

The INDIAN PANORAMA

VAISAKHI SPECIAL EDITION

We will bring out a profusely illustrated special edition on the occasion of Vaisakhi which falls on April 13.

Articles and advertisements for publication in the Vaisakhi special edition may please be emailed by April 5, 2019 to salujaindra@gmail.com

For any question, please call 646-247-9458.

New Zealand bans sale of assault, semi-automatic rifles: PM Ardern



New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern embraces a woman who attended the House session at Parliament on March 19. She has said high-capacity magazines and devices similar to bump stocks-which made rifles fire faster-would also be banned.

CHRIST CHURCH, NEW ZEALAND (TIP): New Zealand will ban military-style semi-automatic and assault rifles under tough new gun laws following the killing of 50 people in its worst mass shooting, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said on Thursday, March 21, reports Reuters. *contd on Page 20*

BJP Releases First List of 184 Candidates: 24 Sitting MP's Dropped

Narendra Modi from Varanasi again; Amit Shah replaces Advani in Gandhinagar

Photo / Courtesy The Hindu

Ready for battle
In its first list, the BJP has put out the names of candidates for 184 seats, spread across 20 States

NARENDRA MODI VARANASI

AMIT SHAH GANDHINAGAR

Prominent absentees: L.K. Advani (Gandhinagar); B.C. Khanduri (Garhwal); Bhagat Singh Koshyari (Nainital)

NEW DELHI (TIP): The BJP on Thursday, March 21, released its first list of 184 candidates for 20 States for the Lok Sabha election being held in seven stages from April 11.

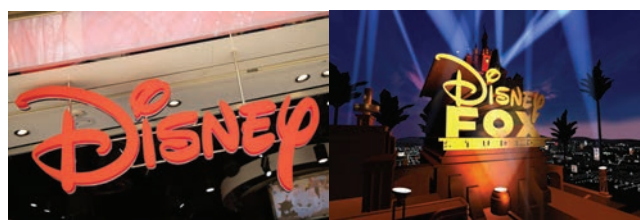
While Prime Minister Narendra Modi will contest again from Varanasi, party president Amit Shah has replaced party stalwart Lal Krishna Advani in Gandhinagar.

The party dropped 24 MP's, the biggest drop in Uttar Pradesh with six candidates replaced in a list of 28.

contd on Page 20
More election news on page 6

Prem Parameswaran: "The Disney Fox deal is very exciting for the global media and entertainment industry"

LOS ANGELES (TIP): It is the latest corporate wedding between Mickey Mouse's sprawling media empire and the entertainment assets that were built under Rupert Murdoch.



The \$71 Billion acquisition officially closed March 20, and in the process reshaped Hollywood's two major studios.

The assets that Murdoch keeps provide a leaner, more focused entity built around the Fox broadcast network, Fox News Channel and Fox Sports. That company will live on as the Fox Corporation (FOXA). Disney CEO Bob Iger, meanwhile, achieved the necessary bulk, theoretically, to mount a formidable competitor to Netflix (NFLX).

contd on Page 20



Obviously, at Eros International we believe in a very similar strategy as we have meshed the best Indian content in the world on our global OTT platform Eros Now

Facebook admits storing passwords in plain text

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (TIP): Facebook on Thursday, March 21, admitted that millions of passwords were stored in plain text on its internal servers, a security slip that left them readable by the social networking giant's employees. "To be clear, these passwords were never visible to anyone outside of Facebook and we have found no evidence to date that anyone internally abused or improperly accessed them," vice president of engineering, security, and privacy, Pedro Canahuati said in a blog post.



The INDIAN PANORAMA

NEW YORK- DALLAS

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Indian Americans Dr. Prakasam Tata and Dr. Sanjay Gupta to receive 2019 Ellis Island Medals of Honor

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian Americans Dr. Prakasam Tata and Dr. Sanjay Gupta have been named 2019 Ellis Island Medals of Honor recipients among others, who will be honored at the 34th annual "Ellis Island Medals of Honor" gala on May 10.

The Ellis Island Honors Society sponsors the Ellis Island Medals of Honor, which are presented annually to a select group of immigrants whose accomplishments in their field and inspired service to the nation are cause for celebration. The Medal has been officially recognized by both Houses of Congress as one of most prestigious awards in the USA and is annually memorialized in the Congressional Record.

Dr. Prakasam Tata is currently serving as Distinguished Professor of Environmental Sciences and Health in the Department of Community Medicine at the Maharajah Institute of Medical Sciences, Nellimarla, Vizianagaram District, Andhra Pradesh, India. Currently he is also serving as the Executive Director of the Center for Waste Transformation Technology, Wheaton, IL, which is a nonprofit organization and works on projects related to environmental education and awareness and use of wastes as resources. Dr. Tata is currently serving as the President, Bharathi Theertha, Naperville, IL USA and Vice President, Bharathi Theertha, Vizianagaram, India.

In 1966, Dr. Tata after receiving his Ph.D. from Rutgers University, NJ, joined the faculty of Cornell University and worked on water quality and animal waste management problems and published several papers and reports. In 1974 he joined the Research and Development Department of the Metropolitan



Dr. Prakasam Tata and Dr. Sanjay Gupta

Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. In 2002 Dr. Tata retired as the Assistant Director and Head of the Environmental Monitoring and Research Division. Although Dr. Tata has been living in the USA for more than five decades, he visited India and other developing countries numerous times. Under the banner of Bharathi Theertha, he is currently working on issues relating to the education, environment and health of poor children and adults alike and on issues related to air, water, and land pollution.

Dr. Sanjay Gupta is the multiple Emmy award winning chief medical correspondent for CNN. Gupta, a practicing neurosurgeon, plays an integral role in CNN's reporting on health and medical news for all of CNN's shows domestically and internationally, and contributes to CNN.com. His medical training and public health policy experience

distinguishes his reporting from war zones and natural disasters, as well as on a range of medical and scientific topics, including the opioid crisis, Pandemic outbreaks, brain injury, disaster recovery, health care reform, fitness, military medicine, and medicinal marijuana.

In addition to his work for CNN, Gupta is a member of the staff and faculty at the Emory University School of Medicine. He is associate chief of neurosurgery at Grady Memorial Hospital and regularly performs surgery at Emory University and Grady hospitals. He holds memberships in the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, Congress of Neurological Surgeons and the Council on Foreign Relations. He serves as a diplomate of the American Board of Neurosurgery and is a Certified Medical Investigator through the American College of Forensic Examiners.

Indian American Couple in North Carolina Convicted of Human Trafficking Charges

Couple promised jobs to lure workers. They beat them and didn't pay, prosecutors say

STOCKTON, NC (TIP): After an 11-day trial, a federal jury found an Indian couple - Satish Kartan, 45, and his wife, Sharmistha Barai, 40, guilty on March 14 of conspiracy to obtain forced labor and two counts of obtaining forced labor. In addition, Kartan was found guilty of fraud in foreign labor contracting. According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, between February 2014 and October 2016, Kartan and Barai hired workers from overseas to perform domestic labor in their home in Stockton. *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*

Indian American Kiran Kaur Gill named SALDEF Executive Director



In addition to her professional accomplishments, Kiran is involved in a variety of community and civic organizations

WASHINGTON (TIP) The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund recently named Kiran Kaur Gill as new Executive Director. Kiran was the former president and CEO of PARS Environmental, Inc., a full-service environmental consulting firm based in Robbinsville, New Jersey.

Upon assuming the role of Executive Director, Kiran said, "I am honored to join SALDEF and feel a deep sense of appreciation and responsibility. The history of the organization is amazing, and I am humbled to be able to add to the legacy of impact and to empower Sikh Americans. I am so excited to do this important work and look forward to working on your behalf."

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian American Health Care Executive in Atlanta Sentenced to Prison for \$8.5M Blood Work Scheme



Shailesh ("Shue") Kothari, the former owner and CEO of Primera Medical Group, Inc was sentenced March 14.

ATLANTA (TIP): An Indian origin former owner and CEO of a medical company in Atlanta, Georgia has been sentenced for conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud and aggravated identity theft. Shailesh ("Shue") Kothari, the former owner and CEO of Primera Medical Group, Inc., and Timothy McMenamin, Primera's former Chief Operating Officer have been sentenced March 14. *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*

Indian Teen Lydian Nadhaswaram wins American Reality Show



Lydian Nadhaswaram and his father Varshan Satish with The World's Best's host James Corden and judges Faith Hill, RuPaul Charles and Drew Barrymore. Photo / courtesy Twitter/Faith Hill

NEW YORK (TIP): A 12-year-old pianist Lydian Nadhaswaram from Tamil Nadu's Chennai made Indians proud by winning the inaugural edition of the CBS 'World's Best Show' on March 14.

Lydian, a student of AR Rahman's Chennai-based KM Music Conservatory, topped South Korea's Kukkiwon, a.k.a. "The Flying Taekwondo Masters" and got the \$1 million top prize in the CBS show. For the finals,

Lydian performed two piano medleys and impressed the judges and audience alike. Faith Hill, RuPaul Charles and Drew Barrymore were the frontline judges and they had 50 other world judges with them to make the final call.

Though Lydian is a familiar name in Chennai, the kid shot to fame after appearing in the Ellen DeGeneres show with his blindfold act.

The World's Best is a new type of talent competition captured on a scale rarely seen on television. The World's Best is a first-of-its-kind global talent contest that features acts from every genre imaginable, from every corner of the world.

His father, Music Director Varshan Satish, accompanied Lydian when he received his award.

Indian American Pleads Guilty to Marriage and Visa Fraud

PANAMA CITY, FL (TIP): Ravi Babu Kolla, 47, an Indian national residing in Panama City, pleaded guilty March 13 to conspiracy to commit marriage and visa fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering. On Tuesday, his co-defendant Krystal Cloud, 40, of Altha, Florida, was sentenced to 24 months in prison for marriage and visa fraud conspiracy after pleading guilty on December 28, 2018. Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the guilty plea and sentence.

Between February 2017 and August 2018, Kolla operated an immigration marriage fraud business in Bay County that recruited U.S. citizens to marry Indian foreign nationals to gain immigration benefits. The majority of the Indian foreign nationals overstayed their Visas or Student Exchange Visitor Program requirements and were unlawfully residing in the United States. The investigation identified over 80 fraudulent marriages that were performed in Alabama as part of Kolla's scheme. Cloud is a U.S. citizen who participated with Kolla in the marriage fraud business. After entering a fraudulent marriage in October 2017, she began recruiting U.S. citizens to marry Indian foreign nationals. Cloud directly recruited or participated in the recruitment of 10 or more U.S. citizens from the Panama City area and rural Calhoun and Jackson Counties. She also helped gather personal information so Kolla could create fraudulent immigration forms in order for the Indian foreign nationals to remain in the United States.



Ravi Babu Kolla faces a maximum of 5 years in prison for conspiracy to commit marriage and visa fraud and a maximum of 20 years in prison for money laundering conspiracy.

Amruta Fadnavis, First Lady of Maharashtra, is Lead Singer with Bollywood Singer Sukhwinder Singh at AAPI's 10-City Jai Ho Musical Dhamaka

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Amruta Fadnavis, a trained classical singer, a social activist, a banker, and the First Lady of the state of Maharashtra, will be the lead singer along with award winning Bollywood singer Sukhwinder Singh at the Ten-City Jai Ho Musical Dhamaka this spring, performing in Ten Cities around the United States.

After mesmerizing musical lovers all across the world with his enchanting voice, Sukhwinder Singh, a top Bollywood singer, accompanied by Amruta Fadnavis, is now on yet another tour across North America.

Organized by American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the proceeds from the 10-city musical tour will support some of the noble initiatives of AAPI, says Dr. Naresh Parikh, President of AAPI. "We are requesting all AAPI members, all doctors of Indian origin, all south Asians to rally and support this amazing opportunity of the 10-city musical tour to promote awareness and raise funds for supporting the many programs to address the rapidly growing problem of cardiovascular diseases in south Asians and minorities living in the United States and Lymphoma & Leukemia in India."

Coupled with three honorable causes addressing cardiovascular disease, lymphoma and leukemia, this is truly a worthy and honorable effort that enhances AAPI's commitment to major health issues and its strong support to eradicate them, Dr. Parikh added.

Amruta Fadnavis, married to the 18th Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri. Devendra Fadnavis, is the youngest First Lady in the history of Maharashtra. Currently she serves as the Vice President - Transaction Banking with Axis Bank.

The beautiful and talented young artist has represented India at the National Prayer Breakfast - 2017, an International peace initiative presided over by US President Donald Trump. She has perfectly blended her life as a working woman and a socialite to nurture her interests and passions. She chose to have her own individuality rather than wrapped herself under the covers of first lady of Maharashtra and which is definitely an inspiration for many women today.

A major objective of this program is to bring together various local Chapters, says Dr. Parikh. National coordinators of the program, Drs. Narendra Kumar, Hemant Dhingra, Raj Bhayani, Amit Chkrabarty, Anjana Samadder, and Gautam Samadder, as well as and the entire AAPI team and leadership enthusiastically received this idea and the net result of our collaboration and dialogue is the 10-city grand mega concert, he added.

With the whole-hearted support and enthusiastic responses from senior leadership and several past Presidents and leaders and members of AAPI, this mega event across the

nation is going to bring AAPI and its members closer, Dr. Parikh says. "I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Narendra Kumar, Dr. Sanku Rao, Dr. Vinod Shah, Dr. Ravi Jahagirdar, Dr. Ajay Lodha, Dr. Jayesh Shah, and Dr. Vijay Koli, all past Presidents of AAPI for their senior advisory role in making this mega event a grand success."

Describing the process leading to the Tour, Dr. Suresh Reddy, President-Elect of AAPI, recalls, "Realizing that it takes a lot of coordination and tremendous effort, we were successful in involving dozens of AAPI office-bearers of various Chapters and Executive Committee members. Each of them is committed to work hard, coordinate with the local leadership, while committing to have the funds raised would be given to AAPI, the local Chapters, and the many philanthropic endeavors organized by AAPI and its Charitable Foundation."

The spectacular musical program combined with educational and networking opportunities for AAPI members, supporters and sponsors, is being organized with the objective of bringing CME and non-CME sponsored medical lectures, exhibits, Gala Dinner, community outreach talks and lively musical nite in each of the 10 cities across the country.

The 10-city musical and educational tour will debut on Friday, May 10th in Tampa, FL; and will be followed by Atlanta on May 11th and in Washington DC on May 12th. Sukhwinder and his team will perform in Charlotte, NC on May 17th, in New Jersey on May 18th and in Dallas, TX on May 19th. In the final weekend, the popular artists will begin the tour in Milwaukee, WI on May 24th, in Columbus, Ohio May 25th in Columbus, Ohio; in Hollywood City, Los Angeles on May 26th; and, the grand finale will be in Fresno, CA on May 27th, 2019.

"Following the past successes of multi-city musical tours organized by AAPI, I am inspired by the concept and how such events have helped in strengthening the relationship between the AAPI Chapters and national office, in addition to help raise funds for the many noble programs for AAPI and the local Chapters" says Dr. Narendra Kumar, past President of AAPI.

Dr. Hemant Dhingra, Entertainment Chair of AAPI provided a detailed description of the planned 10-City Tour by popular Bollywood star, Sukhwinder, which is a way to raise funds for AAPI and its many local Chapters. Dr. Dhingra, who has close relationship with the Entertainment Industry, worked with Sukhwinder Singh and team to put together the mega event. Anwar Feroz Siddiqi, Chief Strategy Adviser says, "We are now poised to take our commitment to newer heights, the 10-City Musical Tour by world renowned Bollywood artist Sukhwinder accompanied by an icon of women leadership, the first lady of Maharashtra. The presence of Ms. Amruta Fadnavis is a very well-known personality, a great singer and an amazing community leader that continues to pursue her career with her

spouse being in the most powerful office in Maharashtra, is a true demonstration of great leadership and commitment for AAPI and its noble causes."

Sukhwinder Singh, an internationally recognized Bollywood playback artist, best known for singing "Chaiyya," for which he won the Best Male Playback Award at the 1999 Filmfare Awards, in association with composer A.R. Rahman has resulted in numerous hit songs. The list includes Chaiyya from Dil Se, Ramta Jogi, Ni Main Samajh Gayee, Taal Se Taal Mila and Nahin Samne from Taal, Ruth Aa Gayee Re, Raat Ki Daldal Hain and Yeh Jo Zindagi Hain from Earth, Jaane Tu Mera Kya Hai from Jaane Tu... Ya Jaane Na, Aayo Re Sakhi, Bhangari Morori and Piya Ho from Water, ChinnammaChilakkamma from Meenaxi, Thok De Killi from Raavan and the most popular Jai Ho from Slumdog Millionaire.

The song "Jai Ho", sung by Singh, composed by A.R. Rahman and written by Gulzar, was nominated as a Critics' Choice Award for Best Song and won an Oscar Academy Award for Best Original Song. It also won the Grammy Award for Best Song Written for a Motion Picture, Television or Other Visual Media in 2010.

Amruta Fadnavis was born, as Amruta Ranade on April 9th, 1979 in Nagpur, Maharashtra, to Dr. Sharad Ranade, an Ophthalmologist and Dr. Charulata Ranade, a Gynaecologist. She grew up in a household where education and independence for women was essential. She initially studied at St. Joseph Convent School, Nagpur. She graduated from G.S. College of Commerce and Economics. Later she pursued MBA in finance and studied taxation laws from Symbiosis Law School, Pune. Along with studies she also participated in sports and an excellent sports person. She was a state level under 16 tennis player.

