

SUDHAKAR DALELA ASSUMES CHARGE AS CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA AT CHICAGO



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Biden launches bid for 2020 presidency

WASHINGTON (TIP): Former Vice-President Joe Biden formally joined the crowded Democratic presidential contest on Thursday, April 25, betting that his working-class appeal and ties to Barack Obama's presidency will help him overcome questions about his place in today's increasingly liberal Democratic Party. He made his announcement in a video posted on Twitter.

Thursday's announcement marks the unofficial end of the chaotic early phase of the 2020 presidential season. The field now features at least 20 Democrats jockeying for the chance to take on President Donald Trump next year. Several lesser-known candidates may still join the race. Biden, a 76-year-old lifelong politician, becomes an instant front-runner alongside Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who is leading

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The 76-year-old Joe Biden is confident he will get the support of the working classes to occupy the White House

US India Chamber of Commerce DFW Hosts Annual Technology Conference 2019



Keynote speakers Nirav Tolia, CoFounder of NextDoor.com and Kittu Kolluri, Founder of NeoTribe Ventures



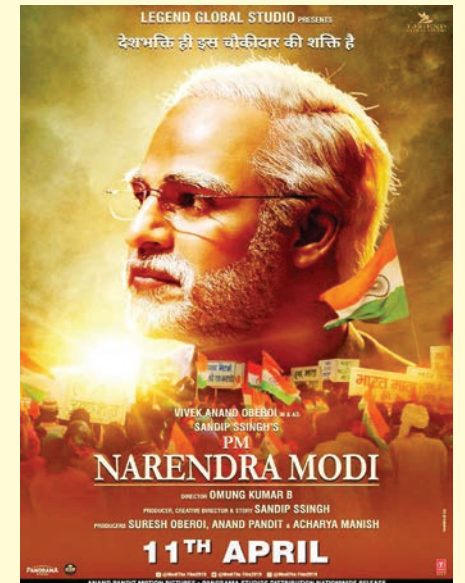
DALLAS, TX (TIP): The US India Chamber of Commerce (USICOC) DFW last week hosted its fourth Annual Technology Conference "The Billion Dollar Exit" featuring keynote speakers Nirav Tolia, CoFounder of NextDoor.com and Kittu Kolluri, Founder of

NeoTribe Ventures.USICOC is Dallas-Fort Worth based 501(c)(6) organization whose mission is to support professional, business and economic development throughout North Texas and facilitate bi-lateral trade with India. The acclaimed USICOC Annual

Technology Conference provides chamber members and the business community the opportunity to come together, learn from thought-provoking technology leaders and discuss the latest technology trends and opportunities.

contd on Page 20

SC AGREES WITH EC: NO SCREENING OF MODI BIOPIIC TILL MAY 19



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court on Friday, April 26, refused to interfere with the Election Commission's order banning release of the biopic

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Ambassador Shringla holds meeting with Consul Generals of India in USA



WASHINGTON (TIP): India's Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla hosted a welcome & networking dinner April 24 for visiting delegations from the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata and the Delhi Policy Group at which representatives of the US Govt,

prominent business representatives and India's five Consuls General in USA were present.

Ambassador Shringla held a separate meeting with Consul Generals who updated the ambassador on the working of their Consulates.

Ambassador Shringla at his meeting with Consul Generals at the Indian Embassy in Washington, April 24. From L to R: Sudhakar Dalela (Chicago), Dr Anupam Ray (Houston), Ambassador Harsh V Shringla, Sanjay Panda (San Francisco) Dr. Swati Vijay Kulkarni (Atlanta) and Sandeep Chakraborty (New York)

TRUMP TAKES ACTION TO REDUCE B-1 AND B-2 VISA OVERSTAYS

WASHINGTON (TIP): In a Presidential memorandum issued April 22, President Donald Trump ordered the Department of State to work with governments to address the high number of nonimmigrant visa recipients who stay past their authorized time in the US. According to a White House release, Trump is directing the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security to find

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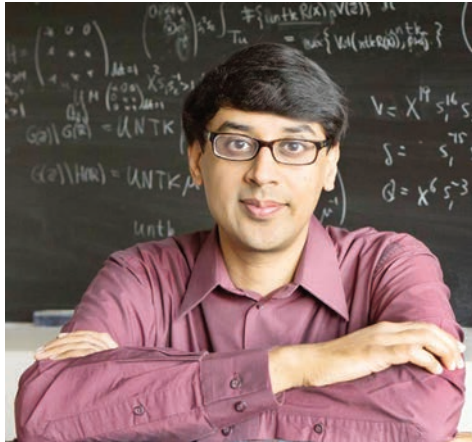
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Dallas Edition - P.O. Box 121695, Arlington, TX 76012
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Indian American Professor in Princeton Manjul Bhargava elected to Royal Society of London

PRINCETON, NJ (TIP): The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge announced April 18 that Manjul Bhargava is one of the 62 scientists who has become fellows or foreign members of the Royal Society.

Bhargava, Princeton's Brandon Fradd, Class of 1983, Professor of Mathematics, is recognized internationally as one of the foremost mathematicians of our times. He is a leading expert in number theory, a branch of mathematics in which he has made several pioneering breakthroughs. His research includes foundational contributions to arithmetic statistics and to the theory of quadratic and higher degree forms, number fields, class groups, and ranks of elliptic curves.

Bhargava is also well-known for his



Bhargava is recognized internationally as one of the foremost mathematicians of our times

contributions to the public popularization of mathematics, and held the first Distinguished Chair for the Public Dissemination of

Mathematics at the National Museum of Mathematics in New York.

The Royal Society was founded in the 1660s to promote "the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity." It is made up of approximately 1,600 of the most eminent scientists, engineers and technologists from the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. Fellows and foreign members are elected for life through a peer review process on the basis of excellence in science. Each year up to 52 fellows and up to 10 foreign members are elected from a group of around 700 candidates who are proposed by the existing fellowship.

Bhargava will be formally admitted as fellows of the Royal Society at a ceremony on July 12, when he will sign the charter book in London.

Indian American Neal Katyal to receive honorary Doctor of Laws degrees from Rutgers University-Camden



Katyal previously served as national security advisor in the U.S. Department of Justice

CAMDEN, NJ (TIP): Indian American Neal Katyal, former Acting U.S. Solicitor General and Kenneth C. Frazier, chief executive officer and board chair of Merck & Co. will receive honorary Doctor of Laws degrees from Rutgers University-Camden during the Rutgers Law School commencement ceremony on Thursday, May 23, the Rutgers University Board of Governors announced at its regularly scheduled meeting on April 9.

"Prof. Katyal is one of our nation's most powerful voices in defending the rights that our nation holds so dear. His career has helped to protect the core values of our democracy and his ongoing work contributes to our understanding of how American law and history define our daily lives", says Rutgers University-Camden Chancellor Phoebe A. Haddon.

Katyal is the Paul Saunders Professor at Georgetown University Law Center and is a partner with Hogan Lovells in Washington, D.C. As Acting Solicitor

General of the United States, he argued several major Supreme Court cases, including his successful defense of the constitutionality of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and his victorious defense of former U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft for alleged abuses in the war on terror. As a professor at Georgetown, in his first Supreme Court argument, Katyal won *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, the case that shut down the Guantanamo military tribunals.

He has orally argued 38 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, where he recently surpassed Thurgood Marshall as the minority attorney who has argued the most Supreme Court cases in the history of the United States. Katyal is the recipient of the very highest award given to a civilian by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Edmund Randolph Award, which the Attorney General presented to him in 2011. He was named American Lawyer's Litigator of the Year last year, selected among all attorneys in the United States.

Katyal previously served as national security advisor in the U.S. Department of Justice and was commissioned by President Bill Clinton to write a report on the need for more legal pro bono work. He served as Vice President Al Gore's co-counsel in the Supreme Court election dispute of 2000, and represented the deans of most major private law schools in the landmark University of Michigan affirmative-action case *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003). Katyal clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer as well as Judge Guido Calabresi of the U.S. Court of Appeals.

(Source - Rutgers-Camden News)

INDIAN AMERICAN UCHICAGO STUDENT EARNS TRUMAN SCHOLARSHIP



Third-year student Vivek Ramakrishnan, currently studying abroad in Hong Kong, was awarded a Harry S. Truman Scholarship.

CHICAGO (TIP): Vivek Ramakrishnan, a University of Chicago student, awarded a prestigious Harry S. Truman Scholarship, which provides up to \$30,000 for students pursuing careers in public service, Ramakrishnan intends to explore how applied and predictive methods can be used to analyze the child welfare system.

Ramakrishnan was one of 62 students chosen for the nationally competitive award from a pool of 840 undergraduate candidates. He is the ninth UChicago student to earn the award in the past 10 years.

After his first year in the College, Ramakrishnan worked for Chicago-based nonprofit MAPSCorps, leading 16 high school students around the city to collect data on resources and assets within various disadvantaged communities. The following summer, he worked as an intern in the data analytics unit of the Philadelphia Department of Human Services and completed a quantitative evaluation of youth at risk of aging out of the foster care system. *(Source - UChicago News)*

INDIAN AMERICAN PSYCHIATRY PROFESSOR AT PITTSBURGH HONORED WITH DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST AWARD

PITTSBURGH, PA (TIP) Mary Ganguli, professor of psychiatry, epidemiology and neurology in University of Pittsburgh's Department of Psychiatry, was recently given the 2019 Distinguished Scientist Award by the American Association for Geriatric Psychiatry.



Mary Ganguli received the award in recognition of her many years of significant contributions to the field

Ganguli received the award in recognition of her many years of significant contributions to the field and her mentorship of successful junior researchers in the field of geriatric psychiatry.

Ganguli has conducted seminal research on the epidemiology of the aging brain and late life mental disorders and is recognized internationally as a leader in the field of geriatric psychiatry.

She received numerous awards including Outstanding Academician Award, Indo-American Psychiatric Association,

Golden Apple Award for Teaching Excellence, House staff, Department of Psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh, Distinguished Alumni Award for Research, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health among others. She is listed annually in Best Doctors list since 1998 by Best Doctors, Inc.

INDIAN AMERICAN PHYSICIAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR HEALTH CARE FRAUD

STUART, FL (TIP): On April 21, an Indian American doctor who previously worked in Stuart, Florida, was sentenced to prison after having been convicted by a federal jury of committing repeated acts of health care fraud.

Sheetal Kanar Kumar, M.D., 48, formerly of Stuart, Florida, was found guilty by a trial jury, on February 15, 2019, of committing twenty-three counts of health care fraud (Case No. 18-14063-CR-Marra). U.S. District Judge Kenneth A. Marra, sitting in Fort Pierce, Florida, sentenced Dr. Kumar to a total of 24 months in prison, to be followed by 2 years of supervised release.

According to the court record, including evidence introduced at trial, Dr. Sheetal Kumar owned and operated the medical practice Advanced Healthcare for Women in Stuart, Florida. *(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)*

Consul General Sudhakar Dalela & IABC Hosts Vibrant Goa Global Expo/Summit 2019 Roadshow in Chicago

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Consul General of India Mr. Sudhakar Dalela in collaboration with Indian American Business Council [IABC] headed by Harish Kolasani, IABC Founding President held Vibrant Goa roadshow highlighting Goa's phenomenal success story in areas such as innovation, sustainability, industries, technology, youth, skill development and knowledge sharing and networking at the Indian Consulate premises in downtown Chicago on April 16, 2019. The entire gamut of Goa's illustrious story will be extensively showcased at the Vibrant Goa Global Expo & Summit 2019 to be held in Goa, India on October 17-19, 2019.

Consul General of India Mr. Sudhakar Dalela in his keynote address comprehensively outlined India's growing economic eminence and the trajectory of its extraordinary growth. Consul General Mr. Sudhakar Dalela commended the initiatives of the Goa's leadership and the roadshow delegation including Dr. Jagat Shah and Raj Kumar Kamat in helping advance the vision of Goa through this magnificent Vibrant Goa 2019 Expo. Consul General of India Mr. Sudhakar Dalela said that this Vibrant Goa 2019 will augur well in validating Goa's fastest growing economy which is driven by strong



Consul General Sudhakar Dalela addressing the gathering

performance of industrial, mining, tourism and pharmaceuticals -- that which was reaffirmed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dr. Jagat Show, Founder Managing Director of Global Network & Chief Mentor of Vibrant Goa 2019 in his presentation expansively delineated the goal of Vibrant Goa Global Expo & Summit and presented a host of audiovisuals illustrating the phenomenal trajectory of growth of the state of Goa vis-à-vis India's burgeoning economic eminence. Dr. Jagat Shah said Vibrant Goa Global Expo Summit would



A view of the gathering

be an ideal convergence of Goa's industries and business community to showcase their strengths, highlight business opportunities and facilitate knowledge dissemination across 19 countries worldwide and 20 states in India. He added Vibrant Goa 2019 would provide a practical opportunity to its participants to understand the potential of Goa across various sectors

Harish Kolasani, IABC President welcomed the corporate, business and community leader and explained the overview of Indian American Business Council and its significant role in creating

platforms in connecting business entrepreneurs; more importantly connecting the small to medium businesses between the United States and India. In a statement, Harish Kolasani said that in less than 24 hours IABC has received huge wave of interest in participating in the Vibrant Goa 2019 including prominent leader Smita Shah, Chair of Delhi Committee on Chicago Sister Cities International had made remarks on ways Delhi Sister City Committee can complement the Vibrant Goa 2019.

Read full story at
www.theindianpanorama.news

Volunteers from 92 cultures convene to plan the 29th Annual Skokie Festival of Cultures

SKOKIE IL (TIP): Representatives from 92 different cultures convened on Monday - April 15, 2019, to organize the 29th Skokie Festival of Cultures scheduled to take place on May 18 & 19, 2019 at Oakton Park. The three-day event is expected to draw an estimated 25,000 people from the Village of Skokie and surrounding areas.

The festival will kick-off on Friday evening with an International Short Film Festival and feature more than 60 ethnic performances throughout the weekend as visitors experience the cultural diversity existing within Skokie through the event theme "Passport to the World."

John Marquardt, chairman of the Planning Committee and Pamela Zeid from the Village of Skokie led the volunteer meeting to finalize the cultural booth selection criteria.

This year's event is expected to feature cultural booths highlighting cultural diversity existing within the Skokie community. The purpose of the festival is to bring together people from the Village for an entire weekend allowing them to celebrate one another's customs and cultural backgrounds in a fun and colorful setting.

The food vendors for this year's event include Skokie Rotary, Windsor Ice Cream, Blackhawk BBQ & Seafood, Lee Concessions, Tamale Express, LC Restaurant, Uncle Zorba's Greek Foods, Urhai Community Service Center and the Perk & Pickle Food truck.

This year's event is sponsored by Geico, NorthShore University HealthSystem, State Farm, Nicor Gas, Renewal by Andersen, Bright Horizons Early Education & Preschool, Byline Bank, Chiro One Wellness Centers, Eye Level, Power Home Remodeling, First Bank Chicago-Highland Park, the Illinois Arts Council, and the Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs of Skokie Valley.

John Marquardt, and Pamela Zeid who led meeting did an excellent job at addressing questions from participating



Representatives from 92 cultures convene to plan the 29th Annual Skokie Festival of Cultures

organizations; and generating enthusiasm and excitement of the upcoming event.

Krishna Goyal, Member, Skokie Human Relations Commission, who has been serving the Village of Skokie for more than 20 years and Chandrakant Modi, M.D. Chairperson, Gandhi Memorial Chicago, also attended the meeting. Due to Easter Sunday Babu Verma could not attend this meeting however he is part of cultural committee executive member in Village of Skokie.

"This is the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and we are elated to be participating in this event to celebrate Gandhi's life through literature and photos," said Chandrakant Modi, M.D.

Gandhi Memorial Chicago will also participate in

Skokie's annual Fourth of July Parade. Arnold Oskin who organizes the parade shared that slots are starting to fill up and those who care interested can register on the website. Gandhi Memorial Chicago float will be part of Fourth of July Parade in Skokie.

For businesses or community organizations interested in supporting the festival through donations may contact Jon Marquardt at 847- 674-1500, ext 3520. In return for their support Friends of the Festival will receive advertisement during the event Skokie Park District facilities and lobbies.

The planning committee is also looking for volunteers for the event. Volunteers may go to the Festival website and submit an online application.

(Photograph and Press release / Asian Media USA)

U.S.-India Political Action Committee Hosts fundraiser for Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi



The launch coincided with a fundraiser for Indian American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi

LOS ANGELES (TIP): Last month, the U.S.-India Political Action Committee (USINPAC) launched its California chapter, with prominent lawyer, Navneet Chugh, serving as chapter head. The launch coincided with a fundraiser for Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, representing the Illinois 8th Congressional district.

