

Free press makes for a stronger democracy: PM Modi on World Press Freedom Day

The United Nations General Assembly had declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day to raise awareness about freedom of press.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi applauded all those who have been working tirelessly to uphold the freedom of press.

File Photo / Courtesy PTI

NEW DELHI (TIP): Multiplicity of ideas and human expression make us more vibrant as a society and a free press makes for a stronger democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on World Press Freedom Day on Thursday, May 3.

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Trump confirms payment to porn star, denies affair; Says his lawyer paid \$130,000 to buy Stormy Daniel's silence



Trump's lawyer Michael Cohen paid Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, the money in 2016 to keep quiet about the alleged sexual encounter before the presidential election. In the picture, from L to R: Michael Cohen, Stephanie Clifford, better known as Stormy Daniels, Rudy Giuliani, and President Donald Trump

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump confirmed on Thursday, May 3 that he reimbursed his personal lawyer \$130,000 he had given to adult film star Stormy Daniels days before the 2016 election to buy her silence over an alleged affair with the then presidential candidate.

Trump's confirmation came hours after his new legal aide and former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani revealed that the President had personally repaid Michael Cohen \$130,000 that was used to buy Daniels's silence through a non-disclosure agreement.

In an early morning tweet, Trump, 71, said his personal attorney, Cohen, was paid via a monthly retainer and that the hush agreement into which Cohen entered with Daniels had "nothing to do with the campaign". The President had previously denied knowledge of the payment, which has prompted complaints to the Justice Department and Federal Election Commission over potential violations of campaign finance law.

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BAPS Women's Conference in Dallas, TX focuses on the power of unity



and their roles in initiating a more unified mind-frame.

DALLAS (TIP): Unity is strength. This was the simple yet powerful subject of conversation at this year's annual BAPS Women's Conference held at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Dallas, TX, on April 21, 2018. With the thought of unity currently on the minds of many in society, the conference focused on the individual's role in creating a unified nation and global community. The speakers delved into the qualities of humility and positivity

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HAWAII'S KILAUEA VOLCANO THROWS UP 'FOUNTAINS OF LAVA', EVACUATIONS ORDERED



In this photo provided by the U.S. Geological Survey, red ash rises from the Puu Oo vent on Hawaii's Kilauea Volcano after a magnitude-5.0 earthquake struck the Big Island, Thursday, May 3, 2018 in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

HONOLULU (TIP): A CBS report, Thursday, May 3 said that Hawaii's Kilauea volcano is releasing red lava into a residential subdivision, prompting the county to order mandatory evacuations. A resident described "fountains of lava" in the community near the volcano.

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North Texas student arrested for planning 'ISIS-inspired' mass shooting at mall

FRISCO, TX (TIP): A North Texas student has been arrested for planning an "ISIS-inspired" mass shooting at a shopping mall, Collin County officials said in a news release.

Plano resident Matin Azizi-Yarand, 17, was arrested for criminal



Matin Azizi-Yarand
Photo / Courtesy Collin County Government

solicitation of capital murder and making a terroristic threat when officials say he planned a mass shooting at Stonebriar Centre in Frisco and solicited others to assist him in the attack, which was planned for mid-May.

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ASIAN INDIANS in NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY - DALLAS (DFW)

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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.

Indian American Teen Wins \$100,000 In College Quiz Championship



Dhruv Gaur upon winning College quiz Championship

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian American teenager Dhruv Gaur has won the \$100,000 Jeopardy college quiz championship.

The first-year student at Ivy League Brown University emerged the champion on April 20th in the two-day final round of the college edition of America's most popular quiz show televised nationwide.

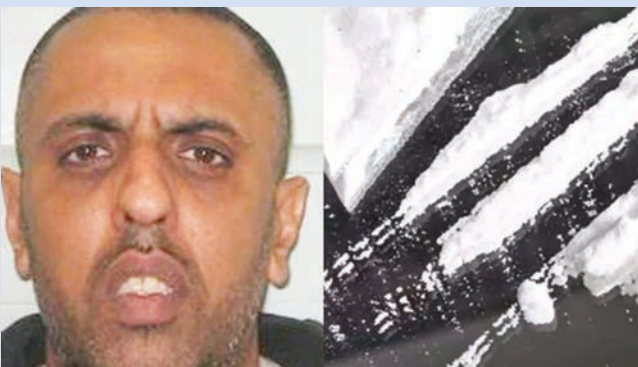
He faced another Indian American, Rishab Jain, in the semi-final round on April 25th before getting to the finals.

Mr. Gaur had scored a perfect score of 1,600 in the national-wide college entrance exam, Scholastic Aptitude Test.

About his plans for the winnings, a Jeopardy news release quoted him as saying, "I'm just going to save it until I need it for grad school or to pursue an opportunity I might really want in the future."

"My little brother is really interested in investing, so I'll give him some, so he can give the stock market a go," he added.

Indian Origin Drug Dealer Jailed in UK for Conspiring to Supply Cocaine



Indian origin Gurdip Samra has been jailed for eight years for dealing in drug

LONDON (TIP): An Indian origin drug dealer and partner has been jailed for nearly eight years by a UK court for conspiring to supply 10 kg of cocaine in London.

Gurdip Samra, 44, was arrested in November last year as part of a joint operation by the UK's National Crime Agency or NCA and Scotland Yard's Organised Crime Partnerships or OCP.

The officers first arrested Samra's accomplice, Mark Lammin, after accosting him as he carried 10 kg of cocaine in a large hold all in Surrey, south-east England.

A short time later, officers stopped a black Range Rover, which was parked in the vicinity of his planned drugs handover and arrested Samra.

The duo was sentenced at Kingston Crown Court earlier this week, with Samra jailed for seven years and eight months and Lammin sentenced to six years and six months behind bars.

"The supply and trafficking of drugs is a business which relies on cash flow the loss of an expensive commodity will stall transactions on both sides, creating a lack of trust between crime groups, Matt McMillan from the Organised Crime Partnership said in a statement.

During a search of 44-year-old Lammin's home address in London, officers found a stun gun and also charged him with possessing a prohibited weapon. He and Samra were both charged with conspiracy to supply Class A drugs.

Indian Origin British Sikh Lawmaker Launches Campaign for Direct Amritsar-London Flights

LONDON (TIP): Britain's first turbaned Indian Origin Sikh MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, along with two NGOs, has started a campaign for the launch of a direct flight between London and Amritsar, a long pending demand of the British-Punjabi community.

The Labour party MP for Slough joined hands with the UK-based NGO, Social Education Volunteer Association (SEVA) Trust and the UK chapter of the Amritsar Vikas Manch (AVM), at an event within the House of Commons complex recently to initiate efforts to push for starting of the non-stop flight services with the Indian and Punjab governments.

"In 2016, even with no direct connectivity, approximately 188,869 passengers (517 per day) travelled between Amritsar and the UK as transit passengers, via other Indian and foreign airports. The demand is there, and we hope the supply will come soon," Mr Dhesi said.

His campaign has found the backing of other British and Indian lawmakers, including fellow Labour Party MP Seema Malhotra and Congress MP for Amritsar, Gurjeet Singh Aujla.

They believe that in addition to better connectivity for millions of passengers, a direct air link between Punjab and Britain holds immense potential to boost trade and tourism as well as strengthen



Tanmanjit Singh Dhesi (Center) At Golden Temple In Amritsar

the India-UK relationship. The lawmakers believe that London Heathrow, one of the world's biggest aviation transit hubs, will open up new onward connections to Europe, Canada and the US.

It will also enable farmers and businessmen from Amritsar and adjoining regions to resume export of dry and perishable goods to the UK, noted Sameep Singh Gumtala, Overseas Secretary of Amritsar Vikas Manch. An official of India's flag carrier, Air India, Deepak

Chudasama acknowledged growing demand of the Punjabi community for the direct flights and assured MPs in Britain that their proposal would be raised with the airline's senior management.

Mr Dhesi's team has also submitted a memorandum, addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to the Indian High Commission in London and the second one, addressed to Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, has been handed over to Mr Aujla.

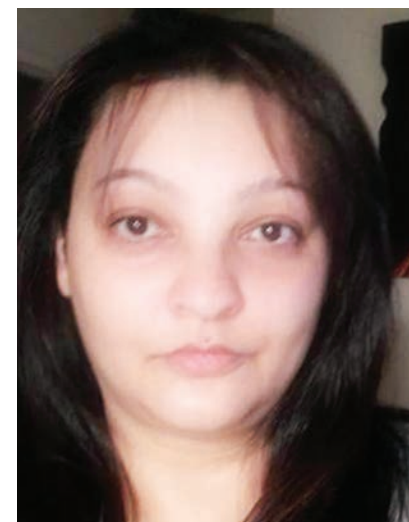
Indian American dentist Amishi Patel sentenced for unnecessary treatment and identity theft

SACRAMENTO (TIP): An Indian American dentist, Amishi Patel, from Daly City, California, has been sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment after she was found guilty of performing unnecessary dental works on several of her patients.

According to the court document, Amishi Patel has been serving as a part-time dentist at Campus Heights Dental Care in the area. During April 2014 and May 2014, she was found doing unnecessary medical treatment to eight of her patients.

In one instance, the San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said, a 16-year-old patient was asked to undergo 16 filling. After she went through eight painful fillings, her parents became suspicious about the treatment given to their daughter.

On seeking a second opinion from another dentist, the parents were shocked to learn that their daughter needed no fillings at all as she had zero cavity. They were also made aware about how poorly Patel performed the filling, which required replacement.



Patel pleaded no contest in December to felony insurance fraud, assault, identity theft, and forgery and was subsequently remanded last month

More cases of unnecessary dental surgeries came to light after the girl's family filed a complaint with Dental Board of California. The Department

of Insurance contacted the Dental Board, and after an investigation, it was found that Patel was engaged in insurance fraud.

She was charged in February 2017 and a judge ordered her not to practice dentistry as a condition of her release on bail.

But she altered the order to make it look like it has been cancelled and applied for jobs and even got one in Fremont. During this period, she treated four patients, which is a gross violation of the court order.

According to the Attorney's office, Patel used the license number of a dentist who had a similar name and applied for several dentist jobs in Fremont. Just before getting caught the second time, she used a fake identity at an interview with an undercover officer, prosecutors said.

San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Donald Ayoob sentenced her on May 1st morning to the 20-month jail sentence and eight years of probation. A restitution hearing in the case has been set for June 22, Wagstaffe said.

Indian American Cancer Scientist Put on Leave after Harassment Allegations

WASHINGTON (TIP): Top Indian American scientist Inder Verma, considered as one of the world's leading authorities on gene therapy and cancer, has been placed on administrative leave following allegations of "inappropriate conduct" against him.

Mr. Verma, 70, a scientist at the prestigious Salk Institute for Biological Studies in California, has been placed on administrative leave, pending the outcome of the investigation into the allegations against him.

The institute did not give any reason for suspending Mr. Verma.

The institute has hired The Rose Group, a San Diego-based international employment law and consulting firm, to investigate allegations, not yet made public, that were reported to the institute in February.

Mr. Verma, who is also on the boards of several Indian scientific institutes, has denied the allegations.

"Recently, the institute became aware of allegations concerning Inder Verma. Consistent with Salk's policies governing workplace conduct, the institute has undertaken a formal investigation that is being led by an independent outside party," Dan



Inder Verma has been placed on administrative leave following allegations of "inappropriate conduct" against him.

Lewis, chairman of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies said in a statement. Mr Verma has been placed on administrative leave, pending the outcome of the investigation. He will not be performing scientific or administrative roles on behalf of the institute during this period," he said, without referring to the nature of the investigation.

The action against Mr Verma comes nearly four months after he was placed on temporary leave as editor of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a prestigious scientific

journal.

Mr Verma, who has denied the allegations, told that the leave had stemmed from the lawsuits that Salk professors filed against the Institute in July.

"I have never used my position at the Salk Institute to take advantage of others. I have also never engaged in any sort of intimate relationship with anyone affiliated with the Salk Institute, he said in a statement to Science through his attorney.

"I have never inappropriately touched, nor have I made any sexually charged comments, to anyone affiliated with the Salk Institute. I have never allowed any offensive or sexually charged conversations, jokes, material, etc. to occur at the Salk Institute, said Mr Verma who earned his MSc in Biochemistry from the Lucknow University.

COMMENTS: Denying misconduct allegations Mr Verma said, "I believe that it is inappropriate for an individual in a position of authority to engage in any intimate relationship with a direct report or to use that position of authority to take advantage of others."

In 2005, he was appointed as foreign fellow by the Indian national Science Academy.

Three Indian Americans die in Queens, NY, house fire

QUEENS VILLAGE, NY (TIP): Indian American mom and grandparents died in Queens Village, NY, as a house was gutted by a fast-spreading fire. Two children were rescued by firefighters.

The New York City Fire Department Deputy Chief Michael Gala identified the deceased as Harleen "Manni" Maggo and her paternal grandparents Ragvir Kaur-Kainth, 82, and Pyara Kainth, 87.

He said that Maggo's 8-year-old girl and a 6-year-old boy were trapped in the building but were rescued.

The girl remains in critical condition, while the boy's condition is stable. Both are currently receiving medical treatment at Nassau University Medical Center, said fire officials.

According to media reports, the fire broke just before midnight on Saturday. There were seven other relatives of the family inside the home, who were there to celebrate an upcoming wedding in the family.

Further the media report stated that the second floor of the house was completely engulfed in flames as people ran out of the building. Voices of people who were still trapped could be heard from outside.

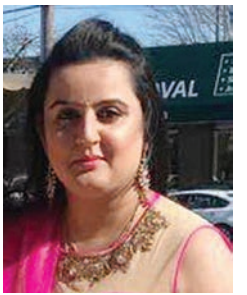
One of the eyewitnesses told the media that he saw one occupant jumping out from the second floor of the burning building.

The other relatives who were inside the building are reportedly out of danger, though some of them suffered serious injuries.

Maggo, who lived with her husband in their newly bought house in Hollis, was visiting her grandparents as the family was celebrating an upcoming marriage of one of their relatives.

According to Param Singh, brother of Maggo, she came out of the burning house but decided to make a re-entry after knowing that her grandparents are still trapped inside.

He also added that her children were doing better with one still breathing with assistance on April 29th afternoon.



Harleen Kaur died in fire while her two children were rescued

Indian American founder of technology firm fined for underpaying H-1B workers

SACRAMENTO (TIP): Indian American Mani Chhabra, founder of a technology firm in East Bay, California, has been asked by the US Department of Labor to pay \$175,000 to 12 Indian H-1B employees after the federal agency found that they were hugely underpaid.

According to an official release from the department, Cloudwick Technologies, founded by Mani Chhabra, hired Indian workers on H-1B visas, offering guaranteed salaries of up to \$8,300 per month. The department alleged that the company paid them just \$800 per month, which is a violation of the work visa program. "Investigators found that the company paid impacted employees well below the wage levels required under the H-1B program based on job skill level, and also made illegal deductions from workers' salaries," the department said. "As a result, some of the H-1B employees that Cloudwick brought from India with promised salaries of up to \$8,300 per month instead received as little as \$800 net per month."

"Cloudwick has never brought resources from India," he said. "All the resources are master's students that have educated in U.S. and then we hired and trained them," Chhabra said.

Chhabra added that the issue came under the radar of the department only because there was changes in visa categories that it imposed. He said that \$800 was paid to employees during their training period. He also acknowledged that Cloudwick Technologies had deducted money for four of its H-1B employees for advanced training, which is illegal.

"This is not allowed for H-1B and we paid them back wages," Chhabra said. The Department of Labor is yet to reveal how the H-1B abuse came to its notice, nor has it provided details about how long the Indian H-1B workers have been employed with Cloudwick Technologies.

According to the official website of Cloudwick, it is a provider of bimodal digital business services and provides solutions to the Global 1000 companies.



Mani Chhabra, the founder and CEO of Cloudwick Technologies, was quoted saying that the Department of Labor misinterpreted some facts about how the company uses its H-1B workers.

Indian American physician Pranav Patel in Illinois indicted for health care fraud



Indicted for stealing \$1 million through his medical company, Patel, if convicted, may get up to 17 years in jail.

CHICAGO (TIP): An Indian American physician, Pranav Patel, has been indicted by the Northern District of Illinois' U.S. Attorney's Office for stealing \$1 million through his medical company.

According to the indictment report, Pranav Patel, 51, submitted bogus insurance claims through his southwest suburban medical firm named Palos Heights.

Patel, a resident of the Chicago suburb of Burr Ridge, allegedly created receipts of medical tests in

the name of his patients without their knowledge. According to Northern District of Illinois's U.S. Attorney's Office, the accused committed the malpractice from 2008 to 2013, during which he obtained at least \$950,000 in fraudulent payments from Medicare and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois.

The attorney's office said that Patel submitted many fake insurance claims for a non-invasive "duplex scans" of his patients that were not actually performed. He even fabricated a seven-page medical document of one of his patients and added up details of a follow-up examination that never happened. In reality, Patel just refilled the prescription of the patient during the visit. The indictment report has leveled 12 charges against Patel - three counts of making false statements, two counts of aggravated identity theft and seven counts of healthcare fraud.

If found guilty of all the charges, Patel will have to spend up to 17 years in jail. Identity theft is punishable by a mandatory two-year sentence, healthcare fraud carries a maximum of 10 years, and making false statements carries five years.

Indian American youths receive Prudential Spirit of Community Awards



WASHINGTON D. C. (TIP): Six Indian American teenagers were among winners of the 23rd annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards in Washington, DC, on April 30th. The Indian Americans honored were Aditya Sidapara, who is a resident of Phoenix, AZ; Sivani Arvapalli, of South Windsor, CT; Vani Sharma, Fishers, IN; Anjali Chadha, Louisville, KY; Praneeth Alla, Exton, PA; and Shrey Pothini, 14, of Savage, MN. In all, 100 top youth volunteers from across the country were honored at the event.

Each recipient received \$1,000 in cash prize and personal congratulations from Olympic gold medalist and World Cup champion Lindsey Vonn.

