

Sadhguru calls upon youth to see danger to world from growing population and inequal distribution of wealth



Sadhguru at "Youth and Truth with Sadhguru" session with student panelists at the India Conference on Feb 17.

BOSTON (TIP): "One of the biggest problems in the world is migration. It's estimated nearly 1.5 billion people will migrate in next 5 to 10 years' time. What is the solution for this? The problem is - nearly 80% of the world's investment goes to cities.

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Mueller could submit report to Attorney-General next week



Special Counsel Robert Mueller is believed to be closing investigation in to Russian interference in 2016 US elections.

WASHINGTON (TIP): The U.S. Department of Justice may announce as early as next week that Special Counsel Robert Mueller has given the Attorney-General his report on the federal Russia investigation, CNN said on Wednesday, February 20, citing unnamed sources.

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Pak bans Hafiz Saeed-led JuD and its charity



Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed - File photo

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan on Thursday, February 21, banned the 2008 Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led Jamat-ud-Dawa and its charity wing Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation,

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BAPS SWAMINARAYAN SANSTHA HOLDS PRAYERS

Pledges 10 Million Rupees for Pulwama Attack Victims

DALLAS (TIP): The 100 BAPS temples across North America held special prayer services in honor of the CRPF personnel who died in the Feb. 14 attack in Kashmir's Pulwama district. Mahant Swami Maharaj, spiritual leader of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, offered his heartfelt prayers and condolences for the tragic deaths of the 44 CRPF personnel during the terrorist attack in Kashmir. He prayed for the peace of the departed souls and the speedy recovery of the injured.

"It was an honor to be part of the prayers at BAPS tonight to mourn those that were murdered in the terror attack in Kashmir. Terror against any is terror against us all," said Jeff Spivey, Chief of Irving Police Department from Irving, TX after

attending a special prayer service organized by the BAPS.

Dr. Jamin Brahmhatt, from Orlando, FL said: "The 44 CRPF personnel who lost their lives each have families and communities who are feeling their absence. As an Indian-American, I feel part of their community and am here to pray for calm in their hearts which we know are hurting."

The BAPS organization also pledged Rs. 10 million for the relief fund to support the victims and their family members.

Jeff Spivey, Chief of Irving Police Department attended a special prayer service organized by the BAPS



UN Security Council condemns Pulwama attack

Sources at the UN said the UNSC statement was released after prolonged Security Council negotiations.



UNITED NATIONS (TIP): The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Thursday, February 21, issued a statement condemning the Pulwama attack and underlining the need to hold those responsible, accountable. Significantly Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) has been named on the statement as having taken responsibility for the attack.

"The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly suicide bombing in Jammu and Kashmir, which resulted in over 40 Indian paramilitary forces dead

and dozens wounded on February 14, 2019, for which Jaish-e-Mohammed has claimed responsibility," the statement said.

Sources at the UN said the UNSC statement was released after prolonged Security Council negotiations. China had wanted additional time to think it through as it had some concerns, they said. France is also working, in parallel, to sanction JeM chief Masood Azhar at the UNSC. Similar action against Azhar in 2017 was blocked by China

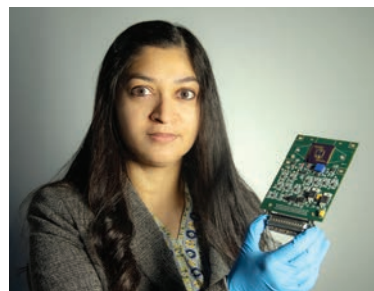
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Bengali Scientist led team receives \$2 million from NASA to develop 3D Printed Multifunctional Sensors

HOUSTON (TIP): NASA scientist Mahmooda Sultana and her team have received \$2 million to develop 3D printed multisensor devices for space exploration. Under her partnership with Northeastern University, Sultana and her group will design the sensor platform.

Sultana is Associate Branch Head of the Systems Engineering Branch at NASA's Maryland-based Goddard Space Flight Center. The Bangladeshi scientist has been with NASA Goddard for 7 years developing technologies for many NASA missions. One of the technologies that she is currently working on is a multifunctional nanosensor platform using additive manufacturing techniques.

The platform includes highly sensitive chemical, pressure, and temperature sensors made with nanomaterials, and electronics for data processing and wireless transmission. This multifunctional sensor platform will benefit a broad range of missions across Planetary Science, Earth Science, Heliophysics and Human Exploration.



Mahmooda Sultana holding a multifunctional sensor platform, Image via NASA

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The INDIAN PANORAMA

NEW YORK- DALLAS

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4 arrested after armed robbery at Fort Worth hotel

DALLAS (TIP): Four people are in custody after police say they robbed a Fort Worth hotel on February 19 night.

According to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, two armed robbers walked into the Fairfield Inn & Suites in the 6800 block of West Freeway around 9:30 p.m. and stole \$200. They fled in a car that was waiting outside.

Police stopped a car matching the description of the getaway vehicle shortly before midnight and apprehended three passengers. The driver ran off, but also was taken into custody, police said.

Kevin Lefall, 17, of Fort Worth, Tiunna Michell Mason, 24, of Arlington, Jonathan Craig Russell, 28, of Arlington and Phares Scarbrough, 32, of Fort Worth each face a charge of aggravated robbery, according to jail records.

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Bengali Scientist led team receives \$2 million from NASA to develop 3D Printed Multifunctional Sensors

Sultana received her Ph.D in Chemical Engineering in 2010 from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering and Mathematics from University of Southern California with Summa Cum Laude. She joined NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in 2010. She has led the development of graphene based detectors at NASA Goddard. Her research interests include graphene, nanomaterials, Micro-Electro-Mechanical Systems (MEMS) devices, and sensors. She has received numerous awards for her work, including Group Achievement Award for James Webb Telescope, NASA Early Career Achievement Medal, ISTD New Achiever Medal, Bell Laboratories Graduate Research Fellowship, NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, and WmC and Margaret H Rousseau Fellowship at MIT.

In 2017 she was named Innovator of the Year at NASA Goddard. Sultana received the award for her groundbreaking work advancing nanomaterials and processes to create small, potentially revolutionary detectors and devices for use in space.

Indian-American Couple Found Dead in Sugarland Apartment

DALLAS (TIP): An Indian-American couple from Andhra Pradesh was found dead in their home in Texas. Police officers were called to the house in Sugar Land on Feb 18 around 6 am where they found the bodies of Sreenivas Nakirekanti, 51, and his wife, 46-year-old Shanti Nakirekanti at the scene.

A preliminary investigation indicated that Sreenivas shot and killed his wife Shanti and then turned the gun on himself. Shanti was found with a gunshot wound to her head in the driveway of the home on Pendergrass and Sheffield Court. Sreenivas was found in the bedroom with a gunshot wound to the chest and a small handgun nearby. "The two fatalities fit the scenario of a murder-suicide. This case is still under investigation," said the Sugar Land Police Department (SLDP) in a press statement.

"There is no danger to residents and SLPD is not looking for any suspects," it added.

Sreenivas Nakirekanti was a director at an energy company in Houston and his wife was a computer programmer. Their 16-year-old daughter was home at the time of the shooting but was not injured.



Sugar Land Police found the bodies of Sreenivas Nakirekanti and his wife Shanti Nakirekanti in an apartment in Sugar Land

3 Indian Americans convicted in Texas in multi-million money laundering scheme

DALLAS (TIP): Six people were found guilty in Laredo, Texas, by the federal jury for their involvement in a two-year multi-million-dollar black market peso exchange money laundering scheme.

Out of the six, three are Indian Americans: Ravinder Reddy Gudipati, Harsh Jaggi and Neeru Jaggi. All three are from Laredo, Texas, and were convicted on February 12, following a five-week jury trial.

Harsh Jaggi was convicted on two counts of money laundering and Neeru Jaggi was convicted on one count of money laundering. Gudipati was convicted on two counts of money laundering, along with other counts. The three along with their other accomplices were a part of a money laundering scheme where money obtained from the sale of drugs in the United States was laundered through businesses in Laredo. This was done in order to return the proceeds to Mexican drug dealers.

From 2011 to 2013, the accused helped to move millions of dollars derived from the

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sale of drugs throughout the United States to Laredo. The modus operandi involved moving US dollars by couriers via cars, commercial buses, commercial planes and also a private plane. The money was transferred in heat sealed packs, uneven rubber-banded money stacks or even loose US currency, arrived in plastic bags, cloth bags, suitcases, backpacks and even cereal boxes.

The money was then distributed among downtown Laredo perfume stores, including stores owned by Gudipati, Harsh Jaggi and Neeru Jaggi. Gudipati, though NYSA Impex LLC that he owned, and Harsh Jaggi and Neeru Jaggi, through El Reino International Inc., which they owned, would accept loose bulk-cash, even after being told it was "narco dinero," as per the evidence presented.

Apart from the Indian Americans, the other accused are Adrian Arciniega-Hernandez of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico; Adriana Alejandra Galvan-Constantini and Luis Montes-Patino, both from Irving, Texas.

Dallas sues to shut down 3 massage parlors accused of having prostitutes sleep in filthy rooms

DALLAS (TIP): City officials have shut down three northwest Dallas massage parlors they say employ women as prostitutes and have them sleep on mattresses on the floor, and four people suspected of human trafficking have been arrested.

Last fall, undercover police officers said they were offered sex at each of the three parlors housed at 11309 Emerald Street: Jasmine, Passion X and Charming.

A Dallas Fire-Rescue investigator also visited the building near Interstate 35E and

Royal Lane and found several indications that people were living in the businesses, he wrote in an affidavit filed in district court Wednesday, February 20.

Photographs included in the lawsuit show bare mattresses shoved together on the business's floors, with plastic containers full of clothes, makeup and personal items.

The city of Dallas shut down a trio of northwest Dallas massage parlors where they say women offered sex to customers and slept on bare mattresses on the floor. (116th District

Court) One Passion worker, who said she was the only employee there who spoke English, admitted to an inspector that employees often slept overnight at the business but did not live there, according to court documents.

At Jasmine, there were also several mattresses and personal items in some of the rooms, according to an affidavit. At Charming, which also operated as Blue Star, mattresses were on the floors of some rooms, and massage tables were in others.

On Wednesday, Yenrudee Anuson, 44, and

Charming owner Josip Maric, 42, were arrested at a home in Commerce. Pornthipa Khan, 54, who owns Passion X and Jasmine, was arrested in Honolulu Wednesday, and Steven Eix, 53, was arrested in Lewisville.

All four were charged with aggravated promotion of prostitution.

Officials took several people into custody at the northwest Dallas building and are working to determine whether they are victims of sex trafficking. Any victims will be provided support services.

Indian American named Chief Product Officer of Yelp

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian American Vivek Patel has been named the newly created role of Chief Product Officer by Yelp. Patel has a record of significant accomplishment in product development and management and extensive industry experience, including spending nearly 10 years leading Yelp's product efforts. He most recently led the successful integration of Yelp's consumer- and business-focused product efforts to drive user growth and maximize the Company's revenue generation.

"Over the 14 years since our founding, Yelp has created the leading local internet destination for consumers with the help of a strong and dedicated team," said Jeremy Stoppelman, co-founder and CEO of Yelp. "Our business-facing products are a central component of Yelp's overall strategy. During his tenure at Yelp, Vivek has played an integral role in accelerating the diversification of our business products and enhancing our go-to-market strategies, specifically through the development of key products such as our self-serve platform, Request-A-Quote and Yelp Reservations, and the integration of Yelp's partnership with GrubHub. Our products have been vital to creating revenue-generation opportunities by



Vivek Patel takes on expanded role focused on driving user growth and monetization

allowing business owners to access our engaged consumer base and by forging deeper relationships with our consumers through our transactions business. These products are the core of our long-term growth strategy, and we are thrilled to have Vivek lead us as we continue working to execute on that strategy."

"I am honored to take on this important

responsibility to help support and drive the Company's product strategy moving forward. Growing up with and working alongside a family of restaurateurs and small-business owners has provided me not only with firsthand knowledge of the complexities of this industry, but also a deep and personal connection to Yelp's business owners and an understanding of products that serve them effectively," said Patel. "Yelp's products are a significant part of our growth opportunity, and I am excited to continue working alongside our incredible team to unlock more value for consumers, advertisers and business owners, and achieve our full potential as a business."

During his career at Yelp, Patel managed the business products team, which, under his leadership, grew Yelp's advertising products from \$25 million to nearly \$1 billion in revenue. Patel also served as Yelp's Head of Business Products from 2011 to 2016, during which he led the development of the company's self-serve advertising platform, business-owner mobile app, Request-A-Quote and integration of Yelp Reservations and Yelp Waitlist. Patel also led the integration of several Yelp-acquired products and businesses.

Indian American Raj Subramaniam named President and Chief Operating Officer of FedEx Corporation



Subramaniam has been with FedEx for more than 27 years

MEMPHIS(TIP): FedEx Corp. announced Feb 14 that Raj Subramaniam has been appointed president and chief operating officer, effective March 1. This appointment follows David J. Bronczek's personal decision to retire as president and chief operating officer and from the Board.

Subramaniam will continue to serve as president and CEO of FedEx Express and will also serve as co-president and co-CEO of FedEx Services. Subramaniam has been with FedEx for more than 27 years and has held various executive level positions in several operating companies and international regions. He began his career in Memphis and subsequently moved to Hong Kong, where he oversaw marketing and customer service for the Asia Pacific region. Subramaniam then took over as president of FedEx Express in Canada before moving back to the U.S. as senior vice president of international marketing. He was then promoted to executive vice president of marketing in 2013 at FedEx Services, prior to being named executive vice president and chief marketing and communications officer at FedEx Corporation in 2017.

"On behalf of the Board and management team, we recognize Dave for his years of service to FedEx. FedEx has a deep bench of talent, and I am confident that the transition will be seamless," said Frederick W. Smith, chairman and chief executive officer, FedEx Corporation. "Raj has significant experience in many areas of our portfolio, which will be vital as he steps into this position."

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Indian American Appointed to UCI Endowed Chair in Sikh Studies

SACRAMENTO (TIP): UCI assistant professor of anthropology Anneeth Kaur Hundle has been recently named the Dhan Kaur Sahota Presidential Chair in Sikh Studies at the University of California, Irvine School of Social Sciences. The \$2 million endowed chair - housed in the Department of



As chair and UCI assistant professor of anthropology, Hundle will contribute to the study of the Sikh religion and culture

Anthropology - was created in 2017 with a \$1.5 million gift from Drs. Harvinder and Asha Sahota and \$500,000 from the UC Presidential Match for Endowed Chairs program.

"With the establishment of this endowed chair, we hope members of the UCI community will deepen their understanding of Sikh religion and culture by learning the vibrant traditions, many contributions in world history and American society," said cardiologist Harvinder Sahota. "We are particularly keen to ensure UCI students are aware of the religion's commitment to equality and social justice."

As chair and UCI assistant professor of anthropology, Hundle will contribute to the study of the Sikh religion and culture in global, comparative, cross-racial and religious community frameworks. She will teach courses and develop research programs to increase understanding of immigrant incorporation and civil rights issues affecting Sikhs in the U.S.

"I am honored to be the first person named to this chair and appreciate the support of the Sahotas, Dean Maurer and my colleagues here at UCI in anthropology and other departments," Hundle said. "I'm excited to have the opportunity to build on my existing expertise and advance Sikh studies scholarly research in local, transnational and global contexts, and I look forward to promoting cross-religious, -ethnic and -racial community outreach and engagement via Sikh studies and anthropology with this position."

Hundle joined UCI in January from UC Merced, where she was an assistant professor of anthropology and associated faculty with the critical race & ethnic studies program. Her current research explores the politics of race, gender, citizenship and decolonization in Uganda after the expulsion of the racialized Asian community in 1972. Her research and writing have been funded by the National Science Foundation, the Wenner-Gren Foundation and multiple UC awards, including the UC President's Faculty Research Fellowship. (Source - UCI News)

Indian-American Doctor in Florida Convicted of Health Care Fraud

STUART, FL(TIP): An Indian-American doctor was convicted by a federal jury of committing repeated acts of health care fraud out of her practice in Stuart, Florida.

Sheetal Kanar Kumar, M.D., 48, was arraigned on twenty-six counts of health care fraud. According to the indictment, Dr. Kumar owned and operated the medical practice Advanced Healthcare for Women in Stuart, Florida. She was an obstetrician and gynecologist licensed to practice medicine. She also provided medical services treating incontinence. From at least as early as January 2014, until July 2017, Dr. Kumar submitted or caused the fraudulent submission of claims to Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance companies. The fraudulent claims sought money for specific health care benefits, items, and services that were not provided as billed. As a result of such false and fraudulent claims, Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance companies, made payments in the approximate amount of \$926,802. Dr. Kumar was found guilty by a jury of committing twenty-three counts of health care fraud and is scheduled to be sentenced on April 19, 2019.



Dr. Kumar was found guilty by a jury of committing twenty-three counts of health care fraud

Indian origin Sikh Store Clerk attacked in Marysville

Community Condemns the Islamophobic attack

SACRAMENTO (TIP): The Sacramento Valley office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-SV) and its allies from the Sikh

community condemned an attack on an Indian American store clerk in Marysville, Calif., that police are calling a hate crime. The victim, who is a clerk at a 7-Eleven, reported that on Feb 13, when he tried to confront a customer who attempted to leave without paying for his coffee, the patron threw the coffee on the clerk and punched the clerk in the face.

Later in the day, another assault was reported to police. Police responded and spoke with the suspect, John Crain, who admitted to attacking the clerk and that he "hated Muslims" and believed that the clerk was Muslim. CBS13 said it confirmed that the clerk is Sikh.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)



John Crain admitted to attacking the 7-Eleven clerk

Father slams Kamala Harris over pot-smoking joke



Senator Kamala Harris

WASHINGTON (TIP): US Democratic presidential candidate Senator Kamala Harris, who is of Indian and Jamaican descent, has been slammed by her father for saying that she smoked marijuana in her younger years and supports it becoming legalized.

Donald Harris, an economics professor at Stanford University, claimed his daughter was playing "identity politics" and added that she was harming her family's Jamaican ancestors, the media reported on Wednesday. "My dear departed grandmothers... as well as my deceased parents, must be turning in their grave right now to see their family's name, reputation and proud Jamaican identity being connected, in any way, jokingly or not with the fraudulent stereotype of a pot-smoking joy seeker and in the pursuit of identity politics," he said. (Source: IANS)

U.S. to leave 200 troops in Syria as "peacekeeping group": White House

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Trump administration will leave 200 US troops in Syria to act as a "small peacekeeping group", the White House has announced following President Donald Trump's order for a "full" withdrawal of the American military from the war-torn country.