In her opening remarks, Dolly Kapoor, co-founder of USINPAC, expressed thanks to Congressman Krishnamoorthi for attending the launch and commended him for his outstanding service in representing the interests of Indian Americans. She also welcomed Navneet Chugh, noting his achievements and stature in the community.

"We stand with India as it confronts terrorism," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Twitter. Calling out Pakistan, Pompeo said, "Pakistan must

not provide safe haven for terrorists to threaten international security."

Navneet Chugh is Managing Partner of Chugh LLP, a full service law and CPA firm. He is on the boards of HAB Bank, Ignify Consulting, Sikh Center of Orange County, Pratham USA's Los Angeles chapter, India Community Center, Dhando Holdings, and Premier Media (the publisher of India Journal). He is also a former board member of the Asia Society of Southern California as well as the American India Foundation (AIF), which was chaired by former President Bill Clinton. Mr. Chugh is a graduate of USC and Harvard.

"USINPAC is pleased to welcome Navneet Chugh as our California Chapter head," Sanjay Puri, Chairman and Founder of USINPAC said. "Our community will be better served having

a changemaker like Navneet working with us to bring about outcomes that matter."

Mr. Puri also expressed strong support for Congressman Krishnamoorthi, who was selected as an Assistant Whip and serves on the Steering and Policy Committee. "Our community is fortunate to have Congressman Krishnamoorthi in the in the U.S. House of Representatives," Puri said, "and we should continue our support through the ballot box and fundraising efforts."

"We are deepening our partnership and engaging at the grassroots levels in very practical ways," Mrs. Kapoor said, "and, with Mr. Chugh on board, I am positive we will be able to galvanize and engage our California community more fully as we work together locally and federally to move the Indian American agenda forward."

INDIAN AMERICAN IMPACT FUND ENDORSES KAMALA HARRIS FOR PRESIDENT



If elected President of the United States, Harris will be the first woman, the first Indian American, the first Asian American, and the first African American woman to hold that post

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Indian American IMPACT Fund ("IMPACT Fund") on April 18 announced its endorsement of U.S. Senator Kamala Harris for President of the United States.

"In such a critically important election, one that will shape policy and politics for generations to come, Indian Americans can't afford to stay on the sidelines. That's why IMPACT Fund is proud to be the first Indian American or Asian American political organization to endorse Senator Harris," said Raj Goyle, co-founder of IMPACT and a former member of the Kansas House of Representatives. "In the coming months, we look forward to mobilizing our network of resources to ensure Senator Harris secures the Democratic nomination and is elected the next President of the United States of America."

A lifelong public safety and civil rights leader, Senator Harris previously served as District Attorney of San Francisco and Attorney General of California, before being elected by voters of the most populous state in the nation, California, to the U.S. Senate in 2016. If elected President of the United States, Harris will be the first woman, the first Indian American, the first Asian American, and the first African American woman to hold that post.

"The Indian American IMPACT Fund is proud to endorse Senator Kamala Harris. She is a tested leader who has demonstrated, throughout her career, a strong commitment to our community's progressive and pluralistic values," said Aruna Miller, Executive Director of IMPACT.

"This endorsement and the support of the Indian American Impact Fund and its members means so much to me," Harris said. "Together, we will fight for an America that restores the values of truth and justice and works for working people, from raising incomes to expanding health care."

In 2018, over 100 Indian Americans ran for office in 29 states; IMPACT Fund endorsed 27 of these candidates, 44% of whom won their races in November.

Trump's Iran Oil Ban: Prepared to deal with the Impact, says India

WASHINGTON / NEW DELHI (TIP): In response to queries on India's reaction to the announcement by the US to discontinue the Significant Reduction Exemption to all purchasers of crude oil from Iran, India said that they 'are adequately prepared to deal with the impact of this decision.' India was one of the eight countries affected by the Trump administration's decision to end waivers that allowed it to buy Iranian oil without facing U.S. sanctions. Iran was the third largest oil supplier for India after Iraq and Saudi Arabia. Imports account for more than 80% of India's oil needs. Washington had reimposed sanctions on Iran in November after pulling out of a 2015

nuclear deal between the Islamic Republic and six global powers. The US had granted waivers that allowed India and seven other countries to continue importing reduced quantity of Iranian oil for six months ending May 1.

The Trump administration announced April 22 that it will no longer exempt any countries from U.S. sanctions if they continue to buy Iranian oil. "President Donald J. Trump is taking action intended to bring Iran's oil exports to zero and deny the regime its principal source of revenue", said the White House.

While China, another major oil importer from Iran, lashed at the Trump administration, India said the

Government would continue to work with partner nations to find a solution.

"Government has noted the announcement by the US Government to discontinue the Significant Reduction Exemption to all purchasers of crude oil from Iran. We are adequately prepared to deal with the impact of this decision. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has already issued a statement in this regard. Government will continue to work with partner nations, including with the US, to find all possible ways to protect India's legitimate energy and economic security interests," an official spokesperson from Ministry of External Affairs said.

AKHILESH, MAYA, CONG CAN'T KEEP NATION SAFE: SHAH

GHAZIPUR (TIP): BJP president Amit Shah on April 25 claimed Opposition leaders could not look after the country's security.

Addressing a rally in Ghazipur constituency of Uttar Pradesh, he alleged BSP supremo Mayawati and her Samajwadi Party and Congress counterparts Akhilesh Yadav and Rahul Gandhi were upset with the Balakot air strikes.

"These 'mahamilavati' people talk about the country. Akhilesh, Mayawati and Congress cannot keep the country safe," he said.

Shah said the BJP could not do "ilu-ilu" with terrorists, an apparent reference to the popular short form of 'I love you'. "Though terrorists of Pakistan were killed (in the Balakot air strikes), there was an atmosphere of mourning in the offices of 'Bua' (Mayawati), 'Bhatija' (Akhilesh) and 'Rahul baba'," he said.

"I could not find out as to why they were so sad. Why were they moving about with long faces? Were those terrorists their maternal or paternal cousins?" he said.

BJP fields Sunny Deol from Gurdaspur



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Bharatiya Janata Party has fielded actor Sunny Deol from Gurdaspur seat in Punjab for the Lok Sabha elections. Releasing its 26th list, the party also declared the names of Som Prakash and Kirron Kher for the Hoshiarpur and Chandigarh seats respectively. Earlier, Deol joined the saffron party in the presence of Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal in New Delhi, saying he was impressed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The way my father (film star Dharmendra) was attached with Atalji, today I have come to join Modiji," said Deol who has worked in several blockbuster films like Ghayal, Damini and Ghatok.

Seeking second term, PM Modi files nomination from Varanasi

VARANASI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 26 submitted his application to fight the 2019 Lok Sabha election from the Varanasi parliamentary seat, the constituency he won in the 2014 general election. PM Modi will file his nomination papers from Varanasi, earlier known as Banaras, which will vote in the seventh phase of the seven-phase 2019 Lok Sabha election.

On April 25, Modi took part in a grand roadshow in Varanasi that saw the holy city turn into a sea of saffron. Frenzied crowds cheered the prime minister on as he made his way from the statue of Banaras Hindu University founder Madan Mohan Malaviya to the Dashashwamedh Ghat, where PM Modi took part in the daily aarti.

PM Modi is seeking a second term in office from Varanasi, a parliamentary seat he handsomely won in 2014, defeating Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal by a massive margin of 3.37 lakh votes.

Narendra Modi stormed to power in 2014 with his Bharatiya Janata Party winning 282 of the Lok Sabha's 543 constituencies. The BJP won an absolute majority in 2014, reducing the then-ruling Congress to a miserly 44 seats.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Varanasi to hold a major roadshow in the temple town of UP.

WORRIES

The Modi-led BJP will be looking to better its performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. However, the state of the economy may prove to be the party's undoing.

A leaked government survey suggested that unemployment is at a four-decade high in India. The opposition Congress has also been questioning the government on the 2016 shock decision to demonetise around 85 per cent of the currency notes that were in circulation then.

The Congress has alleged the Narendra Modi government has run the country's economy into the ground. According to the Congress, the government's demonetisation exercise and the rollout of the Goods and Services Tax have greatly harmed the Indian economy.

'LIVES EASIER'

The Narendra Modi government has responded by saying that citizens' lives have become easier in the last five years, thanks to

a number of the government's schemes.

These range from projects offering housing and power to all to setting up a mechanism to deal with companies (or individuals) defaulting on bank loans.

The government also prides itself on a relative 'tougher' stance with respect to Pakistan. The 2016 cross-LoC surgical strikes and the 2019 cross-border airstrike, both of which targeted terror camps in Pakistan-controlled territory, have been offered as proof of the Narendra Modi government's determination to take on Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

WILL MODI COME BACK TO POWER?

The answer will be out on May 23, when counting begins for the seven-phase Lok Sabha election. India Today's Mood of the Nation poll, conducted in January this year, predicted a hung parliament if elections were held then.

The Narendra Modi and Amit Shah-led Bharatiya Janata Party is confident of victory in the Lok Sabha election. For India's grand old party, the Congress, it's a battle for

survival.

The Congress was reduced to a historic low in the 2014 election. Rahul Gandhi, who comes from a family of three Indian prime ministers, is now at the helm of the party and is hoping to revive the party's fortunes.

Regional parties are expected to play a disruptive role in this election.

Parties such as the Samajwadi Party and Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu, Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in Telangana, Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka, and the Left may end up playing kingmakers in deciding who forms the next government in Delhi. Some of them have already allied with either the BJP or the Congress.

For PM Narendra Modi, who stormed to office on a promise of disruptive change, May 23 will be the day he knows if the five years of his rule have indeed turned the country around. The clock is ticking.

Source: India Today

Rahul Gandhi will be responsible if BJP comes back to power: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI (TIP): "If the BJP comes back to power, only one person would be responsible for it and that would be Rahul Gandhi," Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal said on Thursday, attacking the Congress president for the failure of the two parties to forge an alliance in Delhi.

The Delhi chief minister also hit out at the BJP, accusing the ruling party of fulfilling Pakistan's agenda of "dividing the country".

Talking to reporters at the launch of AAP's Delhi manifesto, Kejriwal said the AAP would not have "dreamt" of forming an alliance with the Congress but had agreed to do so "only to save the country".

"I want to ask Rahul Gandhi which alliance is formed on Twitter. If they were serious about forming an alliance, they should have come to the table for negotiations. Giving statements in public is not going to solve the problem," he said.

On Gandhi's comment that he would try till

the last moment to form an alliance with the AAP in Delhi, Kejriwal said, "This is posturing. They don't have an intention."

The Congress, in response, said Kejriwal was himself confused. "The Congress' top leadership had extended a hand for alliance towards him, but he did not reciprocate. Then, he says the Congress is responsible if Modiji wins. In Delhi, now he is mixing politics and religion," said Ragini Nayak, Congress spokesperson.

"I remember the big dreams that he had shown -- morality in politics, transparency in politics, inclusive politics and today, he is doing what the BJP does, that if you are Hindu, vote for them, or if you are Muslim, vote for them. I feel this is not good for the democracy," Nayak said.

Speaking on the seat-sharing arrangement proposed by the Congress, Kejriwal said giving three seats to the Congress would mean losing on all those seats. Kejriwal went on to



say that the Congress was not getting a single Hindu vote, while the Muslims were a little confused as well.

"The AAP will support any secular mahagathbandhan after the general elections. This election is the fight to save the nation, democracy and the Constitution of the country," he said.

Congress leader PC Chako said his party

will have a direct fight with the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections in Delhi and asserted that the possibility of a triangular contest is "slowly disappearing" in the national capital.

Kejriwal also attacked BJP president Amit Shah for an alleged tweet that the BJP will remove every single infiltrator from this country except Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs, Kejriwal said it meant that the BJP's plan was to remove all religions except these three from the country.

"Even Pakistan wanted to divide India. The BJP is fulfilling Pakistan's agenda of dividing India...of weakening it," Kejriwal added.

The AAP has already announced its candidates for the seven seats in Delhi — Pankaj Gupta from Chandni Chowk, Atishi from East Delhi, Gugan Singh from North West Delhi, Raghav Chadha from South Delhi, Dilip Pandey from North East Delhi, Balbir Singh Jakhar from West Delhi and Brajesh Goel from New Delhi.

Source: HT

SC sets up panel to look into allegations of conspiracy framing Chief Justice of India

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court on April 25 constituted a one-man panel of former apex court judge Justice A K Patnaik to hold inquiry into the allegations of larger conspiracy to frame Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and fixing of benches in the top court.

The apex court asked the Directors of CBI and IB as also the Delhi Police Commissioner to cooperate with Justice (Retd) Patnaik as and when sought by him during the inquiry. The top court said however that the inquiry by will not deal with the allegations of sexual harassment against the CJI. It said the outcome of the inquiry will not affect the in-house committee which is dealing with the complaint against the CJI.

The apex court said that on the completion of inquiry, Justice (Retd) Patnaik will file a report in a sealed cover before the court after which the matter will be heard again. It left it to the panel to take assistance of the people required for the inquiry.

In the order, a special bench headed by



Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi

Justice Arun Mishra said: "Considering the factual gamut and the affidavits filed by advocate Utsav Singh Bains, we are appointing Justice A K Patnaik, retired judge of this court, to hold inquiry into the allegations levelled in the affidavit filed by Bains." The bench, also comprising Justices R F Nariman and Deepak Gupta, clarified that he "would not deal with the allegations of mis-behaviour by

the CJI". It also said that the "outcome of the inquiry and its findings" would not affect the in-house inquiry which has been ordered.

The bench further said: "Directors of CBI and IB and Delhi Police Commissioner would render cooperation to Justice (Retd) Patnaik as and when required during his inquiry." The bench ordered that the affidavit filed by advocate Bains be transferred to Justice (Retd) Patnaik in a sealed cover.

While dictating the order, the bench at the outset said, "We have decided that no privilege can be claimed on certain communications the advocate is claiming and he has to disclose the information as and when required." The Supreme Court earlier on Thursday expressed anguish over the "systematic attack" on the judiciary and said time has come to tell the rich and powerful of this country that they are "playing with fire". The apex court made this observation while hearing claims made by an advocate that there was a larger conspiracy to frame the CJI on allegations of sexual harassment.

India delaying talks to finalise agreement on Kartarpur: Pakistan



ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan on Thursday accused India of delaying the delegation-level talks to finalise the agreement to operationalise the Kartarpur corridor.

On April 16, India and Pakistan held a meeting on technical aspects of the corridor. Experts discussed timing for completion of a bridge, alignment of roads and engineering aspects of the crossing points. The Foreign Office said work was proceeding rapidly on the Pakistani side.

"In view of paucity of time, we are keen to hold the meeting at the earliest to finalise the draft pact. The meeting is specifically to discuss differences," it said.

Source: PTI

Mumbai serial blasts convict Turk dies

NAGPUR (TIP): Abdul Gani Turk, who was among those convicted of their role in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, died at the government hospital here on Thursday.

Nagpur Central Jail superintendent, Rani Bhonsale, said Turk's situation suddenly deteriorated and he was immediately rushed to the hospital. "A post mortem will be conducted at the hospital tomorrow," she said. "We have informed the family members of Turk about his death at the hospital."

Turk was brought to Nagpur central jail in 2012. Turk was convicted for planting the bomb at Mumbai's Century Bazaar, one of the 12 sites devastated by serial blasts on March 12, 1993. A special TADA court had convicted him for driving a van loaded with RDX from the house of the primary accused, Ibrahim Mushtaq 'Tiger' Memon, in Mahim, to Century Bazaar in Worli.

Nirav Modi's hot wheels fetch Rs 3.29cr

MUMBAI (TIP): Of the 13 cars belonging to Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi, all but one found takers at the auction held in Mumbai on Thursday. The sale fetched the Enforcement Directorate, entrusted with selling the cars to recover part of the Rs 14,000 crore owed by the diamantaire and his uncle to Punjab National Bank, Rs 3.29 crore. A profit over the total reserve price of Rs 3.01 crore.

The online auction was conducted by state-run Metal Scrap Trade Corporation (MSTC), and comes a month after 68 artworks belonging to a shell company owned by Modi went under the hammer. Of the 13, two cars — a BMW and a Toyota Innova — belonged to Choksi. One car, a Skoda Superb, belonged to Nirav's brother, Neeshal.