The award ceremony and gala dinner reception was held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History. Sidapara, 18, a senior at BASIS Scottsdale, co-founded an educational initiative that is teaching computer coding to students living in four refugee camps in East Africa, aiming to lift them out of poverty and help meet the worldwide demand for skilled software engineers. Arvapalli, 13, an eighth-grader at Timothy Edwards Middle School, was nominated by the Indian Valley Family YMCA. He volunteers with a group that has raised nearly \$94,000 for child-focused charities by conducting talent shows and organizing benefit dinners and entertainment events.

Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news

US, China begin trade talks centred around tech rivalry

WASHINGTON (TIP): Chinese and US officials met face-to-face on May 3 in an attempt to resolve a dispute over technology that has taken the world's two largest economies the closest they've ever come to a trade war.

A high-powered US delegation arrived in Beijing for talks with Chinese officials aimed at defusing the tensions, though analysts say they appear unlikely to yield a breakthrough given the two sides' intensifying rivalry in strategic technologies, where China lags behind the US.

US treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin is leading the group, which includes commerce secretary Wilbur Ross and US trade representative Robert Lighthizer. Liu He, President Xi Jinping's top economic adviser, headed the Chinese side in the talks, which are expected to end on Friday.

The dispute has deepened as China has stepped up efforts to overtake western industry leaders in advanced technologies, especially for semiconductors, the silicon brains required to run smartphones, connected cars, cloud computing and artificial intelligence.

Ahead of the talks, US President Trump praised his relationship with China's Xi Jinping. "Our great financial team is in China trying to negotiate a level playing field on trade! I look forward to being with President Xi in the not too distant future. We will always have a good (great) relationship!" (AP)

17 Reps nominate Trump for Nobel Peace Prize

WASHINGTON (TIP): Seventeen Republican lawmakers have nominated US President Donald Trump for this year's Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his work to end the Korean War, denuclearise the Korean peninsula and bring peace to the region.

"Since taking office, President Trump has worked tirelessly to apply maximum pressure on North Korea to end its illicit weapons program and bring peace to the region. His administration successfully united the international community, including China, to impose one of the most successful international sanctions regimes in history," the letter said.

The sanctions have decimated the North Korean economy and have been largely credited for bringing North Korea to the negotiating table, the Congressmen said in a letter to Berit Reiss-Andersen, Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

"President Moon Jae-in of South Korea recently said, 'President Trump should win the Nobel Peace Prize'," the lawmakers wrote. The White House did not respond to any question related to the letter. (PTI)

Naked Donald Trump statue goes for \$28,000 at auction

LOS ANGELES (TIP): A naked statue of Donald Trump, complete with a distended belly and jowly sneer, is to go on display at a Haunted Museum after a paranormal investigator bought it at auction.

Julien's Auctions announced Wednesday it sold the artwork -- believed to be the last of the controversial statues not vandalized or destroyed -- for \$28,000 (23,000 euros) at its biannual auction in Los Angeles.

The infamous statue by a West Coast anarchist collective is one of a series depicting the 45th president in the nude, but without testicles.

In August 2016 -- during Trump's then improbable bid for the White House -- the statues appeared in public spaces in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Seattle and Cleveland, garnering international attention.

The four other naked Trumps -- titled "The Emperor Has No Balls" -- were confiscated or destroyed. In one cheeky response, New York officials pointed to regulations banning "any unpermitted erection in city parks, no matter how small." The sole surviving copy was rescued by La Luz de Jesus Gallery on Hollywood Boulevard before it could be taken and melted down. (AFP)

US May Day immigration protests target Trump, fall elections

NEW YORK (TIP): Immigrants say President Donald Trump's administration has become almost everything they feared, but while they rally across the United States on May Day, their focus is less on huge turnout Tuesday than on the first Tuesday in November.

Marches and other demonstrations for labor and immigrant rights were planned from Florida to New York to California on International Workers' Day and come amid similar actions worldwide.

"The Trump administration has made very clear that they've declared war on the immigrant community on all levels," said Javier Valdez, co-executive director of the advocacy group Make the Road New York.

Immigrant rights groups have joined in May Day activities for more than a decade, initially to push back against harsh legislative proposals and later to clamor for reform and legal status for immigrants in the country illegally who were brought to the U.S. as children or overstayed their visas.

Now, they want to drive turnout in the midterm elections. Advocates hope voters target lawmakers who have pushed for measures that hurt immigrants and replace them with immigrant-friendly policymakers, said Angelica Salas, executive director of the



Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights in Los Angeles.

"Elections have consequences, and the consequences for our community have been dire, and if we do not change the balance of power, we question our ability to remain free in this country," she said.

Protesters still are taking aim at policy changes under Trump, including a country-specific travel ban, the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, high-profile detention and deportation efforts, and proposals to cut back the overall numbers of people allowed to immigrate permanently.

Trump and his supporters say the enforcement and policy changes are

needed for national security and economic benefits. Some of the new policies have gotten tangled up in court, and Trump hasn't secured funding for his coveted border wall with Mexico.

After the rallies, immigrant rights groups will join LGBTQ, African-American and women's organizations this summer to push for the election of new leaders, Salas said, adding that they hope to see more support from Americans who aren't immigrants.

"It is really a fundamental question about what kind of a country we're going to be," she said. "For us, the question of immigration is a question about race, and it is also a question about real equality in this country." (AP)

Iran has robust, clandestine nuclear weapons programme: White House

WASHINGTON (TIP): Iran has a robust, clandestine nuclear weapons programme that it tried but failed to hide from the world and from its own people, a top White House official has alleged.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said the recent information released by Israel provided new and compelling details about Iran's efforts to develop missile-deliverable nuclear weapons.

Sanders and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo issued strong statements yesterday after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Iran of having secretly pursued a nuclear weapons programme.

Netanyahu said he had conclusive proof that Iran had lied about its nuclear weapons programme. "These facts are consistent with what the United States has long known: Iran has a robust, clandestine nuclear weapons programme that it has tried and failed to hide from the world and from its own people," Sanders said.

"The Iranian regime has shown it will use destructive weapons against its neighbours and others. Iran must never have nuclear weapons," she said.

Pompeo said the documents obtained by Israel from inside of Iran showed beyond any doubt that the Iranian regime was not telling the truth.

"I have personally reviewed many of the Iranian files. Our nonproliferation and intelligence officials have been analysing tens of thousands of pages and translating them from Farsi. This analytical work will continue for many months. We assess that the documents we have reviewed are



authentic," Pompeo said.

The documents show that Iran had a secret nuclear weapons programme for years. It sought to develop nuclear weapons and missile delivery systems and hid a vast atomic archive from the world and from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), he alleged.

Pompeo said that among the flaws of the Iran nuclear deal was the whitewashing of Tehran's illicit activities related to its military nuclear programme.

Iran had many opportunities over the years to turn over its files to international inspectors from the IAEA and admit its nuclear weapons work. Instead, they lied to the IAEA repeatedly, he alleged.

Pompeo also alleged that Tehran had lied about their nuclear programme to the six nations who negotiated the Iran nuclear



deal.

He said what it meant was the deal was not constructed on a foundation of good faith or transparency and was built on Iran's lies.

Iran's nuclear deception is inconsistent with Iran's pledge in the nuclear deal "that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop or acquire any nuclear weapons," he alleged.

"We are therefore assessing what the discovery of Iran's secret nuclear files means for the future of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Allowing restrictions on Iran's nuclear programme to sunset was a mistake. One has to ask: Why exactly was Iran hiding half a ton of nuclear weaponisation files while implementing the Iran deal?" Pompeo said. (PTI)

ISSUE OF HARASSMENT OF DIPLOMATS WITH INDIA RESOLVED, PAKISTAN SAYS

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan said on May 3 the issue of "harassment" of diplomats with India had been successfully resolved through talks, terming it a "success of diplomacy".

Addressing the weekly media briefing here, foreign office spokesman Mohammad Faisal, however, did not provide any details about how the two sides addressed the issue.

"The issue of harassment of diplomats has been resolved through negotiations between foreign offices and diplomatic missions of the both countries. It is a success of formal diplomacy," he said.

India and Pakistan announced in March that they had agreed to mutually resolve all issues + about the treatment of diplomats.

The agreement followed claims and counter-claims by the two countries about harassment of each other's diplomats.

India had asked Pakistan to ensure safety and security of its officials + working at the Indian mission in Islamabad, saying they continue to face "harassment" and "intimidation".

Pakistan had claimed that there had been as many as 26 instances of harassment and intimidation of its diplomats since March 7, following which Islamabad called back its high commissioner Sohail Mahmood + for discussions on the issue. He, however, returned to New Delhi on March 22.

Faisal also said Pakistan repatriated an Indian prisoner Jetindaera Arjanwaran who was handed over to Indian officials at Wagah border today.

He said Arjanwaran, who was suffering from a debilitating blood disease, had completed his sentence in Pakistan. He was apprehended by the Pakistani security agencies in 2014 under the Foreigners Act and was



sentenced to a one-year imprisonment, Faisal said. Faisal said his sentence had ended in July 2014 but his national status was not confirmed by the Indian High Commission until April 4, 2018.

"Jetindaera's case for the repatriation was favourably considered by Pakistan, due to his deteriorating medical condition and he was repatriated," he said, adding that Shahzad Roy, a social activist and a known singer, had played a key role in his release.

Faisal said that Track-II initiatives + do take place from time to time and usually former ambassadors, retired government officials, journalists and the people from academia of both countries take part, but they do not have any link with the formal dialogue.

Talking about exchange of prisoners, he said Pakistan concurred with the Indian humanitarian proposal regarding exchange of lists of prisoners above 70 years of age, women and mentally challenged persons.

He said Pakistan also proposed exchanging lists of children below 18 years and prisoners below 60 years.

"Both countries are actively pursuing

this matter and hopefully something good will come out soon," he said.

Faisal also said the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) had Agreement on Conducting Joint Anti-Terrorist Military Exercises among the member states to which both Pakistan and India acceded at the time of joining the Organization in June 2017.

"The exercise 'Peace Mission 2018' is being hosted by Russia under this Agreement. We are prepared to share our experiences with other SCO member states and work together against this common enemy. We hope that SCO will provide an opportunity for both countries to interact for peace and security in the region," he said.

He said that a committee constituted at the end of 2015 and headed by Sartaj Aziz presented its final recommendations last year about Gilgit Baltistan reforms.

The Committee's report is in its final phase and its "comprehensive recommendations" on implementation would address most, if not all, the desires of the people of Gilgit Baltistan, he said. (PTI)

3 security personnel injured in IED explosion in Pakistan

PESHAWAR (TIP): Three security personnel were injured on April 3 in an IED blast in Pakistan's restive northwestern tribal region, officials said.

The security personnel were on a patrol duty when their vehicle hit the improvised explosive device (IED) in Jani Khel area of Bannu district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, they said.

According to the officials, the IED was being operated by the terrorists through a remote control device.

The injured were hospitalised.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and initiated operation to trace the attackers, the officials said.

Pakistan opens new Islamabad airport after years of delays

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan's long-awaited new airport in the capital Islamabad opened its doors on May 3, after years of delays and embarrassing setbacks that exposed the difficulty of building modern infrastructure in the chaotic country.

"The new Islamabad International Airport became fully operational from today with the departure and arrival of several domestic and international flights," Pervez George, spokesman for Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority, told AFP.

"Flights took off from and landed at the new airport today as scheduled," he added.

The new airport is set to be able to handle more than nine million passengers annually as China invests billions of dollars in the country and a vast improvement in security has spurred hopes Pakistan is ripe for development. However, the disconcerting number of setbacks delaying its opening since at least 2013 became a perennial joke in the capital, highlighting the government's inability to complete high-profile infrastructure projects. Just two weeks ago, the opening of the airport was delayed again after it was revealed the facility did not have any drinking water or completed restrooms. The capital's previous Benazir Bhutto International Airport was renowned for its long lines and ramshackle ways, doubling as a military base that lacked any boarding bridges. In 2014 the facility was named the world's worst airport by the online Sleeping in Airports guide, which compared the operation to a "central prison" plagued by "aggressive-yet-inconsistent security checks", corruption and an overall lack of hygiene and technology. (AFP)

Afghanistan rolls out electronic ID cards despite opposition

KABUL (TIP): Afghanistan is rolling out long-delayed electronic ID cards as a measure President Ashraf Ghani insists is "important to help fight terrorist attacks." Ghani and some senior officials were the first to receive their cards in Kabul on May 4.

Last December, the Afghan parliament approved Ghani's decree on the ID card, which unlike its simple predecessors made of paper has a chip that will be tied to the country's electronic database. Militants have often used fake ID cards to pass through security checkpoints and enter big urban centers to stage attacks there.

But some in the government of Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah have voiced opposition to the cards because they denote a person's ethnicity and religion -- and as such could be used to discriminate against ethnic Hazaras and other minorities. (AP)

Lanka President Sirisena's chief of staff arrested for bribery

COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena's Chief of Staff was arrested today for soliciting a bribe from an Indian investor, Bribery Commission officials said. IK Mahanama, the chief of staff at presidential secretariat, along with P Dissanayake, who was heading the state-owned Timber Corporation, were arrested when they were accepting a bribe of 20 million Sri Lankan rupees, officials said. The Indian firm was to revive the eastern province's Kantalai state sugar factory owned by the state and was seeking approval for the project, officials said. (PTI)

Myanmar ready to take back verified Rohingyas: Suu Kyi

NAY PYI TAW (TIP): Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi told a visiting UN delegation that the country was ready to allow the return of Rohingya refugees after they complete a verification process, her office said on Tuesday.

On May 1, Suu Kyi, also the State Counsellor, met a delegation of the UN Security Council tasked with investigating the humanitarian crisis, which erupted in August last year after an offensive by the Myanmar military led to the exodus of around 700,000 Rohingya, an ethnic minority group, to neighbouring Bangladesh, reports Efe news.

"During the call, the State Counsellor underscored Myanmar's readiness to receive the verified returnees and necessary cooperation of Bangladesh to expedite the repatriation process quickly," the office said in a Facebook post.

The UN delegation, which arrived here after visiting refugee camps in Bangladesh, also met General Min Aung Hlaing, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Myanmar, and other government officials.

On Tuesday, the 15-member delegation - led by Peru's Ambassador to the UN Gustavo Meza-Cuadra whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the UNSC - is set to visit Rakhine province in western Myanmar, where the Myanmar Army had unleashed the offensive following a series of attacks on government posts by Rohingya rebels.

Last December, Doctors Without Borders had said that around 6,700 Rohingyas were killed in the military campaign, which the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and other countries had described as ethnic cleansing. The UN delegation also visited refugee camps in Bangladesh situated at the border with Myanmar and talked to the refugees to gauge the magnitude of the humanitarian crisis. Myanmar authorities, who signed an agreement with Bangladesh in November to repatriate the refugees, have denied allegations of human rights abuses in the military offensive and justified it as a legitimate response to terror. (IANS)

Double Kabul suicide bombing kills 25, including eight journalists

KABUL (TIP): A coordinated double suicide bombing by the Islamic State group hit central Kabul on May 1 morning, killing at least 25 people, including eight journalists, officials said. An AFP photographer and a cameraman for a local TV station were among the fatalities, the police said.

At least 45 people were wounded in the twin attacks, according to Kabul police spokesman, Hashmat Stanekzai, who also added that four policemen were among those killed.

The attack was the latest in a relentless string of deadly large-scale bombings and assaults that have struck Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan so far this year.

In a statement posted on an IS-affiliated website, the Islamic State group said two of its martyrdom seekers carried out the double bombing, targeting the headquarters of the "renegade" Afghan intelligence services in Kabul. The blasts took place in the central Shash Darak area, home to NATO headquarters and a number of embassies and foreign offices _ as well as the Afghan intelligence service. (AP)

27 KILLED IN BLAZE AFTER BUS OVERTURNS IN BIHAR

PATNA (TIP): At least 27 people were reportedly reduced to ashes after a bus, which overturned and fell into a ditch, caught fire near Bangra village on National Highway 28 in Motihari, Bihar, on May 3.

The locals are said to have rescued five persons.

The bus was going to Delhi from Muzaffarpur. At least 32 people were onboard the air-conditioned bus. The accident occurred at Kotwa police station area about 35 km southwest of Motihari town.

The injured were taken to Sri Krishna Medical College and Hospital. The speeding bus overturned while trying to save a biker before it caught fire, a local claimed.

Locals claimed that the bus was reduced to ashes when it caught fire after falling into a ditch as the fire tender failed to reach at the spot even in an hour. Police officials claimed that over a dozen have been killed but the exact death toll was yet to be ascertained.

Source: The Tribune

India doing extremely well on electrification: World Bank report

WASHINGTON (TIP): India is doing "extremely well" on electrification with nearly 85% of the country's population having access to electricity, the World Bank has said.

Between 2010 and 2016, India providing electricity to 30 million people each year, more than any other country, the World Bank said in its latest report released this week.

While challenges still remain to provide electricity to the rest of the 15 per cent of the 1.25 billion population, India is all set to achieve the target of universal access to electricity before the 2030 target date, Vivien Foster, Lead Energy Economist at the World Bank here told PTI.

The report comes less than a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that all the villages in the country have been electrified.

The report said that nearly 85 per cent of the country's population has access to electricity.

"India is doing extremely well on electrification. We are reporting India about 85 per cent of the population has access to electricity," said Foster, lead World Bank author of the latest report on Energy Progress.

This figure, she pointed out, is higher than that of the Indian government. "That might surprise you. The government is currently reporting in low 80s," she said.

While the World Bank's methodology is based on household survey, which includes even those who are off grid, while the figures of the government is based on official utility connection, she said.

"In absolute terms, India is doing more on electrification than any other countries. Thirty million a year, is really an astounding performance and it stands out from the crowd," Foster said. However, India is not the fastest country in electrification. Bangladesh and Kenya, for example are faster in electrification than India, she noted.

Source: PTI

KARNATAKA ELECTION

Congress turned Bengaluru from Silicon Valley to valley of sin, says PM

BENGALURU (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 3 took aim at the Congress government of Karnataka and accused it of having reduced Bengaluru to a valley of sin from Silicon Valley. Modi also attacked the Janata Dal (Secular), another contender in the May 12 assembly election, and its leader HD Deve Gowda.

