, associate professor at the University of Nottingham.

“They’re also very light, which means we can put them on the scalp surface and the subjects can move their head around whilst they are being scanned.”

In a paper published in the journal Nature, scientists from the two universities showed patients performing a range of physical movements while the scanner helmet took images of their brain’s magnetic field.

They were able to measure vast differences in electrical activity in certain areas of the brain depending on the activity performed -- be that playing table tennis or sipping a cup of tea.

“We can get a full image of what the magnetic field looks like outside the brain,” said Brookes, allowing researchers to see which areas of the brain fire up as patients do different tasks.

In order to gain a clear view of the brain’s electrical signals, the team first had to develop a system of electromagnetic coils that cancelled out the Earth’s natural magnetic field around the patient. *Source: AFP*



NEW DRUG MAY STOP CANCER-CAUSING GENE IN ITS TRACKS

WASHINGTON (TIP): Scientists are testing a promising drug that may stop a gene associated with obesity from triggering breast and lung cancer, as well as prevent them from growing.

Researchers at the Michigan State University in the US showed that the drug, I-BET-762, is showing signs of significantly delaying the development of existing breast and lung cancers by zeroing in on how a cancerous gene, called c-Myc, acts.

“I-BET-762 works by targeting DNA so that this gene can’t be expressed,” said Karen Liby, an associate professor at Michigan.

“It does this by inhibiting a number of important proteins - both in cancer and immune cells - ultimately reducing the amount of cancer cells in mice by 80 per cent,” said Liby, who led one of the two studies published in the journal Cancer Prevention Research.

These proteins are important because they play a critical role in what occurs between cells.

For example, a particular protein, known as pSTAT3, can become activated in immune cells and stop them from doing their job, such as fighting off an invading cancer.

The offending protein also can become overproduced in cancer cells and act as a shield - ultimately protecting the tumour.

“In our study, the drug decreased pSTAT3 levels by 50 per cent in both types of cells,” Liby said.

The second study, led by Jamie Bernard, an assistant professor at Michigan, applied Liby’s findings to precancerous cells.

“We looked directly at the effect I-BET-762 had on human cells that could become tumorigenic, but were not quite yet,” Bernard said.

“We found that the drug prevented more than 50 per cent of these cells from becoming cancerous,” he said.

The c-Myc gene is induced by visceral fat, which is found around the inner organs of the body as opposed to subcutaneous fat, which is located under the skin.

“Almost half a million of all new cancers have been linked to obesity,” Bernard said. *Source: PTI*

Would-be moms, eat more eggs, meat

Consumption of choline – an essential nutrient found in liver, eggs, wheat germ – during pregnancy may improve metabolism and brain development of babies, say researchers.

Although the role of choline in neurodevelopment has been studied before in rodents, the new research, was conducted on pigs, which has more relevance to humans.

“In pigs from choline-deficient moms, their brains were about 10% smaller overall,” said Austin Mudd, a doctoral student in the Neuroscience Program at the University of Illinois. And 11 of the 19 regions were significantly smaller in choline-deficient brains, he said. The result was the same in grey and white matter concentration of the piglets.

Conversely, piglets whose mothers consumed sufficient choline during pregnancy had higher concentrations of grey and white matter in the brain’s cortical regions. Grey matter is primarily made up of the neurons themselves, while white matter comprises the material that connects neurons and bridges in different parts of the brain.

For the study, published in Current Developments in Nutrition, the team gave pregnant sows choline-deficient or choline-sufficient diets through the second half of their pregnancies.

After weaning, piglets were fed choline-deficient or choline-sufficient milk replacer for 30 days. Then the



Studies show if you give pregnant women more choline, the mother will make more choline that contains DHA and this will be specifically directed towards the placenta and the baby

month-old piglets were scanned by magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

The left and right cortex were found to be larger in the choline-sufficient pigs, as a result of a greater density of grey matter in the brain. As part of the study, some of the pigs from choline-deficient mothers were also given adequate amounts of choline after birth. The results showed that it is not sufficient for the brain.

“Postnatal supplementation cannot correct for prenatal deficiency. It has to occur during development,” explained Ryan Dilger, associate professor at the varsity. “We know that the structural alteration is there, but it may not manifest in ways we can see until later in life. That’s why it’s important to think about this during gestation because the changes are occurring then,” Mudd noted. *Source: IANS*

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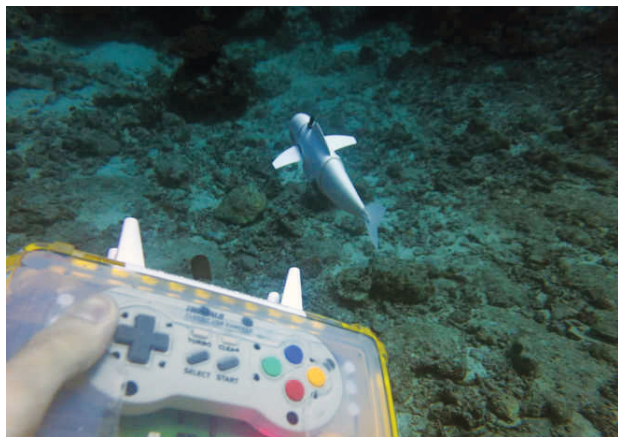
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SOFT ROBOTIC FISH SWIMS ALONGSIDE REAL ONES IN OCEAN



BOSTON (TIP): Scientists have unveiled “SoFi,” a soft robotic fish that can independently swim alongside real fish in the ocean.

During test dives in the Rainbow Reef in Fiji, SoFi swam at depths of more than 50 feet for up to 40 minutes at once, nimbly handling currents and taking high-resolution photos and videos using a fisheye lens.

“To our knowledge, this is the first robotic fish that can swim untethered in three dimensions for extended periods of time,” said Robert Katzschmann from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US.

“We are excited about the possibility of being able to use a system like this to get closer to marine life than humans can get on their own,” said Katzschmann, lead author of the study published in the journal *Science Robotics*.

Existing autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) have traditionally been tethered to boats or powered by bulky and expensive propellers.

In contrast, SoFi has a much simpler and more lightweight setup, with a single camera, a motor, and the same lithium polymer battery that is found in consumer smartphones.

