Future of Democracy in India - TIP Survey

India is going through the process of general elections to elect 542 Lok Sabha members and members to Legislative Assemblies in some States. The seventh and the last phase of voting will be completed on May 19, with counting of votes taking place on May 23.

The present election has raised many issues, the most important being whether or not Democracy in India will survive if the religion-centric BJP is back in power. NRIs are a wide-awake class and have evinced keen interest in the political goings on in India. They may be citizens of any country, but they carry India in their hearts.

The Indian Panorama is conducting a survey on this single issue whether or not Democracy will survive in India if religion-centric BJP comes back in power. Readers may please send in their comments (not exceeding 300 words) with their photograph and email / phone no. by May 12. Their comments will be published in May 17 issue of the newspaper. Please email to salujaindra@gmail.com. Mail to P.O. Box 190067 South Richmond Hill, NY 11419.

UN DESIGNATES MASOOD AZHAR AS GLOBAL TERRORIST

Goal stands achieved, says India's Ambassador to the UN Syed Akbaruddin

NEW YORK (TIP): Moments after the United Nations designated Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist, India’s Ambassador to the UN Syed Akbaruddin thanked all countries for their support.

“Big, small, all join together. Masood Azhar designated as a terrorist in @UN Sanctions list. Grateful to all for their support” Ambassador Akbaruddin tweeted.

Later in an interview with Times Now he said that India’s decade long efforts finally paid off. “This is a significant outcome, we have been at it for several years, today the goal stands achieved.

Massive Sikh Day Parade Taken Out in New York City

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The Sikh Community of Tri-states of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut took out a parade April 27 in Manhattan, to mark the birth of the Khalsa, the Sikhs. The Parade, popularly known as the Sikh Day Parade, attracted thousands from the Tri-State area and the neighboring States.

INDIA GOVERNMENT REVISES POLICY ON CONSULAR SERVICES TO ASYLEES

Asylees will now get visa and OCI cards

NEW YORK (TIP): In a significant move, India has directed all its missions abroad to abolish local blacklists.

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US-India Business Relations: Willingness is the key, says Panagariya

BIDISHA ROY

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Realizing its own interest in “giving ground” in a bilateral relation is the key factor for India’s growth, noted economist Arvind Panagariya said while addressing a business delegation from India.

An Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) delegation led by President Rudra Chatterjee visited New York on April 30 and attended a business seminar on US-India Business Relations organised by the Indian Consulate, New York. Arvind Panagariya, professor of economics at Columbia University, who served as first vice-chairman of the government of India think-tank NITI Aayog between January 2015 and August 2017 and former Chief Economist at the Asian Development Bank, was the keynote speaker.

Deputy Consul General Mr Shatrughna Sinha, who moderated the event, highlighted the development and progress made by India, especially in the last few years, to become the seventh largest economy in the world and is expected to become the sixth largest this year.

ICC President Rudra Chatterjee, who has already held many successful meetings with business houses in DC and New York prior to this event, explained how India and US together can create a “world class system” for international business collaboration which can also be followed by other countries. In this regard, his additional comment was the “The comfort level of Indians here makes a huge difference. This familiarity is the key to create world class system.”

In his keynote speech, Prof Arvind Panagariya detailed how the US-India relationship has transformed to a new level from year 1998 onwards. “Things have gone to a very different level now. That is the eagerness on both sides to build the relationship stronger: The willingness of India to ‘give ground to gain ground’ is important as India sees its own interest in doing so. (As an example), India’s stand on Iran oil is a good compromise. There is flexibility on US side as well,” he said.

Citing the example of growth rate India has achieved in the last 15 years, Prof Panagariya said that in the next 7-8 years India would cross Japan and Germany and become the third largest economy in the world. But for doing so, India needs to open up much wider liberal trade policies, he reminded. Highlighting the priority areas, Panagariya also emphasised on the need for major reforms including privatization of public sector banks and land acquisition policies.

Mr Sumit Ganguly CEO of Princeton based software company GAVS, shared his experience regarding doing business in the US and offered suggestions to Indian delegates.

Mr Rajiv Khamm, president of Indian American Chamber of Commerce, in his address said that West Bengal deserves to be showcased to the world as the ‘investment destination’ in India, citing some recent favourable statistics including GDP Growth Rate. Incidentally, ICC is the leading and only National Chamber of Commerce in Eastern and North-Eastern India operating from Kolkata, West Bengal.

The event ended with a Q and A session. While answering a question by Prof. Indrajit S Saluja, Chief Editor of The Indian Panorama, regarding ease of doing business in India (On Ease of Doing Business, we have moved from 113rd position to 77th in the last three years but still lagging behind even countries like Mexico), Prof. Panagariya emphatically answered that in next couple of years, India will jump fifty places from 77 in ease of doing business list.

Cannes Lions honors UN Women’s Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka with LionHeart Award 2019

Cannes Lions has today announced Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, as the recipient of the 2019 Cannes LionHeart in recognition of her advocacy for women, human rights, and social justice throughout the world, and for her leadership of the industry-wide diversity initiative, The Unstereotype Alliance.

Throughout her career, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka has championed women’s rights through her involvement with projects and programs devoted to education, women’s empowerment and gender equality and in 2018 was named by Apolitical as one of the most influential people in gender policy around the world. Her work spans the private sector, civil society and government.

Her leadership of the Unstereotype Alliance recognizes the power of partnerships to accelerate progress and her involvement has been pivotal to creating a space where industry leaders can set aside competition and unite for a common cause. As the powerhouse behind the initiative, which launched in 2017, she unites leaders to tackle the widespread prevalence of stereotypes that are often perpetuated through media and advertising content.

Philip Thomas, Chairman of Cannes Lions, said, “Phumzile’s passion and tireless work to improve the lives of women and children around the world and bring about social justice represents the true embodiment of the Cannes LionHeart Award. Through her work on the Unstereotype Alliance she has brought together leaders from business, technology and creative industries to consciously consider how individuals are in communications.”

Introduced in 2014, the Cannes LionHeart is an honorary Award presented to a person or organization that has harnessed their position to make a significant and positive difference to the world around us, with particular reference to those who work with brands and the advertising community.

As Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka is driving the role of women in leadership, engaging men as allies and ending discrimination and violence against women and girls through coalition and movement building among global leaders in public and private sectors, and with civil society.

Speaking in response to the announcement, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka said, “It is an honor to be nominated for this Award on behalf of UN Women and The Unstereotype Alliance. I look forward to what we will do next through this partnership to change the way the world looks at itself and disrupt the social norms that are holding us back. We are thrilled to be working with the advertising community to bring about positive change by influencing the way that both women and men are represented.”

An industry-led initiative, The Unstereotype Alliance, convened by UN Women, is a collaboration between industry leaders who have been champions of addressing gender bias. Its members include global brands, advertising agencies and holding companies, associations and organizations dedicated to advancing representation. Since its launch in 2017, the initiative has worked with members to conduct international research projects providing applicable insights for creating more gender-balanced editorial space where industry leaders can set aside competition and unite for a common cause.

Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka will be interviewed on the Debussy stage at 5 p.m. on Friday, June 21 as the final session of the content program. She will accept the LionHeart Award at the final Awards Show closing out Cannes Lions 2019. Further information about the Festival, which runs from 17-21 June can be found at www.canneslions.com.

