

Rs 1,484 crore (\$223.06 million) spent on PM Modi's foreign travel since 2014, RS told



Prime Ministers Narendra Modi disembarking a plane (File photo)

NEW DELHI (TIP): An expenditure of Rs 1,484 (\$223.06 million) crore was incurred on chartered flights, maintenance of aircraft and hotline facilities during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visits to 84 countries since June 2014, according to the government.

contd on Page 32

DOYEN OF HINDI POETRY GOPAL DAS NEERAJ DIES AT 93



NEW DELHI (TIP): Doyen of Hindi poetry Gopal Das Neeraj passed away on Thursday, July 19 evening at the AIIMS trauma center here. He was 93. A Padma Bhushan awardee, Neeraj

contd on Page 32

Composer of "Karavan guzar gaya ghubar dekhte rahe" is no more

Trump takes U-turn, now blames Putin for 2016 US poll meddling

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump said, July 19, he holds his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin personally responsible for the alleged meddling into the 2016 presidential elections, as he went into damage-control mode to douse a flurry of criticism over his recent comments about Russia.

Trump has been on the defensive for the past two days after failing to defend the American intelligence community during a much-talked about press conference with Putin in Helsinki on Monday, July 16, after their first summit.

The US President seemed to lend credence to his Russian counterpart's insistence that his government was not involved in the effort to influence the 2016 election campaign.

contd on Page 32



US President Donald Trump (left) and Russian President Vladimir Putin (right) at the press conference in Helsinki, July 16.

Two Indian-origin candidates in race for London Mayoral Election



Ruby McGregor-Smith (left), Kulveer Ranger (right)

LONDON (TIP): Two Indian-origin individuals are among 10 shortlisted by Britain's ruling Conservative party as

prospective candidates to run for London Mayor in 2020 against Labour's Pakistan-origin Sadiq Khan.

Lucknow-born businesswoman Ruby McGregor-Smith joins the race alongside British Sikh politician Kulveer Ranger, both of whom will go head to head with the others at hustings next month before a vote on the final candidate by October.

contd on Page 32

Ganga in extremely bad state, says NGT

Says work done not adequate, regular monitoring required

NEW DELHI (TIP): The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday, July 19, expressed dissatisfaction over the cleaning up of Ganga and said the situation was extraordinarily bad and hardly anything effective had been done to clean it.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice AK Goel said despite claims by the authorities,

contd on Page 32



Despite an expenditure of Rs. 27304.64 crore from 2015 to March 2017, the 2,525 km long Ganga remains dirty and polluted

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Venue

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Chief Guest

Mr. Sam Pitroda
Chairman
Indian Overseas Congress
Department, AICC

Guest Speaker

Himanshu Vyas
(General Secretary of the
Gujarat Pradesh
Congress Committee)



~ FOR MORE INFORMATION ~

Sam Pitroda - 630-965-1253 | George Abraham - 917-544-4137 | Mohinder Singh Gilzian - 646-732-5119 | Harbachan Singh - 917-749-8769

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Indian Consulate with Shradhaa Foundation Celebrates Vijay Diwas

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Indian Consulate along with Shradhaa Foundation celebrated the Vijay Diwas at Indian Consulate in NY on 18th July 2018. It is the first time an event of this nature has been celebrated. The Victory at Kargil in 1999 was celebrated and all those who laid down their life in the service to nation were remembered.

The event started with the Indian National anthem by Col (Ret.) Virendra Tavathia. Ms. Seema Jagtiani introduced the Shradhaa Foundation to the audience. A comprehensive presentation of the Kargil war in general and battle of Tololing and Tiger Hill was made by Col Tavathia. Entire audience was moved by the sacrifice made by the gallant soldiers of Indian Army fighting at the highest battlefield. The actions of Indian Air Force and Navy were appreciated. The audience was overwhelmed by the courage, determination and will power of our Infantry Soldiers who defied all odds to achieve impossible victory. Some soldiers who actually participated in the Kargil war were also present.

Shradhaa Foundation, a New Jersey Non-Profit Organization is committed to support the families and children of our martyrs organized the event in the true traditions of Indian Army. The Foundation has been helping the families of our martyrs since 2011. The efforts and support received from Tri Service Ex-servicemen Welfare Organization was well recognized. Major Krishna Chari gave a detailed account of the activities of Shradhaa Foundation.

Consul General Sandeep Chakravarti appreciated the efforts and sacrifices of the Indian soldiers in his emotional address to the



Seema Jagtiani, co-founder of Shradha Foundation welcoming and speaking about the event



Col Virendra Tavathia, co-founder of Shradha Foundation, speaking about the Kargil operation

audience. He appreciated the efforts of Shradhaa Foundation and announced that the Victory Diwas will be celebrated annually at the Indian Consulate.

On behalf of Shradhaa Foundation, Ratilal Patel, trustee, Dr Avtar Ganju and Lt Col Suresh Mehra, current President presented the

painting of Major Vivek Gupta, Mahavir Chakra (Posthumous) to Consul General of India. Consul General thanked the office bearers of Foundation and said that this painting will find most appropriate place in the Indian Consulate. Young Yash Kansara and Vicky Kohli presented the emotional patriotic



Trustees and officers of Shradha Foundation with Consul General Sandeep Chakravarti



A View of the audience

Hicksville Attorney from Colombia Isabel C. Mira joins the law firm of Pegalis & Erickson, LLC

NEW HYDE PARK, NY (TIP): The law firm of Pegalis & Erickson, LLC announced, July 19, that attorney Isabel C. Mira has joined the Firm. Ms. Mira has been a distinguished advocate for plaintiffs' rights for more than 16 years in the United States and in South America. At Pegalis & Erickson, LLC, she conducts pre-trial litigation representing patients in medical malpractice actions.

Previously, she advocated for clients with disabilities in administrative court proceedings including court hearings and appeals. Although already an attorney when she first arrived in the U.S., she began working as a legal assistant in a plaintiffs' personal injury law firm. Ms. Mira gained experience in debt collection rights when she negotiated plaintiffs' settlements and managed pre-trial litigation including motions and pleadings. She enjoyed a mid-career opportunity to intern at Glen Cove, NY, City Court assisting the Honorable Joseph McCain with legal research and decision drafting. In her native country of Colombia, South America, Ms. Mira represented clients in civil litigation matters, as a solo practitioner. In addition, she practiced law for a government agency that enforced environmental policy, preparing legal responses to public petitions, administrative decisions, and official documents on



At Pegalis & Erickson, LLC, Attorney Mira conducts pre-trial litigation representing patients in medical malpractice actions.

environmental regulations.

Ms. Mira is a member of the Nassau Suffolk Trial Lawyers Association, the New York State Trial Lawyers Association, the American Association for Justice, the Nassau County Bar Association, the Long Island Hispanic Bar Association, and the Nassau County Women's Bar Association. She is admitted to practice law in New York and Colombia, as well as in the Federal Courts for the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York. She obtained her law degree from Universidad de Medellin, Colombia. She graduated with a Master of Laws degree from St. John's University School of Law. Isabel C. Mira can be reached at Imira@pegalisanderickson.com

Pegalis & Erickson, LLC is a New York law firm for those suffering as a result of medical errors and personal injury. We are advocates who obtain justice for our clients after hospitals, doctors, medical personnel, construction companies, or motor vehicle drivers commit avoidable errors that cause our clients life-altering harm. In our 46 years of practice, we have won some of the largest verdicts in New York State history and strive for medical accountability to ensure safer medical practices for better patient care. Visit us at www.pegalisanderickson.com.

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Indian American Devotees Donate INR 13.5 Crore to Tirupati Temple



Tirupati Temple is the richest Hindu temple in the world

TIRUPATI (TIP): Indian American Ika Ravi and Guthikonda Srinivas, who hail from Andhra Pradesh, donated INR 13.5 money to the temple 'Hundi' and various trusts run by Tirupathi temple authorities.

Mr Ravi, Founder CEO of Rx Advance, a pharmaceutical company based in Boston, donated INR 10 crore to 'Hundi', while Mr Srinivas, CEO of JCG Technologies, a software development and consulting firm based in Florida, donated INR 3.50 crore to the trusts.

They met the officials of Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam (TTD), which manages the richest Hindu temple in the world, handed over the checks in the presence of Andhra Pradesh's Industry Minister Amarnath Reddy. The Minister lauded the gesture of the NRIs. Thousands of devotees, who visit the hill shrine every day, make their offerings in 'Hundi' while some devotees make their donations online. TTD runs several trusts engaged in social, religious, literary and educational activities. According to TTD officials, the temple's earnings during 2018-19 are expected to be INR 2,894 crore, of which the offerings in temple 'Hundi' are likely to be INR 1,156 crore.

INDIAN ORIGIN BANKER FOUND DEAD IN UAE

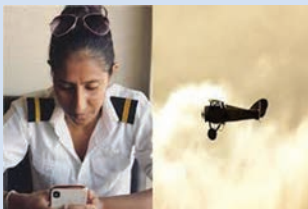
ABU DHABI (TIP): An Indian-origin banker working in UAE has been found dead, a week after he went missing, a media report said on July 18. Jabar KP hails from Kerala. He stayed in Abu Dhabi city, but his body was found from Mussafah industrial area at city's outskirts, as reported. Jabar's body was initially kept in the mortuary as an unidentified corpse. Later social workers and community groups stepped in to locate a relative. On Monday his brother reached the mortuary and identified him, said the report. "We hail from Kannur district of Kerala. Jabar was staying in Abu Dhabi for nine years and he went missing last week," said Muneer, Jabar's brother who works with the same bank.

"I don't know about the day that the body was found on, but the location is Mussafah. Nor do I know the reason behind my brother's death. He never had problem with anyone. I came to know about the news through social workers and identified the body. I have lost my brother," he added. Jabar is survived by his wife and two children. The cause of death will be known following an autopsy, the report said.

Indian American Pilot among 3 dead in mid-air collision

WASHINGTON(TIP): An Indian American is one among two other persons after two small planes collided mid-air in the US state of Florida, aviation authorities said.

Nisha Sejwal, 19, was killed in the accident on July 17, Tuesday along with Jorge Sanchez, 22, and Ralph Knight, 72, the Federal Aviation Administration said. The police said they were trying to trace the whereabouts of a possible fourth passenger after both planes belonging to the Dean International flight school crashed mid-air. The search and rescue effort that were suspended due to low visibility late on Tuesday, would resume on Wednesday, an officer said.



Indian American pilot Nisha Sejwal, 19, was killed when two small planes collided in mid-air on July 17. Image/ courtesy Twitter

Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news

Indian origin Yoga Champion named 'British Indian of the year'

LONDON (TIP): Indian-origin schoolboy who is the under-11 UK national yoga champion has been named the British Indian of the Year for his achievements in the field.

Ishwar Sharma, 8, has won a string of titles in both individual and artistic yoga, most recently a gold medal representing Great Britain at the World Student Games 2018 in Winnipeg, Canada, in June.

"I believe I am competing with myself rather than anyone else, which makes me challenge myself to do the difficult postures," said the schoolboy, who studies at St Michael's Preparatory School in Kent. "I will always be a student of yoga and am deeply grateful to my teachers for the wisdom they have shared with me," he said.

He was named British Indian of the Year in the Young Achiever category at the sixth annual awards ceremony held in Birmingham earlier this week.

"We feel proud of his achievements and it has improved his academic performance. We want him to inspire adults and other children with this lifestyle habit," said his father Vishwanath, himself a keen yoga practitioner.

"He and I perform Vedic Yoga with



Ishwar Sharma, 8, has won a string of titles in both individual and artistic yoga

choreography to music, which includes Hatha Yoga postures with Acroyoga and artistic yoga," he said.

The family is originally from Mysore, home to world-renowned yoga gurus, and travel to the region annually.

"He rejuvenates himself there and would love to stay for more time and get yoga training with the teachers there," added Vishwanath.

His son has performed in more over 100 events across the UK and worldwide and among his many skills is the ability to chant up to 50 'shlokas' from the 'Vedas'

and 'Bhagavad Gita'. He won a gold medal at the Euro Asian Yoga Championships in Turkey in May and has also performed at a number of charity events to raise funds for the under-privileged.

Some of his upcoming competitions include one in Chile in December and then Beijing in January next year. He is also training for the World Games in Canada next year.

"Ishwar is determined to spread awareness about yoga and its benefits, especially among children," his father said.

Indian American Sabrina Singh is key player to offensive communication strategy of the Democratic party

WASHINGTON (TIP): Sabrina Singh joined the Democratic National Committee (DNC) last year as its spokeswoman and deputy communications director. She alleged that the ruling Republican party has "created a toxic environment" and is struggling with telling the truth thus being a key player in the offensive communication strategy of the Democratic party against the alleged divisive policies of the Donald Trump administration.

The Democratic leader said she is inspired by the works of her grandfather Sardar JJ Singh to fight the divisive policies of the Trump administration.

As head of the India League of America, JJ Singh was a key figure among Indians in America fighting for the right to US citizenship.

Some 18 months after Donald Trump entered the White House, Ms Singh said, the Democrats have gone on the offensive. "Democrats certainly have the wind at their backs right now. We're holding the administration accountable and we're not gonna let up until November and onwards till 2020. We just have to keep harnessing the momentum to keep charging forward," she said.

"What one sees every day is the Trump administration lobbying new attacks at different groups whether it's Latino's or Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI). The Trump administration has not done their job of their promise of 'draining the swamp'. I think, if anything, it has gotten swampier," Ms Singh said.

In 1940s, JJ Singh along with a group of fellow Indians mounted a nationwide campaign against racially discriminatory policies of the US which led the then president Harry Truman to sign the Luce-



The Democratic leader said she is inspired by the works of her grandfather Sardar JJ Singh to fight the divisive policies of the Trump administration

Image/ courtesy Twitter

Celler Act on July 2, 1946. The Act allowed a quota of 100 Indians to immigrate to the United States per year.

The Act also permitted Indian nationals already residing in the US (of whom there were approximately 2,500-3,000 at the time) to become naturalized American citizens.

Prior to the Luce-Celler Act, Indians were barred from becoming US citizens and they were allowed to enter the country only as visitors and tourists. "It's a really important time to be working at the DNC. It's a really important time to be a woman of colorworking in Washington," Ms Singh said.

"While the environment can be tough to wake up to see a tweet from Donald Trump saying 'fake news, this is rigged and that is rigged and everyone's out to get me', I think we're seeing a lot of incredible activism," she said referring to various popular protests against the

Trump Administration.

Ahead of the November mid-term, Ms Singh said the focus of the DNC under its chair Tom Perez is to get as many seats as possible from the Congress to elected posts at local level.

"People are excited about the mid-terms. People are ready for change. People are seeing that Trump is not delivering on some of the things that he campaigned on," she claimed.

Responding to the criticism that the Democratic party has now become a party of protests and marches, Ms Singh said, "We are holding the administration accountable. And one way to do that is to rally and to protest and to speak out. I don't think there's anything wrong with people going to the border to protest the administration's policies that are separating families."

"We are not just anti-Trump. We are organizing and making sure that we are electing leaders at all levels...We are going to fight to make sure that women have the right to make the choices about their own reproductive health," she added.

Ms Singh alleged that the White House strategy is not to tell the truth to the press or the public. "You see Sarah Sanders or Raj Shah get in front of the podium every day and essentially lie to the American people," she alleged.

At the same time, Ms Singh noted that Mr Trump uses Twitter "very effectively" and is able to reach his base.

"Many of his supporters like that he is very honest and truthful, but I think it's also a bit scary for many people in this country to see Trump attacking our allies over twitter, or name calling sitting senators, and members of Congress, whether it's racial slurs or derogatory names," she said.



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Mayor De Blasio Announces Largest Ever Affordable Housing Production In City's History

New Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit will be dedicated to responding to tenant complaints of harassment in buildings across the city

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Mayor de Blasio announced, July 19, that his administration financed 32,116 affordable homes last year, breaking the all-time record previously set by former Mayor Ed Koch in 1989 of 25,243 units. The City also broke the record for the most new construction with 9,140 affordable homes; almost 60 percent of all homes financed will serve New Yorkers making less than \$47,000 for a family of three. Additionally, the Mayor announced the formation of the Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit that will be dedicated to pursuing potential cases of maintenance harassment in multi-family residential buildings and connecting tenants to legal services resources, a complement to the City's efforts against construction as harassment.

"This Administration has used every tool available to fight the affordability crisis in New York City. It is paying off - we have created more affordable housing than any other time in our City's history," said Mayor Bill de Blasio. "We will not grow complacent. My Administration is forging ahead with new tools like the Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit to help investigate harassment and hold bad landlords accountable. We have the backs of tenants as we continue to ensure that New York City is the fairest city in America."

"We have established a blueprint for building, for preservation - for overall affordability. We're keeping people in their houses, never giving up a square foot of affordable housing, and increasing the supply of new homes. As neighborhoods grow and change, our work ensures that affordable housing will always be a part of our city," said Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development.

To celebrate this historic milestone, the Mayor handed Destiny Armstead the keys to her new home at 1561 Walton, a new 60-unit building near the Jerome Avenue area in the Bronx, one of several neighborhoods that was recently rezoned to apply the City's new Mandatory Inclusionary Housing policy. The Mayor was joined by Council Members Fernando Cabrera, Vanessa Gibson, and Ydanis Rodriguez, who have been working closely with the administration to develop comprehensive plans for their communities. Developed by non-profit Settlement Housing Fund, 1561 Walton was part of a major wave of construction financed early in the de Blasio administration that has now rented up. Built on City-owned land and a former parking lot, the project is adjacent to New Settlement Apartments, a signature Koch-era portfolio with 900 homes in 14 buildings that was recently preserved by HPD. Renovations, including the installation of solar panels that will help ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of the building,

were recently completed. Settlement Housing Fund also financed the renovation of the beautiful children's playground across the street.

"Making good on the promises of Housing New York, we set an all-time record for affordable housing production in New York City," said Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer. "With 32,116 affordable homes, 2018 also marks the most new construction in history. A full 57 percent of those homes will serve some of the city's lowest income families. By advancing developments on large public sites, implementing policies to require more affordable housing on private sites, pushing to secure the affordability of large Mitchell-Lamas, and seeing new programs to reach small buildings take hold, among other initiatives, we surpassed the new baseline established in HNY 2.0. Our work is far from done. That is why today we also launch a new Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit at HPD to expand our efforts to combat harassment and displacement. All of these results are a testament to our partners and the devoted HPD and HDC teams. I want to thank them and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their vision and ongoing commitment to a building a fairer, more affordable city."

"HDC is proud to have contributed more than \$1.6 billion in bond financing towards this year's historic housing production, and more than \$7.1 billion since the start of Housing New York," said New York City Housing Development Corporation President Eric Enderlin. "Our success under the housing plan has been made possible thanks to the exceptional efforts of our City-wide team and valued public and private partners who have worked around the clock to ensure our limited affordable housing resources are deployed with the greatest impact. The affordable housing the City has created and preserved to date will provide greater opportunity to some of our most vulnerable households as well as our more moderate income New Yorkers, reflecting our commitment to ensure New York is a city for everyone."

"Like so many New Yorkers, finding affordable housing remains a primary concern for older adults living on limited incomes. Preserving affordable housing helps more seniors remain in the communities where they raised their families and have a network of formal and informal supports, which are essential for them to age in place," said Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado.

"As we plan for the future of New York City, it is vital that we remain a city for all. Through Mandatory Inclusionary Housing and other

programs, we are creating unprecedented levels of affordable housing for today and tomorrow's New Yorkers," said Department of City Planning Director Marisa Lago.

"This Administration has proudly fought to make New York City a more equitable place to live," said NYCEDC President and CEO James Patchett. "This is a historic milestone and we're proud to have worked side by side with our sister agencies to help raise the floor for New Yorkers across the five boroughs."

The cornerstone of the Mayor's housing plan continues to be the preservation of affordability in existing buildings, many of which are in need of physical and financial assistance or face expiring protections. Last year, the City used a wide array of programs and tools to extend affordability and finance needed improvements in 22,976 homes. This preservation work is key to keeping people in their homes and neighborhoods and accompanies a robust set of strategies to combat displacement, including a new citywide Certification of No Harassment Program, a Speculation Watch List, and now a new HPD Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit.

The newly established Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit will have ten dedicated staff, including two attorneys to initiate litigation against unscrupulous owners and landlords. The new Unit will use data analysis to identify potential buildings and portfolios where harassment is occurring; respond to emergency complaints; partner closely with the Department of Buildings and other agencies to address issues in buildings where maintenance as harassment has been identified; and connect tenants with legal services resources.

The new Unit will enable HPD to increase the number of buildings with potential construction or maintenance harassment that HPD can inspect from 200 buildings annually to approximately 1,500 buildings. HPD will also seek civil penalties for harassment where warranted.

The record-breaking progress of the last fiscal year brings the total number of homes financed under HNY to date to 109,767, exceeding the original goal established in Housing New York, and the new target set last year in Housing New York 2.0. Through HNY 2.0, the Mayor committed to accelerate and expand the pace of Housing New York to achieve 300,000 affordable apartments by 2026 - 100,000 more than initially planned. Already the City had ramped up to produce more than 20,000 affordable homes a year, and now, has achieved a new baseline of 25,000 affordable apartments a year, ahead of schedule.