To make the robot swim, the motor pumps water into two balloon-like chambers in the fish’s tail that operate like a set of pistons in an engine. As one chamber expands, it bends and flexes to one side; when the actuators push water to the other channel, that one bends and flexes in the other direction. These alternating actions create a side-to-side motion that mimics the movement of a real fish.

By changing its flow patterns, the hydraulic system enables different tail manoeuvres that result in a range of swimming speeds, with an average speed of about half a body length per second. *Source: PTI*

MOZILLA’S NEW TOOL LIMITS FACEBOOK FROM TRACKING USER

Mozilla has launched a Firefox browser add-on that limits Facebook’s ability to track a user’s online activity. The add-on ‘Facebook Container’ isolates users’ Facebook sessions from the rest of their web activity. It’s designed to prevent Facebook from collecting information on other sites that users visit and target them with ads and other messages.

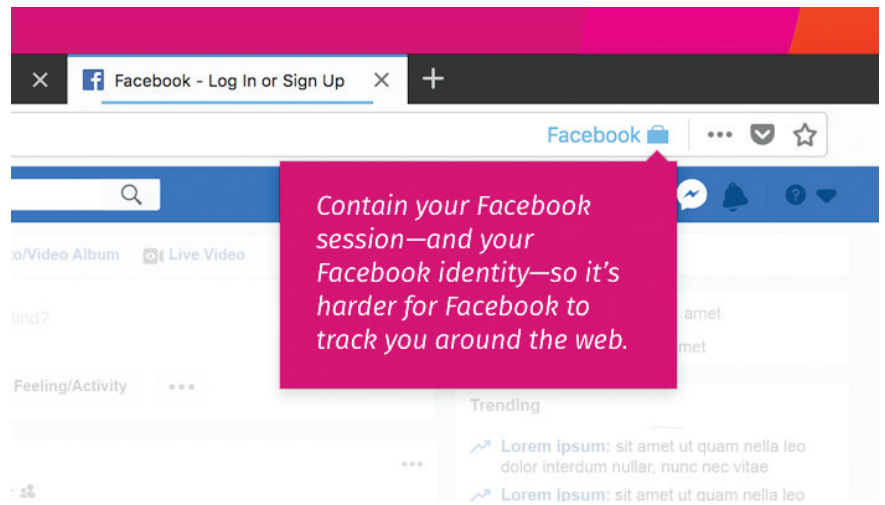
How does it work? When you install the extension, it deletes your Facebook cookies from the browser and logs you out at first. The next time you open Facebook, it will be opened in a blue-coloured tab or “container” and you have to log back in.

From within that container tab, you can continue to use Facebook normally. If you click on a link, on your timeline, that takes you to an external website, it will load that page outside the container. If you click any Facebook share buttons outside of Facebook, it will load those in the Facebook container.

Embedded Facebook comments and Like buttons that a staple of multiple websites won’t work with this add-on enabled.

Note that Facebook in its privacy policy asserts that it collects cookies, small text of information which generally stores and receives identifiers and other details stored on your device.

“We use cookies if you have a Facebook account, use the Facebook Services, including our website and apps (whether or not you are registered or logged in), or visit other websites and



apps that use the Facebook Services (including the Like button or our advertising tools). This policy explains how we use cookies and the choices you have,” says Facebook on its privacy policy page.

“We use cookies to help us show ads for businesses and other organizations to people who may be interested in the products, services or causes they promote,” explains Facebook why it collects your cookies.

Facebook Container by Mozilla is aimed at delivering a “solution that doesn’t tell users to simply stop using a service that they get value from. Instead, it gives users tools that help them protect themselves from the unexpected side effects of their usage,” the company said in a blog post.

Mozilla, however, warns users that

Facebook Container-like add-ons could not have prevented the kind of data leak that happened with Cambridge Analytica but “troves of data are being collected on your behavior on the internet, and so giving users a choice to limit what they share in a way that is under their control is important.”

You can also consider downloading Vivaldi browser, which is a desktop-only browser and is aimed at power users. The browser has enabled DuckDuckGo as the default search engine for private browsing (similar to Google Chrome’s incognito mode). DuckDuckGo is a new search engine that is known for strict privacy policies. For instance, it doesn’t store your search history and block sites from tracking you, ultimately preventing sites and online advertisers from serving you targeted ads.

Now, download everything Google and FB know about you

You can check and download all your information and data saved through your Google account by following these steps.

Google Maps

You can click on this link to check your activity on Google Maps. Here, you will see a timeline showing all the places you’ve visited the most. You can check your travel route for a specific day, month or year. Google’s records for Maps starts from 2009.

Google My Activity

Clicking on this link will take you to Google’s ‘My Activity’ page. This is more of a detailed history page for all your activity on Google Chrome. You will find your history of websites and pages visited on Chrome categorised as Facebook, WhatsApp, and YouTube. It essentially clubs pages you’ve often visited from one website under one category. Although this activity can be viewed only by you, what’s scary here is that it will show activity even if you’ve deleted your browsing history from Chrome.

Google Ads

Ever wondered how you search for a product online and the next thing you see are related ads flashing everywhere. This happens because of your usage being studied online to show tailor-made ads. This page will show you



how Google personalises ads based on your usage behaviour and pattern. Google displays ads from its services like Search, YouTube and also across over 2 million non-Google websites and apps the company partners with.

You can choose to personalise the kind of ads you wish to see ranging from different topics and interests. You can also add your

gender and age group for further personalisation of ads. Facebook has a similar option for ads displayed on the platform.

Apps and services

Here, you’ll find all the apps and services you have given permission to access your

Google account. You can check and review what kind of permissions is granted to the apps and services. You can also revoke access to apps from this page. It also shows the date and time access was given to each app.

Facebook

You will find this feature under the ‘Settings’ menu on Facebook. Facebook warns that this archive will contain “sensitive info like your private Wall posts, photos and profile information”. After entering your password, Facebook will start downloading the zipped file. Here, you’ll find folders of html files, photos, messages, and videos. **ALSO READ:** Here’s how you can keep your Facebook data safe from third-party apps, games

Under the ‘Photos’ folder you’ll find all the photos uploaded on your Facebook account, shared with you and ones you’re tagged on. There’s also a folder titled ‘Messages’ which contains files shared via Messenger. These include audio recordings, GIFs, stickers, photos and videos shared on Messenger. There’s a separate video folder as well for all files shared on Facebook.