Addressing a rally in Bengaluru, his sixth in the state ahead of the polls, Modi listed a slew of alleged lapses by the Congress government, saying it had given the city many "gifts". The PM said the city had been changed from a garden city to garbage city, and its cosmopolitan culture had been changed to a culture of chaos. From computer city, it had become crime city, and from a start-up hub, it had changed to a pothole club, Modi said.

Modi said the city of lakes had been turned into a city of burning lakes. "Photos of the Bellandur lake with froth and fire showed the misrule of the government," he said. The PM also attacked the Congress over the aborted steel flyover plan that was opposed by environmental activists. "It was not a steel flyover, it was a steal flyover," he said referring to allegations of graft in the project.

Just two days after he accused CM Siddaramaiah of having disrespected former prime minister Deve Gowda, Modi said all pre-poll surveys and pundits had already predicted that the Janata Dal (Secular) would finish a distant third in the polls. "All the surveys and pundits are clear that JD(S) will hobble to a distant third with much difficulty. But in its lust for power, that party has tied up with dynastic parties and those who support terrorists," he said. The JD(S) has tied up with Bahujan Samaj Party, Telangana Rashtra Samiti and the All India Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen.

Source: HT



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a public rally for the Karnataka assembly elections, in Bengaluru on May 3. Pic courtesy: PTI

Karnataka elections a battle of ideologies, not personalities, says Rahul Gandhi



BENGALURU (TIP): Congress president Rahul Gandhi on May 3 said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "attacks aimed at him" will not pay off because the Karnataka assembly elections was a battle of ideologies, not personalities.

Gandhi, who embarked on the eighth leg of his 'Jana Ashirwada Yatre' by addressing three rallies at Aurad, Bhalki and Humnabad in Bidar district, said his party has always unified people and worked for their development. Criticising Modi for getting personal with his attacks, he said: "This election is about the future of

Karnataka. Unable to target us on issues like education, roads or farmer welfare, he goes after Rahul Gandhi."

He went on to claim that the Prime Minister makes personal attacks whenever he is afraid. "But we won't reciprocate, because we believe in a culture where we treat opponents with respect. Why doesn't the PM tell small businesses why he couldn't save them from the Gabbar Singh Tax (GST) Instead of that, he keeps attacking me. It won't benefit him."

Gandhi asked Modi to follow Lingayat statesman Basavanna's principle of 'Nudditante Nade' (practice what you preach) instead of pointing fingers at others. "He promised to deposit Rs 15 lakh each in poor citizens' bank accounts (by bringing back black money). Did he do it? He promised two crore jobs to the youth every year. Did he do it? He said he would ensure higher minimum support price for farmers. But he did none of this," he said.

India among top 5 defense spenders in world

NEW DELHI (TIP): India is a country where there has time and again been a lack of adequate funds for the upgradation of armed forces weapons.

Yet, Sweden based think tank, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has come out with a report on global military spending, in which India features among the top five defense spenders in the world! As of 2017, India's defense spending has increased by 5.5 per cent amounting to a total of \$63.9 billion.

The report suggested that India stood fifth in the list after US, China, Saudi and Russia. The total defense spending of the world stands at \$1739 billion with a marginal increase of 1.1 per cent since 2016. However, the list of world's largest military spenders has remained consistent over the years with the US topping the list.

The defense spending of India which has increased by 5.5 per cent has put behind countries like France, U.K. and Japan. Earlier reports had also suggested that India was also the largest importer of arms in the world.



Despite being on the top of defense spenders and importers list, India still does not have the adequate budget required to modernize its arsenal. An IDSA paper titled 'India's Defense

Budget 2017-18: An Analysis, suggests that, out of the total defense expenditure, 42 per cent goes to pay and allowance, 40 per cent goes to modernization & stores and rest 18 per cent is

used of other expenses of the defense forces.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had allocated Rs 3,59,894 crore to the Defense Ministry in this year's budget session. The issue of inadequate defense budget had been raised repeatedly by several officials in defense services. Vice Chief of Army Staff also told the Parliamentary committee that the defense had "dashed their hopes". Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt General Sarath Chand also went on record to term 65 per cent of the arms with India to be in "Vintage Category".

The increase in world expenditure and especially defense spending in the Asia and West Asia is due to increasing security issues in the region. Experts suggest that with respect to India, the growing border tensions with China, and with issues of terrorism and a cross-border threat from Pakistan, has resulted in increased defense spending in India. Nevertheless, reports from the parliamentary committee and several other expert groups continue to question the lack of funds being allocated for defense purposes.

SC/ST Act judgment has govt, apex court arguing over reasons for deaths

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Centre told the Supreme Court that its judgment diluting a stringent provision of the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act has “seriously affected their (SCs/STs) morale and confidence”.

Attorney General KK Venugopal on Thursday told a bench of Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel and Justice Uday Umesh Lalit that their March 20 judgment holding that arrest on a complaint under the law was not mandatory has shaken the confidence of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes “in the ability of the state to protect them”.

He added that it resulted in the death of eight people during protests as well as an increase in the instances of attack on the SCs and STs.

The bench however questioned the submission saying its judgment did not lead to the deaths.

“Our judgment did not incite any one to commit crime. Our judgment has been wrongly understood. The SC/ST community has full protection of this court,” said Justice Goel refuting Venugopal’s argument.

Amicus curiae Amarendra Sharan opposed the plea by the Attorney General urging the court to stay the operation of its March 20 judgment by which it had issued several directions providing for preliminary inquiry before an FIR is lodged and action is taken on a complaint alleging atrocities under the Act.



“Don’t stay (it), it will send a wrong message” that by taking to the streets, the top court’s judgment can be bent, he argued.

Telling the court that its judgment amounted to an exercise in law making, the Attorney General urged the bench to refer to a larger bench the question whether the top court can issue directions, guidelines or mandamus contrary to the provision of existing laws.

He said that directions issued in the March 20 judgment which the Central government is seeking to be reviewed were contrary to the provision of the Act and amounted to whittling down of the stringent provisions.

Citing several instances from the court’s past pronouncements including that of collegium system, appointment of judges, Justice Goel said: “The court has stepped in to fill the gaps in law. (Constitution’s) Article 21 - guaranteeing protection of life and

personal liberty - has been read in the SC/ST Act.”

Justice Lalit said what has been put by the court is a “filter” before a complaint is acted upon.

“It is not that the judgment says no registration of crime. It is not that the perpetrators of crime should not be punished. Let there be a filter” before a complaint is acted upon and an accused is arrested, he said.

As the Attorney General cited the instances of an 83-year-old Dalit woman burnt alive and Thakur community members not allowing a Dalit bridegroom to mount a horse as his wedding party goes to the bride’s home, Justice Goel asked: “Why it is that action is not being taken. There has to be quick punishment.”

The judge also said the burning of the Dalit woman was murder.

As Venugopal argued that only 13 to 15 per cent of the complaints were found to be false, the court observed that does not mean that remaining 85 per cent were true.

The court fixed May 16 for further hearing of the matter when Sharan would respond to the Attorney General’s submissions.

The Central government moved the top court for the review of its March 20 judgment that generated a lot of protests including by lawmakers, who felt that the Supreme Court verdict had diluted the provisions of the Act.

SUPERSTORMS KILL OVER 100 ACROSS INDIA



NEW DELHI (TIP): A severe dust storm followed by thunder showers hit parts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan overnight, killing more than 100 people and leaving a trail of destruction.

Houses collapsed and trees and poles were uprooted in the storm that also led to power outages.

In Uttar Pradesh, the high-intensity dust storm left 64 people dead and 47 injured.

In Rajasthan, 33 were killed, taking the combined death toll to 97. About 100 people were injured in the state, officials said.

In UP, Agra district was the worst hit, accounting for 36 deaths and injuries to 35 others, officials said.

Besides Agra, the other affected UP districts were Bijnor, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Pilibhit, Firozabad, Chitrakoot, Muzaffarnagar, Rae Bareilly and Unnao.

In Rajasthan, Dholpur district was the worst affected with 17 killed.

Two of those killed in Dholpur were from Agra in Uttar Pradesh.

“A few people are undergoing primary treatment while others were discharged. One critical patient from Dholpur was referred to Jaipur,” Hemant Kumar Gera, Secretary, Disaster Management and Relief, said.

A detailed report of the disaster is awaited even as relief and rescue teams have been pressed into service to clear debris and restore power supply, Rajasthan he said.

Gera said contingency funds have been released to the respective district administration. He said Rs 4 lakh will be given to family members of deceased, Rs 2 lakh to persons sustaining 60 per cent injuries and Rs 60,000 to people with 40 to 50 per cent injuries.

Expressing sorrow at the loss of lives due to dust storms in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today directed officials to coordinate with states to ensure speedy relief and rehabilitation of those affected.

“Saddened by the loss of lives due to dust storms in various parts of India. Condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover soon,” the Prime Minister’s Office tweeted quoting Modi.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje expressed grief over the calamity and said authorities concerned in the districts have been directed to ensure all possible help to victims. “Condolence for families who lost their loved ones,” she said on Twitter.

Source: PTI

Chhota Rajan found guilty of journalist J. Dey's murder

MUMBAI (TIP): Gangster Chhota Rajan and eight others were today (May 2) handed life imprisonment by special Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court here for killing senior journalist Jyotirmoy Dey in 2011.

Judge Sameer Adkar, however, acquitted former journalist Jigna Vora, who was charged with instigating Rajan to carry out the killing.

The judge also acquitted Paulson Joseph, who was accused of handling the financial operations concerned with the conspiracy.

Vora broke down in the court soon after her acquittal was announced by the judge.

Rajan, who was witnessing proceedings from New Delhi’s Tihar jail via video conferencing, said “theek hai (alright)”, when the judge read out the sentence and asked the gangster if he wanted to say anything.

This is the first major conviction for Rajan since he was deported to India following his arrest at Bali airport in Indonesia in 2015.

Earlier last year, Rajan was convicted by a court in Delhi and sentenced to seven years imprisonment in a case of fake passports.

NATIONAL FILM AWARDS ROW

65 awardees skip ceremony for not being honoured by Prez

NEW DELHI (TIP): Controversy marred the 65th National Film Awards ceremony here on May 3 with several awardees protesting against the whittling down of the number of those to be honoured by the President to a select 11.

Upset over breaking from the long-held tradition of the President giving away all the awards, around 60 awardees wrote to the Directorate of Film Festivals, President’s office and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, over the “discrimination”.

The nameplates of the absentee winners were placed facing down at the Vigyan Bhawan, where several others from across the length and breadth of the country congregated to celebrate the diversity of India and Indian cinema. Celebrated names

like KJ Yesudas and AR Rahman, apart from actors Riddhi Sen, Divya Dutta and Pankaj Tripathi and a host of others attended the gala.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Smriti Irani and Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore handed out the remainder of the 125 awards at the event, which was also devoid of a musical performance unlike every year.



President Ram Nath Kovind confers Best Actress Award on veteran Bollywood actress Sridevi (posthumously), being received by her husband Boney Kapoor and daughters Janhvi and Khushi, during the 65th National Film Awards function at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on May 3.

The prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award — the country’s highest cinema honour — was given posthumously to Vinod Khanna, whose wife Kavita Khanna and son Akshaye Khanna received it. It was an “emotional and proud moment,” Akshaye said.

Another posthumous honour went to

Sridevi, whose powerful performance in her last film “Mom” fetched her the Best Actress Award. Her husband Boney Kapoor and two daughters — Janhvi and Khushi — took the stage together to receive what was Sridevi’s first National Award in a career of 50 years.



GUEST COMMENT

CAUGHT IN THE VISA VICE, INDIAN SPOUSES FACE MORE RESTRICTIONS IN THE US

The US Citizens and Immigration Services agency has been taking positions that make it more and more difficult for individuals to migrate. Indian professionals have long benefited from the H-1B visas that allow them to work in the US. Persons who get H-1B visas are highly skilled workers. So are most of their spouses, who are given H-4 visas. President Barak Obama had liberally allowed such visa holders to work in the US too, and as a result, many of the highly skilled spouses of H-1B visa holders are now working and contributing to the US economy. The USCIS is actively considering revoking the permission to work for such individuals, an overwhelming majority of them women. An estimated 80,000-1,00,000 persons would thus be affected; so would the companies and communities that were benefiting from their expertise, and the taxes that they paid.

This year, the truncated H-1B visa quota was filled up in just four days, even as the total number of applications has decreased significantly. The USCIS has imposed stringent conditions, increased the paperwork and also for the first time announced that the initial visa would not be for three years. In some cases, it could be granted for less time too. The initial hope that President Donald Trump would tone down from the electioneering rhetoric has been belied. The USCIS has quoted the President's "Buy American, Hire American" Executive Order in its letter on the H-4 visas. Protectionism and anti-immigrant positions have been central to the Trump arrangement, but they are both inimical to the principles that shaped the most powerful democracy in the world.

Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard has rightly pointed out that H-1B visa holders drive innovation and help build and strengthen the US economy. The bond between the largely Indian H-1B visa holders and the US tech companies is strong and one that is mutually beneficial. The decrease in the number of applications and anecdotal evidence indicate a drop in interest from fresh Indian visa seekers. As for those who are already there, as a general principle, it is neither wise nor fair to revoke permissions once granted. The spouses of H-1B visa holders are there to stay in the US for the designated period, allowing them to contribute both to their individual well-being and the society they serve.

(Tribune, India)

AS I SEE IT

When India and China Meet

The message from Wuhan is: let us give each other space and rationalize our differences in a grown-up way.



By Nirupama Rao

The path of India-China relations is strewn with the ghosts of summits past. The leaders of the two countries have met, expressed the loftiest of sentiments, gone their separate ways. No doubt, summits are good, nobody has a quarrel with them, the media at least loves them. The relationship has often benefited from such meetings.

A note of hope was therefore sounded when Prime Minister Narendra Modi flew into the Chinese city of Wuhan to meet with President Xi Jinping for an "informal" summit last week. The aim, as announced, was to build strategic communication and provide a long-term perspective for what is a complex and adversarial bilateral relationship.

CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM: For the duration of a day and a half, the leaders of the world's two most populous countries held talks against a classic Chinese landscape of gardens and lakes, with and without aides. The optics were reassuring and optimism about the outcome of these conversations was implied. Only a year ago, on the high Himalayan plateau of Doklam on the borders of Bhutan, India and China, overlooking the vital Siliguri Corridor connecting 'mainland' India to the Northeastern States, Indian and Chinese troops engaged in a tense stand-off lasting 73 days. The visit of the Dalai Lama, exiled in India for nearly six decades, to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh engendered deep Chinese resentment. The voluble Indian opposition to China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) being developed in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was also a source of serious friction. China's growing inroads in the form of high-profile projects and support for anti-Indian political interests in India's South Asian neighborhood fueled Indian distrust. Hawkish and hyper nationalist voices in both countries raised tensions further, and the specter of armed conflict on a shared but disputed frontier lurked in the shadows.

Last year was an annus horribilis for the India-China relationship. The Wuhan summit signaled that the two countries are working on restoring a much-needed equilibrium in a deeply disturbed relationship. This is a relationship in therapy. For Mr. Modi, whose scorecard on neighborhood policy has been underwhelming, a detoxifying policy facelift with China is certainly advantageous both in terms of his domestic political image, with



Mutual trust and accommodation of interests alone can bring the two countries closer. Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi (left) and Chinese President Xi Jinping at BRICS Summit
File photo

the 2019 parliamentary elections drawing near, as well as in improving his global profile.

The outcome statement from the Indian foreign office and from the Prime Minister's social media network speaks about Mr. Modi and Mr. Xi having forged a common understanding in Wuhan on the future direction of India-China relations "built upon mutual respect for each other's developmental aspirations and prudent management of differences with mutual sensitivity". These are words that can be variously interpreted. Their distilled essence is: let us give each other space and let us rationalize our opposition to each other and our differences in a grown-up way. The takeaway buzzword from Wuhan appears to be "strategic communication" by both leaderships in order to provide a more cogent sense of purpose and direction that helps heal the relationship.

TWO STATEMENTS: The Indian statement (the separate statement from the Chinese foreign ministry is not so full-bodied) also makes it known that the two leaders have "issued strategic guidance" to their militaries to strengthen communication in order to especially "enhance predictability and effectiveness in the management of border affairs". The intention is to prevent incidents in border regions of the Doklam variety, it is presumed. The situation bears watching. There are many pockets along the 3,500 km border between the two countries where the Line of Actual Control is disputed. Transgressions from both sides occur regularly and military establishments, Indian and Chinese, are trained not to yield an inch. Efforts to establish a clearly delineated Line of Actual Control have not succeeded, mainly due to Chinese reluctance. The summit at Wuhan coincided with news that India will build 96 more border outposts along the

frontier with China.

The summit has apparently not yielded (and neither was it expected to) any significant reduction of differences on the CPEC. The Indian government can ill-afford to give the impression of any concession on this question to China given the Pakistan factor - a perennial trigger for public hysteria. The announcement that China and India will jointly work on a project (details yet to be announced) in war-torn Afghanistan is a first and unlikely to give Pakistan comfort, although China will no doubt provide undercover assurances to the former that its interests will not be

harmful.

A sober prognosis for the future of India-China relations is warranted despite the euphoria of Mr. Modi's visit to Wuhan. The potential for tension on the Himalayan piedmont is aggravated by the clash of Chinese and Indian ambition in the maritime environment of the Indo-Pacific. The growing alignment of interest among three democracies - India, the U.S. (now termed an "indispensable" partner) and Japan - is a source for Chinese insecurity, just as China-Pakistan strategic cooperation and China's inroads in South Asia make India uneasy. Twenty-first century Asia is not a pacific place. It is multi-polar and multi-aligned and a testing ground for the security architectures of the future.