The total direct City investment under the Mayor's housing plan last year was \$1.582 billion, and the total bond financing issued by



Mayor Bill de Blasio announced July 19 the formation of the Tenant Anti-Harassment Unit

the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) was over \$1.6 billion in bonds. To date, the City has spent \$4.375 billion in City subsidy, which includes City capital, HDC Corporate Reserves, and Reso-A. In total, HDC issued bonds worth more than \$7.1 billion since the start of the plan.

Affordable housing numbers are available here.

The plan continues to live up to its initial promises:

REZONING AREAS / CITY OWNED LAND: Made progress on large public sites in rezoning and urban renewal areas like Coney Island, East New York, Far Rockaway, and Downtown Jamaica, financing 1,390 new homes. These are some of the 2,513 newly constructed units financed on public land last year; bringing the total under HNY to 8,844 homes.

421A: Produced 760 affordable apartments across 64 projects through 421a with no additional City funding. This doubles the number of stand-alone units created, most of which are in high-cost neighborhoods.

MANDATORY INCLUSIONARY HOUSING (MIH): Doubled the production created through MIH to 805 permanently affordable homes. The City is tracking 8,500 MIH units through rezoning applications; including 4,900 MIH apartments in 51 projects approved by Council that have not yet closed.

SENIORS: Launched Aging in Place, part of our new Seniors First program, and closed the first project to ensure seniors in preservation projects get the improvements they need to stay in their apartments and age in place. Last year saw the most senior housing with 1,888 apartments; bringing the total number of senior homes produced under HNY to 6,507.

*Read more at
www.theindianpanorama.news*

Celebration of National 'Bastille' Day 2018 in France

NEW YORK (TIP): The Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) congratulates the people of France on the 229th anniversary of Bastille Day, the La Fête Nationale, commemorating the day in 1789 when crowds stormed the Bastille, a fortress used as a prison in Paris. The event marks the beginning of the French Revolution and honors democracy and equality in France.

The storming of Bastille on 14th July 1792 sent a signal to the French monarchy that the French people were embracing the revolution's motto, liberté, égalité, fraternité, or liberty, equality and brotherhood. The riot was a call for the establishment of a republic

in France in the face of an oppressive regime and food shortages that spurred on the revolution.

"Justice and power must be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just." ~ Blaise Pascal

Prejudices are what fools use for reason" - Voltaire

IDC also recognizes the sizeable population of persons of Indian origin (PIOs) and non-resident Indians (NRIs) in France, with roots in Mauritius, Reunion Island and territories of the French Caribbean as well as India. PIOs in France and Francophone Territories

contribute significantly to France and Francophone Territories, achieving prominent positions in all segments of French society including businesses, academia, politics, media and sciences.

IDC conveys its best wishes to the people of France for continuing progress in championing the cause of freedom, justice, human rights and liberty throughout the world.

In addition, Congratulation, France! The day after Bastille Day 2018, France are World Cup 2018 champions and deservedly so after a breathless six-goal thriller against Croatia.

For more information contact: Ashook



At a live TV event, Pandit Jasraj unveils biography in the US



Pandit Jasraj, third from left, unveiling his biography, "Rasraj Pandit Jasraj," at a live TV event at the TV Asia auditorium in Edison, NJ on July 17. Others in the photo are, from left, Vikas Nangia, TV Asia host and senior producer; H R Shah, TV Asia chairman and CEO; Sandeep Chakravorty, India's Consul General in New York; Durga Jasraj, Pandit Jasraj's daughter; Sunita Budhiraja, author of "Rasraj Pandit Jasraj" and Arun Maheshwari, publisher of the biography.

EDISON, NJ (TIP):Legendary classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj unveiled his first authorized biography during a book release ceremony at the TV Asia auditorium in Edison, NJ on July 17.

Titled, "Rasraj Pandit Jasraj," the biography is written by Sunita Budhiraja and published by New Delhi-based Vani Prakashan.

The event was jointly hosted by the Consulate General of India in New York, TV Asia and the Pandit Jasraj Institute and broadcast live on TV Asia across the US as part of its "Focus Live" nightly show. The event was also the first public gathering in the US announcing the launch of the biography, before the official India release later this year.

The biography's release was followed by a 90-minute interaction on TV Asia's "Focus Live" with Pandit Jasraj; Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty; Durga Jasraj, Pandit Jasraj's daughter; author Sunita Budhiraja; publisher Arun Maheshwari and TV Asia host and senior producer Vikas Nangia, followed by a question-answer session with the audience.

During the panel discussion, Budhiraja said that while Pandit Jasraj's ragas were soulful, the book focused on several untold struggles that went behind those renditions. "The book is essentially the story behind his music, the challenges and many other yet unknown inspiring aspects of Panditji's life," she added.

When asked about the importance of lyrics, Pandit Jasraj said he believed in immersing

himself into the words before singing.

"Words are absolutely important in my songs because I want to live them, understand them, go into their depths and then sing the song. The process for me is to completely understand the words and then immerse myself in those words, that world," he said. He also recalled during the conversation how thankful he was to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee for calling him "Rasraj," which has been borrowed in the title for the biography.

One of India's best known classical vocalists, Pandit Jasraj, 88, was born in Hisar, Haryana, in a family of classical musicians of the Mewat gharana. His father, Pandit Motiram, a noted classical singer, passed away when Pandit Jasraj was just 4. From a young age, Pandit Jasraj began accompanying his elder brother and first guru vocalist Pandit Maniram as a tabla artiste. At 15, stung by a musician's snide remark about his lack of understanding of classical music because he was a minor artist, Pandit Jasraj decided to take up singing. He gave his first public concert at 22. He was honored by the Indian government with both the Padma Bhushan (1990) and Padma Vibhushan (2000).

Blessed with a soulful and sonorous voice, which traverses masterfully, Pandit Jasraj's vocalizing is characterized by a harmonious blend of the classic and opulent elements, giving his music a unique and sublime



The panelists during "Focus Live" show at the unveiling of Pandit Jasraj's biography, from left, Vikas Nangia, TV Asia host and senior producer; Pandit Jasraj; Sandeep Chakravorty, India's Consul General in New York; Durga Jasraj, Pandit Jasraj's daughter; Sunita Budhiraja, author of "Rasraj Pandit Jasraj" and Arun Maheshwari, publisher of the biography



More than 300 guests attended the book launch and the live TV event.

Photos / courtesy Gunjesh Desai/TV Asia

emotional quality.

The live TV event was interspersed with audio-visuals of Pandit Jasraj's concerts as well as a brief story of his life, frequently applauded by the audience.

Consul General Chakravorty said during the panel discussion that despite Pandit Jasraj's legendary status as a musician, his "tolerance and respect" for all types of music was unique and a testament to his character.

Durga Jasraj spoke about what it meant to be growing up in a family, where his father was continuously traveling on concerts. "He has a high expectation from himself even at this age. All of us in the family, including our father, have sacrificed for music, but we have also learned so much from Panditji about mental and physical tenacity."

Earlier, while introducing Pandit Jasraj, TV

Asia chairman and CEO H R Shah offered an analogy, saying the legendary classical vocalist was a "rare gem" with a large fan-following despite the challenging nature of his music that yet transcended all age groups.

More than 200 guests, including several prominent members of the Indian American community, attended the book release. Among those present, included Tripti Mukherjee, senior disciple of Pandit Jasraj as well as founder and director of Pandit Jasraj Institute; Dr Naveen Mehta, chairman of Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan USA; president of FIA of NY-NJ-CT Srujal Parikh, who along with FIA board of trustee Ram Gadhvi, presented Pandit Jasraj with a plaque of appreciation; Sunil Nayak, AINA president and Peter Kothari, IACS president.

Ex-NY Senate Leader Dean Skelos, son found guilty of corruption charges in retrial

NEW YORK (TIP): Former state Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos, once one of the most politically influential officials in New York, was convicted Tuesday, July 17 of using his considerable influence to secure \$300,000 in low-show jobs and payment for his son.

A jury in Manhattan federal court found Skelos, 70, and his son Adam, 36, guilty of eight felonies in the high-profile retrial, including two counts of conspiracy, three counts of extortion and three counts of bribery, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Skelos, a Nassau County Republican, pressured three politically connected firms to steer hundreds of thousands of dollars to his son via a \$20,000 cash payment and well-paying jobs that required little to no work.

The companies - AbTech Industries, Glenwood Management and a company tied to Physicians' Reciprocal Insurers - all had significant business before the state, which prosecutors say Skelos implicitly and explicitly exploited to benefit his son.

Major corruption convictions

The verdicts Tuesday came just five days after another major Albany-related corruption conviction.

Former SUNY Polytechnic Institute President Alain Kaloyeros was found guilty Thursday of rigging the bid for more than \$850 million in state-funded contracts to build Gov. Andrew Cuomo's top economic-development projects.

"Yet again, a New York jury heard a sordid tale of bribery, extortion, and the abuse of power by a powerful public official of this State," Robert Khuzami, deputy U.S. Attorney for New York's Southern District, said in a statement.



Former State Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos and son Adam Skelos were found guilty in the retrial

"And yet again, a jury responded with a unanimous verdict of guilt, in this case of Dean Skelos and his son Adam - sending the resounding message that political corruption will not be tolerated."

The elder Skelos was one of the three most powerful people in state government as Senate majority leader in 2008 and from 2011 through 2015, leading the Senate Republican conference in negotiations over the state budget and all key pieces of legislation.

Three-year saga

The conviction Tuesday was the latest step in a three-year legal saga for the Skeloses, who were first indicted in 2015.

They were convicted later that year, with Dean Skelos sentenced to 5 years in prison and Adam Skelos sentenced to 6 1/2 years.

But their convictions were later overturned in 2016 after the U.S. Supreme Court narrowed the corruption law the pair was convicted under.

Prosecutors, however, were allowed to retry Skelos and his son under the narrowed definition. And the more-restrictive law ultimately had little impact: The Skeloses were convicted on all counts in both trials.

A similar situation played out with former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, a Manhattan Democrat who was also indicted in 2015 and convicted of fraud.

Like Skelos, Silver's initial convicted was tossed in 2016 but he was found guilty in a retrial earlier this year.

Silver and Skelos were powerful leaders of their chambers and made up two of the "three men in a room" who negotiated state budgets and legislation with Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Corruption at high levels

It was the fourth major corruption conviction touching the highest levels of state government this year.

Along with Skelos, Silver and Kaloyeros, former top Cuomo aide Joseph Percoco, then a close personal friend of the governor's, was convicted in March of accepting more than \$285,000 from companies with business before the state.

Read more at
www.theindianpanorama.news



GUEST COMMENT

Trump - Putin Rocky Summit

Donald Trump did enough, and more, to mess up his meeting with Vladimir Putin

A summit between the leaders of the world's strongest nuclear powers, which fought the Cold War for decades, is an opportunity to discuss areas of shared interest, find ways to dial down mutual tensions and work together to address global issues. But well before Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin sat down for their first formal summit meeting, in Helsinki, there were concerns that it would be overshadowed by allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The uproar in Washington over Mr. Trump's remarks on the Russian meddling scandal - with even accusations of treason - and his subsequent U-turn suggest that such concerns were valid. Mr. Trump could have certainly managed the summit better by addressing genuine concerns in the U.S. over allegations of Russia's election meddling. Days earlier, the U.S. Justice Department indicted 12 Russian intelligence officials for hacking and leaking emails of top Democrats. It therefore seemed surreal when the President accepted the Russian version over that of his own intelligence agencies and the Justice Department. Away from the controversy, the closed-door meeting between the leaders can be evaluated only on the progress made on a number of contentious issues before both.

The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) is set to expire in 2021 and Russia has shown interest in extending it. For a consensus, high-level talks between the U.S. and Russia are needed. From the crisis in Ukraine to the civil war in Syria, Russia-U.S. cooperation is vital to finding lasting solutions. The Iran nuclear deal, for which Mr. Putin and Barack Obama worked together despite differences, is in a shambles. Most of these issues, including the threat posed by nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, were discussed at the summit. But it's not clear whether the talks will lead to any significant change in policies. Since the Ukraine crisis, the West has tried different methods, including sanctions and pressure tactics, to isolate Russia and change its behavior. But those methods have proved largely unsuccessful as Russia is now a far more ambitious foreign policy power with an enhanced presence in Eastern Europe and West Asia - even if its sanctions-hit economy is struggling. Instead of continuing a policy that has failed and ratcheted up global tensions, the Western alliance should junk its Cold War mentality and engage with Russia; Russia, in turn, will have to shed its rogue attitude and be more open and stable in its dealings. The stakes are high, and the bitterness of the past should not hinder U.S.-Russia relations. That should have been the message from Helsinki.

(The Hindu)



By Prabhjot Singh

FIFA World Cup 2018 was an all-European show. If France won the Cup, Russia, the hosts, won the hearts. The Americas - north, south and central - were all cut to size not only on the playfields of Russia but also in politics. It turned out to be a wonderful carnival of fun, sport and politics that witnessed many upheavals, besides showcasing Russia as a modern, dynamic and "normal" nation, ready for inclusion in the global economic, political, and sporting landscapes.

Not only did all 32 nations that qualified laud the event as the "best ever", a certificate of appreciation also came from FIFA president Gianni Infantino when he commented "the whole world fell in love with Russia" for hosting the best World Cup ever.

FIFA World Cup 2018 was no different from the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and 2016 Rio Olympic Games for grabbing criticism on corruption, organizational lapses and failure to provide "clean, healthy and sporting environs for free and fair competitions". Intriguingly, at the end of these events, this criticism was changed to praise.

The allotment of FIFA World Cup 2018 to Russia was not without a controversy. FIFA itself was dogged by allegations of corruption and impropriety. Sepp Blatter, the infamous suspended FIFA chief, was a special guest of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Allotment was made in 2011 and Putin had promised that the event would change the way the planet saw his "nation". He had put in place a mechanism to keep the showcase event of FIFA free from threats of hooliganism, terrorist attacks or disruptions by political activists.

Russia, an offshoot of the erstwhile Soviet Union, got the World Cup at a time when its relationship with both Europe and the US had touched the lowest ebb in decades. Its recent actions in Syria and Ukraine fractured further these ties.

But unlike the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games held a year after the invasion of Afghanistan, this FIFA World Cup witnessed no boycotts. It was all the more credible to have a full FIFA house in Russia, especially when the hosts remain on the "suspension list" of the International Olympic Committee. In the last Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, Russia was not allowed, though its athletes participated under the banner of Olympic Athletes Russia. The World Cup provided a pleasant change. Between June 14 and July 15, the 64 games played in 11 cities not only saw Iceland making an impressive debut, but also defending champions Germany making

AS I SEE IT

FIFA was Russia's coming out party

Moscow splurged over \$11 bn to make the FIFA World Cup an event to make the 'planet' change its outlook about Russia. It worked, leading the FIFA chief to say, "the whole world fell in love with Russia."



an exit after the group matches.

For Asia, it was Japan that carried the flag to the pre-quarterfinals, as other Asian contenders - Iran, Saudi Arabia and Korea - could not cross the group matches hurdle.

Though India has seldom qualified for the prestigious FIFA event, it had its nominal representation through Rishi Tej (10) and John K Nathania (11) who were chosen to carry the ball for the games on June 18 and 23 in the Russia World Cup. Besides there were 100-odd football fans from India, including Amitabh Bachchan. There were also some volunteers from India.

The FIFA World Cup is an event that is as prestigious, if not more, as the summer Olympic Games are. Russia spent more than \$11.6 billion on infrastructure for the FIFA World Cup. Four years earlier, it had put in a huge amount for the Winter Olympic Games, an event that at the end soiled its credibility for conspiring to "drug" the games, with critics calling the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics as "chemist" games.

Besides the Russian Government's expenditure on making the World Cup an event to make the "planet" change its outlook about Russia, FIFA's budget for the just-concluded World Cup was a whopping \$1,943 million.

Compared to it, when Bhubaneswar holds the World Cup Hockey Tournament later this year, the total cost is estimated at about \$19 million. The event will be spread over 19 days and feature 16 teams and 36 matches. FIFA World Cup, a 35-day event, witnessed 64 games played in 11 different cities.

There were nearly half a million football fans, including several thousand from Peru alone, drinking on the streets

of Russia, through the World Cup days.

As the event progressed to its knockout rounds, some icons like Argentina, Spain, Portugal, Brazil and Uruguay made unceremonious exits, losing by results facilitated either by late goals, penalties, own goals or penalty shootouts. There were 29 penalties awarded in the tournament besides "own" goals, including the first goal of the final between France and Croatia. And then, the second goal came from a penalty.

By the time the tournament reached the semi-final stage, the challenge of Asia, Africa and the Americas had ended. The semi-finals and final were an all-European affair. Though Croatia made it to its first final of a World Cup, it could not stand up to the experience of the French, who won their second World Cup title in 20 years, and thus became only the sixth nation to win the elite soccer tournament two or more times.

Harry Kane (England), Luka Modric (Croatia), Kylian Mbappe (France) and Thibaut Courtois (Belgium) were adjudged among the best players of this World Cup that also saw the fading away of Lionel Messi (Argentina), even as Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) and Neymar (Brazil) may continue to hawk headlines for some more time.

And who can forget the Croatian President, Kolinda Grabbar-Kitarovic, who spent her own money to travel to Russia, sported the team jersey to watch the "silver team" play the final, from the stands, and greeted and consoled each member of the losing finalist team with a warm hug?

(The author is a senior journalist. He is executive editor with the PTC TV Channel)

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Decoding Trump's attack on Europe

His incendiary tour of the continent seeks to reverse the gains Europe has achieved over the last 70 years



By Ravi Arvind Palat

“

Mr. Trump's blistering attack on European states for not meeting their military spending obligations is misplaced. Not only does he fail to recognize that their military spending has risen since 2014 when they agreed to raise their military spending to 2% of their GDP by 2024 but also that European states are not positioned to be global powers. Unlike the U.S. which is bordered by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Europe has no need for navies to patrol distant oceans and match the U.S. in defense spending. Moreover, rather than spending massively on defense as the U.S. has opted to do, European states provide their citizens with health care, education, and other welfare benefits.”

”

“Far from Russia posing a threat to the Western alliance, the major source of destabilization to the EU comes from the flow of migrants from Africa. In this context, it is not higher military spending by member states that is crucial but the provision of aid. Members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development had pledged to contribute 0.7% of their GDP as aid to the poorest countries. Germany and the U.K. spend 0.66% and 0.7%, respectively, of their GDP in aid while the U.S. spends a mere 0.18%; Mr. Trump is threatening to slash even that by a third. Spending on aid, especially to African countries, will help stem the tide of refugees coming to Europe far more effectively than policing the Mediterranean.”

U.S. President Donald Trump's incendiary tour of Europe has justly generated extensive coverage for his disregard for diplomatic niceties and attacks on his allies, especially on German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Theresa May, both of whom are facing stiff domestic opposition. Yet, mainstream commentaries on Mr. Trump's attacks on the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) do not place the trans-Atlantic relationship in the broader historical context.

In the first instance, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the U.S. promoted economic integration among its European allies as an essential condition for the post-war revival of world trade. At war's end, wealth had become concentrated in the new superpower - it accounted for 48% of world industrial capacity and 70% of gold reserves. With the demobilization of some 10 million soldiers in the U.S., the shift to a peacetime economy needed allies to open their markets to U.S. products and investments. Its European allies were too poor to provide a market and the notorious 'meat-axe' 80th Congress unwilling to undertake a program for European reconstruction.

In this context, the U.K. government's admission in February 1947 that it could no longer intervene in the Greek Civil War provided an opportune moment for U.S. President Harry Truman to follow Senator Arthur Vandenberg's advice to "scare the hell out of the American people" by manufacturing the Cold War. A Congress that was not willing to aid Clement Attlee's "socialist welfare state" was eager to rebuild Western Europe and Japan as levees to defend the 'free world' against 'godless communism'.

Along with NATO founded in 1949 was the Marshall Plan instituted in 1948. It was innovative not because of its size - \$17 billion over four years was not substantially more than the \$9 billion the U.S. had channeled to its European allies in the previous two years - but because it pressured West European states to reduce tariffs between themselves and to standardize regulations to facilitate the creation of a market viable enough to reap the economies of scale and for U.S. corporations to invest in the continent. This trans-Atlantic U.S. corporate expansion was welcomed by European governments and trade unions as these were the only entities with the funds to create employment.

Post-war reconstruction

A trans-Atlantic military alliance and European economic integration were thus the twin projects of a successful post-war reconstruction. Economic integration proceeded rapidly over the last 40 odd years, with the European Union (EU) becoming the largest economy on the planet and thereby threatening the U.S.

At the same time, the rationale for the NATO military alliance - to protect Western Europe from Soviet expansion and to tie Germany to its neighbors - has largely evaporated with the breakup of the USSR



President Donald Trump and other leaders at NATO summit in Brussels, July 11
Photo / courtesy Bloomberg

and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact.