"Entertainment was only just one component of the entire program," Dr. Parikh adds. "The idea is to put together mini seminars, networking and strengthening the relationship between members and the national office. "Due to popular demand from several physicians on the need for enhancing scientific component at AAPI meetings and allowing greater number of members to participate, AAPI is now organizing the 13-city programs to make it easy for physicians to participate locally avoiding extensive travel and time away from practice," he explains.

"Many of our industry partners liked this concept where they could get prime time with a few hundred doctors in each location for product promotion/theater, non-CME lectures, exhibits, booths," Dr. Narendra Kumar, national coordinator of the event, says. "These multi-city mini-seminars are a novel concept for education and recreation that will raise funds for the local chapters of AAPI, the national AAPI and the AAPI Charitable Foundation."

The Seminars, CMEs, and workshops will be



Amruta Fadnavis, a classical singer and Bollywood singer Sukhwinder Singh are the lead singers at AAPI's Ten-City Jai Ho Musical Dhamaka

led by accomplished faculty of leading Physicians, Industry Leaders, Cardiologists, Cardiovascular Surgeons and Psychiatrists. Each of the nine medical educational programs is expected to have an audience of 250-400 Physicians, which will be followed by an annual gala event and entertainment with an expected 2,500+ audience at each location.

Dr. Parikh promises to "make the musical tour both transparent and successful, and we hope it becomes an annual event. Many of our industry partners have also shown great interest in this concept, where they can receive prime time with a few hundred doctors for product promotion, theater, non-CME lectures, exhibits and booths. Because of this, we hope to have a significant number of national sponsors for this program."

This extensive Musical/Educational Tour program put together by Dr. Parikh and his Team is a step towards reaching the message of AAPI across the globe and help AAPI realize its noble mission. "I am calling on all AAPI members, all doctors of Indian origin, all South Asians to rally and support an amazing opportunity of the 10-city musical tour to promote awareness and raise funds for supporting essential programs to address the rapidly growing problem of cardiovascular diseases in South Asians and minorities living in the United States and Lymphoma & Leukemia in India." For more details on the Musical Tour and for sponsorship opportunities, please visit: <http://www.aapiusa.org/> <https://www.aapievents.com/>

(Press release issued by Ajay Ghosh)

Krishnamoorthi Launches Investigation into 'Talc in Question', seeks Information from Johnson & Johnson

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, who is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy on March 20, launched a comprehensive investigation into the recent revelations that talc used in some consumer products has been contaminated with asbestos and poses a threat to public health. Krishnamoorthi wrote a letter to Johnson & Johnson, one of the largest makers of products containing

the talc in question. In his letter to Alex Gorsky, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Johnson & Johnson, Krishnamoorthi requested him to produce documents and information regarding suppliers of talc-containing products by April 5, 2019.

The letter to Johnson & Johnson comes on the heels of a March 12 hearing on this topic which examined the scientific evidence of health risks from long-term use of consumer products containing talc and the federal regulatory framework on consumer product safety.

The inquiry aims to unearth important information regarding corporate practices to manufacture, market, and sell consumer products with potential talc contamination, and to better understand how the federal government can protect consumers from exposure to asbestos.



Krishnamoorthi wrote a letter to Alex Gorsky, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Johnson & Johnson

India to Emerge as USD 5 Trillion Economy in Next Five Years, Says Ambassador Shringla

WASHINGTON (TIP): India is one of the strongest major emerging economies and all set to emerge as a USD 5 trillion economy in the next five years, India's Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla said at an eventon March 19 at Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University.

The Institute for International Economic Policy, The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry, and The Sigur Center for Asian Studies hosted: "India and USA: Shared Prosperity, Opportunities, and Challenges: A Conversation with Ambassador Shringla and Industry Leaders"

In a Fireside Chat with Dr. Ajay Chibber, Chief Economic Advisor, FICCI & Visiting Scholar, IIEP, George Washington University, the Indian envoy explained how India would become a USD 5 trillion economy in next five years. "We have already grown in the last five years from being the 11th largest economy in the world to the sixth. And this year we might as well become the fifth largest economy. We see ourselves growing to a USD 5 trillion economy in the next five years to 2024 and eight years after that, we see ourselves as USD 10 trillion economy," Shringla said.

The fireside chat was followed by a panel discussion of industry experts to discuss the competitive advantage of the U.S.-India relationship in the sectors of higher



India's Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla (4th from left) with other Industry Leaders at the FICCI event

education, pharmaceuticals and infrastructure investments. Panel Speakers were Subir Gokarn, Executive Director for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Sri Lanka, IMF, Former Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India; Sofia Mumtaz, Head, USA, Lupin Pharmaceuticals and Adrian Mutton, Founder & CEO, Sannam S4.

The Ambassador also launched a FICCI Report on "Envisioning India: 2030", an in-depth study of how India can build a competitive economy by 2030. This will be followed by the Ambassador's remarks on the report, and his views on the potential for growth in the U.S. - India bilateral relationship.

India-based Tech Support Scam: North Carolina Man Pleads Guilty

CHARLOTTE, NC (TIP): A Charlotte, North Carolina man pleaded guilty March 20 for his role in a tech support scam using a call center located in India, set up to handle "tech support" calls with potential victims. Bishap Mittal, 24, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge David S. Cayer to conspiracy to access a protected computer, for his role in the international scam that defrauded hundreds of victims, including seniors, of more than \$3 million.

According to the information and plea agreement, Mittal was part of a conspiracy that carried out the tech support scam by placing fake pop-up ads on victims' computers to convince them they had a serious computer problem, and to induce them to pay for purported "technical support" services to resolve the issue. Mittal admitted in court today that he and "Individual 1" resided together in Charlotte. Individual 1 was the owner/manager of Capstone Technologies LLC (Capstone), a company headquartered in Charlotte that claimed to provide computer-related services to its customers. Capstone conducted business using several different aliases, including Authenza Solutions LLC, MS-Squad Technologies, MS-Squad.com, MS Infotech, United Technologies, and Reventus Technologies, (collectively, Capstone Technologies). Individual 1, Mittal, and others carried out the tech support scam using the call center in India. Mittal has been released on bond. A sentencing date has not been set.

Indian American Lawmakers Condemn Christchurch Attack



Senator Kamala Harris, Rep Pramila Jayapal and Rep Ami Bera have expressed anguish over the attack on Muslims in their mosques in Christ Church

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Lawmakers condemned the terror attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, which has already left 50 dead including at least five Indians and more wounded.

"My heart is heavy with grief for New Zealand & Muslims worldwide

affected by the tragic murders in Christchurch. The massacre of those in a house of worship, in prayer; is evil & cowardly. We stand with our friends around the world to condemn hate & speak out against intolerance" tweeted Senator Kamala Harris.

"I'm heartbroken to learn about the horrific killings in New Zealand. We must all stand up to hatred, bigotry, and violence. My thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by this senseless tragedy" Ami Bera U.S. Representative from California's 7th congressional posted on social media. "Today we mourn the loss of 49 lives tragically taken by acts of Islamophobic, white supremacist terror in Christchurch, New Zealand. Those murdered in these acts of hate at their own mosques, and those wounded with them, were attacked in an hour of prayer as their communities came together. Across the world, people of every faith, creed, race, and background must come together as well and speak with one resounding voice against the violent forces of hate, bigotry, prejudice, and fear: This is a day of mourning for the Muslim community, New Zealand, and all the world, but it must also be one of uniting to build a more diverse, more peaceful, more open, more compassionate, and more tolerant world. Hate must not and will not prevail", Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi from Illinois' 8th district said in a statement. Pramila Jayapal U.S. Representative from Washington's 7th congressional district spoke at a vigil for the Christchurch massacre March 18. "Tonight, I had the honor to speak at a beautiful vigil for the Christchurch massacre. Organized by @mapsoutreach, hundreds came & packed the room. Dozens of faith leaders from all faiths & deep education abt Islamophobia. So proud of our beloved community 4 standing against hate", she tweeted after the event. "It's a pathetic, weak display of "strength" to enter a mosque, synagogue, church, temple or gurdwara armed to the teeth & slaughtering unarmed worshippers. The sick, white nationalist ideology spurred on by 45 of invaders coming to do harm has spread & we must unite against it. This hate-filled violence must be rooted out which means we must take seriously growing threat of white supremacist terrorists. They are targeting Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, immigrants, women, lgbtq" posted Assemblymember Ash Kalra who represents the 27th California Assembly District. (Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

USCIS Announces New Changes to 'Make H-1B visa program Work Better'

WASHINGTON (TIP): U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced March 19 the start of the fiscal year (FY) 2020 H-1B cap season, start dates for premium processing of cap-subject H-1B petitions, and the launch of its new H-1B data hub, while reminding petitioners of its new H-1B cap selection process.

"USCIS continually strives to improve the administration of the H-1B program and make it work better for employers, our agency, and U.S. workers," said USCIS Director L. Francis Cissna. "We are also committed to fulfilling the president's Buy American and Hire American executive order; one of the principal goals of which is to protect the interests of U.S. workers in the administration of our immigration system, in part by promoting the proper functioning of the H-1B visa program. Our new H-1B data hub will make information more accessible to the public, and the new selection process will help make the system more meritorious and better protect the wages of U.S. workers. Additionally, our two-phased approach to premium processing will make the process more effective and efficient for employers and USCIS."

Start of FY 2020 Cap Season

USCIS will begin accepting H-1B petitions subject to the FY 2020 cap on April 1, 2019 and will reject any FY 2020 cap-subject H-1B petitions filed before April 1. H-1B petitioners must follow all statutory and regulatory requirements as they prepare petitions to avoid delays in processing and possible requests for evidence.

Premium Processing for FY 2020 Cap-Subject Petitions

Premium processing will be offered in a two-phased approach during the FY 2020 cap season so USCIS can best manage the premium processing requests without fully suspending it as in previous years. The first phase will include FY 2020 cap-subject H-1B petitions requesting a change of status and the second phase will include all other FY 2020 cap-subject petitions. Premium processing for all other FY 2020 cap-subject H-1B petitions will not begin until at least June 2019.

New H-1B Data Hub

USCIS is also announcing the new H-1B Employer Data Hub that will be available on uscis.gov on April 1. The data hub is part of USCIS' continued effort to increase the transparency of the H-1B program by allowing the public to search for H-1B petitioners by fiscal year, NAICS industry code, company name, city, state, or zip code. This will give the public the ability to calculate approval and denial rates and to review which employers are using the H-1B program.

New H-1B Cap Selection Process

In January, the Department of Homeland Security announced a final rule amending regulations governing cap-subject H-1B petitions, including those that may be eligible for the advanced degree exemption. The final rule reverses the order by which USCIS selects H-1B petitions under the H-1B regular cap and the advanced degree exemption, which will be in effect for the FY 2020 cap season. This simple change increases the chances that more of these visas will be granted to those with an advanced degree from a U.S. institution of higher education.

BJP seals seat-sharing agreement in Kerala, to contest from 14 seats

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Bharatiya Janata Party on Wednesday finalised a seat-sharing agreement with the Bharath Dharma Jana Sena and the Kerala Congress for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, PTI reported. Kerala has 20 Lok Sabha seats and will vote on April 23.

BJP National General Secretary Muralidhar Rao said the party will field candidates in 14 seats in Kerala. Ally Bharath Dharma Jana Sena will contest in five seats and PC Thomas-led Kerala Congress will fight in one, he added.

The Bharath Dharma Jana Sena has been allotted the constituencies of Thrissur, Mavelikkara, Idukki, Alathur and Wayanad, Manorama Online reported.

Rao said the Central Election Committee of the BJP will decide the seat from where former Kummanam Rajasekharan will contest. Rajasekharan, who resigned as Mizoram Governor earlier this month, was the president of the BJP's Kerala unit.

Smriti to again take on Rahul Gandhi in Amethi

NEW DELHI (TIP): Union minister Smriti Irani is among the Bharatiya Janata Party candidates whose names figured in the party's first list for Lok Sabha elections. The list was declared by Union minister JP Nadda on Thursday evening and covered 20 states.



The Union textiles minister has been renominated from the Amethi Lok Sabha constituency from where Rahul Gandhi is contesting the election. This is the second time that she has been pitted against the Congress president.

She was fielded by the BJP in the 2014 elections to make inroads in the Gandhi family pocket borough. She did lose the battle, but managed to succeed in reducing the Congress leader's victory margin to one lakh votes in 2014, down from three lakh five years earlier.

Mayawati won't fight LS poll, but still in PM race

LUCKNOW (TIP): Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati Wednesday announced that she will not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

"In view of the present circumstances and need of the country and the interests of the party, movement and public, it is the need of the hour that I do not contest the Lok Sabha polls. And this is the reason that I have decided not to contest the Lok Sabha polls," Mayawati said here.

"If it so happens that I have to get elected to the Lok Sabha later, I can contest from any seat by getting it vacated and become an MP. I will not face any problem," she said.

The BSP chief also said she does not want to see any damage to the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in Uttar Pradesh.

"Hence, winning each and every Lok Sabha seat is more important than my personal victory," Mayawati said.

She claimed that all she has to do is to go and file nomination papers and her party workers will discharge their responsibilities to ensure her victory.

'Shame', says Modi after Sam Pitroda raises questions on Balakot strike

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday stepped up attack on the Congress after party leader Sam Pitroda sought more 'facts' related to the Indian Air Force strike at a terror camp in Pakistan's Balakot. In a series of tweets, PM Modi lashed out at the opposition alleging it has been insulting the armed forces.

PM Modi said, "The most trusted advisor and guide of the Congress President has kick-started the Pakistan National Day celebrations on behalf of the Congress, ironically by demeaning India's armed forces. Shame!"

Pitroda, in an interview to news agency ANI, raised questions over the Balakot strike saying that international media did not agree with the claims made in India about the IAF action against terror camp in Pakistan. He also questioned the policy to launch air strike across the Line of Control. He said "you don't jump on entire nation" if some terrorists target a place in India.

Reacting to Pitroda's comment, PM Modi said, "Opposition insults our forces time and again. I appeal to my fellow Indians- question Opposition leaders on their statements. Tell them- 130 crore Indians will not forgive or forget the Opposition for their antics. India stands firmly with our forces."

"Loyal courtier of Congress' royal dynasty admits what the nation already knew- Congress was unwilling to respond to forces of terror. This is a New India- we will answer terrorists in a language they understand and with interest," read another tweet posted by PM Modi.



Pitroda, in an interview to news agency ANI, raised questions over the Balakot strike saying that international media did not agree with the claims made in India about the IAF action against terror camp in Pakistan

The prime minister also hit out at Samajwadi Party leader Ram Gopal Yadav, who on Thursday said that Pulwama terror attack was a "conspiracy" in which "soldiers were killed for votes".

"Opposition is the natural habitat of terror apologists and questioners of our armed forces. This reprehensible statement by a senior leader like Ram Gopal Ji insults all those who have given their lives in protecting Kashmir. It humiliates the families of our martyrs," PM Modi wrote on Twitter.

Fresh efforts for AAP-Cong pact in Delhi, Pawar steps in

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Congress and Aam Aadmi Party's Lok Sabha alliance thriller continued today amid fresh efforts by sections of both parties to try and find common ground.

The NCP also got involved in attempts to bring the two outfits together for the Lok Sabha elections so as to prevent the division of anti-BJP votes. NCP supremo Sharad Pawar hosted AAP's Sanjay Singh at his Delhi residence today to discuss the political situation. The two ended up talking Delhi and if an AAP and Congress pact in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana was possible. After the meeting, Sanjay Singh said he discussed with Pawar AAP's proposal of pre-poll alliances with the Congress in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana.

The AAP wants five seats out of seven in Delhi; three out of 13 in Punjab and two out of 10 in Haryana. The AAP's three-state precondition for an alliance with the Congress has so far sabotaged all efforts of any electoral understanding with Congress leaders in Punjab and Haryana, rejecting the offer outright. AICC general secretary in charge of Haryana Ghulam Nabi Azad today ruled out any "scope of an alliance in Haryana". With the Congress closed to any understanding in Punjab and Haryana, it remains to be seen if a standalone Delhi pact between the two parties is possible.

Can Priyanka turn things around for Congress in UP?



KANPUR (TIP): Halfway through the Lucknow-Kanpur road, heaps of small potatoes arrest one's attention. It's the Dahi Chowki market of Unnao, a place where local produce is sold. As sellers find a reporter in their midst, the area turns into something like a TV studio. And just like TV debates, 'panellists' here are sharply divided.

So, here it's the BJP vs SP. What about Congress? Unnao is the constituency from where Annu Tandon won in the 2009 general elections, way before the Modi wave swept away everything. What do the residents think about Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's potential?

Tomato farmer Sunder Lal is not convinced. "What will she do? She is Indira Gandhi's granddaughter, but not Indira Gandhi. We have seen Manmohan Singh's rule for 10 years. He did nothing. Here no one—either Priyanka Vadra or Rahul Gandhi—will be able to cast a spell."

While Lal says he would vote for a strong nation, his fellow trader Rajendra Yadav

vouches for SP's Akhilesh Yadav. In Shuklaganj, about 20 km away, Raju Mishra, a trader, seconds Lal. He brought up Annu Tandon. "Whatever presence Congress has here is because of its candidate Annu Tandon, who has maintained her links with the constituency in the past five years."