SECURING THE ASIAN CENTURY: Decades ago, India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, famously said that the challenge between India and China "runs along the spine of Asia". As India and China re-emerge from the shadows of history, hopes for the so far elusive dream of an Asia united will be center on the progress and development of these two nations. At the same time, tension or conflict between the two takes away from the prospects of the Asian century that their leaders speak of. Perhaps it is this realization that prompted the rendezvous in Wuhan. The world should have no quarrel with India and China beating swords into ploughshares. We need a regular pattern of more informal summits between the leaders of the two countries. The challenge across the spine of Asia does no one good.

(The author is a former Foreign Secretary of India and Ambassador to the United States and to China. Twitter: @NMenonRao)

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THE ROCKY ROAD TO 2019



By M.K. Narayanan

"The authorities also need to be aware that as various State elections draw near, newer threats are likely to emerge. Among them are cyber threats. India is possibly the third most vulnerable country today from the point of view of cyberattacks. Many experts are of the view that as the digital economy expands, India will confront the specter of cyberattacks."

As 2019 and the general election beckon, the situation within the country appears far from reassuring. Several events over the past few months seem to presage that there is worse to follow. Protests and agitations have a life of their own and underestimating their potential could be cause for grief. Hence, it might be worthwhile for the nation's leaders to pay heed to the ancient Chinese proverb, "the wind sweeping through the tower heralds a storm rising in the mountain" and take anticipatory steps.

Lowdown on internal security

The authorities need to analyze why simultaneous upheavals are taking place on different planes across the country. Each day, a concatenation of events and situations are contributing to feelings of deep unease. Take internal security, for instance. The authorities may claim that the situation is stable, but the daily litany of violence tells a different story. Jammu and Kashmir is a good example where the situation has been steadily deteriorating. The past year has witnessed an increase in casualties, of civilians and security personnel, an upsurge in terrorist violence, a rise in cross-border terrorism and increased infiltration from Pakistan. Despite the surgical strikes by India, a palpable fear syndrome prevails in the areas bordering Pakistan.

Likewise, claims made latterly of the eclipse of the Maoist menace - there are reports of scores of Maoists having been killed in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district in end-April - are clearly unconvincing. Maoist violence is not so prevalent in areas where it was once rampant; while the kill-ratio of Maoists to security force personnel appears to have gone in favor of the security forces, the capacity of Maoists in carrying out selective violence has not been significantly blunted, especially in their strongholds in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra. As an ideology-based militant movement, Maoism needs to be countered by a sustained ideological campaign in rural and urban areas, but this is nowhere in evidence.

Next is the growing specter of agrarian unrest. Over the past year, a series of protest movements by farmers have rocked the country. While the causes are varied, the basic issue remains the same, viz. the neglect of farmers and the agrarian community by those in authority. Large-scale protest marches by farmers such as the one in Maharashtra in March, evoke both concern and fear. More protests are in the offing. With cohesive leadership, the current peaceful agrarian protests could attain a dangerous dimension.

Concrete steps are needed to defuse crises that could disrupt India's political and social equilibrium



Dalit identity and concerns

An even bigger challenge confronts the nation today - on how to deal with the issue of Dalit "self-assertion". This aspect was clearly manifest during the April 2 Bharat Bandh which was sponsored by different Dalit groups; its pan-India imprint was unprecedented. The bandh was to protest the judgment of the Supreme Court, amending the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The outburst of violence, which resulted in some casualties and the destruction of property worth crores, went far beyond this aspect. There was and is no mistaking the pent-up resentment or the degree of mistrust.

Anger and resentment have been building up within the Dalit community for quite some time. Growing numbers of atrocities against Dalits in recent years, which thanks to modern communications systems and social media have gained critical publicity, are undoubtedly the root cause of the pent-up anger. Instances in 2016, such as Rohith Vemula's death at Hyderabad University, and, separately, in Una, have been triggers for the explosion of anger and violence.

However, the recent outburst points to a new brand of Dalit "rejectionist politics" which should be a matter of utmost concern. Appeasement is no longer acceptable. Moderating or repealing cow protection laws will hardly matter or make a difference. More reservation in jobs is unlikely to assuage Dalit concerns. A group of alumni from the Indian Institutes of Technology have given up their jobs to form a political party to fight for the rights of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes.

Violence against children

If the authorities have been found wanting or are being accused of their inept handling of the April 2 agitation, they are now being hauled over the coals for their inability to

check the spate of incidents of rape across the country. The brutal assaults on young children have touched a raw nerve. Demands are being made to ensure that crimes of this nature end and that the administration sheds its helplessness and starts taking stringent action.

Today, the place names, Kathua (Jammu) and Unnao (Uttar Pradesh), have become synonymous with the "epidemic" of rapes. But sexual violence still continues despite public outrage and the administration is seen to be helpless in preventing it, which is beginning to create a crisis of confidence in the ability of the administration and the government to deal with the situation. Questions are being asked as the administration is unable to fulfil one of its most basic responsibilities - to protect the honor and the dignity of women and children. Mere condemnation of rape by those in authority will not do.

Cracks in the two pillars

Distinct from these issues, but equally worrisome, is the extent of disruption seen in the functioning of Parliament. A disruption of parliamentary proceedings is not new, but the near total washout of the Budget session has shaken the faith of the nation.

The view from the Treasury Benches that the Opposition is to blame for this has gained little traction. Most people believe that the responsibility to ensure the smooth functioning of Parliament rests equally, if not more, with the ruling dispensation, apart from the Presiding Officers of the two Houses. What the nation is demanding is a resolution of the impasse, and not the assigning of blame. A lack of demonstrable action is only adding to the sense of dismay.

The prevailing dissonance in the higher judiciary, the display of divisions within the highest court of the land, and the charges levelled against the Chief Justice of India by Opposition parties which are seeking his impeachment, are again highly disturbing.

There has been no precedent for such a situation. The persistence of such trends is giving rise to serious concerns as to where the nation is headed.

Cyber concerns

The authorities also need to be aware that as various State elections draw near, newer threats are likely to emerge. Among them are cyber threats. India is possibly the third most vulnerable country today from the point of view of cyberattacks. Many experts are of the view that as the digital economy expands, India will confront the specter of cyberattacks. Given that it is already struggling to deal with threats such as ransomware and cryptojacking, India will need to tone up its strategic mindset and increase its homegrown capabilities expeditiously; a devastating cyberattack could undermine public confidence in an election year.

Finally, given the current resurgence in communal and caste aspirations, India cannot afford to overlook the danger of a rise in regional subnationalism, of which there are already some incipient signs. Such tendencies could gain a fillip, if as anticipated, the coming elections witness bitter electoral campaigns based on a variety of considerations that include caste and community.

It is not that solutions for all these problems fall within the purview of the authorities or the government. However, it is in the nature of things that the responsibility for situations tends to devolve on the government. Hence, it is important that the road to 2019 is paved with not only professed good intentions but also concrete steps to mitigate and "defuse" a succession of crises that have the potential to disturb the political and social equilibrium in an election year.

(The author is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal)

Mother's Day is a holiday honoring motherhood that is observed in different forms throughout the world, and Mother's Day 2018 occurs on Sunday, May 13, in the United States. The American incarnation of Mother's Day was created by Anna Jarvis in 1908 and became an official U.S. holiday in 1914. Jarvis would later denounce the holiday's commercialization and spent the latter part of her life trying to remove it from the calendar. While dates and celebrations vary, Mother's Day traditionally involves presenting moms with flowers, cards and other gifts.

HISTORY OF MOTHER'S DAY

Celebrations of mothers and motherhood can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and Romans, who held festivals in honor of the mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele, but the clearest modern precedent for Mother's Day is the early Christian festival known as "Mothering Sunday."

Once a major tradition in the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this celebration fell on the fourth Sunday in Lent and was originally seen as a time when the faithful would return to their "mother church"—the main church in the vicinity of their home—for a special service.

Over time the Mothering Sunday tradition shifted into a more secular holiday, and children would present their mothers with flowers and other tokens of appreciation. This custom eventually faded in popularity before merging with the American Mother's Day in the 1930s and 1940s.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, on May 9, 1914, signed a proclamation following untiring efforts by Anna Marie Jarvis. The United States, then declared the second Sunday of May a national holiday "as a public expression of our love and reverence for the mothers of our country".

Who Was Anna Marie Jarvis?

Anna Marie Jarvis, seen as founder of Mother's Day, was the daughter of Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis, a social activist who organized events called Mothers' Day Work Clubs to reduce infant mortality. At the events doctors were invited to hold discussions with mothers on how to keep their children healthy and educate them with latest practices of hygiene and sanitation.

It was the elder Jarvis who had inspired her daughter to lead the movement of observing Mother's Day

Anna Marie Jarvis has been quoted saying that in 1876 she heard her mother recite the following prayer after teaching a Sunday School lesson:

"I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mother's day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life."

How Was The First Mother's Day Observed?

After the death of Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis in 1905, Anna Maria Jarvis vowed to fulfill her mother's dream.

On May 10, 1908, Anna Jarvis held a public service at Andrews Methodist Church, where her mother taught Sunday School for 25 years. She sent a donation of 500 white carnations for all those who attended and that is how the first official Mother's Day was observed.

MOTHER'S DAY AROUND THE WORLD

A special day in the honor of mothers, Mothers Day is celebrated in several countries around the world though on different dates. In a large number of countries including US, Mothers Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in the month of May, but in many other countries Mothers Day is celebrated in an entirely different time of the year.

But what ever may be the date of Mother's

MOTHER'S DAY: A SALUTE TO MOM



Day around the world, the spirit is the same everywhere. Everywhere in the world mothers are respected for their extreme devotion towards their kids. And on Mother's Day children pay their humblest tribute to their mothers and thank them for giving them birth and providing them with the best of care and upbringing.

Mother's Day USA

In USA Mothers Day is a national holiday

and is celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm and gaiety. On this day people reflect on the importance of mothers in their life and thank them for their unconditional love and support. Mothers and children in USA look forward to celebrate the day with each other. Besides, in United States the national flag is hoisted on every house and important buildings on the occasion of Mother's Day to honor motherhood and the mothers of the country.

Mothers Day is celebrated in USA in a big way and has been commercialized to a great extent. It is considered as the next big day after Christmas and Valentines Day. Phone lines record a heavy traffic and card sales reaches its peak. Restaurants are filled to their maximum capacity as children don't want their mothers to cook on their special day.

At home children express love for their mother by treating their moms with breakfast in the bed or making a sumptuous lunch. Tradition of gifting flowers and gifts is also rampant. More commonly gifted flowers are carnations as these are the official flower of Mothers Day. People buy red or pink carnations for the mothers who are living and place white carnations on the grave of the mothers who are dead. Children also present skits, plays and song in honor of their mother. Some also make cards and gifts at home to show their gratitude for their mother.

Mother's Day in UK

Mothers Day in UK is celebrated with great excitement and verve but it does not fall on the same date as in US. In UK, Mother's Day celebrations takes place on the fourth Sunday in the month of Lent. Since the Lent days are not fixed, the date for mothers Day changes every year.

The tradition of celebrating Mothers Day began much earlier in England than it started in USA. In fact England was the first country in the world to dedicate a day for mothers as early as 1600s. They called this day for mothers as 'Mothering Sunday'. The festival has its roots in the practice wherein poor people in England send their little children to work as domestic servants or apprentice with the rich. At that time it was considered important by the people that these children, staying away from their families be allowed to visit their homes once in a year. The time decided for the annual visit to home was middle Sunday of the fasting period of Lent (which lasts from Ash Wednesday to Easter). For this reason, the day was called 'Refreshment Sunday' or 'Mid-Lent Sunday'.

Mother's Day in Canada

In North American country of Canada, Mothers Day is a the most popular festival after Christmas and Valentines Day. Just as in USA, Mothers Day in Canada is celebrated in the second Sunday in the month of May. People pay tribute to their mothers on the day and thank them for their constant support and love. In Canada, cards and flowers are the most commonly used methods of expressing love for moms.

Mother's Day In India

The concept of celebrating Mothers Day on the second Sunday of May is very new in India and it can be said that in a time span of less than a decade, Mothers Day has been a great success. In the presence of umpteenth number of existing festivals, it is a remarkable achievement for a foreign festival to make its presence felt in the vast and culturally diverse country like India.

Globalisation, to a great extent has helped to make this Western, or mainly American festival to make its presence felt in India. Besides interaction of Indians with the West is at an all time high. A lot many people have been in US or have their relatives staying there. Internet and satellite revolution has made information about other cultures more accessible than ever. But the reason behind the success of Mothers Day in India can be attributed to the emotions which are attached to the festival. Mothers are mothers everywhere, they are as much loved and respected in India as in any other part of the world. Perhaps Indians have always felt the need of such a day which is devoted solely to mothers. Mothers Day gives them all the opportunity to celebrate such a day.

UK investigation to go on despite Cambridge Analytica shutdown

LONDON (TIP): British authorities on May 3 said that their investigation into the data breach scandal involving Cambridge Analytica will not be impacted with the shutdown of the political consulting firm.

Cambridge Analytica (CA) is accused of acquiring data from up to 87 million Facebook profiles for use in political campaigns around the world. It denies wrongdoing and yesterday announced that the company and its parent, SCL Group, would be wound down due to loss of business as a result of the scandal.

This could have an impact on the group's Indian arm, headquartered in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. According to documents made public on social media in March, SCL India has regional offices in Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Cuttack, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Indore, Kolkata, Patna and Pune.

A spokesperson for Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) said investigators will "examine closely" the details of the closure and will "closely monitor any successor companies".

She said: "The ICO has been investigating the SCL Group and Cambridge Analytica as part of a wider investigation into the use of personal data and analytics by political campaigns, social media companies and others."

"The ICO will continue its civil and criminal investigations and will seek to pursue individuals and directors as appropriate and necessary even where companies may no longer be operating," she said.

The company is accused of mapping the behaviour of voters in the run-up to the 2016 US election and European Union (EU) referendum. The company also allegedly did election-related work in India for the Congress and JD(U) parties, according to revelations by former CA employee-turned-whistleblower Christopher Wylie.



Damian Collins, chair of the House of Commons select committee for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which is conducting its own investigation as part of a wider inquiry in fake news, said: "Cambridge Analytica and (parent company) SCL Group cannot be allowed to delete their data history by closing."

"The investigations into their work are vital," Collins said.

He said the committee is determined to ensure that the closure is not an attempt to "run and hide" and that the companies are not closing down to try to avoid them being rigorously investigated over the allegations that are being made against them. Earlier in the week, Collins repeated a request for Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg to appear before the committee, saying evidence provided by the company's chief technology officer Mike Schroepfer last week "failed to answer fully" MPs' questions.

In a firmly worded letter to Facebook's public policy chief, Rebecca Stimson, he

said: "We hope that he (Zuckerberg) will respond positively to our request, but if not the Committee will resolve to issue a formal summons for him to appear when he is next in the UK."

Facebook has apologised to users for a "breach of trust" and claims to have tightened its privacy restrictions.

Cambridge Analytica yesterday said it had been the subject of "numerous unfounded accusations" and had been "vilified" for activities that were both legal and accepted as a "standard component of online advertising in both the political and commercial arenas".

It blamed a "siege of media coverage" for driving away customers, meaning the company's continued operation was no longer viable, leaving it "with no realistic alternative to placing the company into administration".

The company said that its parent company, SCL Elections, would also be commencing bankruptcy proceedings. (PTI)

UK parties face judgment of public in local elections

LONDON (TIP): Voters in England are casting ballots in local elections considered a test of the public mood less than a year before the UK leaves the European Union.

Voting is taking place Thursday to fill more than 4,000 seats on 150 local councils in towns and cities across England, including all of London's 32 boroughs.

The Conservatives, who have been in power nationally since 2010, are bracing for losses as some voters express anger over unsteady Brexit negotiations, an explosive immigration scandal and years of public spending cuts.

The main opposition Labour Party is hoping to pick up hundreds of seats, but has been tarnished by allegations that its leadership failed to clamp down on anti-Semitism in party ranks.

Polls are open until 10 p.m. (2100GMT), with results expected on May 4 Friday. (AP)

Sex scandal may delay Literature Nobel this year

STOCKHOLM (TIP): The Swedish Academy will announce on May 4 whether or not it will postpone awarding the Nobel Prize for Literature this year following a controversy over alleged sexual misconduct that has seen a string of board members leave the prestigious institution.

It is very rare for the award of Nobel prizes to be cancelled or postponed. The last time the literature prize was not awarded was in 1943, at the height of World War II.

The date for this year's award has not yet been announced, though it always occurs in the first half of October in conjunction with the presentation of winners in other fields.

The Swedish Academy, a council of prestigious authors and linguists tasked with furthering the Swedish language, has been dealing with the fallout of allegations of sexual misconduct by the husband of one of its members and leaks of names of some prizewinners ahead of the formal announcements.

Photographer and cultural figure Jean-Claude Arnault, who is married to Academy member and author Katarina Frostenson, has denied all allegations, both of sexual misconduct and of leaking the names of the laureates.

Six of the Academy's 18 members have stepped down following the controversy that surfaced late last year while two other members were already not participating in the Academy's work for other reasons. (Reuters)

Boat with 53 Iraqis, Syrians runs aground in northern Greece

THESSALONIKI (GREECE) (TIP): Greek authorities say they have picked up 53 people, all believed to be from Iraq and Syria, after the boat smuggling them into the country ran aground on a remote beach off the mainland of northeastern Greece.

Authorities said on May 3 the boat, a 12-metre (40-foot) Turkish-flagged yacht, ran aground on Molyvoti beach in the northeastern Rodopi region, far from any of the usual smuggling routes used to ferry migrants and refugees from Turkey to Greece.

The group comprised 19 men, 11 women and 23 children aged between 2 and 8.

Hundreds of migrants continue to pass from Turkey into Greece. Nearly all cross either from the Turkish coast to nearby Greek islands or forge across a river along the Greek-Turkish land border. (AP)

Russian fighter jet crashes off Syria, both pilots killed

BEIRUT (TIP): A Russian fighter jet crashed today off the coast of Syria, killing both pilots, according to Russia's Defense Ministry, which said the plane did not come under fire and that the crash may have been caused by a bird getting sucked into one of the engines.