(Press release Cannes Lions/ UN Women)
CAREER (TIP): Bala Chaudhary, an environmental scientist at DePaul since 2016, was awarded a 5-year CAREER grant to study dispersal of mycorrhizal fungi. Chaudhary has been teaching courses in plant biology, environment data analysis and climate change at DePaul since 2016.

ECOLOGIST RECEIVES NSF CAREER GRANT

Bala Chaudhary, an assistant professor of environmental science at DePaul, is embarking on a deep dive into mycorrhizal dispersal mechanisms with support from the National Science Foundation. The Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) grant is NSF's most prestigious award in support of early-career faculty who have the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in the mission of their department or organization. The $715,000, five-year research grant will support a multifaceted project that combines trait-based ecology, macroecology and physical laws to study dispersal of mycorrhizal fungi. Chaudhary has been teaching courses in plant biology, environment data analysis and climate change at DePaul since 2016. He is an assistant professor in the College of Science and Health.

Indian American Honored as UChicago’s First Schmidt Science Fellow

CHICAGO (TIP): Kasturi Chakraborty, an Indian American PhD student in UChicago, won the Schmidt Science Fellowship, awarded by Schmidt Futures and the Rhodes Trust to excellent emerging scientists to support a year of postdoctoral research in fields substantially different from their current fields of expertise. Chakraborty, a fifth-year in Yamuna Krishnan’s laboratory, is the University of Chicago’s first Schmidt Fellow.

Born in Kolkata, India, Chakraborty completed a BS in chemistry at St. Stephen’s College at the University of Delhi before pursuing an MS in organic chemistry at the University of Pune. Recalling how her father, an organic chemist, built origami models of molecules and how her mother, a clinical psychologist, worked with children suffering from disease, Chakraborty traces her desire to take a chemical approach to studying biological problems to their early influence. This connection of interests led her to the Krishnan lab. “I saw Yamuna was from a chemistry background, and I liked her outlook and what she was doing,” says Chakraborty. “In her lab, I went from synthesizing molecules as an organic chemist to working with C. elegans.”

At the University of Chicago, Chakraborty has focused on the development of DNA nanodevices for the detection of ions in lysosomes to examine how these organelles function. By correlating ionic imbalances with lysosomal disease severity, these tools can enable quantitative detection of disease phenotypes in cells derived from patients. This work has led to several collaborations with Fred Ausubel at Harvard, Dimitri Krainc at Northwestern, and Paschalis Kratsios and Lev Becker at UChicago and has resulted in thirteen papers, four as first author.

As a Schmidt Fellow, Chakraborty intends to study host-microbe interactions in mammalian intestines. In humans, the genome of the communities of bacteria, viruses, and fungi that live in and on the body, known as the microbiome, far exceeds the size of the human genome.

Indian Doctor Creates History as First Indian President of International Society of Nephrology

LONDON (TIP): Dr Vivekanand Jha created history when he took over as the President of the International Society of Nephrology (ISN) April 15 at the conclusion of the World Congress of Nephrology at Melbourne, Australia. He is the first Indian and only the second person from Asia to ascend to the Presidency of ISN in the 59-year history of the organization.

Currently the Executive Director of George Institute for Global Health India and Professor of Nephrology at University of Oxford, Jha is recognized as an expert on the burden of kidney disease and its socio-economic impact on low-middle income countries. Having joined the ISN community as an ISN Fellow, he set up his own laboratory at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh. He has carried out large scale epidemiological studies, conducted key clinical trials to find treatment for many kidney diseases and conducted basic laboratory research. Working with organizations such as the World Health Organization, Kidney Disease Improving Global Outcomes and the Declaration of Istanbul Custodian Group, he has helped develop clinical practice guidelines and advocacy papers.

The International Society of Nephrology (ISN) is a global organization of nephrologists and allied professionals dedicated to advancing worldwide kidney health. The ISN has over 10,000 members and over 100 affiliated societies. The mission of ISN is to bridge the gaps of available care through advocacy and collaborations, to build capacity with healthcare professionals via granting programs, education and research and to develop a stronger understanding of how to manage kidney diseases and engage in a collaborative effort to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment by connecting communities.

INFORMATION ON THE INDIAN PANORAMA:

This is Kashyap’s second term which will begin on Oct. 1, 2019.

Kashyap’s current term will end Sept. 30, 2019. The FPC was created in the wake of the banking crises by the Financial Services Act of 2012 to protect and enhance the stability of the UK’s financial system by identifying, monitoring and addressing systemic risks. Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of England, said, “I look forward to the FPC benefiting further from Anil’s insights from academia, creative thinking and willingness to challenge and to sharpen our communications.”

Kashyap is the Edward Eagle Brown Professor of Economics and Finance at Chicago Booth, where he teaches classes on central banking and financial crises. His research focuses on monetary policy, financial intermediation and regulation, and business cycles. Prior to joining the Chicago Booth faculty in 1991, Kashyap spent three years as an economist for the Board of Governors for the Federal Reserve System. He currently works as a consultant for the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and as a research associate for the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). He is also a research fellow for the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR).
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Queens Museum Beckons

BIDISHA ROY

QUEENS, NY (TIP): The Queens Museum is dedicated to presenting the highest quality visual arts and educational programming for people in the New York metropolitan area, and particularly for the residents of Queens, a uniquely diverse, ethnic, cultural, and international community. The museum is hosting a variety of events in the month of May.

MAY 4-25 - 3-Day Family Art-Making & Storytelling Workshop in Partnership with Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling
A league of time-traveling beings from alternate worlds is heading towards earth for an emergency meeting of the worlds and to participate in a special parade to restore peace in the universe. In two workshops at Sugar Hill Museum and a culminating parade and pop-up gallery at the Queens Museum, children and their families will respond to a series of writing and drawing prompts to create their own science fiction story of time travel inspired by the exhibition Mundos Alternos, and their family, neighborhood and culture.

MAY 5 - SCREENING AND PANEL DISCUSSION 2:30-4:00pm - Screening of Public Square Media’s new short film, After Rikers, Justice by Design, which explores NYC’s vision of community-based jails as part of its efforts to reform the criminal justice system. The panel discussion that follows will feature two speakers from the Free Verse poetry project, Louis Molina, First Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County Department of Correction, and more.

May 7 - 5:00-8:00pm - Queens Borough Student Arts Festival
Opening
A celebration of the work of students artists from Queens public schools (grades Pre-K-12) with fellow students, families, teachers, and school leaders. This program is presented in partnership with the NYC Department of Education.

Indian National Sentenced to 60 Months for Human Smuggling Conspiracy
NEW YORK (TIP): An Indian national was sentenced April 23 for his leadership in a complex transnational conspiracy to smuggle aliens from India to the United States for profit, which claimed at least one life and endangered many others.

Yadvinder Singh Sandhu, 61, was sentenced to 60 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release. On Jan. 18, 2019, Sandhu pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and 14 counts of smuggling aliens to the United States for profit before U.S. Magistrate Judge Silvia Carreno-Coll of the District of Puerto Rico. District Judge Carmen C. Cerezo accepted the guilty plea and sentenced the defendant. Sandhu was charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the District of Puerto Rico on March 13, 2018. Sandhu has also used the names “Yadvinder Singh Bhamba,” “Bhupinder Kumar,” “Rajinder Singh,” “Robert Howard Scott” and “Atkins Lawson Howard.”

According to admissions in Sandhu’s plea agreement, since 2013, Sandhu had a leadership role in a human smuggling conspiracy operating out of the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Puerto Rico, India and elsewhere.