A first-time voter, Anukriti Singh, seems to be smitten by Priyanka's personality. But she too is not very confident of Priyanka. Neighbouring Kanpur also shows similar trends. Even a traditional Congress supporter like Saud Ahmad, a leather exporter, feels that Priyanka's appointment is too late.

However, Congress' sitting MLA from Kanpur Cantt., Sohail Akhtar Ansari believes that Priyanka's entry is going to change the country's political landscape forever. "Log is chunav ke baad yeh sonchenge ki akhir Congress ko ho kya gaya (After this election, people will wonder what happened to Congress?)."
Source: New Indian Express

With 20 votes in favour, Goa CM Sawant wins floor test

PANAJI (TIP): Goa CM Pramod Sawant today proved majority of his BJP-led government in the Assembly, comfortably winning a floor test in the House.

When Deputy Speaker Michael Lobo asked for division of votes, 20 MLAs supported the confidence motion in the two-day-old government, while 15 legislators opposed it. The effective strength of the 40-member Assembly is now 36, after the death of two members and resignation by two others. The change in leadership in the coastal state was necessitated due to the death of then CM Manohar Parrikar on Sunday.

After winning the floor test, Sawant appealed to House members to "be positive", echoing a message given by Parrikar earlier.

The special Assembly session was convened by Governor Mridula Sinha to conduct the floor test. Besides 11 members from the BJP, three each from the Goa Forward Party, Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and three Independents supported Sawant. All 14 Congress MLAs and one from the NCP stood up against the motion.

The session began with a discussion on a condolence motion moved by BJP's Rajesh Patnekar, expressing grief over the death of Parrikar, former Deputy CM Francis D'Souza and former Deputy Speaker Vishnu Wagh.

SAMJHAUTA EXPRESS BLAST CASE

Aseemanand, three others acquitted by special NIA court

PANCHKULA (TIP): A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Haryana's Panchkula on March 20 acquitted Naba Kumar Sarkar, alias Aseemanand, and three other accused in the 2007 Samjhauta Express blast case that killed 68 people, prompting Pakistan to summon the Indian high commissioner in protest.

This is the third terror-related case in which Aseemanand, a former functionary of a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliate, has been acquitted. He was earlier cleared in the 2007 Mecca Masjid blast case in Hyderabad and the 2007 Ajmer blast case - two other cases that gave rise to the phrase "saffron terror", which Hindutva organisations reject as false propaganda.

"All the four accused, Naba Kumar Sarkar alias Swami Aseemanand, Lokesh Sharma, Kamal Chauhan and Rajinder Chaudhary have been acquitted by the court," NIA counsel Rajan Malhotra said after the verdict was announced by NIA special judge Jagdeep Singh in a courtroom where the media was not allowed.

"While pronouncing the ruling, the NIA special judge Jagdeep Singh stated the prosecution has failed to prove its case and that therefore, all four accused are hereby acquitted. The detailed order of the ruling is awaited," Mukesh Garg, counsel for Aseemanand, told reporters outside the court.

A visibly relieved Aseemanand, who was already out on bail, didn't speak to the media but another of his lawyers, Manvir Rathi, said, "He was a victim of political terrorism. All cases against him including Samjhauta blast case were planted due to political reasons."

Shortly after the verdict, Pakistan summoned the Indian high commissioner to register a "strong protest and condemnation". "The acquittal of the accused today, 11 years after the heinous Samjhauta terror attacks, makes a travesty of justice..." said a statement issued by the foreign office. Pakistan called upon India to explore "judicial remedies".

Officials with knowledge of the developments said the Indian high commissioner rejected Pakistan's assertions



Swami Aseemanand

and highlighted that due process of law had been followed in a transparent manner.

He also pointed to the lack of cooperation by Pakistan in serving summons on Pakistani witnesses in the case. The high commissioner also asked for an expedited trial in the 2008 Mumbai attack case and the 2016 Pathankot attack case, and pointed out that Pakistan hadn't taken "credible" steps against the Jaish-e-Mohammed, which took responsibility for the February 14 Pulwama strike that killed 40 troopers.

A verdict in the case was expected last week but a last-minute intervention by a Pakistani national through her lawyer resulted in the deferment of the judgment.

In her intervention, Rahila Wakil, who hails from Dhingrawali village of Hafizabad district in Pakistan, said that her father Muhammad Wakeel was one of the victims of the train blast and added that all Pakistan nationals who were witnesses in this 2007 case are "ready to appear" to testify. Her petition was dismissed by the court on Wednesday.

"Another UPA time false case falls apart," tweeted Bharatiya Janata Party national general secretary Ram Madhav, referring to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance that was in power when the charge sheet was filed.

Peoples Democratic Party president

Mehbooba Mufti questioned the grounds on which the accused were acquitted.

"Despite damning evidence, the accused including a former RSS member have been acquitted. God forbid, had they been Kashmiris / Muslims, they would be pronounced guilty & imprisoned without even a fair trial. Why such double standards and leniency towards saffron terror?" the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister asked.

Two coaches of the India-Pakistan Samjhauta Express were engulfed in flames on February 18, 2007 after improvised explosive devices (IED) planted in unreserved compartments were set off near Panipat in Haryana. Sixty eight people were killed, most of whom were Pakistani nationals. The bi-weekly train, which is jointly run by the Indian and Pakistani Railways, was travelling from New Delhi to Attari, the last station before the Pakistan border. At Attari, passengers switch to a Pakistani train.

The probe was handed over to the NIA in July 2010. The agency filed a charge sheet in July 2011 against eight people and said two general coaches of the train, which had 16 cars in all, caught fire after the bomb explosions. Two unexploded suitcase bombs were also found in other compartments of the train.

The agency said the accused were angry with the "Islamic terrorist attacks" on Hindu temples - Akshardham (Gujarat), Raghunath Mandir (Jammu) and Sankat Mochan Mandir (Varanasi). The investigators sought to establish a link between the Samjhauta, Mecca Masjid and Ajmer blast cases. The defence argued that the link was tenuous and that the statements of the accused were taken under duress.

Of the eight accused, Aseemanand, Sharma, Chauhan and Chaudhary appeared before the court and faced trial. Sunil Joshi, the alleged mastermind of the attack, was shot dead near his home in Madhya Pradesh's Dewas district in December 2007.

The three other accused — Ramchandra Kalsangra, Sandeep Dange and Amit, who was mentioned only by one name — could not be arrested and were declared proclaimed offenders.

India one of world's fastest growing large economies: IMF

WASHINGTON (TIP): India has been one of the fastest growing large economies in the world, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said, asserting that the country has carried out several key reforms in the last five years, but more needs to be done.

Responding to a question on India's economic development in the last five years at a fortnightly news conference here, IMF communications director Gerry Rice on Thursday said, "India has of course been one of the world's fastest growing large economies of late, with growth averaging about seven per cent over the past five years."

"Important reforms have been implemented and we feel more reforms are needed to sustain this high growth, including to harness the demographic dividend opportunity, which India has," he said.

Details about the Indian economy would be revealed in the upcoming World Economic Outlook (WEO) survey report to be released by the IMF ahead of the annual spring meeting with the World Bank next month, he said.

This report would be the first under Indian American economist Gita Gopinath, who is now IMF's chief economist.

India ranks 140th on global list of happiest nations

UNITED NATIONS (TIP): Indians are not as happy in 2019 as they were in 2018 and the country figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year, on this year's UN World Happiness Report released Wednesday which is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.

The report was released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations on March 20 which has been declared as World Happiness Day by the UN General Assembly in 2012.

The report ranks countries on six key variables that support well-being: income, freedom, trust, healthy life expectancy, social support and generosity.

According to the report, the overall world happiness has fallen over the past few years, which has mostly been fuelled by a sustained drop in India, which came in 140th place this year compared with 133rd place in 2018.

The UN's seventh annual World Happiness Report, which ranks the world's 156 countries on "how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be", also noted that there has been an increase in negative emotions, including worry, sadness and anger. Finland has been ranked as the happiest country in the world for the second year in succession. The Nordic nation is followed by Denmark, Norway, Iceland and The Netherlands.

Pakistan is ranked 67th, Bangladesh 125th and China is place at 93rd, according to the report.

People in war-torn South Sudan are the most unhappy with their lives, followed by Central African Republic (155), Afghanistan (154), Tanzania (153) and Rwanda (152). The happiness study ranks the countries of the world on the basis of questions from the Gallup World Poll.

Source: PTI

Remanded till March 29, Nirav Modi spends Holi in overcrowded UK jail

NEW DELHI/LONDON (TIP): Fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi, wanted in India on fraud and money laundering charges amounting to USD 2 billion, spent Holi behind bars in one of England's most overcrowded jails on Thursday, a day after a UK judge rejected his bail application.

The 48-year-old was arrested by Scotland Yard on Tuesday and presented before District Judge Marie Mallon at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London on Wednesday.

The judge remanded him in custody till March 29 after which he was transferred to Her Majesty's Prison (HMP) Wandsworth in south-west London.

While he would hope to be held in a separate cell, the overcrowding pressures of the jail may mean him sharing a prison cell with any of its around 1,430 male prisoners.

Nirav Modi, one of India's richest men



accustomed to the high-life and celebrity circles around the world, will be faced with some harsh conditions at the prison amid some dubious inmates.

During the most recent inspection carried out in February-March 2018, the Victorian-era jail was found by UK Chief Inspector of Prisons Peter Clarke to be "one of the most overcrowded in England and Wales" and filled with many men with drug or mental health

problems, receiving poor training and education.

"Despite six self-inflicted deaths since the last inspection, it was concerning to find that not all staff were carrying anti-ligature knives, that no staff would enter a cell alone - even if a prisoner's life was in danger - and that the response to cell call bells was totally inadequate," he noted.

Prison cells designed for one prisoner are often occupied by two, with poorly-screened lavatories and inmates being allowed "far too little" time out of their cells, his inspection had concluded.

The living conditions will certainly be in stark contrast to the luxury apartment at Centre Point in the West End of London where Nirav Modi has been living over the past year, as it was confirmed during court proceedings on Wednesday.



GUEST COMMENT

Warrant against Nirav Modi: Law catching up with fugitive diamantaire

Over a month after the UK ordered the extradition of business tycoon Vijay Mallya, who is accused of defrauding banks and laundering money to the tune of Rs 9,000 crore, a London court has issued an arrest warrant against fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi, the main accused in the Rs 13,500-crore Punjab National Bank scam. The development, which comes weeks before the high-stakes Lok Sabha elections, is a shot in the arm for the NDA government, which has been under fire from the Opposition for allegedly failing to stop high-profile offenders from fleeing the country. Incidentally, the news regarding the arrest



The fugitive Nirav Modi has been apprehended and is now lodged in a crowded London jail

warrant came hours after Congress president Rahul Gandhi took potshots at

PM Narendra Modi, accusing him of acting as a 'chowkidar' (watchman) for the likes of Mehul Choksi, Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi and Vijay Mallya.

The legal proceedings for the diamond jeweler's extradition will start only after his formal arrest by the London Metropolitan police, even as he has the option of seeking bail. Going by the apparent fast-tracking of the Mallya and Nirav Modi cases, it's easy to jump to the conclusion that Britain is finally cracking the whip on tainted moneybags from other countries. Facing the heat from India and other nations, the UK had late last year decided to suspend the 'golden visa' scheme, which offers permanent residency on a platter for an investment of £5-10

million. However, the authorities soon did a U-turn on the scheme, which has helped several big shots find a safe haven in Britain while escaping punishment for their misdeeds in their home country. The UK needs to consistently demonstrate its judicial and political will in order to shed the 'harborer' tag.

The breakthrough in the Nirav Modi case might weaken the Opposition's anti-corruption tirade against the ruling BJP. However, the Congress and Co will certainly wonder why the wheels of justice have started moving so late, why things were allowed to come to such a pass. The government owes an explanation to the nation on this count. *(Tribune, India)*

AS I SEE IT

Indian Air Force is grossly under-equipped



By Air Vice Marshal
Manmohan Bahadur
VM (retd)

Lack of empathy and understanding of an operational requirement due to bureaucratic procedures and attitudes is a cause for concern. In any other country, where the political and bureaucratic climate is cognizant of military urgencies, many heads would have rolled.

The Pulwama and Balakot incidents have pushed into the background the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on the Indian Air Force (IAF) acquisitions, of which the Rafale deal hogged the limelight. Despite the favorable Pulwama end state being achieved, albeit temporary, there is an imperative that needs urgent government attention. Tucked away in the CAG report is a cry beseeching a look into what one may call 'defense distress', paraphrasing the term from the agrarian and farmers' distress that every politician is talking about. The last two are vote banks which no politician can be reticent about, as they are leveraged through morchas, hartals and strikes. Unfortunately, when defense distress strikes, it is deadly, and often 'fatal' in a way. The Balakot incident demonstrated resoundingly that India has had enough of Pakistan's support to terrorism; however, it should not divert our attention from the fact that defense pangs are a reality and the tell-tale signs should be recognized and acted upon. There are three pointers that need elaboration; though IAF examples are discussed, the issues are valid for other defense forces too.

Critiquing sub-optimal defense procurement procedures, CAG has commented that the non-conclusion of a usage contract precluded the use of the flight simulator for the C-130 Hercules aircraft till 2016, despite it being ready four years earlier. In the interim, India lost five air warriors and a multi-million-dollar aircraft in 2014, attributed to a training issue. This is the first pointer - lack of empathy and understanding of an operational requirement due to bureaucratic procedures and attitudes (remember, the simulator was fully ready). In any other country, where the political and bureaucratic climate is cognizant of military urgencies, many heads would have rolled.

The second pointer is of an intangible kind, which, if neglected, shows up with deadly results later. The HAL-built HPT-32 trainer was grounded in 2009 after many



accidents, 13 of which were fatal. Many red flags had been raised about the stone-like gliding quality of the HPT after an engine failure (a frequent occurrence). The IAF had pulled along till the proverbial straw fell on the camel's back and we lost two flying instructors at the Air Force Academy (AFA). The HPT was grounded, throwing the training profiles of rookie pilots into bedlam, and for the next few years a sub-optimal training pattern on the HJT-16 Kiran was followed. The emergency purchase of the Pilatus aircraft revolutionized training; AFA's flight line was chock-a-block with the gleaming new trainers till 2017 or so when, due to non-finalization of maintenance contracts, a severe lack of spares ensued. This is the situation even now, as per media reports. However, training has to continue to ensure a regular pilot feed for frontline squadrons and one is sure that cannibalization (shifting) of spares among aircraft is being done and extension given to parts whose life

is expiring. The situation must be similar for some other fleets, too, as many acquisition and upgrade programs have been inordinately delayed, a fact stated by the Air Chief last month. This unacceptable situation is the second indicator of a serious problem, where lack of funds could be pushing reliability of war-fighting equipment towards an unsafe zone, which may translate into tragic results later.

The third warning is where operational preparedness starts getting affected. Under-equipping of the Indian Army was one of the major causes of the 1962 China debacle. At a recent conference, tears welled up in a retired Lt General's eyes while narrating the humiliation the armed forces had felt then. "Thank God for the subsequent 1965 Indo-Pak war that brought back some self-respect," remarked the General. After 1962, the government funded an accelerated re-equipping plan and the victory in the 1971 war bears witness to that effort. However, as per recent media reports, we are on the

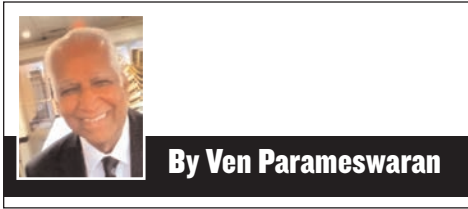
downslide again with a shortage of fighter squadrons and many critical items; soldiers' rifles are having to be imported by the fast-track route, ammunition is in short supply, and sniper rifles, Naval helicopters and MiG-29 fighters for the IAF are planned to be imported too. But will these just remain plans, as this year's defense acquisition budget is insufficient even for previously concluded contracts? Answers to these pointers have a bearing on what happens hereafter.

Will the post-Pulwama happenings deter Pakistan? The answer is an emphatic no. It is time to remember Bernard Brodie, the doyen of strategic thought, who said, "Avoidance of blackmail can be achieved only by demonstrating that our readiness to accept risks need not be and is not less than the blackmailer's."

History shows that adversaries cannot be reformed as per one's wish but have to be coped with through management strategies in which hard power is vital to prevent blackmail. Addressing defense concerns (though not a vote catcher) is an imperative first step to 'manage' Pakistan and simultaneously weigh against China. While short-term responses after the Pulwama attack will be implemented, long-term solutions require tons of money and decades of time spread over many governments. Of the three attributes that determine deterrence to prevent blackmail - resolve, capability and capacity - the Balakot incident demonstrated the first two; the third, dependent on an indigenous arms base, is in short supply. Politicians of all hues need to put their shoulders to the wheel and address defense preparedness in a bipartisan manner - indigenous defense R&D and manufacture must be kickstarted. Hard power, in quality and quantity, is the key to building deterrence to avert future Pulwamas. Can every political party elaborate, in its election manifesto, what it would do to address defense preparedness? That would indeed be welcome.