This discovery of data archives is interesting and scary at the same time. While Google and Facebook assures that data being stored is accessible only by you, it still speaks volumes of the risk and vulnerability of what can leak out and fall into the wrong hands.

Source: HT

GSP renewal will empower American negotiators with India: AFTI

WASHINGTON (TIP): Welcoming the renewal of a programme which allows most Indian imports to enter the US duty free, a trade advocacy group has said it will empower Americans negotiators against their Indian counterparts.

President Donald Trump signed the legislation to renew the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Programme last week as part of the Omnibus Spending Bill.

"GSP renewal will help empower the US Trade Representative (USTR) and other US negotiators as they sit down with India's representatives at upcoming commercial discussions," the Alliance for Fair Trade with India said.

Commending the Congress and Trump for the renewal, the AFTI said the GSP supports the USTR efforts on pending petitions brought by industries that face challenging market conditions and trade barriers.

"AFTI and its members support and commend USTR efforts to engage and address the issues at hand and also calls on India to step up and act to address the issues as well," a media statement said.

The AFTI said the renewal of the highlighted the importance of the India-US economic relationship.

India is the largest recipient of GSP benefits.

"As such, Congress and the White House are empowering their India trade team to assess India's compliance with the GSP Program and make real, tangible progress on the many challenging issues US companies face in India," AFTI said.



Introduced in 1976, a wide range of industrial and agricultural products originating from certain developing countries are given preferential access to American markets.

In India's case, it enables duty-free entry of 3,500 product lines, which benefits exporters of textiles, engineering, gems and jeweler and chemical products.

According to the USTR, the total US imports under GSP in 2017 was USD 21.2 billion, of which India was the biggest beneficiary with USD 5.6 billion, followed by Thailand (USD4.2 billion) and Brazil (USD 2.5 billion).

The programme has now been renewed through December 31, 2020.

While legislation to renew the GSP was enacted on March 23rd, the effective date

of renewal is April 22, 2018. GSP-eligible entries will enter the US duty-free on, and after, April 22, 2018.

Because the GSP programmes renewal is retroactive, importers may seek refunds of duties paid during the lapse of GSP authorization, USTR said in a statement. In accordance with US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) instructions, importers who marked their GSP-eligible articles after January 1, 2018, with the applicable special program indicator (SPI) for GSP ("A" or "A+") will receive automatic duty refunds without interest.

In addition, for GSP-eligible articles that entered the US during the lapse of GSP authorisation without SPI code 'A', importers may request a GSP duty refund request to CBP. *Source: PTI*

ICICI BACKS KOCHHAR IN VIDEOCON LOAN CASE

DELHI/MUMBAI (TIP):

Reiterating its stand on the Videocon issue, ICICI Bank Chairman MK Sharma on Thursday said reports alleging nepotism by the lender's MD and CEO Chanda Kochhar were unfounded and malicious in nature.

He said ICICI's exposure to the Videocon group (Videocon Industries and 12 of its subsidiaries/associates as co-obligors) for a debt consolidation programme and for the group's oil and gas capital expenditure programme aggregating approximately Rs 40,000 crore was less than 10%.

Sharma asserted that no individual bank employee has the ability to influence any credit given by it.

He also said Kochhar did not chair the committee that had lent to Videocon. "Kochhar was part of the committee." Sharma also clarified that Kochhar had always made all regulatory disclosures abiding by the SEBI guidelines.

"...the Board has come to the conclusion that there is no question of any quid pro quo/nepotism/conflict of interest as is being alleged in various rumours. The Board has full confidence and reposes full faith in the Bank's MD & CEO, Chanda Kochhar," the bank said in a statement on Wednesday.

"ICICI Bank was not the lead bank for this consortium and the Bank only sanctioned its share of facilities aggregating approximately Rs 3,250 crore which was less than 10% of the total consortium facility in April 2012," Sharma said.

Allegations had been swirling around alleging involvement of Kochhar and her family members in a loan provided to Videocon group on quid pro quo basis. It was also pointed out that a complaint had been forwarded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others for necessary action against Kochhar.

"We would urge you not to be misled by these rumours which are being spread to malign the Bank and its top management", the Board said.



Chanda Kochhar

FRAUDS COST RS 18,170 CRORE IN FY17: REPORT

MUMBAI (TIP): The domestic banking sector reported a total of 12,553 fraud cases worth Rs 18,170 crore in fiscal 2016-17, with state-run Bank of Maharashtra registering the highest number of such cases, says a report.

While Bank of Maharashtra reported 3,893 cases of fraud, private sector lender ICICI Bank came a close second with 3,359 cases and HDFC Bank the third with 2,319 fraud cases, in the last financial year, according to proxy advisory firm Institutional Investor Advisory Services (IIAS).

In terms of the quantum, PNB had reported the highest amount of frauds at Rs 2,810 crore in the last financial year, followed by Bank of India at Rs 2,770 crore, SBI at Rs 2,420 crore and Bank of Maharashtra at Rs 2,041 crore.

The report comes amid a string of banking frauds recently, including the Rs 13,000-crore PNB scam involving billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi.

"In 2016-17, the Indian banking sector reported 12,553 frauds aggregating to Rs 181.7 billion (Rs 18,170 crore)," IIAS said. *Source: PTI*

TOYOTA, SUZUKI SIGN PACT FOR INDIA MARKET

NEW DELHI (TIP): Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) and Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC) have signed an agreement towards the mutual supply of hybrid and other vehicles to each other for the Indian market. As per agreement signed in Japan on Thursday, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) will supply its models Brezza and Baleno to Toyota and Toyota will supply Corolla to Suzuki Motor Corporation's Indian arm. Details like new branding of the three cars shared are yet to be decided.

This sharing of models between the two car manufacturers would be in addition to the work both companies are doing in the area of electric and hybrid vehicles. The vehicles will be sold by respective subsidiaries of Toyota and Suzuki based in India through their sales networks.