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): The new city in question will be located on an island named Isla Puna in Ecuador, a South American country where the equator crosses. This island, 22 times the size of Manhattan and 102 times the size of Yoido, will be developed as a four-dimensional, futuristic metropolis with eight million residents.

At present, there is nothing noteworthy in the island other than a few shrimp farms. The planners say that they will develop this island as an autonomous city similar to Hong Kong, tentatively called NSC City, which will issue its own passports to its residents. The city will function as the political, economic and cultural hub of the 18 countries in Central and South America.

A trillion dollars will be needed for such development. The planners foresee that the costs for construction and materials will be paid by cyber money like bit coins. The acceptability of the cyber money will be supported by collateralization of the city’s land. It will also be jointly guaranteed by world-class enterprises participating in the project. Although the bit coins are not backed by governments and are not backed by any guarantees, they are still circulated in the world financial market without any difficulty and are commonly utilized as means of investment. The planners emphasize that the project coins to be circulated in the process of this development would be even much more reliable cyber money in which the investors may comfortably make investment since they are supported by the land on which a city like Hong Kong will be built and since the world-class enterprises will jointly guarantee.

The planners of such a city are AK Construction Co. and A&K Group Development, Inc. based in New York. Steve Choi, representative of those corporations, has been doing the planning and research for the past 20 years at his own expenses. After many turns and twists, on April 25, 2018, the planners received from the Presidential office of Ecuador an official correspondence containing an affirmative response to the proposed project. (No. PR-CGATC-17247-0 which can be confirmed by linking to the official website of the Ecuadorian government) This has prompted discussions of the progress of the project between the ministers in charge in the Ecuadorian government and the personnel of the A&K Group Development, Inc. We have learned that A&K Group Development, Inc. is presently in the process of selecting enterprises who will participate in the project.

Steve Choi is pursuing an ambitious plan to create the world’s best welfare city and a four dimensional, futuristic, space city with eight million residents. As a part of the project, 200,000 Koreans will be moved to this city resulting in effectively founding a second Korea.

Concurrently with the progress of this project, the planners are also planning to implement infrastructure projects in the 18 countries in Central and South America. It is learned that all these plans have also been submitted to the government of Ecuador.
Millennial desi women on a mission to make Kathak a household name

NEW YORK (TIP): New York Kathak Festival produced its first festival at the Aliley Studios and Aliley Citigroup Theater this weekend on April 19-21, 2019. The first of its kind, the New York Kathak Festival attended by over 750 was a confluence of artists and Kathak aficionados coming together as a community to learn, share, and connect over the 3-day event in the heart of Manhattan. Originating in India, Kathak is a classical dance that carries history in its very form. The New York Kathak Festival is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit run by a team of 30 young professionals. “The NYKF organizing team is mostly millennial women who live and work in the New York + New Jersey area. The festival is our passion in addition to our careers,” said Meenakshi Lala, on behalf of the festival. Anisha Muni, also on the festival team said, “we created this event with the intention of using art to bring community together and create a platform for Kathak to blossom in New York City. We’re on a mission to make Kathak a household name.”

The festival created space for performance, teaching, and discussion. Raoul Bhavnani of the India Center Foundation co-sponsored panel discussions on critical conversations relevant to Kathak dance. He commented: “An honor to co-host an expert panel on the present, past, and future of Kathak dance today during the Kathak Festival weekend. Well done to all the panelists who grounded us in the living tradition, gender, and the idea of the divine.

Anish Muni, also on the festival team said, “we created this event with the intention of using art to bring community together and create a platform for Kathak to blossom in New York City. We’re on a mission to make Kathak a household name.”

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Inspiring conversation.” Eminent artists contributed to the festival, including Pandit Divyang Vakil, Dr. Pallabi Chakravorty, Dr. Purnima Shah, Dr. Sitarra Thobani, and many others. Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty and Air India supported this important event.

The concert lineup included 50 dancers and 10 musicians from all over the world. Prashant Shah, an Indian dancer now based in New York closed his showcase of traditional and contemporary Kathak to a standing ovation. Shivangi Dhi Robert traveled the furthest all the way from Singapore and was electric. The weekend was closed with a finale by the festival’s guest of honor, legend Pandit Birju Maharaj and his foremost disciple, Saswati Sen. Speaking about the event’s organizers, Sen said, “what the seniors couldn’t do, these children have done: bringing everyone together for Kathak.” Maharaj, 81 years old and a highly celebrated 7th generation artist added, “now you must support them.” The FA is a proud community partner of the New York Kathak Festival.

About New York Kathak Festival: The New York Kathak Festival is a newly formed organization that presents and promotes dancers, scholars, and practitioners of Kathak, a classical dance tracing its origins to India. We produce a festival bringing together established and emerging artists from across the United States and beyond. The New York Kathak Festival is produced by the American Kathak community, inspiring creative exchange between local Kathak artists and diverse New York audiences.

For Inquiries: Henna Khanljou henna@nykathakfestival.com 516-717-7433

NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst Opens renovated Ophthalmology Clinic

New equipment will provide critical treatment for patients with diabetic eye disease, cataracts, and glaucoma

ELMHURST, NY (TIP): NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst today announced that it has renovated and enhanced its ophthalmology clinic to better serve patients being treated for general and specialty eye services. The clinic now offers modern, state-of-the-art technology designed to offer patients a wider range of services related to their eye care needs. The redesigned clinic offers patients an enhanced experience through individual exam rooms and an improved registration process. Patients with conditions, including cataracts, glaucoma, and vision disorders related to diabetes will be treated in the redesigned space. The space is located on the second floor of Elmhurst’s Community Medical Center. The expansion of this facility, funded through the health system’s capital budget, represents a vital patient service offered by the public health system. Providing ophthalmological services supports NYC/Health + Hospitals patient population and contributes to Mayor Bill de Blasio’s plan to guarantee health care for all New Yorkers.

“NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst is very excited to be able to offer enhanced services in our Ophthalmology clinic and provide our patients with the latest advancements in treatment for eye disease,” said Israel Rocha, Vice President of NYC Health + Hospitals and Chief Executive Officer of NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst. “Many people in our community come to our clinic with conditions that can be easily treated if caught early. We know that saving a person’s sight is a vital part of keeping them healthy in the long-term, and we want to be proactive in ensuring that we can accurately diagnose eye diseases as early as possible so as to prevent blindness and other complications that dramatically affect a person’s quality of life.”

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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES ALCOHOL ADVERTISING BAN ON CITY PROPERTY

NEW YORK (TIP): Mayor Bill de Blasio announced, April 30th, an Executive Order banning all alcohol advertising on City property. Under the order, alcohol advertisements will be banned from City property, including bus shelters, newsstands, phone booths, Wi-Fi LinkNYC kiosks and recycling kiosks. The order will take effect immediately, meaning any future contracts or contract renewals must exclude alcohol from the advertisements. Existing ads in these spaces will be allowed to remain until their contract terms end. In addition, venues currently permitted to sell alcohol, such as restaurants, stadiums, and concerts halls, are exempt from the ban.

“There’s no doubt that far too many New Yorkers struggle with serious substance misuse issues, among them excessive drinking,” said Mayor de Blasio. “This order banning alcohol ads from City property reaffirms our commitment to health equity and our stand to protect the well-being of all New Yorkers.”