The Russian angle

In the context of the current outcry among NATO member states about the Russian annexation of Crimea from the Ukraine, it is important to recall that U.S. President George H.W. Bush and other leaders had assured Russia in 1991 that the trans-Atlantic alliance would not extend beyond East Germany's borders. Then when Russia was immensely weakened in the 1990s, U.S. President Bill Clinton led the charge to invite states in Central and Eastern Europe into the alliance. It was this expansion that led to a new confrontation with Russia once it had stabilized itself under President Vladimir Putin.

Nevertheless, there is clearly no Russian threat to Europe. Even in the case of the Ukraine, as Steven Cohen, emeritus professor of Russian studies at New York University, has argued, the crisis was precipitated in 2014 when the EU pressured the Ukrainian government to sign an agreement that would have disadvantaged Russia. When then Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich hesitated, he was overthrown by EU- and U.S.-supported demonstrators even though he had signed an agreement brokered by three EU foreign ministers the previous day to form a coalition government. It was this march of NATO to the frontiers of Russia that provoked Mr. Putin to intervene in the Ukraine.

Recasting security

Far from Russia posing a threat to the Western alliance, the major source of destabilization to the EU comes from the flow of migrants from Africa. In this context, it is not higher military spending by member states that is crucial but the provision of aid. Members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development had pledged to contribute 0.7% of their GDP as aid to the poorest countries.

Germany and the U.K. spend 0.66% and 0.7%, respectively, of their GDP in aid while the U.S. spends a mere 0.18%; Mr. Trump is threatening to slash even that by a third. Spending on aid, especially to African countries, will help stem the tide of refugees coming to Europe far more effectively than policing the Mediterranean.

In this context, Mr. Trump's blistering attack on European states for not meeting their military spending obligations is misplaced. Not only does he fail to recognize that their military spending has risen since 2014 when they agreed to raise their military spending to 2% of their GDP by 2024 but also that European states are not positioned to be global powers. Unlike the U.S. which is bordered by the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Europe has no need for navies to patrol distant oceans and match the U.S. in defense spending. Moreover, rather than spending massively on defense as the U.S. has opted to do, European states provide their citizens with health care, education, and other welfare benefits.

Mr. Trump's support for Brexit and his humiliating undermining of Ms. May, his outrageous comments on Germany being beholden to Russia and on Ms. Merkel in particular, and his alleged offer of a trade deal to French President Emmanuel Macron if France leaves the EU are all designed to break up the organizations so that he can deal from a position of strength with small states. As Britain's difficulties in exiting the union indicates, supply chains are so integrated across the continent that breaking up the EU would have disastrous consequences for production for all its member states and may even risk a global economic downturn.

In short, what Mr. Trump is seeking to do is to reverse the gains Europe has achieved over the last 70 years and make it beholden once again to the U.S.

(The author is a professor of sociology at the State University of New York at Binghamton, U.S.)

(Source: The Hindu)

Doctor on fast forcibly airlifted, his supporters thrashed in Nepal

KATHMANDU (TIP): Dr Govinda K C, who has been on a crusade for providing people of all economic backgrounds with access to medical services, was forcibly airlifted to Kathmandu from Jumla where he had been on an indefinite hungerstrike for the past 20 days, urging restrictions on mushrooming private medical colleges. The security forces also lobbed teargas shells at, and lathi-charged, his supporters.

The 60-year-old Dr KC, as he is known, was brought to Kathmandu in a Nepal Army helicopter on Thursday evening, ostensibly for talks. However, Prime Minister K P Oli had already said that he would not yield to anyone just because "he is fasting".

A noted orthopedic surgeon and professor, Dr KC went on fast, mobilising huge public support, demanding that universities should stop giving affiliations to private medical colleges in Kathmandu. His other demands were that each region should have one medical college, in which reasonable fees and scholarships to the poor were guaranteed.

His fast has triggered a political storm, with the opposition Nepali Congress resolving to obstruct Parliament and state legislature business until the government addressed his demands. Nepali Congress and civil society groups took out protest rallies in the capital as police were rampaging the venue of Dr KC's fast.

Dr KC began his fast after the government introduced a Bill on medical education in Parliament, which, according to him, went against the spirit of previous negotiations and understandings reached with him.

"I will not talk to the government unless it withdraws the Bill," he said before being forcibly airlifted from Jumla. (IE)

Rohingya report more violence, persecution in Myanmar



DHAKA (TIP): Muslim Rohingya refugees reaching Bangladesh say violence, including torture, persists against them in Myanmar and the overall environment remains "menacing" for ethnic and religious minorities, UN human rights investigators said on Thursday. Members of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar ended a five-day visit to the refugee camp of Kutupalong in Cox's Bazar where they interviewed new arrivals among the more than 700,000 Rohingya who have fled Rakhine state since an army crackdown last August.

"They referred to the overt threats they faced of violence and persecution, being cut off from their sources of livelihood, and the overall menacing environment that finally compelled them to leave for Bangladesh," the investigators said in a statement, adding that the arrival of new refugees reflects the "the continuing gravity of the human rights violations in Myanmar."

There was no immediate reaction from authorities in Myanmar, where it is a holiday. Previously, they have denied widespread abuses. The United Nations struck an outline deal with Myanmar in May aimed at eventually allowing hundreds of thousands of Rohingya in Bangladesh to return safely and by choice. But the secret agreement, seen by Reuters, offers no explicit guarantees of citizenship or freedom of movement throughout the country.

"The young men I spoke with were particularly anxious, showing signs of deep trauma. Without education and livelihood I fear for their future," said investigator Radhika Coomaraswamy. (Reuters)

Afghanistan: Air strike near Kunduz kills 14 civilians

Afghan officials said the incident was still being investigated and it was unclear whether the casualties had been caused by Afghan or US aircraft, both of which flew missions in support of the operation.

KUNDUZ (TIP): As many as 14 people, including women and children, were killed in an air strike carried out during an operation by Afghan security forces near the northern city of Kunduz on Thursday, officials said. Afghan officials said the incident was still being investigated and it was unclear whether the casualties had been caused by Afghan or US aircraft, both of which flew missions in support of the operation. A statement from the US military said there was no indication that its aircraft were responsible.

The civilian deaths add to a total that reached record levels in the first half of the year, according to a United Nations report this week that noted a sharp jump in casualties from air strikes. Nematullah Temori, a spokesman for the Kunduz governor, said women and children were among 14 people killed in the raid in Chardara, a district outside Kunduz city that has long been fought over between Taliban and government security forces.

The incident underlined the risks from the increased use of air power under a strategy designed to force the Taliban to accept peace talks.

As air strikes have increased, the U.N. report said civilian casualties from aerial attacks rose by 52 percent in the first half of the year to 353 killed and wounded. It urged forces to improve civilian protection in air operations.



Mohammad Radmanish, a spokesman for the ministry of defence, confirmed that a number of civilians had been killed but said details were still unclear. "An investigation team from Kabul has been deployed to the province to investigate the incident," he said. "For the moment, it is difficult to say how many civilians were killed or wounded and who carried out the air strike."

A statement from the US military command in Kabul said U.S. forces had conducted strikes in the area in support of Afghan-led ground operations, but that its on-the-ground assessment of those strikes gave no indication US forces had caused civilian casualties. A statement from the

Taliban said 28 civilians had been killed. It said most of the victims were women and children and blamed US forces.

According to the United Nations, at least 1,692 civilians were killed in the conflict during the first half of the year, the highest total for the first half of a year that the world body has recorded since it adopted its method of tallying casualties in 2009. Kunduz, a key strategic target for the Taliban that briefly fell to the insurgents in 2015, has seen repeated incidents in which civilians have been killed by air strikes. In April, dozens were killed by a strike on Dasht-i Archi district that local villagers said hit people attending a religious ceremony (Reuters)

Thailand's cave boys wake up at home for first time in weeks

During a national TV broadcast they smiled, joked and showed solidarity with one another, as they shared details of their traumatic experience inside the flooded Tham Luang cave complex.

THAILAND (TIP): Thailand's rescued cave boys woke up in their own homes for the first time in more than three weeks on July 19, with many rising at dawn to take part in a religious ceremony. The 12 boys, aged 11 to 16, and their 25-year-old coach were discharged from a hospital in the northern province of Chiang Rai on Wednesday and later made their first public appearance.

During a national TV broadcast they smiled, joked and showed solidarity with one another, as they shared details of their traumatic experience inside the flooded Tham Luang cave complex. Many of the boys hail from the sleepy district of Mae Sai, near the border with Myanmar. Some were greeted with hugs, tears and smiles from waiting relatives and friends when they returned home on Wednesday. Others were blessed with water as they entered their homes.

On Thursday, some of the boys and their relatives took part in religious ceremonies at Mae Sai's Wat Pha That Doi Wao temple – an ancient temple with scenic views of the surrounding countryside. Reporters



were not allowed close to the boys and their families at the temple to give them privacy.

The last of the group of 13 were brought out of the cave last Tuesday, ending a gruelling 18-day ordeal that claimed the life of Samarn Kunan, a volunteer diver and former Thai navy SEAL who came to help with the rescue mission. He died on

July 6 after losing consciousness during a mission to place oxygen tanks deep inside the cave, just two days before the first boys were brought to safety.

During their TV news conference the boys said when they entered the cave on June 23 they had planned to only be inside the cave for about an hour after soccer practice. (Reuters)

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Missouri: At least eight killed as 'duck boat' capsizes, says police

MISSOURI (TIP): An amphibious vehicle capsized on a lake in Missouri with more than 20 people on board, leading to a "mass casualty incident," the Southern Stone County Fire Protection District said on Thursday. Several people were taken to hospital following the incident on the "Ride the Ducks" amphibious vehicle on Table Rock Lake, Stone County, near Branson, Missouri, the fire district said in posts on Twitter.

Stone County Sheriff Doug Rader said there were fatalities when the boat carrying 31 people, some of them children, capsized and sank, television station KY3 News reported. Rader said he did not know how many people were killed and divers were on the scene searching for passengers, KY3 News reported.

The Stone County Sheriff's Office could not immediately confirm the report. Ride The Ducks, a company in Branson, Missouri, that operates amphibious duck vehicles in the area, did not respond immediately to a request for comment. Duck amphibious vehicles have been involved in a number of fatal accidents around the world in the past two decades, with some sinking or being swamped or others colliding with vehicles. (IE)

Bulk of families separated at US-Mexico border remain apart

LOS ANGELES (TIP): With one week left on a court-ordered deadline to reunite children and parents separated by US immigration officials, government lawyers reported on July 19 that 364 of some 2,500 families with children aged 5 and older have been brought back together. It was unclear from the status report, filed as part of an American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit challenging parent-child separations at the border, exactly how many more reunifications were likely.

Of more than 2,500 parents identified as potentially eligible for having their children returned to them, 848 have been interviewed and cleared for reunification, attorneys for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) told the court. Another 229 parents have been deemed ineligible because of criminal records, or because they "waived" reunification or for other reasons. The rest are pending review.

The report also said more than 700 of the parents in question have final deportation orders, though a federal judge has barred the expulsion of those parents until at least a week after they regain their children. The ACLU asked the judge to require the government to provide a list of all the adult immigrants with final deportation orders, saying those parents would need legal counsel about options for themselves and their children. Attorneys for the US government and the ACLU are due in court again on Friday for a status hearing before US District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego on reunification progress.

The parents and children were separated as part of President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance" crackdown on illegal immigration. Many of the families entered the United States illegally, while some sought asylum at border crossings, after fleeing violence and upheavals in their home countries. Children were sent to multiple care facilities across the United States, while their parents were incarcerated in immigration detention centers or federal prisons.(AP)

Over 400,000 people living in 'modern slavery' in US, report finds

The report, by the Global Slavery Index, also estimates 40.3million globally, with most victims living in Asia, North Korea topping the list.

WASHINGTON (TIP): More than 400,000 people could be living in "modern slavery" in the US, a condition of servitude broadly defined in a new study as forced and state-imposed labor, sexual servitude and forced marriage.

The Global Slavery Index, published on Thursday, July 19, by Walk Free Foundation, describes modern slavery as a complex and often hidden crime that crosses borders, sectors and jurisdictions. The US number, the study estimates, is almost one hundredth of the estimated 40.3 million global total number of people it defines as being enslaved.

"The United States is one of the most advanced countries in the world yet has more than 400,000 modern slaves working under forced labor conditions," said the group's founder, Andrew Forrest, in a news release.

"This is a truly staggering statistic and demonstrates just how substantial this issue is globally. This is only possible through a tolerance of exploitation," Forrest added.

The report estimates most victims of modern slavery live in Asia. North Korea has the highest prevalence of modern slavery globally, with one in 10 of the population, or 2.6 million people, victims of modern slavery.

A third, or 15 million, of victims of modern slavery enter through forced marriage, an issue that disproportionately affects women and girls. "Overall, the cultural practice of forced marriage places women at greater risk of exploitation, and the potential subjection to a life of servitude, financial bondage and sexual exploitation that comes with modern slavery," the report said.

The report also argues the US figures are in themselves deceptive because the US exacerbates the global slavery problem by importing products, including laptops, computers, mobile phones, garments, fish, cocoa and timber, at risk of being produced through forced labor.



People march against modern slavery through London wearing face masks representing the silence of modern slaves in forced labor and sexual exploitation on 14 October 2017 in London.

The group recommends making forced marriage illegal, creating a minimum marriage age of 18, a national database of trafficking and forced labor cases, and working to improve supply-chain transparency to help bring the US numbers down.

It estimates China is by far the largest source of at-risk goods, with the United States importing \$122bn of electronics and clothing from the country. Vietnam was the second largest source with \$11.2bn, and India third with \$3.8bn.

Smaller values of goods were also sourced from Malaysia, Thailand, Brazil, Argentina, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Russia, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Peru.

"There is no quick solution to this and governments, businesses, and consumers alike must wake up to the fact that they must change their behavior if they wish to tackle this

abhorrent issue, both at home and abroad," Forrest wrote.

Walk Free Foundation, a global human rights organization with a mission to end modern slavery in a generation, was founded by Australian philanthropists, Andrew and Nicola Forrest.

Some have criticized the methodology behind the Index, which extrapolates its figures based on various risk factors and a "Vulnerability Model."

Walk Free notes that, because of the changes to its methodology, the national slavery figures are not comparable with previous editions of the Global Slavery Index.

It says: "As such, while comparability from previous years is lost, the changes are justified by the need to continually improve our knowledge base."

China on wrong side of religious freedom: Mike Pompeo

WASHINGTON (TIP): China is on the wrong side of the religious freedom which is a fundamental human right, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo alleged on July 19.

Next week, the State Department will host a three-day summit on religious freedom to bring together government officials, representatives of international organisations, religious leaders, rights advocates and members of the civil society from around the world.

Pompeo said that the Trump administration is considering taking multiple actions against Myanmar on the Rohingya refugee crisis.

"The State Department has made it clear that with respect to this issue (religious freedom), we think they (China) are on the wrong side of religious freedom, that they are a country of concern connected to that," Pompeo told VOA news.

He was responding to a question on repression against the Uighur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists in China.

"We understand that religious freedom is at risk in many places in the world, and yet the US has complex, broad relationships with



many countries, including China, across economic and military and political sets of issues," he said.

Pompeo said that the US puts religious freedom, this fundamental human right, at the very center of its discussions with every country with whom it interacts.

"The Trump administration has been incredibly strong in promoting religious freedom. It is the case that there are many countries, indeed countries that we often work alongside, who are allies in other places, we

work to demonstrate to them that religious tolerance and freedom is good for them," Pompeo told EWTN Television network.

US Vice President Mike Pence would deliver a key note address at the conference next week.

The issue of religious freedom in India including some recent incidents of violence is expected to be raised during the conference, informed sources said.

The conference, Pompeo said, will be laying out a path where the US can lead a process where religious freedom is raised as a priority for the citizens of every country.

"We will have our teams in the subsequent weeks and months in the field talking about religious freedom on a continued basis," the Secretary of State said in another interview to FRC Radio.

Religious freedom, he said is good for their country; it's good for their government. "It'll bring investors; it'll make their people more productive. We think these are all – this fundamental human right, this concept that every individual ought to have the right to practice their own faith, we think makes their countries stronger too," Pompeo said. (Reuters)

Detained Indian Immigrants being treated like criminals: Turbans of Sikhs taken away in US Jail

OREGON (TIP): The detained Indian immigrants, mostly Sikhs, seeking asylum in the US are being treated like criminals with their turbans taken away in a federal prison in Oregon after getting caught up in the Trump administration's controversial "zero-tolerance" policy, according to volunteers from legal advocacy groups.

President Donald Trump's tough immigration policy has separated nearly 2,000 children from their parents and guardians and placed into holding facilities between April 19 and May 31 of this year.

The controversial decision however has been reversed by Trump through an executive order following widespread protests against the move.

"It's heartbreaking when you go in there and you see the young kids like the ages are close to starting from 18 onwards, 22 to 24 in those jumpsuits...And you wonder how they ended up being treated as criminals. They've not committed a crime, they have crossed the border and they have asked for a refugee or asylum and that is a law of this land," Navneet Kaur, a community college professor, told the media.

Over the past several weeks, Navneet has interacted with most of the 52 Indian inmates in the federal prison at Sheridan in Oregon. She has volunteered to work as a Punjabi translator for the non-profit legal firm Innovation Law lab, which is providing legal assistance to the illegal immigrants in jail.

The Indians form the largest group of detainees in the total 123 illegal immigrants being held at a facility in Sheridan.

"Right now, they are (in) a miserable (condition)," she said.

Of the 52 Indians, a majority of them are Punjabi speaking and are Sikhs. When they were arrested, Navneet said, the Indian asylum seekers were chained.

"When they were in handcuffs and chains for 24 hours they ate with their handcuffs on. Even the hardcore criminals are not treated like that. Then they were kept for 22 hours a day in a cell with the people who did not speak the language," she said. "It's inhuman," she said.

The situation is worse for the Sikh inmates as their turbans have been taken away in the jail. "Their turbans have been taken away. In a country where everyone has right to practice their own religion these men there don't have turbans to cover (their head). Not even a piece of cloth to cover their heads," Navneet said.

During the last few days the local



community leaders have managed to give beanies to a few of the Sikh inmates so that they can cover their head.

"They (Indian inmates) are in a state of shock," she said, adding but none of these Indian asylum seekers want to go back home. All of them are seeking asylum in the US on the grounds that they fear for their life in India and that they are subject to political and religious persecution, she added.

"They are feeling very shocked... They are probably all wondering like, is this worth it if I'm going to be treated this way," Victoria Bejarano Muirhead, development director at the non-profit Innovation Law lab, told the media.

The Innovation Law lab has filed a lawsuit to seek access to these inmates and have been providing legal assistance to all the Indian asylum seekers who want one.

Some of the Indian asylum seekers have hired their own attorney. As a result of the intervention of the Innovation Law Lab the condition of these inmates has improved, and they are being allowed to make calls both domestic and internationally.

Innovation Law Lab has been sending its legal team of volunteers accompanied with translators like Navneet to the Sheridan jail on a daily basis.

"I am horrified at how the US is treating people who are seeking asylum. I'm horrified at how they're treating immigrants just in general," Muirhead said.

"Right now, there's so much public attention on this issue, but in reality, many of these issues that we have now are just getting worse, but they were already there even before Trump

was elected as president," she said.

"For example, the mass detention of immigrants, the mass deportation of immigrants, those were issues that were already ongoing before Trump was elected. But I think since his election, it's just gotten to the next level. We already were detaining families, but now Trump is saying let's detain them indefinitely. That's taking it to the next level. So, it was, it's very concerning," Muirhead said.

Despite the inhuman conditions these inmates are living in, none of them are willing to go back home, both Navneet and Muirhead said.

The Indian Consulate in San Francisco had recently sent its officials to meet these inmates. But it is not clear if these Indian citizens accepted the offer of the Indian government to help them go back home.

The next step for those who wish to seek asylum is to have a credible fear interview, which takes place with an asylum officer and with the individual during which the official will try to assess whether or not they have been actually persecuted or have a reasonable fear of persecution, Muirhead said.

Secondly, they will try to assess whether or not that persecution is related to a reason for having asylum, she added.

The Innovation Lab law has put in a formal notice to the government that it is providing legal counsel for a certain number of individuals. Then the government is required to tell them when they have scheduled to that interview so that they can assure they're prepared and accompany them to the interview. **(Source: PTI)**

US needs to invest in job training to continue economic miracle: Donald Trump

Asserting that the US is experiencing the longest positive job growth streak in its history, Trump said to "keep this momentum going, to continue this economic miracle," they must invest in job training and vocational education.

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US needs to invest in job training and vocational education to continue the economic miracle, President Donald Trump said today as he signed an executive order to establish the National Council for the American Worker.

Asserting that the US is experiencing the longest positive job growth streak in its history, Trump said to "keep this momentum going, to continue this economic miracle," they must invest in job training and vocational education.

"The fact is that companies are pouring back into our country... companies that, frankly, left 10 and 20 years ago, and they're coming back. And we need people to work for those companies. We need talented people. We need people with training," he said at a White House event wherein he signed the executive order to establish the National Council for the American Worker.

Among the key tasks of the council will be to develop a national workforce and strategy to equip Americans of all ages and at all stages of their career with the skills they need to thrive in the modern economy.