The most expensive car on the list — a pewter Rolls Royce Ghost that, rumour has it, ferried his three lap dogs — fetched Rs 1,33,10,000. That's Rs 10,000 more than the base price of Rs 1.33 crore. Registered under Firestone International Pvt Ltd, the luxury car originally cost Rs 5 crore.

Military Court Gives Centre 3 Weeks To Decide Plea Against New Navy Chief

NEW DELHI (TIP): A military tribunal on Thursday gave three weeks to the Defence Ministry to decide on a petition by Vice-Admiral Bimal Verma, challenging the appointment of Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Navy Chief overlooking his seniority.

Vice Admiral Verma, the senior-most naval commander, on Tuesday once again moved the Armed Forces Tribunal in Delhi challenging appointment of Vice Admiral Singh to the top post after the defence ministry did not respond to his statutory complaint.

Verma, commander-in-chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command, approached the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) on April 8, but withdrew his petition the next day after the tribunal asked him to first explore "internal remedies".

"The AFT has directed the government to dispose of Vice Admiral Verma's petition by May 15 and fixed May 20 as the next date of hearing in the case," Mr Verma's lawyer Ankur Chhibber said.

He said though the government sought four weeks' time, the AFT granted only three weeks to it.

Vice Admiral Verma filed a statutory complaint with the Defence Ministry on April 10, challenging appointment of Vice Admiral Singh as the next navy chief, and asked it to respond within 10 days. However, as there was no response from the ministry, he again approached the AFT on Tuesday.

Verma, the senior most naval commander, is contesting appointment of his junior Vice Admiral Singh to the top post.

In a first, army starts process to induct women as military police

NEW DELHI (TIP): In a historic first, the Army on Thursday began the process to induct women in the military police, nearly two years after Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat said women will be recruited as jawans.

The Army started the online registration for recruitment in the Corps of military and the last date for filing application has been fixed as June 8.

At present, women are allowed in select areas such as medical, legal, educational, signals and engineering wings of the Army.

The role of the military police includes policing cantonments and army establishments,



preventing breach of rules and regulations by soldiers, maintaining movement of soldiers as well as logistics during peace and war and extending aid to civil police whenever required.

India, China begin to prepare for 2nd informal summit

NEW DELHI (TIP): With nearly a month to go for the results of the general election, India and China have quietly begun preparing for the second informal summit between their top leadership that is expected to build on the gains of the first such meeting in Wuhan and bridge differences on key issues.

New Delhi initially suggested dates in November for the meeting, set to be held in India, but later agreed on dates in October after Beijing said the timing of the summit should be advanced so that the momentum created by the Wuhan meeting isn't dissipated, people familiar with the developments on both sides said.

A full plate of issues, including contentious matters such as the disputed border, especially in Arunachal Pradesh; India's opposition to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); and China's position on Pakistan-based terrorists, will be on the agenda for the summit, which an Indian official said would be "qualitatively different" from the Wuhan meeting between

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping in April 2018.

"The Wuhan summit was held against the backdrop of the military standoff at Doklam and was aimed at a reset in ties. There was strategic guidance from the leaders that things were better at the top and this message was sent down and resulted in better understanding in all arms of the government," said the Indian official, who didn't want to be identified.

"It restored some of the trust that had been lost and there has been better management of each other's sensitivities. In the second summit, we expect to move beyond the ghost of Doklam and truly build on the Wuhan spirit," the official added, noting how both sides were making a conscious effort not to play up differences, including issues such as India's decision to skip China's second Belt and Road Forum and Beijing's hold on efforts to designate Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar at the UN's 1267 Sanctions Committee.

Source: HT

GUEST COMMENT

*Comedian's triumph: On Ukraine's new President***Ukraine's new President must quickly take on the geopolitical and governance challenges**

What is extraordinary about Sunday's Ukrainian presidential runoff is that it turned out to be so predictable. The comedian Volodymyr Zelensky, a rank political outsider until he announced his candidacy over New Year's Eve, recorded the expected landslide victory. He had consistently led in the opinion polls, way ahead of incumbent President Petro Poroshenko and a former Prime Minister. The political neophyte's prospects were enhanced by

a sequence of events. In February, Ukraine's top court struck down an anti-corruption law in a setback for several prosecutions and jeopardizing aid flows to Kiev. Soon, Mr. Poroshenko was forced to ease out an ally in an arms trade scandal. The developments dented the government's image ahead of the elections in a country where the drive against graft has been a live issue for years. And a landslide became a probability with every passing day after Mr. Zelensky beat Mr. Poroshenko by a hefty margin in the first round of polling on March 31. Since Russia's seizure of Ukrainian naval vessels in November, Mr.

Poroshenko had pitched his campaign merely on the need to bolster national unity against the threat from Moscow and assert Ukraine's unique national identity. But the final battle turned brutal and bitter, even if the rival candidates' campaigns were woefully short on substance. Mr. Poroshenko, an ex-oligarch in confectionaries, attacked his opponent as a puppet of another oligarch. The reference was to Igor Kolomoisky, whose TV channel ran Mr. Zelensky's popular show, and has business interests spanning finance and media. The commercial bank he owned was nationalized by the outgoing dispensation as part of an economic clean-up, and Mr. Kolomoisky may have sensed an opportunity in the election to settle scores.

For his part, Mr. Zelensky used a final pre-election debate in Kiev to argue that his candidacy was a judgment on the incumbent, and that his bid was the

result of Mr. Poroshenko's mistakes. As President, Mr. Zelensky enters uncharted territory. The first challenge before him is the parliamentary election later this year, in which he will have to work with established institutions and parties he had railed against during the campaign. There is also the continuing conflict with Russia in the rebel-held territories in eastern Ukraine, where his political inexperience might be a serious handicap. Finally, Mr. Zelensky will be expected to deliver results in the country's crusade against corruption. Progress in each of these areas will be crucial determinants in Ukraine's bid for European Union membership. The television star will soon discover that while theatre might be a good launchpad for the start of a political career, it is no preparatory ground for the real tasks of governance.

(The Hindu, India)

AS I SEE IT



By Ven Parameswaran

CREDIBILITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY AT STAKE**MUELLER COULD NOT FIND COLLUSION. HOW WILL NADLER'S JUDICIARY COMMITTEE FIND IT?**

The Democrats have been left in a dilemma after the release of the Mueller Report. For, consider what Robert Mueller concluded after two years of investigation.

Candidate Donald Trump did not conspire or collude with the Russians to hack the emails of the DNC or John Podesta, Chairman of Hillary Clinton's campaign. Trump did not distribute the fruits of those crimes. Nor did anyone in his campaign. No collusion, no conspiracy, said Mueller, Trump is innocent.

Mueller did not say Trump did not consider interfering with his investigation. But we know the investigation went on unimpeded. Mueller's document demands were all met. And Mueller did not conclude that Trump obstructed justice.

On obstruction, then, not guilty by reason of no indictment.

We are told Trump ranted to subordinates about firing Mueller.

Yet, as Attorney General Bill Barr pointed out, Trump had excellent reasons to be enraged. He was being pilloried for 2-1/2 years for a crime he not only did not commit but a crime that had never taken place.

From the fall of 2016 to the spring of 2019, Trump was subjected to scurrilous attacks. It was alleged that his victory had been stolen for him by Russians, that he was an illegitimate president guilty of treason, and an agent of the Kremlin, that he was being blackmailed and that he rewrote the Republican platform on

Vladimir Putin's instructions. All but hockey, and Mueller all but said so. Yet the false charges did serious damage to his presidency and the nation. Answering them has consumed much of Trump's tenure and ruined his plans to repair our dangerously damaged relations with the world's other great nuclear power.

Yet, it is the Trump haters who are now in something of a box. Their goal had been to use "Russiagate" to bring down their detested antagonist, overturn his 2016 election, and put Trump in the history books as a stooge of Putin who, had the truth be known, would never have won the White House.

Mueller failed to sustain their indictment. Indeed, Mueller all but threw it out. Yet Trump's enemies will not quit now. To do so would be to concede that Trump defenders had been right all along, and they had not only done a grave injustice to Trump but damaged their country with their manic pursuit. AND THEY OWE AMERICA AN APOLOGY. And admitting they were wrong would instantly raise follow-up questions.

If two years of investigation by Mueller, his lawyers and his FBI agents could not unearth hard evidence to prove that Trump and his campaign with the Russians, what was the original evidence that justified launching this historic and massive assault on a U.S. presidential campaign and the presidency of the United States? If there was no collusion, when did Mueller learn this? Did it take 2-

1/2 years to discover there was no conspiracy?

The names tossed out as justifying the original investigation are George Papadopoulos and Carter Page, with the latter subjected to four consecutive secret FISA court surveillance warrants. Yet neither man was ever charged with conspiring with Russia. Was "Russiagate" a nothing burger to begin with, a concocted excuse for "deep state" agencies to rampage through the campaign and personal history of Trump to destroy him and his presidency?

Senator Elizabeth Warren, a presidential candidate, has called for impeachment hearings in the House Judiciary Committee. But her call seems less tied to evidence of high crimes in the Mueller report than her own anemic poll ratings and fundraising performance in the first quarter.

It is difficult to see how those Democrats and their media allies, who have invested so much prestige and so many hopes in the Mueller report, can now pack it in and concede that they were wrong. Their interests will not permit it; their reputations could not sustain it.

SO WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

The anti-Trump media and second-tier candidates for the Democratic nomination will press the front-runners to join their call for impeachment. Some will capitulate to the clamor.

But can Joe Biden, Bernie Sanders, Beto



O'Rourke, Pete Buttigieg or Kamala Harris, who have agendas they wish to advance, accept becoming just another voice crying out for Trump's impeachment?

THE CREDIBILITY OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS NOW AT ISSUE

If Mueller could not find collusion, what reason is there to believe Rep. Jerry Nadler's judiciary committee will find it, and then convince the country that they have discovered what ex-FBI Director Mueller could not. With conspiracy and collusion off the table, and Mueller saying the case for obstruction is unproven, the renewed attack on Trump takes on the aspect of a naked and desperate "deep state" -media coup against a president they fear they cannot defeat at the ballot box.

(Ven Parameswaran is Chairman, Asian American Republican Committee, founded in 1988; lives in Scarsdale, NY. Email: vpwaren@gmail.com)

THE INDIAN PANORAMA

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Published by Prof. Indrajit Saluja

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From Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to President-Elect Volodymyr Zelensky

From Lion of Ukraine to Ukrainian Roar, with America's full backing



By Ravi Batra
Legal & Humanitarian Advisor to
Ukrainian Mission to United Nations

Charles Dickens, in a Tale of Two Cities, started with:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

On December 15, 2013, in Independence Square, Kiev, then-Senator John McCain addressed everyday hardworking Ukrainians and said, "The world is with you. America is with you. And I am with you." And with those three short sentences the die was cast: Ukraine, which was faltering, could either slip back into Russian Orbit, or embrace a full measure of destiny by being free and her own master.



Pres. Poroshenko, FM Klimkin and Amb. Yelchenko

Five years ago, end of February 2014, Russian "Green Men" invaded Crimea. Russia loudly and repeatedly denied the invasion, until they had captured Crimea - and then, it was theirs, and they said so. Ukrainians overthrew President Viktor Yanukovich, as he was perceived a Russian puppet, and elected Petro Poroshenko to stand up to the powerful president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. And stand up, and stand tall President Poroshenko did. He became - what I called him - the Lion of Ukraine.

With his nation at war, and economy squeezed by Russia and her friends, he tried to reform the economy, move the nation towards European Union, NATO and America. But domestically, despite Russian Meddling, his number one priority was to have a strong military and to keep his soldiers well supplied, fed and strong. Few nations-at-war end up with a better economy. As it is well established, the choice is always: "Guns or Butter." He provided more guns to his soldiers. Like Winston Churchill, Petro Poroshenko, who succeeded in limiting Russia at war, was not wanted anymore by those seeking a better economy. By October 2018, Poroshenko was polling in single digits. Then Russia attacked three Ukrainian navy boats in the Ukrainian Waters on November 25, 2018 and captured 24 Sailors.

This forced Poroshenko to fight harder and redouble his efforts, and not walk away and let someone else deal with the headaches from allies and enemies. He came to United Nations on February 20, 2019 to speak in the General Assembly, and meet with Secretary General to



President Poroshenko & Ravi Batra at the United Nations on February 20, 2019

get help in securing the freedom of 24 innocent sailors Russia had wrongfully captured to make them pawns. I met him, and got a bear hug from him; and I hugged him - and by so doing, hugged every Ukrainian yearning for freedom and a better life at-peace with their own American Dream.

In the recent presidential elections, Ukrainians honored Poroshenko by having him come second in the first round, and then in the second and final round with a roar, of almost 75% , voted to elect a comedian-actor Volodymyr Zelensky lead them with a simple-person's honesty and hatred for corrupt government. In so doing, Ukrainians elected their version of a Ronald Reagan, a "B" actor, who will honor Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg recipe: a government "for" the people. An honest fiduciary who will help them get what they deserve from all their hard work and suffering.

With all eyes on Putin, the untrampled Czar of Russia, he didn't send the president-elect Zelensky any flowers, as the German Ambassador Heusgen, as President of the UNSC, complained during the Security Council Meeting on April 25th, but issued a Presidential Decree to award Russian Passports to Ukraine's Citizens - thereby weaponizing passports to steal citizens and pierce sovereignty. Amb. Volodymyr Yelchenko, unlike his predecessor Yuriy Sergeyev who was shocked at the Russian betrayal in 2014, strongly

bemoaned Russia's "creeping aggression." While French Amb. Delattre reminded Amb. Nebenzia, who is always supported by Amb. Dmitry Polyansky, the meaning of international law and norms, and the need for Russia to honor them, it was United States Amb. Jonathan Cohen - who strongly and clearly woke up the Chamber, as it is perpetually tired by one crisis after another, to take note of passports becoming a tool of war and sovereignty-piercing.

Volodymyr Zelensky is a Jew, and so is Ukraine's Prime Minister. I mention this, because just like in the United States, Nazis flourished everywhere, including, in Ukraine in the last Century. Ukraine is now cleansed. And this young man, untested in geopolitics, but who tested his comedic routine daily before a live audience, knows what his people want, and how they want it. He has a leg up on being an Abraham Lincoln. Professionally, he is closer to a Ronald Reagan - who famously told Gorbachev - "trust, but verify." All of us must him - and the young Republic that he will soon lead - our best wishes and undivided support, even as John McCain's words ring in my ear: America is with you!



Pres. Poroshenko seeking world's help to get a UNSC P5-Nation to stop being an outlaw

I have no doubt that Donald J. Trump will fully support Ukraine, even as it may be to President Putin's surprise, as he is now POTUS; and Dickens is watching.

(The author is a senior attorney. He is Legal & Humanitarian Advisor to Ukrainian Mission to United Nations. He can be reached at ravibatralaw@aol.com)



United Nations Secretary General & Pres. Poroshenko

KIM, PUTIN VOW TO SEEK CLOSER TIES AT FIRST TALKS

VLADIVOSTOK (TIP): Russia's Vladimir Putin and North Korea's Kim Jong Un met for their first-ever summit on April 25, vowing to seek closer ties as they look to counter US influence.

Putin emerged from the talks saying that like the United States, Russia supports efforts to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula and prevent nuclear conflicts.

But he insisted that Pyongyang needs guarantees of its security and sovereignty, and took a veiled swipe at Washington for trying to strong-arm North Korea. "We need to... return to a state where international law, not the law of the strongest, determines the situation in the world," Putin said.

The summit in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok came with Kim locked in a nuclear stand-off with Washington and Putin keen to put Moscow forward as a player in another global flashpoint.

The two leaders shook hands and shared smiles before heading into one-on-one talks that lasted nearly two hours, longer than expected, at a university campus on an island off the Pacific coast city. Both men said they were looking to strengthen ties that date back to the Soviet Union's support for the founder of North Korea Kim Il Sung. — AFP

PRINCE WILLIAM MEETS NZ MOSQUE ATTACK RESPONDERS

WELLINGTON (TIP): Britain's Prince William on April 25 met with some of the police officers and medics who were the first to respond to last month's mosque attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand.

The Duke of Cambridge arrived in Christchurch in the afternoon after earlier attending an Anzac Day service in Auckland alongside Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. At the service, the prince laid a wreath of red and white flowers on behalf of his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II. William is on a two-day trip to New Zealand and plans to meet later with survivors of the mosque attacks in which 50 persons were killed and 50 others wounded.

New Zealand Police Commissioner Mike Bush told reporters after the meeting with first responders that the prince had been very supportive and had wanted to make sure the officers and medics were looking after themselves.