State news agency Tass cited the ministry as saying the Su-30 crashed shortly after takeoff from the Russian air base at Hemeimeem in Syria. Russia has been waging an air campaign in support of President Bashar Assad's forces since 2015.

In March, a Russian military cargo plane crashed as it was descending to land at Hemeimeem, killing all 39 people on board. The military blamed the crash on a technical error and insisted the plane was not shot down.

Russia leases the Hemeimeem military base in Syria, near the Mediterranean coast.

In the capital Damascus, Syrian troops managed to capture more areas from the Islamic State group on the southern edge of the city cutting the region held by extremists into two parts.



The government-controlled Syrian Central Military Media said troops today cut off IS fighters based in the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk from those in the Hajar al-Aswad neighbourhood to the south. Yarmouk and Hajar al-Aswad are the last two areas outside government control in Damascus.

Syrian troops began a major offensive two weeks ago to retake the area under the cover of airstrikes. The fighting led to the displacement of thousands of Palestinian refugees and others to neighbouring areas. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that since the government offensive began on

April 19, 112 soldiers and pro-government gunmen as well as 91 IS fighters have been killed. Dozens of civilians have been killed as well in the fighting, according to the war monitor.

Near Hajar al-Aswad, preparations were underway to evacuate thousands of opposition fighters and civilians from three southern suburbs following a deal reached last week to hand over the area to government forces.

State TV said buses started entering the southern suburbs of Babila, Beit Sahem and Yalda to evacuate some 5,000 fighters and their families, while those who decide to stay are eligible for amnesty. (AP)



ANUSHKA SHARMA THANKS VIRAT KOHLI FOR MAKING HER BIRTHDAY SPECIAL

Anushka Sharma turned a year older on Tuesday with husband Virat Kohli by her side. The much-sought-after couple was in Bengaluru as Kohli had a match against Mumbai Indians there and Anushka took a break from work to be with him. The day became even more special with Virat's team Royal Challengers Bangalore winning the match. Post-match, the two celebrated together and the Sui Dhaaga actor shared a photo from the celebration. She thanked the "bestest, kindest, bravest man in the world" for making the day a memorable one for her.

"Best birthday with the bestest, kindest, bravest man in the world. Love you for making it so special my love!" read the caption of Anushka's Instagram post. Being a loving husband that he is, Virat wished his lovely wife on social media with the sweetest message. He wrote, "Happy B'day my love. The most positive and honest person I know. Love you ??" Not only this, he even dedicated RCB's win on Tuesday to Anushka. In the post-match presentation, the Indian skipper said, "My wife is here, it's her birthday and it's a little birthday gift for her. I'm glad she could enjoy the win watching from here & it's very special to achieve 2 points in front of her."

IT'S OFFICIAL, SONAM KAPOOR, ANAND AHUJA ARE GETTING MARRIED ON MAY 8

Actress Sonam Kapoor will marry Delhi-based businessman Anand Ahuja in Mumbai on May 8, the family has confirmed following weeks of speculation around their union.

A statement on behalf of the Kapoor and Ahuja families was issued on Tuesday.

"The Kapoor and Ahuja families take great joy and pride in announcing the marriage of Sonam and Anand. The wedding will take place on May 8 in Mumbai," read the statement.

"Thank you for all your blessings and love, as we celebrate this special moment in our lives," the statement read.

Kapoor and Ahuja have been dating for a number of years, but it is only in the past few months that they have been open about their relationship and travels together on social media.

The lighting and decorations outside the Kapoor residence in Mumbai added fuel to the speculation about the wedding.

Veteran actor Anil Kapoor, Sonam's father, reportedly commented at an event last week: "Media has always been with me and my family when we began our careers. We will share everything at the right time. You all will know very soon. We won't hide these details. You will know why there is lighting outside the house."

Kapoor, after debuting in Bollywood with Saawariya in 2008, has featured in movies such as Delhi-6, Aisha, and Khoobsurat. Her performance in Neerja won her a Special Mention at the Indian National Film Awards.

Now, just weeks before her next film Veere Di Wedding releases in India on June 1 (May 31 in the UAE), she is busy preparing for her own wedding.

A week after her wedding day, Kapoor will walk the red carpet at the 71st Cannes Film Festival.



Anand Ahuja is a Delhi-based businessman and the CEO and co-founder of Bhane, an apparel manufacturing company. He also owns Veg Non-veg, a multi-brand sneaker boutique in Delhi. Anand is also the managing director at Shahi Exports which reportedly has an annual turnover of Rs 3,000 crore.

Anand studied at American Embassy School and later completed his post-graduation from Wharton School at the

University of Pennsylvania. He interned at Amazon.com in America before moving back to Delhi and joining his dad, Harish Ahuja, in his business ventures.

Anand is rumoured to have met Sonam in 2014 through fashion designer Prernia Qureshi, who is Sonam's stylist. He is said to have proposed Sonam within a month of their first meeting. Anand often shares Sonam's pictures and promotes her films and projects on Instagram.

'He wanted to see how I looked in a nightie': Mahie Gill reveals shocking details about a director who harassed her

After the shocking BBC documentary that was aimed to expose the dirty secrets of the casting couch in the industry, Actress Mahie Gill has now opened up about her own experience of getting sexually harassed in Bollywood.

The star has revealed in shocking details to Hindustan Times how a director wanted to see her in a 'nightie'.

"It happened with me a few times. I don't even remember the name of the directors. I had to meet a director, so I wore a salwar suit and went, and he told me, 'If you wear a suit and come, nobody is going to cast you in a film.' Then, I met another director and he tells me, 'I want to see how you look in a nightie'. So, you see, there are idiots all around." Mahie adds in the same interview that such incidents made her confused about how things worked in the industry.

"I was so new to Mumbai, so, I didn't



know who was right and who was wrong. And when people know you are new in the industry and struggling while they've been sitting in Mumbai for so many years, you tend to listen to them. I mean, I actually started to think that 'achha, aisa hota hai ki suit pehnne se role nahi milte aur koi kaam nahi dega?' So, with everyone trying to give you free advice, it's very difficult to meet the right kind of people," added Mahie.

The actor admits that "it really affects" one's state of mind.

"After all this, you don't know who to meet, how to meet. There was a point when I stopped meeting people in their offices and I even used to take a friend along with me so that people don't try to act smart. But then, you want money also, so, I started doing some serials also on Doordarshan just to earn," says Mahie in the interview to Hindustan Times.



CHARLIZE THERON FED UP OF HER WEIGHT GAIN STORY

Actress Charlize Theron believes too much focus has been put on her body transformation for the film 'Tully'.

According to reports, in an interview, she says gaining weight was not a big deal for her.

"Women gain that amount, if not more, every time they get pregnant. So it's not that big of a deal," Theron said.

The award-winning actress put on weight to play a pregnant and tired mother of three in 'Tully', which has received rave reviews.

"I was playing this woman and I wanted to get closer to her. I don't think when an actress does that we have to get so focused on it," she added.

Theron, who has two adopted children, had previously said that gaining weight for the role made her depressed.

Source: IANS

ASHLEY JUDD SUES HARVEY WEINSTEIN FOR SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Hollywood actor Ashley Judd on Monday filed a defamation and sexual harassment lawsuit against film producer Harvey Weinstein, alleging that he damaged her movie career after she refused his sexual advances. The civil lawsuit, filed in Los Angeles Superior Court in Santa Monica, accuses Weinstein of causing Judd to lose a part in 1998 in the film, *The Lord of the Rings*, by making "baseless smears" against her.

The lawsuit, reviewed by Reuters, alleges that Weinstein "was retaliating against Ms Judd for rejecting his sexual demands approximately one year earlier, when he cornered her in a hotel room under the guise of discussing business."

"Weinstein used his power in the entertainment industry to damage Ms. Judd's reputation and limit her ability to find work," the lawsuit added.

A representative for Weinstein issued a statement hours later saying the onetime film studio chieftain had "neither defamed Ms Judd nor ever interfered with Ms Judd's career."

Instead, the statement said, Weinstein "championed" Judd's work and "repeatedly approved her casting for two of his movies" - *Frida* in 2002 starring Salma Hayek, and *Crossing Over* with Harrison Ford in 2009. It also said he had "fought for Ms Judd as his first choice for a lead role in *Good Will Hunting*."

The statement did not address Judd's allegations that she was sexually harassed by Weinstein.

Judd was one of the first women in October 2017 to make an on-the-record allegation of sexual misconduct against Weinstein, which soon evolved into the social media #MeToo movement against



sexual harassment and assault. The Oscar-winning producer has since been accused of sexual impropriety by more than 70 women.

He has denied having non-consensual sex with anyone.

Judd, a leading member of the Time's Up movement against sexual harassment in the workplace, is seeking unspecified damages and a jury trial. Judd's

representative did not immediately return a call for comment.

The actress said in a statement to the New York Times that any financial recuperation from the lawsuit would be donated to Time's Up "so that women and men in all professions may have legal redress for sexual harassment, economic retaliation and damage to their careers."

Source: Reuters

Blake Lively deletes all her Instagram posts

Actor Blake Lively has deleted all her Instagram posts and is now following only 27 people named Emily Nelson.

The 30-year-old actor's social media account has been a fan favourite with over 20.4 million followers courtesy her fashion posts and pranks on husband Ryan Reynolds, but users were left stunned when they found her official page completely blank.

Her last, now-deleted, post was a photo of a completed game of Hangman, the answer to which was: "What happened to Emily?"

The cryptic question is now Lively's Instagram biography. She has also removed her display picture.

Lively's blank Instagram and sudden obsession with Emily Nelson hints at her upcoming film, 'A Simple Favor'.

The movie, directed by Paul Feig and also starring Anna Kendrick, is an adaptation of a book by the same name in which a woman named Emily Nelson mysteriously vanishes.

Some of the Emily Nelsons on social media were left wondering, publicly, why the Hollywood star has suddenly started following them.



"Does anyone want to tell me why Blake Lively followed me and had this as a bio. Goodbye cruel world some hacker is anti-Emily, my time has come," one Emily Nelson

said.

She quickly tweeted again, noticing that Reynolds, 41, had liked her tweet.

Source: PTI

RACHEL MCADAMS FELT 'FREE' SHOOTING LESBIAN SEX SCENE WITH RACHEL WEISZ

Actors Rachel McAdams and Rachel Weisz worked closely with their director Sebastian Lelio to ensure their sex scene in *Disobedience* was perfect. The three were in agreement that there would be no nudity in the movie's sex scene as it was not essential to the story, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

Lelio told Den of Geek magazine: "That was very organic. It was a long conversation. I always knew that the hotel scene, the big love scene, was the heart of the film. I knew it had to be long. It was all about duration, I mean screen time."

"At the same time, I really wanted to explore the possibility of portraying a very erotic and urgent encounter without nudity, so how to do that. Then I storyboarded everything, and I presented the idea to them, and we were all in agreement. I had this idea of instead of showing skin we would find very specific acts that we rarely see on screen or in these kind of films and go for them," he added.

Lelio also believes the scene gives the audience a greater insight into McAdams' and Weisz's characters, who had a relationship while growing up in an extremely conservative orthodox Jewish community.

China deploys missiles in South China Sea, says it has 'indisputable sovereignty'

BEIJING (TIP): China on May 3 defended the deployment of anti-ship cruise missiles and surface-to-air missile systems in the disputed South China Sea, saying it has "indisputable sovereignty" over the area.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in both the South China Sea and the East China Sea. China claims almost all of South China Sea. Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan have counter claims.

"China has indisputable sovereignty over the Nansha (known as Sparty) islands and its affiliated islands," foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying told a media briefing here when asked about the reported of deployment of the missiles.

Vietnam and Taiwan have rival claims over Spratly islands.

"China's activities in the South China Sea is to uphold our sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is our right," she said.

Virtually confirming the deployment of the missiles, Hua said, "relevant deployment is not directed against any country. The relevant parties should not be concerned about this and should view this in an objective way." (PTI)

Chinese FM met Kim Jong Un in North Korea: Chinese foreign ministry

BEIJING (TIP): Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during a rare visit to Pyongyang, China's foreign ministry said Thursday on its official social media account.

The two-day visit by Wang Yi -- the highest-ranking Chinese official to travel to North Korea in years -- follows a landmark inter-Korean summit and precedes a planned meeting between Kim and US President Donald Trump in the coming weeks.

The meeting with Kim followed talks Wednesday between Wang and his North Korean counterpart Ri Yong Ho, where the two discussed issues including the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula.

Wang, who arrived in Pyongyang Wednesday, is the first Chinese foreign minister to visit the North since 2007, a lapse that highlights the rough patch in relations between the allies in recent years.

China -- North Korea's sole diplomatic ally and economic benefactor -- has supported a series of United Nations sanctions against Pyongyang over its nuclear and missile programmes. (AFP)

Israel's parliament approves bill allowing PM Benjamin Netanyahu to declare war

JERUSALEM (TIP): The Israeli parliament has approved a law empowering the country's prime minister and defense minister to declare war without full Cabinet approval in "extreme circumstances."

While Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a presentation showcasing intelligence on Iran's nuclear program on live television, his coalition quietly pushed through a bill on May 1 expanding his authority to order military operations.

The measure was passed amid heightened tensions with Iran over its involvement in Syria. It was approved less than a day after warplanes, believed to be Israeli, carried out an airstrike Syrian military facility, killing 26 pro-government fighters, most of them Iranians.

Israel is believed to have been responsible for several strikes on Iranian positions in Syria in recent months. Israeli officials typically neither confirm nor deny such reports. (AP)

Tough road for Iraq's female candidates in May 12 elections

BAGHDAD (TIP): Iraqi women running for parliament this month are undaunted, despite many challenges they face ahead of the May 12 elections - including unprecedented smear campaigns complete with sex videos that have forced some to withdraw from the race.

Many see the vote as a chance to push women's issues to the fore in this traditionally male-dominated society, where women still find it hard to win a powerful place in politics.

There are concerns that women's rights are being eroded, 15 years after the US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein with hopes of bringing democracy to a nation long staggering under wars, oppression and countless economic and social problems.

Nearly 2,600 female candidates are vying for a quarter - a quota allotted to women under the constitution - of parliament's 329 seats in these elections, the fourth since Saddam's 2003 ouster.

Fatin Rasheed Hameed, a candidate with the Baghdad Alliance party dominated by the country's minority Sunnis, says there would be fewer women in parliament if it were not for the 25 percent quota.

"One of the most important women's issues in Iraq that needs to be urgently addressed is marginalization," said the mother of two and a university professor with a doctorate in biology. "Our society still allows men to dominate in all areas and fields." "Even this quota is unfair," she added. "Half of any society's success depends on women; therefore the representation should be ... at least half of the seats."

Iraqi women account for 57 per cent of Iraq's population of over 37 million, according to the UN Development Programme, and despite government efforts to address gender inequality, the situation for Iraqi women has declined steadily since 2003.

According to the UNDP, one in every 10 Iraqi households is headed by a widow. In recent years, Iraqi women suffered further economic, social and political marginalization due to decades of wars, conflict, violence and sanctions.

In the 1950s, Iraq had a liberal society, becoming the first Arab country to name a female minister and adopt progressive laws for women and the family. But, the situation started to decline during Saddam's era and became further complicated after 2003, mainly due to the rise of the country's religious institutions



but also militancy and extremism.

In 2014, Islamic State militants seized human rights lawyer Samira Salih al-Nuaimi when she was at home with her husband and three children in the northern city of Mosul. The extremists tortured and then publicly killed her after their self-proclaimed religious court ruled that she had abandoned Islam.

Those harrowing images may still haunt Iraqi women ahead of the elections - the first since U.S.-backed Iraqi forces defeated IS, declaring last December that the war against the Islamic State group had been won. In the streets of Baghdad and elsewhere, posters of women candidates have been plastered on electricity poles and buildings, alongside those of men.

Some depict veil-framed faces while others show candidates with make-up and without the traditional Islamic headscarf, or hijab. Both provoked a harsh response - many posters were splattered with mud, defaced with beards drawn on or completely torn up.

For the first time, harassment and smear campaigns against women running for a seat in parliament moved online. Sex videos have been widely circulated on social media purporting to show female candidates in bed with men, as well as photos allegedly showing candidates posing in underwear or revealing outfits.

One such video - which she dismissed as a "fabrication aimed at pushing her out" - forced Intidhar Ahmed Jassim, allied with Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's Victory Alliance party, to withdraw from the race.

In Iraq's southern Najaf province, tribal arbitration was held over a video showing a young man kissing the poster of a female candidate from another tribe. The outcome: he apologized, the apology was accepted and the female candidate's tribe even declined compensation for the insult. Alarmed by the unseen level of harassment, the U.N. chief's special representative for Iraq, Jan Kubis met last month with several women candidates over the "alarming situation" and "vulgar acts" targeting women, which he said only undermines the democratic process. "Those behind defamation, cyber bullying and harassment are trying to scare you off," Kubis told them, adding that the perpetrators are "afraid of educated, dynamic, qualified, courageous and open-minded women candidates that rightfully claim their space and meaningful role in political life of Iraq." Baydaa Salim al-Najar, who was at the meeting, said the attacks "systemically target candidates without the hijab, to knock you down."

She is one of 45 candidates from Iraq's minority Yazidis - an ethnic group particularly targeted by IS in horrific attacks. Al-Najar accused Iraq's dominant parties of being behind the harassment of women - mainly as a campaign against new faces. The Baghdad-based lawyer is making her priority to raise the voice of Yazidis, especially Yazidi women, many of whom were enslaved by IS militants in their self-proclaimed caliphate. Sunni extremists consider non-Muslims infidels who deserve to be killed. (AP)

Earthquake rattles southern Iran, 31 injured

TEHRAN (TIP): A magnitude 5.2 earthquake struck a remote, mountainous region in southern Iran on May 3, injuring at least 31 people and disrupting power and communication lines, state media reported.

It says the temblor rocked the town of Sisakht, some 700 kilometres south of Tehran, causing people to rush out into the streets. The town has a population of 10,000. Footage showed cracks in the walls of buildings.

The semi-official ISNA news agency quoted Jalal Pouranfard, the head of provincial emergency services, as saying 18 people were transferred to medical centres and another 13 received treatment.