The White House announced the decision on Thursday, February 21, after Mr. Trump spoke with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over the phone.

"A small peacekeeping group of about 200 will remain in Syria for a period of time," White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement after the call between the two leaders.

In December, Mr. Trump abruptly declared victory against the Islamic State (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria and announced that the more than 2,000 US troops in Syria would be withdrawn immediately.

Senate confirms William Barr as attorney general

WASHINGTON (TIP): With a 54-45 vote, the Senate on Thursday, February 14, confirmed William Barr as Attorney General.

This will be Barr's second tour as attorney general; he led the Justice Department during the George H.W. Bush administration.

Barr's nomination last year marked an unusual return to politics for the 68-year-old.

An old guard conservative, Barr has held many of Washington's most influential legal perches, including a stint as the head of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, where he helped shape legal opinions that influenced White House policy and action.

After Bush's re-election defeat, Barr left government service for lucrative positions in the private sector, becoming the general counsel of Verizon up until 2008 and serving on the board of Time Warner, CNN's former parent company, through last year.

In his confirmation hearing last month, Barr pointed to this distance from the Washington career ladder as one of the reasons he decided to take the job.

"I feel I'm in a position in life where I can do the right thing and not really care about the consequences in the sense that I can truly be independent," Barr said.

MUELLER INVESTIGATION: Barr's claim of independence did little to assuage Senate Democrats skeptical of his potential handling of the looming conclusion of Mueller's investigation.

In their rejection, many Democrats have pointed to a 19-page memo Barr wrote and sent to senior White House and Justice Department officials last year that criticized an element of the special counsel probe.

"We must be clear-eyed about the moment our country is facing and the Attorney General's important role in ensuring the integrity of our democratic institutions," Sen. Chris Coons, a Democrat from Delaware, said



Barr returns for the second time as Attorney General

in a statement Wednesday announcing his no vote.

IMMIGRATION: Barr has a reputation as a hardliner on immigration and crime.

His plans to build a barrier along the US-Mexico border in 1992 will ring familiar in an administration currently engaged in a funding fight for a wall to stop an influx of illegal immigration, and in his confirmation hearing last month, Barr aligned himself with the President's views on border security.

Barr's stance on criminal justice, however, appear to have evolved since he endorsed a Justice Department publication titled "The Case for More Incarceration" in 1992, when violent crime rates hit record highs in the country.

Pressed by Democrats at his confirmation hearing last month, Barr said, "I don't think comparing the policies that were in effect in 1992 to the situation now is really fair," and told senators that he would carry out a newly passed bipartisan sentencing reform bill.

"I think the time was right to take stock and make changes to our penal system based on current experience, so I have no problem with the approach of reforming the sentencing

structure and I will faithfully enforce that law," Barr said.

CYBER SECURITY: Barr will face a new landscape of challenges in his second turn at Justice, including foreign threats and cyber crimes that were not on the department's radar, or even physical possibilities, in the early 1990s.

Chinese state-sponsored hacking and intellectual property theft are now top of mind for the Department of Justice, and federal prosecutors have brought a number of cases against Chinese nationals - and that country's biggest telecommunications manufacturer - in recent months.

"The primary rival of the United States is China. I think Russia is half the size it was when we were facing them at the peak of the Cold War. Their economy's long-term prognosis is nowhere near China's," Barr testified last month.

Barr has also set his sights on American technology companies and told senators at his confirmation hearing that he would use the Justice Department's antitrust division to explore questions around competition in Silicon Valley.

Barr agreed to return to the Justice Department out of a sense of "patriotism" and he will likely aim to helm the department in a way that restores some normalcy after a period of criticism from the President and his allies, his friends say.

"This is a person who has a special commitment to making sure that the Justice Department is really seen in a great light," said Paul McNulty, a former deputy attorney general who was Barr's top deputy for policy and communications. "He'd really want his legacy on a second time around at DOJ to be that he made the department stronger, because it's that special to him." (Source: CNN)

US Treasury Sanctions Indian Narcotics Trafficker Jasmeet Hakimzada and his Network

WASHINGTON (TIP): On February 20, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) identified Indian national Jasmeet Hakimzada as a Significant Foreign Narcotics Trafficker pursuant to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (Kingpin Act). OFAC also designated two Indian nationals and four entities registered in India or the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that form part of the narcotics trafficking organization run by Jasmeet Hakimzada. As a result, any assets in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons must be blocked and reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of blocked persons.

"Jasmeet Hakimzada's global drug trafficking and money laundering network has been involved in smuggling heroin and synthetic opioids around the world," said Sigal Mandelker, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence. "This action is a result of years of effort with our U.S. and foreign partners to disrupt the activities of this significant narcotics trafficking organization. We are leveraging extensive international partnerships to deploy a multilayered, coordinated approach to secure our borders and deny narcotics traffickers access to the United States."

Indian narcotics trafficker Jasmeet Hakimzada, who resides in the UAE, runs a global drug trafficking network that smuggles heroin, cocaine, ephedrine, ketamine, and synthetic opioids into the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Since at least 2008, Jasmeet Hakimzada has laundered hundreds of millions of dollars of illicit proceeds using his UAE-based company Maiwand General Trading Company LLC through financial institutions in the United States, Brazil, India, Panama, the UAE, and the UK.

OFAC also designated two individuals who also reside in the UAE, for their roles in Jasmeet Hakimzada's criminal organization: Harmohan Hakimzada, Jasmeet's father, is his primary partner in the drug trafficking and money laundering operation; and Eljeet Kaur,



Indian narcotics trafficker Jasmeet Hakimzada resides in the UAE

Jasmeet's mother, who serves as an officer in two front companies in India.

The four entities designated today include three entities based in India - Maiwand Exim Private Limited, Maiwand Tobacco Limited, and Maiwand Beverages Limited - and UAE-based Maiwand General Trading Company LLC, which operates as a front for an array of illicit activities to include shipping narcotics and illegal pharmaceuticals as well as laundering large sums of narcotics proceeds.

On April 5, 2017, a federal grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee indicted Jasmeet Hakimzada on 46 counts of drug trafficking and money laundering. Over the course of three years from 2014 through 2016, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) conducted an extensive investigation into Jasmeet Hakimzada's global narcotics and money laundering operation uncovering dozens of drug trafficking and money laundering-related transactions transiting the United States involving numerous U.S. banks, as well as drug shipments directly to the United States using commercial international courier services. (Source: DOJ)

Number of people with Master's and Ph.D. Degrees doubles since 2000

About 13.1 Percent Have a Master's, Professional Degree or Doctorate

WASHINGTON (TIP): The educational level of American adults is on the rise as more college graduates go on to earn master's, professional and doctoral degrees, says a US Census report dated February 21.

Since 2000, the number of people age 25 and over whose highest degree was a master's has doubled to 21 million. The number of doctoral degree holders has more than doubled to 4.5 million.

Now, about 13.1 percent of U.S. adults have an advanced degree, up from 8.6 percent in 2000.

These findings come from the U.S. Census Bureau's Educational Attainment in the United States: 2018 table package that uses data from the Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

It examines the educational attainment of adults age 25 and older by demographic and social characteristics, such as age, sex, race and Hispanic origin, nativity and disability status.

In 2017, on average a person with an advanced degree earned 3.7 times as much as a high school dropout.

The tables show, among other things, that



women make up a smaller share of high school dropouts than men, the share of Asians with advanced degrees is growing and that recent immigrants are more likely to go to college than earlier immigrants or native-born. They also clearly show a rise in the number of college graduates who have advanced degrees. In 2000, one-third of people with at least a bachelor's degree had completed an advanced degree. By 2018, 37 percent had done so.

In 2017, on average a person with an advanced degree earned 3.7 times as much as a high school dropout.

Some Highlights

The percentage of people age 25 and over who had completed less than a high school diploma or equivalent was higher for men

(10.6 percent) than for women (9.8 percent).

Between 2000 and 2018, the percentage of people 25 years and older who had completed a bachelor's degree or higher increased by 9 percentage points, from 25.6 percent to 35.0 percent.

Among Asians ages 25 to 29 in 2018, almost 7 in 10 (69.5 percent) had a bachelor's or higher degree. Five years earlier (in 2013), the bachelor's degree attainment rate for this group was 59 percent.

Recent immigrants to the United States were more likely to have a college education than earlier immigrants or the native born.

Among immigrants who have arrived since 2000, 38.8 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 35.2 percent of the native-born. Among earlier immigrants, the rate of college education was lower - for those who arrived in the 1990s, it was 31.3 percent.

Naturalized citizens were among the groups with high levels of college attainment - 38.4 percent had a bachelor's degree or higher.

The children of immigrants were also likely to have a bachelor's degree (39.6 percent).



Indian American Law Firm Executive gets 7 years Imprisonment for Fraud

ATLANTA (TIP): A Federal Judge has sentenced Indian American Asha R. Maurya, former controller in a now defunct law firm, to seven years in prison, and three years of supervised release for participating in a fraud scheme. Her co-conspirator Nathan E. Hardwick IV, an Atlanta real estate attorney, has been sentenced to 15 years in federal prison for orchestrating a scheme to defraud his law firm out of millions of dollars. Maurya was also ordered to forfeit \$900,000 in criminal proceeds. Their restitution hearing is scheduled for May 9, 2019.

According to U.S. Attorney Byung J. "BJay" Pak, the charges and other information presented in court: Hardwick and Asha R. Maurya engaged in a scheme to defraud MHS LAW, Inc. and its subsidiaries, Morris Hardwick Schneider, LLC, and LandCastle Title, LLC, (collectively referred to as "MHS"). MHS owned and operated a law firm that specialized in residential real estate closings and foreclosures, and it ran a title business. MHS employed approximately 800 people in 16 states. Hardwick was the managing partner of the law firm and the CEO of the title business. He also ran the law firm's closing division, which was based in Atlanta. Maurya managed MHS's accounting operations under Hardwick's supervision and control.

In early 2007, Hardwick and his law partners sold off part of their business, and Hardwick pocketed approximately \$11.8 million. Hardwick quickly squandered that money, however, and by the end of 2010 was broke and deeply in debt.

From January 2011 through August 2014, Hardwick siphoned off more than \$26 million from MHS's accounts to pay his personal debts and expenses and to finance his extravagant lifestyle. More than \$19 million of that was client money that was stolen from MHS's attorney trust accounts. Hardwick spent approximately \$18.5 million of the fraud proceeds on gambling, private jets, and more than 50 different social companions.

MHS's audited financial statements showed that the firm's combined net income from 2011 through 2013 was approximately \$10 million. During that same three-year period, however, Hardwick took more than \$20 million out of the firm's accounts.

Both Hardwick and Maurya made numerous false statements to Hardwick's law partners concerning the amount of money that Hardwick was taking out of the firm. Hardwick and Maurya conspired to cover-up the fraud.

Indian American to Pay \$1.25 Million to Settle False Claims Act Allegations

PHILADELPHIA (TIP): Prime Healthcare Services and CEO Dr. Prem Reddy have agreed to pay \$1.25 million to settle false claims act allegations, U.S. Attorney William M. McSwain announced.

He would pay the United States \$1.25 million to settle allegations that two Prime hospitals in Pennsylvania - Roxborough Memorial Hospital in Philadelphia and Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol - knowingly submitted false claims to Medicare by engaging in the following conduct: (1) admitting patients to the hospital for overnight stays who required only less costly, outpatient care and (2) billing for more expensive patient diagnoses than the patients had (the latter practice known as "up-coding").

"We are committed to ensuring that hospitals, companies that own and operate

them, and their executives appropriately bill Medicare," said U.S. Attorney McSwain. "Charging the government for more costly services than what the patient actually needs and billing the government for more serious diagnoses than what the patient actually has is a waste of taxpayer dollars. Those who engage in these practices will be held accountable."

Headquartered in Ontario, California, Prime is one of the largest hospital systems in the nation, with 45 acute-care hospitals located in 14 states. Prime acquired Roxborough Memorial Hospital on February 22, 2012, and Lower Bucks Hospital on October 3, 2012.

The Settlement resolves allegations that Prime submitted or caused the submission of fraudulent claims to Medicare. Specifically, from the date that Prime acquired

Roxborough and Lower Bucks through September 30, 2013, under Prime management, Roxborough and Lower Bucks hospitals admitted emergency room Medicare patients for costly and medically unnecessary one- and two-day overnight hospital stays, instead of treating the patients in less costly outpatient service or keeping them under observation. In addition, from the dates of acquisition through December 31, 2014, the hospitals upcoded inpatient diagnoses (i.e., billed Medicare for more serious medical conditions than the patients actually had) to increase Medicare payments.

As part of a separate lawsuit in the Central District of California, Prime and Dr. Reddy paid the United States \$65 million dollars in August 2018 to settle similar Medicare fraud allegations arising out of 14 Prime hospitals in California.

Congresswoman Grace Meng to Reintroduce Measure Promoting International Mother Language Day

WASHINGTON (TIP): U.S. Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) announced that she will reintroduce a resolution in the House of Representatives that aims to promote International Mother Language Day in the United States. February 21 was declared as the International Mother Language Day at the initiative of Bangladesh.

International Mother Language Day was established in 1999 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to increase awareness of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. The United Nations has been observing the day since 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. Although the holiday is celebrated across the globe, it holds special significance to Bangladesh and those of Bangladeshi descent. The observance date



February 21 was declared as the International Mother Language Day at the initiative of Bangladesh

was chosen to commemorate the day in 1952 in Bangladesh where students died demonstrating for recognition of Bengali as a national language of Pakistan. Dhaka, now the Capital of Bangladesh, was then controlled by Pakistan.

"I am proud to once again introduce this important resolution and I urge all of my Congressional colleagues to support it," said Meng. "Passage of this measure would go a long way towards making more Americans aware of what International Mother Language Day is about. It would also help increase the number of people who observe the holiday in the U.S., and increase awareness of its significance to Bangladesh and those of Bangladeshi descent. I look forward to my measure moving through the House."

Meng plans to reintroduce her measure end February. It would support the goals and ideals of International Mother Language Day, and encourage people in the U.S. to observe it with appropriate ceremonies, programs and activities. Meng has sponsored the resolution during the past three sessions of Congress.

Free air travel for paramilitary forces posted in J&K

NEW DELHI (TIP): All paramilitary personnel deployed in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) will now be entitled to take commercial flights to either join duty or go on leave.

In an order issued on Thursday, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said it has "approved the entitlement of air travel on Delhi-Srinagar, Srinagar-Delhi, Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Jammu sectors to all the personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)". This includes their journey for joining duty, transfer, tour or going on leave, it said.

The CRPF, however, clarified that convoy movement would continue to transport logistics and personnel as and when required, with adequate security measures.

The order comes a week after the attack on a CRPF convoy in Pulwama, in which 40 security personnel were killed. The convoy was on its way from Jammu to Srinagar. Many of those killed were returning after leave.

Sources said questions were raised as to why the troops were not allowed to travel by air so that the risk and threat of travelling on road, in large convoys in the Valley, is eliminated.

MHA officials said that till now, this air travel facility was only available to officers in the rank of Inspectors and above. A senior official said all CAPF personnel will now be able to book tickets on regular commercial flights and claim reimbursement from their organisation or force for travel to and from Kashmir.

Court adjourns hearing in Sunanda Pushkar death case till March 7

NEW DELHI (TIP): A Delhi court on Thursday began hearing the Sunanda Pushkar death case. Sunanda Pushkar's husband and Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who has been accused of abetting her suicide, was present in the court. The court adjourned the matter till March 7 for further hearing.



The police asked the court for 10 days' time to argue on charges against Shashi Tharoor. While, Tharoor's lawyer Vikas Pahwa said that they have filed revision petition for non compliance of evidence under section 207 of the CrPC (supply the accused of copy of police report and other documents) as the documents provided by the prosecution to them have some discrepancies.

Shashi Tharoor has been charged under sections 498-A (husband or his relative subjecting a woman to cruelty) and 306 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Sunanda Pushkar was found dead in a suite of a luxury hotel in the city on the night of January 17, 2014. The couple were staying in the hotel as the official bungalow of Tharoor was being renovated at that time. Earlier this month, a Delhi court had sent the Sunanda Pushkar death case to Sessions court for further proceedings.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal sent the case to Additional Sessions Judge Arun Bhardwaj since the offence under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the IPC.

India will stop share of its water flowing into Pakistan: Gadkari

NEW DELHI (TIP): India has decided to stop the flow of its share of water to Pakistan from rivers under the Indus Water Treaty, a move seen as an immediate fallout of deadly terrorist attack that killed 40 paramilitary personnel in south Kashmir.

Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari tweeted to convey the decision of the government to stop India's share of water going to Pakistan.

But the actual implementation of the decision may take up to six years as dams as high as 100 metres will have to be built to stop such flow, officials said insisting it decision was in no way a violation of the Treaty and was only aimed at getting the rightful due to people of the country.

Under the Indus Water Treaty signed in 1960, the waters of the western rivers -- the Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab -- was given to Pakistan and those of the eastern rivers -- the Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej -- to India.

India's share of water from Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers came to 33 million acres feet (MAF). While about 95 per cent of the water was being used in the country after the construction of three main dams across the rivers, close to 5 per cent water or 1.6 MAF would flow to Pakistan.

To gain access to this water, India is now building more dams which will be completed in six years, officials said.

Another official said the decision was taken two months back.

Water to Pakistan from the three rivers has been flowing for 60 years while the country needs the same to meet needs of its citizens, they said insisting stopping of its share of water from going to Pakistan is in no way a violation of the Treaty.

"Under the leadership of Hon'ble PM Sri @narendramodi ji, Our Govt. has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan. We will divert water from Eastern rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab," Gadkari said in a



India to expedite 3 projects to stop its share of Indus waters from flowing into Pakistan.

tweet. He further said, "The construction of dam has started at Shahpur- Kandi on Ravi river. Moreover, UJH project will store our share of water for use in J&K and the balance water will flow from 2nd Ravi-BEAS Link to provide water to other basin states."

Gadkari's tweets have come barely a week after the gruesome Pulwama terror attack on February 14 in which as many as 40 CRPF personnel were martyred when a terrorist rammed an explosives laden vehicle into a bus carrying them. New Delhi believes the attack was planned and supported by elements in Pakistan. Following the attack, the government revoked the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status given to Pakistan and also imposed 200 per cent customs duty on all goods imported from the neighbouring country.

"We have started the work of purification of river Yamuna ... After the formation of India and Pakistan, Pakistan got three rivers, and India got three rivers. The rightful water of our three rivers was flowing to Pakistan. Now

we will build three projects on them, and divert the water to river Yamuna," Gadkari has said yesterday at Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh while addressing a public rally.