Bush said the prince told staff that "A good friend doesn't pick up the phone when people are in need. You travel to their place and you put your arms around them." — AP

China seeks to allay Belt and Road debt concerns

BEIJING (TIP): China aims to make the Belt and Road initiative sustainable and prevent debt risks, its finance minister said on April 25, seeking to allay criticism that the infrastructure plan to boost trade and investment creates a heavy burden for some nations.

The policy championed by Chinese President Xi Jinping has become mired in controversy, with some partner nations bemoaning the high cost of projects, though China has repeatedly said it is not seeking to trap anyone with debt.

Western governments have tended to view it as a means to spread Chinese influence abroad, saddling poor countries with unsustainable debt.

Finance minister Liu Kun, speaking at a forum to kick off a three-day Belt and Road summit in Beijing, said China will establish an analysis framework on debt sustainability for Belt and Road projects to "prevent and resolve debt risks".

Chinese financial institutions, countries involved in Belt and Road and international agencies are encouraged to use this framework to enhance debt management, Liu said.

While most of the Belt and Road projects are continuing as planned, some have been caught up by changes in government in countries such as Malaysia and the Maldives.

Those that have been shelved for financial reasons include a power plant in Pakistan and an airport in Sierra Leone, and Beijing has in recent months had to rebuff critics by saying that not



one country has been burdened with so-called "debt traps".

Yi Gang, China's central bank governor, said at the same event that local currencies will be used for investments related to the Belt and Road plan to curb exchange rate risks.

China will follow market principles and rely on commercial funds for Belt and Road financing, Yi said, adding that China will improve transparency for those projects.

"We should strengthen debt and risk management. We should objectively and fully understand debt problems of developing countries," he added.

"Investment decisions should...effectively control risks and fully consider a country's overall debt

capacity and ensure debt is sustainable."

In a nod to debt concerns, a draft communique seen by Reuters said that 37 world leaders attending the summit will agree to project financing that respects global debt goals and promotes green growth.

Visiting leaders will be headlined by Russia's Vladimir Putin, as well as Prime Minister Imran Khan of Pakistan, a close China ally and among the biggest recipients of Belt and Road investment, and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte of Italy, which recently became the first G7 country to sign on to the initiative.

The United States, which has not joined the Belt and Road, is expected to send only a lower-level delegation, and nobody from Washington. Reuters

Britain 'approves' Huawei role in 5G

LONDON (TIP): British Prime Minister Theresa May has reportedly approved a limited role for China's Huawei to help build a 5G network in the UK, shrugging off security warnings from senior ministers and Washington surrounding the telecoms giant, media said on April 24. Britain's National Security Council, which is chaired by May, agreed on Tuesday to allow the Chinese technology giant limited access to build "non-core" infrastructure, such as antennas, The Daily Telegraph newspaper wrote. The Financial Times, citing those close to the meeting, added that the Chinese company had been banned from more sensitive "core" parts of the project.

May's move comes despite concerns raised by Home Secretary Sajid Javid, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, International Trade Secretary Liam Fox and International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt.

May's office declined to comment on the story. However, Digital Minister Margot James dismissed the media speculation.

"In spite of cabinet leaks to the contrary, final decision is yet to be made on managing threats to telecoms infrastructure," she tweeted.

She later told Sky News that while a final decision had not been made, a security review had concluded. "The decision has

HUAWEI FACES PUSHBACK

Britain's National Security Council, which is chaired by May, agreed on Tuesday to allow the Chinese technology giant Huawei limited access to build "non-core" infrastructure, such as antennas. Her move comes despite concerns raised by Home Secretary Sajid Javid, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, International Trade Secretary Liam Fox and International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt.

Huawei, the leading manufacturer of equipment for next-generation 5G mobile networks, faces pushback in some Western markets over fears that Beijing could spy on communications and gain access to critical infrastructure.

not been finally made yet and the Prime Minister will take advice from all of the relevant agencies and departments," James added.

Huawei itself welcomed the report. "Huawei welcomes reports that the UK government is moving towards allowing Huawei to help build the UK's 5G network," it said. Britain's move would be at odds with the United States, which has banned Huawei's 5G technology from its territory and urged allies in the so-called Five Eyes intelligence sharing collective, comprising Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand, to follow suit. AFP

11 DIE AS ELEVATOR CABLE SNAPS AT WORK SITE IN NORTH CHINA

BEIJING (TIP): Eleven workers were killed and two seriously injured April 25 when an elevator at a construction site in northern China fell due to snapped cable, state media reported.

The Voice of China radio said the accident, the latest in a series of deadly industrial incidents, occurred around 8 a.m. in the Hebei province city of Hengshui. It didn't say how far the elevator fell.

Recent months have been particularly deadly for Chinese workers, underscoring shoddy enforcement of safety regulations and a desire by management to cut corners as the economy slows.

In March, 78 people were killed in a blast at a chemical plant in the eastern city of Yancheng that had numerous safety violations, making it one of China's worst industrial accidents in recent years.

Earlier, in November, at least 22 people were killed in an explosion outside a chemical plant in the northeastern city of Zhangjiakou, which will host competitions in the 2022 Winter Olympics. AP

Japan court grants \$4.5m bail to Carlos Ghosn

TOKYO (TIP): A Japanese court granted Carlos Ghosn bail on April 25, meaning the former Nissan boss could soon walk out of his Tokyo detention centre to prepare his defence against multiple charges of financial misconduct.

The Tokyo District Court set bail at 500 million yen (\$4.5 million) as the 65-year-old auto sector legend faces four charges ranging from concealing part of his salary from shareholders to syphoning off Nissan funds for his personal use.

Prosecutors are likely to appeal the court's decision, delaying his immediate release but public broadcaster NHK said he could walk out of his detention centre "as early as Thursday".

Ghosn denies all the charges, with a spokesperson for the executive saying on Monday he would "vigorously defend himself against these baseless accusations and fully expects to be vindicated".

The spokesperson said Ghosn was being detained "under cruel and unjust conditions, in violation of his human rights, in an effort by prosecutors to coerce a confession from him".

On Monday, he was hit with what experts have described as the most serious charges yet as prosecutors accused him of syphoning off \$5 million of Nissan cash transferred from the company to a dealership in Oman.

He also faces two charges of deferring some \$80 million of his salary and hiding



this in official documents to shareholders and seeking to shift personal investment losses to the firm during the 2008 financial crisis.

Ghosn has already been granted bail once, posting \$9 million and vowing not to leave Japan and to live in a small court-appointed apartment in central Tokyo--a far cry from his former luxury suite.

Last time he left the detention centre in northern Tokyo, he was dressed in a cap, face mask and workman's uniform in an apparent attempt to evade dozens of journalists from around the world hoping to snap a picture of the fallen tycoon.

The bizarre stunt was cooked up by one of his lawyers, Takashi Takano, who later apologised for "tainting" the reputation of his client who usually appears in public in sharp suits.

Ghosn was preparing to hold a much-

anticipated news conference to "tell the truth" about his case but he was re-arrested shortly beforehand to face questioning about the alleged \$5 million embezzlement.

Clearly aware he was about to return to custody, Ghosn pre-recorded a video in which he attacked "backstabbing" Nissan executives of a "plot" against him, as they feared closer ties with French partner Renault.

Japanese media reported on Tuesday that the French firm had offered a "management integration proposal" to Nissan, which was

poised to reject it as they believed it did not provide equality to the Japanese company.

Unless re-arrested over further allegations, Ghosn will be free to organise his defence ahead of a possible trial that is likely to take months to prepare.

Ghosn's lead lawyer Junichiro Hironaka has told reporters that a trial as early as the autumn was "not possible for various reasons".

His lawyers have demanded he be tried separately from Nissan, which also faces charges for submitting the suspect financial documents, and have voiced fears he will not receive a fair trial.

The dramatic case has thrown the international spotlight on the Japanese justice system, derided by critics as "hostage justice" as it allows prolonged detention and relies heavily on suspects' confessions. AFP

WILL HE? WON'T HE? N KOREA'S KIM LATE FOR VLADIVOSTOK CEREMONY

VLADIVOSTOK (TIP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un kept an honour guard and officials waiting for two hours on April 26 but eventually showed up for a wreath-laying ceremony in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok.

Visiting the city a day after his first summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Kim had been scheduled to take part in the ceremony at 10 am but at first was a no-show.

As soldiers and a military band waited in the rain, word came that the event--at a World War II memorial to Russia's Pacific Fleet--had been cancelled and the red carpet was rolled up.

Around noon the honour guard returned and a few minutes later Kim pulled up in his black limousine.

The band played solemn music and ceremonial guards placed a large wreath on a stand next to an eternal flame.

In a black hat and double-breasted overcoat, Kim went up to the wreath briefly, then stepped back and stood with his hat in his hand, looking sombre.

Behind him stood local officials holding carnations, including regional governor Oleg Kozhemyako.

A ceremonial guard marched past, Kim spoke briefly with a Russian military official, then got back into his limousine and drove off with a motorcade.

Kim arrived on Wednesday in the Pacific coast port on his armoured train, then met with Putin for five hours on Thursday for a summit that saw the two leaders vow to pursue closer ties.

Putin left the same day for China and Kim stayed on for a series of cultural events.

Russian media had reported that he was due to visit Vladivostok's aquarium and see a ballet, but on Friday said his programme had been significantly reduced and that Kim would be departing earlier than planned. AFP

FACEBOOK SUES NEW ZEALAND COMPANY TO THWART FAKE LIKES

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): Facebook on April 25 filed a lawsuit in a US federal court to bar a New Zealand company from selling fake "likes", views and followers to Instagram users. The company and three people targeted in the lawsuit operated a service to raise the profile of Instagram accounts by bolstering them with bogus followers, views and "likes", Facebook director of platform enforcement and litigation Jessica Romero said in a blog post. "By filing the lawsuit, we are sending a message that this kind of fraudulent activity is not tolerated on our services, and we will act to protect the integrity of our platform," Romero said. AFP

25 PEOPLE KILLED IN BOLIVIA ROAD ACCIDENT

LA PAZ (TIP): At least 25 people were killed and 23 others injured when a bus ran off the road and plunged 350 metres to the bottom of a ravine near the Bolivian capital, a senior police officer told Efe news.

The officer said the accident occurred on April 23 near the town of Yolosita, some 90 km from La Paz in a mountainous zone, reports Efe news.

Initial indications are that it was the "driver's error" that caused the accident, while he was reportedly trying to overtake a truck "and hit the other vehicle" in the process, he said.

According to the officer, who went to the accident site, the bus "was completely destroyed, with the bodies scattered due to the impact and plunging down (into the ravine)".

The vehicle was transporting 48 passengers from La Paz to the town of Rurrenabaque, in Bolivia's northeastern Amazon region.

Bolivian President Evo Morales said in a tweet: "Our condolences to the families of the dead. To the brother drivers, we ask you to always exercise great caution; protecting life is above everything." IANS

Peru probes murders at world's highest gold mine



LIMA (TIP): Police in the world's highest town are investigating the mysterious killing of seven men whose bodies were found with gunshot wounds inside a Peruvian gold mine.

The prosecutors; office said in a statement on Wednesday that they were "directing the first steps in the investigation to clarify the alleged murder of seven miners" at La Rinconada gold mine.

Seven bodies with gunshot wounds to the head were discovered on Monday by security guards inside a tunnel, located more than 5,000 metres (16,000 feet) above sea level. The mine's manager

Policarpio Calla said none of the dead men were employed at the mine, where work had been suspended for the Easter holidays. Calla said the seven men could have entered the tunnel during the four-day holiday period to steal gold and clashed with another group.

La Rinconada is the world's highest permanent settlement, perched atop Mount Ananea in the Peruvian Andes close to the Bolivian border.

The population snowballed to around 50,000 during the 2000s when a spike in the price of gold drew tens of thousands of prospectors to brave the often sub-zero conditions. AFP



PRIYANKA CHOPRA WINS PEOPLE'S BEAUTY OF THE YEAR

Priyanka Chopra, who has been named the Beauty of the Year by People Magazine, has said that she has realised 'looks aren't everything'. She told People in their upcoming Beautiful Issue, "In the world we live in, the standard of beauty is not really real, and that's something that we have done to ourselves."

She added, "I think I realized what all it takes to actually look the way we do on magazine covers and the work we do. That's when I realized looks aren't everything, it's the confidence with which you walk into a room, it's the ability to do your job to the best of your capabilities."

Priyanka has appeared on dozens of magazine covers over the years, the most recent being for Vogue's Netherlands edition. Priyanka appeared in her bridal gown for the magazine, and wrote in an Instagram post, "My fairytale. Thank you @nlvogue for making me your first cover girl of the Love & Wedding issue."

PARINEETI CHOPRA TO STAR IN OFFICIAL HINDI REMAKE OF 'THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN'

Parineeti Chopra has been roped in for the official Hindi remake of Hollywood thriller "The Girl On The Train", the makers announced Wednesday.

The actor will play an alcoholic divorcee, who becomes involved in a missing person's investigation. The role was originally played by Emily Blunt, who received critical acclaim for her performance in the 2016 film.

Parineeti said the viewers will see her in a different avatar with this film.

"I want to do roles that audiences haven't seen me in before and ones that require a lot of prep and homework, which is why 'The Girl On The Train' really worked for me. The character is an alcoholic and a victim of abuse, and I haven't explored anything like her on screen before," she said in a statement.

The yet-to-be-titled film, based on Paula Hawkins' 2015 bestseller, will be directed by Ribhu Dasgupta.

The director said he is looking forward to working with Parineeti.

"The character is edgy, dark, and gritty along with being extremely emotional. So it is great to team up with someone like Parineeti, who is an extremely sincere actor and a powerful performer," Dasgupta said.

The movie is produced by Reliance Entertainment.

"The Girl On The Train' is one of the best psychological thrillers and also a heartwarming story of the female protagonist and her discovery of life. We have procured the rights of the book and the film, and will be adapting it from an Indian story telling perspective. Amblin will be a partner in this film," Shibasish Sarkar, Group CEO Reliance Entertainment, added.

The Hollywood film was backed by Steven Spielberg's DreamWorks Pictures. Spielberg is Amblin Entertainment co-founder.

Set in the UK, the film is expected to go on floors around July. The makers are eyeing a 2020 release.



SARA ALI KHAN TO STAR OPPOSITE VARUN DHAWAN IN COOLIE NO 1 REMAKE

Bollywood actor Sara Ali Khan, who made her debut last year with Abhishek Kapoor's box office dud Kedarnath and went to feature in Rohit Shetty's blockbuster featuring Ranveer Singh, is set to star in the remake of Coolie No 1 alongside Varun Dhawan, the makers announced Wednesday.

"It's official... After 25 years David Dhawan and Vashu Bhagnani come back together to adapt their timeless comedy, Coolie No 1. The film starring Varun Dhawan and Sara Ali Khan begins shoot this August," a statement from the makers read.

There were speculations that the actor, who made her Bollywood debut with 2018's Kedarnath, would be playing the female lead opposite Varun Dhawan in the modern adaptation of the hit comedy.

The original, which starred Govinda and Karisma Kapoor in the lead, was directed by Varun's father, filmmaker David Dhawan. David is returning to direct the new movie, which is produced by Vashu Bhagnani who also backed the 1995 film.

After Judwaa 2, the film marks David and Varun's second collaboration.

While Varun's latest release was Kalank, Sara was last seen in Simmba.

Sara shares pic of her 'Easter bunnies' Taimur and Ibrahim

Sara Ali Khan, who was in New York for a well-earned vacation, is back in Mumbai. Looks like Sunday was a busy day for the Simmba actor. On Easter Sunday, Sara shared picture of her brother Ibrahim Ali Khan and half brother Taimur Ali Khan and dubbed them her 'Easter Bunnies'. Later in the day, accompanied by her mother actor Amrita Singh, Ibrahim and writer Kanika Dhillon, she stepped out for a movie outing.

Sharing a picture of Ibrahim and Taimur, Sara wrote on Instagram: "My Easter Bunnies #munchkins #brothersinarms #doubletrouble." In the picture, Taimur looks at the camera like a pro; a slight smile lights up his face while spectacled and smiling Ibrahim, looking quite like his dad from his younger days, has his protective arms around his kid brother.

At the movie outing later in the evening, Sara is a picture of grace. In pictures and videos that are now online, Sara can be seen laughing and smiling as she enters the cinema complex. At one point, she greets someone with a namaste. Sara can be seen in a light green salwar kameez, as she is often seen at public events.





ELLE FANNING: WANTED TO BE A POP STAR

Hollywood actress Elle Fanning, known for films like 'Teen Spirit', 'Maleficent' and 'We Bought a Zoo', dreams of becoming a pop star.