(The author is Addl Director General, Centre for Air Power Studies, New Delhi)

India Needs Course Correction : Socialism has failed India in 72 years



By Ven Parameswaran

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It is a paradox that India is a net exporter of food while 300 million poor starve. It is more painful to know that India is wasting approximately 40% of its food valued at \$40 billion due to lack of marketing management. The Food Corporation of India, a public sector corporation is the villain responsible for lack of adequate modern silos, warehouses, refrigerated trucks, and retail outlets. The pricing is a key component of marketing. The farmers of India are the victims of poor pricing and they are agitating against the government. This is one of the major issues of the campaign”.

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Time to emulate USA and China -the two global powers

900 million eligible Indians will go to the poll on April 11, 2019 to elect 545 Members of Parliament. The voting begins on April 11 and ends on May 19. The political party that gains the largest per cent of the vote will be asked to form the government by the President of India. No single party is likely to get a majority. Therefore, the leading winner must seek partnership with other parties to form the new government. This could be called the final election of the elections! After India retaliated against Pakistan, it would appear now the BJP headed by Prime Minister Modi has good chances to lead subject to what happens between now and the end of the elections during the campaign.

India prides itself calling it the largest democracy. Is India a successful political and economic democracy? It is a paradox that India is a net exporter of food while 300 million poor starve. It is more painful to know that India is wasting approximately 40% of its food valued at \$40 billion due to lack of marketing management. The Food Corporation of India, a public sector corporation is the villain responsible for lack of adequate modern silos, warehouses, refrigerated trucks, and retail outlets. The pricing is a key component of marketing. The farmers of India are the victims of poor pricing and they are agitating against the government. This is one of the major issues of the campaign.

INDIA DOES NOT HAVE TO INVENT A NEW WHEEL, JUST FOLLOW CHINA. BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

India won independence in 1947 and it is now almost 72 years. What is India's progress and standing in the world compared to China that has almost the same population? China established Peoples Republic of China in 1949. China became the second global economic power at the beginning of this century, thanks to the USA. From 1949 for 30 years China and the USA were loggerheads. The USA recognized Communist China only in 1979. But their friendship to improve China's economy thrived very fast. The USA agreed to help China provided China would liberate and open its economy fully and applied capitalistic principles. China gave carte blanche to the USA. This had a bandwagon effect - all Western countries followed the leadership of the USA. Thus, China embarked on a new economic revolution to develop China. China opened huge factories to produce consumer and industrial goods for export. The USA and the Western countries were anxious to take advantage of the comparative advantage. China was able to employ millions of its people and its GDP started growing @10 to 12%. China made a right about turn to create the most comfortable business environment for foreign investment. China was not shy to cut good business deals with the world reputed corporations of the USA and the European Union. Within two decades, starting from almost NOTHING, China became the second global economic power.

China also beat the Soviet Union in politics and economics. While the Soviet Union continued its Cold War with the USA, China compromised and worked with the USA. While the Soviet Union and Russia emphasized military power, China believed in

There is a large supply of all kinds of engineers and professional managers in India. This is a huge competitive advantage. Cite the example of IBM, the second largest private employer in India after Tatas employing 150,000, more than it employs anywhere including its HQ in the US. India should liberalize its rules and regulations and make it easier for American corporations to manufacture in India.



economic power first. In retrospect, China is the envy of the world.

WILL INDIA DEBATE THE MAJOR ISSUES AND EMBARK ON ECONOMIC REVOLUTION? 72 YEARS IS A LONG TIME, BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

I strongly recommend the parties discuss the following during the campaign. Time should not be spent on name calling and bickering. Unless India develops its great potential the elections and the democracy will remain in textbooks only.

1. Capitalism has worked wonders in the USA, EU, Japan, Singapore, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Korea and even in Communist China. India experimented with the Mixed Economy and later Socialism. So far it is a failure. Failure because India still does not have a modern infrastructure. No running water or electricity for 24/7 for all. There is no scientific system for removal and treatment of garbage and waste. There is no modern sewerage system. India must embrace capitalism 100% and give up socialism once and for all.
2. "India-USA Closest Ally" Partnership must be fully capitalized here and now. 72 years is a long time to wait. There is no need to invent a new wheel. Just translate Modi's physical embrace of Trump into real actions that will set in motion the great potentials for enormous growth. Its GDP should grow @12% for a decade or two. Invite President Trump to India and solidify the bilateral relationship. I am sure he will be happy to come with a huge delegation of CEO's of major U.S. corporations. Such a historic and most friendly visit could result in major deals and investments. This is also excellent for foreign policy and defense strategy.
3. India must create the most favorable climate for foreigners to do business. Right now, India ranks almost at the lowest amongst others. India has been blaming its democracy as the reason. I do not buy this. There is no political democracy without economic democracy. India should be ashamed to live with 300 million poor starving, when it is wasting 40% of food production costing \$40 billion. Open up the economy fully so that it will bloom and flower as China did.
4. India is the youngest in the world. 50% of India's population is under 35 and 25%



under 25.

There is a large supply of all kinds of engineers and professional managers in India. This is a huge competitive advantage. Cite the example of IBM, the second largest private employer in India after Tatas employing 150,000, more than it employs anywhere including its HQ in the US. India should liberalize its rules and regulations and make it easier for American corporations to manufacture in India.

5. India can create the capacity to manufacture all drugs and pharma products for export to the U.S. by U.S. companies in joint venture or as subsidiary giving generous terms. This will lower the cost of drugs for American consumers. The US can save huge and solve its health care problem. Will India cooperate with the US as China did?
6. The U.S. will help India build modern infrastructure in no time. Now India takes too many years to complete any major project, be it Bangalore railway or Delhi Metro. India should be able to take orders for 100 million pieces of variety of men's and women's clothing.
7. EMPLOYMENT: India needs to create new jobs for 12 million per year. My recommendations will enable it to happen. If China can do it, why cannot India. After all, China was way behind India in 1979, even after 30 years of establishing Communist China in 1949.

India has more assets and advantages than China when it embraced the U.S.A. in 1979.

India is the largest English speaking country in the world. This is one of the reasons, more CEO's of Indian origin are selected than any other national origin including China.

India must privatize all its public sector corporations, that will raise more than a trillion dollars for economic development. For India, funding is not a problem. India can float 50- or 100-year Treasury Bonds that will be bought by 30 million NRI's and the world investors. Because India's credit is good, it can raise any amount of money from the financial markets, World Bank and other institutions if need be.

India must turn a new leaf to mobilize and reap the full potential of real India.

(The author, MBA, Columbia University, is a Senior Adviser to Imagindia Institute, a think tank in New Delhi. He can be reached at vpwaren@gmail.com)

NJSO Presents Maestro Amjad Ali Khan & Sons

By Mabel Pais

"Music has connected the world and is the common expression of every human being"

Maestro Amjad Ali Khan

"If you can appreciate Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, symphony music, you will be able to enjoy and experience our sacred trio" -

Ayaan Bangash

"The most charismatic performer (Maestro Amjad Ali Khan) of Indian Ragas....."

The New York Times

".....the finest living exponent of the sarod"

The Guardian

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) presents Amjad Ali Khan's "Samaagam" sarod concerto and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade."

Maestro Amjad Ali Khan's "Samaagam": A Concerto for Sarod, Concertante Group and String Orchestra and Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" is a collaboration with his sons, Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash who join the sarod master for the NJSO premiere of his concerto. Western and Indian musical streams merge in Khan's "Samaagam," title meaning "confluence."

Music Director Xian Zhang conducts.

This concerto takes place April 5-7.

Concert tickets, including student discounted tickets are available for purchase at njsymphony.org or 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).



From left to right: Amaan Ali Bangash, Maestro Akbar Ali Khan, Ayaan Ali Bangash.

Photo / Courtesy NJSO

THE PROGRAM

Sarod & Scheherazade

Fri, Apr 5, at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Sat, Apr 6, at 8 pm | State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick

Sun, Apr 7, at 3 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Xian Zhang, conductor

Amjad Ali Khan, sarod

Amaan Ali Bangash, sarod

Ayaan Ali Bangash, sarod

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

AMJAD ALI KHAN Samaagam: A Concerto for Sarod, Concertante Group and String Orchestra (NJSO Premiere)

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV Scheherazade

NJSO Accents include Classical Conversations, Prelude Performance, College Night

NJSO ACCENTS

Classical Conversation - Fri, Apr 5, at 7 pm and Sat, Apr 6, at 7 pm

Enjoy a lively Classical Conversation before the performance. Learn more about the music from NJSO musicians, guest artists and other engaging insiders.

NJSO Accent events also include Classical Conversations one hour before the April 5 and 6 performances. The NJSO String Ensemble-part of the NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles-gives a Prelude Performance on April 7 at 2:15 pm.

For more information on NJSO Accent events, visit njsymphony.org/accents.

College Night - Sat, Apr 6, after the concert

Discounted tickets for college students include the concert and a post-concert party with refreshments and a lively Q&A with NJSO musicians. To learn more, visit njsymphony.org/college

Prelude Performance - Sun, Apr 7, at 2:15 pm

Come early and enjoy a special Prelude Performance featuring one of the NJSO Youth Orchestras ensembles, led by Naomi

Youngstein.

Additional concert information and artist bios are available at njsymphony.org/sarod.

Maestro Amjad Ali Khan

He is India's most celebrated classical musician and an undisputed master of the Sarod, a stringed instrument used in classical Indian music. He is the 7th generation of musicians playing the same instrument, being heir to a long and distinguished musical lineage.

He gave his first performance at age 6 and has since performed his own compositions with the finest orchestras and ensembles in venues around the world, including an acclaimed performance at the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Concert in Norway. The Grammy-nominated musician has won many prestigious awards including the Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum, UNICEF's National Ambassadorship, and India's prestigious awards, the Padma Vibhushan and the Sangeet Natak Akademi award for music.

Based on his belief that music transcends all, he has broadened the appeal of Indian music and its spirit throughout the world, transcending race, religion and generation.

In the current political climate, there is even more reason to find commonality and feel inclusive. Human emotions are universal and are the common thread binding us as a community. Khan affirms, "Since my childhood, I always wanted my instrument, the Sarod to be able to express the entire range of human emotions.... to Sing, Shout, Whisper and Cry. All the emotions! It has been a long journey so far and by the benevolence of the heavens, the Sarod has become far more expressive than it was 35 years ago." He has a special connection to this region of the USA for the awareness and love of Indian music that has been generated over this period of time.

To learn more about Maestro Amjad Ali Khan and his sons, visit www.sarod.com.

Amaan Ali Bangash

Amaan Ali Bangash, the first son and disciple of Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan, was initiated by his father into the fine art of Sarod playing and gave his 1st public performance at age 8. Amaan's musical style is marked by its precision in tunefulness, bold and resonant strokes, along with tradition and continuity of Indian Classical Music. Besides performing with his father, Amaan has performed with his younger brother Ayaan, and many others from Cellist Matthew Barley, collaborated with the David Trucks Band, Evelyn Glennie, Carrie Newcomer, Oudist Rahim Alhaj, Elmira Darvarova to touring with Britten Sinfonia.

As a part of their "Family Pride" series, he is the co-author of "Abba-God's Greatest Gift To Us" with Ayaan Bangash and, the recipient of several Indian and international awards.

Ayaan Ali Bangash

Ayaan Ali Bangash, the younger son of maestro Akbar Ali Khan and younger brother of Amaan had a similar initiation into Sarod playing as Amaan, giving his solo debut at age 8.

His performance collaboration has been mostly with Amaan Bangash, and together with international artists.

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by 'The Wall Street Journal,' the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb

musicians.

Music Director Xian Zhang-a "dynamic podium presence" 'The New York Times' has praised for her "technical abilities, musicianship and maturity"-continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO.

The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People; NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez; and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners program.

For more information about the NJSO, visit www.njsymphony.org or email information@njsymphony.org.

For tickets to this performance call 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or visit www.njsymphony.org.

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

A breather for May: the U.K. has been granted more time to plan terms of its exit from the European Union

LONDON (TIP): British Prime Minister Theresa May has won approval of her request for an extension to the deadline for the U.K. to exit the European Union, delaying the departure until either early April or late May. Donald Tusk, president of the European Council, announced his consent to the extension on Twitter Thursday, March 21. Tusk said he would push the deadline to May 22, but only if the U.K. Parliament approves a withdrawal agreement next week.

If British lawmakers fail to approve the Brexit deal - which they have already defeated twice - the deadline for departure will be on April 12.

The grant of the delay comes a day after May delivered a televised speech to the public after Parliament's twice rejecting the withdrawal agreement she negotiated with the E.U. After the second defeat by lawmakers, May asked European leaders for a short delay in the March 29 Brexit deadline.



The embattled UK Prime Minister has got a reprieve to plan out terms of exit from EU.

At least 6 killed in blasts as Kabul marks Persian New Year

KABUL (TIP): At least six people were killed by blasts in Kabul on Thursday during Persian New Year celebrations in a Shiite area of the Afghan capital, authorities said, in the latest violence to hit the war-torn city.

"Twenty-three were wounded and six people were martyred (killed) in today's explosions in Kabul," health ministry spokesman Wahidullah Mayar told AFP, with the interior ministry confirming the toll.

In a message to AFP, the Taliban denied responsibility for the attack, which police said had been caused by three remote-controlled mines—one placed in the washroom of a mosque, one behind a hospital, and one in an electricity meter.

The blasts were near Kabul University and the Karte Sakhi shrine, where many Afghans gather every year to mark Nawrooz, which is the traditional Persian New Year holiday but considered un-Islamic by Muslim fundamentalists. "As we celebrate this auspicious day to bind us together our fellow citizens witnessed another devastating day in #Kabul," President Ashraf Ghani wrote on Twitter. "We lost peaceful citizens to a coward enemy that knows no bounds." Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said a fourth mine was defused near Kabul



University, and that authorities were searching for any others that may have been placed in the area. But he added that the mines were far from the main site of the celebrations.

Exactly one year ago, a blast near a crowd celebrating at the shrine killed 33 people in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group.

IS, which regularly targets Shiites in an attempt to stir up sectarian violence in Sunni-majority Afghanistan, has also attacked the shrine once before, in October 2016, when its gunmen killed 18 people gathered there to mark Ashura, an important date for many Muslims, especially Shiites. — AFP

Pak court awards life sentence to two in Mashal Khan lynching case

PESHAWAR (TIP): An anti-terrorism court in northwest Pakistan on Thursday awarded life imprisonment to two accused in the lynching case of Mashal Khan, a university student who was murdered by an angry mob for allegedly committing blasphemy in 2017. Judge Mahmoodul Hassan Khattak announced the verdict, awarding life imprisonment to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) counsellor Arif Khan and Asad for their involvement in the 2017 public lynching at Bacha Khan University in Mardan city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Two other accused were acquitted in the case. The court had reserved its verdict on March 13. On April 13, 2017, Khan, 23, was beaten and shot to death by a mob accusing him of blasphemy. The lynching, which took place within the university's campus, was filmed and widely circulated on social media. A 13-member joint investigation (JIT) found that the allegations of blasphemy were used as a pretext to incite a mob against Khan, a Mass Communications student. Earlier, an anti-terrorism court in Abbotabad had awarded death penalty to main suspect Imran, life imprisonment to five and, one to three-year rigorous imprisonment to 25 others. A total of 61 people suspected of involvement in the lynching - the majority of them students and university employees — were charged in the first information report. PTI

Pak claims to have rescued 4 kidnapped Iranian soldiers in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan has claimed to have rescued four kidnapped Iranian soldiers from terrorists in the restive Balochistan province bordering Afghanistan. The Pakistan Army said the security forces carried out an operation following a tip-off that extremists from a banned outfit had brought soldiers from Afghanistan to a "transitional hideout" in Amori area of Chaghai district of the province. "After an exchange of fire, four Iranian soldiers were rescued," it said on Wednesday. At least 12 Iranian security personnel, including members of the Revolutionary Guards, were kidnapped near the Pakistan border in October last year. Jaish al-Adl, an anti-Shiite and anti-Iran terrorist group, had claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. The kidnapping led to a public spat between Pakistan and Iran, which accused extremists hiding in Pakistan of carrying out attacks inside Iran. PTI

Italian driver hijacks, torches school bus carrying dozens of children

ROME (TIP): Italian police on Wednesday rescued 51 children taken hostage by their school bus driver, who doused the vehicle in petrol and set it alight apparently in protest at migrant deaths in the Mediterranean.

Some of the children were tied up during the 30-minute ordeal, which saw the bus slam into a car but was brought to an end by police after one of the children was able to call for help. No one was seriously injured.

"It is a miracle, it could have been carnage. The police were outstanding, blocking the bus and getting the children off," said Milan

prosecutor Francesco Greco.

Photos showed the burnt-out shell of the bus and the car, which were travelling on a road near Milan.

Driver Ousseynou Sy—a 47-year-old Italian citizen of Senegalese origin—explained under questioning that he wanted "to draw attention to the consequences of migration policies", according to his lawyer.

The 51 students in year two of secondary school in Crema were coming back from a sports outing accompanied by three adults when the driver abruptly changed route,

announcing he was taking them all hostage.

"No one is getting out of here alive," he said, according to several of the students.

A dozen children and two of the adults were taken to hospital for smoke inhalation while the arrested driver also needed treatment for burns to his hands.

The Milan police anti-terrorism unit has been charged with investigating the hostage-taking which lasted a little over 30 minutes.