Microsoft unveils biggest reorganisation in years, Terry Myerson to leave firm



Microsoft Corp Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Satya Nadella unveiled the company's biggest reorganisation in years, combining the divisions that focus on devices and software for businesses while moving the Windows operating system unit into the cloud operations.

It's a sweeping set of changes that includes the departure of Windows chief and Microsoft veteran Terry Myerson and the appointment of Scott Guthrie to oversee the combined Windows and cloud operation.

Nadella is also putting Office chief Rajesh Jha in charge of the newly created Experiences & Devices team. This group will focus on how people interact with various computing devices, using multiple senses, Microsoft said in a memo.

Shares of the world's biggest software maker rose 0.8% to \$90.06 at 11:59 am in New York. The stock has gained 38% in the past year.

Long time allies Renault and Nissan in talks to merge

Renault SA and Nissan Motor Co. are in talks to merge, seeking to solidify their two-decade-old alliance under a single stock as an unprecedented shift toward electric and shared cars transforms the industry, people with knowledge of the matter said.

A deal would end the current alliance between the companies and marry them as one corporation, said the people, who asked not to be identified as the details aren't public. Renault currently owns 43% of Nissan while the Japanese carmaker has a 15% stake in its French counterpart. Carlos Ghosn, the chairman of both companies, is driving the negotiations and would run the combined entity, the people said.

A merged giant would be a more formidable rival for Volkswagen AG and Toyota Motor Corp., allowing the partners to better pool resources as the industry shifts toward new-energy vehicles, autonomous driving and car-sharing services. While the alliance of Renault and Nissan has brought savings, the fragmented ownership structure has prevented the companies from reaping full benefits from their union. "Size matters in the auto industry," said Janet Lewis, an analyst at Macquarie in Tokyo. "The concern has always primarily been the French government, and somewhat Japan, because both France and Japan like to keep their national champions."

The parties are discussing a transaction in which Nissan would essentially give Renault shareholders stock in the new company, the people said. Nissan shareholders would also receive shares in the new company in exchange for their holdings, they said. The automaker may maintain headquarters in both Japan and France.

Renault shares jumped as much as 8.3%, hitting the highest intraday level in more than a decade. Nissan shares are down nearly 2% over the past year, giving the company a valuation of 4.6 trillion yen (\$43 billion).



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 APRIL 02 - APRIL 08, 2018

Aries:

Ganesha says your mind doesn't waiver and you take risks at work. You gamble and speculate with aggression and believe that risks have to be taken to conquer new horizons. You spend time with bank details, loans, funds, real-estate deals, financially sound partners and customers, and reap the whirlwind. There is some passion on the cards but not the sort of romance that turns you on.

Taurus:

Life is good, and you have no complaints which, I must add, is a rare human condition. You have been bestowed with everything and you thank the Lord and live in gratitude which is certainly a good way to be. This is a wonderful period with beauty and utility, money and deep bonds. Family life is excellent and there is intense romance too. Your work / career is moving along well and all the hard work has paid off. You will socialize and fuse work and play with pleasure, fun and joy.

Gemini:

This is a good period for intense companionship and indulgences, also many expenses as you will be in a happy mood and will be dining in style. You get a trifle laidback where work is concerned and entrust a lot of it to associates which you must guard against. There will be a variety of activities and experiences and new projects and collaborations. There will be fun outings with the family, and time spent with children; dependents and pets also provide great joy.

Cancer:

You continue in a happy mode with some minor adjustments to your ebullience and enthusiasm. There are journeys, ceremonies, publicity, meetings, interviews, conferences, marriages to attend and all sorts of socializing. You enjoy the attention and also make time for pleasant amusements. Work is on the backseat for the moment, but you can return it to any time. You use the time to meet old and ailing relatives and spend time with friends and associates who need you not just for your business acumen but for your charm and inherent people skills.

Leo:

You are filled with expansion plans and have the determination to see them through. It is a fantastic period with a large chunk of luck following you wherever you go. You make spectacular progress in whatever you do despite mounting expenses. It is a thrilling period and you are enjoying the ride. If in business, there is enormous money to be made. You have the tactical acumen to seize the moment and mint it.

Virgo:

Busy times reign supreme as you will be on your toes on the work and home fronts. Money will be spent on refurbishing, renovating and decorating your home and office and there could be added expenses on children and illnesses of family members. You will be troubled by all this and will look to spirituality for a way out. You were on a roll, have been pampered for too long, and suddenly there are problems to solve and you don't know how to cope.

Libra:

Your work life acquires a fresh coat of paint as you increase the tempo and intensity. There will be many new ties, bonds, partnerships, collaborations and links including distracting romance with many passion-packed moments. If single, there could be serious love on the cards which could lead to the altar. For the married, marital bonds will be strengthened. It can get a bit complicated too with relationships within relationships, there may be adultery too but that depends a lot on the personal horoscope.

Scorpio:

You reach a type of completion at home and at work; in many ways, the circle is complete. There is fruition in your affairs and you find that yourself in a pool of bliss. You will feel happy, content and fulfilled with life. Your talents win the applause they so richly deserve and you bask in all the attention and glory. Pleasure, profit, joy and contentment are yours for the asking. You take no concrete step forward at work, but there is happiness in sheer acceptance.

Sagittarius:

You are filled with new wisdom and ideas and want to share it with the world, or at least with friends and close associates. You may even seem quickly to those who don't know you too well as your imagination runs wild and you come up with innovative schemes. But there will be happy moments with the family and you will take refuge in it. You are also drawn to religion, spirituality, prayer, meditation, rituals, yoga and the esoteric sciences.

Capricorn:

There is some sort of reality check now and the material world beckons with its allurements of hard work and its rewards in monetary terms. You can get insecure when your bank account diminishes, and you are away from work. So, you get down to the task of shoring up your finances. You find a semblance of happiness, though fleeting. Work has never been the reason for your existence but at least it consumes time and keeps you occupied and distracted from the various dreams that catch your fancy every now and then.