"It's definitely crossed my mind. That's not out of the question and I feel like I did get a taste of maybe what pop stars go through with the performance element because also there would be days where I would have to just sing like the song 30 times," Fanning told a Chicago-based online magazine website.

She added, "That element of it I was like, 'Whew'. That's an element people don't think of when they think of pop stars. The strength of having to go on tour ... that would be a lot but I don't know, maybe an album or something of songs would be cool. Country songs to surprise everybody!"

Fanning also said she has been a huge music fan since her youth.

MY DAUGHTERS HAVE STRONG THEATRICAL FAMILY GENES: DREW BARRYMORE

Hollywood star Drew Barrymore said her daughters, Olive and Frankie, are 'very theatrical' and enjoy coming on film sets. The 44-year-old actor said she can sense her children are interested in pursuing acting.

"They're very theatrical. They definitely have a Barrymore gene strong within the two of them, but they're funny and they're cool and they're adventurous and they love coming to set," Barrymore told Us Weekly.

The 'Santa Clarita Diet' actor, who shot to fame as a child star with Steven Spielberg's 'E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial', said she never wanted her kids to choose the profession.

She, however, is okay with them joining the industry at an 'appropriate age'.

"I always thought the second they were born like, 'Oh God, I don't want you to be an actress.' But what I really realised is that I just don't want them to not have a childhood.

"If they were to go into acting in an appropriate age, I'd be, like, the most supportive, fiercest lion for it. Now I'm like, 'If you want to do that and go into theatre in high school and do that for a living, I'm behind you.' I just want them to have, like, a normal childhood," Barrymore said.



Charlize Theron 'blessed' to work with Seth Rogen



Hollywood star Charlize Theron says she feels blessed to get an opportunity to collaborate with Seth Rogen on their upcoming film 'Long Shot'. The 43-year-old star said she has always been a 'fan' of the 38-year-old actor and was delighted to work with him in the comedy.

"I've been a sincere, down to the core of my body, fan of Seth Rogen's. I have watched everything that he's touched and never in a million years did I think I would be in a

movie with him, so I am hashtag blessed," Theron told a magazine.

In the film, Rogen plays a journalist who is spending time with Theron, a presidential hopeful who also happens to be his former babysitter.

Theron said working in a comedy was a different experience for her.

"I usually die or kill people in my movies, or get assaulted. This is not my wheelhouse," she said.



'CAPTAIN MARVEL' STAR BRIE LARSON ON TROLLS: IT'S OUTSIDE NOISE

Brie Larson's vocal feminist stance has earned her both fans and trolls but the actor, who fuels her portrayal of 'Captain Marvel' with extreme confidence, says she has learnt to tune out the 'outside noise' and focus on doing what she feels is right.

Larson's casting as Captain Marvel, 'the strongest superhero in the Marvel Cinematic Universe', has made her a target of online negativity.

"I made a promise to myself a long time ago that I won't pay attention to either of it (positive or negative). I just do what feels right in my heart and all that stuff is outside noise,"

Larson told when asked about dealing with online trolls.

The actor, 29, says she relies on a close set of people for support.

"I know who I am and I know what it is that feels right and what I want to do. I just stay true to that. And those other things about myself that I need to learn, things I can do better, I trust that people that love me and are close to me in my life, will tell me those things. Not that outside stuff."

Some fans have issues that Marvel introduced such a powerful superhero so late in the game though her stand-alone film has done record numbers at the box office.

AUSTRALIAN CAFE THAT CHARGED 'MAN TAX' TO CLOSE

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP) : A vegan cafe in Australia that charged men an 18 per cent premium to reflect the gender pay gap with the funds given to charity is to close, its owners said on April 25. Soon after opening its doors in August 2017, Handsome Her in Melbourne caused an online and media storm when a photograph of a chalkboard outside the cafe explaining its voluntary "man tax" and women priority seating hit Twitter. reuters

POLICE TO ALLOW TRANSGENDER RECRUITS IN PAK'S SINDH

KARACHI (PAKISTAN) (TIP): Transgenders in Pakistan's Sindh will be able to serve as regular duty police officers, the police chief said, adding it was time to offer more opportunities to a group relegated to menial jobs in government.

Transgender Pakistanis gained recognition in 2009 when the Supreme Court granted them special status with rights equal to other citizens. While discrimination still persists, the move to allow transgender police recruits would be a significant step for the community, activists say.

Many transgenders live in secluded communities, earning a living as dancers or forced into sex work or begging. A 2017 census counted 10,418 transgenders in the country of 207 million, but rights group Charity Trans Action Pakistan estimates there are at least 5,00,000. — Reuters

FIRE GUTS SHANTIES IN BANGLADESH ROHINGYA REFUGEE CAMP

DHAKA (TIP): An official says a fire in a sprawling Rohingya refugee camp in southern Bangladesh has destroyed more than two dozen huts and a mosque.

The official in Cox's Bazar district, Mikaruzzman Chowdhury, says no injuries occurred in the fire, which broke out on Wednesday in a camp in Kutupalong. He says 28 huts and a mosque were destroyed.

Chowdhury says firefighters were able to douse the blaze before it spread further.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh from western Myanmar's Rakhine state to escape an army-led crackdown on the minority group that started in August 2017.

Critics have described the campaign as ethnic cleansing, or even genocide, on the part of Myanmar security forces. — AP

Sri Lanka: Not 359, Easter blasts toll 253



COLOMBO (TIP): Sri Lanka on April 25 night revised the Easter blasts death toll downward to 253, saying the previous figure of 359 was due to a "calculation error".

Authorities earlier said that nine suicide bombers, believed to be members of local Islamist extremist group called National Thowheed Jamath, carried out the blasts that killed 359 persons and wounded more than 500 others. However, in an embarrassing revision, Dr Anil Jasinghe, the Director General of the Health Services, said the larger death toll was released as a result of a "calculation error".

"The approximate total of the dead would be 253 and not 359 as reported in media," he said. Jasinghe said that at least 485 injured were admitted to six hospitals throughout the country. "By 10 am today, the casualty number at hospitals has been reduced to 149. Only

six had died in hospitals," Jasinghe said.

"As it was not easy to count the correct number of dead due to extensive damages suffered in some cases, the figures issued were all approximate numbers," he defended. Jasinghe said those who died in the three hotel blasts were mostly beyond recognition as their body parts had suffered comparatively more damages than those who died at church blasts.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry said the number of foreigners killed has risen to 40, including 11 Indians.

Meanwhile, the island nation on Thursday suspended its plans to grant visas on arrival to citizens of 39 countries after the Easter suicide bombings. "Although arrangements were in place to issue visas on arrival for citizens of 39 countries, we have now decided to hold it for the time being in consideration of the current security

DRONES BANNED; HUNT ON FOR SUSPECTS

A minor explosion occurred on Thursday in the Sri Lankan capital's outskirts even as security forces continued a search for accomplices of suicide bombers

The government also banned the use of all drones and unmanned aircraft within the Sri Lankan airspace with effect from Thursday for security reasons

"Investigations have revealed foreign links to the attacks and we do not want this visa-on-arrival facility to be abused," Tourism Minister John Amaratunga said

The visa-on-arrival pilot programme was part of an initiative to increase tourist arrivals to the country during off-season from May to October

SRI LANKAN DEFENCE SECRETARY QUILTS

Sri Lankan Defence Secretary Hemasiri Fernando resigned on Thursday, accepting responsibility for failing to prevent the Easter Sunday suicide bombings. Fernando told an international news agency that while there had been no failure on his own part, he was taking responsibility for the failures of some institutions which were under his command. President Maithripala Sirisena had earlier asked the Defence Secretary and the police chief to quit

situation," Tourism Minister John Amaratunga said. "Investigations have revealed foreign links to the attacks and we don't want this facility to be abused."

The visa-on-arrival pilot programme was part of an initiative to increase tourist arrivals to the country during the six month off-season period from May to October. — PTI

Casualties by US, Afghan forces more than Taliban

KABUL (TIP): Afghan civilians are, for the first time, being killed in greater numbers by US and pro-government forces than by the Taliban and other insurgent groups, a UN report released on April 24 revealed.

The bloody milestone comes as the US steps up its air campaign in Afghanistan while pushing for a peace deal with the Taliban, who now control or influence more parts of the country than at any time since they were ousted in 2001.

During the first three months of 2019, international and pro-government forces were responsible for the deaths of 305 civilians, whereas insurgent groups killed 227 people, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a quarterly report.

A majority of the deaths resulted from US air strikes or from search operations on the ground, primarily conducted by US-backed Afghan forces, some of which UNAMA said "appear to act with impunity". UNAMA started compiling civilian casualty data in 2009 amid deteriorating security conditions in



Afghanistan. Colonel Dave Butler, spokesman for US Forces-Afghanistan, said the US military holds itself "to the highest standards of accuracy and accountability" and that it strived for precision in all its operations.

"We reserve the right of self-defence of our forces as well as the Afghan Security Forces," Butler said in a statement. "The

best way to end the suffering of non-combatants is to end the fighting through an agreed-upon reduction in violence on all sides." In 2017, the US military started quickening its operational tempo after President Donald Trump loosened restrictions and made it easier for American forces to bomb Taliban positions. AFP

EXPLORING LEH & LADAKH

Leh-Ladakh is a destination with ultra wide landscapes, gigantic mountains, and captivating trails along with rich cultural heritage, beautiful Monasteries, mouth watering relishments, tranquil ambience, and fabulous local hospitality. This Leh Ladakh Tour Package covers Leh, Pangong and Khardungla. It is tastefully crafted so that traveler must get the chance to explore the real essence of the destination.

LEH PALACE

Quite an impressive replica of Lhasa's Potala Palace, the Leh Palace is a major attraction in Leh. A nine storey structure in dun colour, it was the erstwhile home to the royals of Ladakh, built at the behest of King Senge Namgyal in the 17th century. The Leh Palace rises up against the backdrop of the lofty Himalayas, looking more like a painter's muse. Built mostly of mud, rocks and wood, it is grand in its simplicity. The palace also houses a rich collection of traditional dresses and crowns, thangka paintings and some impressive traditional ornaments. The best part about Leh Palace is its terrace for you can pore over Leh, Stok Kangri and the Zaskar range from it. This one cannot be missed for it looms high in the skyline of Leh, standing guard over this Himalayan kingdom.

STOK PALACE

Stok Palace is the less majestic yet more famous of the palaces in Ladakh. At some 14 km from Leh, it was the once summer palace of Ladakh's royal family. Built over 200 years ago, Stok Palace houses some rare ancient paintings of Buddhist deities Shakyamuni, Avalokiteshwara, Vajrapani, Tara, Amchi etc. The palace museum also houses some 100 plus volumes of Buddhist teachings and a giant statue of Avalokiteshwara. Some interesting artifacts like the jewel-studded crown of Ladakh's erstwhile queen are also housed in the palace. The palace also has a cafe on its terrace and some rooms open for visitors. Prior booking has to be made in case you wish to stay here. Stok Palace is a major pit-stop if you are eager to hit some impressive treks in the Himalayas around.

PANGONG TSO

While no words can be apt enough to describe Pangong Tso, words like 'magic' and 'surreal' can be put to good use here. This astonishing, blue-water body at 14,270 ft is guarded by looming mountains. One of the most stunning lakes of the world, Pangong Tso covers 134 km and touches India and



Tibet. Also important as a major wetland, it sees flocks of migratory birds in summers. Visiting it in winters is, of course, an out of this world experience for it is completely frozen at that time. The lake lies in the Changthang region of Ladakh at some 170 km from Leh, and has just one cemented stay facility nearby. Foreign nationals need Inner Line Permit to visit the lake; thus it's advisable to check for visitor's guidelines beforehand.

LAMAYURU MONASTERY

Lamayuru, fondly referred to as the Moon Land, is a major stopover on the Leh-Kargil Road. Hidden in the folds of the mountains of this mystical land is the Lamayuru Monastery. One of the oldest gompas in Ladakh and Spiti, this monastery is perched atop a cliff. Going by the legends, this region was once under a lake that was made to dry up by a holy man. The main sanctum of the

monastery has a cave where Mahasiddha Naropa meditated for years. The entire region is considered sacred owing to the monastery's presence and a visit is believed to liberate people from all their sins. Other than its religious significance, the place looks like a picture postcard that has turned real.

TSEMO FORT

his fort cum monastery stands guard over the city of Leh and is a major landmark, visible from everywhere in the city. Built by King Tashi Namgyal, it sees elaborate Buddhist ceremonies in morning and evening. Take the trail leading to the monastery from Leh to witness the interesting rituals. It also houses a three-storey tall statue of Maitreya Buddha, its face made out of solid gold. Also a vantage point for photographers, its terrace gives a bird's eye view of the whole city. Visit it early in the morning to escape the scorching heat, witness the rituals as well as

click great shots in the almost golden light that lights it up.

STOK KANGRI

Stok Kangri is the highest mountain peak in the Stok range of the Himalayas. At 20,500 ft, it is also the highest trekkable summit in India. It has always been a great lure for trekkers from all over the world and is quite popular since it requires relatively less trekking skills. Ideally done between 6-10 days, it is one of the must have Ladakh experiences. You need to be properly acclimatised to the high altitude conditions before attempting this one. It is advisable to make a summit attempt if you have prior experience of scaling some 14,000 ft peaks. A lot of mental fitness also goes into this one, for weather can take sudden turns on the trek to Stok Kangri. Still, it is a must do if adventure is your calling and you harbour a secret wish to scale a world-famous Indian peak.



HOW TO HANDLE LOVING A MARRIED MAN

You may not have set out to fall in love with a married man, but there are times in life when even the most intelligent women find their emotions getting the better of them. Loving and dating a married man can be extremely painful and seldom works out well.

But this article is not intended to judge anyone or tell you to "just dump him!" This article will openly and honestly describe what the typical experiences and outcomes are in these relationships so that you may be more prepared, educated, and informed about what you should expect, and how to handle it.

Things to remember

Remember that his first priority will always be his children and his wife, no matter what he says.

If he lied to you in the beginning about whether or not he was married, you should seriously consider whether or not you can trust him.

Do not sacrifice everything for him. Be independent. Go on dates with other men. Have other hobbies. He's not giving up everything for you, so you shouldn't give up everything for him either.

Your relationship will change if he divorces his wife for you. It will not all be fun and games anymore.

Make your relationship worth your time. Ask him to support you financially, or at least make sure you're getting as much out of it as you're putting in. Don't let him take advantage of you.

Be honest with yourself. What you're doing is risky. Own up to the risk.

Very likely, he will not leave his wife for you.

No matter what he says, he's still



having sex with his wife. Don't let your relationship with him keep you from seeing other people.

Questions to Ask

There are issues to seriously consider if you think that this man may be the one.

One of the first things to consider is this: Did he tell you he was married from the beginning or did he lie to you and then have to tell the truth? This will be a major factor as to whether or not you can ever trust him.

Another thing to give some serious thought to is whether children are involved. No matter how much he loves

you, he is obligated to his children, and if you come between him and the kids, he may resent you in the long run.

Is your relationship strong enough to withstand the turmoil of a divorce? How long have you been seeing this guy? One year is about right when it comes to shifting from playing around to getting serious. Right now you may be experiencing the best of the best, but when you are living in the real world together, things will change.

Moreover, if he divorces his wife for you, the two of you will go through a lot of sad, and trying times together. Will you still love him as much as you do while things are nothing but fun?

FOOD CORNER



CHEESE CORN BALLS

Ingredients

Potatoes - 100 gms, boiled, peeled
Cheese - 100 gms, grated + little extra
Sweet Corn Kernels - 50 gms
Green Chillies - 4 to 5, finely chopped
Corn Flour - 1 to 2 tblsp
Oil as required
Salt as per taste

Method

- Mix the corn, potatoes and cheese in a bowl.
- Add the green chillies and salt.
- Mix well and make small balls of the mixture.
- Heat oil in a deep frying pan over medium flame.
- Roll the prepared balls in corn flour and add them to the hot oil.
- Fry until golden brown and remove.
- Drain excess oil and transfer to a serving dish.
- Sprinkle the reserved cheese on top.
- Serve with sauce or mint chutney.