However Sy had no links with Islamic terrorism, Alberto Nobili, head of counter-terrorism at the Milan public

prosecutor's office, told a press conference, saying he "acted as a lone wolf". Planning the hijack over several days, Nobili said Sy "wanted the whole world talking about his story". He posted a video on Youtube to explain his actions and say "Africa—arise", directed at family and friends in Crema but also in Senegal. The driver, armed with two canisters filled with petrol and a cigarette lighter, threatened the children, took their telephones and told the adults to tie them up with electric cable. (AFP)



WORK COMES FIRST FOR KANGANA

Work comes first for Kangana Ranaut and after witnessing spectacular success of her directorial debut, *Manikarnika*, she is getting ready for the release of *Mental Hai Kya*.

The actress had initially planned to celebrate her birthday, which falls on March 23, in her hometown, Manali.

However, the plan to celebrate her birthday with her family will not be possible for the actress now as she will be shooting for a promotional campaign for her upcoming movie *Mental Hai Kya* on her birthday.

To make sure that she fulfils her professional commitment, Kangana has put her family celebrations in Manali on the backburner, and her priority is to wrap up patch work and promotional campaign shoot for *MNH* before she heads for the next schedule of *Panga*.

PRIYANKA CHOPRA IN USA TODAY'S '50 MOST POWERFUL WOMEN' LIST

Global icon Priyanka Chopra Jonas has joined international celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey and Meryl Streep, in USA Today's list of "50 most powerful women in entertainment". Honoured on getting featured in the list, Priyanka said in a statement: "I feel privileged to share this platform with these amazing women who have each pushed through their own challenges and created their own realities, and today stand shoulders above everyone in their chosen careers. It does give one a feeling of achievement."

Priyanka became a popular name in the West through her lead role of Alex Parrish in the American TV drama thriller series *Quantico*. She made her Hollywood debut opposite Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and Zac Efron in the action-comedy *Baywatch* in 2017.

The list also includes the names of singer Beyonce, television star Ellen Degeneres, Oscar-winner Jennifer Lawrence and international pop icon Jennifer Lopez, among many others. On the film front, Priyanka will be next seen in *The Sky Is Pink* alongside Farhan Akhtar and Zaira Wasim.

'I can't cook, I am a terrible wife'

Priyanka Chopra appeared on ABC's chat show, *The View*, and talked about tying the knot with American singer Nick Jonas, her appearance in Nick's video *Sucker* and more. The show focussed on her marriage to Nick and their relationship.

Calling herself a 'terrible wife', Priyanka said she does not know how to cook. "He is from a good Southern home where his mother made food, and I am not like that. I am a terrible wife in that sense." She also admitted she can only make 'eggs and toast'.



DEEPIKA AND RANVEER GET MARRIED AGAIN AT AWARD SHOW



Actors and husband-wife duo of Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh won big at the Zee Cine Awards on Tuesday. Deepika took home the Best Actress award for *Padmaavat* and Ranveer won the Viewers Choice award for Best Actor in a Leading Role for playing Alauddin Khilji in the same film.

Deepika was handed her awards by the film's director Sanjay Leela Bhansali and her husband. While accepting her award, Deepika recounted all the characters Ranveer has played with her in their films together. "Let's take it from the top: Ram, Bajirao and Khilji of course. You've been my most amazing partner in crime," she said. Deepika had to deliver her speech again because Ranveer started dancing in the middle of it.

Ranveer thanked Bhansali in his speech and said that he made him the actor he is. "If I am an actor with any kind of calibre, it's because of you. You've given me my life's greatest opportunities," he said. He also took to Twitter to share a picture with his award. "Best Actor in a Leading Role! #zee Cineawards #ontopoftheworld," he wrote.

When his name was called out,

Actors Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh have a lot to celebrate as they won the Best Actress and Best Actor trophy for their work in *Padmaavat* at Zee Cine Awards

Ranveer hugged his wife Deepika and gave Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt hugs. All four were seated together at the awards function.

Ranveer and Deepika also entertained the audience by recreating their wedding on stage. Ranveer held on to the train of Deepika's dress and took pheras around Vicky Kaushal while Kartik Aaryan played the priest.

Ranveer's latest film was *Gully Boy* with Alia. The film was a hit with the audience and got great reviews from critics as well. He will now begin work on *83* in which he plays cricket star Kapil Dev. Then, he will begin shooting for Karan Johar's *Takht* with Kareena Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Vicky Kaushal. Deepika has begun working on her next with Meghna Gulzar, *Chapaak*.



Elizabeth Lail to star in horror film Countdown

You' star Elizabeth Lail has been roped in to lead the cast of STX Films' upcoming horror movie Countdown. The story centres around a young nurse who downloads an app that claims to predict exactly when a person is going to die. When it tells her she only has three days to live, she must find a way to save her life before time runs out, all while a mysterious figure haunts her.

"Elizabeth Lail is an exciting young actress whose breakout performance in the wildly popular psychological thriller 'You' was a breath of fresh air. 'Countdown' is a wholly original, scary, and fun script, and we're thrilled to have found the perfect lead to bring this story to life for audiences around the world," STX Films chairman Adam Fogelson said in a statement to Variety.

EVA GREEN: JAMES BOND SHOULD BE PLAYED BY A MAN

Former Bond girl Eva Green is not in the favour of flipping the gender of Agent 007 as she believes it would be wrong to ignore the history of the character, in which has always been played by a man.

The Casino Royale actor, considered one of the best Bond girls in the history of the franchise, says women should create their own action film legacy.

Daniel Craig is set to leave the franchise after the release of Cary Fukunaga's Bond 25 in April 2020 and there is already a lot of speculation about his replacement with names such as Idris Elba and Richard Madden doing the rounds.

Some actors and fans are in favour of a gender swap as they believe it is time for a female actor to take on the role, created by Ian Fleming.

"I'm for women, but I really think James Bond should remain a man. It doesn't make sense for him to be a woman. Women can play different types of characters, be in action movies, and be superheroes, but James Bond should always be a man and not be Jane Bond. There is history with the character that should continue. He should be played by a man," Green told Vanity Fair on the Dumbo red carpet.

Green is proud of the fact that her character Vesper Lynd brought about a change in the way Bond girls are perceived.



"I originally had reservations about being a Bond girl. I didn't want to be a bimbo. The women are now perceived differently. They are intelligent and sassy and fascinating. I loved playing Vesper.

She's the only one to get to Bond's heart and has a big impact on his life," she said.

Bond 25 will be Craig's fifth outing as 007 following Casino Royale, Quantum of Solace, Skyfall and Spectre.

Mia Khalifa engaged to beau Robert Sandberg



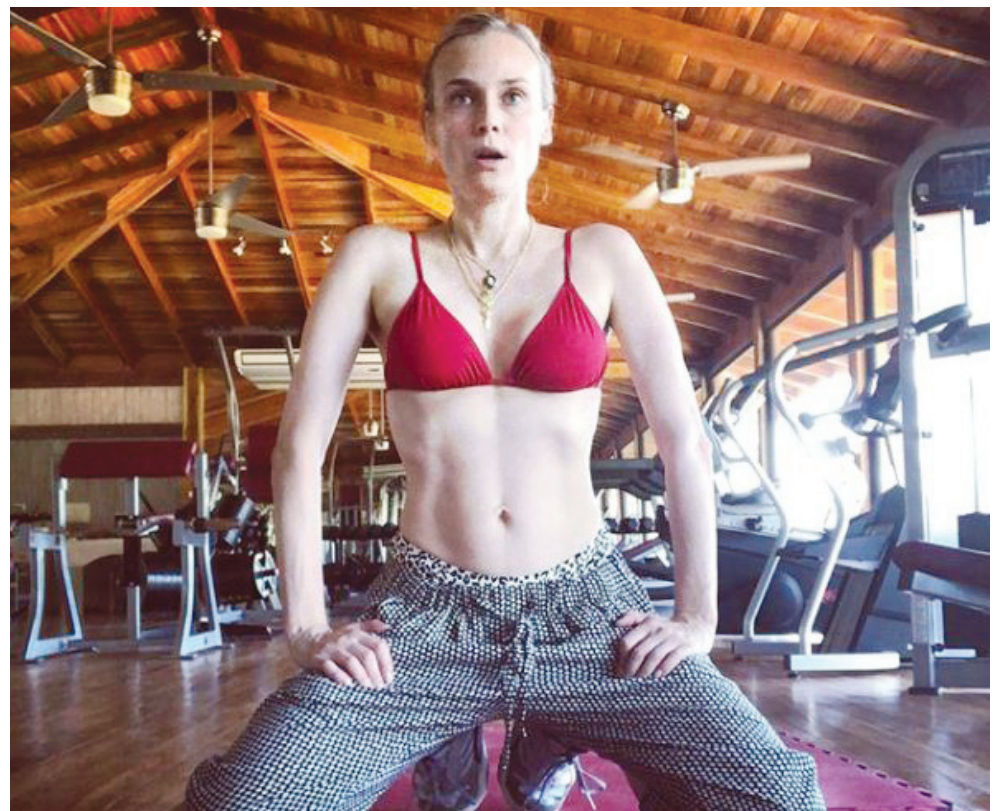
Former porn star-turned-sports commentator Mia Khalifa is engaged to long-time boyfriend chef Robert Sandberg.

Sandberg proposed to her in Chicago. Sandberg reportedly hid a ring in a bowl of dried ingredients and the Lebanese-American star almost ate the ring but he was on ground to warn her, and he proposed to her on the spot. She said yes, reports guardian.com.

Sharing the news on his Instagram page, Sandberg wrote: "We went to Chicago this weekend and had a wonderful dinner at Smyth. I proposed to Mia Khalifa and she said yes! "The ring was hidden in a bowl of

dried ingredients and came out as a 'new serving'. Mia was too curious and too eager to taste so she started to eat the inedible ingredients. I told her not do it and then I put the ring on the finger. I love you so much." Khalifa confirmed the news on her Instagram page.

"Thank you a million times over for the entire team at Smyth Chicago for helping Robert Sandberg propose... This trip and dinner was supposed to celebrate him getting his visa. "Robert has planted the seed so deep in my mind for so long that he hates restaurant proposals so I never, ever, saw this coming. I love you all so much! Thank you!" *Source: IANS*



DIANE KRUGER FLAUNTS ABS 4 MONTHS AFTER DELIVERING CHILD

Diane Kruger may not be ready to show off her baby — the German actress admonished the paparazzi in January for taking unauthorized photos of her daughter, whose dad is actor Norman Reedus — but she's more than happy to show off the results of her post-pregnancy workouts.

Just four months after giving birth to her first child, the 'Inglourious Basterds' star is back in a bikini and proudly flaunting her toned abs.

In her caption, Kruger admitted that she feared she wouldn't be able to get back in

shape after giving birth at age 42. What's more, she did it without a trainer — though she did cite workout influencer and fellow mom Hannah Bower as an inspiration.

"Am I showing off?" Kruger wrote. "F**k yeah. 'cause it's been hard work to get my abs back. I didn't think it was possible after having a baby. And certainly not at my age.

"I want to thank @hannahbower2 for sharing her journey and helping me get motivated. I don't have a trainer, but I've been committed to get my body back ... The female body is AMAZING."



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CHIKMAGALUR

Chikmagalur city is at the foot of highest mountain range in Karnataka. The life-supporting rivers of Karnataka and other states - Tunga, Bhadra, Hemavati, Vedavati, Yagachi originate in the Western Ghat hills of the district. The district is a great attraction to all kinds of people - trekkers, pilgrims, travellers and tourists. This area is famous for the coffee estates in the vicinity and also known as the Coffee Belt of the South.

COFFEE CULTURE

Perfect for a traveller who is happy sauntering between the thick undergrowth of the wild coffee bushes, eyes peeled for exotic birdlife and animals, Chikmagalur is the ideal pick. Most of the accommodations lie in the backdrop of coffee plantations, giving the traveller an opportunity to stay in the middle of a million shades of green. Coffee plantation walks organised by the owners are an essential orientation to understand the variety, seasons, wildlife around the area, history of coffee making, processes and what a planter's life might be like. Coffee plantations of Chikmagalur offer a brilliant atmosphere for both outdoor junkies and those who like to switch off and do nothing. Outdoor enthusiasts during their short hikes to the top of a plantation often make their way through forest streams and spot an array of local avian and animal occupants.

Birding enthusiasts should remember to carry their binoculars. For those who need to unwind without a packed itinerary or an activity should grab a book or an i-pod and sink into a lounging chair or a hammock, and succumb to the sound of nature around. Miles of stunning views, ludicrous amount of green and the whiff of coffee accompany the copious amount of mugs you can down.

MOUNTAIN CIRCUIT

The main highlight of Chikmagalur for most travellers lies in covering the three main peaks of the town? Sheethalagiri, Baba Budan Giri and Mullayanagiri. Head towards Kaimara junction to start at the foothills of this loop and head first towards Sheethalagiri. This is an ancient temple whose history can be traced back to 1000 years and is dedicated to Mallikarjuna Swamy. The temple itself is not very elaborate but is worth your while for its history and the 'prasadam', a fistful of water from a natural trickle of waterfall inside. Next on the same route is Baba Budan Giri hill, also known as Dattagiri Hill Range or Inam Dattatreya Peetha after the famous saint who brought coffee to India. This small shrine is propped at 1895 m offering a breathtaking view of the valley below. The shrine is visited by people of all religions. The next stop is Mullayanagiri, the highest peak (1930 m) in the state of Karnataka. Predictably windy and bone chilling cold, it's apt to stay for a short time to enjoy the view. Many trekkers take on the mammoth mountain despite the winds and near invisible paths due to the mist. The trio are known as the Chandradrona Parvatha Shreni.

KEMMANAGUNDI

Even though Kemmanagundi lies almost 500 m below the highest Karnataka peak, Mullayanagiri, the views from here are equally riveting as the hills cascade down, draped in coffee bushes. It is more accessible than the higher mountain loop and is embellished by pit stops for tourists; an unimpressive rock garden and a government



run children's park are part of Kemmanagundi area but can be avoided. This does not hamper dozens of camera happy tourists enjoying the lush green environs as a backdrop to perfect pictures. What is not to miss is the few spots from where you can see the clouds fill up the valley for a mesmerising view. This was the very reason King Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV chose this as a summer retreat. There are a handful of restaurants, viewing decks and even a place to stay maintained by the Karnataka State Tourism Development Board. Raj Bhavan is one of the most popular viewing points of the hill top. If you're running short of time, stick with the Sheethalagiri-Baba Budan Giri- Mullayanagiri circuit and give this one a miss. The only veritable reason why one should visit Kemmanagundi, is because it is the only access point to Hebbe Falls. Local four wheel jeeps can be hired from here to get to the beautiful untouched waterfalls.



BENEFITS OF OILING YOUR HAIR

Oiling is perhaps the best thing you can do to your hair. In the long run, this practice is your key to healthier and stronger hair.

Natural goodness for hair

The first benefit is that natural hair oil, meaning the least processed, comes packed with several of the vitamins and micro-nutrients that are found in food. So hair oil is basically hair food.

Revitalises hair tissues

The second benefit of a hair oil massage is the way it penetrates the skin. A shampoo-conditioner, no matter how good its components, can't match the way hair oil goes deep into the skin and does its job revitalising the skin tissue.

Relaxing massage for healthy scalp

The third benefit of a thorough hair oil massage is that it boosts blood circulation in the scalp. The oil is spread evenly around the scalp, sending nutrients directly to all the hair roots.

Fights hair fall

Hair oil does the job of fighting hair fall and of aiding hair regrowth. Therefore, whether you've got a hair loss problem or not, you can use a hair thickening oil, and the results can only be good.

Tames frizz

Using hair oil is a great way to control frizzy hair. On days when your hair seems all out of control and frizzy, rub some hair oil on your palms and run through the hair lightly. This will cause the frizz to settle immediately and also



provide nourishment to the hair.

Tips for oiling your hair

- Ideally, your scalp should be clean for the hair oil to work really well.
- Wash hair with a degreasing shampoo and let the hair dry out completely.
- Then apply hair oil the same day or the next day (before dirt builds up again on the scalp).
- Massage the oil in gently for about 10 to 15 minutes but thoroughly,
- Leave this on for at least 3 hours before washing off. You could even leave the hair oil on overnight, if you're so inclined. Keeping it more than 24 hours will make the hair weak as it will start accumulating dirt.
- Oil your hair at least once a week however for dry hair twice a week is advisable.

covering every inch of the scalp. If you can warm the hair oil slightly before applying, it will spread better.

Appreciate your partner openly

Who does not like to be appreciated? Human beings thrive on it, and even the tiniest of acknowledgements put wide smiles on our faces. When you are working day in and day out on your relationship, every once in a while it pays to let your partner know he's appreciated, rather than assuming he already knows it. Here's why.

It makes him happy

People enjoy doing things for others, and in a relationship, partners are no different. When your partner does something or thinks about the smallest detail for you, of course he is happy that he eased your work. This happiness will only multiply if you let him know how much it means to you. Just drop him a text on it, and see him grin away as he reads it.

He will reciprocate

When your partner realises that you thank him for every small aspect and always acknowledge his help, he will start appreciating similar things that you do for him. It will lead to a healthier and more communicative bond.

He will know his opinion matters

Factoring in his suggestions, asking him for ideas because you trust him, and valuing his inputs will provide him with the impetus to be more supportive. He knows his thoughts matter to you and he will share them in an uninhibited manner.