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ELMHURST, NY (TIP): NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst today announced that it has renovated and enhanced its ophthalmology clinic to better serve patients being treated for general and specialty eye services. The clinic now offers modern, state-of-the-art technology designed to offer patients a wider range of services related to their eye care needs. The redesigned clinic offers patients an enhanced experience through individual exam rooms and an improved registration process. Patients with conditions, including cataracts, glaucoma, and vision disorders related to diabetes will be treated in the redesigned space. The space is located on the second floor of Elmhurst’s Community Medical Center. The expansion of this facility, funded through the health system’s capital budget, represents a vital patient service offered by the public health system. Providing ophthalmological services supports NYC/Health + Hospitals patient population and contributes to Mayor Bill de Blasio’s plan to guarantee health care for all New Yorkers.

“NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst is very excited to be able to offer enhanced services in our Ophthalmology clinic and provide our patients with the latest advancements in treatment for eye disease,” said Israel Rocha, Vice President of NYC Health + Hospitals and Chief Executive Officer of NYC Health + Hospitals/Elmhurst. “Many people in our community come to our clinic with conditions that can be easily treated if caught early. We know that saving a person’s sight is a vital part of keeping them healthy in the long-term, and we want to be proactive in ensuring that we can accurately diagnose eye diseases as early as possible so as to prevent blindness and other complications that dramatically affect a person’s quality of life.”

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DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES ALCOHOL ADVERTISING BAN ON CITY PROPERTY

NEW YORK (TIP): Mayor Bill de Blasio announced, April 30th, an Executive Order banning all alcohol advertising on City property. Under the order, alcohol advertisements will be banned from City property, including bus shelters, newsstands, phone booths, Wi-Fi LinkNYC kiosks and recycling kiosks. The order will take effect immediately, meaning any future contracts or contract renewals must exclude alcohol from the advertisements. Existing ads in these spaces will be allowed to remain until their contract terms end. In addition, venues currently permitted to sell alcohol, such as restaurants, stadiums, and concerts halls, are exempt from the ban.

“There’s no doubt that far too many New Yorkers struggle with serious substance misuse issues, among them excessive drinking,” said Mayor de Blasio. “This order banning alcohol ads from City property reaffirms our commitment to health equity and our stand to protect the well-being of all New Yorkers.”

Read full story at www.theindianpanorama.news
GUEST COMMENT

A global label: on designating Masood Azhar as global terrorist

With Masood Azhar listed as a terrorist, India must work to ensure the mandated sanctions

Masood Azhar's listing as a designated terrorist by the UN Security Council at long last closes an important chapter in India's quest to bring the Jaish-e-Mohammad chief to justice. He eluded the designation for 20 years, despite his release in 1999 in exchange for hostages after the IC-814 hijack, and his leadership of the JeM as it carried out dozens of deadly attacks in India, including the Parliament attack of 2001, and more recent ones like the Pathankot airbase attack in 2016 and the Pulwama police convoy bombing this year. China's opposition to the listing has long been a thorn in India's side, given the toll Azhar and the JeM have exacted, and Beijing's veto of the listing three times between 2009 and 2017 had driven a wedge in India-China relations. Despite the frustration over China's last hold on a proposal moved by the U.S., the UK, and France just weeks after Pulwama, the government has done well to approach Beijing with what the Ministry of External Affairs called "patience and persistence".

There is much disappointment, however, over the final listing released by the Security Council, with no mention of Mr. Azhar's rule in any of the attacks against India, or directing the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. A specific reference to Pulwama, which was in the original proposal, was also dropped, presumably to effect China's change of mind on the issue. Pakistan's claims of a victory in this are hardly credible; Masood Azhar is one of about twenty 1267-sanctioned terrorists who have Pakistani nationality, and more are based there, which is hardly a situation that gives it cause for pride. It is necessary to recognize that India's efforts and those of its partners in the Security Council have been rewarded with a UNSC designation at its 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee. The focus must now move to ensuring its full implementation in Pakistan.

But this is easier said than done. Pakistan's actions against others on the 1267 list have been far from effective, and in many cases obstructionist. Hafiz Saeed, the 26/11 mastermind and Lashkar-e-Toiba chief, roams free, addresses rallies, and runs a political party and several NGOs without any government restrictions. LeT's operations commander Zaki ur Rahman Lakhvi was granted bail some years ago despite the UNSC sanctions mandating that funds and assets to the sanctioned individuals must be frozen. It will take an effort from New Delhi, and a push from the global community, to ensure that Masood Azhar is not just starved of funds, arms and ammunition as mandated, but that he is prosecuted in Pakistan for the acts of terror he is responsible for. Azhar and his JeM must lose all capacity to carry out attacks, particularly across the border. Global terror financing watchdog Financial Action Task Force will also be watching Pakistan's next moves closely, ahead of a decision, that could come as early as in June, on whether to "blacklist" Pakistan or keep it on the "graylist". Both financial and political pressure should be maintained on Islamabad to bring the hard-fought designation of Masood Azhar to its logical conclusion.

By Gurmeet Kanwal

Dealing with fundamentalist terrorism

India's experiments with POTA, TADA and UAPA have failed to deliver the desired results. Laws must be just and humane and not be vindictive towards or shield any particular community or religious denomination. We are living in the age of 'new terrorism' that is far more violent and diabolical and our policies must keep pace with the emerging developments.

The terror strikes in New Zealand and Sri Lanka are only the most recent manifestations of what is rapidly becoming the new normal in this age of fundamentalist terrorism. It has clearly emerged from the ongoing investigations into the attacks in Colombo that the terrorists involved had linkages in India and Indian cities are probably on the radar on the Islamic State.

Ten years after the Mumbai terror attacks, there is broad consensus that the response in November 2008 was slow, laborious and poorly coordinated among the Central and state governments and their various agencies. Coastal security was virtually non-existent; the Marine Police were few in number to effectively patrol the vast area entrusted to them; they were ill equipped and inadequately trained; and, there was poor coordination between the Coast Guard and the Marine Police. It took far too long to begin flushing-out operations and then to eliminate the nine terrorists who were holed up at three separate locations.

The government needs to review its largely reactive policies and adopt pro-active measures to fight terrorism, particularly the variety that emanates largely from the soil of inimical neighboring countries. The government must formulate a comprehensive approach to fight terrorism, and all organs of the state must come together to implement a national-level counter-terrorism strategy. The government must draw up a strategy that is inter-ministerial, inter-agency and inter-departmental in character.

It must be ensured that the counter-terrorism policy is based on strong but egalitarian laws. India's experiments with POTA, TADA and UAPA have failed to deliver the desired results. Laws must be just and humane and must not be designed to either be vindictive towards or shield any particular community or religious denomination. The experience of many other countries has proved that it is possible to formulate strong counter-terrorism laws. The US established a powerful Department of Homeland Security following the 9/11 strikes and there has not been a major terrorist attack since then.

One major lacuna in India's approach to counter-terrorism is the gross disconnect between how the Central and the state governments view counter-terrorism. The Constitution must be amended to move 'law and order' from the State List to the Concurrent List so that the Central government can act on its own initiative when necessary, particularly in the case of externally-sponsored terrorism. And, it is time the government bifurcated the internal security function of the Ministry of Home Affairs into a separate ministry headed by a cabinet minister.

Besides prevention through accurate 'humint'and 'techint' intelligence gathering, successful counter-terrorism requires the effective intelligence penetration of terrorist groups so that their leadership can be systematically neutralized by an empowered anti-terrorism agency. Comprehensive planning and better stage management are necessary for the real-time elimination of a group of terrorists during a strike, as terrorists are still on a killing spree.