CHILLI CHEESE TOAST

Ingredients

Bread Slices - 8 to 10
Butter - 5 to 6 tsp
Onions - 2, finely chopped
Green Chillies - 2tblsp, finely chopped
Cheese - 1/3 cup, grated (you can also use cheese slices, see the end of the recipe for instructions)
Salt as per taste
Black Pepper Powder as per taste

Method

- Mix the cheese, onions, green chillies, pepper powder and little salt in a bowl.
- Spread butter on half of the bread slices.
- Spread some of the cheese-onion-green chillies mixture evenly on top.
- Cover with the remaining slices.
- Heat a toaster/sandwich maker for 45 seconds.
- Place the prepared bread slices and cook until set.
- Alternately, heat a tawa over medium flame.
- Add little butter and place the prepared bread on top.
- Cover with a lid and cook on both sides until lightly browned and cheese has melted.
- Serve with ketchup.

Get rid of a sun tan naturally

Holidays are all fun and games until you look into the mirror and see your skin two or more shades darker. While a tan will fade out eventually, if you're in a hurry, give these home remedies a try. Here's a quick look at how you can get rid of sun tan in a jiffy! You no longer have to worry about spending too much time out in the sun, or at the beach.

Lemon juice and honey

Lemon juice has bleaching effect which helps in removing tan quickly.

- Take fresh lemon juice, add some honey to it and apply on your skin.
- Let it stay for 30 minutes and wash off.
- You can also add some sugar to the lemon juice and scrub your skin gently to slough off dead cells from the surface.

Yogurt and tomato

Tomato is rich in antioxidants that helps in brightening skin. Yogurt on the other hand contains lactic acid which softens the skin.

- Take raw tomato and remove the skin.
- Blend it with 1-2 tsp of fresh yogurt.
- Use this paste on your tan, and wash off after 20 minutes.

Cucumber extract

Cucumber is highly beneficial for tanned and sunburnt skin. Cucumber has a cooling effect and helps remove tan.

- Shred a cucumber, and squeeze to get the juice out.



- Using a cotton ball, apply the juice all over your skin.
- Let it dry and wash. You may also add a little lemon juice for added benefits.

Bengal gram flour and turmeric

Turmeric is an excellent skin brightening agent while Bengal gram flour (besan) lightens skin effectively.

- Add 1 tsp of turmeric to a cup of Bengal gram flour, and mix some water or milk to make a thin paste.
- Apply this mixture on your face and body, and let it dry, before gently scrubbing it away using lukewarm water.
- Regular use will help fade the tan from your skin.

WORLD'S FIRST MALARIA VACCINE LAUNCHED IN AFRICA

GENEVA (TIP): The world's first malaria vaccine has been launched in Malawi after concerted efforts of over 30 years to protect children from the deadly disease that claims over 435,000 lives globally every year.

The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomed the Government of Malawi's landmark pilot programme.

The launch of the first and only malaria vaccine, known as RTS,S, makes Malawi the first of three countries in Africa where it will be made available to children up to 2 years of age.

Ghana and Kenya will introduce the vaccine in the coming weeks, WHO said in a statement.

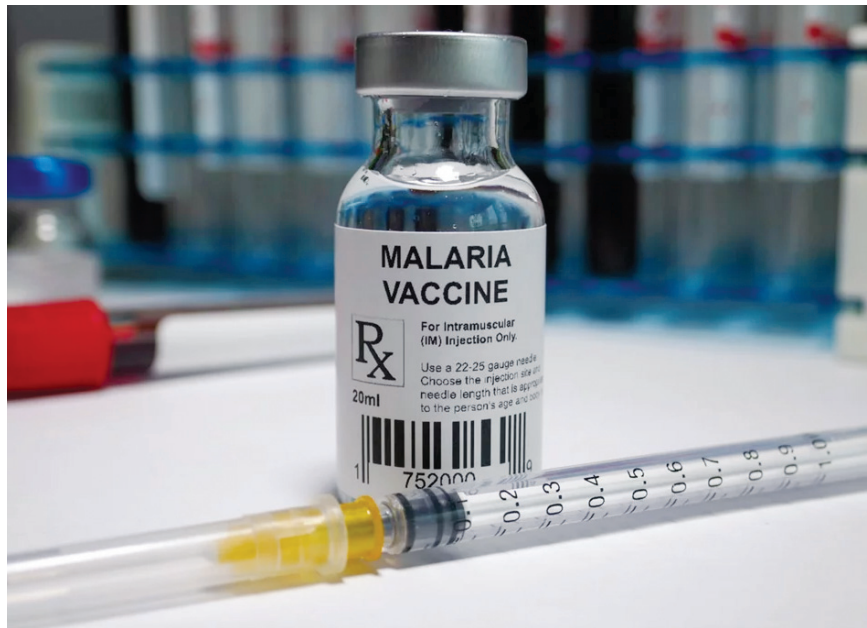
Malaria remains one of the world's leading killers, claiming the life of one child every two minutes. Most of these deaths are in Africa, where more than 250,000 children die from the disease every year.

WHO estimates that India accounts for 89 per cent malaria cases in South-East Asia. According to National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), 1,090,724 cases and 331 deaths due to malaria were reported during 2016 in the country.

Children under five are at greatest risk of its life-threatening complications. Worldwide, malaria kills 435 000 people a year, most of them children.

"We have seen tremendous gains from bed nets and other measures to control malaria in the last 15 years, but progress has stalled and even reversed in some areas," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

"We need new solutions to get the malaria response back on track, and this vaccine gives us a promising tool to get there. The malaria vaccine has the potential to save tens of thousands of



children's lives," Ghebreyesus said in a statement.

Thirty years in the making, RTS,S is the first, and to date the only, vaccine that has demonstrated it can significantly reduce malaria in children.

In clinical trials, the vaccine was found to prevent approximately four in 10 malaria cases, including three in 10 cases of life-threatening severe malaria.

"Malaria is a constant threat in the African communities where this vaccine will be given. The poorest children suffer the most and are at highest risk of death," said Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa.

"We know the power of vaccines to prevent killer diseases and reach children, including those who may not have immediate access to the doctors, nurses and health facilities they need to save them when severe illness comes," Moeti said. "This is a day to celebrate as

we begin to learn more about what this tool can do to change the trajectory of malaria through childhood vaccination," she added.

The pilot programme is designed to generate evidence and experience to inform WHO policy recommendations on the broader use of the RTS,S malaria vaccine.

It will look at reductions in child deaths; vaccine uptake, including whether parents bring their children on time for the four required doses; and vaccine safety in the context of routine use. The vaccine is a complementary malaria control tool—to be added to the core package of WHO-recommended measures for malaria prevention, including the routine use of insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor spraying with insecticides, and the timely use of malaria testing and treatment.

Source: PTI



Almonds may cut heart disease risk in diabetics

Eating tree nuts, such as almonds, may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease for adults with type 2 diabetes, a Harvard study has found.

The study shows that people with diabetes who ate at least five servings of nuts per week had a 17 per cent lower risk of total cardiovascular disease incidence compared to those who ate one or less weekly servings.

They also had a 20 per cent lower risk of coronary heart disease, a 34 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease death and a 31 per cent reduced risk of death from all causes.

The study included 16,217 men and women who either had type 2 diabetes at the start of the study or who were diagnosed during the time of the study. A serving in the study was defined as one ounce or 28 grammes of nuts.

The researchers from Harvard University in the US said that compared to those who did not change their nut-eating habits after their diabetes diagnosis to those who did begin to eat more nuts had an 11 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease, a 15 per cent lower risk of coronary heart disease, a 25 per cent lower risk of cardiovascular disease death and a 27 per cent lower risk of all-cause premature death.

Turmeric compounds may help combat cancer: Study

Compounds found in turmeric—a condiment commonly used in Indian cuisine—can help prevent and treat stomach cancer, scientists claim.

Researchers Federal University of Sao Paulo (UNIFESP) and the Federal University of Para (UFPA) in Brazil identified possible therapeutic effects of curcumin—the yellow powder derived from the roots of the turmeric plant.

"We undertook a vast review of the scientific literature on all nutrients and bioactive compounds with the potential to prevent or treat stomach cancer and found that curcumin is one of them," Danielle Queiroz Calcagno, a professor at UFPA.

According to Calcagno, compounds such as cholecalciferol (a form of vitamin D), resveratrol (a polyphenol) and quercetin can prevent or combat stomach cancer because they are natural regulators of histone activity.

Histones are proteins in cell nuclei that organise the DNA double helix into structural units called nucleosomes, according to a study published in the journal *Epigenomics*.

Each nucleosome is made of DNA coiled like a spool around eight histone proteins (a histone octamer) to compact the DNA so that it fits in the cell, where it is packaged into chromatin.

Posttranslational chemical modification of the amino acid chain in these proteins, such as acetylation (introduction of an acetyl group) or methylation (addition of a methyl group), can affect chromatin compaction and hence gene expression.

Physical activity may offset health risks of desk-bound work

A weekly dose of at least 150 minutes of physical activity could substantially reduce the health risks in desk-bound office workers, a study has found.

Sitting is often touted as 'the new smoking', but it is unclear if it is the sitting itself or the lack of physical activity that causes the harm.

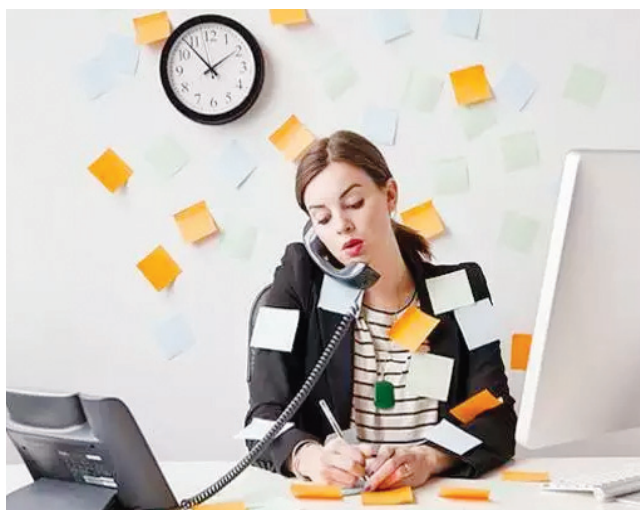
It has also been unclear what level of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity—routine activities like walking briskly to work, as well as sport and exercises—might offset this risk.

Scientists from University of Sydney in Australia have examined the associations of sitting and physical activity with premature death and cardiovascular disease mortality, and estimated what level of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity might offset health risks of sitting.

The researchers statistically modelled physical activity and sitting against death records of nearly 150,000 study participants aged 45 years and over and followed up over almost nine years.

According to the study, physical activity is particularly important for people who sit a lot. Reducing sitting would be a good start but is not enough: the most important lifestyle change for such people would be to look for or create opportunities to move more daily.

Replacing sitting with physical activity—but not standing—reduced mortality risk among 'high sitters', people who sit over six hours per day, said Emmanuel Stamatakis, from the University of Sydney. "In our study, sitting time was associated



consistently with both overall premature mortality and cardiovascular disease mortality in the least physically active groups—those doing under 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per week," Stamatakis said.

"For example, people who were physically inactive and sat for more than eight hours per day had 107 per cent higher risk for cardiovascular death compared to those who did at least one hour physical activity per day and sat less than four hours," he said.

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WHATSAPP TO DENY PRIVATE CHAT SCREENSHOTS: REPORT

Facebook-owned instant messaging app WhatsApp is testing an 'Authentication' feature which would bar users from taking screenshots of their private conversations.

The new feature comes as part of a plethora of security changes that the app has been working on and introducing, keeping in line with the app's commitment to user-privacy, web portal Independent reported on Tuesday.

The screenshot-blocking feature would be made available to users whenever WhatsApp plans to release the 'Authentication' feature, which is currently under development.

Before accessing into the app, the 'Authentication' feature would ask users to confirm their identities via their fingerprints, WABetaInfo reported.

On enabling the feature, even after confirming their identities, users would not be able to take a screenshot of their chats.

"Fingerprint Security: When enabled, fingerprint is required to open WhatsApp and conversation screenshots are blocked. You can still reply to messages from notifications and answer calls if WhatsApp is locked," a screenshot of the beta version of the 'Authentication' feature reads.

Information surfacing about this upcoming feature has left users in a state of confusion.

"I don't get it. What's the point. How's this useful. You've authenticated fingerprint security, that means your chat is secured. Why blocking screenshot, after all its your own chat, its your own WhatsApp, you should be able to do what you want," a user replied on WABeta's tweet informing users about the feature.

Details about the roll-out of the feature remains unknown. *Source: IANS*

iPhones to sport 3-camera setup, 12MP selfie shooter

Apple is planning to upgrade camera resolution and setup in iPhones, to be unveiled this year.

While the front camera would be upgraded from 7MP to 12MP, triple-camera setup would be implemented in the 6.5-inch and 5.8-inch OLED iPhones, along with a new super-wide 12MP lens, according to Ming-Chi Kuo, famous Apple expert and predictor.

Both super-wide and front camera lenses will be coated black to make them blend better with the surrounding bezel for an "inconspicuous" look, 9To5Mac reported on Saturday. Thus, it would be almost impossible to see the new lens, improving the apparent aesthetic symmetry.

The new front camera will be included in all three new 2019 iPhones, whose names remain undisclosed. Apple is expected to officially announce new iPhones in the Fall, likely at a September media event, the report noted. *Source: IANS*



AMAZON'S ALEXA REVIEWERS CAN ACCESS USERS' HOME ADDRESSES

An Amazon.com Inc. team auditing Alexa users' commands has access to location data and can, in some cases, easily find a customer's home address, according to five employees familiar with the programme.

The team, spread across three continents, transcribes, annotates and analyses a portion of the voice recordings picked up by Alexa. The programme, whose existence Bloomberg revealed earlier this month, was set up to help Amazon's digital voice assistant get better at understanding and responding to commands.

Team members with access to Alexa users' geographic coordinates can easily type them into third-party mapping software and find home residences, according to the employees, who signed nondisclosure agreements barring them from speaking publicly about the programme.

While there's no indication Amazon employees with access to the data have attempted to track down individual users, two members of the Alexa team expressed concern to Bloomberg that



Amazon was granting unnecessarily broad access to customer data that would make it easy to identify a device's owner.

Location data is more sensitive than many other categories of user information that would be more difficult to trace back to a real person, said Lindsey Barrett, a staff attorney and teaching fellow at Georgetown Law's Communications and Technology Clinic.

"Anytime someone is collecting

where you are, that means it could go to someone else who could find you when you don't want to be found," she said. Widespread access to location data associated with Alexa user recordings "would set up a big red flag for me."

In an April 10 statement acknowledging the Alexa auditing programme, Amazon said "employees do not have direct access to information that can identify the person or account as part of this workflow."

New sensor spots rare metals used in smartphones



Researchers have developed a new protein-based sensor that can detect lanthanides, the rare earth metals used in smartphones and other technologies, in a more efficient and cost-effective way.

The sensor changes its fluorescence when it binds to these metals, according to the study published online in the Journal of the American Chemical Society.

The protein undergoes a shape change when it binds to lanthanides, which is key for the sensor's fluorescence to "turn on", said the study.

To develop the sensor, the researchers from Pennsylvania State University in the US used a protein they recently described and subsequently used to explore the biology of bacteria that use lanthanides.

"Lanthanides are used in a variety of current technologies, including the screens and electronics of smartphones, batteries of electric cars, satellites, and lasers," said Joseph Cotruvo, Assistant Professor at Penn State and senior author of the study.

"These elements are called rare earths, and they include chemical elements of atomic weight 57 to 71 on the periodic table," Cotruvo added.

Extracting rare earths from the environment or from industrial samples, like waste water from mines or coal waste products, is generally very challenging and expensive.

"We developed a protein-based sensor that can detect tiny amounts of lanthanides in a sample, letting us know if it's worth investing resources to extract these important metals," Cotruvo said.

MS Paint app to remain part of Windows 10

Good news for Windows 10 users as Microsoft is keeping the Paint app, for now at least. Microsoft earlier said it would remove MS Paint from Windows 10 but the company has reversed the decision.

In the latest Windows May 2019 Update (1903), Microsoft hasn't issued any warnings from MS Paint app removal. The software maker had been warning Windows 10 users for months that Paint would eventually be removed, The Verge reported.

"Yes, MS Paint will be included in 1903. It'll remain included in Windows 10 for now," Brandon LeBlanc, Senior Programme Manager, Windows Insider Programme Team at Microsoft, confirmed in a reply to a tweet.

Previously, the software-maker marked Paint as "deprecated", meaning it was not in active development and could be removed in future releases of Windows. The company had planned to remove it from Windows 10 and include it later as a free optional download from the Microsoft Store.

Most of the main MS Paint functions were to be integrated into the more modern Paint 3D app, as part of a broader push to entice creators to use Windows 10. It remains unclear if Microsoft still remains committed to Paint 3D or why there will continue to be two paint apps included with Windows 10 in the future, the report said.