It will make his day

It's not just about being grateful and showing it. It is also

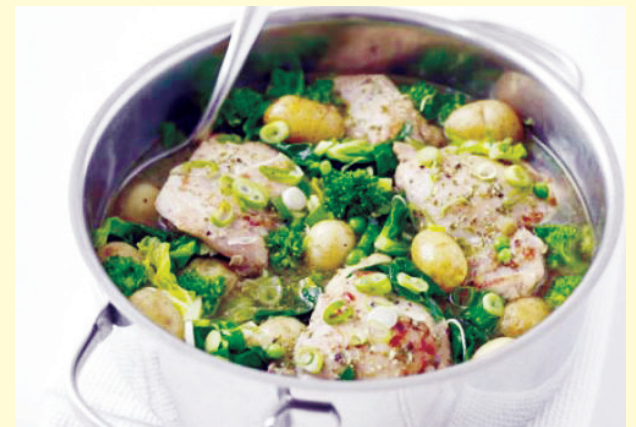


about looking at how he reacts to your gratitude. Leave him a note, send him a text, call him and surprise him in the middle of the day with these thank yous, and just see how his mood brightens up.

He will know his gestures are not going unnoticed

If it is not indicated to a person that what he's doing is making a difference, it will always make him wonder. It will also make him think whether or not it is worth going through all the trouble if you don't notice it. Tell him, and turn it around.

FOOD CORNER



SPRING CHICKEN

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil, 1 onion chopped, 500g boneless, skinless chicken thigh, 300g small new potato, 425ml low-salt vegetable stock (such as Kallo low-salt vegetable stock cubes), 350g broccoli, cut into small florets, 350g spring green, shredded, 140g petits pois, bunch spring onion, sliced, 2 tbsp pesto

Method

- Heat the oil in a large, heavy pan.
- Add the onion, gently fry for 5 mins until softened, add the chicken, then fry until lightly coloured.
- Add the potatoes, stock and plenty of freshly ground black pepper, then bring to the boil.
- Cover, then simmer for 30 mins until the potatoes are tender and the chicken is cooked.
- Can be frozen at this point.
- Add the broccoli, spring greens, petit pois and spring onions, stir well, then return to the boil.
- Cover, then cook for 5 mins more, stir in the pesto and heat through.



CHANA MASALA

Ingredients

800g canned chickpeas or 720g jar giant chickpeas, 3 onions, quartered, 3 garlic cloves, 5cm piece of ginger, 2-3 green chillies, roughly chopped, 1½ tbsp ghee, ½ tsp ground coriander, ½ tsp ground cumin, ½ tsp chilli, powder (Kashmiri if possible), 1 tsp turmeric, 1 tsp garam masala, 1 ½ tsp amchoor powder (optional), 3 medium tomatoes, around 300g, roughly chopped, or 400g can chopped, tomatoes, 1 lemon juiced, ½ small pack coriander leaves, to serve

Method

- Drain the chickpeas, add to a large pan with 400ml of water and season. Bring to the boil, then turn off the heat and set aside to allow the chickpea flavour to infuse the water.
- Blitz the onions with the garlic, ginger and green chillies. Melt the ghee in a large saucepan, then add the onion mix with a pinch of salt and cook for 8-10 mins, until softened.
- Stir in the spices, and cook for 3 more mins, adding a splash of the chickpea water to stop them sticking to the bottom of the pan. Add the tomatoes and another splash of water and cook for 5 mins, squishing the tomatoes with a spoon as they soften. Tip in the chickpeas, along with their cooking water. Cook for 10 mins. Season well, add the lemon juice, and a splash of water if you like a looser curry. Scatter with the coriander, to serve.

COFFEE COMPOUNDS MAY HELP FIGHT PROSTATE CANCER

In a first, scientists have identified compounds found in coffee which may inhibit the growth of prostate cancer.

The study, published in the journal *The Prostate*, was carried out on drug-resistant cancer cells in cell culture and in a mouse model.

Coffee is a complex mixture of compounds which has been shown to influence human health in both positive and negative ways.

There is increasing evidence that drinking certain types of coffee is associated with a reduction in incidence of some cancers, including prostate cancers.

Researchers from Kanazawa University in Japan have studied the effects of two compounds found in coffee, kahweol acetate and cafestol, on prostate cancer cells and in animals, where they were able to inhibit growth in cells which are resistant to common anti-cancer drugs such as Cabazitaxel.

The researchers initially tested six compounds, naturally found in coffee, on the proliferation of human prostate cancer cells in a petri-dish.

They found that cells treated with kahweol acetate and cafestol grew more slowly than controls.

They then tested these compounds on prostate cancer cells which had been transplanted to 16 mice.

Four mice were controls, four were treated with kahweol acetate, four with cafestol, with the remaining mice being treated with a combination of kahweol acetate and cafestol.

"We found that kahweol acetate and cafestol inhibited the growth of the cancer cells in mice, but the combination seemed to work synergistically, leading to a significantly



slower tumour growth than in untreated mice," said Hiroaki Iwamoto from Kanazawa University.

"After 11 days, the untreated tumours had grown by around three and a half times the original volume, whereas the tumours in the mice treated with both compounds had grown by around just over one and a half times the original size," said Iwamoto.

This is a pilot study, so this work shows that the use of these compounds is scientifically feasible, but needs further investigation, researchers said. It does not mean that the findings can yet be applied to humans.

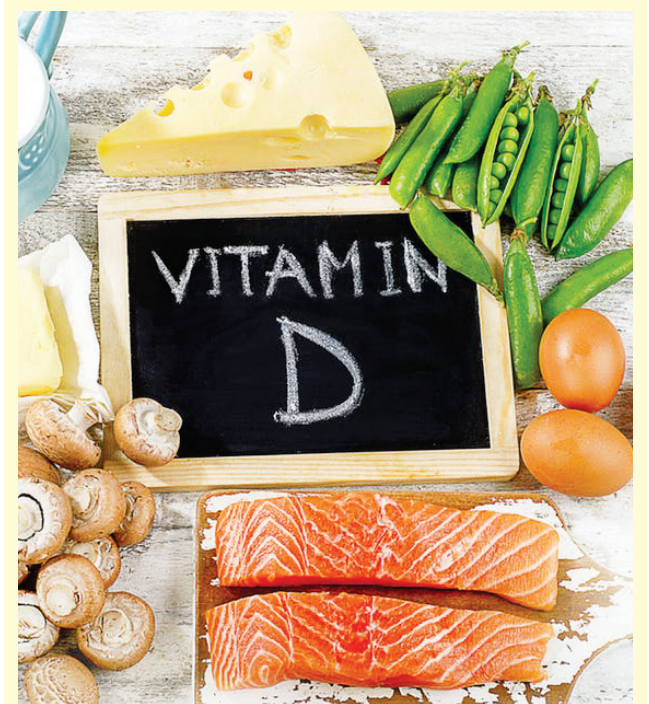
What it does show is that these compounds appear to have an effect on drug resistant cells prostate cancer cells in the right circumstances, and that they

too need further investigation," said Iwamoto.

"We are currently considering how we might test these findings in a larger sample, and then in humans," he said.

Kahweol acetate and cafestol are hydrocarbons, naturally found in Arabica coffee. The coffee-making process has been found to affect whether these compounds remain in coffee after brewing (as with espresso), or whether they are stripped out (as when filtered).

"These are promising findings, but they should not make people change their coffee consumption. However, if we can confirm these results, we may have candidates to treat drug-resistant prostate cancer," said Atsushi Mizokami, professor at Kanazawa University. *Source: PTI*



Vitamin D improves memory but slows down reactions

According to a recent study, improvements in memory were noted in obese older women who took three times the recommended dose of vitamin D. However, it was also seen that their reactions were slower.

The study was published in the *Journals of Gerontology: Series A* where they used computers to assess the impact of vitamin D on cognitive function. The researchers evaluated three groups of women between 50 and 70 years old in a randomized controlled trial. One group took the recommended daily dose of 600 international units (IU), equivalent to 15 micrograms, of vitamin D each day for a year. Another group took 2,000 IU per day and the third took 4,000. All women participated in lifestyle counselling and were encouraged to lose a modest amount of weight.

The researchers found that memory and learning improved in the group that took 2,000 IU per day, but not in the group that took the higher dosage. Meanwhile, the women's reaction time showed a trend to be slower at 2,000 IU daily and was significantly slower at the higher dosage.

"The slower reaction time may have other negative outcomes such as potentially increasing the risk of falling and fractures. This is possible since other researchers have found that vitamin D supplementation at about 2,000 IU daily or more increased risk of falls, but they did not understand the cause. Our team's findings indicating a slower reaction time may be one answer. Many people think that more vitamin D supplementation is better, but this study shows that is not always the case," said senior author Sue Shapses.

Shapses further explained, "4,000 IU a day might not be a problem for younger people but for the elderly, it could compromise walking or catching one's balance to avoid a fall because their reaction time is slower. This is a presumption until future research can cover vitamin D levels, cognition and falls in one study." Vitamin D is known for its importance for bone health and is obtained through sun exposure and some foods and now researchers have found that vitamin D has a major impact on how the body, including the brain, functions.

'Inactive' ingredients in most pills may cause allergic reactions: Study

A vast majority of the most frequently prescribed medications contain at least one ingredient capable of causing an adverse allergic reaction, a US study has found.

Known as inactive ingredients, these components are added to improve the taste, shelf-life, absorption and other characteristics of a pill, but the researchers found that more than 90 per cent of all oral medications tested contained at least one ingredient that can cause allergic or gastrointestinal symptoms in sensitive individuals.

Such ingredients include lactose, peanut oil, gluten and chemical dyes, scientists said.

"When you're a clinician, the last thing you want to do is prescribe a medication that could cause an adverse reaction or allergic reaction in a patient," said C Giovanni Traverso, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

"This project was inspired by a real-life incident where a patient with Celiac disease was prescribed a medication and the formulation of the pill they picked up from the pharmacy had gluten in it," Traverso said.

We wanted to understand the problem and drill down to characterise the entire universe of inactive ingredients across thousands of drugs," he said.

Researchers analysed data on the inactive ingredients found in 42,052 oral medications that contained more than 354,597 inactive ingredients.

Inactive ingredients are defined as substances that are added to a pill's formulation but are not intended or expected to have a direct biological or therapeutic effect.



Although such ingredients have been tested for safety at the population level, scattered case reports have suggested that inactive ingredients may cause adverse reactions in individuals who have allergies or intolerances.

"There are hundreds of different versions of pills or capsules that deliver the same medication using a different combination of inactive ingredients," said Daniel Reker, a postdoctoral fellow at MIT. *Source: PTI*

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'ONLINE POLYGRAPH COULD SPOT LIARS ON FB, TINDER'

Scientists are developing an online polygraph that could spot liars from the words they write on their internet dating profiles, Facebook messages or Twitter posts.

It is tricky enough to identify a lie in face-to-face conversations that offer facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice because those physical cues add context.

Spotting a liar gets even tougher in blind computer conversations, said Shuyuan Ho from Florida State University in the US who wants to shed those blinders.

"The future of my research is an online polygraph that could be used many different ways," Ho said in a statement.

"You could use it for online dating, Facebook, Twitter—the applications are endless. I think the future is unlimited for an online polygraph system," she said.

Ho envisions a future where technology can identify liars and truth tellers based on the words they write in electronic messages.

Her research dove into the murky depths of internet deception where trolling, identity theft and phishing for credit card numbers snag an increasing number of online users.

The study, published in the journal *Computers in Human Behaviour*, detailed the findings of an online game that she created to measure truthful and deceptive communications between two people.

Ho parsed the words in those conversations, hoping to extract context from millions of bits of data in many messages—described as language-action cues—just as people get context from seeing physical cues that indicate whether someone is telling the truth or lying.

FACEBOOK RESTORES PAGE WARNING ABOUT FASCISM

After facing flak for briefly banning one of India's most active Pages on Facebook that warned people about the dangers of fascism, the social media giant has restored the Page and apologised to its creator Dhruv Rathee.



A popular YouTuber with more than 1.7 million subscribers, Rathee on Monday pointed out that he was banned from posting on his Facebook Page after he wrote how Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power, which implicitly drew a parallel with the rise of right wing politics in India.

He highlighted in the post how Hitler remained unmarried, was more popular than the Nazi party, used propaganda and received support from industrialists.

While the post was a criticism of fascism, and not an endorsement, Facebook first determined that it was against its Community Standards, drawing severe criticism from several public figures.

Facebook, however, later realised its mistake and restored the Page.

"Account restored! Thanks for your support guys! See the second photo, the reason Facebook had banned me," Rathee said in a post, while adding a note from Facebook in which the social media giant apologised for the mistake.

"It looks like we did a mistake and removed something you posted on Facebook that did not go against our Community Standards. We want to apologise and let you know that we have restored your content and removed any blocks on your account related to this incorrect action," Facebook said in the note.

Source: IANS

EVIDENCE OF WATER, PARTICLE PLUMES DISCOVERED ON ASTEROID BENNU

A NASA spacecraft, that will return a sample of a near-Earth asteroid named Bennu to Earth in 2023, has discovered plumes erupting from the cosmic body's surface—among a numerous other findings including evidence of water-bearing minerals.

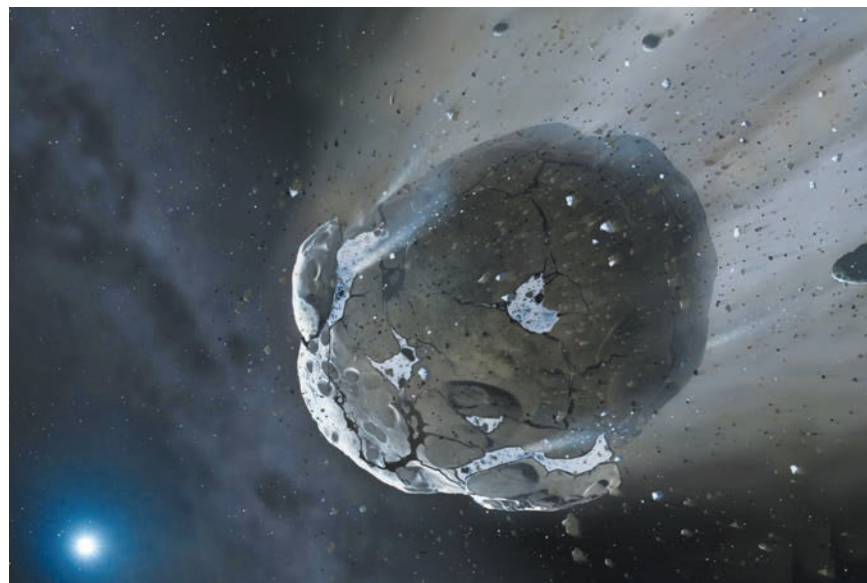
Bennu also revealed itself to be more rugged than expected, challenging the mission team to alter its flight and sample collection plans, due to the rough terrain.

Bennu is the target of NASA's Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx) mission, which began orbiting the asteroid on December 31 last year.

Bennu, which is only slightly wider than the height of the Empire State Building, may contain unaltered material from the very beginning of our solar system.

"The discovery of plumes is one of the biggest surprises of my scientific career," said Dante Lauretta, OSIRIS-REx principal investigator at the University of Arizona in the US.

"And the rugged terrain went against all of our predictions. Bennu is already surprising us, and our exciting journey there is just getting started," Lauretta



said. Shortly after the discovery of the particle plumes on January 6, the mission science team increased the frequency of observations, and subsequently detected additional particle plumes during the following two months.

Although many of the particles were ejected clear of Bennu, the team tracked some particles that orbited Bennu as satellites before returning to the

asteroid's surface.

Scientists have also discovered evidence of abundant water-bearing minerals on the surface of Bennu.

Using early spectral data from NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft orbiting the asteroid, the team identified infrared properties similar to those in a type of meteorite called carbonaceous chondrites.

Source: PTI

AI can make eye doctors more effective: Google

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to evolve, diagnosing diseases has become faster with greater accuracy. A new study from the Google AI research group shows that physicians and algorithms working together are more effective than either one alone.

In the study, to be published in the journal *Ophthalmology*, the researchers created a system which not only improved the ophthalmologists' diagnostic accuracy but also improved the algorithm's accuracy.

The study expands on previous work from Google AI showing that its algorithm works roughly as well as human experts in screening patients for a common diabetic eye disease called diabetic retinopathy.

"What we found is that AI can do more than simply automate eye screening, it can assist physicians in more accurately diagnosing diabetic retinopathy. AI and physicians working together can be more accurate than either one alone," said lead researcher Rory Sayres.

Recent advances in AI promise to improve access to diabetic retinopathy screening and to improve its accuracy. But it's less clear how AI will work in the physician's office or other clinical settings, the team said.

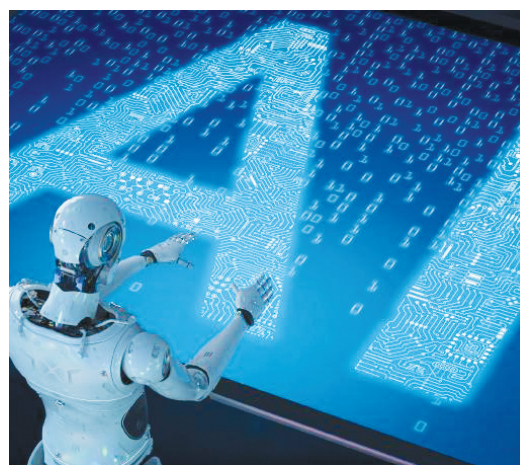
According to the team, previous attempts to use computer-assisted diagnosis shows that some screeners rely on the machine too much, which leads to repeating the machine's errors, or under-rely on it and ignore accurate predictions.