Though the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) gave its approval for the establishment of a National Counter-terrorism Centre (NCTC) following the Mumbai terror strikes, seven chief ministers virtually vetoed the NCTC on the grounds that its functioning would undermine the federal structure of India's Constitution and that it must not be placed under the Intelligence Bureau (IB). The opposition came despite PM Mannohit Singh's assurance that, "It is not our government's intention to alter distribution of power between states and the Centre. The NCTC is to coordinate counter-terrorism measures, not to infringe on state powers."

The NCTC was opposed despite the fact that its structure approved by the CCS was a watered-down version of the form in which the NCTC had been conceived by then Home Minister P Chidambaram as an organization capable of "preventing a terrorist attack, containing a terrorist attack should one take place, and responding to a terrorist attack by inflicting pain upon the perpetrators."

The NCTC was envisaged as an umbrella organization, which would exercise control over the other agencies. It was proposed to be placed under the IB and the existing Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) was to be subsumed in it. The NCTC was to be tasked to draw up and coordinate counter-terrorism plans.

cond on Page 32
INDIA POST-ELECTIONS

By Ven Parameswaran

Present indications are no party will be able to get an absolute majority to form the new government. It has been reported that the BJP will be the only party that will have a commanding lead. Therefore, BJP will be given the first opportunity to form a government with coalition partners.

The largest election with 900 million eligible voters began in India on April 11, 2019 and is continuing. The results will be announced on May 23, that is almost six weeks from the start. Present indications are no party will be able to get an absolute majority to form the new government. It has been reported that the BJP will be the only party that will have a commanding lead. Therefore, BJP will be given the first opportunity to form a government with coalition partners.

Therefore, the parties that are ambitious to plant their members as Ministers in the cabinet will try to woo Prime Minister Modi. Because of political and ideological differences, Modi will try to offer partnerships to the parties that are willing to compromise their ideology for the sake of united front.

Between the date of elections result and forming a new government, the election for power politics will take shape. This process will be exciting and interesting to India and the world. Thus, weaving of democratic fabric will be in full action. There will be speculation every hour as to who is likely to join the BJP. It is a foregone conclusion that the defeated Congress party will be almost powerless.

Let us assume that after the dust settles, Modi will succeed in putting together a coalition that will be approved by the President of India and the Indian Parliament. Now comes, the hard part, how to govern?

Unless the ruling party has majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, it is difficult to get major legislations approved. Composition of Rajya Sabha is based on representation of different parties from various States. As in the past, the BJP may not be able to enjoy a majority in the Rajya Sabha.

The actual results of the election will give some indication on the degree of mandate, if any, Modi is able to get from the electorate. After the election, the resulted Modi will be highly competitive. Thus, the huge election and its results offer many opportunities for Modi to transform India from a developing to a developed country. Will Modi embark on an economic revolution to create employment and start wiping out poverty? Will Modi finally make a determination to build the most modern infrastructure that will deliver clean drinking water and electricity for 24/7 to all Indians?

India has many intrinsic strengths that have not been capitalized within India. The outstanding and extraordinary success of overseas Indians in capturing the leadership of almost all levels of society in the USA, UK, Ireland, Canada, Portugal, Singapore, U.A.E., and others make a refreshing contrast to the leadership within India. Will Modi mobilize the leaders of private industry in India and use their experience in transforming Indians? Will Modi prioritize Public Sector corporations and 145 Public Enterprizes?

India is a net exporter of food. But there are 300 million poor in India going hungry, while India is wasting 40% of its food production, costing $40 billion per year. Will Modi start doing something about this sooner than later?

USA-INDIA CLOSEST ALLY RELATIONSHIP

Prime Minister Modi must capitalize on this new relationship with the USA. President Trump has visited all major countries except India. After forming the new government, Prime Minister Modi should organize a warm reception to President Trump. This visit must be well prepared. The USA private industry is ready, willing and cooperate with India. It can help as much as it helped China, if not more. India must create favorable and notable environment for private foreign investment. If India gives carte blanche as China did to the USA, India will make a rapid progress.

India should build large scale factories to manufacture consumer and industrial goods for export. India has no choice but to promote exports to create massive employment. India does not have to invent a new wheel. We have seen the successful experience of China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore.

Will India open its economy and liberalize fully? Will India take steps to make India one of the easiest countries to do business with?

FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

President Trump is the first US President since India's independence to give unstinted support to India. India has been branded as the CLOSET ALLY and the USA will allow India to transfer 100% of any and all technologies. This will enable India to manufacture products in India using most sophisticated and latest technologies. We know all modern wars are won by sophisticated technologies.

As India transforms its economy thru economic revolution, it can also build the most modern defense using sophisticated technologies.

Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh were one country before independence. Modi must give leadership and negotiate peaceful relations with Pakistan. Pakistan's economy is in shambles. If only Pakistan exterminates all its terrorist organizations, Pakistan can open a new page. It is reported that after India's election, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan will be willing to get together with Modi. Helping to grow Pakistan's economy can help India's economy also. Fortunately, the U.S. and the U.N. are applying maximum pressure on Pakistan to get rid of all terrorist organizations.

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MODI MUST CAPITALIZE ON THE ELECTION AND CLOSEST ALLY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USA

India's GDP now growing @7% must grow at least @10% for the next decade to modernize India and create employment. The USA because of unfavorable trade balances with China wants to divert its imports from China. Modi has the greatest opportunity to embrace the USA and work together as China did. Modi must discourage socialism and embark on full-fledged capitalism.

(The author is a former President & CEO, First Asian Securities, NY, and Senior Adviser, imaginica Institute, New Delhi, a think tank. He can be reached at vpwaren@gmail.com)
ISLAMABAD (TIP): A special court accepted former Pakistan President Pervaiz Musharraf’s request on May 2 to postpone the hearing of a treason trial against him until after the month of Ramzan owing to his poor health.

A three-member bench headed by Justice Tahira Safdar adjourned the case hearing till June 12 after the former military dictator’s counsel Salman Safdar told the court that his client could not travel to Pakistan to attend the hearing due to his medical condition, Geo News reported.

The counsel, in an application on behalf of Musharraf, stated that despite “strong willingness and eagerness to return to Pakistan, life-threatening ailments and medical complications had forced him not to appear before the special court.”

“He is ashamed and apologetic for not being able to reach (in time). He is unable to walk,” the counsel said, adding that he had spent three days with Musharraf and was ‘shocked to see that he could barely even speak’.

“The doctors have said it is not safe for him to travel in this condition,” the counsel said. He then asked the court to postpone the hearing until after Ramzan. — IANS

‘IMRAN’S CHINA TRIP PLAYED CRUCIAL ROLE’

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The “breakthrough” in designating Masood Azhar as a global terrorist came during Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan’s recent visit to China where both sides agreed to withdraw their opposition to the latest move to blacklist the JeM chief, a media report said here on May 2.

The US, Pakistan and China held extensive talks on Azhar, the Express Tribune, quoting a senior official claimed that “both sides agreed to withdraw their opposition to the latest move to blacklist the JeM chief”. The report said that on May 1, both sides agreed to withdraw their opposition to the latest move to blacklist the JeM chief.

One of his most visible initiatives has signed up some 5 million Thais to a new volunteer corps, whose members salute a portrait of the king before going out to work on community service projects such as cleaning public spaces.