"Whether it's a high school student looking to land their first job ever. They've got a lot of enthusiasm, and they lose that enthusiasm when they don't land that job, but now they're all landing jobs. Or a late-career worker who wants to learn a new trade, we want every American to have the chance to earn a great living doing a great job that they love, where they wake up in the morning and they can't get to work fast enough.

"A lot of these people know that feeling. That's why they're in the position they're in," Trump said. Trump said that there's never been a better time to hire and grow in America. "We've created 3.7 million jobs since the election. In the month of June alone, we grew the workforce by more than 600,000 workers. We're in the longest positive job growth streak in American history.

"Every day, we are lifting our forgotten Americans off the sidelines, out of the margins and back into the workforce. We are giving a second chance at life to the 620,000 former inmates who reenter society each year. There's nothing like a great, great jobs market to take care of that situation," the President added. (PTI)

US, allies set to evacuate Syrian aid workers from southwest

WASHINGTON (TIP): US officials say the United States is finalizing plans to evacuate several hundred Syrian civil defense workers and their families from southwest Syria as Russian-backed government forces close in on the area. Two officials familiar with the plans said on July 19 that the US, Britain and Canada are spearheading the evacuation that would transport members of the White Helmets group to transit camps in neighbouring countries.

From there, they will be sent to third countries, including Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and possibly Canada, according to the officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter.

The officials, and a member of the White

Helmets who is due to be evacuated from Quneitra province, said the operation appears to be imminent as the Syrian army continues to gain ground in its latest offensive. The White Helmets, who have enjoyed backing from the US and other Western nations for years, are likely to be targeted by Syrian forces as they retake control of the southwest, according to the officials.

The officials said planning for the evacuation has been taking place for some time but accelerated after last week's NATO summit in Brussels. "These are hard hours and minutes," the White Helmets volunteer in Quneitra said, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear for his life. "This is the worst day of my life. I hope they rescue us before it is too late."

The evacuation is expected to take place from Quneitra, which straddles the frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and where the civil defense team is trapped. It is the last sliver of land still outside government control in the region. Since the government offensive began in June, the area along the frontier with the Golan Heights has been the safest in the southwestern region, attracting hundreds of displaced people because is along the disengagement line with Israel demarcated in 1974 after a war. The Syrian government is unlikely to fire there or carry out airstrikes. Negotiations are also ongoing to evacuate armed rebels and their families who don't want to accept the return of the rule of Bashar Assad's government to Quneitra, which the

rebels have controlled for years. The fighters will be evacuated to the northern part of Syria, where the opposition still holds sway. Except from that sliver of land, the southern tip of the southwestern region lies along the border with Jordan and the Golan Heights and is occupied by an Islamic State-affiliated group. The area is expected to be the target of the next government advances and the civil defense teams don't operate there.

The White Helmets are not without controversy. They only operate in opposition-held areas, where government services are almost non-existent and aerial bombings are recurrent. Syrian government supporters accuse them of being politically affiliated with the rebel groups. (AP)

INDIA INVITES DONALD TRUMP TO BE GUEST AT 2019 REPUBLIC DAY

NEW DELHI (TIP): United States President Donald Trump has been invited to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade in 2019, PTI reported quoting unidentified officials. The report added that the United States has not yet responded to India's invite, though "the initial indication has been positive".

In June 2017, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bilateral talks with Trump in Washington, the US president had said he would visit India. If Trump attends the event, he will be the second US president to do so. In 2015, former President Barack Obama had attended the Republic Day parade. Former President Bill Clinton was invited in 1994, but did not attend.

Source: PTI

Modi to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on BRICS sidelines

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Brics Summit in Johannesburg on July 25 in continuation of the "Wuhan spirit" of stepping up their bilateral engagements, officials familiar with the planning of the trip said on Thursday.

Modi will also meet South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who assumed office in February this year, and is expected to meet Russian president Vladimir Putin, they said. Bilateral meeting with the leaders of the other Brics countries are still being worked out, added one of the officials cited above.

The 10th Brics Summit will be held from July 25 to July 27. Modi will arrive in Rwanda on July 23 for a bilateral visit. He will then be in Uganda for a two-day visit, before arriving in South Africa on July 25.

"The meeting will give an opportunity for both Prime Minister Modi and President Xi to take stock of the ties," said an official. The "Wuhan spirit" is a reference to the two-day informal summit between Modi and Xi at the Chinese city of Wuhan in April.

India is slated to host China's defence minister Wei Fenghe in the coming months.

Source: HT

Passports of 8 NRI husbands who abandoned wives cancelled

NEW DELHI (TIP): Passports of eight NRIs, who abandoned their wives and absconded, have been cancelled, a senior official of the Ministry of Women and Child Development said on Thursday. An inter-ministerial agency of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs has formed a committee to look into the cases involving NRI offenders, who abscond after abandoning their wives. The panel has received 70 complaints in last two months.

Rajya Sabha passes amendments to anti-graft law

NEW DELHI (TIP): Rajya Sabha on July 19 passed the amendments to anti-graft law making it more stringent which include making bribe-giving an offence.

The bill, seeking amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, was first floated by the Congress-led UPA in 2013. It was taken up today by the Upper House after being sent back to it by its Select Committee.

A total of 46 amendments were proposed in the bill.

The amendment bill redefines criminal misconduct to expand its application encompassing misappropriation of property and the possession of disproportionate assets.

Replying to the debate on the bill, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension Jitendra Singh said the need for amendments was a continuing process of improvement in existing laws. "Had the law been perfect, there would have been no need to constitute CAT, CVC, and enact Right to Information Act, come up with bill on Lok Pal." This was in response to Congress Deputy Leader in the House Anand Sharma's remarks that ample laws were in vogue, and enough could be achieved by invoking them, provided the intent was right. He said the bill sought to make the anti-graft law robust. The bribe givers will also be brought to book, but enough safe guards have been taken to prevent its misuse.

Source: The Tribune

India, US to hold 2+2 dialogue on September 6 in New Delhi

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI (TIP): The inaugural 'two-plus-two dialogue' between India and the US will be held on September 6 in New Delhi, the State Department announced today.

Last month, the US had postponed the much-awaited dialogue due to "unavoidable reasons".

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary James Mattis would travel to India for the dialogue.

"The United States is pleased to announce that the inaugural US-India '2+2 dialogue' will be held in New Delhi, India, on September 6," State Department Spokesperson Heather Nauert said in a statement.

Pompeo and Mattis "look forward to meeting with their Indian counterparts," Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj and Minister of Defence Nirmala Sitharaman, "to discuss strengthening strategic, security and defence cooperation" as the US and India jointly address challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, Mr Nauert said.

The dialogue was announced last year during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with President Donald Trump at the White House. After June last year, the two countries have tried to schedule the dialogue many times with several dates having been considered.

Last month, the US postponed the dialogue scheduled to be held in Washington due to "unavoidable reasons".

The dialogue is seen as a vehicle to elevate the strategic relationship between the two countries.

Meanwhile, a senior State Department official told reporters that the co-operation among quad countries - the US, Japan, India and Australia - would come up in the next week's US-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets with US president Donald Trump in the White House, in Washington DC, in 2017.

Australia Ministerial Consultations in Palo Alto.

"I think it will publicly come up in the course of the discussions. We've been encouraged by the two quad meetings that have taken place at the assistant secretary level to date, and we look forward to continuing holding these meetings," the official said.

"We believe it's a constructive way for like-minded nations in the region to have a chance to share views and to coordinate to the extent possible to ensure that we reach our mutual objectives in the region.

"Our fundamental objectives are laid out in our Indo-Pacific strategy, and I think whether it's Australia, the US, Japan or India, we all have some very close-held, very similar views on the fundamental importance of maintaining a rules-based system and international norms, our commitment to free and open markets, all these things," the official said.

The announcement of the 'two-plus-two dialogue' comes amidst prospects of

India being imposed with unintended sanctions that are targeted at Iran and Russia.

"The unfortunate reality is that India has been caught in the crossfire of the Trump administration's secondary sanctions against both Russia and Iran.

"Although this is undoubtedly a serious challenge in the bilateral relationship, it is not insurmountable. Both sides will have to focus their efforts in finding a solution that preserves both their respective interests," Ronak Desai, vice-chair, India Practice at Steptoe & Johnson LLP, told PTI.

In the past, the US recognised the central role Iranian crude oil plays in India's energy security. At the same time, New Delhi gradually curtailed its oil imports to comply with US secondary sanctions and secure the requisite waivers from Washington.

"In this instance, India has already begun reducing its oil supply from Iran, but it is unlikely that it can, or will, do so completely," he said.

Source: PTI

Swami Agnivesh alleges attack by BJP workers in Jharkhand

RANCHI (TIP): Social activist Swami Agnivesh was allegedly attacked on Tuesday by workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party's youth wing in Jharkhand's Pakur district, police said, prompting chief minister Raghubar Das to order a probe into the incident.

Agnivesh said he suspected it to be a sponsored assault and demanded a judicial probe.

"As soon as I came out of the venue, BJYM and ABVP activists attacked me without any provocation. They alleged that I was speaking against Hindus," he was quoted as saying by news agency PTI.

"I thought Jharkhand was a peaceful state, but my views have changed after this incident," he said.

Agnivesh was in Pakur to address a tribal festival organised to commemorate the 195th foundation of Damin-i-Koh, part of land allocated to Santhals, at Littipara stadium, around 350km northeast from state capital Ranchi.

The incident took place outside a hotel under town police station, around 30km from the venue of the festival. The Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) workers were holding a demonstration with black flags outside the hotel since morning and shouted slogans of "Agnivesh go back".

Agnivesh was attacked by the protesters when he came out of the hotel, police said.

He was dragged, beaten up and his cloth was torn during the assault and reportedly received injuries on his arms, legs and



Social activist Swami Agnivesh after he was allegedly assaulted by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) workers, during his visit to Pakur on Tuesday, July 17, 2018.

head. A district administration medical team is treating him at the hotel.

Pakur BJYM president Prasanna Mishra, however, denied the allegation of assault. He alleged that Agnivesh had called men armed with traditional weapon like bows and arrows to attack them. "We are peacefully protesting his visit to Pakur. Agnivesh came here to mislead innocent tribal and misguide them against the government as he was to deliver a speech at a festival sponsored by missionaries," he said.

CBI names P Chidambaram, Karti in Aircel-Maxis case charge sheet

NEW DELHI (TIP): Congress leader P Chidambaram and his son Karti Chidambaram were on July 19 named as accused in a charge sheet filed by the CBI in the Aircel-Maxis deal case in which they have been charged for alleged criminal conspiracy and misconduct.

The agency filed its supplementary charge sheet before special CBI judge O P Saini who fixed it for consideration on July 31.

Besides Chidambaram and Karti, the CBI named 10 individuals, including public servants, and six companies as accused in the case.

The charge sheet was filed for the alleged offences of criminal conspiracy under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), public servant taking illegal gratification, punishment for abetting this offence and public servant committing criminal misconduct under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

If convicted, the offences entail a maximum punishment of seven years.

According to the sources, the CBI is yet to obtain sanction to prosecute the public servants.

The money alleged to be given as illegal gratification was taken from a Malaysia-based company and Aircel Televentures Ltd, they said.

The CBI was conducting probe as to how Chidambaram, who was the finance minister in 2006, granted Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) approval to a foreign firm when only the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) was empowered to do it.

The senior Congress leader's role had come under the scanner of investigating



A file photo of former finance minister P Chidambaram with his son Karti Chidambaram (right).

agencies in the Aircel-Maxis deal of Rs 3,500 crore and INX Media case involving Rs 305 crore.

In its charge sheet filed earlier in the case against former telecom minister Dayanidhi Maran, his brother Kalanidhi Maran and others, the agency had alleged that Chidambaram had granted FIPB approval in March 2006 to Mauritius-based Global Communication Services Holdings Ltd, a subsidiary of Maxis.

The Maran brothers and other accused, who were listed in the CBI charge sheet earlier, were discharged by the special court which had said that the agency had failed to produce any material against them to proceed with the trial.

The CBI had alleged in the charge

sheet against the Marans that Global Communication Services Holdings Ltd had sought FIPB approval for USD 800 million for which only the CCEA was competent, but Chidambaram had given approval to the firm in March 2006.

It had claimed that the finance minister was competent to accord approval on project proposals of up to Rs 600 crore and proposals beyond this required the approval of the CCEA.

The Enforcement Directorate is also probing a separate money laundering case in the Aircel-Maxis deal in which Chidambaram and Karti have been questioned by the agency.

Both Chidambaram and Karti have denied the allegations levelled against them by the CBI and ED.

Source: PTI

RBI TO SOON ISSUE NEW RS 100 NOTES IN LAVENDER COLOUR



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Reserve Bank on Thursday said it will soon issue new Rs 100 notes in lavender colour having motif of 'Rani ki vav' – a stepwell located on the banks of Saraswati river in Gujarat's Patan.

"All Rs 100 banknotes issued earlier will also continue to be legal tender," the central bank said while announcing the issue of the new Rs 100 notes.

The base colour of the note is Lavender.

The note has other designs, geometric patterns aligning with the overall colour scheme, both at the obverse and reverse.

Dimension of the banknote will be 66 mm x 142 mm, making it smaller than the current Rs 100 notes. The size of current Rs 100 notes is 157 mm x 73 mm.

"As is normal, when a new design of banknote is introduced, printing and supply of these notes for distribution to public through the banking channel will gradually increase," said the RBI, which issues currency in the country.

The new Rs 100 note follows new notes in denomination of Rs 10, Rs 50 and Rs 500.

Besides, the central bank introduced a Rs 200 note in addition to currency note in denomination of Rs 2,000 after the demonetisation on November 8, 2016.

Source: PTI

Rajnath Singh blames fake news on social media for lynching incidents, asks states to take action

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Centre on Thursday condemned the recent incidents of mob lynching saying it had advised the states to take stringent action against the culprits and asked social media service providers to install checks to stop spread of rumours and fake news.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh condemned the incidents and made a statement in the Lok Sabha during Zero Hour while responding to Congress leader KC Venugopal, who raised the issue of lynching, last week's attack on Swami Agnivesh in Jharkhand and trolling of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

Singh said several people were killed in the lynching incidents, adding that it was a matter of grave concern for the government.

He said lynching happened because of rumours and unverified or fake news.

Observing that law and order was a state subject, Singh said the Centre could not remain silent on the issue.

"I have issued advisories to state governments in 2016 and 2018. We have asked social media service providers to install check. Such incidents are unfortunate. We have asked the chief ministers to take firm action against the culprits," Singh said.

Source: PTI

India, US discuss military relations

NEW DELHI (TIP): Four days after India made it clear that it will ignore US pressure to impose sanctions on any nation maintaining military ties with Russia, Ministry of Defence on Wednesday, after an Indo-US dialogue, issued a statement listing out the outcome of the India-US defence partnership.

Four days ago, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made it clear that it would be going ahead with the S-400 missile deal with Moscow days despite the US threat of sanctions.

Today in New Delhi, the 7th Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) meeting was conducted where it was reiterated that the India-US defence cooperation is one of the core pillars of the defence relationship between the two countries.

The meeting was co-chaired by, Secretary Defence Production Dr Ajay Kumar and Under US Secretary of Defence for Acquisition and Sustainment Ellen M Lord.

WhatsApp to cap message forwarding to five chats in India to counter fake news

NEW DELHI (TIP): WhatsApp on Friday said its users in India will not be allowed to forward more than five chats at once and the company will remove the quick forward button that appears next to media messages, as part of its efforts to reduce circulation of fake messages on the platform that have even incited mob lynching incidents.

In a blogpost, WhatsApp noted that its users in India "forward more messages, photos, and videos, than any other country in the world".

The Facebook-owned company has over one billion users globally, of which over 200 million are in India.

"Today, we're launching a test to limit forwarding that will apply to everyone using WhatsApp. In India... we'll also test a lower limit of five chats at once and we'll remove the quick forward button next to media messages," the blogpost said.

WhatsApp has received flak from the Indian government over fake news and false information being circulated on its messaging platform. Such messages



have incited mob-fury, triggering multiple cases of lynching across the country.

On Thursday, the government shot off a second notice to WhatsApp asking it to come out with effective solutions to curb the menace of fake news beyond just labelling forwards.

It also warned the company that mediums used for propagation of rumours are liable to be treated as 'abettors' and can face legal consequences if they remain "mute spectators".

While the company is yet to respond to the notice, the blogpost said the company believes that "these changes - which we'll continue to evaluate - will help keep WhatsApp the way it was designed to be: a private messaging app".

"We built WhatsApp as a private messaging app - a simple, secure, and reliable way to communicate with friends and family. And as we've added new features, we've been careful to try and keep that feeling of intimacy, which people say they love," it said.

WhatsApp had introduced the option of forwarding multiple chats at once a few years ago, it added.

"We are deeply committed to your safety and privacy which is why WhatsApp is end-to-end encrypted, and we'll continue to improve our app with features like this one," the blog said.

WhatsApp had previously stated that it had launched new safety features, including a label that clearly identifies forwarded messages and controls for group conversations in the last few weeks.

Source: PTI

NJ Native M.D. Returns After Success With Houston Texans, Rockets, Astros and Dynamo

By Mabel Pais

“(What) makes me most excited about going to work everyday is that I have the ability to truly help people get back to the activities and things that they love to do in their life.”- Arun Rajaram, M.D.

Dr. Arun Rajaram, M.D. is a New Jersey native, born and brought up in Morris County, New Jersey.

Dr. Rajaram completed his orthopaedic surgery residency at Yale University. He completed his orthopedic sports medicine fellowship through the Baylor College of Medicine at the Texas Medical Center, the largest medical center in the world. During his fellowship, he gained phenomenal experience while serving as an assistant team physician for multiple professional teams, including the Houston Texans, Rockets, Astros and Dynamo. He received his medical degree (with distinction) and bachelor's degree in computer science from The George Washington University.

An orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery, Dr. Arun Rajaram uses the most advanced techniques available to surgeons.

Dr. Rajaram chatted with Mabel Pais about his work as an Orthopaedic surgeon. What is your specialty?

I'm a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon with a specialty in Sports Medicine and arthroscopic surgery, using the most advanced techniques. I'm from the IGEA Division of Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine. Prior to returning home to practice in New Jersey, I was an assistant team physician for multiple professional teams, including the Houston Texans, Rockets, Astros and Dynamo.

Arun Rajaram,
M.D.

What are some of the most common causes of back issues?

Are there preventive measures?

Some of the most common causes of back issues can come from traumatic injuries, overuse injuries or postural imbalance. Many of these injuries can be prevented by strengthening the lumbar muscles and the core muscles of our body.

What are some of the common problems you have found in your patients?

When you are sitting at a desk for several hours a day, a lot of your muscles tend to develop tightness and weakness. We see a lot of patients develop shoulder problems such as rotator cuff tendonitis and shoulder pain because of their position on the keyboard, the position at their desk. We also see people develop knee pain issues from their position at the desk or sitting in their vehicle for long periods of time. This puts a lot of pressure on the inside of the knee and causes knee symptoms. The problems we see in a lot of athletes, we also see in a lot of professionals working at the desk.

Do you use holistic approaches to treatment? Explain.

As a result of the experience I gained working with professional athletes, I have incorporated many biologic treatment options into my practice. Working in that world of orthopaedics, I have included alternative methods, therapies in my practice. Many of these treatments help the body repair and

recover from a variety of athletic, work related, and day to day activities. As a result, in addition to surgical options, biologic therapies are also available for my patients.

Ortho-Biologics such as Platelet Rich Plasma is an alternative therapy where we draw blood from the patient's arm and then the blood is placed in a centrifuge. It is then spun for 5 minutes in the centrifuge, which then separates the blood from the plasma layer. We then extract the plasma layer with all of the platelets. Then we inject the platelet-rich plasma back into the site of the injury. This is a common form of biologic cell therapy. It has been very successful. The 4 most common joints that we use this therapy for are the knee, elbow, hip and shoulder. We have many other treatments whereby we are able to optimize the patient's recovery and healing and enable them to return to their normal activities.

What is the connection between the brain, spine, and sports medicine?

The most common brain injury we see in sports medicine is concussions. Spine injuries can also occur in sporting activities. The brain and spine injuries must be taken very seriously and cared for by the appropriate team of specialists.

Explain the use of the Stability Ball?

The stability ball helps to strengthen and stabilize the core muscles of our body which help improve and prevent a lot of injuries. The two most important core muscles are the abdominal muscles and the lumbar muscles. These muscles stabilize your core, whether you're standing, walking or sitting. These muscles stabilize the central portion of the body in all activities.

What self-help or healing modalities do you recommend to your patients?

We absolutely recommend exercises on quadriceps-strengthening to help improve the function of the knees. I demonstrate these exercises to the patients in our office. I also work closely with many physical therapists to continue our patient's treatment plans outside of the office.

Do you incorporate exercise and nutrition in your therapy?

I spend a lot of time on nutrition. Protein in the diet will help with muscle healing and growth. We discuss the importance of fruits and vegetables in our diet, and Vitamin D for the need for strong bones, and overall a well-balanced diet to fuel the body.

How long have you been in practice overall?

I've been in practice with IGEA since December 2017 and in Sports Medicine since 2014.