The Union Cabinet in December had approved the Shahpurkandi dam project on the Ravi river in Punjab, a move that was intended to help India arrest its share of water flowing into Pakistan.

For this, a central assistance of Rs 485.38 crore for irrigation component over five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23 was also announced.

The Indus Waters Treaty was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960 for sharing of Indus waters. According to the Treaty, India got the full rights for utilisation of waters of the three eastern rivers -- Ravi, Beas and Satluj. "Some of the water of the Ravi river at present is going waste through the Madhopur Headworks downstream to Pakistan. Implementation of the project would minimise such wastage of water," the government has said in a statement.

Source: PTI

BSP to contest 38 LS seats, SP 37 in UP

LUCKNOW (TIP): The Bahujan Samaj Party will contest 38 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh while the Samajwadi Party would field candidates in 37 constituencies in the upcoming parliamentary polls.

A release signed by BSP chief Mayawati and SP president Akhilesh Yadav listed the name of the constituencies that the two parties are going to contest in the Lok Sabha polls as part of their alliance for the Lok Sabha elections. The 37 seats in the SP quota include Kairana, Moradabad, Sambhal, Rampur, Mainpuri, Firozabad, Badaun, Bareilly, Lucknow, Etawah, Kanpur, Kannauj, Jhansi, Banda, Allahabad, Kaushambi, Phulpur, Faizabad, Gonda, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Varanasi, and Mirzapur.

The BSP will contest from Saharanpur, Bijnor, Nagina, Aligarh, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Dhaurahara, Sitapur, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh, Kaiserganj, Basti, Salempur, Jaunpur, Bhadohi and Deoria, among other constituencies.

The two parties announced a tie-up for

the parliamentary elections last month. The BSP and the SP had then decided to put up candidates on equal number of seats. But the release signed by the two party chiefs named one less constituency for the Samajwadi Party. The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), which had been in talks to join the opposition alliance in Uttar Pradesh, is expected to be given three seats.

At the time of announcing their election tie-up, Mayawati and Akhilesh Yadav had said that the alliance would not field any candidate at Amethi and Rae Bareilly parliamentary constituencies, represented by Congress president Rahul Gandhi and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi respectively. Akhilesh Yadav had later reasoned that they hadn't kept the Congress out in the cold because it was leaving two seats for them. Mayawati had earlier explained that one issue with getting the Congress on board was that the party had "no real vote transfer". Congress leaders have indicated that the other reason, probably had something to do with the number of seats the party wanted.

SC to consider pleas against Rafale verdict



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court said it would consider hearing petitions seeking review of its verdict dismissing petitions demanding a probe into alleged irregularities in procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France under an inter-governmental agreement (IGA).

In a relief to the Modi government, the top court had on December 14 dismissed petitions seeking probe into India-France deal for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets — a twin-engine Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) manufactured by French aerospace company Dassault Aviation — holding there was no commercial favouritism. There was no occasion to "really doubt the decision making process" warranting setting aside of the contract, it had said. Lawyer Prashant Bhushan today requested a Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi to consider the submission that his review petition and an application seeking perjury prosecution of some government officials for "misleading" the court during earlier hearings be listed urgently.

Terrorism 'common concern', says Saudi Crown Prince after talks with PM Modi

NEW DELHI (TIP): Terrorism and extremism are "common concerns" and Saudi Arabia will extend all cooperation to India and other countries in the region to deal with them, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said on Wednesday after holding extensive talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

While the two leaders in their respective press statements after their meeting did not mention Pakistan, top officials in the Ministry of External Affairs later said Pakistan's complicity in the Pulwama terror strike was underlined during their parleys where they also condemned the terrorist attack by the Pakistan-based JeM in "strongest" possible terms.

The meeting took place two days after the influential Arab leader concluded a high profile visit to Islamabad, and in the backdrop of escalating tension between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed by a Jaish-e-Mohammad suicide bomber.

In his statement, Modi called the attack a "cruel symbol" of the scourge of terrorism and sought punishment for terrorists and their backers.

The crown prince, however, did not mention the Pulwama strike in his remarks.

Asserting that close contact between people of Saudi and India was a "living bridge" for the two countries, Modi also welcomed the



Crown Prince's announcement of a potential investment of USD 100 billion in India in areas like energy, refining, petrochemicals, infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing etc. Briefing reporters on the Saudi Crown Prince's visit and issues discussed during his meeting with Modi, T S Tirumurti, Secretary (ER) in Ministry of External Affairs said they also underlined the importance of comprehensive sanctioning of not just terror organisations, but also terrorists by the United Nations, in an apparent reference to New Delhi's demand for JeM head Massod

Azhar's listing by the global body.

The reference to the listing issue assumes significance as in a joint statement, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Monday called for avoiding "politicisation" of the UN listing regime, at a time India is stepping up efforts to brand the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group's chief Masood Azhar a global terrorist.

In an interview to PTI, Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir on Wednesday said any terrorist or anyone who supports and finances terrorism must be proscribed by the United Nations. *Source: PTI*

SC holds Anil Ambani guilty of contempt in Ericsson case, told to clear dues in 4 weeks

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday held industrialist Anil Ambani guilty of contempt in a case filed by telecom equipment maker Ericsson. The court slapped a fine of Rs 1 crore on three Reliance Group companies - RCom, Reliance Telecom Ltd and Reliance Infratel Ltd - in the case. The Swedish telecom equipment maker had complained that Reliance Communications had not paid up as ordered by the court earlier.

The apex court directed Anil Ambani to pay the dues of Rs 453 crore in four weeks failing which he will be sentenced to three-month jail term. An amount of 118 crore is already deposited with the registry. The court directed this amount to be released immediately.

The court observed that RCom had no intention to pay and had "willfully" not paid Ericsson the due amount. An apology by RCom was also rejected by the top court.

Earlier, a bench of Justices RF Nariman and Vineet Saran on February 13 reserved its judgment when Ericsson India had alleged that the Reliance Group has money to invest in the Rafale jet deal but they were unable to clear its dues of Rs 550 crore. The Anil Ambani-led company denied the charge.

Anil Ambani had told the Supreme Court that has entered insolvency proceedings due to failure of Reliance Communications (RCom) assets sale deal with Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio. He argued that he is not in control of the funds.

Modi arrives in South Korea on two-day visit to bolster ties

SEOUL (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived here Thursday on a two-day visit to strengthen India's strategic ties with South Korea and seek to enhance bilateral cooperation in diverse areas, including trade and investment. Ahead of his visit, the prime minister described South Korea as an important partner for India's key initiatives such as 'Make in India', and said as fellow democracies the two countries share values and vision for regional and global peace.

Modi is visiting South Korea on the invitation of President Moon Jae-in. This is his second visit to the Republic of Korea since 2015 and second summit meeting with President Moon Jae-in.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Raveesh Kumar said the visit would strengthen India's special strategic partnership with South Korea and add dynamism to the Look East Policy. During the visit, Prime Minister Modi will have bilateral and business engagements, unveil a bust of Mahatma Gandhi and accept the Seoul Peace Prize conferred upon him, Kumar said in a tweet. Earlier in his departure statement, Modi said his visit is reflective of the importance "we both attach to our relationship". "We regard the Republic of Korea as a valued friend, a nation with which we have a Special Strategic Partnership. As fellow democracies, India and the ROK have shared values and a shared vision for regional and global peace," the prime minister said.

LOK SABHA POLLS 2019

After Maharashtra, TN, BJP eyes poll alliances in Kerala, Andhra

NEW DELHI (TIP): Internal assessments that predicted a tough contest in the Hindi heartland, which it swept in 2014; a desire to retain the party's base in the west; and the compulsion to make inroads into new territories have prompted the Bharatiya Janata Party to seal pre-poll alliances with existing and new partners, senior leaders of the party said on condition of anonymity.

The BJP's focus will now shift to working out the fine-print of agreements in Bihar, Maharashtra and Tami Nadu; ironing out differences in the Northeast; and prospecting for possible pre-and post-poll alliances in Kerala and Andhra Pradesh, the BJP leaders added.

"Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have become a tight contest against a united opposition. We needed to firm up alliances," one of the BJP leaders said. "We ceded space to allies such as the Janata Dal (United), buried differences with the Shiv Sena, and kept our ambitions under check in Tamil Nadu to forge alliances that can help us return to power." The Bihar deal is the oldest, and was struck in December 2018. The BJP's deals with the Sena in Maharashtra and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu were finalised earlier this week.

The BJP has now turned its attention to other states.

"Our alliance with the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab remains intact and there is no major issue over number of seats we will contest," the BJP leader added. Of the 13 Lok Sabha seats of Punjab, the Akalis got 10 to contest in the last election and the BJP 3. "The numbers will remain the same," a second BJP leader said. The party may also cede a seat or two to alliance partners in Jharkhand, where all opposition parties have joined hands, the second leader added.

The BJP's Kerala unit is in talks with the Bharatiya Dharma Jana Sena, an outfit with following among the OBC Ezhava community. "They want about half a dozen seats and discussions are on," a third BJP leader said. "The BJP may also support a couple of independent candidates in the state." Kerala has 20 Lok Sabha seats and despite



The BJP alliance with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra and the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu were finalised earlier this week. The Bihar deal is the oldest, and was struck in December 2018.

fielding candidates in 18 in the last parliamentary election, the party could not win even a single seat.

The BJP continues to flirt with actor-politician Pawan Kalyan (of the Jana Sena) in Andhra Pradesh, but he continues to remain non-committal. The party has, meanwhile, suffered a setback in the Northeast with the Asom Gana Parishad walking out of the National Democratic Alliance over the citizenship amendment bill, which intends to grant citizenship to non-Muslims from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The BJP was relieved after the Bodo People's Front, another ally from Assam, decided to remain with the NDA, but 11 other regional parties gave it the jitters by openly opposing the proposed law.

Guest Comment

Saudi Crown Prince's visit:
The lure of geo-economics
vs 'brotherly love'

The times have changed. Till recently, Saudi Arabia would go along with vitriolic Pakistani resolutions on Kashmir at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Visiting Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's commiserations over the Pulwama attack fell short of expectations. Some renitence is understandable - Pakistan army serves as Riyadh's Praetorian Guard, there are 20 lakh Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia, and for decades, the US-Saudi-Pakistan troika has acted in close concert to superimpose its foreign policy on the region. Nor do the Saudis have very clean hands, having involved themselves in backing non-state actors, from Afghanistan to Syria.

Despite these constraints, India's success in breaking into the Saudi security calculus is laudable: there is an offer for real-time intelligence sharing, which was recently in evidence when Riyadh deported half a dozen Lashkar-e-Taiba suspects along with the prospect of a partnership in maritime security that matches with India's desire to keep a military eye on its sea lanes of communication carrying bulk of its energy supplies. But more important is the move towards erecting formal structures for interaction on anti-terrorism and investment.

India has played its cards well to elicit a shift in the Saudi approach which could have implications for Pakistani behavior, though Riyadh also stands diminished after its stalemate against the resource-strapped Houthis and the clumsy murder of a journalist in Turkey. But the catalyst may have been geo-economics. Mohammed has set his country on the path of modernization- women can now drive; female preachers are encouraged, and the Saudis are rare to enter downstream areas in petroleum overseas. India is among the eight countries identified for an expanding economic footprint with talk of \$100 billion in investment. The Crown Prince also advised the Pakistanis about the need to gain from India's economic resurgence, provided they had a 'great leader'. The Saudis have come a long way. They not just condemned the Pulwama attack, but also denounced it. The lure of the market seems to be triumphing over brotherly love.

AS I SEE IT

US regards India as the 'Closest Ally' & will
be ready to support its war on terrorism

It is for India to take advantage of a sea of US goodwill



By Ven Parameswaran

The US has recommended that India must get rid of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba thru surgical strikes. It is implied that once India decides, both the U.S. and India would jointly formulate military strategy and execute it.

Pakistan sponsored Jaish-e-Mohammed, a terrorist organization, killed 41 Indian para military personnel on February 14th. Immediately upon hearing the news, a chain of successive events took place in Washington D.C. The Secretary of State and the National Security Adviser issued statements of strongest support to India. This was followed by discussion on the situation in the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. All important and leading senators and congressmen/women condemned Pakistan and extended political support to India. The Chief of the US Central Command, General Joseph Votel gave his assessment to the Congress and offered support to India.

The US has recommended that India must get rid of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba thru surgical strikes. It is implied that once India decides, both the U.S. and India would jointly formulate military strategy and execute it. Indian Ambassador Shringla said: "The designation of India as a Major Defense Partner was also codified into law by the US Congress in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2017, thanks to the unstinted support of the members of the India Caucus."

President Trump has been demanding that Pakistan dismantle all terror cells and



Tricolor draped coffins of CRPF personnel who lost their lives in the Pulwama terror attack, during wreath laying ceremony at the CRPF camp in Budgam on Friday, February 15

Photo / Courtesy PTI

organizations inside Pakistan. He is the first US President to cancel military aid to Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan has been wanting to meet President Trump to seek support for loans from the I.M.F. President Trump has told him that unless he gets rid of all terror outfits and terrorists from Pakistan, he would not support Pakistan's request.

Pakistan was defeated by India in three conventional wars. India defeated Pakistan in its third war and Pakistan lost East Pakistan. Since then, Pakistan has been using the homegrown terrorist organizations, such as Jaish-e-Mohammed; Lashkar-e-Taiba; and others as proxy to fight India. This resulted in attacks on the Indian Parliament, New Delhi shopping mall, and the City of Mumbai that killed 165 Indians and foreigners.

Pakistan is controlled by its military and the I.S.I., its intelligence agency. The military has selected its Prime Minister and therefore the Parliament is a joke. Because India so far has not retaliated, Pakistan has taken

advantage and continues to use the terrorists to attack India.

India's new Ambassador to the U.S.A., Harsh Vardhan Shringla after presenting his credentials to President Trump was given the most enthusiastic reception at the Capitol Hill. This was attended by more senators and congressmen/women than ever before. The grand reception given to Ambassador Shringla is a reflection of India-US relations, with India now branded as "CLOSEST ALLY". The chain of events in Washington after Pakistan's attack in Kashmir reinforces President Trump's new policy towards South Asia. India should be pleased because the "CLOSEST ALLY" status has bipartisan support. It is time for India to take full advantage of the US support and draw up a plan to end the scourge of terrorism from inside Pakistan.

(The author, in the U.S. for 65 years, lives in Scarsdale, N.Y. He is a Senior Adviser to Imagindia Institute, New Delhi, a think tank. He can be reached at vpwaren@gmail.com)

Readers Write

"Fire & Fury" Trump nominated by
Abe for Nobel Peace Prize

I applaud and join PM Shinzo Abe, whose nation saw North Korean ICBM rockets fly over Japan, to nominate President Donald J. Trump for the Nobel Peace prize. Unlike prior presidents who could deliberate into inaction, President Trump charged in with "Fire & Fury" and "Little Rocket Man" and promised devastation of DPRK and Chairman Kim jong Un. The rest, as they say is history as the North Korean Missiles have stopped flying.

While it isn't easy to always agree with Trump's "ways & means", his foreign policy goals are more often than not - dead on. Credit the disturbed Deep State has a hard time comprehending, let alone supporting.

The Arab Spring was started by a male Street Vendor in Tunisia after he was insulted by a female cop, and after unsuccessfully trying his best to protest, he self-immolated. Trump gave voice to the overwhelming number of unhappy and angry hardworking Americans who feel they and their children had been dealt out of the American Dream by lobbyists and Special Interests (who created the most unnecessary and corrupt 4Trillion dollar TARP as a reward to those who had then just destroyed America's pensions & 401Ks in 2007).

Trump is the updated version of Teddy Roosevelt, as he changed "walk softly and carry a big stick" to "walk loudly and carry a big stick!" In today's noise-filled life, Trump has cut through the status quo with his unending Tweet-storms, disrupted geopolitics, and made America stronger and safer, even if not liked as much as before. The British Empire's biggest empire-building asset - "it's been decided" - no matter if right or wrong - it was followed through as 'it's been decided.' Trump is a 'decider' and the American Empire is on the march to greater peace & security."

Ravi Batra Esq.
(ravibatralaw@aol.com),
New York

Letter to Editor

Mea Culpa

Dear Editor:

Re the recent piece of mine on Gurduara Troubles in Glen Cove, New York that you kindly published in the Indian Panorama just days ago.

True that it was not the first of my opinions on our dysfunctional gurduara management, but very deliberately and carefully in the past I NEVER identified by name any of the persons involved in any altercations. Why? Because shaming people was never my intent NOR is it now. The note that you published under my name identified some of the responsible people and that created unforeseen problems. This note was NEVER intended for publication and general distribution. It was intended for only a limited audience to spur them to use discretion and good sense in an effort towards working for an amicable resolution for the greater good.

For this reason I had NOT submitted this note to you for publication. Apparently, someone from one side or the other, sent it to you perhaps hoping to shame people into better sense. Unfortunately shaming did what it usually does - it makes them aggressively self-defensive. I witnessed firsthand the unfortunate result today. At an unrelated function loyalist of both sides accosted me. They were offended for having been named in print. In the melee, the intent of my piece was lost. My theme was that the gurduara is not meant to divide our community into "Friends and Foes" but to create an ambience where we transform a divided people into collaborators and allies that work towards the common good of the community despite our differences.

The public shaming from seeing their names in print very likely kills any incentive for peace and for that I offer regrets -- a sincere Mea Culpa.

I.J. Singh, (ijsingh99@gmail.com)

North Bellmore, New York

February 18, 2019

Air Canada ignoring its Punjabi Customer Base

No Flights from Vancouver & Toronto to Amritsar



By Harjap Singh Aujla

As the number of Punjabis swelled to over a million in Canada. Air Canada decided to start Toronto – New Delhi flight on all seven days of the week. Who advised Air Canada to take this decision is not known. The fact remains that more than 80% load of Air Canada Toronto – New Delhi flight

It is the paramount duty of all modes of transportation, including the railways, airways and road transportation to serve the customers as conveniently as possible. Punjabis are settled in Canada since early 1900s. They started with a few hundred landing in small numbers in Vancouver area prior to World War I and their numbers kept swelling in later years. Most of them were from the districts of Lyallpur, Montgomery, Lahore, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala. After the 1947 partition of Punjab, most of the immigrants from Lahore, Lyallpur and Montgomery moved to the districts of Ferozepur, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur. All this area is served by Amritsar Airport, the oldest in East Punjab, in operation since 1944.