Aquarius:

The money angle, travel, family, friends and many new diversions grab your attention. You have to cope with funds, joint holdings, settlements, hypothecation, trusts, even alimony and golden handshakes. Many kinds of financial possibilities confront you and you will be juggling them with some dexterity. This is not what you bargained for, but it has to be done. You will also meet many people and there is romance in the air.

Pisces:

You are working at full steam and progress is assured. You may also travel on work and holiday and there could be distractions like illness in the family. Stress levels are high, and you have to take care of yourself too. You are loved and appreciated and there is emotional support and happy bonding. It is a pleasant period in many ways as you make progress and more money. You could be wrong and there is no harm admitting it.

Ball-tampering row: Will regret the incident all his life, says a tearful Smith

SYDNEY (TIP): A tearful Steve Smith on March 29 took full responsibility for the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa that has left his reputation in tatters, saying he is absolutely gutted right now and would regret the incident for the rest of his life.

The 28-year-old, who has been banned for a year by Cricket Australia and stripped of captaincy, broke down repeatedly in a five-minute press conference after his arrival from South Africa on March 29.

"As captain of the Australian cricket team, I take full responsibility. I made a serious error of judgment and now I understand the consequences. It was a failure of my leadership," a devastated Smith said, trying hard to keep his composure in a packed press conference.

"I will do everything I can to make up for my mistake and the damage it has caused. If any good can come through this, if there can be a lesson to others, I hope I can be a force for change. I know I will regret this for the rest of my life. I am absolutely gutted," he added.

Smith, along with his deputy David Warner, were handed similar bans for their role in plotting the episode during the third Test against South Africa in Cape Town.



Steve Smith breaks down during press conference.

Opener Cameron Bancroft, who was entrusted with the task of tampering the ball with a sandpaper before he was caught on camera, has been handed a nine-month

suspension.

"I hope in time, I can earn back respect and forgiveness. I have been so privileged and honoured to captain the Australian

cricket team. Cricket is the greatest game in the world. It has been my life and I hope it can be again. I am sorry and absolutely devastated," he said.

Smith refused to blame any of the other players involved, saying he could only blame himself at the moment.

"Good people make mistakes. I have made a big mistake by allowing this to happen. It was a huge error of judgment on my part and I am sorry. To my knowledge this is the first time I have seen this happened. I can assure you it will never be happening again," he said.

"I don't blame anyone. I am the captain of the Australian team, I take responsibility of what happened last Saturday in Cape Town," he added.

Before being escorted out, Smith hoped that his fate served as a warning to anybody trying to attempt any wrongdoing.

"...(when) you think about making a questionable decision you should think about people who will be affected. You are affecting your parents and to see my old man's pain (breaks down)," he said.

"(To see) My mum it hurts. I can't remember what I was saying. I just want to say sorry for the pain I have caused to the Australian public. I am truly sorry," he concluded fighting back sobs. *Source: PTI*

AUSTRALIA COACH DARREN LEHMANN TO QUIT AFTER SOUTH AFRICA SERIES

JOHANNESBURG (TIP): A tearful Darren Lehmann on March 29 said he would quit as coach of the scandal-tainted Australia cricket team after the fourth and final Test of a series in South Africa.

"This will be my last Test as head coach of the Australian cricket team," Lehmann told a press conference on the eve of the match.

"Saying goodbye to the players was the toughest thing I have ever had to do.

"After seeing events in the media today with Steve Smith and Cameron Bancroft, the feeling is that Australian cricket needs to move forward and this is the right thing to do.

"I really felt for Steve and as you see I'm crying in front of the media. All the players are really hurting."

Lehmann, who was due to leave the job after the 2019 Ashes series in England, is quitting despite being cleared of any role in the ball-tampering scandal that has rocked the sport.

His decision follows 12-month bans given to captain Smith and vice-captain David Warner for the roles they played in a plot to cheat in Cape Town last Saturday during the third Test.

Opening batsman Bancroft was banned for nine months for his part in the affair.

"My family and I have copped a lot of abuse over the last week and it's taken its toll," added Lehmann.

"After speaking to my family at length over the last few days, it's the right time to step away.

"I am ultimately responsible for the culture of the team and I've been thinking about my position for a while.

"Despite telling media yesterday that I'm not resigning, after viewing Steve and Cameron's hurting, it is only fair that I make this decision.

"This will let Cricket Australia make a full review of the team and implement changes to regain the trust of the Australian public." *Source: AFP*



Australia loses major sponsor over players' 'conspiracy' to cheat



A video grab showing how the ball was tampered with.

SYDNEY (TIP): Australia's Magellan Financial Group Ltd cancelled a naming rights sponsorship deal with Cricket Australia after it banned players involved in a ball-tampering scandal, the biggest blow to the country's governing body reeling from the incident.

Though some sponsors of Australian cricketers have pulled individual sponsorship deals, the decision by Magellan suggests the financial impact of the episode will go to the core of a sport seen by many Australians as the embodiment of fairness.

Magellan said it was ending its contract with Cricket Australia seven months into a three-year deal which was based on shared values of "integrity, leadership, dedication and an unwavering customer-first culture".

"A conspiracy by the leadership of the Australian Men's Test Cricket Team which broke the rules with a clear intention to

gain an unfair advantage during the third test in South Africa goes to the heart of integrity," Magellan CEO Hamish Douglass said in the statement.

"These recent events are so inconsistent with our values that we are left with no option but to terminate our ongoing partnership with Cricket Australia." Magellan has not put a price on the sponsorship deal and did not immediately return calls seeking more details, but Australian media reported it was worth about A\$20 million (\$15.30 million). The company's 2017 annual report forecast a "material increase in its currently modest marketing expenditure" in part because of cricket sponsorship.

Morals clauses are commonplace in sports sponsorship deals, allowing both parties to exit if the other engages in conduct that might negatively impact on the image, goodwill and reputation of their partner.

What actual rules were broken?