The research team at Google AI believes that some of these pitfalls may be avoided if the computer can "explain" its predictions.

To test this theory, ten ophthalmologists (four general ophthalmologists, one trained outside the US, four retina specialists, and one retina specialist in training) were asked to read images with and without algorithm assistance.

Without assistance, general ophthalmologists are significantly less accurate than the algorithm, while retina specialists are not significantly more accurate than the algorithm. With assistance, general ophthalmologists match but do not exceed the model's accuracy, while retina specialists start to exceed the model's performance.

Source: IANS



Apple Watch can safely detect irregular heartbeat

Apple Watch can detect and notify users when they experience irregular heart rhythms, finds a study demonstrating the ability of wearable technology to detect atrial fibrillation.

In 2017, Apple had partnered with researchers from the Stanford University and launched an app called "Apple Heart Study" to determine whether a mobile app that uses data from a heart rate pulse sensor on the Apple Watch can identify atrial fibrillation.

Atrial fibrillation, a deadly and often undiagnosed condition, can lead to strokes. The condition often remains hidden because many people do not experience symptoms.

The findings showed only 0.5 per cent participants received irregular pulse notifications, an important finding given the concerns about potential over-notification.

Eighty-four per cent of the time participants who received irregular pulse notifications were found to be in atrial fibrillation at the time of the notification and 34 per cent who followed up by using an ECG patch over a week later were found to have atrial fibrillation.

"The results of the Apple Heart Study highlight the role that innovative digital technology can play in creating more predictive and preventive health care," said Lloyd Minor of the Stanford School of Medicine.

INDIA'S RUPEE JUST WENT FROM ASIA'S WORST TO BEST CURRENCY

Asia's worst-performing currency took five weeks to become its best.

The turnaround has been fuelled by the improved chances of Prime Minister Narendra Modi winning a second term amid recent tensions between India and Pakistan. The optimism has led to local shares and debt luring robust flows, which have turned the carry-trade returns on the rupee to the highest in the world in the past month.

"The high-yielding rupee will likely advance further if Modi wins a second term," said Gao Qi, a currency strategist at Scotiabank in Singapore, who expects the currency to rally to 67 per dollar by June-end. A dovish tilt by major central banks in the face of a faltering global expansion could also prompt foreigners to chase higher yields in emerging Asia, he said.

Here's a graphical look at the state of play in India's currency market:



Dollars Gush In

Foreigners bought a net \$3.3 billion of shares through March 18, accounting for more than half the \$5.6 billion of inflows year-to-date, and raised holdings of bonds by \$1.4 billion this month. The gush of dollars sent the rupee to its highest level since August, prompting profit-booking that saw the currency posting its first drop in seven sessions on Tuesday.

Gaining Allure

Borrowing in dollars to purchase rupee assets has earned 3.8 percent over the past one month, the best carry-trade return in the world, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Two opinion polls showed Modi's ruling coalition may get close to the 272 seats needed for majority in elections that begin on April 11.

Results are due on May 23.

"The market is pricing in a Modi victory as there are no other factors that explain the sudden change of mood," said Anindya Banerjee, an analyst at Kotak Securities Ltd. in Mumbai. "On top of that, carry traders are eager to be long rupee and short other low-yielding currencies, including the dollar. It is a get-set-go for the rupee."

Options Costs

The rupee optimism is also reflected in the derivatives market, where one-month options conferring the right to sell the rupee now cost 19 basis points more than those to buy. That's down from 148 on Sept. 5, which was the highest since November 2016.

"Global conditions -- dovish Fed and ECB -- have turned more supportive and

domestically, increased confidence in the BJP's prospects and a recovery in portfolio flows have been the key driver" for the rupee, said Dushyant Padmanabhan, a currency strategist at Nomura Holdings Inc. in Singapore.

Swings Ebb

The rupee's three-month implied volatility, a gauge of expected swings used to price options, fell to 5.87 percent on Friday, the lowest reading since August.

"We expect the rupee to remain resilient in the near term, as bunched up foreign inflows limit any pressure from weakening EMFX sentiment," Barclays Plc strategist Ashish Agrawal, wrote in a note. "A potential BJP-led coalition victory would bode well for the INR for the rest of this year." *Source: Bloomberg*



EU FINES GOOGLE \$1.68 BILLION FOR ANTI-TRUST BREACH

BRUSSELS (TIP): European Union regulators have hit Google with a 1.49 billion euro (\$1.68 billion) fine for abusing its dominant role in online advertising.

The EU's competition commissioner, Margrethe Vestager, announced the results of the long-running probe of Google's AdSense advertising business case at a news conference in Brussels on Wednesday.

It's the third time the commission has slapped Google with an antitrust penalty, following multibillion-dollar fines resulting from separate probes into two other parts of the Silicon Valley giant's business.

Last year Vestager hit the company with a record 4.34 billion euro (\$5 billion) fine following an investigation into its Android operating system. In 2017, she slapped Google with a 2.42 billion euro fine in a case involving its online shopping search results.

JET AIRWAYS SHARES DROP AS CRISIS DEEPENS



MUMBAI (TIP): Shares of Jet Airways Ltd dropped about 7 percent on Wednesday as the company's distress aggravated after the government called for an emergency meeting to discuss the cash-strapped carrier's woes.

The government has asked state-run banks to rescue the airline without pushing it into bankruptcy, two people within the administration told Reuters.

State-run banks have been urged to convert debt into equity and take a stake in Jet in a rare move to use taxpayer money to save a struggling private-sector company from bankruptcy. The two people and another source, however, said this would be "transitory" and lenders could sell the stakes once Jet revives itself.

The 25-year-old airline defaulted on loans after racking up over \$1 billion in debt, and owes money to banks, suppliers, pilots and lessors - some of whom have started terminating their lease deals with the carrier. *Source: Reuters*

VODAFONE IDEA OKAYS RS 25,000-CR RIGHTS ISSUE

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Board of Directors of India's largest telecom operator Vodafone Idea today cleared the planned Rs 25,000-crore rights issue at a price of Rs 12.50 per equity share, a steep 61% discount to the prevailing market rate.

In a regulatory filing, the company said the rights entitlement ratio has been fixed at 87 equity shares for every 38 equity shares held by eligible shareholders of the company on the record date, that is April 2, 2019.

The issue opening date has been fixed for April 10 while the closing date has been set for April 24, 2019, the filing said.

The issue price of Rs 12.50 per equity share (including a premium of Rs 2.50 per equity share) is at a massive 61 per cent discount to the previous closing of Rs 32 per share.

Earlier this year, the Board of directors of Vodafone Idea had approved Rs 25,000 crore fund-raising plan by way of rights issue to the existing eligible equity shareholders, following which the company received cabinet nod for foreign direct investment (FDI) infusion in February.

Musk reveals Tesla Model Y crossover at \$39,000

Elon Musk's unveiling of a new electric vehicle that Tesla Inc. won't deliver to customers for another year and a half rekindled concerns about the company's cash position.

The Model Y crossover that the chief executive officer debuted late Thursday in Hawthorne, California, will start being delivered to customers in the fall of next year. The company immediately began taking \$2,500 pre-orders, a bigger ask than the \$1,000 it charged at first to reserve a Model 3 sedan.

"More expensive customer deposits for Model Y are likely to reinforce bear concerns about Tesla's cash," Toni Sacconaghi, an analyst with Sanford C. Bernstein Co., said in a report Friday. "We expect initial orders to be notably lower than Model 3."

Tesla shares fell as much as 5 percent and traded down 3.8 percent to \$278.82 as of noon Friday in New York. The stock is down about 16 percent this year.

At Tesla's design studio, Musk showed off a blue prototype of the mid-sized Model Y, which is roughly 10 percent bigger than its best-selling Model 3. Initially, three higher-end editions of the new vehicle will be available, with a standard version scheduled to arrive in spring 2021 that will be priced at



\$39,000 and equipped with a 230-mile battery.

By showing the Model Y now and yet keeping most customers waiting until the second half of next year, Tesla risks undermining momentum for the Model 3, which catapulted the automaker up the sales charts and helped Musk post back-to-back quarterly profits. Investors are counting on the Model Y to help the company better meet the demands of consumers who are increasingly ditching sedans for roomier crossovers and SUVs. *Source: Bloomberg*

contd from page 1

BJP Releases First List of 184...

Sources in the party said the decision on whether Mr. Advani would like to contest was left to him, as was the case with former Union Minister Murli Manohar Joshi. This was discussed at the parliamentary board of the party two weeks ago. As for Mr. Shah, senior leaders said the party needed a heavyweight replacement for Mr. Advani, and with Mr. Modi not contesting from Gujarat, Mr. Shah was the natural choice. It is also a sign of Mr. Shah's undisputed pre-eminence in the BJP and its affairs both in Gujarat and nationally.

Rajnath from Lucknow:

In the electorally crucial State of Uttar Pradesh, where the BJP faces a formidable alliance of the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, the first list saw 28 names announced including that of Prime Minister Modi from Varanasi, Home Minister Rajnath Singh from Lucknow and Textiles Minister Smriti Irani from Amethi. She will be challenging Congress president Rahul Gandhi.

The party dropped six sitting MPs. These include Union Minister Krishna Raj from Shahjahanpur. She has been replaced by Arun Sagar, from Sambhal. Satyapal Saini has been replaced by Parmeshwar Lal Saini. The Misrikh seat sees Anju Bala being replaced by Ashok Rawat. In Hardoi Jai Prakash Rawat replaces Anshul Verma. Agra and Fatehpur Sikri MPs have both been replaced by S.P. Singh Baghel and Rajkumar Singh respectively.

Significantly, the candidature of former Union Minister Murli Manohar Joshi, an MP from Kanpur, Union Minister Maneka Gandhi who represents Pilibhit and her son Varun Gandhi representing Sultanpur was also not announced. Mr. Nadda said that all 17 candidates from Bihar had been finalised and the list sent to the State unit for endorsement. It will be announced at an NDA event. The BJP announced 21 out of 28 candidates for Karnataka retaining 16 sitting MPs, and with new entrant A Manju from the Congress now getting a BJP ticket from Hassan to take on Prajwal Revanna, grandson of former prime minister Deve Gowda. Interestingly, no candidate was announced for Bengaluru South, although Tejaswini Ananth Kumar, wife of late Union Minister Ananth Kumar was widely tipped as the candidate.

Tamil Nadu:

In Tamil Nadu, the BJP's lone sitting MP, Union minister Pon Radhakrishnan has been repeated from Kanyakumari and state unit chief Tamilsai Soundararajan from Thoothukudi where she will face off against DMK MP Kanimozhi.

In Kerala, the party firmed up its alliance with the Bharth Jana Sena Party (BDJS) on Wednesday, giving it five seats, and the Kerala Congress (Thomas) with one seat. The list saw BJP announce 13 out of its 14 seats in the fray (the exception being Pathanamthitta), with Union minister K J Alphons to fight from Ernakulam and former Mizoram governor Kummanam Rajashekharan to fight Shashi Tharoor from Thiruvananthapuram.

West Bengal and Odisha:

The BJP wants to make serious inroads into Odisha and West Bengal and announced 28 out of the 42 seats it will fight in the former and 10 out of 21 seats in Odisha. In Bengal, many cross overs from Trinamool Congress, the Congress and the CPI(M) have found a spot in the list including Arjun Singh who will take on former Union minister Dinesh Trivedi from Barackpore. The party did not announce any candidate for its sitting seat of Darjeeling as the views of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) weighs heavily in that. The BJP did not announce a candidate for the Puri seat in Odisha with speculation that it may be Prime Minister Modi's second seat in these polls. But, as widely expected, former BJD MP and BJP's newest Vice President Baijayant Panda will contest from

Kendrapara, while bureaucrat turned politician Aparajita Sarangi is their Bhubaneswar candidate. BJD's Nabrangpur Balabhadra Majhi who left the party is BJP's candidate from the same seat.

The party is fielding two of its former MLA candidates, Pratap Sarangi and Brughu Baxipatra from Balasore and Berhampur respectively. Union minister Jual Oram, the party's only MP to scrape through in 2014, will contest again. As will Sangeeta Kumari Singh Deo, who lost her Bolangir seat to her brother in law Kalikesh Singh Deo (BJD's candidate for 2019 again).

Maharashtra:

The party accommodated new entrant Sujay Vikhe Patil in the Ahmadnagar seat and replaced sitting MP from Latur, Sunil Gaikwad with Sudhakar Bahlerao Shringare. The party will fight 25 seats in the state and declared 16 seats from the state. Union minister Nitin Gadkari has been repeated from his old seat of Nagpur.

Assam and North East:

Party chief Amit Shah made an unprecedented move of giving an explanation for the exclusion of Assam finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma from the list, when he was widely tipped to fight from Tezpur. Mr Shah said Mr Sarma was needed in his role as convenor of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) and the party's growth in that area. The list from Assam saw three sitting MPs dropped, Bijoya Chakraborty in Gauhati replaced by Queen Ojha, Dilip Saikia replacing Ramen Deka in Mangaldoi and Tapan Gogoi replacing Kamakhya Prasad Tassa in Jorhat.

Prem Parameswaran: "The...

Amazon (AMZN), Apple (AAPL) and other streaming and tech giants crowding into the entertainment field. Prem Parameswaran Group CFO & President North America, Eros International, when asked by The Indian Panorama to comment on the deal said: "The Disney Fox deal is very exciting for the global media and entertainment industry. Disney is combining its content with Fox as well as Fox's rights to cricket in India and will also be launching Disney Plus later this year. They basically have three different OTT platforms (Disney Plus, Hulu and Hotstar). Bob Iger's strategy is excellent and shows that having premium content whether entertainment or sports will ultimately win consumers. Obviously at Eros International we believe in a very similar strategy as we have meshed the best Indian content in the world on our global OTT platform Eros Now. This ultimately leads to a rapidly growing consumer base. In fact, Disney's strategy in OTT basically validated the strategy that we set forth for Eros Now. So, with that I commend my friend Bob Iger."

New Zealand bans sale of...

In the immediate aftermath of last Friday's shootings at two mosques in the city of Christchurch, Ardern labelled the attack as terrorism and said New Zealand's gun laws would change.

"On 15 March our history changed forever. Now, our laws will too. We are announcing action today on behalf of all New Zealanders to strengthen our gun laws and make our country a safer place," Ardern told a news conference.

"All semi-automatic weapons used during the terrorist attack on Friday 15 March will be banned."

Ardern said she expected the new laws to be in place by April 11 and a buy-back scheme costing up to NZ\$200 million (\$138 million) would be established for banned weapons.

All military style semi-automatics (MSSA) and assault rifles would be banned, along with parts used to convert weapons into MSSAs and all high-capacity magazines.

Under existing gun laws, a standard A-category gun license allows semi-automatics limited to seven shots. Live-streamed video of a gunman in one of the mosques showed a semi-automatic weapon modified with a large magazine.

Australia banned semi-automatic weapons and launched a gun buy-back after the Port Arthur massacre in 1996 in

which 35 people were killed.

Ardern said that similar to Australia, the law would allow for strictly enforced exemptions for farmers for pest control and animal welfare.

"I strongly believe that the vast majority of legitimate gun owners in New Zealand will understand that these moves are in the national interest and will take these changes in their stride."

Lots of guns

New Zealand, a country of fewer than 5 million people, has an estimated 1.2-1.5 million firearms, about 13,500 of them MSSA-type weapons.

Most farmers own guns while hunting of deer, pigs and goats is popular. Gun clubs and shooting ranges dot the country.

That has created a powerful lobby that has thwarted previous attempts to tighten gun laws.

Federated Farmers, which represent thousands of farmers, said it supported the new laws.

"This will not be popular among some of our members but ...

we believe this is the only practicable solution," a group spokesman, Miles Anderson, said in a statement.

The main opposition National Party, which draws strong support in rural areas, said it also supported the ban.

The changes exclude two general classes of firearms commonly used for hunting, pest control and stock management on farms.

"I have a military style weapon. But to be fair, I don't really use it, I don't really need it," said Noel Womersley, who slaughters cattle for small farmers around Christchurch.

"So I'm quite happy to hand mine over."

Ardern said more reforms would cover the firearm registry and licensing.

Mosques to reopen for Friday prayers

Nada Tawfeek, who buried her father-in-law killed in the attacks, Hussein Moustafa, on Thursday, welcomed the ban.

"It's a great reaction. I think other countries need to learn from her," Tawfeek said.

Mohammed Faqih, a member of the Islamic clergy who flew in from California and attended the funerals for some victims on Thursday, said he was "extremely grateful" for the gun ban.

"I wish our leaders in the States would follow on her footsteps and do the same thing," he said.

The first victims were buried on Wednesday and burials continued on Thursday, with the funeral of a school boy.

A mass burial is expected on Friday.

The bullet-riddled Al Noor mosque was being repaired, painted and cleaned ahead of Friday prayers.

Ardern will attend the Muslim call to prayer and a two-minute silence at Hagley Park, opposite the mosque. The call to prayer will be telecast nationally.