After independence of India, the Canadian immigration laws were made more liberal and during the 1950s, the numbers of Punjabis swelled to over 100000 in whole of Canada, most of them were clustered around the city of Vancouver in the British Columbia Province. When air travel picked

not want to lose this costly slot. So they decided to skip Birmingham and route their Toronto flight through London Heathrow. This move temporarily reduced the load of Jet Airways. In a jiffy, Jet Airways decided to cancel their Amritsar – London operation. After sometime, GMR built a new terminal at New Delhi Airport called T-3. Somehow Air India decided to fly first thrice weekly from New Delhi via London to Toronto and subsequently they started New Delhi – London – Toronto daily flight. Changing gear quickly, they started flying on Amritsar – New Delhi – London route daily and commenced a new service to Toronto from New Delhi. Subsequently Amritsar was dropped from the route to the dismay of all Punjabis.

As the number of Punjabis swelled to over a million in Canada. Air Canada decided to start Toronto – New Delhi flight on all seven days of the week. Who advised Air Canada to take

community had barred Turkmenistan from operations over the European Union. But they have hired other planes to continue their operations unhindered.

The Punjabi diaspora living in all major cities of Australia, including Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Gold Coast, Adelaide and Brisbane is served very well by one Singapore based Scoot Airlines and two Kuala Lumpur based companies Malindo Airlines and Air Asia X. They pick up passengers daily from Amritsar and transfer them to the Australian flights. Scoot now serves Auckland in New Zealand too. Similarly all the Pacific rim countries are served by flights from Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Now the Punjabi origin passengers bound for South East Asian countries and Australia / New Zealand do not



Air Canada loses heavy revenue in not operating on Vancouver/ Toronto-Amritsar route

originates from areas around Amritsar International Airport. Long ago, Air Canada could shun Amritsar Airport on the grounds that Amritsar had no five star hotel. Now both Taj Swarna and Hyatt Regency are truly 5 star hotels. There are other hotels also almost in the same category. Now Air Canada has no excuse to shun Amritsar International Airport. This airport has a 12001 foot long runway, which was recently strengthened to take heaviest planes. There are at least 15 fully functional parking spots for planes and the finest taxi-ways. This airport has the latest instrument landing system ILS CAT 3, which enables planes to land with 50 meter visibility and take off with 125 meter visibility. Now all flights coming from Europe and North America can land at Amritsar during poor visibility at New Delhi Airport.

up steam, during the 1960s, the Ontario Province, which was geographically closer to the United Kingdom and India, started getting more Punjabi immigrants from Great Britain and the Indian Punjab. Toronto, being the largest city in Canada and its surrounding areas started getting bulk of the immigrants of Punjabi origin both from England and India. Vancouver got most of the rest.

When I reached the USA in 1980, the number of Indian Punjabis in Canada had exceeded half a million, the majority of them were in British Columbia. Ontario had the second biggest concentration, followed by Alberta and Quebec. Air India, in a business savvy decision, around early years of 2000s, decided to fly to Toronto. They already had a service from Amritsar to Birmingham. It was wiser on their part to extend the Air India service to Toronto. For a few years the Amritsar – Birmingham – Toronto service of Air India was running with a load factor of 80 to 90%. Very high for Air India compared to other flights. Turkmenistan Airlines also had a successful operation between Birmingham – Ashgabat – Amritsar and they were running in decent profit.

Sensing success of Amritsar – Birmingham – Toronto service of Air India, a newly emerging company Jet Airways also started a six days per week service to London (Heathrow). It was also running with a passenger load of 80 % to 90%. Air India had three slots per day (21 slots per week) at the most sought after Heathrow Airport in metropolitan London. They were operating one flight every day from Bombay and New Delhi to London. For quite some time, their third slot was not being used. Heathrow, being too much in demand, decided to cancel the third slot. Air India did

this decision is not known. The fact remains that more than 80% load of Air Canada Toronto – New Delhi flight originates from areas around Amritsar International Airport. Long ago, Air Canada could shun Amritsar Airport on the grounds that Amritsar had no five star hotel. Now both Taj Swarna and Hyatt Regency are truly 5 star hotels. There are other hotels also almost in the same category. Now Air Canada has no excuse to shun Amritsar International Airport. This airport has a 12001 foot long runway, which was recently strengthened to take heaviest planes. There are at least 15 fully functional parking spots for planes and the finest taxi-ways. This airport has the latest instrument landing system ILS CAT 3, which enables planes to land with 50 meter visibility and take off with 125 meter visibility. Now all flights coming from Europe and North America can land at Amritsar during poor visibility at New Delhi Airport.

Of late Air Canada has started another non-stop service from Vancouver to New Delhi. For this flight too, 80 to 90% load comes from Amritsar region. Who advised Air Canada to take this step beats my imagination? More over Amritsar is the home to the most sacred shrine of the Sikh community, the Golden Temple, where every Punjabi likes to bow his/her head on arrival as well as at the time of departure. Things have changed for the better at Amritsar International Airport.

Amritsar is very well connected to the Middle – East. There are three daily flights to Dubai and one to Doha. Amritsar has three flights per/day to Mumbai, which connect Amritsar to Manchester (UK) too. Birmingham is served thrice a week from Amritsar by Air India and four times a week by Turkmenistan Airlines. The European

have to travel to New Delhi for seven to eight hours by cars and buses.

The story of Canada is totally perplexing. This great nation has the largest contingent of high level elected officials of Punjabi origin, including MPs. Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, the member of parliament from Slough (London) is single-handedly toiling hard to connect London with Amritsar. But none from the nearly two dozen MPs of Canada is even making a well meaning attempt to directly connect Punjabi diaspora living in Canada with Amritsar International Airport.

All that the diaspora wants is direct Air Canada flights from Vancouver to Amritsar and from Toronto to Amritsar. Can't they hold meetings with Air Canada to exert pressure to start these flights. We have very fine hotels in Amritsar at half the prices compared to New Delhi and Mumbai. Amritsar has been adjudged as the fastest growing large airport in India for the year 2018.

The "Amritsar Vikas Manch" and its offshoot "Fly-Amritsar Initiative" spearheaded by Professor Mohan Singh and assisted by Manjit Singh Saini, Kulwant Singh Ankh, Charanjit Singh Gumtala, Er. D.S. Kohli, Sameep Singh Gumtala, Yogesh Kamra and Michael Raul among others have launched a signature campaign to connect two major cities of Canada and London (UK) with Amritsar by direct flights. This campaign is in full steam, already about 20000 signatures have been obtained. It will be submitted to Air Canada and other organizations for action. Hopefully something positive will emerge.

(The author can be reached at harjapauja@gmail.com)

Indian Origin Gas Station Clerk shot dead in Florida



Kotha Goverdhan Reddy, a native from Telangana was allegedly shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Florida

TAMPA (TIP): Kotha Goverdhan Reddy, a native from Telangana was allegedly shot dead by unidentified gunmen in Florida on Feb 19. He worked as a clerk at a gas station located near the Pensacola area of the city. He came to Florida six years ago. News agency ANI reported that the victim is survived by his wife and two teenager daughters who stay in village Raheem Khan Pet in Telangana's Yadadri Bhongir district.

"We received information that on Tuesday late night, two persons barged into the gas station store where Goverdhan was alone and opened fire on him," Madhusudan Reddy, the brother of the victim, told ANI. "The local authorities are suspecting that the two unidentified men who shot Goverdhan would be robbers. Exactly we don't know the reason why the assailants had killed my brother... We are waiting for details," he was further quoted by ANI.

The Pensacola police said that based on CCTV footage, they identified at least three people who were involved in the crime and arrested them.

South Korea retracts guidelines on look-alike K-pop stars

SEOUL (TIP): Government guidelines aimed at promoting more diversity in South Korea's K-pop world have been withdrawn after critics said they amounted to state censorship of a booming industry.

The guidelines issued last week complained that K-pop stars looked too alike, saying "the problem of ... uniformity among singers is serious", and noting most idols were thin and wore identical make-up and skimpy outfits.

South Korea's K-pop world is a multi-billion-dollar business, but so too is the plastic surgery industry in the image-obsessed country, and tens of thousands of people go under the knife every year in pursuit of the perfect look.

The guidelines from the ministry of gender equality drew criticism online -- and also from a lawmaker who said it was reminiscent of censorship during the country's period of authoritarian government which ended in 1980s.

Demanding the state apologises, Lawmaker Ha Tae-keung said the guidelines were a "totalitarian and unconstitutional idea".

In a survey of teenagers last year, nearly 70 per cent said the idea of trying to become a celebrity in the entertainment industry had crossed their mind.

The ministry alluded to the impact TV celebrities have on young people in the guidelines. "Overt concerns for how one should look on TV has a negative impact not only on adults, but also on teenagers and children," it said. AFP

China's desire for close Iran ties unchanged, Xi says ahead of Saudi Prince's visit

BEIJING (TIP): China's desire to develop close ties with Iran will remain unchanged, regardless of the international situation, President Xi Jinping told the Speaker of Iran's Parliament, ahead of Thursday's visit to Beijing by Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince.

China has traditionally played little role in Middle East conflicts or diplomacy, despite relying on the region for oil, with Iran its fourth largest supplier last year, but has been trying to raise its profile, especially in the Arab world.

Saudi Arabia's King Salman visited Beijing in 2017, and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman arrives on Thursday for a two-day visit.

However, China has had to walk a fine line, as it also has close ties with Saudi Arabia's regional foe, Iran.

Meeting Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani on Wednesday, Xi said the two countries had a long friendship and shared long-tested mutual trust, according to a Chinese foreign ministry statement issued on Thursday.

"No matter how the international and regional situation changes, China's resolve to develop a comprehensive strategic partnership with Iran will remain unchanged," it paraphrased Xi as saying.

China and Iran should further deepen strategic mutual trust and continue to support each other on core interests and major



concerns, Xi added.

China advocates cooperation among international and regional parties to swiftly put the Middle East on the road of stability and development, he said.

"We support Iran in playing a constructive role in maintaining regional peace and stability and are willing to closely communicate and coordinate on regional issues," Xi added.

In Beijing, Larijani has been accompanied by Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who met his Chinese counterpart on Tuesday.

Washington's major European allies opposed a decision last year by U.S. President Donald Trump to abandon the Iran nuclear deal that included China and Russia, and lifted international sanctions on Iran, in return for curbs on its nuclear programme. Reuters

Former New Zealand PM denies writing article in China's official paper

WELLINGTON (TIP): New Zealand's former prime minister has denied writing an article attributed to her by the official newspaper of China's ruling communist party that praised the Asian giant's economic development at a time of strained ties.

The first-person opinion piece, headlined "We need to learn to listen to China", was published under Jenny Shipley's name on the website of the People's Daily on Monday. It had become its top-read English-language story by Thursday.

"It is important for the foreign minister and prime minister and others to understand that I would never think of getting into a public situation like this, at such an important time for New Zealand's relationship," Shipley told the New Zealand Herald newspaper. She said she had not been aware of the piece.

Shipley, who is the chairwoman of the New Zealand subsidiary of China Construction Bank, did not respond to Reuters' request for comment on Thursday.

The People's Daily, which published a Chinese version in the newspaper's main edition on Jan. 23, said it was looking into the matter and declined further immediate comment.

The item drew a backlash from Foreign Minister Winston Peters, who told Radio New Zealand on Wednesday its timing was "very unwise".



An intelligence agency decision in November that rejected participation by Chinese technology giant Huawei in New Zealand's 5G network has left politicians and foreign policy analysts worried about relations with one of New Zealand's key trading partners.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's first visit to Beijing has faced scheduling issues and China last week postponed the New Zealand launch of a major tourism campaign. Shipley said she had been interviewed by a Chinese newspaper in

December for a feature article that had already been published, the New Zealand Herald said. An article with comments on topics similar to those in Monday's piece ran last month on the website of the China Daily, a separate state-run newspaper, but was couched in the third person and put Shipley's comments in quotation marks.

Shipley was New Zealand's first female prime minister and led the country from 1997 to 1999 as head of the centre-right National Party. Reuters

UK strips teen of citizenship, Begum had joined IS in Syria

Currently in a refugee camp, she describes move as 'unjust'

LONDON (TIP) Britain stripped a teenager who travelled to join Islamic State of her citizenship on security grounds, triggering a row over the ramifications of leaving a 19-year-old mother with a jihadist fighter's child to fend for herself in a war zone.

The fate of Shamima Begum, who was found in a detention camp in Syria last week, has illustrated the ethical, legal and security conundrum that governments face when dealing with the families of militants who swore to destroy the West.

With Islamic State depleted and Kurdish-led militia poised to seize the group's last holdout in eastern Syria, Western capitals are trying to work out what to do with battle-hardened foreign jihadist fighters, and their wives and children.

Begum, who gave birth to a son at the weekend, prompted a public backlash in Britain by appearing unrepentant about seeing severed heads and even claiming the 2017 Manchester suicide attack was justified.

Begum, who is currently in a Syrian refugee camp, described the move as "unjust". "I am not that shocked but I am a bit shocked. It's a bit upsetting and frustrating. I feel like it's a bit unjust on me and my son," she told 'ITV News' channel from the camp.

Begum claimed that she was being treated harshly because "I was on the news four years ago", saying that she heard of "other people being sent back to Britain". "I don't know why my case is any different," she added.

She had pleaded to be repatriated back to her family in London and said that she was not a threat. But ITV News published a February 19 letter from the interior ministry to her mother that said Home Secretary Sajid



Javid had taken the decision to deprive Begum of her British citizenship.

The letter asked Begum's mother to inform her daughter of the decision and set out the appeal process. When asked about the decision, a spokesman said Javid's priority was "the safety and security of Britain and the people who live here".

Begum was one of three outwardly

Labour questions govt move

The government's move to strip Begum of her citizenship has been attacked by the Opposition Labour Party, with shadow home secretary Diane Abbott calling it a failure of security obligations and breach of human rights law

"If the government is proposing to make Shamima Begum stateless it is not just a breach of international human rights law but is a failure to meet our security obligations to the international community," Diane Abbott, Labour spokeswoman on home issues

Under the 1981 British Nationality Act, the UK home secretary has the power to deprive a person of their citizenship if satisfied that it would be "conducive to the public good" and they would not become stateless as a result

Meanwhile, an e-petition started last week since Begum's case hit the headlines has attracted nearly 45,000 signatures calling for preventing her return to the UK

studious schoolgirls who slipped away from their lives in London's Bethnal Green area in February 2015 to fly to Turkey and then over the border into the cauldron of the Syrian civil war. — Agencies

'Concrete measures' on sex abuse must: Pope

VATICAN CIT (TIP): Pope Francis opened on Thursday a landmark summit at the Vatican on fighting child sex abuse, saying that the world expected "concrete measures" on tackling paedophilia in the Catholic Church.

The pontiff will dedicate the next three and a half days to discussing the Church's response to child abuse by members of the clergy with bishops from around the world. "The Holy people of God are watching and waiting not for simple and obvious condemnations, but concrete and efficient measures," he said as the summit opened, the first of its kind.

The pope is aiming to tackle the continuing scandal, which again hit the Church in 2018 in countries across the globe, including Chile, Germany and the United States. —AFP

Mongolia shuts KFC after dozens hospitalised

ULAANBAATAR (TIP): Mongolian authorities have temporarily closed all KFC restaurants in the country after more than 200 customers suffered food poisoning symptoms and dozens were hospitalised.

The first cases emerged earlier this month, with 16 persons showing symptoms of food poisoning, including diarrhoea, vomiting and high fever after eating at the fried chicken franchise. Ulaanbaatar's Metropolitan Professional Inspection Department said 247 similar cases had been reported and 42 people had been hospitalised. AFP

Huawei's founder says world can't live without it

BEIJING (TIP): The founder of Chinese telecom giant Huawei has hit back at the US efforts to blacklist the company, saying defiantly that the world cannot do without Huawei and its "more advanced" technology. "There's no way the US can crush us," Ren Zhengfei said in an interview with the BBC.

"The world cannot leave us because we are more advanced." Ren (74), also denounced as "politically motivated" the December arrest of his daughter, Huawei Chief Financial Officer Meng Wanzhou, who is accused of violating US sanctions against Iran. AFP

'Suicide bomber who killed 27 members of Iran's Guards was Pakistani'

GENEVA (TIP): The man who carried out a suicide bombing which killed 27 members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards near the border with Pakistan last week was Pakistani, a senior Revolutionary Guards commander said on Tuesday, according to the Tasnim news agency.

One other member of the militant cell that planned the attack was also a Pakistani citizen, the head of the Guards' ground forces, Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour said. Iran has repeatedly blamed Pakistan for sheltering militants connected with attacks in the border area, although Tuesday's remarks appear to be the first time Tehran has said Pakistani citizens were directly involved in the attack. (Reuters)

Putin warns new missiles could target 'decision-making centres'

MOSCOW (TIP): President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday said Russia would have to deploy missiles targeting "decision-making centres" if Washington sends missiles to Europe.

The announcement comes after the US said it would withdraw from a key Cold War-era arms treaty over what it said were Russian violations, prompting a mirror move from Moscow.

"Russia does not intend to be the first to deploy such missiles in Europe," Putin said during an annual state of the nation address.

"If (the US) develops and deploys them in Europe... this will dramatically exacerbate the international security situation, creating serious threats to Russia," he said.

"I'm saying this clearly and openly, Russia will be forced to deploy weapons that can be used... against the decision-making centres that are behind the missiles systems which threaten us."

He earlier accused Washington of using "far-fetched accusations" to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement.

Putin said he understood concerns about the bilateral deal, namely that other countries could continue to develop weapons that are banned for the US and Russia.

"The current state of affairs of course raises questions," he told the audience of



lawmakers and celebrities.

"Our American partners should have been honest... and not use far-fetched accusations against Russia to justify their unilateral withdrawal from the treaty," he added.

The United States has repeatedly accused Russia of violating the INF by developing banned weapons and this month President Donald Trump said Washington was starting a process to withdraw from the treaty.

In a tit-for-tat move, Putin said Moscow was

also leaving the treaty and beginning work on new types of weapons that would breach the agreement.

Many analysts say abandoning the treaty effectively signalled the start of a new arms race.

The INF deal was signed in 1987 by then US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and resolved a crisis over Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles targeting Western capitals. — AFP



KIARA ADVANI RECEIVES THE 'EMERGING STAR OF THE YEAR' AWARD

Acknowledging her achievements of the past year, Bollywood actress Kiara Advani was presented "The Emerging Star Of The Year Award" at the Asiavision Awards 2018 as a token of love and appreciation.

Kiara Advani had a good run at the box office last year 2018 and had even tasted success with two hits down south.

The gala night saw A-list celebrities from South Cinema and Bollywood industry under one roof. Right from Ranveer Singh to Ayushmann Khurrana to other celebrities from down south, the evening was a starry affair.