- Fielders aren't allowed to change the condition of the ball, with the major exception that they're allowed to polish it — so long as no artificial substance is used and it doesn't waste time.
- Players can also remove mud from the ball (under the supervision of an umpire) and dry it with an approved piece of cloth.
- The ICC Code of Conduct specifically outlines some of the things you can't do to the ball, including:
 - Deliberately throw it into the ground to roughen it up
 - Apply any artificial substance to it
 - Interfere with the seams
 - Scratch the surface with fingernails or any implement
 - It's up to the umpires to determine if a team has unfairly changed the condition of the ball. If they have, the ball is changed and their opponents are awarded five penalty runs.
- While Bancroft was charged with ball tampering — and lost 75 per cent of his match fee as a result — Smith was charged with the separate offence of "conduct of a serious nature that is contrary to the spirit of the game", which led to him being suspended for one match and losing 100 per cent of his match fee.

12 JYOTIRLINGAS OF LORD SHIVA

Shiva's Jyotirlinga is highly revered among the Hindus. A Jyotirlinga is a shrine where Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of a Jyotirlingam. Now you would ask what a Jyotirlingam is? It is the radiant sign (phallus symbol) of The Almighty. There are 12 Jyotirlinga in India.

Somnath Jyotirlinga



Considered to be the first of the 12 Jyotirlingas, the Somnath Temple in Gujarat is situated near Veraval in (Prabhas Kshetra) Kathiawad district. This is a highly revered pilgrimage site in the country. There is a legend related to how this Jyotirlinga came into being. According to the Shiva Purana, the moon was married to 27 daughters of Daksha Prajapati, out of which he loved Rohini the most. Seeing his negligence towards the other wives, Prajapati cursed moon that it would lose all its radiance. A disturbed moon along with Rohini came to Somnath and worshipped the Sparsa Lingam after which he was blessed by Shiva to regain his lost beauty and shine. On his request, Lord Shiva assumed the name Somchandra and resided there eternally.

Mallikarjuna Jyotirlinga

The Mallikarjuna Temple is situated on the Shri Shaila Mountain, on the banks of the Krishna River in the southern part of Andhra Pradesh. It is also known as "Kailash of the South" and is one of the greatest Shaivite shrines in India. The presiding deities at this temple are Mallikarjuna (Shiva) and Bhramaramba (Devi). According to the Shiva Purana, Lord Ganesha was married off before Kartikeya which left Kartikeya angered. He went away to the Kraunch Mountain. All the Gods tried to console him but in vain. Ultimately Shiva-Parvati themselves travelled to the mountain but were turned away by Kartikeya. Seeing their son in such a state they were very hurt and Shiva assumed the form of a Jyotirlinga and resided on the mountain by the name of Mallikarjuna.

Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga

Mahakaleshwar Temple is located on the banks of the Kshipra River, in the dense Mahakal forest in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. This Jyotirlinga in Madhya Pradesh is an important pilgrimage site in Central India. There are a number of legends related to how this Jyotirlinga came into existence. According to the Puranas, there was a five-year-old boy Shrikar who was enthralled by the devotion of King Chandrasena of Ujjain towards Lord Shiva. Shrikar took a stone and started worshipping as Shiva. Many people tried to dissuade him in different ways, but his devotion kept growing. Pleased by his devotion, Lord Shiva assumed the form of a Jyotirlinga and resided in the Mahakal forest.

Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga

Omkareshwar Temple is one of the highly revered Jyotirlinga and is located on an island called Shivapuri in the Narmada River in Madhya Pradesh. The word Omkareshwar means "Lord of Omkaara" or the Lord of the Om Sound! According to the Hindu scriptures, once upon a time there ensued a great war between the Devas and Danavas (Gods and Demons), in which the Danavas won. This was a

major setback for the Devas who then prayed to Lord Shiva. Pleased with their prayer, Lord Shiva emerged in the form of Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga and defeated the Danavas.

Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga

Vaidyanath Temple is also known as Vajinath or Baidyanath. It is located at Deogarh in the Santal Parganas region of Jharkhand. This is one of the highly revered Jyotirlinga shrines, and the devotees believe that the sincere worship of this shrine relieves a person from all his worries and miseries. People believe that one attains moksha or salvation by worshipping this Jyotirlinga. According to a famous legend, the demon king Ravana meditated and asked Lord Shiva to come over to Sri Lanka and make it invincible. Ravana tried to take Mount Kailash with him, but Lord Shiva crushed it. Ravana asked for penance and in turn was given of the twelve Jyotirlingas on the condition that if it was placed on the ground it would remain rooted to that spot till eternity. While transporting it to Sri Lanka, Lord Varuna entered Ravana's body and he felt an urgent need to relieve himself. Lord Vishnu came down in the form of a lad and offered to hold the lingam in the meantime. However, Vishnu placed the lingam on the ground and it got rooted to the spot.

Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga



The Bhimashankar Temple is located in the Sahyadri region of Pune, Maharashtra. It lies on the banks of Bhima River and is considered to be a source of this river. The legend about the existence of this Jyotirlinga is related to Kumbhakarna's son Bhima. When Bhima learned that he was the son of Kumbhakarna who was annihilated by Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Lord Ram, he vowed to avenge Lord Vishnu. He performed penance to please Lord Brahma who granted him immense power. On achieving this power, he started creating havoc in the world. He defeated the staunch devotee of Lord Shiva- Kamrupeshwar and put him in the dungeons. This angered the Lords who requested Shiva to descend Earth and put an end to this tyranny. A war ensued between the two and Shiva ultimately put the demon to ashes. All the Gods then requested Shiva to make that place his abode. Shiva then manifested himself in the form of Bhimashankar Jyotirlinga.

Rameshwar Jyotirlinga

Rameshwar Temple, the southernmost of the 12 Jyotirlingas, is located on the island of Rameshwaram, off the Sethu coast of Tamil Nadu. This temple is popularly known for its architecture, more prominently the long ornate corridors, towers, and 36 theerthams. This has been a time-honoured pilgrimage centre considered by many at par with Banaras. This Jyotirlinga is closely associated with Ramayana and Ram's victorious return from Sri Lanka. It is believed that Ram on his way to Sri Lanka stopped at Rameshwaram and was drinking water on the seashore when there was a celestial proclamation: "You are drinking water without worshipping me." Listening to this Ram made a linga of sand and worshipped it and asked for its blessings to defeat Ravana. He got the blessings from Lord Shiva who then turned into



a Jyotirlinga and resided at the place for eternity.