Why choose to practice in IgeaNeuro?

What I like about IGEA is that we are a multi-specialty practice that is able to help patients from head to toe and we're able to provide world-class care in a comforting private practice setting. We strive to provide excellent care and create great relationships with our patients in the IGEA.

Why do you love your job?

One of the things that makes me most excited about going to work everyday is that I have the ability to truly help people get back to the activities and things that they love to do in their life.

The entire mission of Orthopaedic Sports Medicine is to help people get back to doing everything they want to do in life.

At which locations do you practice?

I practice at the following locations: Union, Florham Park, and Hazlet in New Jersey; and New York City at 86th Street & Park Avenue and Broad Street in the Financial District.

For more information on Arun Rajaram, M.D. and IGEA, visit
<https://youtu.be/y0aMptTnr3w>

<https://www.igeaneuro.com/nj-neurosurgeons-physicians/arun-rajaram-md/>

(Mabel Pais writes on The Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Health and Wellness, and Spirituality)



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After Striking Bollywood Gold, Mouni Roy will be Made In China

Actress Mouni Roy has just confirmed that she will be seen opposite Rajkummar Rao in an upcoming "quirky comedy"- Made In China. Mouni will play Rajkummar Rao's wife in the film, which will be directed by Mikhil Musale. Made In China is set to roll in September this year and will be shot in Mumbai, Gujarat and China. Rajkummar Rao will play a struggling Gujarati businessman in the film while Mouni will play a Mumbai girl who moves to Ahmedabad after her wedding. The story revolves around a newlywed couple, who are seeking an opportunity for a better livelihood.

Mouni Roy, who will make her Bollywood debut with Gold also has two movies in the line-up. Reema Kagti-directed Gold also stars Akshay Kumar, Amit Sath, Vineet Kumar and Kunal Kapoor. The film, which will hit screens on Independence Day this year is a fictional retelling of Indian's epic win at the 1948 Olympics in field hockey - it was India's first gold medal as a free nation.

The 32-year-old actress is currently shooting for Ayan Mukerji-directed Brahmastra, which also stars Amitabh Bachchan, Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Nagarjuna. The first part of the fantasy trilogy is expected to release in August next year. Team Brahmastra is currently shooting the film in Bulgaria and Mouni seems to be having a lot of fun on the sets. Earlier she had shared with her Instafam, a photo with her co-star Nagarjuna and the film's director Ayan Mukerji.

B'DAY BASH: NICK JONAS, PRIYANKA CHOPRA TAKE LONDON BY STORM

Priyanka Chopra's birthday celebrations are in full swing in London. The actor was spotted on several occasions with her rumoured boyfriend, Nick Jonas. A day after stepping out for dinner together, the two were photographed wearing matching white outfits, stepping out of their hotel.

The photos have been shared online by several fan clubs. Priyanka can be seen wearing a white shirt and a slit skirt, while Nick is wearing a plain tee with dark trousers.

On Wednesday the two rang in Priyanka's 36th birthday at The Chiltern Firehouse. She was wearing a black shirt and a polka dotted bottoms while Nick wore a grey sweatshirt. They were clicked walking hand in hand.

A couple of days earlier, Priyanka and Nick were spotted on a double date at 34 Restaurant in Mayfair with Nick's brother Joe and his fiancée, the actor Sophie Turner.

Over the last several weeks, Priyanka and Nick have made their relationship semi-official by introducing each other to their families. While Priyanka attended Nick's family wedding, he accompanied the actor to India where he met her mother and other family members. The couple was first spotted at 2017's Met Gala; they were later spotted on several dates, including a dinner date in New York City and a Beauty and the Beast Live in Concert show in Los Angeles.

Recently, Priyanka told People about Nick, "We're getting to know each other and I think it (travelling to India) was a great experience for him... I think he really enjoyed it. It was really beautiful. He had a great time."



Malaika Arora cancels Australia appearance non-payment of fees: Report

Malaika Arora has reportedly cancelled an appearance at the last minute over differences with regards to payment, says report. She was scheduled to appear at a fashion event in Australia this week.

Malaika was supposed to fly down to Victoria on Wednesday to make it in time for her appearance at the show, organised by Elite Vin Productions and Friends India Entertainment (FIE). According to a Mid-Day report, Malaika backed out of the show minutes before the flight because the organisers allegedly did not meet the requirements of the contract. Malaika was supposed to be paid in full prior to her arrival.

"Passes for the VVIP, VIP, Gold and Silver tables of the Denim & Diamonds event were already sold. While she was set for the performance till Tuesday, she called it off the next day, few minutes before she was to board the flight. The organisers had promised to pay her the full amount before Wednesday. Since they did not honour their commitment, Malaika declined to go. It was a fair and professional call taken by her," a source was quoted as saying.

Several popular Bollywood stars earn crores from appearances on dance tours, such as the ongoing Dabangg Reloaded Tour led by Salman Khan. That tour, too, has seen its fair share of problems, with reports of double-selling of tickets doing the rounds.

When Mid-Day reached out to the organiser for comment, he said, "The event got cancelled due to various reasons. There was no issue from the celebrity's [Malaika] end. It's just bad luck and we will plan the event again soon." Talking about whether or not money was the reason behind the cancellation, he said, "Yes, there was some misunderstanding, but it has been ironed out, and the event has been rescheduled."



Sacred Games actor defends sex scenes

Her portrayal of a gangster's wife Subhadra, in the web-series Sacred Games, has been a revelation and it has earned Rajshri Deshpande accolades from all quarters. However, there have also been instances of her love-making scenes in the series being taken out of context by some sections of the audiences. Some of those scenes have also been uploaded on porn websites.

"It was a tender moment between a husband and wife," she says referring to the love-making scene between her character and actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui's on screen avatar, Ganesh Gaitonde.

Source: HT



Jessica Simpson's husband makes her want to 'stay young'

Actress Jessica Simpson thinks her husband Eric Johnson is the reason she is "hot".

"He keeps me hot, I have to say... He's always throwing around the kids, and he's just an amazing father, it makes me want to stay young. Like how can you be so active? I mean watching the kids running makes me exhausted," Simpson told etonline.com.

Although they are very loved up, the actress and her beau have no plans to add anymore little ones to their brood because their two children keep them on their toes already.

"We're good, we are chilling. I mean we're very happy and we know how to make babies very well but, we got the little one here," she said.

Simpson regularly gushes about how proud she is of her children.

"The most rewarding part of being a mother is really just watching my kids grow. It's like, how much knowledge they have about life is just so meaningful to me, and how much heart they put into everything they do. There's just nothing like the innocence of a child," she said.

Source: IANS

SCARLETT JOHANSSON QUILTS TRANSGENDER ROLE IN RUB AND TUG AFTER LGBT BACKLASH



Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson has dropped out of a role in which she was going to play a transgender man following backlash from the LGBT community.

The actor exited the drama film Rub and Tug a little more than a week after her casting sparked backlash amid trans groups and activists.

"In light of recent ethical questions raised surrounding my casting as Dante Tex Gill, I have decided to respectfully withdraw my participation in the project. Our cultural understanding of transgender people continues to advance, and I've learned a lot from the community since making my first statement about my casting and realise it was insensitive.

"I have great admiration and love for the trans community and am grateful that the conversation regarding inclusivity in Hollywood continues. According to GLAAD, LGBTQ+ characters dropped 40 per cent in 2017 from the previous year, with no representation of trans characters in any major studio release," Johansson told Out Magazine in a statement.

Rub and Tug focused on Dante Tex Gill, a crime kingpin who used his massage parlour as a front for prostitution in the '70s and '80s. Gill lived his life as a trans man, which led many on social media to wonder why a trans actor was not tapped for the role. "Oh word?? So you can continue to play us but we can't play y'all?" Trace Lysette, a transgender actress best known for appearing on Amazon's "Transparent," wrote on Twitter after the casting announcement. "Actors who are trans never even get to audition FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN ROLES OF TRANS CHARACTERS," tweeted Jamie Clayton, another transgender actress known for her role on Sense8.

"While I would have loved the opportunity to bring Dante's story and transition to life, I understand why many feel he should be portrayed by a transgender person, and I am thankful that this casting debate, albeit controversial, has sparked a larger conversation about diversity and representation in film.

"I believe that all artists should be considered equally and fairly. My production company, These Pictures, actively pursues projects that both entertain and push boundaries. We look forward to working with every community to bring these most poignant and important stories to audiences worldwide," Johansson added.

Source: PTI

Katy Perry reveals mental health struggle following flop album

Katy Perry has revealed she spent time in a mental health retreat following the failure of her last album, saying she suffered from "situational depression". The singer said she checked herself into the Hoffman Institute, a "personal growth retreat" in California, for a week after the dismal commercial performance of Witness.

"I have had bouts of situational depression and my heart was broken last year because, unknowingly, I put so much validity in the reaction of the public, and the public didn't react in the way I had expected to... which broke my heart," she told Vogue, ahead of her Australian tour this month.

"Music is my first love and I think it was the universe saying: 'Okay, you speak all of this language about self-love and authenticity, but we are going to put you through another test and take away any self validating blankie. Then we'll see how much you do truly love yourself.'"

Witness, Perry's fifth album, was released to middling critical reviews and an indifferent public reaction last June. Lead singles Bon Appetit and Swish Swish failed to resonate with fans, peaking at #35 and #22 on the ARIA charts.

The singer was also routinely derided for her desperate exploits to drum up publicity ahead of its release, including a



politically hollow re-branding of her sound as "purposeful pop" and reigniting a long dormant feud with Taylor Swift in press interviews.

Lest we chide the 'tortured artist' narrative coming from a

star famous for singing lines like "sun-kissed skin, so hot, will melt your popsicle" and "are you brave enough to let me see your peacock?", Perry says the experience "gave me a wholeness I never had" and she has recommended therapy to her friends, "other artists who are looking for a breakthrough".

"There are a lot of people who are self-medicating through validation in audiences, through substances, through continually running away from their realities – denial, withdrawal. I did that for a long, long time, too," she told the magazine.

"I was with someone recently who asked: 'Well, don't you think that if you do too much therapy it will take away your artistic process?' And I told them: 'The biggest lie that we've ever been sold is that we artists have to stay in pain to create.'"

The pop star has previously discussed her struggles with mental health. In a therapy session with Dr Siri Sat Nam Singh filmed for Viceland last June, Perry was in tears as she discussed the toll of living her public persona.

"Sometimes I've built up this Katy Perry thing and it's fantastic, but it's more of a facade than a real thing," she said, revealing she'd struggled with suicidal thoughts, inspiring her song By the Grace of God.



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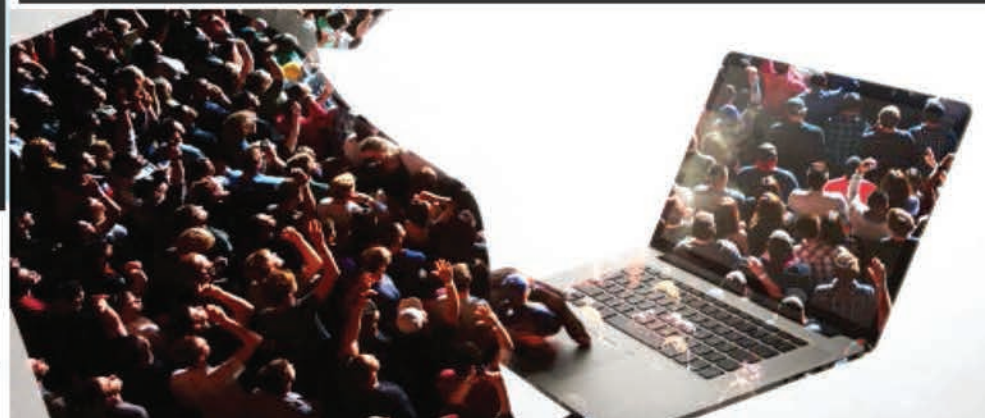
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Turkish court sentences journalist to jail under anti-terror law-Report

ISTANBUL (TIP): A Turkish court sentenced a journalist from the opposition Cumhuriyet newspaper to more than two years in jail on Thursday on charges of making people potential targets for militant groups through her reporting, the paper said.

Human rights organisations have voiced increasing concern about media freedom in Turkey, where President Tayyip Erdogan won elections last month triggering a move to a powerful executive presidency.

The case was triggered by an article which Canan Cokkun wrote last September about prosecutors' questioning of detained lawyers for two hunger-striking teachers allegedly linked to the leftist DHKP-C militant group, designated a terrorist group by Turkey.

The court found that Cokkun, who covered Istanbul courts for the paper, made "people involved in the fight against terrorism a target", the Cumhuriyet said.

A lawyer for Cokkun told the court that the naming of a prosecutor in that article did not amount to making that person a target and denied the charges against her, rights group Amnesty International reported on Twitter.

"Another punishment for press freedom," main opposition party lawmaker Sezgin Tanrikulu, who attended the hearing, wrote on Twitter. "Writing a story and being a journalist is sufficient for a court to take a negative view."

In April, a court sentenced 14 staff of Cumhuriyet – one of the few remaining voices critical of the government – to jail on charges of terrorism and supporting a US-based cleric blamed for organising an attempted coup in July 2016.

Since then more than 120 journalists have been detained and more than 180 media outlets closed on suspicion of links to the network of the Islamic preacher, Fethullah Gulen.

Free speech advocacy group Reporters Without Borders in April ranked Turkey 157 out of 180 countries in its annual report on global press freedom, and estimated about 90 percent of Turkey's newspaper coverage is pro-government.

Erdogan has frequently lashed out at media criticising the crackdown that followed the abortive putsch in 2016 and Turkey's military operations into northern Syria. (Reuters)

EU Commission calls on members to step up Brexit preparations

BRUSSELS (TIP): The European Commission on July 19 called on EU countries to increase preparations for all outcomes in Brexit negotiations, saying Britain's withdrawal from the bloc was likely to cause disruptions.

"Today's text calls on member states and private parties to step up preparations and follows a request by the European Council last month to intensify preparedness at all levels and for all outcomes," the EU executive said in a statement.

"While the EU is working day and night for a deal ensuring an orderly withdrawal, the UK's withdrawal will undoubtedly cause disruption – for example in business supply chains – whether or not there is a deal," the Commission added. A Commission spokeswoman said the EU executive wanted to be ready for all outcomes but did not say which is the more likely scenario. (Reuters)

North Korea denuclearization in a year not likely: US intelligence chief

SINGAPORE (TIP): US Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said on Thursday it was technically possible for North Korea to eliminate its nuclear weapons program within a year, but added that it was not likely to happen.

Asked at the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado about White House national security adviser John Bolton's statement that North Korea could denuclearize in a year, Coats said: "It's technically possible but probably not going to happen."

"It's a much more complicated process than most people think," Coats told the forum. He added that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had "clearly said this is hard, this is going to take some time" and projected a "longer time frame."

There has been no sign of concrete action toward denuclearization by Pyongyang since US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un held a summit in Singapore on June 12. Pompeo visited Pyongyang in early July and the two sides struggled to make headway on the denuclearization issue.

Trump on Tuesday told reporters there was "no rush" and "no time limit" on denuclearization negotiations with North Korea.

Coats said on Thursday that Kim had made a commitment to denuclearize and that he and other senior officials had continued to reassert that commitment.



"I don't think we should go forward with the assumption that all this is going to work," Coats said. "But having the opportunity to try to succeed here instead potentially going to war with a potentially nuclear-armed nation and what we have evaluated as a somewhat unstable leader, why not give it a shot?"

Coats said it was not a matter of trusting the North Koreans but of ensuring proper verification mechanisms were in place.

"We know, and we have the capability to know, what they're doing, and we're going to make sure we do it right," he said.

The U.S. intelligence chief said sanctions against North Korea were still broadly holding, supported by China, Russia and other nations, dramatically driving down Pyongyang's exports and forcing Kim to consider "a potential collapse of his economy if he can't do something moving forward with this."

While acknowledging there had been some ship-to-ship transfers of energy supplies despite the embargo, Coats said it had not been so significant as to prevent North Korean leaders from seeing the "consequences of sanctions." (Reuters)

Philippines to expel 'undesirable' Australian nun who irked Duterte

The Nun is accused of taking part in news conferences, labour-related fact-finding missions and protests calling for political prisoners to be freed, for human rights and land rights to be respected and for martial law to be lifted on the southern island of Mindanao.

MANILA (TIP): The Philippines blacklisted and ordered the deportation on Thursday of an elderly Australian nun at odds with President Rodrigo Duterte, calling her an "undesirable alien" who broke terms of her missionary visa by engaging in political activism.

The resolution was the second time immigration chiefs have sought to deport Patricia Fox, 71, who two months ago had been granted a reprieve by the justice department.

Fox has worked in the Philippines since the early 1990s and is a coordinator of a congregation of Catholic nuns called Notre Dame de Sion.

The 10-page order said her continued presence in the country "poses a risk to public interest" and she would be barred from returning.

She is accused of taking part in news conferences, labour-related fact-finding missions and protests calling for political prisoners to be freed, for human rights and land rights to be respected and for martial law to be lifted on the southern island of Mindanao.

Duterte has made no secret of his annoyance at Fox and has said he personally ordered an investigation into her activities. He said he refuses to hear criticism from anyone who is not Filipino.

Thursday's order specifically referred to



Duterte's admission that he had asked for Fox to be investigated.

Fox is the latest in a growing number of people who have challenged Duterte and found themselves investigated, detained, humiliated, and sanctioned for offences that his opponents say usually amount to technicalities or minor

infringements.

"That's the law," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said of the order to send Fox back to Australia.

Local media quoted Fox as saying she was disappointed but would challenge the order. (Reuters)

Israeli parliament passes contentious Jewish nation bill

Israelis, including President Reuven Rivlin and attorney general, voiced opposition to the earlier draft of the bill. Israelis opposed to the bill, deeming it discriminatory, took to the streets to protest in large numbers on Saturday in Tel Aviv.

JERUSALEM (TIP): Israel's parliament approved a controversial piece of legislation on July 19 that defines the country as the nation-state of the Jewish people but which critics warn sidelines minorities. The government says the bill, passed in the early morning hours, will merely enshrine into law Israel's existing character. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called its passage a "historic moment in the history of Zionism and the history of the state of Israel."

"Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people, which honours the individual rights of all its citizens," he said. "I repeat this is our state. The Jewish state."

"Lately, there are people who are trying to destabilize this and therefore destabilize the foundations of our existence and our rights," he added. "So today we have made a law in stone. This is our country. This is our language. This is our anthem and this is our flag. Long live the state of Israel."

Israel's 1948 declaration of independence defined its nature as a Jewish and democratic state, a delicate balance the country has grappled to maintain for 70 years. Opponents of the new bill say it marginalizes the country's Arab minority of around 20 per cent and also downgrades the Arabic language from official to "special" standing.

The law passed with a 62-55 backing, with two members of the Knesset abstaining. The legislation, defined as a "basic law," granting it quasi-constitutional status, will likely face a challenge at the Supreme Court.

Lawmakers took turns to passionately express their views in a rowdy, hours-long debate in parliament overnight. Ayman Odeh, the head of the Arab Joint List, pulled out a black flag and waved it during his speech, warning of the implications of the law.

"This is an evil law," he told lawmakers, adding that "a black flag hovers over it."

"Today, I will have to tell my children, along with all the children of Palestinian Arab towns ... that the state has declared that it



does not want us here," Odeh said in a statement later. "It has passed a law of Jewish supremacy and told us that we will always be second-class citizens."

Benny Begin, son of former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, the founder of Netanyahu's ruling Likud party, abstained from voting, warning of the party's growing disconnect from human rights. "This is not a decision I expected from the Likud leadership," he said.

Eugene Kontorovich, international law director at the Kohelet Policy Forum, a conservative Jerusalem think tank, defended the bill, arguing it "is similar to provisions in many Western democratic constitutions, which provide for an official language and national character that reflects the majority of the population." Kontorovich dismissed the "faux outrage" against the bill as "simply another attempt to single-out the Jewish state and hold her to a double standard." American Jewish organizations also expressed their disapproval of the law.

The American Jewish Committee, a group representing the Jewish Diaspora, said it was

"deeply disappointed," adding that the law "puts at risk the commitment of Israel's founders to build a country that is both Jewish and democratic." Jeremy Ben Ami, president of J Street, a Washington liberal pro-Israel group, said the bill's purpose is "to send a message to the Arab community, the LGBT community and other minorities in Israel, that they are not and never will be equal citizens."

"Strong connection between Israel and Jews worldwide is based on these values that Israel is both a Jewish and democratic state," Ben Ami said, adding concerns the bill would "weaken the strength of Israel's democracy."

Lawmakers had removed the most contentious clause of the bill on Sunday which would have allowed the establishment of "separate communities" and which critics had called racist.

Israelis, including President Reuven Rivlin and attorney general, voiced opposition to the earlier draft of the bill. Israelis opposed to the bill, deeming it discriminatory, took to the streets to protest in large numbers on Saturday in Tel Aviv. (AP)

Australia PM Malcolm Turnbull calls on Pope to fire archbishop

CANBERRA (TIP): Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has called on Pope Francis to fire an Australian archbishop who is the most senior Roman Catholic cleric ever convicted for covering up child sexual abuse.