Kiara, who is hopping between shoots for two of her upcoming films, also made it for the award. She was thrilled to receive the title of 'Emerging Star Of The Year', and said, "I am extremely humbled to be receiving the prestigious title. It's overwhelming when your hard work is loved and acknowledged and this only motivated me to work harder and promise to live up to the honour."

Kiara is currently shooting for 'Good News' alongside Diljit Dosanjh, Akshay Kumar and Kareena Kapoor Khan and for 'Kabir Singh' opposite Shahid Kapoor, where Kiara will be seen in a de-glam avatar.

I DON'T WANT TO BE SINGLE NOW: KATRINA

Ever since she parted ways with Ranbir Kapoor in 2016, Katrina Kaif has been "as single as one can possibly be". However, she is hoping to change that this year and find her Mr Right.

In a recent interview, Katrina was asked about the things that she wanted this year. "A boyfriend. I don't want to be single now," was one of the things she wished for.

Katrina revealed that she has never really dated anyone and has only had "heavy, intense, all-or-nothing relationships". It was during a conversation with a friend that she realised that she has never really experienced going on casual dates. "I don't know if I will be able to do that," she said.

While Katrina is not opposed to the idea of dating, she does not think that she is meant for it. "If you're not that person, who is like that, then it's tough, right?" she said.

According to the actress, she was "as single as one can possibly be". "There is no more single than this right now," she said.

Katrina was also asked what was important for her in a relationship. "The most important thing which I believe now is you have to maintain your sense of individuality and still have your sense of who you are, apart from your partner," she said.

On the work front, Katrina is currently shooting for Ali Abbas Zafar's Bharat, in which she is paired opposite Salman Khan. The period drama also features Disha Patani, Nora Fatehi, Tabu and Sunil Grover in key roles.

Bharat is an official remake of the Korean film, Ode To My Father, and depicts the history of India through the life of an ordinary man. It is scheduled to open in theatres on Eid this year.



Sanjay Kapoor's daughter Shanaya to make her Bollywood debut in cousin Janhvi Kapoor's next

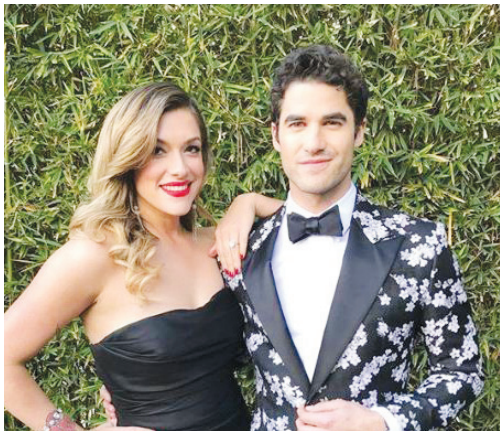
As more and more star kids make their foray into Bollywood, next in line is actor Sanjay Kapoor's daughter Shanaya Kapoor. It was revealed that the 19-year-old would be making her debut as an assistant director and has already flown to Lucknow to begin work on a film. According to a report in Mumbai Mirror, Shanaya is assisting on the film – the Gunjan Saxena biopic starring her cousin Janhvi Kapoor. She will be learning the ropes of filmmaking before her big acting debut in 2020.

A source said in the report, "The team will be shooting in Lucknow for the next two weeks before moving to other locations. While Shanaya has made up her mind about being an actress, her parents wanted her to experience life behind the scenes first. She had been making regular rounds of Karan Johar's Andheri office to work on the project." The film is being directed by

debutant Sharan Sharma, who assisted Karan Johar on 2016 film Ae Dil Hai Mushkil. Janhvi will be playing Gunjan, one of the first Indian female helicopter pilots and the first woman to be honoured with the Shaurya Chakra, who had evacuated soldiers injured in the 1999 Kargil War.

A few days ago, Sanjay had broken the news on the social media by sharing a throwback picture of the father-daughter posing together, with the caption, "All the best Shanaya #newbeginnings #newjourney."

Her mother Maheep Kapoor had also shared a picture and a message that read, "My baby's gone to Lucknow for 2 weeks #MissYouAlready #AssistantDirectorsLife #LoveYou @shanayakapoor02 #ProudMama." Neerja actor Sonam Kapoor was the first among the Kapoor cousins to make her acting debut. *Source: HT*



DARREN CRISS MARRIES GIRLFRIEND MIA SWIER

Darren Criss, the Emmy and the Golden Globe-winning star of 'American Crime Story: The Assassination of Gianni Versace', has tied the knot with his longtime girlfriend Mia Swier. The 32-year-old star and Swier got married on Saturday at the Ace Hotel in New Orleans.

The wedding was attended by many of Criss' fellow 'Glee' alums, including Lea Michele, John Stamos, Chord Overstreet and Harry Shum Jr.

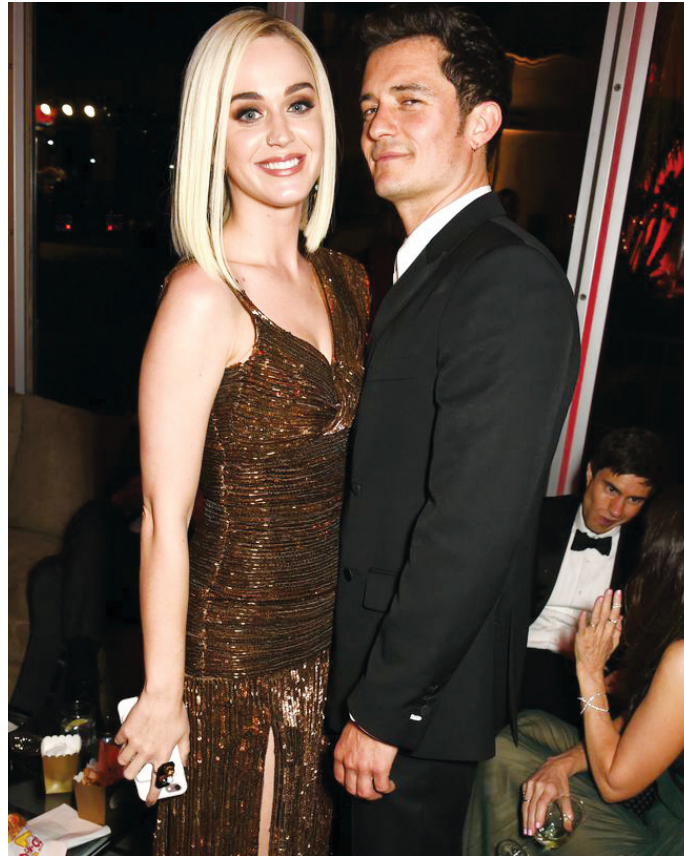
The actor had announced his engagement to Swier in January 2018.

"Mia and I have had seven and a half years of fun, wacky, wonderful, CRAZY adventures together. And I'm happy to announce that we're kicking those adventures up a notch.

"We're going for it. To boldly go where neither of us have gone before. Engage," he had posted on Instagram.

Besides his successful Hollywood career, Criss co-owns a Hollywood piano bar, called Tram Stamp Granny's, with Swier.

KATY PERRY'S ENGAGEMENT RING FROM ORLANDO BLOOM HAS A LINK TO PRINCESS DIANA



It's only right that Katy Perry, a woman who wore a memorable dress to the Grammys and rode into her Super Bowl halftime performance on a giant lion, receive an engagement ring that matches her fun and unexpected style. Orlando Bloom, her new fiancé, nailed the challenge.

The Lord of the Rings alum proposed to the pop star on Valentine's Day with a unique (and sizable) flower-shaped ring, featuring a deep pink center stone embraced by a ring of eight smaller diamonds. Perry and Bloom both flaunted the rock on Instagram this morning.

Because the couple's selfie is the only public picture we have of the ring, it's hard to distinguish its exact features. There's speculation as to whether the rosy middle gem is a ruby, pink diamond, or pink sapphire, and therefore various experts are projecting different estimates for its possible value. Kathryn

Money of Brilliant Earth tells Town & Country the ring could cost between \$25,000 and \$50,000 if the middle stone is a ruby, while Andrew Brown, president of WP Diamonds, tells E! News the ring could be worth \$5 million.

The exact price tag remains unconfirmed, but we do know the ring's structure has a royal connection. Perry's piece of jewelry is known as a cluster ring, according to Stephen Feuerman of NYC jeweler Stephen Russell, which specializes in period jewelry.

The design came into style around 1900, but resurged in popularity after Prince Charles proposed to Princess Diana with a sapphire cluster ring with surrounding diamonds in 1981.

"Lady Di really brought them back into fashion when Charles gave her one," Feuerman tells BAZAAR.com. (Prince William later used the same ring to propose to Kate Middleton in 2010.)

Richard Gere, 69, welcomes baby boy with 35-year-old wife Alejandra Silva



Richard Gere, 69, and his wife Alejandra Silva, 35, have welcomed their first bundle of joy, a baby boy. A representative for the actor confirmed the happy news to the media. The boy, whose name has not been revealed yet, was born last week in New York.

Although Gere and Silva both have children from their previous marriages, this is their first child together. While Gere has an 19-year-old son, Homer, with ex-wife Casey Lowell, Silva has a six-year-old son, Albert, from her previous marriage to Govind Friedland.

Gere and Silva got married in April last

year after being in a relationship for over three years. Although they are family friends and have known each other for over a decade, they reconnected through a common friend in 2014 and instantly hit it off.

The couple announced the news of Silva's pregnancy with an Instagram post in September, in which the Dalai Lama was seen blessing her baby bump. "A very special moment just a few minutes ago... Getting blessings for our precious to come," she captioned the now-deleted post. "We couldn't announce it before telling HH Dalai Lama," she added.



MANDY MOORE ON HER MARRIAGE TO RYAN ADAMS: I WAS LONELY WITH HIM

Singer-actor Mandy Moore has opened up about her former marriage to musician Ryan Adams calling it 'an entirely unhealthy dynamic'. During an appearance on the episode of Marc Maron show, Moore said she was 'sad and lonely'.

"I was living my life for him. It (was) an entirely unhealthy dynamic. I had no sense of self. I felt like I was drowning. It was so untenable and unsustainable and it was so lonely. I was so sad," Moore, 34, said.

The interview comes in light of the recent article in which Adams was accused of sexual misconduct and emotional abuse by multiple

women, including Moore.

She added that pressure from Adams led to her working less.

"I got married in 2009, and that's when things really quieted down for me. I would do little jobs. It's not like I completely stopped working. I would do things here or there, but it would become abundantly clear while I was working, things would fall completely apart at home.

"I couldn't do my job because there was a constant stream of trying to pay attention to this person who needed me and wouldn't let me do anything else." *Source: PTI*

British aide to Malaysian ex-PM charged with money laundering: Report

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP): Malaysian authorities charged Paul Stadlen, a British national who had worked for disgraced former prime minister Najib Razak as a media adviser, with two counts of money laundering, state news agency Bernama reported on Wednesday. Najib was ousted in a general election last year amid widespread public anger over a multibillion-dollar graft scandal at state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). Malaysian anti-graft investigators issued a notice in November calling for Stadlen, whose whereabouts are unknown, to assist in its 1MDB probe. Malaysian media reports say he fled the country shortly after Najib's shock defeat in the May 9 election.

Stadlen was charged in absentia on Wednesday with laundering a total of 14.3 million ringgit (\$3.5 million) that were proceeds from illegal activities and had been deposited in the client account of a law firm that prosecutors claimed received money from Najib. Stadlen was accused of ordering the sum to be transferred from the account to several companies and individuals between June 2014 and August 2015, Bernama said, citing charge sheets filed at a Kuala Lumpur court. (Reuters)

Bangladesh shuts 20,000 websites in anti-porn 'war'

DHAKA (TIP): Bangladesh authorities have blocked almost 20,000 websites as part of an anti-pornography "war", a minister said Tuesday. Internet providers in the conservative Muslim-majority nation took down pornography and gambling websites in the past week under orders from the telecommunications regulator. AFP

Protests in Nepal after satirical song taken off Web

KATHMANDU (TIP): The sudden withdrawal of a popular song — full of satire aimed at corruption and highly placed public figures — from YouTube and other social media by its creator, apparently under political pressure, has sparked a spate of protests across the country and among the Nepali diaspora.

"Lutna sake loot kanchha, lutna sake loot, aru deshma paidaina, Nepal ma chha chhut," (Loot whatever you can, as you can do that in Nepal) is a popular song by Pashupati Sharma. It disappeared from social media abruptly on Saturday night, with a note from Sharma that while he would make certain changes in the wording, he would not surrender his right as a Nepali citizen to raise his voice against corruption and wrong-doers.

As reports about the song's withdrawal began coming up, an avalanche of support for the singer, and the right to protest against the government, have dominated public discourse. As protests against the ban began pouring in, Kiran Poudel, senior vice-chairman of the Nepal Yuba Sangh, a youth front affiliated to the ruling Nepal Communist Party, issued a general appeal to all to boycott Sharma, alleging that he has insulted the country's President and tried to project Communist rule as "the rule of Yamaraj (the god of death)". (The Indian Express)

70 killed in major Bangladesh fire

Among victims, five children, nine women | Blaze started from chemical warehouse

DHAKA (TIP): A fire ravished adjoining apartment buildings and chemical warehouses in a historic part of the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, killing at least 70 persons and injuring several others.

Officials said the fire broke out at a chemical warehouse on the ground floor of a four-storey building named Hazi Wahed Mansion behind a mosque in Old Dhaka's congested Chawkbazar area on Wednesday night and the flames then quickly spread through four other buildings nearby, including a community centre where a wedding party was on.

"The salvage campaign is ending here," mayor of Dhaka (South) Sayeed Khokon said.

Fire officials said the blaze had claimed 70 lives so far.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police officials said the fire spread rapidly due to the multiple chemical godowns that were situated in the area.

Fire service control room spokesman Kamrul Ahsan confirmed the death toll to be 70 while state-run Dhaka Medical College Hospital's director Brigadier General AKM Nasiruddin said bodies were kept at their disposal. Nasiruddin, however, feared that the toll may rise as several people were being treated at the facility with critical burn injuries.

Khokon called off the rescue operation around 12.10 pm after nearly 14 hours of efforts. Two-hundred firefighters from 37 units doused the blaze, making their way to the scene through narrow lanes with fire engines. "Some of the bodies were burned very badly, difficult to be identified... of the victims, five are children and nine women," a doctor said.

Bangladesh's fire service chief Ali Ahmed said the blaze may have started with a gas cylinder before quickly spreading through the building where chemicals were stored.



Firefighters and local people help in dousing the fire in Dhaka, Bangladesh. AP

"The flames raced through four adjoining buildings, which were also used as chemical warehouses," he said. — Reuters/PTI

Historic Chawkbazar

The fire broke out at a chemical warehouse on the ground floor of a five-storey building named Hazi Wahed Mansion behind a mosque in Old Dhaka's congested Chawkbazar area

Chawkbazar is one of the most important areas in Old Dhaka, a historic district established about 400 years ago during the Mughal dynasty

It is a hub of chemical businesses and local perfume factories

Gas cylinder to blame?

The blaze may have started with a gas cylinder before quickly spreading through the

building where chemicals were stored.

There was a traffic jam when the fire broke out.

TV images showed the main gate of one of the buildings was locked, leaving its residents trapped which made escape difficult

Govt to provide relief

The district administration will provide 20,000 taka (US\$ 238) to the victims' families for burial

Past incidents

In 2012, a fire in a garments factory on the outskirts of Dhaka killed 117 persons and injured more than 200

In 2010 in Nimtoli in Dhaka, a fire broke out in a chemical warehouse that killed more than 120 persons. (Reuters/PTI)

Pakistan gifted gold-plated assault rifle to Saudi Crown Prince

ISLAMABAD (TIP): At a time when Pakistan is under immense global pressure on terrorism, the country's cash-strapped government has gifted Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman a gold-plated assault rifle, a media report said.

The unusual gift for a visiting foreign dignitary was presented to Mohammad during his first official visit to Islamabad.

The News International reported that Pakistan's Senate delegation called on the Crown Prince at the Prime Minister's House where Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani gifted him a portrait and a gold-plated gun.

The Prince is also Saudi Arabia's defence minister. In a similar gesture from the cash-rich kingdom in January, Saudi Prince Fahd Bin Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, also the Tabuk Governor, presented a gift of 'gold Kalashnikov' and bullets to Prime Minister Khan at the Prime Minister's Office here.

Khan had thanked him for the gold-plated Russian gun.

The Saudi Crown Prince's just-concluded high-profile visit to Islamabad came in the midst of heightened tensions between India and Pakistan following one of the worst terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir in which 40 CRPF soldiers were killed. The attack was carried out by Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad. The international community



led by the US has pressed Pakistan to deny safe haven to terror groups operating from its soil and bring the perpetrators of the Pulwama attack to justice. Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Sunday signed a slew of investment agreements worth USD 20 billion which will

provide a welcome relief to the teetering economy of the cash-strapped Pakistan.

Pakistan is negotiating with the International Monetary Fund a multi-billion bailout package to overcome the country's financial instability. (PTI)

Rishikesh, situated in the foothills of Himalayas on the banks of River Ganga in Northern India, is undoubtedly one of the best places to find quick relaxation from the mundane life. Located about 43 km away from Dehradun, Rishikesh is a hub of Yoga, meditation and spirituality. The place is frequented by many international travellers and pilgrims. Rishikesh has also become a popular destination for white water rafting, attracting tourists from both India and abroad. It is also a center for hiking, backpacking, camping, rock climbing, rappelling, kayaking and bungee jumping. No doubt, it has become one stop destination for everyone seeking peace, fun and enjoyment. Besides these, there are 5 things about Rishikesh that you never knew.

NEERGARH FALLS

Rishikesh is the home to many lesser-known waterfalls and the beauty of these hidden treasures is that one has to take a trek of few Kilometres to reach the falls. If you wish to spend some quality time with your family and friends amidst nature-rich environs, you can definitely plan a waterfall trekking in Rishikesh. The trekking to Neergadh Waterfall starts 3 km away from Laxman Jhula on the Badrinath Highway. It is one of the most frequented waterfalls as it is easiest to access. Visit Neergarh Waterfall just after monsoon season and you will witness water cascading thousands of feet from the mountain top. There are small pools along the hike where a hiker can sit and enjoy the serenity of falls, while soaking the tired feet. You can also consider taking a dip into the pool of fresh water. Trekking through Neergarh waterfall and passing by shallow pool will give you a feel and touch of what the state of Uttarakhand is all about. The best thing about this adventure activity is that it does not require any special skill to trek, owing to easy path and can be undertaken by people from all age group. Vendors are also available here to sell the beverages, which will cost slightly higher but a cup of tea in hand will be a good idea to enjoy the surreal beauty of the place.