Iran is prone to near-daily earthquakes as it sits on major fault lines. In November, a magnitude 7.2 quake hit western Iran, killing more than 600. In 2003, a magnitude 6.6 quake flattened the historic city of Bam, killing 26,000 people. (AP)

SYRIANS HELD BY REBELS FREED AS PART OF DEAL WITH GOVERNMENT

BEIRUT (TIP): Syrian state-run media say 42 people who were held for years by al-Qaida-linked insurgents in the country's northwest have been released as part of a deal to hand over areas around Damascus back to the government.

Al-Ikhabariya TV broadcast images Tuesday of the released, including women and children, arriving by bus at a government-controlled checkpoint, kissing and hugging Syrian soldiers.

The 42 are the first batch of more than 80 who are to be released.

According to the deal, al-Qaida-linked fighters are to evacuate from a Palestinian refugee camp near Damascus while some 5,000 people in two northwestern villages besieged by insurgents will be allowed to move to government-held areas. (AP)



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BEAUTY BENEFITS OF HUMBLE BANANA

While it is known that this humble fruit may have a host of health benefits, bananas also offer several beauty benefits. Available throughout the year, bananas are a powerhouse of nutrients and are great for your skin and hair as well.

- The fruit contains generous amounts of vitamin C and B6, which ensure that your skin remains supple and elastic. Apart from that, bananas also have antioxidants that protect your skin from premature ageing.
- The water content present in bananas keeps your skin well hydrated so that it doesn't get flaky and dry. It works as a great moisturiser as well. This is because it comprises vitamin A, which helps your skin recover the moisture.
- One of the best ways to moisturise your skin is to use a mashed banana and liberally rub it all over your face and neck. After leaving the pulp on your face for about half an hour, wash it off.
- You also treat pigmented skin with bananas. Simply add a tablespoon of honey to banana pulp and apply it on your skin.
- Have to go to an important function and don't have time to visit the parlour? Simply take a banana and add yogurt, honey and almonds to it. Make a paste and apply it all over your face. Not only will this moisturise your face but also remove excess oil and add a glow to your skin. For those who want to get rid of marks and scars left on the skin due to acne and pimples, bananas are a helpful aid. The vitamin C they contain lightens blemishes caused by skin aggravation.
- Bananas also work as great exfoliators. Simply mix jaggedy and mashed bananas together and use the paste as a scrub on your face and neck.



TOP BENEFITS OF BANANA

SKIN MOISTURIZER: Rich in potassium and moisture, it will hydrate and moisturizes dry skin, making it soft and supple. If your skin is peeling and dry, simply apply a banana face mask on your face. Get a small bowl, mash up a ripe banana with the back of your fork, and apply to your face, avoiding the area around your eye and mouth. Rinse with cold water after 10 to 15 minutes and enjoy the soft feel of your skin.

OIL CONTROL: If you've got oily greasy skin, use a simple banana face mask with lemon juice and honey. Banana is a great exfoliator which helps slough off excess sebum on skin surface. It also contains and contains moisture, potassium, and vitamins E and C, which all promote clear glowing skin. Mash a ripe banana with the back of a fork and combine 1 tablespoon of raw honey and 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice to make an amazing face mask. Rinse off with a wet cloth or cold water.

ANTI-AGING EFFECTS: Bananas, also known as nature's botox, contain super wrinkle fighting nutrients that helps fade age spots and prevent fine lines and wrinkles from forming. Coupled with other wrinkle-busting kitchen ingredients, you can gently nourish, exfoliate and protect mature skin. Slather on a thick coat of a powerful anti aging banana face mask containing one mashed banana, 1 teaspoon orange juice, and 1 teaspoon thick yogurt.



HIDE YOUR GREY HAIR

Having a grey hair problem? Try applying grey hair chalk or braid a section of your hair with colourful threads, says an expert.

Hair chalk

You can apply hair chalk as it is easily available and you will get stylish and colourful hair. Hair chalks are not harmful for hair as it is an instant application to hide your grey hair.

Colourful threads

Braid a section of your hair with colourful threads and include the discoloured area in it. It will add a funky look to your hairstyle.

Sleek side parted ponytail

Hide white hair of your middle part by making sleek side parted pony tail. It is very easy to do, if you are in hurry you can go for this stylish hairdo.

Light accessories

There are so many accessories that can be used to hide the grey hairs. Like artificial flowers, transparent stone beads in various colours, transparent head bands and bandanas.

Curls

Use curling rollers or an iron to curl your hair or a particular section of it and hide grey areas. Curls are best styling trick, because you can move and mould them easily, and will be spread in different sections of your hair.

Side swept heavy bangs

This hairstyle will take care of those hairs which have turned white bang on top of your head and all kinds of parting will expose them out. A heavy bang brought from behind and swept cleverly to one side will do the trick.

Bun it all up

If you have grey hair in and around the crown area, you can gather all your hair into an elegant bun and glam this bun up with bling accessories. There shouldn't be any parting in the front otherwise there are chances that white hair would be visible from there. For a casual day out, instead of a sleek neat bun go for messy buns, they will give your overall personality an edge and compliment your casual attire.

FOOD CORNER

TANDOORI POMFRET

Ingredients

- 8 Pomfret fish
- 1/4 tsp Turmeric powder
- 2 tbsp Red chilli powder
- 1 tsp Garam masala powder
- 1/2 tsp Carom seeds/ ajwain
- 1 tbsp Roasted gram flour/ Besan
- 1/2 cup Hung Curd
- Salt to taste
- 4 tbsp Mustard oil
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp Coriander paste
- 1 tsp Ginger-garlic paste

Directions

- Trim tails, fins and other unnecessary things. Then wash it thoroughly.
- Make incisions on a clean fish. Keep it aside.
- In a bowl, add all the ingredients mentioned in the ingredient list. Adjust the amount of besan and yogurt to get a nice thick paste.
- Apply this marinade to the fish on both sides very well.
- Keep it for at least 30 minutes in the fridge.



- Preheat the oven to 180 Degree Celsius (356 Degree Fahrenheit).
- Grease the pan or rack. Place the fish on grill rack and cook it for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.
- Serve with Onion rings and lemon.

EGG SALAD SANDWICH

A delicious dish, Egg Salad Sandwich is a healthy recipe made using tomatoes, onions and mayonnaise with bread slices and eggs! This breakfast recipe is a great sandwich and is a kids favourite! Try out this simple and easy to make recipe.



INGREDIENTS

4 bread slices, 4 teaspoon mayonnaise, 1 pinch salt, 2 teaspoon ghee, 1/4 cup finely chopped spring onions, 1 handful chopped lettuce loose-leaf, 2 boiled, finely chopped egg, 1/2 teaspoon chilli flakes, 1 dash spice black pepper, 1 sliced tomato, 1 sliced Red onion.

Method

Mix the eggs, mayonnaise, red chilli flakes, salt and pepper powder in a bowl. Spread this on 2 bread slices. Top it up with the tomato, spring onions, red onion and lettuce leaves. Cover with the remaining slices. Heat a tawa over low flame. Place the sandwiches and apply little ghee around the edges. Cook for 30 seconds on each side and remove. Serve with french fries.

RICE, PASTA-HEAVY DIET MAY HASTEN MENOPAUSE

LONDON (TIP): High consumption of refined white pasta and rice may advance the onset of menopause by about one-and-a-half years, a UK study warns.

The study, published in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, also showed that high intake of healthy foods, such as oily fish and fresh legumes, such as peas and green beans is associated with a later onset of the menopause.

Researchers from the University of Leeds examined the link between diet and the onset of menopause in 14,150 women living in the UK.

"This study is the first to investigate the links between individual nutrients and a wide variety of food groups and age at natural menopause in a large cohort of British women," said Yashvee Dunneram, a postdoctoral researcher at University of Leeds.

"Further studies are needed to improve understanding on how this may impact health and wellbeing," Dunneram said.

Along with a detailed diet questionnaire, an initial survey collected information on reproductive history and health.

When a follow up survey and questionnaire were conducted four years later, researchers were able to assess the diets of the women who had experienced the onset of a natural menopause in the interim.



The average age at the start of the menopause for women in the UK is 51 years. Over 900 women between the ages of 40 and 65 had experienced a natural start of their menopause at the time of the follow-up survey.

They had not had menstrual periods for at least 12 consecutive months and menopause had not been brought on by such things as cancer, surgery or pharmaceutical treatments.

Analysis of their diet showed that high intake of oily fish was associated with a delayed start to menopause by nearly three years, researchers said.

A diet with lots of refined pasta and rice showed that menopause was more

likely to occur one and a half years earlier than average, they said.

"The age at which menopause begins can have serious health implications for some women," said Janet Cade, a professor at the University of Leeds.

"A clear understanding of how diet affects the start of natural menopause will be very beneficial to those who may already be at risk or have a family history of certain complications related to menopause," Cade said.

Previous studies have suggested that earlier onset of menopause is associated with lower bone density, osteoporosis and increased risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Source: PTI



SMOKING, DRINKING MAY UP 'HEART FLUTTE' RISK

BOSTON (TIP): Smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol may significantly increase the risk of irregular heartbeats or atrial fibrillation, a study has found.

Lifetime risk is a useful method to quantify risk of atrial fibrillation over a person's lifetime. However, data are scarce with respect to the lifetime risk of atrial fibrillation in the presence of one or multiple risk factors such as obesity and smoking.

Researchers from Boston University in the US found that among individuals aged 55 years or older, the overall lifetime risk of atrial fibrillation (AF) was 37 per cent and was influenced by the burden of risk factors.

"We examined the lifetime risk of atrial fibrillation, which measures the cumulative risk of developing a disease during the remainder of an individual's life," said Ludovic Trinquart, an assistant professor at Boston University.

"It is essential to look at lifetime risks in addition to short-term risks, because it may enable early identification of individuals at higher long-term risk and facilitate lifestyle change counselling," said Trinquart.

Established risk factors for developing atrial fibrillation within 10 years include cigarette smoking, alcohol misuse, hypertension, obesity, diabetes, myocardial infarction, and heart failure. However, prior research has provided little insight on the lifetime risk of atrial fibrillation.

"By contrast with the relative risk of atrial fibrillation, lifetime risk is an easy way for clinicians to communicate future risk of atrial fibrillation to individuals," researchers wrote in a study published in the journal *BMJ*.

"Estimating the lifetime risk of atrial fibrillation in various subgroups with one or multiple elevated or borderline-elevated risk factors might also help to design preventive strategies," they said.

The researchers assessed 5,338 participants from the Framingham Heart Study who did not have atrial fibrillation at one or more of the index ages of 55, 65, and 75 years.

They identified smoking, alcohol consumption, body mass index, blood pressure, diabetes, and history of myocardial infarction or heart failure at an index age as risk factors.

Then, they categorised risk factor burdens as optimal (all risk factors were optimal), elevated (at least one risk factor elevated), and borderline, and compared the lifetime risk estimates according to those levels of risk factor burden.

Source: PTI

Drinking baking soda may help combat rheumatoid arthritis

Drinking baking soda daily may help reduce the destructive inflammation of autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, say scientists. While the immune system normally protects us from disease and infection, in someone who has an autoimmune disease the immune system attacks healthy cells in the body by mistake.

Drinking baking soda, or sodium bicarbonate, tells the spleen — which is part of the immune system — to go easy on the immune response, the study said. "Certainly drinking bicarbonate affects the spleen and we think it's through the mesothelial cells," said study co-author Paul O'Connor from Augusta University in Georgia, US.

The findings, published in the *Journal of Immunology*, showed that when rats or healthy people drink a solution of baking soda, or sodium bicarbonate, it becomes a trigger for the stomach to make more acid to digest the next meal. And for the mesothelial cells sitting on the spleen, it tells that there is no need to mount a protective immune response. "It's most likely a hamburger not a bacterial infection," is basically the message, O'Connor said.

In the spleen, as well as the blood and kidneys, the researchers found after drinking water with baking soda for two weeks, the population of immune cells



Drinking baking soda, or sodium bicarbonate, tells the spleen, which is part of the immune system, to go easy on the immune response, the study says

called macrophages, shifted from primarily those that promote inflammation, called M1, to those that reduce it, called M2.

"The shift from inflammatory to an anti-inflammatory profile is happening everywhere," O'Connor said. "We saw it in the kidneys, we saw it in the spleen,

now we see it in the peripheral blood." The shifting landscape is likely due to increased conversion of some of the proinflammatory cells to anti-inflammatory ones coupled with actual production of more anti-inflammatory macrophages, he added.

Source: IANS

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TURNING SMOKE INTO INK? ENGINEERS; NOVEL APPROACH TO CHECK AIR POLLUTION



A device created by company Chakr Innovation to remove soot from diesel generator exhaust, to clean the air and to allow ink to be created from soot.

NEW DELHI (TIP): As the pre-monsoon summer heat takes hold in the National Capital, two things are as inevitable as 40-degree-Celsius days: power cuts and air pollution from the diesel generators that then kick in.

But a team of Indian engineers has figured out away to bring some good from choking generator exhaust: They are capturing it and turning it into ink.

"The alarming thing about diesel generators is they are located in the heart of densely populated areas. It's spitting smoke right there," said Kushagra Srivastava, one of the three engineers who developed the technology, now installed in Gurgaon, a satellite city of New Delhi, and in the southern city of Chennai.

The idea, Srivastava said, came about when he and his co-founders stopped at a sugarcane juice stall on a hot day.

They noticed a wall that had turned black behind the stand's diesel generator, where exhaust emerged from a pipe.

They wondered if diesel exhaust might be used to produce paint — and set out to try.

The device they came up with, which attaches to generators, captures 90 per cent of the soot particles from cooled diesel exhaust. The material can then be sold to ink manufacturers. Their company, Chakr Innovation, has so far installed 50 of the devices for government firms such as Indian Oil, real estate developers and other state government offices, earning more than 11 million rupees (\$2,00,000) in revenue in the first year, Srivastava said.

The company has plans to install another 50 devices over the coming year, he said. It has so far sold 500 kg of collected soot, which has been used to create 20,000 litres of ink, he added.

Source: Thomson Reuters

Life-size holograms for 3D video-conferences developed

TORONTO (TIP): Scientists have developed the world's first truly holographic video-conference system, which allows people in different locations to appear before one another in life-size 3D, as if they were in the same room.

Using a ring of intelligent projectors mounted above and around a retro-reflective, human-sized cylindrical pod, researchers from Queen's University in Canada were able to project objects as light fields that can be walked around and viewed from all sides simultaneously by multiple users — much like Star Trek's famed, fictional 'holodeck'.

Capturing the remote 3D image with an array of depth cameras, the team has 'teleported' live, 3D images of a human from one room to another — a feat that is set to revolutionise human telepresence.

Due to the display projects a light field with many images, one for every degree of angle, users need not wear a headset or 3D glasses to experience each other in augmented reality.

"Face-to-face interaction transfers an immense amount of non-verbal information," said Roel Vertegaal, a professor at the Queen's University.

"This information is lost in online tools, promoting poor online behaviours. Users miss the proxemics, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact that bring nuance, emotional connotation and ultimately empathy to a conversation," Vertegaal said. "TeleHuman 2 injects these missing elements into long-distance conversations with a realism that cannot be achieved with a Skype or Facetime video chat," he said.

Vertegaal first debuted the TeleHuman technology in 2012, but at that time the device only allowed for a single viewer to see the holographic projection correctly.

Source: PTI

NEW FACEBOOK TOOL ALERTS WEBSITE OWNERS ABOUT PHISHING ATTACKS

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Facebook has announced a new tool for website owners and developers that will alert them about phishing attacks on their platforms.

"We are extending the capabilities of our 'Certificate Transparency Monitoring' tool to make it easier for developers to learn about new domains that are maliciously created to implement phishing attacks," security engineer David Huang and software engineers Bartosz Niemczura and Amy Xu said in a blog post late on Wednesday.

Phishing websites try to trick people into revealing their passwords, credit card numbers, or other sensitive information.

The tool, announced during the F8 annual developer conference in San Jose, alerts website owners of these scams so that they can take action to protect their domain and the people who use their websites.

"Certificate Transparency Logs" are designed to keep a record of all valid security certificates issued by publicly-trusted Certificate Authorities.

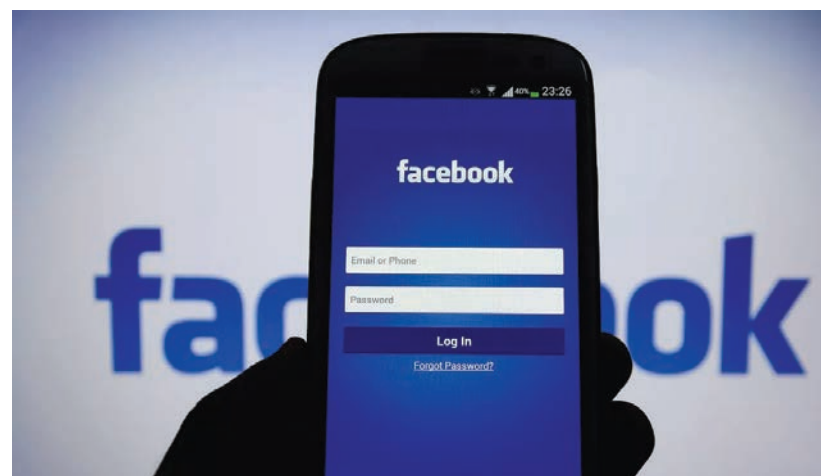
"We have been using these logs to monitor certificates issued for domains owned by Facebook and have created tools to help developers take advantage of the same approach," the post said.

Using these tools, developers can learn about certificates that are mis-issued for the domains they control.

"We are extending the capabilities of our tool to send alerts when certificates are issued for potential phishing domains," the post added.

Source: IANS

BETS BIG ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



After making deep investments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology, Facebook has announced the next version of its open-source AI framework for developers.