Devotion to the monarch is an ingrained part of Thai culture that deepened during Bhumibol’s 70-year reign. Vajiralongkorn’s portrait has replaced or hangs alongside that of his father in many streets, public buildings and private businesses.

Public criticism of the king or his family is illegal, with insults to the monarchy punishable by up to 15 years in prison under Thailand’s strict lese majeste laws.

Vajiralongkorn was born on July 28, 1952, the second of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit’s four children and their only son.

After completing primary education in Thailand, he was educated at private schools in Britain and Australia, before attending Australia’s Royal Military College Duntroon, in Canberra, and earning a bachelor’s degree in military studies from the University of New South Wales in Australia.

According to the king’s official biography, he is a qualified helicopter and fighter pilot and served as a career officer in the Royal Thai Army, where he saw action against communist insurgents in Thailand in the 1970s.

As king, he is now commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Since he ascended the throne, Vajiralongkorn has asserted his authority in several ways, according to analysts observing his public actions. — Reuters

BANGKOK (TIP): Thailand’s King Maha Vajiralongkorn BodindradeBayavarangkun will be officially crowned as the 10th king of the Chakri dynasty on May 4, after taking the throne following the death of his father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, in late 2016.

The 66-year-old constitutional monarch had a pre-coronation surprise for his subjects: He married for the fourth time on Wednesday and named his new wife as queen.

During 18 months of his reign so far, Vajiralongkorn, also known by the title King Rama X, has moved to consolidate the authority of the monarchy, including taking more direct control of the crown’s vast wealth with the help of Thailand’s military government.

In one of his most visible initiatives, he has signed up some 5 million Thais to a new volunteer corps, whose members salute a portrait of the king before going out to work on community service projects such as cleaning public spaces.

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Sri Lanka to freeze assets of terrorists involved in Easter bombings

COLOMBO (TIP): The Sri Lankan authorities are taking steps to freeze the assets of terrorists involved in the Easter Sunday bomb blasts, a media report said on May 2.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is in the process of identifying and compiling the list of assets belonging to those involved in the attacks, police spokesman S P Ruwan Gunasekera was quoted as saying by the Daily Mirror.

Nine suicide bombers carried out the series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and three luxury hotels, killing 253 people and injuring 500 others.

The details of the attackers and their relatives linked to the bombings was released by the police on Wednesday.

Police identified Mohamed Cassim Mohamed Zahran also known as Zahran Hashmi to have led the team of suicide bombers had Hashmi, the leader of ISIS linked local outfit National Thowheeth Jamath (NTJ), blew himself up in the Eleventh Street adjoining the Wijieeni (Anjel) Mosque in Batticaloa while his another brother Achihi Mohamed Mohamed Hastun was the bomber at the St Sebastian’s Church at Katuwapitiya, Negombo, the Western coastal town.

The official said that the CID is taking these steps as per the Convention on the Suppression of Terrorist Finance Act and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. On the identification of those involved the country’s worst terror attacks, he said that though CID has identified nine terrorists, “further DNA tests will be conducted to ensure proper identification of the suicide bombers who carried out the Easter Sunday attacks and those who were involved in the shoot-out in Kalmunai on Friday.”

Six children and three women were among 15 people killed on Saturday when militants linked to the Easter Sunday bombings opened fire and blew themselves up during a fierce gun battle with security forces in the Sri Lanka’s Eastern province.

The shootout occurred as the security forces continued their hunt for members of the NTJ that carried out the attacks.

Meanwhile, the special panel appointed by President Maithripala Sirisena to probe the attacks will release its report on May 6. The special panel was appointed to report on the alleged security lapse which paved the way for the local jihadist group NTJ to carry out the attacks. PTI

PAKISTAN COAST GUARDS SEIZE NARCOTICS OVER $24M

ISLAMABAD (TIP): The Pakistan Coast Guards have recovered narcotics worth over $24 million during an operation near Jiwan town of Balochistan province, officials said.

Saifee Mehdi, a spokesperson of the Pakistan Coast Guards, told Xinhua news agency that they received a tip-off regarding a possible bid to smuggle high-quality narcotics to some foreign countries.

Acting on the intelligence report, the Coast Guards launched an extensive operation in the area and recovered 350 kg of hashish hidden in the ground at a beach in Jiwan.

The Pakistan Coast Guards handed the drugs to the anti-narcotics force who would later destroy them as per their schedule, Mehdi added.

No arrest was made, but security forces have increased vigilance and monitoring in the area in efforts to get clues of drug peddlers. IANS
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US Lawmakers Praise AAPI's Growing Clout in Advocating for Effective Health Care in US

WASHINGTON (TIP): Healthcare continues to be at the center of the national debate, especially after the Trump Administration's efforts to dismantle Affordable Care Act, and to do away with the Individual Mandate, affecting almost everyone in the country.

Association of American Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the largest ethnic organization of physicians, representing over 100,000 physicians of Indian origin, wants to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and around the nation, particularly on issues relating to healthcare.

Indian-Americans constitute less than one percent of the country's population, but they account for nine percent of the American doctors and physicians. One out of every seven doctors serving in the US is of Indian heritage, providing medical care to over 40 million of US population.

AAPI leaders and members brought to the fore some of the major issues facing the Indian-American community, particularly those affecting the physicians and their patients during AAPI's Legislative Day on Capitol Hill, Washington D.C., on April 30th, 2019.

Attended by several key leading Congressmen and women from both the major political parties, the event held at the Rayburn House Office Building, highlighted key issues affecting physicians and the country in general.

House Minority Leader, Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD); Rep. Henry Cuellar (D-TX); Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA); Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HAWAI); Rep. Andy Harris, MD (R-MD) and several other leading lawmakers addressed the AAPI delegates and listened to their concerns and promised support.

A White Paper outlining the concerns of the fraternity was submitted to lawmakers who addressed the delegates.

Some of the issues outlined in the White Paper included, Increased Residency Slots, Immigration Reform, Medicare and Medicaid Reimbursements, Tort Reform, Repeal of the Individual Mandate, Lowering the Cost of Prescription Drugs, and, The South Asian Heart Health Awareness and Research Act of 2017.

In his welcoming remarks, Dr. Naresh Parikh, President of AAPI, stressed the importance of young physicians in AAPI, who are the "future of AAPI." He highlighted the efforts of the current team under his leadership "to make AAPI financially sound and stable for the years to come."

"We are pleased with the enormous turnout of both AAPI members and the showing of bipartisan members of Congress at this year's Legislative Day," said Dr. Parikh, AAPI President. "It is a testament to the strength of AAPI's reputation as strong leaders, with our physicians proudly serving as health care providers in all 50 states. With this event, we are building a strong foundation for future advocacy and legislative successes at both the federal and state level," said Parikh.

More Affluent Executives or Celebrities might be charged in Nationwide College Admissions Scam, says report

BOSTON (TIP): In March 2019, dozens of people were arrested in a nationwide college admissions scam that facilitated cheating on college entrance exams and the admission of students to elite universities, as purported athletic recruits. Athletic coaches from Yale, Stanford, USC, Wake Forest and Georgetown, among others as well as parents and exam administrator were arrested by federal agents in multiple states on March 12 and charged in federal court in Boston. Actress Lori Loughlin and Felicity Huffman were among the high-profile parents charged in the alleged scheme.

Now according to a report published in The New York Times, prosecutors are pursuing a new set of parents in the college admissions scandal including some celebrity parents in Los Angeles. The prosecutors have informed some of the parents that they are under investigation and the lead prosecutor conferred with lawyers for at least two of these parents during a trip to Los Angeles in April, the report says.