NEELKANTH TEMPLE

Neelkanth temple is one of the most sacred places of worship for Hindus. It is situated on a hill above Swargashram and located at a distance of 32 km from Rishikesh. Neelkanth temple is considered to be an apt example of complete natural hill heaven that lies adjacent to mountain ranges of Nar-Narayan. Owing to its raw beauty & religious significance, both the devotees and nature lovers visit the place round the year. The way to the temple is quite exhilarating. There are steep & narrow roads taking above the hill, which will add the extra spice of adventure amidst the beauty. There is river flowing on one side and mountain terrain is on the other side. Road is very curvy and narrow with steep slopes.

TREKKING

Trekking is all about reconnecting yourself with nature and exploring the wonders of the Himalayas. For adventure enthusiasts, it is a much sought after option to escape the daily mundane life to find themselves in the lap of nature. Walking through verdant landscape, lush greenery and waterfall, and breathing in fresh air really prove to be a refreshing experience. Located in the lap of the Shivalik Himalayas, the picturesque town of Rishikesh offers a host of scenic locales for trekkers. It gives the trekker a chance to witness the outstanding scenery of flowery green meadows, dense forests, fascinating local communities and astounding landscape of the eastern part of the Garhwal Himalayan ranges. There are all sorts of treks available near Rishikesh, which can be categorised into easy, moderate and hard treks. Small treks can be done in the adjoining villages and waterfalls while longer treks can be taken in near-by mountains. Few famous treks which can be

RISHIKESH: THE 'YOGA CAPITAL OF WORLD'



taken near Rishikesh are Neer Garh waterfall trek, Kunjapuri trek, Neelkanth Temple Trek, and Jhilmil Gufa Trek. Longer treks which serve route from Rishikesh are Gomukh (Gaumukh) Trek, Valley of flower Trek, Tungnath-Chandrasheela Trek, Deoria Taal Trek, Hemkund sahib trek, Kuari Pass Trek and Roop Kund Trek.

DEVPRAYAG

In Sanskrit, prayag means 'confluence' and Devprayag stands for 'holy confluence'. Devprayag is the confluence of two holy rivers Alaknanda and Bhagirathi to form Ganga. According to religious scriptures, Devprayag is one of the five important holy confluences. Rivers like Bhagirathi, Alaknanda & the mythological river Saraswati (flowing underground) meet to form the River Ganga. River Bhagirathi originates from Gangotri and Alaknanda originates from Badrinath, both of which are considered sacred destinations for Hindus across the world. Devprayag is the last prayag of River Alaknanda. Religiously, the site is very sacred and holds immense significance among the Hindu followers. It is believed that Lord Rama and the King Dushratha did penance here. There is an ancient temple of Raghunathji built above the confluence with massive rocks. It is believed that the temple was built more than ten thousand years ago. There is a small water spring called Baitalshila, which is believed to have powers to cure leprosy. Devprayag is also hugely blessed with divine natural beauty and showers tourists with its serenity. The place is accessible throughout the year and can be visited anytime.

RAJAJI NATIONAL PARK

Rajaji National Park is known for its pristine scenic beauty and rich bio-diversity. A paradise for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts, Rajaji National Park or Chilla Park is just 25 km away from Rishikesh. A normal safari by jeep usually takes 3 to 4 hours to complete the 36 km stretch of safari range and costs around Rs. 1200-1500 per person. It is carried out twice in a day; at 7 am in the morning and around 2 pm in the afternoon. Rajaji National Park is home to Asian elephants, deers, birds, tigers (only few), and antelopes such as the Nilgai, langoors etc. This park is the first staging ground for the migratory birds when they cross Himalayas to enter India.



WAYS TO MAKE ANY RELATIONSHIP LAST

Love that lasts is the result of partners embedding themselves in each other's brains in a positive way. Memory circuits and pleasure get all wound up together so that the other person becomes integral to the very structure of your brain, and you become part of the structure of theirs. Here's more on what happens to your brain when you're in love.

Take your partner's breath away

Do something amazingly thoughtful and out of the ordinary and try to incorporate an element of surprise to it: a loving note tucked into a pocket. A special dinner on an otherwise ordinary night. A playlist made up with his favorite songs. These thoughtful acts will embed you in your partner's memory.

Do something special

Call them every day just to touch base for a few minutes. Make their favorite meal once a week. Once they begin to expect these things, you will always be close to their awareness.

Engage in lots of eye contact

New couples seem to do this naturally, but don't drop this strong bonding behavior just because the relationship has progressed. This is one way to keep the "romance alive", as they say, and is especially powerful when making love.

Teach your partner what you like

Likewise, making you happy will make your partner feel good. And research shows that the sexual pleasure of one partner increases the pleasure of the other partner.

Do something edgy

If you get your partner's heart rate up,



they may associate the feeling of excitement with you and may develop more powerful feelings for you. Going on a roller-coaster ride, taking a balloon trip, shooting the rapids—anything with a touch of danger to it—can make them fall more deeply in love with you.

Do something great for someone your partner loves

If you show kindness and love for someone they love, you'll earn major points. When you enter a relationship, you also enter a relationship with all their family and friends. Show them that the people who are important to them are important to you.

Summarize and immortalize loving moments

Don't be afraid to give voice to your

love. Tell them how you feel. Write a loving note or poem. Lovers have been doing this from the beginning of time because it works.

Boost the love chemicals

There are many brain chemicals that go into the feeling of love and attachment. Oxytocin is known as the bonding, trust, and cuddle hormone. Oxytocin is enhanced by watching romantic movies together, holding hands, cuddling, and long, loving eye contact. (And kissing, which has a bunch of other health benefits!) Women usually have more oxytocin than men, but according to one study, a man's level of oxytocin goes up 500 percent after making love. Being too busy to make love pushes couples apart.

Castor oil pack for gentle detox, pain and inflammation

A bottle of organic castor oil, non-organic oils may contain residues of pesticides and chemicals used to cultivate it. The toxins will be absorbed from the oil to the body.

Get your hot water bottle or heating pad/ water bottle ready.

Take a piece of flannel and place it in the bowl or glass container and pour enough castor oil over it to soak it (make sure it's saturated, but it doesn't need to be dripping in oil).

Place an old towel on a flat surface (either a couch, bed or the floor). For added protection, you can put down a garbage bag underneath the towel so that your bed or couch won't get stained from any oil that may escape from the plastic cover.

Place the saturated flannel over the affected area of your body and cover the pack with plastic.

Place the heating pad or hot water bottle over the pack, cover with a towel and let it sit on the treated area such as the liver for at least 30-60 minutes. During this time you can rest, read a book, listen to music, meditate, or do your healing affirmations. If treating the liver, you can lie on the right side over the pack.

When the time is up, remove the pack and clean the area with water and a bit of baking soda to get the stickiness off.

You can keep the pack for reuse for a few months, stored in a plastic bag in a cool place. Just add another 2-3 tablespoons of castor oil for the next session.

It is recommended to have having 2-3 castor oil packs per week for liver detox over 2-3 weeks but if you have time for



more (to do them daily), that would greatly enhance healing and repair. To boost the liver detox have 1 tablespoon of olive oil just before you apply the pack.

If you'd like to watch how to make and apply castor pack, here is a great YouTube video that shows how to do it.

Contraindications and cautions

Castor oil packs should not be used over open wounds or ulcers, during pregnancy or heavy menstrual bleeding, or over areas of malignancy, numbness or weakness.

The above material is for informational and educational purposes only, and is not intended as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Please consult with your doctor to learn if castor oil packs are appropriate for you.

FOOD CORNER



Bengali Fish Fingers

A popular and easy to make Bengali style appetizer/snack. These fish fingers are well suited for any occasion, party or can also be served as an evening snack.

Ingredients

White Fish Fillets - 300 gms, skinless, boneless, Eggs - 2, Fennel Seeds - 1 tsp, Cumin Seeds - 1 tsp, Mustard Seeds - 1 tsp, Nigella Seeds - 1 tsp, Fenugreek Seeds (Methi) - 1/2 tsp, Maida - 1 1/2 tbsps, Besan Flour - 1/2 tbsps, Red Chilli Powder - 1 tsp, Garlic - 3 cloves, crushed, Ginger - 1 inch piece, grated, Oil as required, Breadcrumbs - 1 to 2 cups, Coriander Leaves - handful, chopped, Salt as per taste

Method

- Combine the cumin seeds, fennel seeds, mustard seeds, nigella seeds and methi in a mixer jar. Grind them together and transfer to a bowl. Add the maida, besan, red chilli powder, garlic, coriander leaves, ginger and enough salt. Beat the eggs in a bowl and add to the flour. Gently whisk until combined. Chop the fish fillets into small bite-sized pieces or strips. Heat oil in a deep frying pan. Dip the fish fillets into the batter and remove. Allow any excess to drip off and dredge it in the breadcrumbs, coating it fully. Gently slide them into the hot oil and fry until cooked through or crisp and golden brown.

Cardamom butter chicken

Ingredients

2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped, thumb-sized piece ginger, 2 green chillies, chopped (leave seeds in if you like it hot), small bunch coriander, leaves picked, stalks roughly chopped, 3 tbsps ghee, 2 onions, 2 tsp each turmeric, garam masala and ground cumin, 1 tsp ground fenugreek, 4 chicken breasts, cut into 2 1/2 cm cubes, 4 cloves, 12 cardamom pods, seeds removed, 1 cinnamon stick, 400g can tomato, 150ml pot yogurt, 50ml double cream.

Method

Place the garlic, ginger, chillies and coriander stalks in the small bowl of a food processor with a good pinch of salt, and blend to a fine paste – or grind to a paste using a pestle and mortar. Heat 2 tbsps of the ghee or oil in a large pan, add the onions and cook slowly for 15-20 mins until golden and caramelised. Tip in the garlic-ginger paste, turn up the heat and cook for a further 5 mins. Add the ground spices and cook for 2 mins more until fragrant. Scoop the spicy onion mixture out of the pan into a bowl.

Add the remaining ghee or oil to the pan and cook the chicken over a medium-high heat until browned all over. Tip into a bowl, cover and set aside. Return the onion mixture to the pan along with the whole spices, tomatoes and a can full of water (400ml). Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer gently for 40 mins. Return the chicken to the pan and cook, uncovered, for a further 10 mins until the sauce has thickened and the chicken is cooked through. Stir in the yogurt and cream, season well and scatter with coriander leaves. Serve with chapatis and rice.

NEW DRUG MAY HELP DELAY AGEING IN HUMANS

Researchers, including one of Indian origin, have developed a promising drug that significantly increases muscle size, strength and metabolic state in aged mice, and may help delay ageing process in humans.

As we age, our bodies increasingly lose the ability to repair and rebuild degenerating skeletal muscles, said researchers from the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in the US.

Beginning around age 35, muscle mass, strength and function continually decline as we get older, according to the study published in *Biochemical Pharmacology*.

This can dramatically limit the ability of older adults to live fully active and independent lives.

"There are no treatments currently available to delay, arrest or reverse age-related muscle degeneration," said Harshini Neelakantan, a research scientist at UTMB.

"These initial results support the development of an innovative drug treatment that has the potential to help the elderly to become fitter, faster and stronger, thus enabling them to live more active and independent lives as they age," Neelakantan said.

"We identified a protein in muscle stem cells that appears to be responsible for their age-related dysfunction, and then developed a small molecule drug that limits the effects of this protein," said Stanley Watowich, an associate professor at UTMB.

"By resetting muscle stem cells to a more youthful state, we were able to rejuvenate them so that they could more effectively repair muscle tissues," Watowich said.

In the study, aged mice with a muscle injury were treated with either the drug or a placebo. Following seven days of drug treatment, researchers found that the aged mice that received the drug had more functional muscle stem cells that



WHAT CAUSES AGEING?

Ageing is caused by a complex interplay between genes and environment. Both external environment, things like diet, exercise, stress and infection, and the environment of each cell, things like oxidative stress and epigenetic changes (changes in marks on DNA) affect how our cells, and therefore how our whole body ages.

DNA inside our cells is constantly being damaged. This is normally repaired by 'in house' DNA repair mechanisms. But these mechanisms become less effective as we age.

Telomeres are the regions at the end of chromosomes. They comprise repeated DNA sequences that protect the important DNA from being chopped off each time DNA is copied so the cell can divide and reproduce.

Epigenetic alterations are reversible marks on DNA that do not change the DNA sequence. These include DNA methylation, post-translation histone modification, and chromatin remodelling. Epigenetic marks change as we age.

Proteins in our cells are constantly being recycled. Old damaged proteins are removed, and new proteins are made to replace them. If this system doesn't work, there is an accumulation of damaged proteins in cell.

were actively repairing the injured muscle.

In the treated group, muscle fibre size doubled, and muscle strength increased by 70 per cent, compared with the

placebo group.

In addition, the blood chemistry of the drug-treated and untreated mice was similar, suggesting no adverse drug effects were occurring. *Source: PTI*



Antibiotics can cause seizures, delirium

Common antibiotics may be linked to a serious disruption in brain function, called delirium, and other brain problems, researchers including one of Indian-origin have claimed. Delirium causes mental confusion that may be accompanied by hallucinations and agitation. Medications are often the cause of delirium, but antibiotics are not necessarily the first medications doctors may suspect.

"People who have delirium are more likely to have other complications, go into a nursing home instead of going home after being in the hospital and are more likely to die than people who do not develop delirium," said Shamik Bhattacharyya, of Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. "Any efforts we can make to help identify the cause of delirium have the potential to be greatly beneficial," said Bhattacharyya.

For the study, researchers reviewed all available scientific reports and found case reports on 391 patients, over seven decades, who were given antibiotics and later developed delirium and other brain problems. A total of 54 different antibiotics were involved, from 12 different classes of antibiotics ranging from commonly used antibiotics such as sulfonamides and ciprofloxacin to intravenous antibiotics such as cefepime and penicillin.

About 47% had delusions or hallucinations, 14% had seizures, 15% had involuntary muscle twitching and 5% had loss of control of body movements. EEG, a test that detects electrical activity in the brain, was abnormal in 70% of the cases.

As many as 25% of the people who developed delirium had kidney failure. The researchers identified three types of delirium and other brain problems related to antibiotics.

Type 1 was characterised by seizures and most often associated with penicillin and cephalosporins. Type 2 was marked by symptoms of psychosis and associated with procaine penicillin, sulfonamides, fluoroquinolones and macrolides. Both Type 1 and Type 2 had a quick onset of symptoms, within days. Once antibiotics were stopped, symptoms also stopped within days.

Type 3 was characterised by abnormal brain scans and impaired muscle coordination and other signs of brain dysfunction, and was only associated with the drug metronidazole.

Green tea helps you fight arthritis

Here's to green tea once again. A compound found in green tea may help combat joint pain, inflammation and tissue damage caused by rheumatoid arthritis, researchers, including those from India, have claimed.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a debilitating autoimmune disorder that mostly affects the small joints of the hands and feet. It causes painful swelling that progresses into cartilage damage, bone erosion and joint deformity.

"Existing drugs for rheumatoid arthritis are expensive, immunosuppressive and sometimes unsuitable for long-term use," said Salahuddin Ahmed, lead researcher on the project from Washington State University (WSU) in Spokane.

His team evaluated a phytochemical called epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), which is a molecule with anti-inflammatory properties found in green tea.

The study suggests that EGCG has high potential as a treatment for rheumatoid arthritis because of how effectively the molecule blocks the effects of the disease without blocking other cellular functions. "This study has opened the field of research into using EGCG for targeting TAK1 -- an important signalling protein -- through which proinflammatory



cytokines transmit their signals to cause inflammation and tissue destruction in rheumatoid arthritis," said Ahmed.

The researchers, including Anil Singh and Sadiq Umar from WSU, confirmed their findings in a pre-clinical animal model of human rheumatoid arthritis, where they observed that ankle swelling in animals given EGCG in a 10-day treatment plan was markedly reduced.

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AMERICA'S FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS REVEALED

Long before the advent of Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, early Mississippian Mound cultures in America's southern Appalachian Mountains shared artistic trends and technologies across regional networks that functioned in similar ways as modern social media, according to a study.

The findings, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, suggest that strong social connections between common people have always played an important role in helping societies guard themselves against the vagaries of unpredictable leaders and ruling classes.

"Just as we have our own networks of 'friends' and 'followers' on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, societies that existed in North America between 1,200 and 350 years ago had their own information sharing networks," said Jacob Lulewicz, lecturer at the Washington University in the US.

"Our study found a way to reconstruct these indigenous communication networks," he said in a statement.

"Our analysis shows how these networks laid the groundwork for Native American political systems that began developing as far back as 600 AD," Lulewicz said.

The study utilises sophisticated social network analysis to map social and political connections that helped unite friends and families in dozens of Native American villages well before the arrival of European explorers.

The findings are based on a messaging archive that is preserved not in bytes, but in bits of pottery sherds unearthed over many years in archaeology digs at dozens of Mississippian culture sites scattered across southern Appalachia.

INSTAGRAM TESTING DONATION STICKER ON STORIES

Facebook-owned photo-messaging app Instagram is reportedly testing a donation sticker on its Stories feature that would offer fundraising and donation tools for charity or personal reasons.

"Instagram is working on 'Donation' sticker. It lets users start fundraisers for their favorite non-profits," tipster Jane Manchun Wong tweeted on Monday.

Facebook has been hosting such fundraising tools since 2015 and it recently dropped fees associated with those donations. "Over the past few years, Instagram has been experimenting with what payments would look like on the platform, but it has so far only released test features to allow select users to book spa appointments and restaurant reservations," The Verge reported.

Instagram has also been developing a standalone app for shopping indicating the possibility for payment functionalities to also exist on Stories, the media has reported.

Since Instagram has not officially addressed the subject as yet, whether or not donation sticker rolls out to the public still remains unclear. *Source: IANS*



MASSIVE MOUNTAINS DISCOVERED UNDER EARTH'S CRUST

Scientists have discovered massive mountains in the Earth's mantle, an advance that may change our understanding of how the planet was formed.

Most school children learn that the Earth has three layers: a crust, mantle and core, which is subdivided into an inner and outer core.