Turnbull said two weeks ago that Adelaide Archbishop Philip Wilson should have resigned when he was convicted in May of failing to report to police the repeated abuse of two altar boys by a pedophile priest in the Hunter Valley region north of Sydney during the 1970s.

Turnbull told reporters on Thursday the 67-year-old cleric should not be allowed to remain an archbishop while he appealed against his conviction.

Wilson has said he would only offer his resignation to Francis if his appeal against his conviction fails in the New South Wales state District Court. (AP)

Lava from Kilauea 'collapse explosion' destroys Hawaii structures

HAWAII'S (TIP): A "collapse explosion" at the summit of Hawaii's Kilauea volcano on July 18 sent a surge of lava that destroyed structures in an evacuated housing development, geologists and civil defense authorities said.

The blast sparked by the gradual collapse of the volcano's crater was equivalent to a 5.3 magnitude earthquake and caused lava to burst from a fissure 25 miles (40 km) east, destroying at least one home in Leilani Estates, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and Hawaii County Civil Defense said.

These lava surges on Hawaii's Big Island have become an increased concern during the volcano's 11-week eruption, which has destroyed some 712 homes but so far claimed no lives, according to the County of Hawaii.

A massive explosion on Monday caused by molten rock flowing into the ocean sent a "lava bomb" through the roof of a tour boat, injuring 23 people.

Geologists say such explosions may be due, in part, to large volumes of lava rapidly flowing into the Pacific Ocean. (Reuters)

A Ship Wreck with \$130 Billion 'Treasure' may have just been discovered

The company said the ship held 150 trillion won (\$130 billion) in gold and it would provide evidence next week to support its claims.

SEOUL (TIP): A company claiming to have found the wreck of a Russian warship with \$130 billion in gold "treasure" off the coast of South Korea has drawn scepticism from researchers and regulators in Seoul.

Shinil Group, which lists a Singapore address on its website, said on Tuesday it had discovered the wreck of the Dmitrii Donskoi, a Russian armoured cruiser built in the 1880s and sunk in 1905 after battling Japanese warships.

The company said the ship held 150 trillion won (\$130 billion) in gold and it would provide evidence next week to support its claims.

Shinil Group representatives did not respond to requests for comment, but its

news release said the company was the "only entity in the world" to have discovered the ship.

The release was accompanied by photos and video of a wreck, including a section that appeared to show the ship's name. It said the search team included experts from Britain, Canada and South Korea.

The announcement was disputed by the government-run Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology, which told South Korean media that it discovered the wreck in 2003.

The institute did not respond to a request for comment, but its website showed photos dated from 2007 of what it said was the wreck, along with maps of its general location.

A South Korean construction company has also laid claim to being the first to discover the Russian warship, South Korean media said.

Some academics have cast doubt on past reports of a massive treasure on the ship. South Korean financial regulators also cautioned against investing in treasure hunting ventures.

In a separate statement on its website, Shinil Group described its newly launched "Donskoi International" crypto currency exchange as linked to the find.

The company said it would "share profits" from the Russian wreck with the public by handing out its virtual currency to anyone who signed up to use the exchange. It

promised additional coins to those who helped sign up others.

Shinil Group's English website was registered in January, according to the Whois internet domain registry, and has many sections marked "under construction".

South Korea's Financial Supervisory Services on Wednesday warned against "overheated" investment, citing past cases of treasure-hunting companies that saw their stock skyrocket after a discovery only to end up filing for bankruptcy.

"Investors need to be cautious as it's possible they could suffer massive losses if they bank on rumours without concrete facts regarding the recovery of a treasure ship," the regulator said in a statement. (Reuters)

COULD YOU HANDLE AN OPEN RELATIONSHIP?

Open relationships aren't for everyone — in fact, they're not for most people. It might not be in your nature to be cool about sharing your partner with another woman (or multiple other women), and it's not something you can fake. If you relate to any of the following, you're probably better off staying monogamous.

YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR JEALOUSY

In an open relationship, there's really no room for jealousy of any kind. You're in an agreement with your partner to have other options, lovers and relationships. This game isn't one-on-one, so if you can't help but envy other players, then you need to get out of the game.

YOU'RE DREAMING OF YOUR HAPPILY EVER AFTER

If the only reason you agree to an open relationship now is because you're hoping he'll change his mind in the future, you're making a big mistake. You're sacrificing your own happiness for his. You can't risk your heart on a forever after that might never come. You need to live in the now and stop putting your happiness (and sanity) off for a someday dream.

YOU'RE NOT INTO CASUAL SEX

For you, sex and emotions are irrevocably connected. You're not a prude, you've just never been interested in sleeping around. You prefer to have one steady partner — that doesn't mean your sex life is boring, it just means you don't take sex lightly. For you, there's nothing casual about it, because if you're sleeping with someone, then it's always serious, and there is no room to share.

YOU'RE OBSESSED WITH DTR... AKA DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP

In the modern dating scene, it can feel



like everyone rejects labels, but it shouldn't be about the "status" for you. It's about knowing where you stand with one another. An open relationship can be pretty damn complicated and endlessly confusing, so for a girl who needs the lines to be drawn out clearly, openness will never be your comfort zone.

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO YOUR OWN THING

Open relationships are all about space and separation. To you, that could sound a lot like loneliness. You want a guy who will always be there — a partner, lover and very best friend all rolled into one. You might be a strong, independent woman, but you still want a partner you can lean on. You want a life that's always intertwined with your partner because separation is your nightmare.

YOU KEEP TABS ON YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

When you're in a relationship, you're always checking in with your partner. It

doesn't mean you don't trust them and it doesn't make you needy or controlling — it just means you like steady communication. It goes both ways. He always knows where you are and what you're doing, and he keeps you updated on his day-to-day life. You don't have secrets, you're 100% open and despite it being called an "open" relationship, it's full of keep it to yourself material.

YOU CARE TOO MUCH WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK

An open relationship just isn't the norm. That doesn't make it wrong. You can live your life however you please, but people are always going to have opinions, so if you're going to invest in an open relationship, you need to be able to brush off the criticism. The only opinions that matter are yours and your partner's, but if you're the type of person who always lets public perception in, then you're not the type of girl who could handle an open relationship.



GET RID OF PUFFY EYES

Waking up with puffy eyes can be really frustrating when you have a big day ahead. Puffy eyes are one of the most common beauty problems.

This occurs when the eyes begin to swell for various reasons, including excessive crying, excessive physical stress, genetics, dermatitis, hormonal changes in the body, a change in weather, sinus problems, hangovers, bad diet, lack of sleep and some allergic reaction. Puffy eyes can make you look tired and ill. But you can easily take care of them with some simple, natural home remedies.

Here are the top 10 ways to get rid of puffy eyes.

Water

- The easiest way to get rid of puffy eyes is to drink water. When the body is well hydrated, there is less chance of water retention that can cause your under-eye area and other parts of your body to swell. Water also helps flush toxins out of the body.
- To stay well hydrated, drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of water each day. In addition to this, you must reduce the amount of salt you eat to reduce water retention in the body. Also, avoid caffeinated and carbonated beverages that can be dehydrating.

Cold Spoons

- This simple home remedy is surprisingly very effective. It will help tighten up the skin around your eyes as well as relax the blood vessels, thus offering relief to puffy and tired eyes.
- Chill 5 or 6 metal spoons in your refrigerator for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Hold the rounded portion of one of the cold spoons against your eye for a few minutes until the spoon becomes warm.
- As the spoon warms, replace it with another cold one from the refrigerator.

Tea Bags

Be it green tea bags or black tea bags, both can help soothe puffy and irritated eyes. They contain anti-irritant properties that help reduce swelling around your eyes. They can also relieve redness and inflammation.

- Put 2 used tea bags in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
- Lie down and put the tea bags over your eyelids.
- Leave them in place for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Repeat a few times a day.

Cucumbers

Chilled cucumbers make a good remedy for treating puffy eyes. The enzymes and the astringent properties in cucumbers help reduce inflammation and help tighten the skin. This remedy will also help get rid of wrinkles and dark circles around your eyes.

- Cut a cucumber into thick slices.
- Chill the slices in the refrigerator for 10 minutes.
- Place the cold slices on your eyelids for about 10 minutes or until they become warm.
- Repeat the process several times a day.

Egg Whites

Egg whites have skin-tightening properties that can help banish under-eye bags as well as help prevent wrinkles.

- Separate the yolks from 2 eggs and put the whites in a bowl.
- Whip the egg whites thoroughly until you get a stiff consistency.
- Add a few drops of witch hazel, a natural skin-tightening astringent.
- Use a brush or soft cloth to apply this mixture under your eyes and allow it to dry.
- Leave it on for about 15 minutes.
- Do this daily for a few days.

FOOD CORNER

ARBI GOSHT

Ingredients

500 Gram Mutton, 8-10 Arbi, 1 1/2 tsp Red chilli powder, 1/4 tsp Turmeric powder, 2 tsp Coriander powder, 1 tsp Garlic paste, 1 tsp Ginger paste, 3 Tbsp Fresh coriander leaves, 2-3 Green chilli, 2 Tomatoes, 2 Onion, 1 Cinnamon stick, 1 Black cardamom, salt to taste, 4-5 Tbsp Oil for frying

Method

- Wash and peel the arbi. After removing the skin cut in to halves and wash.
- In a pan take little oil and deep fry the arbi until they are golden in colour as fried potatoes.
- Heat oil and add cinnamon stick, black cardamom and finely chopped onions, fry onions till golden brown.
- Add the meat and sauté for a minute. Add ginger garlic paste and fry for a few minutes.
- Add coriander, turmeric and red chilli powder and salt and cook on a low flame. By adding few sprinkles of water in between shall prevent it from burning.
- Add finely chopped tomatoes and let it cook until tomatoes are soft.
- Add water to the mutton and mix.
- Once the water comes to a boil, reduce heat to low and



- cover lid to and let it cook until mutton is cooked.
- Add fried arbi pieces and green chillies and simmer for about 5 minutes.
- Now add water depending on how thin you want the gravy. Mix well and bring to boil, until the Arbi become soft.
- Garnish it with fresh coriander leaves.

EATING FRUITS WITH MEALS: IS IT BAD FOR YOU?

Fruits are powerhouses of nutrition and they provide our body with a wide range of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients that are essential for a healthy body. They also find a number of uses in cooking and you can get extremely creative with fruits to include them in dishes both savoury and sweet. But, there are a lot of questions that plague our minds about healthy practices related to consumption of fruits. For example, whether it is healthier to eat raw fruits rather than having fruit juices, or whether we should eat fruits first thing in the morning or at night. One such question related to fruit consumption is that a lot of people are confused about is whether it is okay to consume fruits with meals or not. There are some conflicting schools of thought about the same.

In some Indian homes, it's common practice to eat one portion of fruits during lunchtime, with the meal. Usually, we Indians tend to eat whatever is in season, after our afternoon meal. It's a way to satiate our sweet tooth and also tuck in some nutrients at the same time. During the summers, for example, a lot of lunchtime meals include a few pieces of mango. But, is it healthy or should this practice be discontinued? According to clinical nutritionist Dr. Rupali Dutta, eating fruits with your meal is completely alright. "According to allopathy, there is no contra-indication to the habit of eating fruits with meals," she says, adding that a lot of these doubts about consumption of fruits with meals may come from individual and anecdotal experiences.

"There may be some people who experience digestive stress or bloating



(when they eat fruits with meals)," says Dr. Dutta, concluding that if one doesn't experience any such discomfort, then the practice may by all means be continued.

She suggests it may even be healthier for people who have a sweet tooth, as by eating fruits with lunch, they can indulge their sweet tooth without consuming too many extra or harmful calories.

However, Dr. Dutta says that fruits should be ideally consumed as mid-meal snacks, ahead of lunch or in the evening, before dinner. "The main purpose of eating fruits as mid-meal snacks is replenishing our body's store of electrolytes," says Dr. Dutta, adding that if you consume your daily fruit portion during lunch, then you may have to

forgo the snack.

However, celebrity acupuncturist and beauty expert Dr. Jewel Gamadia has something else to say. Recently, he said on his Instagram page that one should avoid eating fruits with meals, saying, "It's not a good idea for those who suffer with digestive issues. Every food has a different enzyme to digest. The enzymes needed for a normal meal are very different than those needed for fruits. Hence, it makes a problem for your stomach. So, try having fruit after sometime." What about fruit juices? Dr. Dutta says that it's okay to drink fresh fruit juices with your meals, if you are not restricting your daily calorie-count. Also, as a general rule, it's healthier to consume whole foods rather than juicing them.

Source: NDTV

Testosterone treatment can bring new hope for cancer patients

Treatment with hormone testosterone could be effective at combating a condition of loss of body mass in cancer patients and improving the quality of life, say researchers.

Approximately 20 per cent of cancer related deaths are attributed to the syndrome of cachexia, which in cancer patients is often characterised by a rapid or loss of fat and skeletal muscle.

These findings are important, as there are currently no established therapies targeting this loss of skeletal muscle, and without an intervention, patients lose muscle function and become fatigued and weakened.

"We hoped to demonstrate these patients would go from not feeling well enough to even get out of bed to at least being able to have some basic quality of life that allows them to take care of themselves and receive therapy," said Melinda Sheffield-Moore, Professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch, in the US. She said previous nutrition-focused treatment failed to combat this severe loss of body mass.

"We already know that testosterone



builds skeletal muscle in healthy individuals, so we tried using it in a population at a high risk of muscle loss, so these patients could maintain their strength and performance status to be able to receive standard cancer therapies," Sheffield-Moore said.

For the study, published in the Journal of Cachexia, patients with a type of cancer known as squamous cell carcinoma were treated with standard of care chemotherapy and/or radiation in addition to seven weeks of treatment with either testosterone or placebo.

Those receiving testosterone maintained total body mass and increased lean body mass by 3.2 per cent.

Sustaining body mass is important considering most patients experience a 20 per cent decrease in body mass or more depending upon the type of cancer.

Patients also demonstrated enhanced physical activity.

"They felt well enough to get up and take care of some of their basic activities of daily living, like cooking, cleaning and bathing themselves," Sheffield-Moore said.

Source: IANS



Eating salamis, hot dogs can lead to manic episodes

Chemicals in processed meat snacks, such as salamis and hot dogs, can contribute to mania, an abnormal mood state characterised by hyperactivity, euphoria and insomnia.

The study, published in the journal Molecular Psychiatry, found that people hospitalised for an episode of mania had more than three times the odds of having ever eaten nitrate-cured meats than people without a history of a serious psychiatric disorder.

Experiments in rats by the researchers from Johns Hopkins University in the US showed that mania-like hyperactivity after just a few weeks on diets with added nitrates.

The study adds to evidence that certain diets and potentially the amounts and types of bacteria in the gut may contribute to mania and other disorders that affect the brain.

"Future work on this association could lead to dietary interventions to help reduce the risk of manic episodes in those who have bipolar disorder or who are otherwise vulnerable to mania," said Robert Yolken, from the Johns Hopkins University.

Mania, a state of elevated mood, arousal and energy that lasts weeks to months, is generally seen in people with bipolar disorder, but can also occur in those with schizoaffective disorder.

Manic states can lead to dangerous risk-taking behaviour and can include delusional thinking, and most of those affected experience multiple hospitalisations in the course of their psychiatric illness.

Researchers collected demographic, health and dietary data on 1,101 individuals aged 18 through 65 with and without psychiatric disorders.

About 55 per cent of the participants were female and 55 per cent were Caucasian, with 36 per cent identifying as African-American.

A study of their records between 2007 and 2017 showed that among people who had been hospitalised for mania, a history of eating cured meat before hospitalisation were about 3.5 times higher than the group of people without a psychiatric disorder.

Cured meats were not associated with a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, bipolar disorder in people not hospitalized for mania or in major depressive disorder.

No other foods about which participants were queried had a significant association with any of the disorders, or with mania.

Source: PTI

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NEW NASA MINI SATELLITE TO PEER INTO MILKY WAY'S HALO

A tiny NASA satellite has been deployed from the International Space Station (ISS) that will help scientists search for the universe's missing matter by studying X-rays from the 'halo' of hot gas surrounding our Milky Way galaxy.

Astronomers keep coming up short when they survey "normal" matter, the material that makes up galaxies, stars and planets.

To look for this missing matter, a NASA-sponsored CubeSat mission called HaloSat was deployed from the ISS on July 13.

The cosmic microwave background (CMB) is the oldest light in the universe, radiation from when it was 400,000 years old.

Calculations based on CMB observations indicate the universe contains five per cent normal matter protons, neutrons and other subatomic particles, 25 per cent dark matter - a substance that remains unknown - and 70 per cent dark energy, a negative pressure accelerating the expansion of the universe.

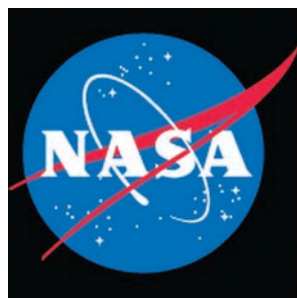
As the universe expanded and cooled, normal matter coalesced into gas, dust, planets, stars and galaxies. However, when astronomers tally the estimated masses of these objects, they account for only about half of what cosmologists say should be present.

"We should have all the matter today that we had back when the universe was 400,000 years old," said Philip Kaaret, principal investigator at the University of Iowa (UI) in the US, which leads the mission.

Researchers think the missing matter may be in hot gas located either in the space between galaxies or in galactic halos, extended components surrounding individual galaxies.

HaloSat will study gas in the Milky Way's halo that runs about 2 million degrees Celsius. At such high temperatures, oxygen sheds most of its eight electrons and produces the X-rays HaloSat will measure.

Source: PTI



SHAPE-CHANGING ROBOT CAN HELP FIND PEOPLE TRAPPED IN DEBRIS

Scientists have developed a robot that can change its shape to crawl through tight spaces and climb over rough terrain, an advance that may help search and rescue teams locate people trapped under debris.

The Rising Sprawl-Tuned Autonomous Robot (RSTAR) utilises adjustable sprawling wheel legs attached to a body that can move independently and reposition itself to run on flat surfaces, climb over large obstacles and up closely-spaced walls, and crawl through a tunnel, pipe or narrow gaps.

"The RSTAR is ideal for search and rescue operations in unstructured environments, such as collapsed buildings or flooded areas, where it must adapt and overcome a variety of successive obstacles to reach its target," said David Zarrouk, from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) in Israel.

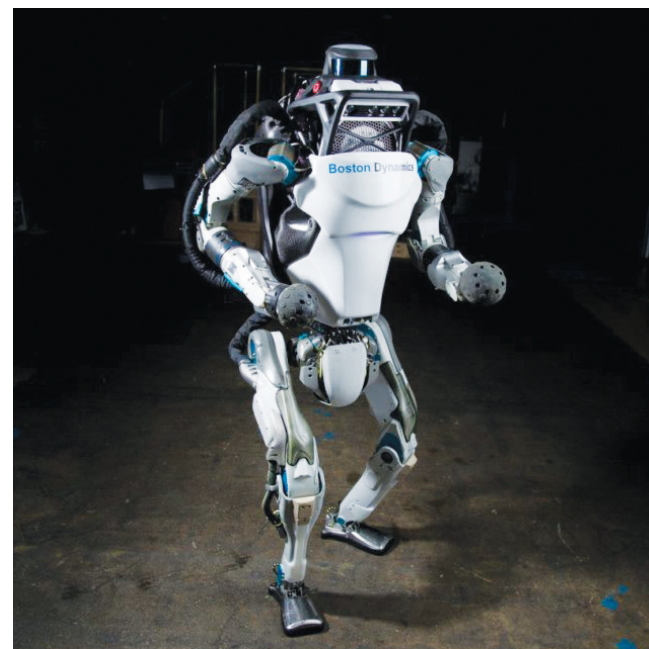
Researchers designed RSTAR to function simply and reliably, change shape and overcome common obstacles without any external mechanical intervention.

Its speed and relatively low energy consumption make the robot ideal for a broad range of applications that may require longer work time.

The robot uses its round wheels to travel more than three feet per second on hard flat surfaces and switches to spoke wheels to traverse extremely soft or granular surfaces, like thick mud or sand, without getting stuck.

It also climbs vertically and crawls horizontally by pressing its wheels to walls without touching the floor.

The team is working on a larger STAR robot version that will climb over larger obstacles, including stairs, and carry



more than four pounds of sensors and supplies.

A smaller STAR or RSTAR will piggyback on the larger robot to use in hard-to-reach areas and sneak in between narrow cracks and passages.

Source: PTI

HOW TO USE TRUECALLER'S NEW CALL RECORDING FEATURE

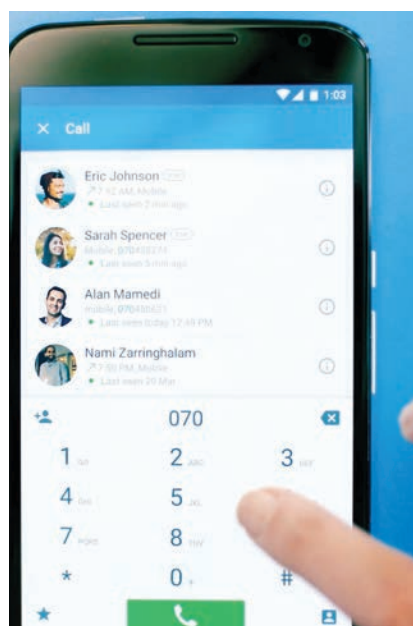
Truecaller has introduced a new feature for its premium users on Android. Truecaller users can now record their calls and conversations from the app itself. The company says that this move will help users "report harassment related or fraudulent calls."