According to the charging documents, Singer facilitated cheating on the SAT and ACT exams for his clients by instructing them to seek extended time for their children on college entrance exams, which included having the children purport to have learning disabilities in order to obtain the required medical documentation. Once the extended time was granted, Singer allegedly instructed the clients to change the location of the exams to one of two test centers: a public high school in Houston, Texas, or a private college preparatory school in West Hollywood, Calif.

It is further alleged that throughout the conspiracy, parents paid Singer approximately $25 million to briege coaches and university administrators to designate their children as purported athletic recruits, thereby facilitating the children's admission to those universities.

Hollywood actress Lori Loughlin and her husband, designer Mossimo Giannulli have pleaded not guilty in the case while actress Felicity Huffman has admitted to paying a college counselor $15,000 to arrange for cheating on her daughter's SAT test.
Indian diaspora is One of the Greatest Assets, says Ambassador Shringla at Community Reception in Maryland

MARYLAND (TIP): Ambassador Harsh Vardhan Shringla on April 28 addressed some 500 members of the Indian community at a reception hosted by the National Council of Asian Indian Associations (NCAIA) at Montgomery County, Maryland. In his keynote address, Ambassador lauded the contribution of the Indian diaspora in strengthening these ties. “The Indian American community in the United States has made a mark for itself and is well regarded across the country. With estimated 4 million Indian American population in the US, its achievements and excellence in diverse fields like medicine, business, engineering, technology, academia, entrepreneurship etc. is duly acknowledged in the country. India regards its diaspora, especially in the US, as one of its greatest assets and looks forward to your help and support in the development of our country in various domains as also to strengthen the Indo-US relationship,” he said. Ambassador spoke of the strong India-US relationship as well. "Our relationship with the US has also progressed and we are now close strategic partners. In recent years, we have witnessed a significant convergence of views and evolved a close partnership on a whole range of issues affecting both the countries. In this endeavor, your support and contribution are well recognized, and I hope that you will continue to contribute whole heartedly in the days ahead as well.”

He thanked NCAIA for organizing the program along with participating organizations like Global Organization of Peoples of Indian Origin, National Federation of Indian Association, American Telugu Association, American Hindu Coalition and many other organizations for their contribution and support.

IN INDIAN-ORIGIN FAMILY MOWED DOWN BY US WAR VETERAN IN CALIFORNIA

SAN JOSE (TIP): An US Iraq war veteran intentionally ran down a family of Indian origin in California thinking they were Muslims, according to media reports.

The attack took place in Sunnyvale on Tuesday, April 23 when Isiah Peoples, an African American war veteran was on his way to a Bible study group when he drove his car into the pedestrians, ABC7 TV quoted police as saying. Peoples “intentionally targeted the victims based on their race and his belief that they were of the Muslim faith,” Sunnyvale police chief Phan Ngo said.

A 13-year-old girl identified as Dhruti was in coma and fighting for her life after the attack and her father and 9-year-old brother Prakhar were also hurt. Peoples was produced in a San Jose court on April 26 and charged with attempted murder.

CHICAGO (TIP): In his new book Raghuram Rajan, a long-time finance professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and former Governor of Reserve Bank of India, makes the case for giving more power to local communities.

In his new book, The Third Pillar: How Markets and the State Leave the Community Behind (Penguin Press), Rajan presents a radical rethinking of why capitalist democracies have been so successful in the past and why the consensus behind them is breaking down today.

Rajan explores the passions that are unleashed when an imagined community, such as the nation, fulfills the need for belonging that the neighborhood can no longer meet. He argues that many of the world’s most pressing political and economic concerns-including the rise of populist nationalism and growing inequality-reflect technological changes that are creating an imbalance in the three pillars that hold up society: government, the markets, the community. - Why do our neighbours matter when we can reach people across the world? The answer is in his book.

Indian diaspora is One of the Greatest Assets, says Ambassador Shringla at Community Reception in Maryland

Raghuram Rajan’s Latest Book Calls for a New Social Contract

The former Governor of Reserve Bank of India makes a case for giving more power to local communities.

ON FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO LOS ANGELES, INDIAN ENVOY HOSTS DIVERSE ENGAGEMENTS

LOS ANGELES (TIP): India’s Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla undertook his first official visit to Los Angeles April 26-27. On the first day of his tour, he had a number of diverse engagements, including meetings with Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti at the City Hall; Randy Worthing, COO and senior executives of AECOM, a major investor in India’s Infrastructure development; Nicole Clemens, President and senior executives of Paramount Pictures & TV; Michael D. Rich, CEO, RAND Corporation and research analysts; and a number of Los Angeles based businesses at a US India Business Council event. Consul General of India in San Francisco Sanjay Panda and USIBC President Nisha Biswal accompanied the ambassador.

On the second day of his tour in Los Angeles and before departing for Washington DC on 27 April 2019, Ambassador Shringla hosted a reception for the Indian community based in Southern California along with Congressman Brad Sherman, co-Chair of the House India Caucus and Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla by presenting the U.S. flag that has been flown over the U.S. Capitol.
PM Modi gets clean chit from poll panel on ‘Nuclear Button’ remark

NEW DELHI (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi was given a clean chit by the Election Commission today - his third in three days - for his comment that India too has nuclear weapons and does not care about Pakistan’s threats. The comment, the Election Commission said, does not violate the Model Code of Conduct - a set of dos and don’ts for political parties and the government ahead of elections.

Highlighting the party’s national security theme at a rally in Rajasthan’s Barmer, the Prime Minister had jeered at Pakistan.

“India has quit the policy of being scared of Pakistan threats... Else, every other day they announced, ‘We have nuclear button, we have nuclear button’. So what do we do then? Are those being saved for Diwali?” he had said.

His remarks were vehemently panned by the opposition, which said it was “boastful” and “irresponsible”.

The Congress’s Anand Sharma said such statements “point to the growing desperation” of the BJP. Prime Minister’s boastful claim of being ready for a nuclear missile attack on Pakistan and US intervention are uncalled for and not in interest of national security,” he tweeted.

The Election Commission was asked by the Supreme Court today to expedite their decision on the pending complaints against PM Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah. The court has given it time till Monday.

The Congress’s appeal was being heard by the top court, has contended that altogether, 11 complaints are pending against the Prime Minister and Mr Shah. The Commission, which resolved the third complaint today, has eight more to go.

The Commission has asked for time till Wednesday, saying it has its hands full with conducting the elections and complaints against other leaders, but the court refused a larger window.

ELECTION COMMISSION GIVES CLEAN CHIT TO RAHUL OVER SPEECH AGAINST AMIT SHAH

The Election Commission has held that Congress President Rahul Gandhi did not violate the model code of conduct during an election speech in Madhya Pradesh where he called his BJP counterpart Amit Shah a “murder-accused.”

Giving a clean chit to Rahul Gandhi, EC officials said the “complaint was examined in detail and after examination of the complete transcript of speech sent by the district electoral officer of Jabalpur, the Commission is of the considered view that no violation of the model code of conduct is made out.”

Rahul Gandhi made the purported remark during an election rally in Sihora district of Madhya Pradesh on April 23. Attacking the BJP president, Rahul Gandhi reportedly said, “Murder accused BJP chief Amit Shah, Wah, kya shaan hai! (Wow, what a glory!).”

The BJP had complained to the EC about the comment.