Nageshwar

The Nageshwar Temple also known as Nagnath Temple is located on the route between Gomati Dwarka and the Bait Dwarka Island on the coast of Saurashtra in Gujarat. This Jyotirlinga holds special significance as it symbolises protection from all types of poison. It is believed that those who worship at this temple become free of all poisons. According to the Shiva Purana, a Shiva devotee by the name Supriya was captured by the demon Daaruka. The demon imprisoned her with several others in his capital Daarukavana. Supriya advised all prisoners to chant "Aum Namaha Shivaya" which enraged Daaruka who ran to kill Supriya. Lord Shiva manifested in front of the demon and put an end to him. Thus the Nageshwar Jyotirlinga came into being.

Kashi Vishwanath

The Kashi Vishwanath Temple is located in the most revered site in the world- Kashi! It is situated amidst the crowded lanes of the holy city of Banaras (Varanasi). More than the Ghats and Ganga of Varanasi, the Shivalinga remains the devotional focus of the pilgrims. It is believed that Banaras is the site at which the first Jyotirlinga manifested its supremacy over other Gods, broke through the earth's crust and flared towards heaven. This temple is said to be the dearest to Lord Shiva, and the people believe that those who die here achieve liberation. Many believe that Shiva himself resided here and is the giver of the liberation and happiness. This temple has been rebuilt several times but always continued to hold its ultimate significance.

Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga

The Trimbakeshwar Temple is located about 30kms from Nasik in Maharashtra near the mountain named Brahmagiri from the river Godavari flows. This temple is considered to be a source of the river Godavari which is known as "Gautami Ganga"- the most sacred river in South India. According to the Shiva Purana, it is on the earnest request of River Godavari, Gautam Rishi and all the other Gods that Shiva decided to reside here and assumed the name

Trimbakeshwar. Gautam Rishi earned a boon from Varuna in the form of a pit from which he received an inexhaustible supply of grains and food. The other Gods were rendered jealous by him and they send a cow to enter the granary. The cow was mistakenly killed by Gautam Rishi who then asked Lord Shiva to do something to purify the premises. Shiva asked Ganga to flow through the land to make it pure.

Kedarnath Jyotirlinga

One of the holiest pilgrimage sites in India, the Kedarnath Temple is located on the Rudra Himalaya Range at the height of 12000 feet on a mountain named Kedar. It is approximately 150 miles from Haridwar. The temple enshrining the Jyotirlinga opens only six months in a year. The tradition is that while embarking on a pilgrimage to Kedarnath people first visit Yamunotri and Gangotri and brings the holy water to offer at Kedarnath. According to the legends, pleased by the severe penance of the Nara and Narayana - two incarnations of Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva took up permanent abode in Kedarnath in the form of this Jyotirlinga. People believe that praying at this site one gets all his desire fulfilled.

Ghrishneshwar Jyotirlinga



The Ghrishneshwar Jyotirlinga is located in a village called Verul, which lies 20 km from Daulatabad, near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Located near this temple is the famous tourist site - Ajanta & Ellora caves. This temple was built by Ahilyabai Holkar who also rebuilt the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi. The Ghrishneshwar temple is also known by other names like Kusumeswarar, Ghushmeswara, Grushmeswara and Grishneswara. According to the Shiva Purana, a couple named Sudharm and Sudeha resided on the Devagiri Mountain. They were childless, and thus Sudeha got her sister Ghushma married to Sudharm. They bore a son who rendered Ghushma proud and Sudeha jealous of her sister. In her jealousy, Sudeha threw the son in the lake where Ghushma used to discharge 101 lingams. Ghushma prayed to Lord Shiva who ultimately returned her the son and told her of her sister's deeds. Sudharm asked Shiva to emancipate Sudeha which left Shiva pleased with his generosity. On Sudharm's request, Shiva manifested himself in the form of the Jyotirlinga and assumed the name Ghushmeshwar.

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OPINIO

contd from Page 1

It's Tit for Tat: Russia...

Washington earlier ordered the expulsion of 60 diplomats and shut down the Russian consulate general in Seattle.

Mr. Lavrov added that Russia would also issue tit-for-tat responses to the other countries that have expelled diplomats in a mass show of support for Britain which has blamed Moscow for the poisoning of ex-spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia with a nerve agent in the city of Salisbury.

"As for the other countries it's also all symmetrical measures as to the number of people who will be leaving Russia from diplomatic missions, and that's all so far," Mr. Lavrov said.

He added that Russia was reacting to "absolutely unacceptable actions that are taken against us under very harsh pressure from the United States and Britain under the pretext of the so-called Skripal case."

He accused London of "forcing everyone to follow an anti-Russian course."

He said Britain had informed Moscow of the state of health of Yulia Skripal on Thursday and that Russia had asked again for access to her as a citizen.

Mr. Lavrov vowed at the briefing in Moscow that "we want to establish the truth" over the poisoning and accused Britain of "making mockery of international law."

He said that Russia had asked for a meeting with the executive council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on Tuesday to ask questions to "establish the truth."

"We are counting on our Western partners not evading an honest conversation," Mr. Lavrov said. (Source: AFP)

Narendra Modi's U.K...

addressed a gathering of around 60,000 people, and will be a smaller affair, with around 1,500 to 2,000 people.

Within the first hours of the website for free registration going live, the number of registrations had already exceeded this figure.

The planned format highlights the different

tone of the current visit and the audience Mr. Modi hopes to focus on - while the Wembley event was pitched very much as a "diaspora" event, with community performances - the April event is targeted at a more global audience, matching the aspirations of the visit, which is pegged around the ambitions of taking the Commonwealth to a new level. India's active engagement is seen as key to the revival of the Commonwealth during the heads of government meeting on April 19 and 20, and the preceding Commonwealth Business Forum.

Visiting London earlier this year, Suresh Prabhu touted the leadership role that India could adopt in the organization.

However, others are hopeful the visit will also provide an opportunity for the U.K. government to express concerns over a number of developments in India. Earlier this month Foreign Office Minister Mark Field, responding to a debate in the House of Commons Westminster Hall, during which MPs expressed concerns, said the government would raise the issue of the treatment of Christian and Sikh minorities in India in the "appropriate manner" during CHOGM to ensure that Parliament's voice was "properly heard."