Most smartphones come pre-loaded with call recording feature. At the same time, there are multiple third-party apps on Play Store through which one can record call conversations. But with an in-built feature, this will help active Truecaller users record calls seamlessly.

This feature has been released for Truecaller Premium only which is the paid version of the app. Truecaller Premium can be availed at Rs 30 per month and Rs 270 per year.

How to record calls on Truecaller

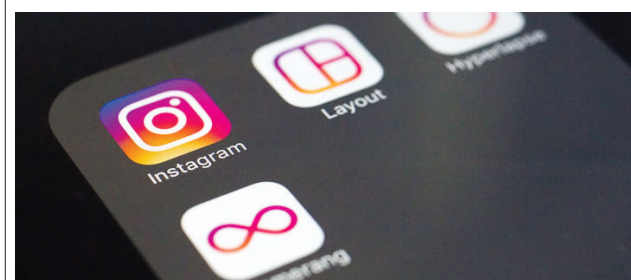
- When users receive a call on their



phone, there will be a recording icon just below the caller ID.

- One can toggle the option on to start recording their conversation.
- The recorded conversations will be saved in the user's phone.
- Truecaller says that the calls will not be saved in the company's systems.

In addition to call recording, the premium version of Truecaller offers ad-free usage, 30 contact requests per month, a 'Pro Badge' on their profile, and options to know who viewed your profile. Truecaller Premium users also have the option to view others profiles privately. Users can subscribe to Truecaller Premium by tapping on the menu bar and selecting 'Upgrade to Professional'. Here, they can choose between the monthly and yearly package.



INSTAGRAM'S PUBLIC ACCOUNTS CAN REMOVE FOLLOWERS

Instagram is testing a new feature that will give public account holders more control over followers. The new feature will allow users with an open account to remove followers while maintaining their public account, The Verge reported. When a person removes someone from the followers list, Instagram won't send them a notification thereby keeping things discreet and flexible at the same time.

Source: ANI

Facebook to remove posts that spur violence

Accused of helping to spur violence in countries like Myanmar, Sri Lanka and India, Facebook has said it will begin removing misinformation that leads to violence and physical harm.

Currently, Facebook bans content that directly calls for violence but the new policy will cover fake news that has the potential to stir up physical harm, CNET reported late on Wednesday.

"There are certain forms of misinformation that have contributed to physical harm, and we are making a policy change which will enable us to take that type of content down," Facebook said in a statement.

"We will begin implementing the policy

during the coming months," it added.

Facebook-owned WhatsApp is facing the flak in India for allowing the circulation of large number of irresponsible messages filled with rumours and provocation that has led to growing instances of lynching of innocent people.

In June, Facebook removed content that alleged Muslims in Sri Lanka were poisoning food given and sold to Buddhists.

A coalition of activists from eight countries, including India and Myanmar, in May called on Facebook to put in place a transparent and consistent approach to moderation. In a statement, the coalition demanded civil rights and political bias audits



into Facebook's role in abetting human rights abuses, spreading misinformation and manipulation of democratic processes in their respective countries.

Besides India and Myanmar, the other countries that the activists represented were Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, the Philippines, Syria and Ethiopia. The demands raised by the group bore significance as Facebook came under fire for its failure to stop the deluge of hate-filled posts against the disenfranchised Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar. Sri Lanka temporarily shut down Facebook earlier in 2018 after hate speech spread on the company's apps resulted in mob violence.

Source: IANS

Amazon valuation crosses \$900 billion for the first time

Amazon.com's stock market value reached \$900 billion on Wednesday for the first time, marking a major milestone in its 21-year trajectory as a publicly listed company and threatening to dislodge Apple as Wall Street's most valuable jewel.

After Jeff Bezos founded the online book-selling company in his garage in 1994, Amazon survived the dot-com crisis and then expanded across the retail industry, altering how consumers buy products and setting off a Darwinian struggle among brick-and-mortar stores.

After announcing on Wednesday that it sold more than \$100 million products during its annual Prime Day sale, the Seattle, Washington company's stock briefly touched \$1,858.88, giving Amazon a stock market value of \$902 billion. It later reversed, trading down 0.16% for the session.

Amazon's stock has surged more than 57% in 2018, bringing its increase to over 123,000% since it listed on the Nasdaq in 1997. An investor who bought 1 share of Amazon for \$18 in the IPO would now have an investment worth more than \$22,200, including three stock splits in the 1990s.

Amazon, video streaming service Netflix and a handful of heavyweight technology companies have fueled Wall Street's rally in recent years and they remain key parts of portfolio managers' portfolios.



Apple replaced Exxon Mobil in late 2011 as the US company with the largest stock market value. The Silicon Valley company's shares have risen 12 percent in 2018, bringing its stock market value to \$935 billion.

The calculations for Apple and Amazon's market capitalizations are based on the number of shares outstanding in their March-quarter reports. Amazon has increased its share count by over 1 million shares per quarter in recent years, and if it continued that in the June quarter, its stock market value may already have exceeded \$900 billion.

Amazon reports its results on July 26

and Apple, which has been reducing its share count through buybacks, reports its June-quarter results on July 31.

As Amazon expands into grocery retail through its acquisition of Whole Foods Market last year, and as more businesses move their IT departments onto the cloud, its stock price has been red hot, recently trading at 111 times expected earnings, compared to more-profitable - but slower growing - Apple's valuation of 15 times earnings.

Amazon dislodged Microsoft Corp as the No. 3 US company by market capitalization in February. Since then, Microsoft has been overtaken by Google-owner Alphabet.

Source: Reuters

Google fined record \$5 billion by European Union, told to alter Android model



Google was fined 4.3 billion euros (\$5 billion) by the European Union and ordered to change the way it puts search and web browser apps on Android mobile devices, setting a global record for antitrust penalties.

The penalty -- the same amount the Netherlands contributes to the EU budget every year -- is far higher than any other dished out by the US, Chinese or other antitrust authorities. More significantly, Google was given 90 days to stop what the EU said were "illegal practices" on contracts with handset manufacturers that push Google services in front of users.

"Google has used Android as a vehicle to cement the dominance of its search engine," EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said in an emailed statement. "These practices have denied rivals the chance to innovate and compete on the merits."

Google has built a massive business of banner and videos ads, thanks largely to its central role on Android devices. Google will account for a third of all global mobile ads in 2018, according to research firm eMarketer, giving the company around \$40 billion in sales outside the US. Google risks losing that traction if it is forced to surrender its real estate on millions of Android phones.

Google immediately said it would challenge the ruling at the EU courts.

Source: Bloomberg

Govt set to inject Rs 2000 crore into fraud-hit Punjab National Bank by next week

India is said to be preparing to infuse about Rs 2000 crore (\$290 million) into Punjab National Bank by next week to help it meet dues on its perpetual bonds, people familiar with the matter said.

India's third-largest state-run lender will issue preferential shares to the government, the people said, asking not to be named as the information isn't public. This will help restore capital to the level needed to pay the coupon that's due July 25, they said.

PNB needs to pay about Rs 135 crore to cover the 8.98% annual interest on Rs 1500 crore worth of so-called AT1 bonds sold in July 2017.

Unless PNB gets fresh capital in time, it may be unable to make the payment because an unprecedented loan-fraud wiped out its profits and pushed the bank's capital below mandated levels, according to the local unit of Fitch Ratings. PNB's core tier I capital was at 5.96 percent as of March 31, below the Reserve Bank of India's minimum required 7.375%.

"A plain reading of the RBI's rules could be interpreted as if the bank is below the minimum core tier I capital requirement, they would face restrictions on payment of coupon," said Prakash Agarwal, head -- financial institutions, at India Ratings & Research, the local unit of Fitch. "The government is expected to step in."

A spokesman for Punjab National Bank said the bank will be making the coupon payments on the due date, subject to regulatory approvals. He didn't provide any further details.

Source: Bloomberg



OIL PRICES FALL ON RISE IN US STOCKPILES, DEMAND WORRIES



LONDON (TIP): Oil prices fell on Wednesday after news of a rise in US crude inventories last week, defying analysts' expectations for a big fall, while concerns about weak demand also resurfaced.

Brent crude oil was down 60 cents at \$71.56 a barrel by 0750 GMT. The benchmark hit a three-month low on Tuesday.

US light crude was down 50 cents at \$67.58, not far off Tuesday's one-month low of \$67.03 per barrel.

Oil markets have fallen over the last week as Saudi Arabia and other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia have increased production and as some supply disruptions have eased.

Investors have also begun to worry about the impact on global economic growth and energy demand of the escalating trade dispute between the United States and its trading partners, including China.

The US oil market has been tight in recent months but data on Tuesday from the American Petroleum Institute (API) showed an unexpected a rise of more than 600,000 barrels in national crude inventories.

Analysts had forecast a decline of 3.6 million barrels in US crude stocks for the week through July 13.

Official numbers from the US Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration are due at 10:30 a.m. EDT (1430 GMT) on Wednesday.

"Oil is trading lower this morning on the back of the API release, and price action later today will largely depend on what the EIA release," said ING commodities strategist Warren Patterson. "A number broadly similar to the API could put some further pressure on the market later this afternoon."

On the demand-side, intensifying risks over trade tensions between the United States and China could drag on the global economic outlook, BMI Research said.

Source: Reuters

Stable coin: IBM backs a new 'price stable' cryptocurrency

NEW YORK (TIP): International Business Machines (IBM) is backing a new cryptocurrency pegged to the US dollar, in a partnership with US-based financial services provider Stronghold that adds stability to a sector known for its volatility, the companies said.

The so-called stable coin, Stronghold USD, launched on Tuesday on the Stellar blockchain platform. Buyers of the coin will deposit greenbacks with the company's partner bank, Nevada-based Prime Trust for Stronghold to issue the tokens based on a 1-to-1 ratio.

Stable coins, pegged to an asset like gold, or major currencies such as the euro, pound and US dollar, have emerged as issuers seek to expand uses for digital currencies, which are unregulated and volatile. Bitcoin, the most well-known token, has fallen around 55% so far in 2018 against the dollar, after surging more than 1,300% last year.

Cryptocurrencies are powered by blockchain, a shared database maintained by a network of computers connected to the internet.

Source: Reuters





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 JULY 23 - 29, 2018

Aries:

Ganesha says there is a semblance of stability. You have emerged from the maze of the mind. You realize that a lot of time has been wasted in your shenanigans and you need to get cracking. 'When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth,' noted Arthur Conan Doyle, physician and writer. You now work with whatever remains. You get down to the hard slog of making a living.

Taurus:

The heat is on in more ways than one. There is fire in your belly and you are steaming away. There could be travel, and new vistas opening. You may meet with someone from an entirely different culture and form a profound bond. 'People don't notice whether it is winter or summer when they are happy,' said Anton Chekov. Right on! The subcontinent is heating like an oven, but this doesn't get to you even if you live in my backyard.

Gemini:

You are busy with domestic issues. The health of elders could be a cause of concern. If you are living with an elderly parent, hospitalization may be necessary. Your health too may need to be scanned. You meet up with friends and loved ones and bask in the comfort of familiarity. I must mention here that all influences have many sides to them. What manifests depends on the personal horoscope. These are mere indicators. I wish you well. So, does Ganesha.

Cancer:

You are bogged down by life. Yes, life can be tough, even cruel. You want excitement in your life. You want to do new things, live and love large. There could be foreign travel. Some of you may even seriously consider emigration. A new breeze flows in through the windows left open. There are many options. Use your free will and instinct to choose the right one. Ganesha is pleased.

Leo:

This is a profitable phase for creative pursuits. Those in the media are crowned with success. Your mind plays tricks, but if you use its offbeat aroma, miracles may happen. This is a great chance to step out of your comfort zone and chase new trails. You could go backpacking to unusual locales and check out the many wonders of the world you inhabit. You also lend a shoulder to others to lean on. People come to you with their sob stories and you patiently hear them out.

Virgo:

This period is ripe with opportunities. Make the most of it. Like the Bard said, 'Take the tide at the flood.' There are expenses and heightened passions. Someone you meet at a party or gatherings leaves you breathless and panting. This may not be love and shouldn't be confused with a normal longing of the flesh. Ask me. I know, having lived over eight decades on this planet. This is a great period for those in realty and stocks.

Libra:

You are high on energy. You also display your charm and captivate one and all. You are at your irresistible best. You dazzle. There are love and longing and you play the field. There are fun times and festivities, possibly an addition to the family. Pet lovers may bring home an exotic creature. There could be engagements and weddings, fun, frolic and festivities. You live in the 'now' and that is the key. Enjoy, says Ganesha.

Scorpio:

You broaden your scope of work. There are new ventures in the offing. You sign on the dotted line. Money flows through your fingers as silky smooth as water in the desert. But it is not money wasted. You are savvy and crafty and negotiate giant deals in your favor. You look through every detail with a magnifying glass, armed with a team of legal and fiscal experts. You cannot go wrong. There are powerful ego drives too but remember that life can turn on its head in a jiffy.

Sagittarius:

Expenses continue. You may purchase exquisite works of art. You may even invest in a country home. You are in full flow, like a flamingo in flight across the blue yonder. Your actions are also tempered by kindness. You help out the less fortunate and volunteer in hospices and halfway houses. The universe has sent you the message of humility. You touch all your ventures with it, along with the sweet aroma of gratitude.

Capricorn:

You are networking like there is no tomorrow. You reach out to people and places. Even elders play with the modern marvels of communication. There are gatherings, festive times and travel. You may go solo just to test the waters. You are filled with bravado and will attempt anything. You are warned that you may get scorched by newness but that doesn't deter you.

Aquarius:

There is more stability now, though I must warn you that tendencies from one period often spill over into the next. You get down to the hard slog. There is work, and money to be made and you sense the opportunities. You may also go in for a complete sartorial makeover. You could also get a new hairdo and simply transform yourself. You want to reinvent yourself and do the tango with life. The home and heart are also calling. And you are not one to shirk from responsibilities. Ganesha applauds.

Pisces:

You could well be in for a new job, business expansion and more money and perks. On the personal front, you could take your love to the altar. There could be indulgences, and a roll of fat around your waist. Need I say more? The compatibility of partners and also the type of life the individual will lead are judged from the placement of stars in the horoscope. In human beings, this attractive force manifests as love and beauty.

SHRAVAN MAAS: AUSPICIOUS MONTH OF THE SOLAR YEAR

Shravan mahina, or Sawan month, is one of the holiest Hindu months and is dedicated to Lord Shiva in North India. Shravan Month 2018 is from July 23 to August 22.

Shravan Month is the fifth month in a traditional Hindu lunar calendar followed in North India. This calendar is followed mainly in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Haryana, Bihar and Chhattisgarh and other North Indian states. A month in these regions is calculated from the day after Purnima or full moon to the next Purnima. The year in the Hindi Calendar is Saka 2072.

The Mondays or Somwar in Shravan month is dedicated to worship of Shiva. People make it a point to visit Shiva temples on Sawan Mondays

Shravan Month is also the first month in the Chatur Maas - four holy months.

Shravan Mahina, or Sawan Mas, in the Hindi calendar is dedicated to Lord Shiva. Special prayers and rituals are performed in Lord Shiva temples and in sacred places associated with Siva. Kanwarias travel to the origin of Ganga River to collect holy water, or Gangajal, to bath the Shivling at their homes or in villages. Somvar or Mondays in the month is considered highly auspicious for the worship of Lord Shiva.

It is believed that Lord Shiva to save the world drank the poison 'halahala' that came out during the Samdura Manthan or churning of ocean. It is said that the gods in Hindu pantheon assembled to witness this holy act of Shiva. Water from Ganga is offered to cool Lord Shiva and to alleviate the ill effects of the poison.

The main Shravan Puja is the worship of Shivling with Gangajal, Bilva leaves or pure water. Some people observe fast on Mondays. Many people observe different vows during the month like having only vegetarian food, or reading a particular Holy Scripture on all days of the month.

Shiva temples across North India have special poojas in this month. Deoghar Baidhyanath Dham and Kashi Vishwanath Temple is visited by millions of Hindus in the month of Sawan.

Another unique feature is the strict observance of Sawan Somwar Vrata. Mondays are dedicated to Lord Shiva and the Mondays in Shravan Mahina are even more auspicious.

Mangala Gouri Puja is performed on Tuesdays in Shravan Month.

Saturdays in Shravan month is dedicated to the worship of Lord Shani.

Millions of devotees visit the Baba Baidyanath Dham in Deoghar and offer Ganga water collected from Sultanganj as Abhishek on the Shivling at the Deoghar Temple. This is the period of the Shravani mela at the temple.

Daily pujas in Marathi Shravan month

Monday – Shiva Puja
Tuesday – Mangala Gouri Puja
Wednesday – Budha Puja
Thursday – Brihaspati Puja
Friday – Jara Jivantika Puja
Saturday – Maruti Puja
Sunday – Aditya Puja

Why is Shravan maas given so much important?

During Shivaratri and Shravan maas, the effect of the Jupiter on Earth is such that, it



holds the harmful gases present in the atmosphere, and allows the useful gases present in the ozone layer go closer to Earth's surface. Ozone layer which contains pure oxygen and higher prana, elevates the prana (life force) of living being with increased state of awareness. The effect is the highest during sunrise and sunset. Therefore, performing Rudra puja during this time of the day is most conducive.

Benefits of worshipping Shiva this holy month

- Lord Shiva has the power to protect us from the ill effects of Grah or planetary Dosh, including Shani Dosh
- Rudrabhishekyagya nullifies the evil effects of the planets
- It bestows prosperity and blesses the person with a child
- Unmarried women worship Lord Shiva with the aim of getting a husband like him, as Shiva is considered to be the ideal of the Purush
- It helps you defeat your enemies; It bestows good physical and mental health. Devotees who observe Shiva puja can see their health improving rapidly and are protected from ailments and deadly diseases
- Worshipping Lord Shiva can move one closer towards salvation of the soul or Moksha after death
- All your wishes are fulfilled. Performing Puja/Abhishek can bring great wealth and prosperity to the lives of devotees.

Other Celebrations in Shravan Maas

There are so many festivals and events observed during this month such as Nag Panchami, Govatsa, ShravaniPurnima, Vara Lakshmi Vrata, Rishi Panchami, RakshaBandhan, Avani Avittam, Kalkyavatara and Putradaikadashi, each having its own significance. Shravan Maas as a whole is therefore considered highly auspicious. Here is a brief on some of these special days.

AVANI AVITTAM is celebrated with immense zeal in Orissa, Maharashtra and southern states of India and is also known as

Janeyu Purnima. On this occasion, Brahmins ritually change their upanayana thread accompanied by chanting 1008 Gayatri mantra japas, vedic rituals and yagnas.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI is celebrated as a day when Lord Krishna was born. It is celebrated across the world with bhajans, feasts, dance and reading of scriptures.

RAKSHA BANDHAN (also known as Rakhi Purnima) is celebrated in many parts of India and Nepal. The sisters tie the rakhi on their brothers' wrists signifying and celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters. Click here to read more about this festival.

NARALI PURNIMA (Shravan Purnima) is celebrated in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa. On this day an offering of coconut is made to the sea, as a respect to Lord Varuna (the sea God). It is celebrated as the beginning of fishing season, by calming down the sea after the monsoon season.

NAG PANCHAMI is celebrated as a day when Krishna defeated Kalia (the 10 headed poisonous snake) and saved the lives of Brindavan. During monsoon season the snakes come out of their holes looking for shelter and food and might harm human beings. On this day people offer milk and rice to the snakes, for the wellbeing of mankind.

PAVITROPANA celebrated in Gujarat, as a grand celebration of worshipping Lord Shiva.

SHRI BALADEVA BIRTHDAY is celebrated on Shravan Purnima, as the birthday of Krishna's elder brother Balram.

PAVITHRA EKADASHI is celebrated in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan, as the birth of Pushtimarga, the path of grace. On this day, Lord Krishna appeared in front of Shri Vallabhacharya. Shri Vallabhacharya offered him a thread (soothan), which was pious (pavitra). Such threads are offered from Ekadashi till Raksha Bandhan.

SALONO FESTIVAL is celebrated in Haryana and Punjab, in addition to Raksha Bandhan. The priests tie amulets on people's wrist as a protection against evil. The thread tied on this occasion is called ponchis.

SHRAVANI MELA is a major festival celebrated at Deogarh in Jharkhand. Thousands of saffron-clad pilgrims travel 100 kms on foot to fetch holy water from river Ganges in Bihar and travel to Baidyanath Dham (in Deogarh, Jharkhand) to perform abhishekam to Lord Shiva.