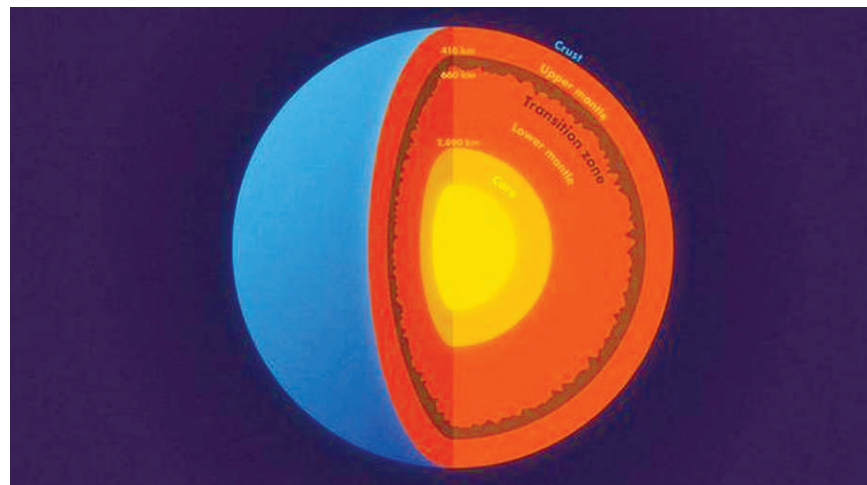
While that is not wrong, it does leave out several other layers that scientists have identified within the Earth.

In a study published in the journal Science, scientists used data from an enormous earthquake in Bolivia to find mountains and other topography on a layer located 660 kilometers straight down, which separates the upper and lower mantle.

Lacking a formal name for this layer, the researchers simply call it "the 660-km boundary."

To peer deep into the Earth, scientists from the Princeton University in the US and the Institute of Geodesy and Geophysics in China, used the most powerful waves on the planet, which are generated by massive earthquakes.

Data from earthquakes that are magnitude 7.0 or higher send out



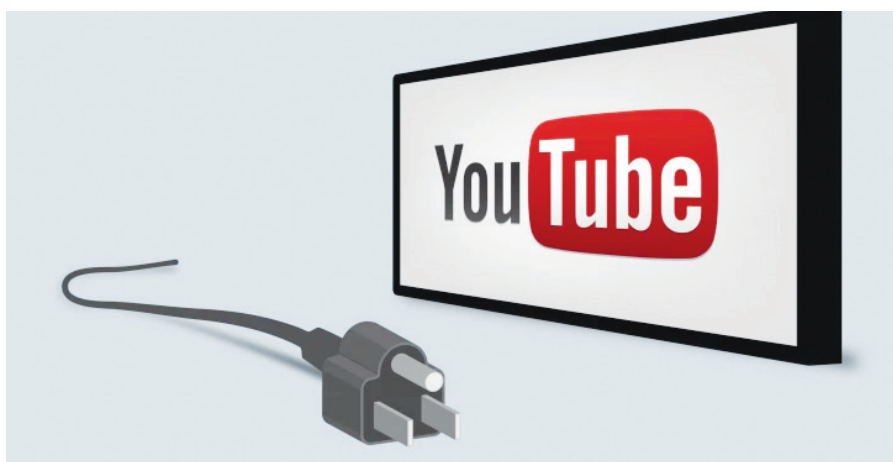
shockwaves in all directions that can travel through the core to the other side of the planet—and back again.

For this study, the key data came from waves picked up after a magnitude 8.2 earthquake—the second-largest deep earthquake ever recorded—that shook Bolivia in 1994. Scientists used powerful computers to simulate the complicated behaviour of scattering waves in the deep Earth. The technology depends on a fundamental property of waves: their

ability to bend and bounce.

Just as light waves can bounce (reflect) off a mirror or bend (refract) when passing through a prism, earthquake waves travel straight through homogenous rocks but reflect or refract when they encounter any boundary or roughness. "We know that almost all objects have surface roughness and therefore scatter light," said Wenbo Wu, who was at Princeton at the time of the study. *Source: PTI*

YouTube revamps Strike rules, intensifies punitive action



Google-owned video sharing platform YouTube has revamped its community guidelines and after almost a decade, updated its Strike rules.

"Starting February 25, all channels will receive a one-time warning the first time they post content that crosses the line, with no penalties to their channel except for the removal of that content," the YouTube team wrote in a blog-post on Tuesday.

Under the new guidelines and Strike rules, the first strike would result in a one-week freeze on the ability to upload any new content to YouTube, including live streaming. The second strike in any 90-day period will result in a two-week freeze and the third strike would result in channel termination.

Moreover, the platform is expanding its policy resources aiming to provide more details about what behaviour could result in a strike. "We always want to make it

clear why a strike occurred, hence we're making our email and desktop notifications clearer to provide more details on which policy was violated," the post said.

YouTube is also adding new mobile and in-product notifications to highlight important information on strikes.

"Our strikes system is an important way for us to help creators and artists understand when they've crossed the line by uploading content that undermines that goal. We'll build on this and all the progress we've made over the last year by continuing to consult with you as we strengthen enforcement and update our policies," the post added.

Copyright strikes will continue to be issued when YouTube receives legal requests from rights holders, will not offer a warning strike and follow the company's separate penalty system detailed on the copyright strike page. *Source: IANS*

WhatsApp's bug lets anyone bypass Face ID, Touch ID lock on iPhones

WhatsApp recently rolled out long-awaited biometric support for iPhone users. The feature allows users to add another layer of privacy by adding Touch ID or Face ID lock. WhatsApp's new feature is now facing a critical bug in less than a few weeks of its roll out.

According to a Reddit threat, the bug allows anyone to bypass the additional security layer when using the WhatsApp share shortcut on any other application. The bug works when users have set authentication kick-in time to after in minute, after 15 minutes and after 1 hour.

The feature works perfectly when a user has set the kick-in time to "immediately." In simpler terms, WhatsApp does not show the additional security layer when using the sharing extension, reported Gadgets360. "While transitioning to the next screen, you observe that no FaceID or TouchID verification takes place if an option other than 'Immediately' was set previously. Now just exit out to the iOS Home Screen. (If in some cases, it asks for FaceID or TouchID verification, just cancel it and try clicking on WhatsApp icon in the iOS Share Sheet again)."



Venezuelan oil finds home in India as US shuns shipments

India is feasting on Venezuelan oil, after the U.S. imposed a de facto ban on crude imports from the Latin American nation.

While flows to the U.S. came to a halt, India became the No. 1 buyer of Venezuelan crude in the first half of February, with imports jumping 66 percent to 620,000 barrels a day. Indian refiners Reliance Industries Ltd and Nayara Energy Ltd, which is backed by Rosneft Oil Co PJSC, are driving the boost.

Still, Venezuelan crude exports have plunged since U.S. President Donald Trump ratcheted up sanctions against the country's oil company. Shipments of oil, the commodity that bankrolls the regime of embattled president Nicolas Maduro, fell to 1.12 million barrels daily in the first half of February, down 9.2 percent compared with the same period in January. No U.S.-bound vessels have left Venezuelan ports in that time.

Seven Venezuelan oil-laden vessels loaded for U.S. refiners Valero Energy Corp and Chevron Corp have been stranded since sanctions were announced on Jan. 28, as state-owned



Seven Venezuelan oil-laden vessels loaded for U.S. refiners have been stranded since sanctions were announced on Jan. 28, as state-owned Petroleos de Venezuela SA demands upfront payment for the cargoes.

Petroleos de Venezuela SA demands upfront payment for the cargoes.

Meanwhile, shipments to long-time ally China, which is struggling to recover

at least \$50 billion it loaned to Venezuela over the past 12 years, have slowed down. Imports fell by 50 percent to 120,000 barrels daily. *Source: Bloomberg*



CENTRE CLEARS PLAN TO INFUSE RS 48,000 CRORE IN 12 STATE-OWNED BANKS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The finance ministry Wednesday announced to pump in Rs 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks in this fiscal to help them maintain regulatory capital requirements and finance growth plans.

Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar said that the government will infuse Rs 9,086 crore in Corporation Bank and Rs 6,896 crore in Allahabad Bank -- the two "better-performing" banks currently under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) supervision of the RBI.

Further, Rs 4,638 crore and Rs 205 crore will be provided to Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra. These banks have recently come out of the regulatory supervisory framework PCA of the RBI.

Kumar further said Punjab National Bank will get Rs 5,908 crore, Union Bank of India Rs 4,112 crore, Andhra Bank Rs 3,256 crore and Syndicate Bank Rs 1,603 crore.

The government will pump in Rs 12,535 crore in four other banks under PCA -- Central Bank of India, United Bank, UCO Bank and Indian Overseas Bank. The government in December had infused Rs 28,615 crore into seven public sector banks (PSBs) through recapitalisation bonds.

Samsung launches folding smartphone, first 5G handset

Samsung on Wednesday unveiled a smartphone that folds open to be a tablet, becoming the first major manufacturer to offer the feature as it strives to stoke excitement in a slumping market.

The South Korean giant also appeared to get the jump on rivals by announcing the first smartphone for fifth-generation --or 5G--wireless networks, while stepping up its efforts in artificial intelligence and wearables.

The Galaxy Fold, unveiled at a San Francisco event, serves as a smartphone with a 4.6-inch display and opens like a book to become a 7.3-inch tablet.

"We are giving you a device that



doesn't just define a new category, it defies category," said Samsung's Justin Denison at the event. The Fold will be available from April 26 starting at USD 1,980, the company said. The launch comes as the smartphone market experiences its worst-ever decline with consumers keeping devices longer and waiting for new innovations.

Samsung made the announcement on the home turf of rival Apple, with the two giants battling in the premium segment of the market.

Denison touted the Fold as "a one-of-a-kind luxury device" and boasted that it let three apps operate simultaneously on its large screen.

Bitcoin gets a delayed boost after JPMorgan embraces cryptocurrencies

Bitcoin is approaching \$4,000 for the first time since the start of the year, as the largest cryptocurrency gets a delayed boost from the announcement last week that JPMorgan has developed a prototype digital coin that it plans to use to speed up payments between corporate customers.

"What some people have pointed to is that because they're using distributed ledger technology and they're calling it a cryptocurrency, that could have a positive effect on the industry," said Mati Greenspan, senior market analyst at eToro in Tel Aviv.

Greenspan credited a jump in Ethereum over the weekend tied to the production of coins for helping to create an optimistic environment that pushed most crypto prices higher. Ether rose 17 % Monday, and was up 3.6 % to around \$146 as of 10:30 a.m. in New York. Bitcoin climbed as much as 3.1 % Tuesday to \$3,970.

At least one measure followed by technical analysts suggests Bitcoin has more room to run, with the digital token in a solid buy trend for the first time since mid-December.

In addition, the VERA Convergence Divergence indicator turned positive today for the first time in over two months,



indicating this rally may take Bitcoin over the heavily resisted \$4,000 level. The last time Bitcoin triggered a buy signal it gained \$1,100 over the next 10 days. *Source: Bloomberg*



GOOGLE TO ACQUIRE DATA MIGRATION COMPANY 'ALOOMA'

Alphabet Inc's Google said on Tuesday it will buy data migration company Aloomo, as part of efforts to catch up with bigger cloud service rivals Amazon.com Inc and Microsoft Corp.

Google trails Amazon and Microsoft in the fast-growing business of helping companies move to the cloud, with Google Cloud holding 8.5 % of worldwide cloud market share at the end of 2018, according to Canalis.

Amazon Web Services had a 31.7 % share and Microsoft Azure 16.8 % during the same period, the market research firm said.

Google in November hired former Oracle Corp product head Thomas Kurian as the chief executive officer of the cloud division.

Headquartered in Redwood City, California, Aloomo helps enterprise companies streamline database migration in the cloud with a tool that enables moving data from multiple sources to a single data warehouse.

The company has raised about \$15 million from investors including leading venture funds such as Sequoia Capital and Lightspeed, according to Crunchbase. Google did not disclose terms of the deal. *Source: Reuters*

Google ends forced arbitration for employees globally

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): After facing intense protests over sexual misconduct and discrimination at workplace, Google has decided to end the forced arbitration policy for its employees. According to a report in Axios on Thursday, the new policy will go into effect from March 21 for Google employees globally. The decision will not open the door to bringing lawsuits over previously-settled claims, said Google.

"Employees with disputes currently in arbitration who are still employed by the company as of March 21 will be able to choose to sue instead," it added. Google employees the world over have called for the practice to end in other cases of harassment and discrimination. (IANS)

JAPANESE SPACECRAFT LANDS ON ASTEROID, TAKES SAMPLES

TOKYO (TIP): A Japanese spacecraft successfully touched down on the asteroid Ryugu on Friday, which is some 340 million km from Earth, to take samples that could provide clues on the origins of the solar system.

The Japan Space Exploration Agency (JAXA) reported that at 7.49 a.m., it began to receive data from the Hayabusa2 that confirmed its landing on the asteroid, reports Efe news.

"Spacecraft state is normal. Based on this, we determined touchdown was successful! A detailed analysis will now be done," JAXA said in a tweet, adding "the Doppler data showed the behaviour as expected and cheers went up with a clap!" The landing took place

from an altitude of 20 km, where the probe had been circling the asteroid since last June, and its descend began on Thursday afternoon.

The landing operation was originally scheduled for last October, but was delayed to gather more information about Ryugu first.

Hayabusa2 was launched in December 2014 from the Tanegashima space centre and is scheduled to return to Earth in late 2020.

Towards the end of June 2018, it arrived at the asteroid and was first located at a height of 20 km, but also went as close as 6 km to conduct the necessary preliminary studies to define the eventual landing site.

If the probe successfully returns to Earth with the samples, valuable clues about the origins of the solar system could be provided,

the Japanese aerospace agency said.

The asteroid Ryugu - the name of a magical submarine palace from Japanese folklore - is about 900 metres in diameter and slightly cubic in shape.

Like other minor planets, it is considered to be among the oldest bodies in the solar system and therefore has the potential to provide information on the evolution of the universe.

The Japanese aerospace agency had already undertaken a similar mission, with the Hayabusa1 spacecraft, between 2003 and 2010 to take samples from a different type of asteroid. That project was successfully completed after several technical problems and delays, including loss of contact with the spacecraft. (IANS)

contd from page 1

UN Security Council...

(India had moved the 1267 Sanctions Committee to ban Azhar twice before in 2009 and 2016). On Tuesday, UN Secretary General António Guterres had called on India and Pakistan to defuse tensions and for "meaningful mutual engagement."

Condemning terrorism in all its forms as one of the most serious threats to international peace, the UNSC offered its condolences to those impacted by the attack.

"The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Indian people and the government of India and wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured," the statement said.

In what appears to be a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan, the Council has asked countries to cooperate actively with the Government of India.

"The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Government of India and all other relevant authorities in this regard," the statement read.

"The members of the Security Council reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomsoever committed. They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts," it said.

Mueller could submit...

After the expected announcement, U.S. Attorney General William Barr will review

Mr. Mueller's findings and submit his own summary to Congress, CNN reported. Democrats have been concerned that Mr. Barr, who has discretion over what is ultimately made public, will choose to limit disclosure.

Under Special Counsel regulations, Mr. Mueller must submit a confidential report to the Attorney-General. Mr. Barr, in turn, is required to provide information on the report to the judiciary committees of Congress.

Pak bans Hafiz Saeed...

amid intense global pressure to rein in the militant groups following the Pulwama terror attack that killed 40 CRPF jawans.

A spokesman of the Interior Ministry said the decision to ban these groups was taken during a meeting of the National Security Committee (NSC) chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan at his office on Thursday.

"It was decided during the meeting to accelerate action against proscribed organizations," the spokesperson said in a statement.

"It was further decided that Jamat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation be notified as proscribed organizations by the Ministry of Interior," he added.

Earlier, the two outfits were kept on the watchlist of the interior ministry.

According to officials, JuD's network includes 300 seminaries and schools, hospitals, a publishing house and ambulance service. The two groups have about 50,000 volunteers and hundreds of other paid workers.

The JuD is believed to be the front organization for the LeT which is responsible for carrying out the Mumbai attack that killed 166 people. It has been declared as a foreign terrorist organization by the US in June 2014.

The US Department of the Treasury has designated its chief Saeed as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist, and the US, since 2012, has offered a USD 10 million reward for information that brings Saeed to justice.

Saeed was listed under UN Security Council Resolution 1267 in December 2008. He was released from house arrest in

Pakistan in November 2017.

The NSC meeting also reviewed the National Action Plan against terrorism in detail. Services chiefs and key ministers were in attendance.

"We need to move to ensure that militancy and extremism are rooted from the society and the State never becomes hostage to extremists," Khan said as he directed both the interior ministry and the security institutions to immediately accelerate actions on ground. (Source: PTI)

Sadhguru calls upon...

We have to create business friendly environment for all. We have to invest in various areas and create livelihood", said Sadhguru on February 17, at the 16th edition of India Conference, one of the largest student-run conferences focusing on India in the USA. It is jointly organized by students of Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School.

One of the most enlightened persons of our time, Sadhguru said population growth and inequal distribution of wealth must lead to migration, and no walls or barriers could stop the influx.

Sadhguru answered questions from panelists and the audience on a number of issues at the session "Youth and Truth with Sadhguru."

Asked to comment on the subject of rape, Sadhguru said, "We have to deal with it in a sensible way. This is not a social issue - it's a human issue. This debate has to come".

On democracy in America, Sadhguru said he believed there is no democracy in the United States. "It's feudalism", he said. "My father was a Republican so am I. Same for the Democrats. How is it democracy? Every citizen has the right to express own opinion. I don't want to take any political side. If one individual can move million votes - that means we are going back to feudalism not democracy. The idea of democracy and secret ballot is that every person will decide on his/her own and cast the vote. Political party membership should be taken away. Political parties should not enroll members because people are voting for you without looking at what you have done. Every five years we must evaluate what politicians have done - should I

give them another chance or not. I support this party and I will vote for them without judging their work - this is feudalism. This destroys fundamental democratic fabric".

On the issue of marriage and relationship between man and woman, husband and wife, Sadhguru quipped; "Be it marketplace or marriage - for any relationship to sustain it has to be beneficial for both parties. Unless it benefits both, the business won't last long".

The India Conference is one of the largest student-run conferences focusing on India in the USA. It is jointly organized by students of Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School. The 16th edition of the Conference was organized on February 16th and February 17th, 2019 in Boston. The theme was 'India at an inflection point'.

A statement on the conference said, "At the 16th edition of India Conference at Harvard, we aim to bring together India's thought leaders for a weekend of discussions and brainstorming sessions to unravel the exciting opportunities that lay ahead for our country. The conference has a strong legacy of bringing together politicians, business leaders, entertainment professionals, public intellectuals, spiritual leaders, government officials, philanthropists, and many other leaders to meaningfully discuss key issues, solutions and opportunities in the context of India's path to global leadership.