BOEING AXES ORDERS FOR 210 PLANES AFTER JET AIRWAYS STOPS FLYING

Boeing Co removed 210 aircraft from its order backlog and took an impairment charge over customer financing losses on Wednesday following the near-collapse of India's Jet Airways.

The adjustment pushed the world's largest planemaker behind European rival Airbus in the race for business this year as both companies grappled with cancellations that outweighed new orders in the first quarter.

Under recent changes in accounting rules, Boeing hives off orders that no longer meet its criteria for recognising revenue into a separate category, while deferring contractual claims.

As a result, Boeing net orders for the first quarter slid into negative territory, with a total of minus 119 net orders after cancellations, despite a slew of new wide-body sales.

Airbus posted a negative total of 58 net orders over the same period.

Boeing finance director Greg Smith confirmed the adjustment was related to financial problems at Jet Airways, which halted all flight operations indefinitely on April 17 after its lenders rejected a plea for emergency funds.

Reuters reported earlier on Wednesday that Boeing's order



adjustment, which initially emerged on a routine web page for orders and deliveries, came after Jet Airways stopped flying. Boeing also posted a first-quarter operational loss of \$707 million in a specific category grouping together certain unallocated items, compared with a loss of \$326 million a year earlier. Overall, it posted a \$2.35 billion operating profit.

"The change in earnings from other unallocated items and eliminations is primarily due to a customer financing impairment, higher deferred

compensation expense and increased enterprise research and development investment," Boeing said.

Industry sources say customer finance arm Boeing Capital is carrying 75 narrow-body orders on behalf of Jet in addition to 125 that the airline ordered directly from Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

There have also been doubts over a 10-year-old order of 10 wide-body 787s. At least one of Jet's 787s has already been built, according to recent visitors to Boeing factories. *Source: Reuters*



AUDI LAUNCHES NEW EDITIONS OF Q7 SUV, A4 SEDAN IN INDIA

NEW DELHI (TIP): German luxury carmaker Audi on Wednesday launched new variants of its SUV Q7 and sedan A4 in India.

The Audi Q7 Lifestyle Edition is priced at Rs 75.82 lakh while the A4 Lifestyle Edition is tagged at Rs 43.09 lakh (ex-showroom prices).

"The successful feedback and strong demand from our customers for our recently launched Audi A6 Lifestyle Edition has inspired us to introduce the popular Audi models — the Audi Q7 and the Audi A4 Lifestyle Edition in India," Audi India Head Rahil Ansari said in a statement.

CBI's lookout notice against Bhushan steel chairman, wife

NEW DELHI (TIP): The CBI has issued Look Out Circulars (LOCs) against chairman of Bhushan Power and Steel Limited Sanjay Singhal and his wife Aarti, who is vice chairman of the company, in connection with cheating in loans worth over Rs 2,348 crore, sources said.

The LOCs have been opened recently to prevent any attempt by the accused to leave the country without permission from the authorities, the sources said.

A look out circular is a letter used by authorities to keep a tab on an individual. The Immigration authorities at all airports and entry-exit points across the country will have to inform the CBI if Singhal and his wife attempt to leave the country.

The agency had on April 6 carried out searches at 18 locations connected to the company after registering a case of cheating amounting to Rs 2,348 crore against Singhal and others. Loans worth Rs 47,204 crore were availed from 33 banks and financial institutions from 2007 to 2014 and the company defaulted on their repayments, the CBI said.

The searches were carried out in a number of cities, including the Delhi-NCR, Chandigarh, Kolkata, Odisha, at the office and residential premises of the company, its directors and promoters and their associates in the bank fraud case.

The CBI has also already booked Sanjay Singhal, Aarti Singhal, directors Ravi Prakash Goyal, Ram Naresh Yadav, Hardev Chand Verma, Ravinder Kumar Gupta and one Ritesh Kapoor besides unidentified public servants.

FB beats profit estimates, sets aside \$3 billion for US FTC penalty

Facebook on Wednesday blew away Wall Street profit estimates in the first quarter as it kept a lid on the costs of making its social networks safer, and set aside \$3 billion to cover a settlement with US regulators, calming investors who had worried about the outcome of a months-long federal probe.

Shares of the world's biggest online social network jumped more than 10 % after hours.

The US Federal Trade Commission has been investigating revelations that Facebook inappropriately shared information belonging to 87 million of its users with the now-defunct British political consulting firm Cambridge



Analytica. The probe has focussed on whether the sharing of data and other disputes violated a 2011 agreement with the FTC to safeguard user privacy. Facebook set aside \$3 billion to cover anticipated costs associated with the settlement, but said the charges could reach as high as \$5 billion.

If the settlement is in that range, it would be the largest civil penalty paid to

the agency, said David Vladeck, a former FTC official now at Georgetown Law School.

"Everyone expected there would be a substantial civil penalty in this case," said Vladeck. "There's no question that Facebook is going to have to settle this matter. Investors want this behind them." The accrual cut the company's net income in the first quarter to \$2.43 billion, or \$0.85 per share.

Excluding the \$3 billion it set aside, Facebook would have earned \$1.89 a share, up from \$1.69 the year prior and easily beating analysts' average estimate of \$1.63 per share, according to IBES data from Refinitiv. *Source: Reuters*

Cloud push continues to power Microsoft's growth

Microsoft Corp's cloud computing business fuelled quarterly sales and profit that topped analysts' estimates, boosted by several new deals with large corporate clients.

Revenue rose 14 % from a year earlier to \$30.6 billion in the quarter ended March 31, the Redmond, Washington-based company said Wednesday in a statement. Analysts on average projected \$29.9 billion. Net income was \$8.8 billion, or \$1.14 a share, compared with an average analyst estimate of \$1 a share, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The fiscal third quarter featured a flurry of large brands, particularly in retail, signing agreements to use Microsoft's Azure cloud software. Clients included grocer Kroger Co., Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. and oil company Exxon Mobile Corp. Some, such as Walgreens, also committed to using cloud-based Office and security software. The deals reflect Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella's efforts to draw some customers away from cloud market leader Amazon.com Inc. and ink more significant clients. Microsoft also is benefiting as more traditional companies that are longtime customers move to the cloud.



Azure cloud-services revenue rose 73 %, slower than the 76 % Microsoft posted in the fiscal second quarter. Some investors have been concerned that while Azure is still growing rapidly, those increases have slowed from the past when doubling was a regular occurrence. Sales of Office cloud software to business customers rose 30 %.

"The Azure growth blew away Street expectations," said Dan Ives, an analyst at Wedbush Securities. "This was an A+ quarter across the board for Redmond."

The company's shares rose about 4 % in extended trading on

the results, after closing at \$125.01 in New York. Microsoft shares have gained 23 % this year, topping the 17 % increase in the S&P 500 Index. The software maker, for a time, leapfrogged Apple Inc. to become the most valuable publicly traded U.S. company by market capitalization.

Commercial cloud revenue, a measure of sales from Azure, internet-based versions of Office software and some smaller products, rose 41 % in the period from a year earlier to \$9.6 billion. Profit margins for the business widened to 63 %.

"The strength of our commercial clouds continued to boost" the company overall, Microsoft Chief Financial Officer Amy Hood said in an interview. "We saw demand for Azure across all of our geographic regions and among companies of all sizes," including BMW AG and Renault-Nissan, she said.

Worldwide public-cloud services sales are expected to grow 17.5 % this year to \$214.3 billion, according to Gartner Inc. Software and cloud company stocks recovered in the first four months of 2019, with Facebook Inc., Apple, Alphabet Inc. and Amazon all up this year, after a roller coaster end to 2018 that saw shares drop amid concerns spending might be declining.

Source: Bloomberg

Indian American Sentenced to more than Eight Years for Role in international Call Centre Scam

TAMPA, FL (TIP): U.S. District Judge Virginia Hernandez Covington on April 18 has sentenced Hemalkumar Shah, 27, a citizen of India, residing in Tampa, to eight years and six months in federal prison for conspiracy to commit wire fraud and aggravated identity theft related to his participation in an Indian call center scam. As part of Shah's sentence, the court also entered a money judgment of \$80,000.

Shah had pleaded guilty on January 28, 2019.

According to court documents, from 2014 through at least 2016, Shah conspired with U.S.-based co-conspirators and India-based call centers to extort money from U.S. residents by impersonating IRS officers and misleading victims to believe that they owed money to the IRS and would be arrested and fined if they did not pay

their alleged back taxes immediately. The conspirators collected the fraud proceeds by (1) withdrawing cash from prepaid cards purchased and funded by victims; (2) hiring other conspirators (runners) to retrieve money wired by the victims to those runners; and/or (3) hiring runners to open bank accounts into which victims deposited fraud proceeds. The defendants collected the proceeds by providing the runners with

the victims' names, locations, and amounts paid. The runners were directed to retrieve the fraud proceeds in cash and turn the funds over to the defendants, often less a payment to the runner for opening the account or conducting the transaction.

Four others previously pleaded guilty for their roles in the scheme. On March 25, 2019, Alejandro Juarez was sentenced to 15 months in federal prison, and on March 29, 2019, Nishitkumar Patel was sentenced to 8 years and 9 months' imprisonment. Sharvil Patel and Brenda Dozier are currently awaiting sentencing.

CONTD FROM PAGE 1

BIDEN LAUNCHES BID FOR 2020 PRESIDENCY

many polls and has proved to be a successful fundraiser. Among Democrats, Biden has unmatched international and legislative experience, and he is among the best-known faces in US politics.

But the anti-establishment wave that swept Trump into office has not been kind to either party's statesmen. Biden's team worries about his fundraising ability and his tendency to commit gaffes. His centrist approach in a party moving left on major policy debates raises questions about his appeal.

Four years Trump's senior, Biden will be the oldest person ever elected president should he win. Yet his allies believe the skeptics will ultimately warm to his strong connections to the Obama years.

Biden has said he would campaign as an "Obama-Biden Democrat," who is as pragmatic as he is progressive. He's aiming to be a conduit between working-class white voters and the younger, more diverse voters who backed Obama in historic numbers. The Republican Party wasted no time seeking to undercut Biden's record, releasing a video on Wednesday questioning economic growth under Obama and Biden while resurrecting conservative arguments against Obama's health care law and a failed investment in green energy company Solyndra. The video ends with the words, "Joe Biden: Backwards, not forwards."

Yet privately, Trump allies have warned that Biden might be the biggest re-election threat given the former vice-president's potential appeal among the white working class in the Midwest, the region that gave Trump a path to the presidency. The Republican video notably does not argue a Biden candidacy would lead to socialism, as Trump and his backers have said would happen with many in the large 2020 Democratic presidential field.

Biden is paying special attention to Pennsylvania, a state that swung to Trump in 2016 after voting for Democratic presidential candidates for decades. The former Vice-President will be in the state three times within the opening weeks of his campaign. He'll be in Philadelphia on Thursday evening headlining a fundraiser at the home of David L. Cohen, executive senior vice president of Comcast. - AP

In 1972, Biden was elected to the US Senate at the age of 29 and took office a few weeks later when he turned 30.

Biden, a 76-year-old lifelong politician, becomes an instant front-runner alongside Vermont Sen, Bernie Sanders, who is leading many polls, has proved to be a successful fundraiser. Among Democrats, Biden has unmatched international and legislative experience, and he is among the best-known faces in US politics. However, Biden's team worries about his fundraising ability and his tendency to commit gaffes. His centrist approach in a party moving left on major policy debates raises questions about his appeal. (Source: Agencies)

SUDHAKAR DALELA ASSUMES CHARGE AS CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA AT CHICAGO

This is his second assignment in the United States; he previously served as Minister (Political Affairs) at the Indian Embassy in Washington D.C.

He brings a wealth of experience in trade and economic policy to his role, having served twice at the Permanent Mission of India to the WTO, including as India's Deputy Permanent Representative. He was member of India's negotiating team for the WTO Ministerial Conferences in Doha, Cancun, Hong Kong China and Nairobi.

Dalela has also served in critical roles in New Delhi. He served as a Director in the Prime Minister's Office, focussing on India's engagement with its South Asian neighbors, China, and countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Gulf, Middle East, and Africa. Most recently, he served as Joint Secretary (North), overseeing India's relations with Bhutan and Nepal.

Before joining the Foreign Service, he earned a Bachelor's degree in Electronics Engineering. He is married to Namrata, who is a textile conservator, and they have a daughter and son.

SC AGREES WITH EC: NO SCREENING OF MODI BIOPIC TILL MAY 19

on PM Narendra Modi until May 19. A Bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said it was not inclined to entertain the application filed by producers of biopic challenging the EC's order. "What survives in this now?" the Bench, also comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and

Sanjiv Khanna, said.

The counsel, appearing for producers, told the bench that the EC's order is contrary to the clearance given to the movie by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC).

"The issue is whether the movie can be exhibited at this time. The Election Commission has taken a decision. We are not inclined to entertain this," the Bench said. The screening of Modi's biopic was expected to create a favorable impression of Narendra Modi and boost the chances of BJP candidates. There was tremendous push by the BJP to have the film screened. The BJP leaders are obviously disappointed. (With inputs from PTI)

TRUMP TAKES ACTION TO REDUCE B-1 AND B-2 VISA OVERSTAYS

effective ways to combat the rampant number of B-1 and B-2 nonimmigrant visa overstay rates. "We have laws that need to be followed to keep Americans safe and to protect the integrity of a system where, right now, there are millions of people

who are waiting in line to come to America to seek the American Dream", said Trump. The Secretary of State will work to ensure countries with visa overstay rates higher than 10 percent address this problem. The Secretaries of State and Homeland Security will make recommendations within 120 days on actions to limit overstays.

One action being considered would suspend or limit entry of individuals from countries with high rates of visa overstays. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will explore ways to reduce overstays from countries participating in the Visa Waiver Program. The Trump Administration will develop measures for implementing admission bonds as a potential way to improve compliance with visas.

As of March 2019, there were over 415,000 individuals in the United States suspected to still be in the United States after overstaying their nonimmigrant visas in fiscal year (FY) 2018. Twenty countries have overstay rates of more than 10 percent-some with rates as high as 20, 30, or 40 percent. Countries not part of the Visa Waiver Program accounted for more than 300,000 total overstays in FY 2018.

US INDIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE DFW HOSTS ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE 2019

Started in 2016, the Chamber's Technology Conference hosts over 100 unique technology companies annually and has become a "must-attend" and "sold out" event.

Annually, the conference hosts various speakers from various backgrounds including:

- Successful Technology Entrepreneurs & CEOs
- Inc. 1000 Companies
- Chief Technology and Information Officers
- Fortune 500 Company Procurement professionals
- Technology Investors

USICOC will host US India Chamber YEP (Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals) - a breakfast meeting with Raj Malik, CEO of Bioworld Merchandising on Wednesday, June 26, 2019 from 7:30am-9:00am at Benedict's Restaurant, 4800 Belt Line Rd; Dallas, TX 75254.

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

Nandi (Bull) is the vehicle of the Supreme lord of Hindus, Shiva. In Hindu mythology, Nandi is the bearer of truth and righteousness. Each Hindu god has their own vahana (the Sanskrit root word for the English term of Wagon) that they use in war or in peacetime. Each of these vehicles stand for specific qualities that are consistent with the deity's image & functions.

Nandi signifies strength, load bearing capacity and virility. Given that Shiva didn't have to fight fierce battles or travel quickly between the worlds (he spent most time meditating) he didn't have to choose for a more agile vahana similar to Vishnu's Garuda. Given that bulls were the main form of transportation in rural India, it made perfect sense for Shiva – who is the most down to earth & connected with rural India – to take a form that was close to the people.

How Nandi Became so Dear to Lord Shiva

There was once a sage called as Shilada. Shilada did not have any children. Of his own, but he adored children. He wanted to adopt a child, but he did not want to adopt just any child. He wanted a special child blessed by Lord Shiva. So he worshipped Lord Shiva for many years.

Lord Shiva finally appeared before Shilada, 'What boon do you seek, Shilada?'

'A child. I wish to have a child, Lord Shiva.' Shilada said bowing before Lord Shiva.

Shiva smiled. 'You shall have it soon' He said and vanished.

Shilada returned home a happy man, knowing that the Lord would bless him with a very good child. The next day he went to the farm to begin ploughing, when he found a beautiful baby in the field before his plough. The baby's skin glowed with a beautiful white light.

Shilada stared at the baby transfixed, when he heard a voice from the heaven, 'SHILADA, TAKE THE CHILD. BRING HIM UP WELL!'