"He will appreciate that diplomacy sometimes needs to be done behind closed doors, rather than with megaphones," he told MPs.

With the government of Theresa May touting a free trade deal with India as one of the ambitions of a "global" post-Brexit Britain, the visit will be a crucial, though sensitive one for the UK.

Earlier this year Britain and India agreed to the terms of a memo on the swift return of Indian illegal immigrants from the U.K. - an issue that has repeatedly been raised by the British government and seen as an obstacle to immigration reform on the British side.

India's action will park the ball back in Britain's court and strengthen calls for change from the U.K. when it comes to immigration and visa issues, particularly for business travelers, students and those in professional services.

Protests and rallies are also expected to take place, as they did during Mr. Modi's last

visit. The Sikh Federation, U.K. said it expected large numbers to turn out for a protest rally during the visit. The protest will raise issues including the detention of U.K. citizen Jagtar Singh Johal by Indian authorities last year. (Source: The Hindu)

In yet another ouster...

Trump had unceremoniously fired Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and nominated Mike Pompeo, the CIA Director, for the top diplomatic position in his cabinet.

Both the cabinet positions need to be confirmed by the US Senate.

"In the interim, Hon. Robert Wilkie of DOD will serve as Acting Secretary. I am thankful for Dr. David Shulkin's service to our country and to our GREAT VETERANS!" Trump said in another tweet.

Trump said Jackson was highly trained and qualified.

"As a service member himself, he has seen firsthand the tremendous sacrifice our veterans make and has a deep appreciation for the debt our great country owes them," he said in a separate statement.

Wilkie, who will serve as the Acting Secretary for the department, is currently the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Department of Defense and overseas health affairs, welfare and quality of life for military families.

Jackson has served as the White House physician during the past three administrations of Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

Since arriving at the White House, he has directed the Executive Health Care for the President's Cabinet and Senior Staff, served as physician supervisor for the Camp David Presidential Retreat, held the position of physician to the White House and led the White House Medical Unit as its director.

A native of Texas, and a graduate from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology; Jackson began his active duty naval service in 1995 and went on to become the honor graduate of the Navy's Undersea Medical Officer Program in Groton, Connecticut.

The opposition Democratic Party expressed concern over the firing of Shulkin.

Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi called Shulkin's dismissal "a troubling step in the Trump Administration's ultimate goal of VA (Veterans Affairs) privatization".

"From day one of this administration, the president has openly encouraged and embraced Koch Brothers-led forces as they work around Congress and behind closed doors to dismantle veterans' health care," Pelosi said.

She urged the members of Congress to join hands against any effort to privatize VA.

Senator Johnny Isakson, chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, said Shulkin had made a tremendous impact toward improving the lives of veterans during his time at the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

"He has been instrumental in all that we have accomplished in the last year, and I thank Dr. Shulkin for his dedicated service to our country and our veterans," he said.

Concerned Veterans for America executive director Dan Caldwell said Shulkin made significant headway in reforming the department, but ultimately became a distraction from the important task of improving health care for the veterans. "The Trump administration has made great progress over the last year reforming and fixing the VA, however there is still much work to be done," he said. (Source: PTI)

East Coast, Texas...

"The employment of high-skilled foreign workers with H-1B visas has centered on large East Coast metropolitan areas for fiscal years

2010 to 2016. In addition, these foreign workers have made up a significant part of the workforces in several Texas metro areas," it said in an analysis of the previously unpublished metro-level government data of H-1B visa approvals on Thursday.

The figures were obtained by the center through a public records request.

The Dallas and Washington metro areas got 74,000 and 64,800 approvals respectively, the next highest totals along with Boston's 38,300 approvals.

The data, obtained from US Citizenship and Immigration Services, include details of those approved for an H-1B visa.

When looking at the footprint of high-skilled foreign workers by metro area, Texas' College Station stands far above the rest, with about 32 H-1B approvals per 100 workers.

According to report, more than 99 per cent of the metro area's H-1B approvals went to employees of Cognizant Technology Solutions Corporation, whose US headquarters are in College Station.

No other metro area had more than five H-1B approvals per 100 workers.

"The San Jose, California metro area, home of Silicon Valley, trailed the leading metro area on these measures, despite being home to some of the world's most famous technology companies. The San Jose metro area had 22,200 H-1B approvals from fiscal 2010 to 2016, which amounted to two approvals per 100 workers," the report said.

The US government approved more than 859,600 applications in fiscal 2010-2016.

While nationwide, foreign workers approved for H-1B visas earned an average of USD 80,600 in fiscal 2010-2016, Bridgeport in Connecticut had the highest average salary of USD 100,200 of all metro area, followed by Seattle with USD 98,100 and Phoenix USD 97,100.

In College Station, the Texas metro area with the greatest concentration of H-1B workers in its workforce, the average salary in 2010-2016 was USD 82,600, the report said.

About half (49 per cent) of H-1B approvals in recent years have gone to foreign workers with an advanced degree (Master's, professional or doctorate) earned either in the US or internationally, it said.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. (Source: PTI)

Shekhar Kapur to head...

The central panel comprises a chairperson and 10 other members, including five regional chairpersons who head the respective regional panels.

Film writer Imtiaz Hussain, known for his works in films like Astitva (2000) and Parinda (1989) will be the regional chairperson of South I panel. Mehboob, who penned the lyrics for the Hindi (dubbed) version of 1995 Tamil romantic drama Bombay, has been appointed as the regional chairperson of South II panel, the sources said.

Actor Gautami Tadimalla, who is known for her work in Tamil films, is the regional chairman of the North panel, while director Rahul Rawail known for films like Love Story (1981), Betaab (1983), Arjun (1985) and Jo Bole So Nihaal (2005), was chosen as the regional chairperson of the Western panel, they said.

Director P. Sheshadri, a known name in Kannada cinema, is the regional chairperson of Eastern panel.

Other members of the panel include Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury, a Bengali and Hindi film director; playwright Tripurari Sharma; dialogue and script writer Rumi Jaffery; Ranjit Das known for the critically acclaimed film Pratyavartan; and film writer, director and producer Rajesh Mapuskar, the sources added.

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