Called "PyTorch 1.0", the framework provides everyone in the AI research community with a fast, seamless path for building a broad range of AI projects. "The technology in PyTorch 1.0 is already being used at scale, including performing nearly 6 billion text translations per day for the 48 most commonly used languages on Facebook," the company announced during its F8 developer conference in San Jose on Wednesday.

The AI research and engineering

teams at Facebook have successfully trained an image recognition system on a dataset of 3.5 billion publicly available photos, using the hashtags on those photos in place of human annotations.

"This new technique will allow our researchers to scale their work much more quickly, and they've already used it to score a record-high 85.4 per cent accuracy on the widely used 'ImageNet' benchmark," Facebook said.

The "PyTorch 1.0" toolkit will be available in beta within the next few months, making Facebook's state-of-the-art AI research tools available to everyone.

World's smallest implantable device can control brain patterns

TOKYO (TIP): Scientists have developed the world's smallest implantable device — no bigger than the width of a coin — that can be used to control brain patterns.

The device converts infrared light into blue light to control neural activity and is both the smallest and lightest wireless optical biodevice to be reported.

For centuries, it has been known that chemicals can change neural behaviour. The field of optogenetics proved that neural behavior can also be changed with mere light.

It is now known that light can activate certain proteins in the brain to change brain patterns. Accordingly, scientists have implanted optical devices to successfully control the behavior of rodents using nothing more than light of specific wavelengths as the stimulus.

However, the devices are often bulky, akin to wearing a football helmet or something heavier, and cause discomfort and distress to the animals.

Takashi Tokuda, an associate professor at the Nara Institute of Science and Technology (NAIST) in Japan, has been investigating ways to



miniaturise implantable optical devices.

"Size is always the challenge. No one likes having large implants," he said.

The miniaturisation of implantable devices has been hindered by a dependency on electromagnetics. In such devices, both the voltage and the current decrease with a reduction in size, thus limiting the power.

On the other hand, in devices that depend on photovoltaics, voltage

remains unchanged as size is reduced.

The new device made by Tokuda's research team uses a complementary metal-oxide semiconductor that controls photovoltaic power.

"We integrated two sets of photovoltaic cells onto semiconductor chips. Ten cells were integrated for powering, and seven cells for biasing," he said.

Source: PTI

Apple surprises with solid iPhone sales, announces \$100 bn buyback

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Apple Inc on Tuesday reported resilient iPhone sales in the face of waning global demand and promised \$100 billion in additional stock buybacks, reassuring investors that its decade-old smartphone invention had life in it yet.

Apple's quarterly results topped Wall Street forecasts, which dropped ahead of the report on growing concern over the iPhone. The Cupertino, California-based company also was more optimistic about the current quarter than most financial analysts, driving shares up 3.6 per cent to \$175.25 after hours.

Suppliers around the globe had warned of smartphone weakness, playing into fears that the company known for popularizing personal computers, tablets and smartphones had become too reliant on the iPhone.

Sales of 52.2 million iPhones against a Wall Street target of 52.3 million was a comfort and up from 50.7 million last year, according to data from Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

Apple bought \$23.5 billion of stock in the March quarter, and said it planned to hike its dividend 16 percent, compared with a 10.5 percent increase last year. Analysts believe the heavy emphasis on buybacks will bolster share prices, but some investors wished Apple had found different uses for the cash.

"I'd hoped for more on the dividend side or maybe a strategic investment," said Hal Eddins, chief economist for



Apple shareholder Capital Investment Counsel. "I assume Apple can't find a strategic investment at the current prices that will move the needle for them. The \$100 billion buyback is good for right now but it's not exactly looking to the future." The cash Apple earmarked for stock buybacks is about twice the \$50 billion market capitalization of electric car maker Tesla Inc.

Apple posted revenue for its March quarter of \$61.1 billion, up from \$52.9 billion last year. Wall Street expected \$60.8 billion, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

Average selling prices for iPhones were \$728, compared with Wall Street expectations of \$742. The figure is up more than 10 percent from \$655 a year ago, suggesting Apple's iPhone X, which starts at \$999, has helped boost prices.

Analysts had feared the high price was muting demand for the iPhone X, but Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook said it was the most popular iPhone model every week in the March quarter.

"This is the first cycle that we've ever had where the top of the line iPhone model has also been the most popular," Cook said during the company's earnings call.

"It's one of those things like when a team wins the Super Bowl, maybe you want them to win by a few more points. But it's a Super Bowl winner and that's how we feel about it." The iPhone X has shaped up to be "a good, not a great product. There was a time prior to its introduction that investors expected it to be a great product," said Thomas Forte, an analyst with D.A. Davidson Companies. *Source: Reuters*

India's gold demand falls by 12% to 115.6 ton in Q1: WGC



MUMBAI (TIP): The gold demand in India declined by 12 per cent in the first quarter of this year to 115.6 tonne compared to the same period last year due to high local gold price, the World Gold Council (WGC) said in a report.

The total demand stood at 131.2 tonne in the January-March period in 2017, WGC said in its 'Gold Demand Trends' report for Q1 2018.

In terms of value, the gold demand fell by 8 per cent to Rs 31,800 crore, compared to Rs 34,440 crore in the same period of 2017.

"The decline in demand can be attributed to a number of reasons, including the rising local gold prices, a substantial drop in the number of auspicious wedding days during the period compared to the previous year, and anticipation of an import duty cut in the Union Budget," WGC, India, Managing Director P R Somasundaram told PTI here.

"The transition to GST, especially by the unorganised sector, also affected demand to a certain extent," he said.

Also, the trade sentiment was subdued following the (PNB) bank scam, which continued till 'Akshaya Tritiya', he added.

The jewellery demand in India for the first quarter dipped by 12 per cent to 87.7 tonne, compared to 99.2 tonne in the same period of 2017.

In value terms, the jewellery demand during the period dropped by 7 per cent to Rs 24,130 crore, from Rs 26,050 crore in the corresponding period last year.

The total investment demand for January-March was down by 13 per cent at 27.9 tonne against 32 tonne in the same quarter last year. *Source: PTI*

23,000 BANK FRAUDS OF RS 1 LAKH CR IN 5 YEARS: RBI

NEW DELHI (TIP): Over 23,000 cases of fraud involving a whopping Rs 1 lakh crore have been reported in the past five years in various banks, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



A total of 5,152 cases of fraud, up from over 5,000 cases in 2016-17, were reported in banks from April 2017 to March 1, 2018, it said in reply to an RTI query.

The highest ever amount of Rs 28,459 crore is said to have been involved in these cases of fraud reported from April 2017 to March 1, 2018, the Central bank said.

In 2016-17, banks had reported 5,076 cases of fraud involving Rs 23,933 crore.

From 2013 to March 1, 2018, as many as 23,866 cases of fraud, of Rs 1 lakh or above in each case, were reported. A total of Rs 1,00,718 crore was involved in all the cases put together, according to the RTI reply.

Giving the break-up, the RBI said 4,693 such cases (involving Rs 18,698 crore) and 4,639 cases (involving Rs 19,455 crore) were reported in 2015-16 and 2014-15, respectively.

In 2013-14, banks reported 4,306 cases of fraud, involving Rs 10,170 crore, the Central bank said.

"The reported fraud cases are processed and action is taken according to the facts and circumstances of individual cases," the RBI said.

The data assumes significance as Central investigating agencies such as the CBI and the ED are looking into various big-ticket fraud cases in banks involving industrialists and others. *Source: PTI*

UK supermarket giants Asda, Sainsbury's agree to merge



LONDON (TIP): Britain's second and third biggest supermarket chains Sainsbury's and Walmart-owned rival Asda have agreed to merge, both said on Monday, creating a retail king that would leapfrog current leader Tesco.

The blockbuster deal comes as the UK retail sector faces squeezed profit margins due to fierce competition from German-owned discounters Aldi and Lidl — as well as major online players like US titan Amazon.

"Sainsbury's and Walmart Inc. are pleased to announce that they have agreed terms in relation to a proposed combination of Sainsbury's and Asda Group Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Walmart, to create an enlarged business," they said. The transaction values Asda at \$10 billion. Walmart will own 42% of the combined business and also receive 2.97 billion in cash.

The combined business would have a network of 2,800 Sainsbury's, Asda and Argos stores. *Source: AFP*

HCL POISED TO REPLACE WIPRO AS INDIA'S THIRD BIGGEST IT FIRM

BENGALURU (TIP): HCL Technologies Ltd is set to surpass Wipro Ltd to become India's third biggest software services provider in the three months to 30 June, marking the first change in the pecking order of the country's \$167 billion information technology outsourcing industry in six years.

Billionaire Shiv Nadar-led HCL Technologies expects its dollar revenue to grow by as much as 12.5% in the current financial year, implying that the company will race past Azim Premji-led Wipro.

HCL Technologies's rise has come on the back of years of underperformance by Wipro. Until a few years ago, both companies used to generate significant business from managing data centres or offering infrastructure services to their clients. That revenue disappeared with the rise of cloud computing or offerings of computing power by the hour by firms such as Amazon Web Services.

To mitigate this, HCL Technologies has invested over \$1.3 billion over the past two years in licensing intellectual properties (IPs) from companies and then building products around them for clients. This has proved financially lucrative for the company in the short run. Noida-based HCL Technologies reported 2.5% sequential dollar revenue growth in the quarter ended March to end with \$2.038 billion in revenue, a mere \$24 million less than Wipro's \$2.062 billion.

Wipro does not provide full-year revenue forecast but expects its quarterly revenue to be between a decline of 2% and growth of 0.2% in constant currency terms in the April-June period from the preceding quarter. If Wipro manages to retain its revenue in constant currency terms and gains from favourable currency movements, it will mean reporting at best 1% dollar revenue growth, according to Mint's calculations. *Source: HT*

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

Trump confirms...

Trump had told reporters on Air Force One last month that he did not know about the payment to Daniels or the source of the money.

The agreement was used to stop the false and extortionist accusations made by her about an affair despite already having signed a detailed letter admitting that there was no affair," Trump said.

He added, "Prior to its violation by Ms Clifford and her attorney, this was a private agreement. Money from the campaign, or campaign contributions, played no role in this transaction."

Speaking on Fox News on Wednesday, May 2, Giuliani said the reimbursement to Cohen was "not campaign money" and that the payment was "perfectly legal". Cohen had admitted to paying Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, out of his own pocket through a private LLC.

Daniels has sued Trump and Cohen, saying the nondisclosure agreement is void because Trump did not sign it. The White House has said Trump denies the affair.

Giuliani recently joined Trump's legal team in an effort to bring special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russia's 2016 election meddling and any possible coordination with the Trump campaign to an end.

"He (Trump) paid him back. No campaign finance violations, no crime of any kind. Michael had discretion to solve these," Giuliani told The Wall Street Journal in another interview.

When the daily asked whether the fact that Trump had repaid his lawyer conflicted with the President's previous statements that he was unaware of the payment, Giuliani said it was "not [an] issue".

"Cohen was his lawyer and had discretion to settle, as I have had for clients ultimately paying for it," he said. Trump was "probably not aware" of the payment at the time it was made, he said. Giuliani said Trump repaid Cohen "over several months" by putting him on a "retainer" of \$35,000 when he was doing no work for the President". Daniels' lawyer, Michael Avenatti, told CNBC: "This is exactly what we predicted would ultimately be shown. Every American, regardless of their politics, should be outraged."

Free press makes for a...

"Today on #World Press Freedom Day, let us reaffirm our commitment towards steadfastly supporting a free press. It is the multiplicity of ideas and human expression that makes us more vibrant as a society," he said in a series of tweets.

Narendra Modi

@narendramodi

A free press makes a stronger democracy! Today on #WorldPressFreedomDay, let us reaffirm our commitment towards steadfastly supporting a free press. It is the multiplicity of ideas and human expression that makes us more vibrant as a society.

2:56 AM - May 3, 2018

Prime Minister Narendra Modi applauded all those who have been working tirelessly to uphold the freedom of press.

"It is due to these countless women and men that the spirit of a free press is significantly enhanced...would once again like to appreciate the proactive role of everyone on social media for their commendable work towards safeguarding the freedom of press and expression," the Prime Minister tweeted.

Narendra Modi

@narendramodi

I applaud all those who have been working tirelessly to uphold freedom of press. It is due to these countless women and men that the spirit of a free press is significantly enhanced. #WorldPressFreedomDay

2:56 AM - May 3, 2018

The United Nations General Assembly had declared May 3 as World Press Freedom Day to raise awareness about freedom of press.

(Source: PTI)

BAPS Women's...

Hosted in fourteen cities across North America, the conference aimed to inspire its attendees to bring about change through dialogue and reflection. Shahla Pillai, Manager of Guest Relations at DFW Airport, was the keynote speaker at the conference in Dallas. Reflecting on the importance of the conference, she opined that "Growing up I didn't have such support...so having women that have paved the way, that can guide us to avoid some of the same pitfalls

and give us a better opportunity to better our futures...that alone is a reason to have such events".

The conference began with attendees standing up for both the American and Indian national anthems. The presentations then began with Pooja Solanki emphasizing what unity truly means and why it is essential to achieve it. While there are more apparent benefits one can claim from integration, the speaker focused on how the small and incremental actions of individuals can lead to a more unified family, which can in turn influence a community and even society at large.

The other two speakers for the conference concentrated on two instrumental traits that can be further developed to create unity within our relationships - that of humility and positivity. Affirming that humility is not a fixed trait, but one that should be practiced and developed, Dr. Jyoti Patel discussed the small, everyday steps that can be taken to practice humility. Using her personal experiences and quoting those she gained inspiration from, Rina Rao explained how humility strengthens through service and tolerance. Finally, Gopi Patel closed out the conference with a compelling talk on the power of positivity.

The speakers, just like the audience, were from various professional and personal diasporas and yet were able to come together to bring about an environment for dialogue for self-reflection and growth. Attendee Julie Mitchell reflected on her experience "it is a beautiful celebration of women and unity and love". The BAPS Women's Conference was inspired by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj and encouraged by His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj. The conference highlights the influential role of women in today's society and also empowers the younger generations by promoting a healthy dialogue around current topics. Before and after the conference, attendees had the opportunity to network with others from the greater community and share their perspective on the talks of the day. Many in attendance felt inspired by the conference and conveyed their motivation to share the word with their family and friends. The audience left with the message that while unity may seem like a global concept, the power of change, and the power of creating a more unified world lies within everyone.

ABOUT BAPS: The BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) is a worldwide spiritual and humanitarian organization that is dedicated to community service, peace, and harmony. Motivated by Hindu principles, BAPS strives to care for the world by caring for societies, families, and individuals. Through various spiritual and humanitarian activities, BAPS endeavors to develop better citizens of tomorrow with high esteem for their roots and culture. Its 3,300 international centers support these character-building activities. Under the guidance and leadership of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS aspires to build a community that is free of addictions as well as morally, ethically and spiritually pure. For more details, please visit www.baps.org.

ABOUT MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ: His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj is the sixth and current spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. He was ordained a swami by Yogiji Maharaj in 1961 and named Sadhu Keshavjivandas. As he was appointed the head (Mahant) of the Mandir in Mumbai, he became known as Mahant Swami. His devout, humble and service-focused life earned him the innermost blessings of Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Mahant Swami Maharaj travels throughout the world inspiring people through his insightful spiritual discourses and disciplined conduct. His virtuous lifestyle and profound devotion to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and gurus are ideals toward which devotees strive. Mahant Swami Maharaj became the guru and President of BAPS upon Pramukh Swami Maharaj's passing in 2016.

ABOUT PRAMUKH SWAMI MAHARAJ: Pramukh Swami Maharaj was the fifth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan. Under his leadership, BAPS grew into an international spiritual and humanitarian organization with over 3,300 centers worldwide. He dedicated his life to the well-being of others, traveling throughout the world to foster love, peace, harmony, righteousness, faith in God, and service to humanity. With genuine care and compassion, he reached out to all members of society irrespective of class, color, or age. Recognized and respected as one of India's greatest spiritual teachers, he lived by and promoted the principle: "In the joy of others, lies our own."



CONTACT: BAPS North American Headquarters
Phone: 732-777-1414, Email: media@na.baps.org

(SOURCE: BAPS)

Hawaii's Kilauea...

The TV Channel quoted Hawaii County spokeswoman Janet Snyder who said Thursday red lava emerged on Mohala Street in the Leilani Estates subdivision. The county is ordering evacuations for homes from Luana Street to Pohohiki Road. Residents and social media posts show lava spewing from cracks in roadways. Resident Ikaika Marzo said he could see "fountains" of lava in the community.

The eruption comes after days of earthquakes rocked the Puna district of the Big Island. Overnight into Wednesday, quakes continued to shake Puna as seismic activity appeared to be moving eastward toward Kapoho, KGMB reports.

From midnight to 10 a.m. Wednesday, there were more than 45 earthquakes at Kilauea, most of which measured about magnitude 2.0. Altogether in recent days, more than 250 small temblors have been recorded, including a magnitude 4.0 tremor just offshore of Puu Oo early Tuesday.

Earlier in the week, the crater floor of the Puu Oo vent collapsed. That caused magma to push more than 10 miles downslope toward the populated southeast coastline of the island. On Wednesday, cracks were also reported on the road in Leilani Estates, but officials reported they did not pose a lava threat. Still, the cracks added to residents' anxieties as the quakes didn't let up.

"Last night, we started having them ... about five a minute. It was like that just about all night long," said Chris Burmeister, who lives in Leilani Estates. "It'll rumble for a little bit. Rumble for a little bit. And then every now and then, you'll get just a heavy jolt." Officials have said it's impossible to predict where an eruption might happen, but areas that could be affected include Nanawele Estates, Leilani Estates and the coastal area of Kapoho, KGMB reports. Most of Kilauea's activity has been nonexplosive, but a 1924 eruption spewed ash and 10-ton rocks into the sky, leaving one man dead. Puu Oo's 1983 eruption resulted in lava fountains soaring over 1,500 feet high. In the decades since, the lava flow has buried dozens of square miles of land and destroyed many homes.

North Texas student arrested...

Collin County officials said Azizi-Yarand was inspired by ISIS. In Dec. Azizi-Yarand began communicating online with an FBI Confidential Human Source about his desire to either "make hijab [travel]" or to conduct a terrorist attack within the United States, an arrest affidavit said.