"This conference will bring together great business leaders, entertainment professionals, government officials, philanthropists and many other leaders to engage in conversation about India's path to global leadership. In the past, we have been fortunate to host Amartya Sen, Omar Abdullah, Azim Premji, Kamal Hassan, Ravish Kumar, Karan Johar, and Sabyasachi Mukherjee among many other influential speakers. Our 2018 conference had over 1000 attendees and was a resounding success".

The 2019 conference was no less star-studded and was very well attended. The 2-day conference witnessed the presence of dozens of intellectuals and social activists from India and the US who dealt with dozens of issues. The young students deserve highest appreciation for organizing a great India conference, with the theme "India at an inflection point".

THE INDIAN PANORAMA

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AGNI: THE HINDU FIRE GOD

Agni, the god of Fire, is one of the most prominent of the deities of the Vedas. With the single exception of Indra, more hymns are addressed to Angi than to any other deity. To this day, Agni forms a part of many rites-of-passage ceremonies for Hindus, including birth, marriage and death.

The Origin & Appearance of Agni

In legend, various accounts are given of the origin of Agni. By one account, he is said to be a son of Dyaus and Prithivi. Another version says he is the son of Brahma, named Abhimani. By yet another account he is reckoned amongst the children of Kasyapa and Aditi, and hence is one of the Adityas. In the later writings, he is described as a son of Angiras, king of the Pitris (fathers of mankind), and the authorship of several hymns is ascribed to him.

In artwork, Agni is represented as a red man, having three legs and seven arms, dark eyes, eyebrows and hair. He rides on a ram, wears a poita (Brahmanical thread), and a garland of fruit. Flames of fire issue from his mouth, and seven streams of glory radiate from his body.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of Agni in Hindu religious practice and belief.

The Many Hues of Agni

Agni is an immortal who has taken up his abode with mortals as their guest. He is the domestic priest who rises before the dawn; he embodies a purified and intensified form of the sacrificial duties assigned to various human functionaries.

Agni is the most divine of the sages and is intimately acquainted with all the forms of worship. He is the wise director and the protector of all ceremonies, who enables men to serve the gods in a correct and acceptable manner.

He is a swift messenger moving between heaven and earth, commissioned both by gods and men to maintain their mutual communication. He both communicates to the immortals the hymns and offerings of earthly worshippers, and also brings the immortals down from the skies to the place of sacrifice. He accompanies the gods when they visit the earth and shares in the reverence and adoration they receive. He makes human offerings tangible; without him, the gods experience no satisfaction.

The Uniqueness of Agni

Agni is the lord, protector, and king of men. He is the lord of the house, dwelling in every abode. He is a guest in every home; he despises no man and he lives in every family. He is therefore considered as a mediator between gods and men and a witness of their actions. To the present day, Agni is worshiped and his blessing sought on all solemn occasions, including birth, marriage, and death.

In the old hymns, Agni is said to dwell in the two pieces of wood which produce fire when rubbed together--the living being that springs out of dry, dead wood. As the poet says, as soon as he is born the child begins to consume his parents. Agni's growth is seen as a marvel, since he is born to a mother who cannot nourish him, but instead receives his nourishment from offerings of clarified butter poured into this mouth.

The Might of Agni

The highest divine functions are ascribed to Agni. Although in some accounts he depicted as the son of heaven and earth, in others he is said to have formed heaven and earth and all that flies or walks, stands or moves. Agni formed the sun and adorned the heavens



with stars. Men tremble at his mighty deeds, and his edicts cannot be resisted. Earth, heaven, and all things obey his commands. All the gods fear and do homage to Agni. He knows the secrets of mortals and hears all invocations addressed to him.

Why do Hindus Worship Agni?

The worshippers of Agni will prosper, be wealthy and live long. Agni will watch with a thousand eyes over the man who brings him food and nourishes him with offerings. No mortal enemy can gain mastery over the person who sacrifices to Agni. Agni also confers immortality. In a funeral hymn, Agni is asked to use his heat to warm the unborn (immortal) part of the deceased and to carry it to the world of the righteous.

Agni carries men across calamities, as a ship over the sea. He commands all the riches in earth and heaven and therefore is invoked for riches, food, deliverance and all other forms of temporal good. He also forgives any sins that may have been committed through folly. All gods are said to be included within Agni; he surrounds them as the circumference of a wheel does the spokes.

Agni in Hindu Scriptures & Epics

Agni appears in many epic Vedic hymns.

In a celebrated hymn of the Rig-Veda, Indra and the other gods are called upon to destroy the Kravyads (the flesh-eaters), or Rakshas, enemies of the gods. But Agni himself is a Kravyad, and as such he takes an entirely different character. In this hymn, Agni exists in a form as hideous as the beings he has been called upon to devour. Nevertheless, he sharpens his two iron tusks, puts his enemies into his mouth and devours them. He heats the edges of his shafts and sends them into the hearts of the Rakshas.

In the Mahabharata, Agni is exhausted by

devouring too many offerings and wishes to restore his strength by consuming the whole Khandava forest. Initially, Indra prevents Agni from doing this, once Agni obtains the assistance of Krishna and Arjuna, he baffles Indra, and accomplished his goal.

According to the Ramayana, in order to assist Vishnu, when Agni is incarnate as Rama, he becomes the father of Nila by a monkey mother.

Finally, in Vishnu Purana, Agni marries Swaha, by whom he has three sons: Pavaka, Pavamana, and Suchi.

The Seven Names of Agni

Agni has many names: Vahni (who receives the hom, or burnt sacrifice); Vitihotra, (who sanctifies the worshipper); Dhananjaya (who conquers riches); Jivalana (who burns); Dhumketu (whose sign is smoke); Chhagaratha (who rides on a ram); Saptajihva (who has seven tongues).



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"If Hindus don't maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?"

"If India's own children don't cling to their faith, who shall guard it?"

"Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."

IPL: BCCI announces schedule for 2 weeks, CSK to play RCB in opener

NEW DELHI (TIP): Defending champions Chennai Super Kings will take on Royal Challengers Bangalore in the opening encounter of the 12th Indian Premier League for which a provisional two-week schedule was announced by the BCCI on Tuesday.

The opening game has been scheduled for March 23 in Chennai, the BCCI announced in its schedule comprising 17 games.

The IPL will be off to an earlier-than-usual start this year owing to the general elections, dates of which are yet to be announced. Any change in the provisional itinerary—from March 23 to April 5 — will be revised accordingly.

“These are still subject to the announcement of the Lok Sabha 2019 election dates. Once these have been released, the BCCI will address any issues with the first two weeks and will also prepare a schedule for the remainder of the season working with the local authorities around the polling dates,” read an official statement from the IPL.

On March 24, Kolkata Knight Riders will host Sunrisers Hyderabad in the afternoon encounter of a double header in which Mumbai Indians will take on Delhi Capitals in Mumbai.

Rajasthan Royals and Kings XI Punjab will meet each other in Jaipur to complete the first round of games.

A total of 17 matches will be played during this two-week phase across the 8 home venues of the respective franchises.

All teams will play a minimum of four games with Delhi Capitals and RCB competing in five matches each during this time. Every side will play a



minimum of two home and two away matches except for Delhi and RCB.

While Delhi will compete in three home games, RCB will play an equal number of away encounters.

While the weekends will have double-headers but the schedule doesn't clarify whether the BCCI will continue with the usual 4 pm (afternoon) and 8 pm (evening) format or there will be a change in timing.

Itinerary

- March 23: CSK vs RCB (Chennai)
- March 24: KKR vs Sunrisers Hyderabad (Kolkata, Afternoon) Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals (Mumbai, Evening)
- March 25: Rajasthan Royals vs KXIP (Jaipur)
- March 26: Delhi Capitals vs CSK

(Delhi)

- March 27: KKR vs KXIP (Kolkata)
- March 28: RCB vs MI (Bengaluru)
- March 29: Sunrisers vs Rajasthan Royals (Hyderabad)
- March 30: KXIP vs MI (Mohali, Afternoon) Delhi Capitals vs KKR (Delhi, Evening)
- March 31: Sunrisers Hyderabad vs RCB (Hyderabad, Afternoon) CSK vs Rajasthan Royals (Chennai, Evening)
- April 1: KXIP vs Delhi Capitals (Mohali)
- April 2: Rajasthan Royals vs RCB (Jaipur)
- April 3: MI vs CSK (Mumbai)
- April 4: Delhi Capitals vs Sunrisers Hyderabad (Delhi)
- April 5: RCB vs KKR (Bengaluru).

Source: PTI



INDIA EVES LOOK TO DOMINATE ENGLAND AFTER SUCCESS IN NEW ZEALAND

MUMBAI (TIP): Indian women will plunge into the three-game ODI rubber against England evens here on Friday with their confidence bolstered by their recent 2-1 series victory against New Zealand in the latter's backyard.

With it being a short series, the outfit that wins the opening game, will be at a big advantage going into the next two clashes with all of them to be played at the Wankhede Stadium as part of the ICC Championship.

The hosts cannot afford to take England lightly, as the visiting team boasts of some big names in women's cricket.

Opener Smriti Mandhana, who amassed 196 runs including a hundred and a 90 in New Zealand, will be a key player with the bat for the Indian women's team.

There are others too such as the experienced captain Mithali Raj, the first woman cricketer to appear in 200 ODIs.

However, the hosts will miss the aggressive Harmanpreet Kaur, who was ruled out of the entire series with an ankle injury and has been replaced by Harleen Deol.

Then there is also the young Jemimah Rodrigues to shore up the home teams batting.

It would be interesting to see whether Rodrigues or Punam Raut, who played her last ODI against Sri Lanka in September 2018, gets a look in.

The Mithali Raj-led team has had middle-order issues in the past and newly-appointed coach W V Raman would be keen to sort them as quickly as possible.

But the hosts would not have an easy outing facing the English attack.

The Indian bowling has an all-round look with the pace attack being led by veteran Jhulan Goswami and also comprising the likes of Shikha Pandey and Mansi Joshi.

With spin being a key element on Indian wickets, the role of slow bowlers Deepti Sharma, Ekta Bisht and Poonam Yadav in the middle overs would be crucial.

England evens, on the other hand, are a force to reckon with in the 50-over format. They have experienced campaigners in the top-order such as Danni Wyatt (746 runs in 61 matches) and 28-year-old Heather Knight.

Heather, with 2,331 runs to her credit in 86 ODIs, displayed good form in the practice game against the Board Presidents XI and showed her anchoring capabilities.

With all-rounders like Sophie Ecclestone, experienced pacer Anya Shrubsole and accurate medium pacer Nat Sciver in the reckoning, England has the bowling attack to trouble the hosts.

Anya would also take confidence from her four wicket haul in the warm-up game.

Teams (From): Mithali Raj (Captain), Jhulan Goswami, Smriti Mandhana, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Taniya Bhatia (wicket-keeper), R Kalpana (wicket-keeper), Mona Meshram, Ekta Bisht, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Poonam Yadav, Shikha Pandey, Mansi Joshi, Punam Raut, Harleen Deol.

England women: Tammy Beaumont, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elwiss, Alex Hartley, Amy Jones, Heather Knight, Laura Marsh, Nat Sciver, Anya Shrubsole, Sarah Taylor (wicketkeeper), Lauren Winfield and Danni Wyatt.

ICC Test Rankings: Virat Kohli, India maintain top ranking

After dominating England in the first Test, West Indies captain Jason Holder rose to the number 1 ranking in the list of Test all-rounders. The other notable improvements in the rankings include the Australian trio of Pat Cummins, Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne, along with the Windies' Kemar Roach, Roston Chase and Shane Dowrich.

Indian captain Virat Kohli continues to maintain his hold as the number 1 ranked Test batsman in the world. As far as the team rankings are concerned, the Indian team with 116 points remain the number 1 side in the world followed by South Africa which has 110 points.

The highlight of the week was Windies captain Jason Holder, whose superb maiden double century paved the way for West Indies crushing win over England by 381 runs. “It's been a while since I've been playing Test cricket and it's really good to come back in the game like this. I put a lot of hard work in just to get back



to full fitness,” Holder said after the match. “It's difficult to explain (his celebrations after reaching 200). A bit of emotion getting out. I've had a lot bottle

up for a long time and I had the moment there to express myself a little bit. It's really pleasing to know I can bat a whole sessions,” he added.



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@bejandaruwala.com and on phone **011-91-8141234275 www.bejandaruwala.com**

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE FEBRUARY 25 - MARCH 3, 2019

ARIES

Finances are in focus - particularly in buying, selling, brokerage and trade related activities. Also loans, contracts, tenders. But expenses, perhaps taxes will be rather heavy. This may also be because of a fair amount of entertaining. Ganesha says, there's a playful quality to the year and you'll enjoy out for some fun. Do some gardening. Have a backyard barbecue. Take a child on a day trip. Enjoy sports, or visit the seashore.

TAURUS

You will be suffused and over-powered with love also patriotic love for your country. You will be going around with your head in the clouds, full of fantasies and sentimentality. Taureans are known to be dreamy to the point of being reckless. So it's good to keep your feet firmly on the ground. The moon lights up your private sector and brings secrets to light. Keep private what you want to stay that way. Don't make promises. Do what you must to promote better health

GEMINI

You will be extremely work-oriented. If in government service or in the corporate world, there are great chances of a move up the ladder. Health will, however, pose a few problems, now and in the coming weeks, too. Ganesha advises you that since Geminis are often delicate and also neglectful so, CARE IS MUST. Matters of the heart strike a serious note. Don't obsess or tread where you shouldn't. Avoid argumentative people on the job. If a health concern is on your mind, it's time to make a plan.

CANCER

You will extend yourself in many directions. Primarily work but also wining and dining, entertaining and interfacing with people. You will display much charm and sensitivity in all you say and do. Once again, I must point out that health care is a must. Cancer is a sign that does not provide much stamina. The fantasy pull is strong. Not everyone is facing up to reality. Health and job, issues can bring on some stress. Opinions can widely differ. Don't expect perfection. Caution is the way!

LEO

Mars and Venus and the moon connect beautifully to endow you with money and force and the comforts of home. It's an ideal time to be outgoing and extroverted, pleasing others as well as yourself. Those connected with art or earning by it will prosper. Work satisfactions will be couple with good money. It sounds a good deal, doesn't it? Something that seems so right brings feelings of self-satisfaction. You're in charge. Sell your ideas and folks will listen. A domestic situation or home life in general feels very comfortable.

VIRGO

You will have much to do with dependents (even pets and servants), colleagues, projects and the work front in general. This is a definite trend for the month. However, work will be coupled with plenty of fun, so you will work and play equally successfully. It's kind of Ganesha, isn't it? Work and business affairs proceed smoothly. A partner has an idea that doesn't work for you at first. Think it over. The year has nice romance potential. A social evening at home is fine.

LIBRA

You will be in an emotional treadmill. Journeys and contacts are important, along with collaborations, import-export, higher studies abroad or negotiations with foreigners. A wedding, engagement, love affairs is also likely. A notable quarter for the multitude of possibilities it offers. I forgot to add social service and care for others on this list! A creative touch in your work is noticed. A party is fun. Some will be just as happy with only one special person. Conversation reveals important ideas. A little self-indulgence is okay.

SCORPIO

The moon energizes the human relationship angle. The trend for engagement/marriage becomes stronger now. Also, much more interfacing with the public, and you could gain much from this, if you do it with sincerity and caring. Ganesha says Keep your nose to the grindstone and play it safe where business interests, career, and your reputation are concerned.

SAGITTARIUS

Buying, selling, trade, brokerage, will give you much gain. Extra attention will be required for the home/office/shop. Also likely is the acquiring of a vehicle, or comfort and luxury goods that make for better living. You may even visit auctions and flea markets to pick up attractive bargains. You're best off keeping a low profile. Be discreet guard against someone who wants to blow your cover or ferret out a secret. Restrain that tendency to be blunt and up front.

CAPRICORN

Saturn brings the world to your heart. Unions and separations will occur, and you may become a news worthy person yourself. People from distant lands will play an important role in your life. Films and Television may have openings for you. You have to cash in on the possibilities that lie before you once again. Your personal magnetism is amped up, making it possible to get what you want, as others fall prey to your charm. Watch out for someone who has his/her own agenda and plays on your vanity.

AQUARIUS

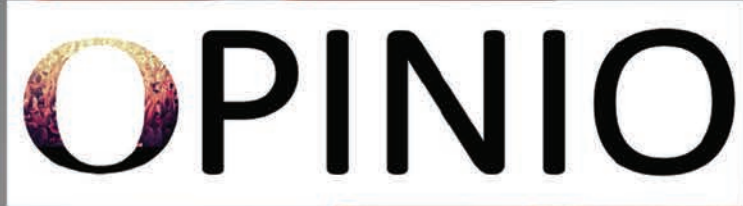
You will make that extra effort to get fame, recognition, glory. It's going to be hard work (it's never easy, believe me!). But you'll get there in the end. Ganesha advises you, in modern American parlance, to step on the gas. With the Moon in Cancer you can further your position in the world by taking into account other people's feelings, Charm and diplomacy count as much now as skill and talent. Take someone to lunch.

PISCES

It's a time to be alert and active enough to snatch the opportunities for advancement that come your way. Recognition and rewards, both here and abroad, are yours for the taking, and take them you will, in your present frame of mind. Finances and wealth will be important. There is a possibility of good news and interesting or surprising events, which help further your hopes and wishes. Much is learned now through friendly, social channels.

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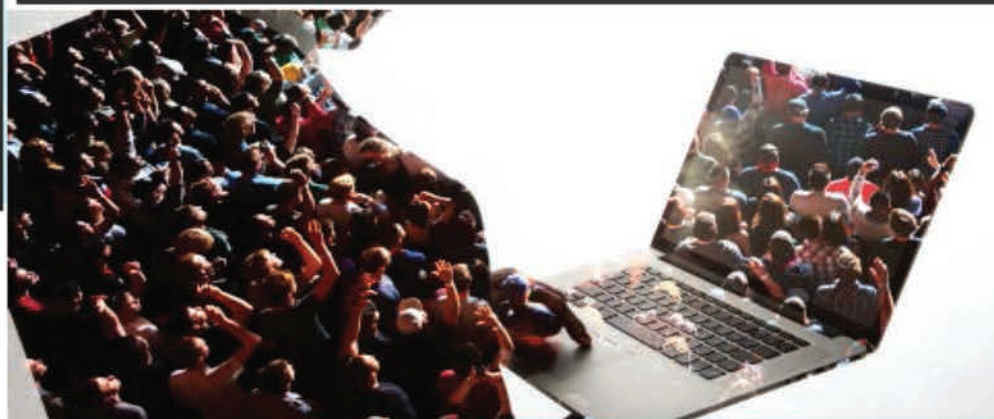
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