Armed police have been guarding mosques around New Zealand since the attacks. Police said there would be a "heightened presence" on Friday to reassure those attending weekly prayers.

Thousands of worshippers are expected at the Al Noor mosque, where the majority of victims died.

Most victims were migrants or refugees from countries such as Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Somalia, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Australian Brenton Tarrant, 28, a suspected white supremacist who was living in Dunedin, on New Zealand's South Island, has been charged with murder following the attack. He was remanded without a plea and is due back in court on April 5, when police said he was likely to face more charges. Twenty-eight people wounded in the attacks remain in hospital, six in intensive care.

As darkness fell, about 100 people gathered in a Christchurch square for an inter-faith vigil. Christian leaders led hymns and people laid ferns as a symbol of peace.

"Whatever you believe, whatever I believe, we're still human beings. We still need each other," Ibrahim Abdelhalim, imam of Linwood Mosque, where seven people were killed, told the crowd. (Source: Agencies)

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Basoda Puja is dedicated to Goddess Sheetala and celebrated on Krishna Paksha Ashtami after Holi. Basoda is also known as Sheetala Ashtami. Usually it falls after eight days of Holi but many people observe it on first Monday or Friday after Holi. Sheetala Ashtami is more popular in North Indian states like Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

According to Basoda customs families don't lit fire for cooking. Hence most families cook one day before and consume stale food on Sheetala Ashtami day. It is believed that Goddess Sheetala controls smallpox, chickenpox, measles, etc. and people worship her to ward off any outbreak of those diseases.

In Gujarat, the similar ritual as Basoda is observed just a day before Krishna Janmashtami and is known as Shitala Satam. Shitala Satam is also dedicated to Goddess Sheetala and no fresh food is cooked on the day of Sheetala Satam.

Mother Sheetala is considered the goddess who can cure heat borne diseases including measles, chicken pox and small pox. Therefore, this vrat is observed with great involvement so that people are saved from these dreaded diseases during the outbreak of summer months.

Mother Sheetala is one of the manifestations of Mother Parvati in the name Katyayani, the daughter of Rishi Katyayan. In this form, the goddess ventured into destroying the demonic forces and save the worlds. In course of her voyage, she came across a demon called Jwarasur, the demon of fever who was spreading several heat borne diseases like chicken pox, small pox, fevers, and measles.

Goddess assumed the form of Sheetala devi to destroy this demon. She was mounted on a donkey and carried in her four arms a silver broom, a winnowing fan, a bowl and a pitcher of Ganges water. She gave rise to a dwarf Bhatuk who in turn assumed the ferocious form of Bhairav and vanquished the demon. Sheetala devi cured the diseases of all the people with her benevolence.

Once there lived a king called Indralumna who ruled over Hasthinapur. His daughter Shubhakari was given in marriage to prince Gunvan. Once, the king invited both of them to observe Sheetalashami. As per the procedure, the couple left for a lake and spared meticulous efforts to perform the vrat with devotion. Pleased with their sincerity, Sheetala devi appeared before them and granted a boon which Shubakari could use anytime she wanted.

On their way back, Shubhakari saw a sorrowful Brahmin family that was grieving over his death due to snakebite. Shubhakari used the boon to revive the Brahmin from death. All the people realized the power of the Sheetalashami vrat and started observing it with great faith.

On the day of Sheetalashami, people take bath in a lake or river and install an image of Sheetaladevi seated on a donkey in the river bank. They decorate the idol with cool stuff like chandan paste, turmeric and vermilion and offer fruits and sixteen types of offerings. At the end of the puja, they offer rice mixed with ghee. Notably, this rice should have been cooked the previous day. After the puja, this rice is eaten by all the family members.

The ladies of the home observe a day long fast on this day accompanied by the prayers and worship to propitiate Sheetala devi. On the next day, they take food that was cooked earlier, offered to goddess and preserved. It is said that those who observe this vrat with fervor shall find their homes free of any heat borne diseases during summer months.

Sheetala Devi rides on a donkey, and she has four arms. In her hands she carries a silver broom, a fan, a small bowl, and a pot of water. She uses these items to rid a house of disease—she sweeps up the germs with her broom, uses the fan to collect them, and

SHEETALA ASHTAMI



dumps them into the bowl. She then sprinkles water from the pot (which is water from the river Ganges) to purify the house. Shitala's name means "the cooling one". With the change of seasons and coming of the hot period, it is essential to emphasize the importance of hygiene for human health and the worship of Shitala Mata provides the motivation to keep the surroundings clean and hygienic.

Rituals during Sheetala Ashtami:

- On the day of Sheetala Ashtami as per the traditions, the families do not lit fire for the purpose of cooking. They therefore prepare food a day in advance and consume the stale food on the actual day. It is only in Sheetala Ashtami that there is unique custom of offering stale food to Goddess Sheetala.
- Devotees get up early, before sunrise and take a bath. They visit the Sheetala Devi temple and worship the Goddess with 'haldi' and 'bajra'. After performing the puja rituals they listen to the 'Basoda Vrat Katha'. 'Rabri', 'curd' and other essential offerings are then made to Goddess Sheetala. People also take blessings from their elders.
- After offering the prepared food to the Goddess, rest of the food is eaten all day long as Prasad and is known as 'Basoda' in local language. The food is also distributed among other devotees and also given to the poor and needy people. On this day reading 'Sheetalashami' is also considered favourable.

Significance of Sheetala Ashtami

Sheetala Mata is known to be an important Goddess in Hindu mythology. The Goddess is seated on a donkey and has been portrayed holding neem leaves, broom, soup and a pot. Her magnificence has been explicitly mentioned in several religious scriptures. In the Skanda Purana, the benefit of worshipping Sheetala Ashtami has been explained in great details. The Sheetala Mata Stotra written by Lord Shiva and also known as 'Sheetalashami' can also be found in the Skanda Purana.



This day is dedicated to worshipping Goddess Sheetala. According to the Hindu scriptures, it is believed that Goddess Sheetala controls chickenpox, measles, small pox and other similar diseases. By worshipping the Goddess on this auspicious day people can prevent the outbreak of epidemic diseases in their family, especially among children.

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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."

Ponting backs Rishabh to bat at No. 4, Ganguly terms southpaw a 'huge asset'

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ricky Ponting on Tuesday unequivocally backed Rishabh Pant for the number four slot in India's World Cup line-up and even saw him as one capable of winning the tournament.

Former India skipper Sourav Ganguly marked the young wicketkeeper-batsman as one for the future, calling him a "huge asset".

With little over two months to go for the World Cup and the number four batsman yet to be decided, it could now boil down to performance in the Indian Premier League, according to Ganguly.

But Ponting, a two-time World Cup winning Australian captain, left nothing to doubt when discussions turned to Pant.

"The first thing I would do is pick him in that Indian squad for the World Cup, I would play him as a batter, I would play him at number four. He is the sort of guy, with that kind of talent, he can win you a World Cup, he has just got that x-factor," Ponting said.

Ganguly added, "Anybody who wants to succeed in shorter formats of the game he has to go up; we have seen the best in world do that. If you send Rishabh at number four, he will score runs for you because he is so talented he has got so much time to play.

"In his short career he has been remarkable for India and once he starts getting opportunity consistently, he will be a top player."

Pant had a terrific start to his Test career, becoming the first Indian wicketkeeper to score centuries in England and Australia, but there is a perception that he hasn't showed the temperament or tasted as much success in the shorter formats.

During an interaction organised by the Delhi Capitals, Ganguly didn't agree



with the viewpoint.

"Look at the way he played in the IPL last year, he got a full tournament, 14 games, and he was probably the second highest run-getter in the IPL last year.

"The problem with him in shorter formats is that he doesn't get regular cricket because you have a champion in MS Dhoni who actually plays most of the shorter formats, so Rishabh is coming in and going out all the time and that's never good for anybody, however quality player you are," Ganguly said.

Pant's exploits with the willow have taken the cricket world by storm in recent months.

Ganguly said, "The reason he succeeds in Test cricket is because he plays consistently. How many Indian

wicketkeeper-batsmen have got Test hundreds in England and Australia, and he scored them at ease. It's not that he struggled; it's not that he looked out of place against fast bowling.

"For me, he is your future. For the next 10 years, you will see that boy a lot in all formats of the game and not because he plays for Delhi, he can play for anyone he wants to."

Pant will be eyeing a successful IPL with the rechristened Delhi Capitals.

"Just the serious talent he is, he is a hard worker; I have been watching him at nets for the last four years, he is always the first one to come out and bat for longer periods. He will be a huge asset to Indian cricket in the years to come," said Ganguly. *Source: PTI*



DRAVID SOUNDS WARNING BELLS BEFORE WORLD CUP

MUMBAI (TIP): Former India captain Rahul Dravid believes that India's recent ODI series defeat to Australia is a warning sign ahead of the World Cup.

India had crashed to a stunning 3-2 defeat to Australia after leading 2-0, and Dravid today said that the loss showed that the World Cup, which begins in England on May 30, would be a very tough assignment for Virat Kohli and his men.

"I think there was a bit of notion that we are going to walk there and win the World Cup easily," said Dravid. "So it's a good thing that has happened. What it has (loss to Australia) reminded us is that we have to play the World Cup very, very well." "In a way I think it's a good balancing factor. India has performed well in the last couple of years," Dravid, currently India's Under-19 and A team coach, added. "There was a little bit of talk that we are almost going to walk in there and win the World Cup very easily because we are the No. 1 team and we have been dominating One-day cricket for the last couple of years. But I don't find anything strange from my perspective watching the series. I still feel that we are going to be one of the favourites. But it's going to be tough. It's going to be competitive."

Dravid also discussed the workload on the players during the IPL, a topic which has been talked about a lot in the recent past. "Most players are smart about these things. They know how to handle their body," Dravid said. "I don't think the players would put their body on the line. I was reading Patrick Cummins (Australia pacer) saying that he feels better bowling when he is constantly playing rather than having rested and coming back. So to each player, it's different. There cannot be a blanket case that all should be rested. We have to just trust the players. They know what needs to be done." *Source: PTI*

Neeraj, Hima named in India's Asian Championships team



NEW DELHI (TIP): Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra was Wednesday named to lead a 39-member Indian athletics team for next month's Asian Championships in Doha, with sprint sensation Hima Das also making the cut in 400m despite her recent below-par show.

National record holders, Mohd. Anas (400m), Jinson Johnson (800m and 1500m), Dharun Ayyasamy (400m hurdles), Avinash Sable (3000m steeplechase), Tajinder Pal Singh Toor (shot put), Dutte Chand (100m) and Annu Rani (javelin throw) were also among those named in the team.

Tejaswin Shankar (high jump) and M Shreeshankar (long jump) -- both national record holders -- were left out of the team for different reasons while seasoned campaigners Seema Antil (discus throw) and Arpinder Singh (triple jump) opted out of the continental showpiece to focus on the World Championships later this year.

Sanjivani Jadhav, who recently returned positive for a specified substance, was also named in the team for 10,000m race subject to clearance by the NADA. The 22-year-old Jadhav was not handed a provisional suspension by the NADA and she won the 10,000m gold in the just-concluded Federation Cup which served as the selection trials for the April 19-24 continental showpiece.

South Africa beat Sri Lanka in super over after thrilling tie

CAPE TOWN (TIP): David Miller shone with gloves and bat as South Africa beat Sri Lanka on a Super Over in a dramatic first Twenty20 international at Newlands.

In the unaccustomed role of wicketkeeper, Miller held a catch and made a stumping as Sri Lanka were restricted to 134 for seven after being sent in.

Miller then hit 41 off 23 balls but South Africa's lower order collapsed as the home side lost eight wickets and could only match Sri Lanka's total.

Miller followed up with 13 runs as South Africa scored 14 off the Super Over, bowled by Sri Lankan captain Lasith Malinga.

Sri Lanka could only manage five runs off Imran Tahir's over in reply. "We didn't handle it well with the bat in the last five or six overs but getting another opportunity in the Super Over I thought we handled it beautifully," said South African captain Faf du Plessis.

Miller was handed the wicketkeeping gloves in preparation for his likely role as Quinton de Kock's back-up in the World Cup. He caught Niroshan Dickwella off Dale Steyn's bowling off the second ball of the match and made a stumping when Kamindu Mendis ran past an Imran Tahir googly. Mendis top-scored for Sri Lanka with 41.

South Africa looked set for a comfortable win when Miller



and Rassie van der Dussen (34) put on 66 for the fourth wicket but both were out within three balls before the rest of the batting crumbled.

Van der Dussen was caught at fine leg off Malinga and two balls later man-of-the-match Miller was run out. Malinga was superb in the closing overs, finishing with two for 11, while Isuru Udana bowled a tight final over, conceding only four runs. Tahir scrambled a single to tie the match off the last ball, with wicketkeeper Dickwella missing the stumps with a throw which would have won the match for Sri Lanka. *Source: AFP*



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 MARCH 25 - MARCH 31, 2019

Aries:

Ganesha says the period begins with a strong desire to be up and doing, seeking the advancement of your own interests. Being a leader, not a camp follower, an initiator, an ideal person is what turns you on, as they say now-a-days. You will focus directly, almost totally on the things that will influence your own power and position. Yet the personal angle also comes into play at the same time.

Taurus:

Nobody can accuse you of not appreciating and recognizing the value of money - and you also handle it more than well. An allied or related trend that sets in now makes you aware of the need for making your work more lucrative, and this is what you focus on. And this applies to personal finances and the funds for home as well. A good deal of thought and planning in matters to do with financial issues, emoluments will be the periodic trend.

Gemini:

It's not just money, but assets of all kinds that you will concentrate on now. Your possessions and investments are most important in this phase. It is in this phase, in fact, that the build up to the financial theme that started last period becomes a strong and definite force in your life, with the focus firmly on finances and income, for without these no accumulation of assets is possible, is it? Success in today's world is usually measured in very concrete material terms.

Cancer:

You have concentrated on work, serious issues, and money dealings. It's time now to relax, having got yourself somewhat organized. You're in a mood to chance your arm - or your heart! Entertainment, amusement, games, hobbies, warm interactions with children and love and romance will all excite you, please you, and perhaps even fulfil you. You will be in a mood to go in for some risky enterprises or speculation or trying your hand at the luck of draw.

Leo:

You start the period with a bang. Events move at a furious pace and you have to cover a lot of ground. This is a very productive period and you will be busier than ever. You exhibit great skills at work and bond with loved ones. There is travel and mounting costs and many visitors. There may be shortcomings in your plans and a financial crunch. It may be a good idea to be discreet and low-key in your activities, particularly with financial matters.

Virgo:

Ganesha says don't trust others too much or you may end up disclosing secrets, projects or assets that are best kept to yourself. This is the time for new beginnings and focused effort. The start of the period may also see a new love interest and this can be very significant. There is passion, beautiful bonding and great times. You start the period with the intensity of intimacy. Ganesha wishes you well.

Libra:

You pass through several testing emotional moments. The new love interest keeps you on your toes. There is melodrama in your life. From money and material assets, the focus shifts to the domestic set-up. You are keen to enhance and improve your family and social interactions in a big way. There are partnerships, religious ceremonies, meetings and interviews and you come out with flying colors.

Scorpio:

You come out with guns blazing. There is a lot on your plate and you will have a lot to cope with, especially continued pressure at work. There could be many changes on the domestic scene; what these are likely to be, I am not in a position to say in a general forecast. I will need personal details for that. But there will be growth in parental ties and duties, and a new attitude of pooling, caring and sharing. You will find time for leisure despite the pressure of work.

Sagittarius:

You are in a whirl of new ideas. Having experienced the joys of togetherness and closeness with people, you will focus now on group and shared activities, visits to amusement parks, clubs, even the disco and the races. There will be congenial and pleasant company. Your own changed persona will contribute greatly to the happy atmosphere. You have come a long way emotionally and discarded old opinions and dogmatic attitudes.

Capricorn:

You move to more stable ground. You have gained belief in yourself and faith in those you care for. You learn to take setbacks calmly, especially when plans don't quite work out the way you had anticipated and friends don't live up to your hopes and dreams. You have the ability to change the situation with your own efforts and don't allow delays, problems or snags to hold you back.

Aquarius:

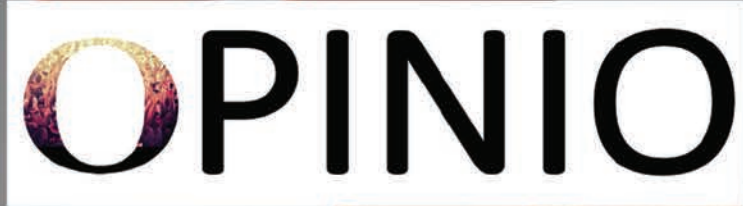
Life now is large and fabulous. You think big and plan big. You also execute big. You recently embarked on a program of self-improvement and now you are ready to claim your treasure chest. There is a great desire to work harder, earn more and build assets. You are satisfied with life and there are massive gains in business. You meet up with old and new friends, and social and family activities will be most pleasurable as both, work and pleasure come together beautifully for you.

Pisces:

There is passion and new liaisons. You play the field as though tomorrow would never come by. You look back in satisfaction at the growth in every sphere of your life and there is a glow of contentment. You experience the pleasure of a bright, new image, feelings of self-worth, gains in money matters and personal assets. You realize that success is valid only if it is apparent and visible. You revamp your finances and it leads to greater prosperity. You focus strongly on property, gains, friendship and fraternity.

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