In January, he began communicating with an undercover FBI agent, to whom he joked about getting a knock on his door and getting big smiles from men in suits.

When discussing potential places for the attack, he mentioned school as the "perfect place for an attack," the affidavit said. Azizi-Yarand wrote a speech with his "message for America," in which he described his plan to attack the shopping mall.

Azizi-Yarand sent more than \$1,400 to other individuals to buy weapons and tactical gear, the news release said.

"We are fortunate that the brave men and women of local and federal law enforcement work around the clock to prevent acts of terrorism and mass shootings," said Collin County District Attorney Greg Willis. "I'd like to thank the FBI's North Texas Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Frisco and Plano Police Departments for their efforts in this case and their vigilance in protecting the citizens of Collin County."

This case will be prosecuted by the Collin County District Attorney's Office. If convicted, the 17-year-old could face life in prison. Azizi-Yarand is in custody with bonds totaling at \$3 million.



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 MAY 07- MAY 13, 2018

Aries:

Ganesha says you rope in your associates in your dealings and this proves to be a good move. The attention also shifts from the work front to home and family and there are many domestic responsibilities and joys to handle and enjoy. You also have to invest some time in your housing society or community and you can't get away from all this. Nor do you want to. There are other responsibilities to attend to as well. Plus, there may be demands from siblings, co-workers, immediate and distant family and neighbors.

Taurus:-

Love and money are the twin themes of the period. You also find time to relax, and there could perhaps be a home away from home as a kind of holiday retreat or period getaway. There will be loans, joint accounts, bonds, insurance and funds of all kinds to deal with on the money front, along with soaring expenses. You do a juggling act and manage it all well. You will also be spending a lot of time with loved ones and that will give you many happy moments. The family is important.

Gemini:-

Your people skills will be at their best and you will get the support of both colleagues and loved ones. Partnerships and collaborations are vital and most beneficial in this period. You surmount many obstacles and ride the wave to glorious times. You worry about your image and there may be legal issues that could tarnish it. You confide in family and form a strong team to battle these challenges. You find great support and strength in your association.

Cancer:-

Money and its jingle appeal to you more than ever before. You look at finances in a big way, as that is the main theme of this period. Personal and work related finances hog the limelight. There are tax issues and all sorts of monetary developments that will take up your time. You have to solve it all and spend time behind closed doors getting to the nitty gritty of your finances and its implications.

Leo:-

Once the finances are worked out, you get to spending the money which you believe is hard earned. There are many expenses and, for a change, your creative instincts blossom. You do well at work and there is recognition. You may even get an award for something you have done. You love the limelight and the appreciation that it all brings. You are the toast of the office, and may get a promotion, if not more. If you are on your own, you make tangible expansion of the business/enterprise. A tremendous sense of aestheticism, of beauty, now grips you.

Virgo:

You have achieved a lot, but you don't want to stop here. You are prepared to stick your neck out like a platoon commander flushing out terrorists. This works as you break new ground and make many startling discoveries. Your new interests include religion and spirituality, travel and education. You have to keep money aside for the family and for a nest egg, and so monetary issues are not the real focus this period. You look for harmony and try to smooth the feathers you have rustled in the past.

Libra:-

Your conciliatory moves and work success are highly appreciated. There is enhanced income and prestige. You party a lot now and look at finances in the form of inheritance and legacies. You are a social butterfly and spend time at various gatherings enjoying yourself thoroughly. You are ebullient and enthusiastic, and your happy mood is contagious.

Scorpio:

You are again on the work track. You are confident, pragmatic and determined and will forge ahead furiously. You earn plaudits for your achievements and decide to expand further and make more money, which is never out of your sights for long. You look at holistic progress and make the necessary adjustments to your personal and work life so that both show steady progress and harmony. There are expenses and minor delays to your plans including some medical expenses.

Sagittarius:

You give your best to work and your relationships and there is great intensity in whatever you do. You extend your hand towards humanity, undertake social work and spend quality time with your children and/or parents. You are endowed now with a new vision and charisma and look at the future with immense possibilities in mind. You are riding the crest of a wave and feel that the world is yours to conquer.

Capricorn:

You see yourself in a new light and are empowered by your success. The early part of the year was hectic and now you try to enjoy yourself and ride on the momentum generated in the previous months. There is a welcome change in your perspective and the way you are looking at the world. There is a new you eyeballing the world and whatever it has to offer. But, at the same time, while all this is hunky dory, avoid unnecessary show downs and run-ins with friends, family, colleagues and the law.

Aquarius: -

You are busier than ever before and highly motivated in all that you undertake - and it shows in the results. You spend quality time with loved ones and there are possibilities of exciting travel. But there are pinpricks like unexpected expenses, ill-health in the family, and a frittering away of valuable resources on issues that are of no relevance to you; in other words, there is highly avoidable wastage of both time and money. There may also be a brush with the law. Don't put your faith in people without ascertaining their credentials.

Pisces:

There are many distractions at play here. There are partnerships, religious ceremonies, meetings and interviews and several business/collaborations/connections, all of which lead you into a profitable, upward spiral. This is a good time to spread your wings and meet as many people as possible. There will be journeys and conferences and you will benefit greatly from them. There is romance in the air and, if married, there will be dealings with close family, your spouse, even your in-laws.

Narine, Gill power KKR to easy win over Chennai Super Kings

KOLKATA (TIP): Young Shubman Gill came of age on an evening that was supposed to be all about someone twice his age. MS Dhoni's arrival at the crease added to the luminous intensity at Eden because torches in mobile phones increased the incandescence. Just before that, the IPL's equivalent of a clothed 'Jimmy Jump' had streaked into the Chennai Super Kings' (CSK) dugout.

But it ended with Gill making the journey from boy to man as Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) easily won by six wickets, reaching 180/4 in 17.4 overs in reply to CSK's 177/5.

Gill made 57 from 36 balls and was involved in a fifth-wicket unbeaten stand of 83 in 36 balls with skipper Dinesh Karthik (45). This was after Gill and Rinku Singh steadied the innings following an early wobble, with a 33-run stand for the third wicket. Gill anchored KKR's chase of 178, eschewing risks without letting any loose balls go unpunished. It was he who got the Eden to roar the home team's name after it spent most of the evening chanting 'CSK, CSK'. Gill hit three fours off Shane Watson, adjusting the pull for the first, edging the second and cutting the third.

So sure was Gill's batting that Karthik played second fiddle. Gill greeted K Asif in the 15th over with a superb pull for six. That over yielded 21 runs and turned the match around. And it was Gill, who had dropped Dhoni on 29 letting the ball slip through for



Shubman Gill blasted his maiden fifty as Kolkata Knight Riders defeated Chennai Super Kings by six wickets in the IPL 2018 clash at the Eden Gardens.

six, who played an important part in that.

After CSK ended the first 10 on 90/1, KKR took control and never let it slip. They dismissed Shane Watson, Suresh Raina and Ambati Rayudu between the 11th and the 15th overs conceding 31 runs. Dhoni made 43 helping CSK take 15 off the 17th over bowled by Mitchell Johnson, who had also gone for 19 in the innings' fifth.

Yet, KKR would be happy that CSK were restricted to 177/5. En route, KKR broke the

powerplay hoodoo when Piyush Chawla's googly foxed Faf du Plessis.

Before his customary cameo that was helped by Ravindra Jadeja dropping him off successive Asif deliveries when on six, Sunil Narine too broke a barren run finishing with 2/20. Young Shivam Mavi was impressive too when CSK batted and then Gill showed that the Dad's Army led by Daddy Cool may still be ahead, but T20 is usually a young man's game.

Justin Langer is Australia's new head coach

MELBOURNE (TIP): Newly appointed Australia coach Justin Langer will charge his players with winning back the "respect" of the cricket world after a ball-tampering scandal left the team's reputation in ruins. Long touted as head coach-in-waiting, Langer was named as Darren Lehmann's replacement on Thursday, his predecessor having resigned in the wake of the Cape Town scandal even though he was cleared of wrongdoing.



A gritty opening batsman who played in some of Australia's greatest-ever teams, Langer takes over a depleted side, with disgraced former captain Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner serving year-long bans in the fall-out from South Africa.

"For me, I think one of the things that's really important is we keep looking to earn respect," said the 47-year-old on Thursday. "To me, respect's worth more than all the gold in the world. It's not just about how we play our cricket, it's about being good citizens and good Australians," he said.

Perth-born Langer scored more than 7,500 runs in 105 Tests, including 23 centuries, before retiring with a slew of greats at the end of the 2006/07 Ashes series.

He has had success coaching Western Australia state since 2012, guiding Perth Scorchers to three domestic T20 titles in the 'Big Bash', making them the most successful franchise in the tournament's short history.

Virat Kohli officially signs for Surrey, set to miss Afghanistan Test

NEW DELHI (TIP): India captain Virat Kohli on May 3 officially inked his deal with top English county side Surrey in his bid to prepare for the tour of England, starting in July.

While Kohli joining the London-based team was an open secret, the county officially announced the deal today on their official website.

"Surrey County Cricket Club are delighted to announce the signing of India captain Virat Kohli for the month of June," the club announced on their website www.kiaoval.com.

Speaking after signing for the club, Kohli said: "It has long been an ambition of mine to play county cricket and I am thankful to Alec Stewart and Surrey for allowing me the opportunity to join them during their 2018 season. I can't wait to get to the Kia Oval."

Alec Stewart, Surrey's Director of Cricket, added: "We are thrilled to have signed the biggest name in world cricket for the month of June.

"Playing and training alongside Virat will be a massive benefit for our players who will have the opportunity to learn so much from him.

"At a time when there is much discussion around the future of county cricket, the arrival of Virat should give our domestic game a massive boost and positive exposure around the cricketing world which in turn can benefit every county," the former England



captain said.

With Kohli playing three county championship matches in June, he is all set to miss the historic first-ever Test match against Afghanistan scheduled in Bengaluru from June 14-18. The Committee of Administrators chief Vinod Rai has already said that Kohli will be encouraged to play county in his bid to prepare for the Test series in August.

Source: PTI

India refuse pink ball day & night Test on Australia tour

NEW DELHI (TIP): India have refused to play a day-night Test during the tour of Australia later this year because of doubts over the quality of the pink ball, their cricket board said on May 3.

"Yes, it's pretty clear that we are not playing a day-night Test in Australia, no doubt about it," BCCI administrator Vinod Rai said.

Cricket Australia (CA) had wanted the first Test in Adelaide from December 6 played under lights to tap on the growing popularity of pink-ball cricket.

But the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said they did not want to get involved in an experiment in a high-profile series. "We have been saying this all along that we are experimenting with pink ball cricket in the Duleep Trophy (India's domestic competition) and that's it for now," said Rai.

CA chief executive James Sutherland has lobbied hard for top-ranked India to play a day-night match, but hinted the tourists were scared of conceding an advantage to Australia, who have won all three pink ball Tests at Adelaide.

"I think everyone in world cricket knows that, to be frank, I think they want to come out here and beat us," said Sutherland.

"There's a sense, or a reality, that Australia has won each of the pink-ball Test matches that have played in Australia and there may be a sense that it gives us a bit of an advantage," Sutherland told SEN Radio Wednesday.

Observers believe the tour could be one of India's best chance to record a first Test series win in Australia as the hosts' star players Steve Smith and David Warner are serving 12-month bans for ball tampering.



Rai, who heads a special committee appointed by India's Supreme Court to run the BCCI, said India would not be forced into playing a day-night Test.

"Nobody can put a gun on to our head and say play (day-night cricket). There have been doubts about the pink ball itself in Duke and Kookaburra," Rai said, referring to the English and Australian ball manufacturers.

The powerful BCCI are one of the few national governing bodies to have avoided playing pink ball cricket at the international level. India experimented with pink ball cricket in its Duleep Trophy domestic championship in 2016 but administrators and top players are wary about playing at international level.

India are will tour Australia from November 21 to January 19 with four Tests, three Twenty20 internationals and three one-day games on the schedule.

Australia, after playing the first floodlit Test at the Adelaide Oval in 2015 against New Zealand, also hosted South Africa the following year and England last November in day-night Tests. They won all the three games.

Source: AFP

THE PANCHANANA ASPECTS AND FORMS OF LORD SHIVA

Shiva occupies a prominent place in Hinduism. He is one of the Trimurthis, or the three highest manifestations of Brahman. As the destroyer, in his function as Time (Kala) or Death, he represents the disintegration and dispersing mode of Tamas. However, in Shaivism, Shiva occupies the highest place and represents purity and auspiciousness (shivam). As Brahman (Mahesvara) himself, and Lord of the Universe (Isvara), he performs five functions.

The five functions of Shiva

CREATION, SRISHTI: He creates all the worlds and beings, manifesting himself as the individual souls or pure consciousness in the bodies and in the materiality of all existence.

PRESERVATION, STHITHI: As preserver, Shiva is responsible for the continuation of all the worlds and beings. In the body he is the sustaining power of breath (praneswara) and the digestive power of fire (jatharagni). He is the source of all food and water for gods and beings.

CONCEALMENT, TIROBHAVA: As the concealer, Shiva casts the net of delusion (maya) upon the whole creation and keeps the beings deluded, so that the order and regularity of the worlds are not disrupted. Because of his deluding power (maya-shakti) beings cannot perceive him or realize their own essential nature, which remains suppressed or hidden behind a veil of impurities.

REVELATION, ANUGRAHA: As the revealer of truth, source of knowledge, and grace, Shiva is responsible for the liberation of beings. None can achieve liberation without his grace. In Shaivism individual effort and good karma are important, but the grace of Shiva is even more important to achieve liberation, for which the path of knowledge is the prescribed method.

DESTRUCTION, LAYA OR SAMHARA: At the end of each cycle of creation, Shiva withdraws all worlds and beings into himself and goes into a temporary restful mode. As Death and lord of destruction, he is also responsible for the renewal of life and rebirth of beings.

Panchanana Shiva

The five functions of Shiva are represented in the panchanana (pancanana) or the fivefold aspect of Shiva. In the iconography, he is depicted as the five faced deity (pancha muka Shiva), each face representing one of his five functions. The fivefold aspect of Shiva also represents the fivefold aspect of creation, the five bodies (kosas) in the human beings, five breaths, five directions, five elements, five senses, five colors, five energies, five divisions of time, and five human races. Significance of the panchanana form of Shiva is explained in the Linga Purana. A reference to it is also found in the Mahabharata. The five aspects of Shiva as represented in the five faced deity are described below.

ISHANA, THE LORD: He is Brahma, the lord of creation and represents the mind power (chit-shakti), the element earth (or air according to some), the ritual knowledge of the Vedas, and the manifesting power of the mind. Among the senses, he represents the sense of touch and among the organs of the body, hands. In the iconography he represents upward looking face. His color is copper. In individual images, he is depicted along with a She-goat, holding in his hands the Vedas, the



elephant hook, a noose, hatchet, skull, drum, rosary, trident, one hand showing the gestures of protection (abhaya) and another that of offering boons (varada).

TAT-PURUSHA, THE COSMIC BEING: He is Vishnu, the lord of preservation, cosmic egg (Hiranyagarbha), the enjoyer, nourisher, and the chief priest of the cosmic sacrifice who represents bliss (ananda shakti), the rising sun, liberating knowledge, the material abundance (Sri Siva tattva), and the element of water. Among the sense organs he is the sense of smell, and in the bodily organs, the anus. In the iconography he represents the eastward face and golden color. In individual images he is shown with three eyes and four faces, wearing yellow garments, and standing in the company of Gayathri.

VAMADEVA, THE CONCEALER: He is the suppressor who conceals Tatpurusha behind a veil of delusion. He is the opposite (tirobhava) of Tatpurusha, who is described as west faced, evening sun, and the left-hand (vama) deity. His color is red. In the body he represents egoism (anava), the power of action (kriya-shakti), and the element of air. Among the senses he is the sense of sight, and in the bodily organs, the feet. In individual images he is shown as red or lotus colored, adorned with red ornaments, with four hands, one holding a rosary and the second a hatchet. The third and the fourth show the gestures of offering protection (abhaya), and granting boons (varada) respectively.

SADYOJATA, THE REVEALER: He is

gestures of offering protection (abhaya), and granting boons (varada) respectively.

RUDRA, THE DESTROYER: He is also known Aghora (the non-fearful one), who is battle-ready, and who is mentioned in the Vedas as the howler and father of the war gods Maruts and Rudras. His main function is destruction (samhara). He represents the element fire, the power of desire (iccha-shakti), the punitive power of the law (dharma), the power of discrimination (buddhi), the sense of hearing, and the organ of speech. All these faculties are used in dispensing justice and enforcing the law as the lord of Dharma. His color is black or dark red. In the panchanana form he represents the southern face. In individual images he is shown as a fierce god with four faces and nine hands, holding ax, shield, elephant hook, noose, spear, skull, drum and rosary respectively.

The fivefold aspect of Shiva plays an important role in our lives, minds and bodies, and in our spiritual transformation. The five functions of Shiva are responsible for our existence, continuation, transformation, purification and liberation. Therefore, contemplation upon the five forms will have a beneficial effect.

Nataraja, The Lord of the Cosmic Dance

Nataraja literally means lord of the dance. Siva is the lord, the ultimate and effective cause of all creation and the dance is his act of creation, a dynamic rhythmic movement. His dance is a guided action, under his complete mastery, not an act of chaotic, random movements. The lord and the dance together constitute the projection of the Paramasiva, the highest eternal and formless Nirguna Brahman on the canvas of his own awakened state as Saguna Brahman.

Every aspect in the image of Nataraja represents an aspect of creation. The lord is surrounded on all sides by a circular ring of fire. The ring represents the whole of creation. It is finite, cyclical and filled with energy or Shakti shown here as flames. It ensues from the hands and limbs of the Lord suggestive of the fact that he is the primal and effective cause of all creation.

Nataraja holds a tongue of flame in his upper left hand. The fire represents the energy that is responsible for creation and also the dissolution of the worlds at the end of creation. As a creator he creates, upholds and also destroys the worlds.

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

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