10 THINGS YOU MUST DO DURING SHRAVAN MAAS

- Devotees must wake up early in the morning, take shower. One must get dressed up with clean and washed clothes and perform puja for Lord Ganesha and Lord Shiva with milk, sugar and rice as offerings.
- The devotees' house should be clean before the start of the puja.
- One can keep fast on every monday of this Shravan maas, by eating a single satvik meal during the day and light meal after sunset. Eating lots of fruits, milk and milk products like curd and cottage cheese is recommended during the fast. One should drink lots liquid and eat vegetables. One should also be more with one's self by being in silence while fasting.
- After performing the Somvar vrata, soak the thread in turmeric and tie it to the devotee's wrist.
- One should avoid or reduce rajasik diet and activities which engage our sense organs more to the outside world rather than our own self.
- One should have a healthier and easy to digest kind of diet during this month, as the digestive fire is low and as a result most of the food gets converted to toxins. One should also drink more water.

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LETTERS REVEAL LIGHT ON HOW NELSON MANDELA SURVIVED 27 YEARS IN PRISON

"The Prison Letters of Nelson Mandela," edited by South African journalist Sahm Venter, was released this month and features 255 letters from Mandela - about half of which have never been seen publicly before.

LONDON (TIP): Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison, most of them isolated on Robben Island off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa. His encounters with visitors from the outside world were brief and strictly controlled; he spent much of his time alone, uncertain of whether he would ever emerge alive.

But a new collection of Mandela's letters from prison show how the freedom fighter who would become South Africa's first black president kept himself grounded and connected to the outside world, even as apartheid leaders tried to silence him. "The Prison Letters of Nelson Mandela," edited by South African journalist Sahm Venter, was released this month and features 255 letters from Mandela - about half of which have never been seen publicly before.

Venter, who spent nearly a decade reviewing Mandela's letters, said in an email to The Washington Post that the wisdom Mandela displayed in his letters is "particularly relevant in the world today, which is experiencing the rise of . . . racism, sexism and xenophobia."

The book reveals the personal side of South Africa's most famous man - a side Mandela was somewhat reluctant to share publicly

after his imprisonment and before the publication of his memoir, "Long Walk to Freedom." While in prison, Mandela missed raising his children and burying both his mother and elder son, Thembi, who was killed in a car accident in 1969. His correspondence brings to light the efforts he made to humanize himself to prison officials as he requested special permission to attend family funerals - requests that were denied. They also offer a lens into the pain Mandela experienced in remaining isolated as he grieved for his loved ones.

"The feeling of anguish & depression that had hit me so viciously when I received the horrible news of his death returned and began to gnaw away mercilessly at my insides," he wrote to his wife, Winnie, after a visit from Thoko Mandela, his son Thembi's young widow, not long after the 24-year-old was killed.

Letters to his children also reveal how Mandela tried to be an active father from prison - often coming up short. While his daughters were young when he was arrested, Mandela addressed his family's difficulties head-on and did not shy away from explaining where he was and what his incarceration meant. His letters to various family friends

expressed concern over how the children were faring, especially after the arrest of Winnie in 1969.

That year, Mandela wrote to his daughters and acknowledged that they would now lack the comforts they had come to expect from their mother. "[F]or long you may live like orphans," he wrote. The letter also revealed his deep agony over Winnie's arrest and his willingness to share that pain with his young children. "My heart bleeds as I think of her sitting in some police cell far away from home, perhaps alone and without anybody to talk to, and with nothing to read," he wrote.

In a letter to Winnie herself, he described how, in hearing she had been imprisoned, his "faculties seemed to have ceased functioning." Knowing she was free, he told her, was part of the way he was able to retain a sense of freedom and joy.

"One day we will have the privacy which will enable us to share the tender thoughts which we have kept buried in our hearts during the past eight years," he wrote. It was June 1969; Winnie Mandela would spend another 15 months or so in solitary confinement, and Mandela himself would not be released from prison until 1990.

The words Mandela sent to his family

reveal remarkable patience and positivity. But Venter said one of her most unexpected discoveries was finding "detailed letters to the prison authorities in which he complained about conditions in prison."

In 1970, Mandela asked the commanding officer to reconsider his refusal to provide him with four pounds of honey each month, which Mandela claimed he needed for medical purposes. In another he requested Pond's Cold Cream for his dry skin, complaining that he was instead given Vaseline. Many of his letters to prison officials included requests for new study materials - he was pursuing a law degree from his cell. One lengthy letter from 1976 describes how he has "slept naked on a cement floor that becomes damp and cold during the rainy season" for 13 years and urgently needs pajamas, noting that white prisoners have always been provided pajamas and only black prisoners have not.

"He was not allowed to write about prison conditions or other prisoners in his letters to family and friends," Venter said. "So it is through these letters that we can today learn of exactly what it was like for him and his comrades in prison."

(The Washington Post)

contd from page 1

Trump takes U-turn...

Trump, a Republican, defeated his Democratic party rival Hillary Clinton in the election. Trump's comments sparked a barrage of criticism from the media and lawmakers across the political spectrum, with many calling on him to correct himself.

Speaking to CBS News, Trump said he would consider Putin culpable because he was Russia's leader. "I would because he's in charge of the country just like I consider myself to be responsible for things that happen in this country," Trump said.

"So, certainly as the leader of the country you would have to hold him responsible," he said. Facing huge criticism, Trump quickly took a U-turn and attributed his comments at the joint press conference with Putin to a simple mistake.

Looking forward to 2nd meeting with Putin

US President Donald Trump said on Thursday, July 19, he looked forward to his second meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, insisting that the first meeting was a success despite howls of criticism at home and abroad

Summit with Russia was a great success, except with the real enemy of the people, the Fake News Media. I look forward to our second meeting so that we can start implementing some of the many things discussed," he wrote on Twitter

Forces in US trying to derail Peace: Putin

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday, July 19, accused forces in the United States of trying to undermine the success of his first summit with US President Donald Trump, and said the two leaders had managed to begin to improve US-Russia ties anyway

Putin, speaking to Russian diplomats from around the world assembled in Moscow, said on Thursday that the summit had been a success overall, but complained about what he described as "powerful" US efforts to sabotage it. **(With inputs from PTI)**

Rs 1,484 crore...

The details of Modi's foreign travel expenditure under the three heads were shared in the Rajya Sabha by Minister of State for External Affairs V K Singh.

According to the data, a total of Rs 1088.42 crore was spent on maintenance of the prime minister's aircraft and Rs 387.26 crore on chartered flights during the period between June 15, 2014 and June 10, 2018.

The total expenditure on hotline was Rs 9.12 crore.

Modi visited a total of 84 countries in 42 foreign trips since taking over as prime minister in May 2014.

The details provided by Singh did not include expenditure on hotline facilities during his foreign visits in financial years 2017-18 and 2018-19. The cost of chartered flights for visits in 2018-19 was also not included.

According to Singh's reply, the prime minister visited a maximum of 24 countries in 2015-16 followed by 19 in 2017-18 and 18 nations in 2016-17.

In 2014-15, Modi had visited 13 countries with first one as prime minister to Bhutan in June 2014. In 2018, he travelled to 10 countries with the last one being to China last month.

The cost for chartered flights to overseas destinations in 2014-15 was Rs 93.76 crore while in 2015-16, it was Rs 117 crore. In 2016-17, the cost was Rs 76.27 crore and in 2017-18, the expense on chartered flight was Rs 99.32 crore.

"Diplomatic outreach during this period (since May 2014) has included first ever visits from India to several countries at the head of government level," Singh said.

He said the outreach has led to enhanced engagement of India's foreign partners in its flagship programs. **(Source: PTI)**

Doyen of Hindi poetry...

had suffered a head injury following a fall at his house in Agra and was undergoing treatment at a hospital there, Dr Rajesh Malhotra, chief of the AIIMS trauma center, said.

"He was shifted to the trauma center here last night in a critical condition. He had kidney failure, infection all over his body and head injury. He passed away today at around 7.30 pm," he said.

Neeraj's family was by his side during his last hours.

The poet had also written songs for Bollywood films. Neeraj had penned several hits such as 'Ae Bhai Zara Dekh Ke Chalo', 'Dil Ne Phir Yaad Kiya', 'Dil Aaj Shayar Hai', 'Likhe Jo Khat Tujhe, among others.

He was awarded Padma Shri in 1991 and Padma Bhushan in 2007. **(Source: PTI)**

Two Indian-origin...

"It's time for a Mayor who will re-ignite the possibility, opportunity and the confidence of the greatest city on earth. That's why I'm running to be London's Mayor," McGregor said in reference to her bid on Wednesday.

The 55-year-old peer in the House of Lords made history as the first Indian-origin woman to run a FTSE-250 company, Mitie Group, nearly a decade ago. She was awarded a

Commander of British Empire (CBE) honor by Queen Elizabeth II in 2012 for services to business and promoting diversity.

Ranger, a former transport adviser in the London Mayor's office, also made the Tory shortlist for the mayoral race held every four years. "I was born here, grew up, studied, have worked in and for London. I am proud and humbled to be part of this list," he said. **(Source: PTI)**

Ganga in extremely bad...

the work done on the ground for Ganga rejuvenation was not adequate and regular monitoring was required to improve the situation.

The Green panel ordered survey to seek views of common man about what he feels on ground about the pollution in Ganga and said the feedback could be given through e-mail of the authorities concerned. The Bench also comprised

Justices Jawad Rahim and RS Rathore, said.

The NGT had earlier rapped the National Mission for Clean Ganga for not filing a report on the steps taken by the Centre and the UP and Uttarakhand governments to clean the river in the stretch between Gomukh and Unnao.

The NGT had passed directions to rejuvenate Ganga, declaring 'No Development Zone' an area of 100 meters from the edge of the river between Haridwar and Unnao and prohibiting dumping of waste within 500 meters from it.

Ganga Action Plan

Launched in two phases by then PM Rajiv Gandhi on Jan 14, 1986, to free Ganga of pollution, domestic sewage and industrial chemical wastes. In first phase, it covered 25 towns in 3 states; in second, 59 towns in 5 states

River Basin Authority

Established on February 20, 2009 by the UPA government for ensuring effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river by adopting a river basin approach

Namami Gange

Mission set up by the Narendra Modi govt in 2014 to accomplish twin objectives: abatement of pollution, river rejuvenation

(With inputs from PTI)

FACT FILE

- **2,525 km Total length of Ganga**
- **800 tanneries' dump in it**
- **Rs 20,000 crore to clean it from 2015-2020**
- **Rs 7,304.64 crore spent up to March 2017**

NAINITAL: THE LAKE DISTRICT OF UTTARAKHAND

A beautiful emerald lake surrounded by green hills, quaint old cottages and markets, and a web of walking tracks—there are plenty of picturesque places to visit in Nainital. One of the most popular hill destinations in India, Nainital is also a part of the 'lake district' of the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand, with lakes such as Bhimtal, Sattal and Naukuchiatal in the vicinity. Nainital's charms include everything from boating and sailing to old temples and heritage buildings, and of course, scenic views at every other step. Here's your guide to the hill town's most captivating spots.

NAINI LAKE

This beautiful lake lies at the heart of Nainital, with its waters reflecting the colour of the surrounding green hills. The hill station itself is divided into parts: Mallital, the northern side of the lake, and Tallital, the southern end of the lake. Boating in the lake is a favourite tourist pastime. There are rowboats and pedal boats available at various spots. For a more thrilling alternative, try sailing on the lake with a small yacht. The Nainital Boat House Club has facilities for renting yachts, guided by a boatman. A promenade circles the entire lake and is a good stretch for walking, taking in the views and the cool breeze from the lake.

NAINA DEVI TEMPLE

Perched on the banks of Naini Lake, this temple plays a central role in the origin myths surrounding Nainital. It is believed that after the death of his wife Sati, the Hindu god Shiva was so distraught that he began a tandava dance of cosmic destruction. In order to stop him, Sati's body was scattered all over the earth. This was the exact spot where her eye fell, creating the lake. The temple's open courtyard also offers scenic views and cool breeze from the lake.

RAJ BHAWAN

Also known as Governor's House, this was the official residence of the Governor of North-West Province in colonial India. It is now the residence of the Uttarakhand Governor, and is one of the few Raj Bhawans open to the public. Built towards the end of the 19th century, the imposing building is spread over an area of 220 acres. Its Gothic-style architecture was inspired by the Buckingham Palace.

The two-storey mansion contains around 113 rooms, but visitors are only allowed in its vast lawns and in the 18-hole golf course within its premises. Constructed by the British in 1924, the golf course is set around a scenic forest, and is home to several rare species of flora and fauna. Visitors can play a game of golf for a small fee or lounge in its clubhouse and restaurants.

GURNEY HOUSE

Located on Ayarpatta Hill, this beautiful cottage was the former residence of British hunter, conservationist, and beloved writer Jim Corbett. This British-style building was built in the 19th century by the Corbett family. Jim Corbett lived here with his sister Margaret between 1920 and 1947, following which, they left for Kenya. During his time here, Corbett famously hunted man-eating tigers in the Kumaon region, and penned several books based on his experiences. The house has been carefully preserved, and still



HOW TO REACH

- Kathgodham Railway Station, located around 34 km away, is the nearest railhead to Nainital.
- Plenty of trains connect Nainital with Delhi and Dehradun.
- Passengers coming from Kolkata, Lucknow, Agra and Mathura, can even take a train till Kathgodam and then hire a private cab or shared taxi for Nainital.
- One who is inquiring about how to reach Nainital has also option of flight. The nearest Domestic Airport from Nainital is Pantnagar Airport, Pantnagar, roughly one hour drive from the city. It is well connected to New Delhi and Mumbai via Jet Airways, Air India and Spice Jet. The nearest International Airport is Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, roughly five hour drive from Nainital.

has Corbett's possessions, including his trophies, furniture, books, and boat. It is now a private property, but informal tours can be arranged by contacting the owners via phone or email.

GOVIND BALLABH PANT ZOO

Home to a variety of endangered animals and a wide variety of flora, the Pt. GB Pant High Altitude Zoo is the perfect way to explore the mountain wildlife. Lay your eyes on rare species of animals such as the Khaleej Pheasant, Siberian Tiger, Snow Leopard, Goat Antelope-Ghooral and Sero, among several others. If you are an avid bird lover, you will be more than happy to hear that this zoo is home to several high altitude birds like the Golden Pheasant, Rose Ringed Parakeet, Red Jungle fowl and Lady Amherst Pheasant. Most of these are kept according to their natural habitat, ensuring that they feel right at home. The zoo was founded in the year 1984



but it was opened to visitors in 1995.

TIFFIN TOP

The panoramic beauty of soft white clouds, rocky peaks, emerald jungles, and green verdant valleys from Tiffin Top can not be put into words. The place is only about 4 km from the heart of Nainital and makes for a wonderful trek. Alternately, you may go there on horseback.

Tiffin Top is also known as Dorothy's seat as it was built in the memory of an English artist name Dorothy Kellet by her family. With so much to offer, no wonder, the place is a delight for dozens of artists, photographers, and nature enthusiasts.

SNOW VIEW

With a towering height of 2,270 metres, this hilltop is an old tourist favourite for its beautiful views of the surrounding hills. Situated at a distance of 2.5 kilometres from

the town, it is easily accessible by an aerial ropeway, which connects Snow View point with Mallital in Nainital. There's an amusement park with bumper car ride for kids, and stalls offering tea and snacks. You can also trek from here to Naina Peak or China Peak, which is the highest peak in Nainital and also offers stunning views of snow-clad Himalayas.

ARYABHATTA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

This astronomical observatory is located on the Manora peak, and is the perfect place to indulge in star-gazing. The observatory has facilities for viewing celestial bodies on clear nights between 7 pm and 9 pm, through its high-powered telescopes. The institute was established in 1955, and is a major centre for astrophysical research. To book a visit, call the observatory or make a reservation through their website.

FRANCE WIN FIFA WORLD CUP

End Croatian dream run, bring home trophy after 20 years

MOSCOW (TIP): France won the World Cup for the second time by ending battling Croatia's dream of a first title with a 4-2 victory on July 15 in one of the most entertaining and action-packed finals for decades.

France led 2-1 at halftime after a Mario Mandzukic own goal and an Antoine Griezmann VAR penalty, with Ivan Perisic briefly bringing first-time finalists Croatia level.

Quickfire strikes by Paul Pogba and Kylian Mbappe midway through the second half put France on course for the title but Mandzukic was gifted a goal by French keeper Hugo Lloris to set up a nervous last 20 minutes.

France, however, withstood a spirited Croatia assault to lift the trophy for the second time, following their success on home soil 20 years ago, and ensure there was no repeat of two years ago when they were beaten in the European Championship final by Portugal in Paris.

The victory means that Didier Deschamps, captain of the 1998 side, becomes the third man to win the World Cup as player and coach after Brazil's Mario Zagallo and Germany's Franz Beckenbauer.

It was the highest-scoring final since England beat West Germany 4-2 after extra-time in 1966 and the highest in normal time since Brazil beat Sweden 5-2, 60 years ago. The landmarks came thick and fast in the first half too.

Croatia had started full of energy but fell behind when Mandzukic, who scored the extra-time winner against England in the semi-final, became the first man to score an own goal in a World Cup final when a Griezmann free kick skidded in off his head in the 18th minute. It was the 12th own goal of the tournament.

That meant it was the fourth successive knockout game that Croatia had conceded first but Perisic, who got the equaliser against England, was on hand again to level



France players celebrate after winning the world cup.

the scores 10 minutes later, smashing in a low shot after Sime Vrsaljko had headed Luka Modric's free kick across the box.

But it was then Perisic's turn go from hero to zero when he flapped an arm at a corner and, after a VAR review, Argentine referee Nestor Pitana awarded the 28th penalty of the tournament, another record, which Griezmann stroked home in the 38th minute for his fourth goal of Russia 2018.

That made it the highest-scoring first half since 1974, when West Germany led the Netherlands 2-1 -- also the final score then. It was harsh on Croatia, who had made most of

the running, and they were on top again after the break, continually winning their one-on-one duels in the air and in every tackle and forging forward in the French box with plenty of variety.

But France's defence, so impressive all tournament, held and they went 3-1 up on the hour as Mbappe and Griezmann combined to set up Pogba on the edge of the box. His right-footed shot was blocked but he coolly curved the rebound in with his left.

After three successive extra-time knockout games the chances of another Croatian comeback seemed slight but they

looked dead and buried six minutes later. Lucas Hernandez tore down the left to set up Mbappe who drilled a low shot beyond keeper Danijel Subasic for the 19-year-old's fourth goal of the tournament.

An awful blunder by Lloris revived Croatia, as the French keeper tried to dribble around Mandzukic only for the striker to tap the ball straight into an unguarded net.

Croatia, beaten by the French in the semi-finals in their first World Cup appearance in 1998, continued to press but their energy was sapped and France safely held out for the victory.

Source: Reuters

England beat India to win third ODI and series

HEADINGLEY (TIP): To the utter disbelief of their army of supporters who had thronged Headingley in anticipation of a grand finale, India produced a limp show on the most important day of the limited-overs leg of their tour as they were outperformed by England in all departments in the third and final ODI on July 16.

Having conceded the psychological edge to England at Lord's, the visitors lost the plot in the series decider on Tuesday as the rampaging England outplayed Virat Kohli's men by eight wickets to clinch the ODI series 2-1.

After restricting India to a below par 256/8, Joe Root (100 no) and captain Eoin Morgan (88 no) lead the chase with authority.

It was abject surrender as the Men in Blue put up an abysmal batting show and were equally listless on the field. They failed to make any impact on England with the ball and the game was over as a contest in the first 10 overs of the second half.

India were 32/1 after the first powerplay period; England had raced to 78/2 in 10 overs.

It undid the psychological advantage India had gained by dominating the early exchanges as England ticked all boxes in preparation for the 2019 World Cup.

The India pace bowlers only needed to keep



Joe Root during the 3rd ODI against India in Headingley.

it tight for the spinners to try and build pressure. But by the time the spinners got into the attack, England had reached 74/1 in nine overs. It left them with simply too much to do. It was pedestrian stuff from India's new ball bowlers, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Hardik

Pandya. There was no movement in the air and nothing off the pitch. They were wayward as well. It was a complete performance by England. They won the battle with dangerman Kuldeep Yadav as well. To his luck, Root was at the crease when he came to bowl and the

England Test captain, who hit 113 at Lord's continued from where he had left, working around Kuldeep's bowling. The chinaman bowler's first spell read 4-0-23-0 before he finished wicketless, going for 55 runs in 10 overs.

England elected to bowl and their bowlers put up a strong showing to pin down India's powerful batting. After playing on sun-kissed grounds, India faced tough English conditions on Tuesday. Shikhar Dhawan (44 runs), Virat Kohli (71), Dinesh Karthik (21), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (42) and Hardik Pandya (21) all got starts but couldn't capitalise.

Mark Wood and David Willey bowled well with the new ball, but the men who made the difference were spinners Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali.

Leggie Rashid made the biggest splash. In a dream spell of 10-0-49-3, he put England on top in the decisive game. It was his double strike in the 31st over that knocked the wind out of India's sails. Rashid produced the ball of the series to knock Kohli's off-stump, with a delivery which pitched outside leg and turned across to the disbelief of the India captain. Raina fell on the last ball of the over, turning a leg spinner into the hands of the leg-slip fielder.



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