Shilada was overjoyed as he took the boy home. He named the boy Nandi. Right from his childhood, Nandi was devoted to Lord Shiva. Shilada brought up the child with love and care. Shilada taught the child the Vedas and gave the child a good education. Nandi was a brilliant boy and learnt everything very fast. Shilada felt very proud of the child.

Some years later, two sages – Mitra and Varuna came to Shilada's home. 'Welcome great sages!' Shilada gave the rishis some refreshments, 'Please sit and make yourself comfortable.'

'Nandi!' Shilada called his son. Nandi came from inside the house. 'Nandi please make sure these sages are well looked after.'

Nandi smiled and nodded his head. 'Yes father!'

Nandi looked after the two sages well and after enjoying the stay, the sages said that it was time they left. Before they were about to live, Shilada and Nandi both prostrated before the two sages.

Mitra and Varuna first blessed Shilada, 'Have a long and happy life, Shilada. You have made us very happy!'

When Nandi fell at the feet, the two sages looked slightly sad. Slowly they said, 'Be well son! Be good to your parents and your teachers!' And they walked off, outside the house

However Shilada noticed the change in the expression of the sages. He ran outside the house, 'Great rishis!' He said breathlessly. He turned around and made sure that Nandi was inside the house and could not hear him, and talked to the sages, 'You looked sad while blessing my son!' Shilada said feeling terrified, as he was thinking of unpleasant things... 'is...is something wrong?'

Mitra looked at Shilada with pity, 'I cannot wish your son a long life...' Mitra said softly.

Shilada looked in absolute panic. 'What is going to happen to my son?' He whispered.

'Your son, does not...' Varuna cleared his throat, '...does not have long to live, Shilada. I

NANDI, THE VEHICLE OF LORD SHIVA

am sorry...' He said lamely, looking at the horrified expression on Shilada's face.

Shilada stood there transfixed for a long time. After a long time, he slowly walked back home with stooping shoulders and a broken heart.

Nandi immediately guessed something was wrong, 'What is it father? What happened? What...' Nandi asked, vigorously shaking his father.

Slowly and painfully, Shilada narrated his conversation with the two sages.

He expected Nandi to be scared or even that Nandi would even start crying. However Shilada was surprised when he heard Nandi's laugh. 'You were scared of what the sages said!' He said still laughing.

Shilada wondered what could be so funny and looked at his son without any expression.

'Father, you have told me that you have seen Lord Shiva...' Nandi said with great devotion in his eyes. 'Anybody who has seen Lord Shiva cannot be afraid of what the sages just said.'

Shilada still looked dumbly at his son, not understanding. 'Father, it is my fate to die, then Lord Shiva can reverse my fate! He is the most powerful God and can do anything. Do you think he would let anything happen to us, when we worship him?' Nandi looked at his father challengingly. 'I don't think so., father.' Nandi said softly.

Shilada looked at his son as if looking at him for the first time. Slowly Shilada nodded his head and smiled.

Nandi bowed to his father. 'Bless me father!'

Shilada blessed his son, 'be victorious my son!'

Nandi Becomes Shiva's Vehicle or Vahana

Nandi then went near the River Bhuvana. He entered the river and began his penance. His devotion was so great and his concentration was so high, that Lord Shiva appeared almost instantaneously.

'Nandi, open your eyes!' said the three eyed God tenderly, looking at Nandi.

Nandi opened his eyes and before his eyes stood the most beautiful person he had seen in his whole life. Nandi looked at the God wanting to savor his image. He felt that he had nothing more left to ask. If only I could stay with the Lord always.

Shiva looked at Nandi with lots of love, 'Nandi, your penance was so powerful that it dragged me here immediately! Ask me anything I will grant it to you!' Shiva said.

'Lord I wish to be with you always.' The words were out of Nandi's mouth before he could stop them.

Shiva smiled. 'Nandi I have just lost my bull, on which I used to travel. Henceforth Nandi, you shall have a face of a bull. You shall stay in my home at Kailash. You shall be the head of all my Ganas. You will be my companion, my vehicle and my friend, always!'

Nandi closed his eyes as tears flowed through them. The Lord had granted him his wish and a lot more...

Since then Nandi became Shiva's vehicle, doorman, his companion and the head of all of Shiva's attendants, the Ganas. Thus by sheer devotion Nandi was not only able to overcome his fate, he also rewrote it!

A few days later the Devas and the Asuras together churned the ocean for nectar. However the first thing that emerged from the churning was the poison Halahala. The poison was so strong that it threatened to



destroy the whole world. To protect the world, Lord Shiva collected the poison in his hand and swallowed it. Goddess Parvati who was near Lord Shiva clutched Shiva's throat to make sure that the poison was stored in the throat and would not affect Lord Shiva.

However some Halahala slipped out of Shiva's hands and fell on the ground. Nandi gathered the fallen Halahala and seeing his master drink it, he also drank it!

The Devas were staring shocked at what

Nandi had done! Lord Shiva was a God and besides he had Goddess Parvati to protect him, so nothing would happen to Lord Shiva. But Nandi,

However nothing happened to Nandi. Shiva looked at the dumb folded gods and smiled, 'Nandi is my greatest devotee! All my powers are his too and Parvati's protection will go to him too!'

The three of them smiled and then returned to Kailash.

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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."

Lost ball halts play as umpire pockets it and forgets



RCB batsman AB de Villiers plays a shot during the Indian Premier League 2019 (IPL T20) cricket match between Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) and Kings XI Punjab (KXIP), at Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, Wednesday, April 24.

BENGALURU (TIP): Umpiring howlers refuse to end in the 12th edition of the Indian Premier League, and on Wednesday night umpire Shamshuddin was in the spotlight. He forgot where he kept the ball at the end of the 13th over of the RCB innings as players headed for a strategic break during the Royal Challengers Bangalore and Kings XI Punjab face-off.

Resuming the game after the second strategic break, KXIP skipper R Ashwin and Ankit Rajpoot could not find the ball even as AB de Villiers and Marcus Stoinis waited for the game to get under way. Ashwin walked up to Shamshuddin, but even he couldn't

track the ball.

Play was halted as Bruce Oxenford joined the scene and the fourth umpire rushed onto the field with a new box of balls. But television replays showed that Shamshuddin had put the ball in his pocket before the players headed for the strategic break at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The confusion left AB de Villiers in splits and what followed was an onslaught from the former Proteas skipper as RCB beat KXIP by 17 runs.

Speaking after the game, ABD said that he was only looking to stay calm and not get rattled by the situation. While his innings and the partnership

with Stoinis was the game-changer, de Villiers also praised the RCB bowlers for putting up a good show as it was relatively easy to bat in the second innings.

"I tried to stay calm in the last few overs. It is not easy always, the game is happening at a rapid pace. We know our home ground very well, it hasn't been a great hunting ground for us to start with but we are turning things around now. And we are doing things well. We are doing good as a team. I still think 160 was a par score but it gets easier in the second innings. Our bowlers executed their plans to perfection in the end," he smiled. *Source: IANS*



Dale Steyn ruled out of IPL

NEW DELHI (TIP): After a brief two-match stint, Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Dale Steyn was on Thursday ruled out of the Indian Premier League owing to an inflammation in his shoulder.

The veteran South African fast bowler, who had recently joined RCB as a replacement for injured Nathan Coulter-Nile, was forced to sit out of the match against Kings XI Punjab here on Wednesday after he picked up a niggle.

"Dale Steyn has been prescribed with ample rest due to inflammation in his shoulder. On account of state of his health, Dale will not be available to take part further in the ongoing season of IPL," Sanjeev Churiwala, Chairman of RCB, said in a statement.

The injury-prone pacer had returned to the IPL after a gap of two years and straight away contributed to team's winning cause by picking up four wickets in two games -- against Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings.

"His presence has helped the team immensely and we are very thankful for the inspiration and passion that he brought to the squad. The team will deeply miss his energy and presence around. We wish him a speedy recovery and all the luck for all future endeavours," RCB Chairman said.

With the ODI World Cup scheduled to start on May 30 in UK, Steyn may not be willing to aggravate his injury. The shoulder injury that the 35-year-old had suffered in Perth against Australia in 2016 kept him out of action for two years.

Steyn went unsold in the 2018 and 2019 auctions. He had last played for the now-defunct Gujarat Lions in 2016.

We have right combination for World Cup: Rahul Dravid

NEW DELHI (TIP): Former skipper Rahul Dravid reckons India's recent 2-3 loss to Australia in a home ODI series will not have much impact in their 2019 World Cup campaign and their good show in the past few years has made them strong title contenders.

After taking a 2-0 lead in a five-match ODI rubber last month, India faltered and were defeated in the rest three matches and lost the series.

"In the last 30 months, India has been playing really well, and the loss, much to the credit of the way Australia played, came at the back end of a very busy series," Dravid was quoted as saying by The Times of India.

"We have the right combination for the World Cup. If India wins the World Cup, we will not be worrying about who won 2-3 or 3-2. There will be an odd series that India will lose. But the (ICC) rankings prove that India is there and should win the World Cup to become No. 1," he said.

When asked what he thinks of the Indian squad for the showpiece event as stumper Rishabh Pant and Ambati Rayudu were not included in the team, Dravid termed the side as "well-balanced".

"India has a very good, balanced team for this World Cup. They have a lot of combinations, lot of options. It is a question of them performing in the tournament. You can always argue one or two cases, one or two names. The team has been picked and hope they do really well," the 46-year-old opined.

Dravid also felt that unlike the previous times, the wickets have changed in England and the upcoming tournament will witness high-scoring games.

"This World Cup will probably be a much high scoring one, and India is well equipped for that. English conditions have actually changed, especially for ODIs. We were there last year for an 'A' series, and the scores were really high, 300 was par score, and was being chased consistently.

R Ashwin explains angry reaction after receiving send off from Virat Kohli

BENGALURU (TIP): Kings XI Punjab captain Ravichandran Ashwin played down the animated reaction from his Royal Challengers Bangalore counterpart Virat Kohli after taking his catch during their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2019 encounter on Wednesday, saying both of them react out of passion.

With 27 runs needed from the final over, Ashwin hit the first ball for a six, but on the very next delivery, he hit one straight to Kohli at long-on off Umesh Yadav's bowling. Kohli celebrated in his usual style, giving Ashwin a fiery send-off. Ashwin, on his part, was also seen throwing his gloves in the dugout in anger.

"I just played with passion, so does he (Virat). That's it. As simple as that," Ashwin said at the post-match press conference here on Wednesday night after KXIP lost to RCB by 17 runs.

KXIP skipper said his team failed to come good during crunch situations.

"Three overs for 60 odd runs wasn't desirable, but we were in the chase all along and I thought we couldn't finish it off in crunch situation. That is what you back



the senior players to do. Didn't quite turn out the way we wanted. That is exactly how that is gone for us the entire tournament.

"Whenever we played those crucial moments, we won, and whenever we haven't, we have lost it, because the games are really really tight for us," said Ashwin.

The 32-year-old said KXIP lost the plot in middle overs despite Nicholas Pooran and David Miller bringing them back into the game.

"When you chase down 200, you ideally like one of your batsmen to make 70-80. We were not in it. We were 105 in 10 overs or something like that. We lost momentum similar to what RCB did in middle overs, but I thought Nicholas Pooran played really well and he got us back into the game.

"I thought we were cruising at 4 overs 45 or 46 needed. From there on, it is quite disappointing that we could not finish the game on this ground." *Source: PTI*



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 - APRIL 29 - MAY 5, 2019

ARIES: Ganesha says there are different commitments of all kinds confronting you now. Work and family will demand not only hard work and effort, but also investments and outlays in finance and time. You will have to cope with several demands made on you. There could also be an illness in the family, and elders and children will need particular attention. A parent or in-law may need to be hospitalised. You will also have to go slow and look for time to recuperate from the hectic periods of the recent past.

TAURUS: Ganesha says that you have a busy time ahead, both professionally and emotionally. But you are determined to enjoy it. There could also be journeys, legal issues, and dealings at law courts, even some settlements and compromises. You will be in the midst of negotiations of all kinds. There will be sharing, togetherness, bonding, warmth, love, true accord and harmony.

GEMINI: The earth element now balances your fiery temperament and grounds it. You have evolved, developed a vision of the future, worked hard and made all possible efforts to convert your dreams and hopes into reality. There are many possibilities that you will explore. Of course, finance remains a central theme and there will be much buying and selling, signing of lease documents, contracts, instruments of negotiation, promissory notes etc.

CANCER: You have been striving hard for a long time to achieve all this and now success, happiness and all the goodies of life are firmly in your grasp. This is also a great time for love, adds Ganesha. There will be passion and several intimate moments. This is also a time for consolidation. Finances will keep you busy. The focus will be on property, acquisitions, possessions, buying and selling, stocks, reality, inheritances, wills and so on.

LEO: There will be genuine gains as you also plan carefully for the future. It is important in this phase to protect your interests, not to get unethical in your dealings and to prevent others from riding roughshod over your principles. There will be new love too and you could get waylaid. The domestic scene also demands your time and attention. Ganesha asks you to take special care not to be pressurised and exploited. There is urgent need for peace and harmony, and you should work towards that.

VIRGO: There will be business issues, acquisitions, capital, funds and other fiscal issues taking up your time. This is also a good time to launch a project, finish pending work, take on new assignments. Lending / borrowing / investing / buying / selling / shopping will continue to be very important. You continue on the fast track of progress. You feel good about yourself as you follow your heart and your true inclinations.

LIBRA: Moonlight and roses, love and storybook romance, leisure and pleasure, fun times and children are what this period has in store for you. There is also more money and great luck in dealing with funds and investments. You are ready to take risks but do not treat true love with disdain. You are on a high and will have many affairs of the heart. In the process, do not look down on someone who truly loves you. You have both, the resources and the chutzpah to make a success of whatever you take on.

SCORPIO: Ganesha asks you to guard against causing disappointment to a loved one, resentment or impatience with others, and inconsideration in your dealings. You expect too much from friends and colleagues and that can mean trouble. You will have to meet others half way. There is also great danger in breaking hearts as we all know how a woman who has been scorned is! You can look forward to happy times, says Ganesha

SAGITTARIUS: In this intense period, there is genuine love, romance and laughter, fun and frolic, the social whirligig, and many bouts of profound happiness. There is respite, relaxation, excitement and glamour and you will revel in it. Your burdens will seem to have fallen away. It will also reflect happily on both your family life and personal interactions. You are now able to enjoy life, laughter, love, the good times. You bond powerfully with loved ones and there will be an addition to the family or a marriage or engagement.

CAPRICORN: You are happy and turn to prayer, spirituality or meditation. You are drawn to the contemplative life, thinking and looking within, the merging of the lower and higher selves. But there are also mounting expenses and other domestic issues to deal with. But you tide over all the roadblocks with Ganesha's help. You are well equipped to handle life and turn to the spiritual self for answers. It is a unique phase when material and spiritual progress will be linked.

AQUARIUS: There is a significant period and you will reap the whirlwind in the days to come. Ganesha blesses you. There are also wonderful moments spent with loved ones. You are moving in many directions and not all of them are right. This could be a taxing, tiring, demanding time of highs and lows. While there is a probable wish-fulfilment, there is also much anxiety. There will be a lot of work along with a fair amount of socialising. Family life will be good, but you may not have much time for the home.

PISCES: There will be international travel and those in the media, in particular, will do well. This will be a busy and demanding period with many pleasant moves and a lot of pleasure. You make contact with old friends and there will be many happy reunions. Life is good as you savour the golden moments. Ganesha is happy. You will be busy tending to an ailing relative. The family will be the centre of attention in every way.

BIRTHDAY HOROSCOPE APRIL 29 - MAY 5, 2019

29TH: Ganesha says you've got a good head on your shoulders this morning, able to make plans and set strategies that show you're a good, responsible leader who can handle things fairly and judiciously.

30TH: There will be an expansive

opportunity through a friend or ally or the chance to speak up about things you know that will help others reach their goals. Insight is sharpened.

1ST: The Moon falls in your business section, which means you're ready to forge useful alliances and put into place a professional idea or union that will take you places in the future.

2ND: An early-morning talk can bring up confidential matters, which best remain secret. As the day goes by, finding social harmony takes more finesse and consideration than expected.

3RD: Why not gather up some friends and go out and enjoy the weekend? A morning idea may be just the suggestion that will join the group in accord. A communal

project involves you deeply.

4TH: During the day, you may find intuition more surprisingly accurate than reason. By tonight, psychic energy shifts back to logic and forethought.

5TH: The Moon in your sign offers you everything you need today, making work, home, and conversations positive and beneficial to you.

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