The remark had prompted a strong rebuttal from Amit Shah, who questioned the opposition leader’s “legal knowledge” and said the “fake” charge was dismissed as “politically motivated” by the court long ago.

“Let me tell you the gist of the order. I was slapped with a fake case and the court has already passed its order that it was a politically motivated allegation and was without any evidence. I don’t want to make any comment on the legal knowledge of Rahul Gandhi,” he said.

In 2014, a special court discharged Amit Shah in the Sehrawat sheikh and Tulsiram Prajapati encounter killing cases, holding there existed “no case” against him and that he had been implicated for “political reasons.”

2019 hustings may create history with record polling

MUMBAI (TIP): The country may see the highest voter turnout since Independence in the ongoing Lok Sabha poll if the first four rounds, which clocked 67 per cent polling, is any indication says a report.

Last hustings had clocked the highest turnout at 67.6 per cent and if the remaining three phases of the seven-legged election season record more turnouts then this election will create history since Independence, says SBI Research.

Normally, psephologists and political pundits consider a higher voter turnout as an indication of anti-incumbency.

Of the 543 Lok Sabha seats, voting has been completed in 373 seats (68 per cent of the total seats) in the first four of the seven phases, which will end on May 19 after beginning on April 11.

A phase-wise turnout rate indicates that polling in 2019 is more or equal to the 2014 rate, except for the third phase. Overall turnout after the four rounds this time is 67 percent compared to 67.4 percent in 2014.

“If the same trend continues, this year’s turnout rate may cross the previous record, and will be the highest since Independence,” the report said.

It said though the delayed elections in 2018, the voter turnout was 72 percent, but it was only in Assam and Punjab, and the average turnout of 1984 and 1985, when only these two states went to polls, is coming 67.9 per cent. So far in the ongoing elections, the voter turnout in Andhra, Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka registered highest ever since 1982 or in last 57 years since Independence.

Chhattisgarh has seen a 15 years and 30 years high in voter turnout. Mumbai registered a voter turnout of 55.1 percent, which is the highest for the city since 1989, the report said.

In Assam, Bihar, UP, Andhra, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, MP (partial) and Rajasthan (partial) the polling percentage of younger voters in the 18-25 age bracket on an average is more than national average, there is a 3.3 percent increase in voter turnout (additional 4.5 million), it said.

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Election Commission to pass necessary orders on a plea seeking to begin voting at 5 am instead of 7 am in view of the Ramzan month. It is coinciding with the remaining phases of voting in the general election.

States like Maharashtra where the elderly population is higher than national average has witnessed an increase in voter turnout, though marginally.

In Karnataka and Kerala that are relatively older states (8.6 per cent elderly population, which is much higher than the national average) there is also an increased 1.6 per cent more voting (or 1.1 million), it said.

Women voters who were previously missing from electoral process due to various socio economic reasons, their numbers have come down in 2019 and are also now actively casting their votes. It said in the western states, where poverty is less, are seeing better polling this year than in the past election.

Southern states also have lower levels of deprivation, and with the exception of Tamil Nadu, they have improved their voter turnout, the report said.

BIOPIC ON MODI TO RELEASE ON MAY 24

MUMBAI (TIP): The makers of Vivek Oberoi-starrer biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Friday announced that the film would be released countrywide on May 24, a day after the results of the Lok Sabha elections are declared.

The film, ‘PM Narendra Modi’, was earlier set to release on April 11 but was banned by the Election Commission.

In its order last month, the EC had banned the screening of the film during the poll period, saying any such film that sought support of an individual or political entity or individual should not be displayed in the electronic media.

The EC order had come a day before the movie was to be presented to the producers.

Producer Sandip Ssingh said he hoped the film would have a smooth run in the theatres. “As a responsible citizen we respect the law of the country. After a lot of discussions and keeping the curiosity and excitement about the film in mind we have decided to release the film immediately after the Lok Sabha election results,” Singh said in a statement.

“We are now releasing our film on May 24. This is the first time a film will be promoted for only four days. I hope now nobody has any problem with the film and we are hoping for the smooth release this time,” he added.

Directed by Omung Kumar, the film also features Boman Irani, Manoj Joshi, Prashant Narayanan, Zarina Wahab, Barkha Sengupta and Darshan Kumar.

Suresh Oberoi and Anand Pandit are co-producers of the film.

Source: PTI

SC asks EC to consider starting polling at 5 am

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Election Commission to pass necessary orders on a plea seeking to begin voting at 5 am instead of 7 am in view of the Ramzan month. It is coinciding with the remaining phases of voting in the general election.

Source: PTI
Six surgical strikes under UPA, claims Cong; BJP calls it ‘farcical’

NEW DELHI (TIP): A war of words broke out between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress on May 2 over the issue of ‘surgical strikes’ and listing of Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a UN-designated terrorist.

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh said Indian armed forces received a free hand to respond to external threats during the Congress-led UPA’s tenure. Singh termed it “shameful and unacceptable” that the BJP was attempting to gain electoral mileage from military operations.

The Congress, later, came out with a list of six anti-terror surgical strikes carried out during the UPA rule but it never tried to take political advantage from military operations — a claim which was dubbed “fraudulent and farcical” by the BJP.

Earlier in the day, senior BJP leader and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley during a press conference said that Opposition parties were reluctant to celebrate the achievement because they feel they may have to pay a political price for it.

The UN Sanctions Committee on Wednesday had designated Pakistan-based Azhar a global terrorist after China lifted its hold on a proposal to ban him. Jaitley said the Narendra Modi government succeeded in an attempt the country has been making for the last 10 years, “but then they (Opposition) says this is trivial, what is big in it’.”

Sharda sector, across Neelam River valley, in Keri (August 30-September 1, 2011); Sawan Patra checkpost (January 6, 2013); Nazapur sector (July 27-28, 2013); Neelam valley (August 6, 2013); and one on December 23, 2013.

Congress spokespersons Rajeev Shukla and Renuka Nayak also listed two surgical strikes carried out under the previous BJP-led NDA government of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. These were Nadala Enclave, across the Neelam River (January 21, 2001) and Barahat sector in Poonch (September 18, 2001).

However, the BJP rejected the Congress’ claim of six surgical strikes during the UPA tenure. “It is a farcical and fraudulent claim. We have the greatest of respect for our armed forces. Our forces were capable of carrying out surgical strikes across the LoC, inside Pakistan, but they were not allowed to do so when the UPA was in power,” BJP national spokesperson GVL Narasimha Rao said in another press conference.

On the other hand, Jaitley, who was responding to the comments made by Singh in an interview, said the UPA government did not act against terrorists after the Mumbai terror attack in 2008 even as security forces were ready to target them. The UPA government, in fact, released 25 terrorists as a “goodwill gesture” and one of them was later involved in the Pathankot terror attack, he said.

But Nayak’s retort was: “When the former prime minister and (a former) army chief say earlier also surgical strikes have taken place and the FM says they were invisible strikes then he is raising questions not just on Vajpayeeji and Manmohan Singhji, but is also casting aspersions on the Army and the remarks made by the army chiefs at that time.”

Jaitley also rejected the Congress’ stand that it was disappointed that the UN’s decision did not make any reference to the Pulwama terror attack and Azhar’s role in terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. The UN’s listing and decision are not a “biomota” of Azhar, and they don’t have to give details of his each and every activity, the FM said. The core issue is that Azhar has been declared an international terrorist and he and his country will have to bear the consequences, Jaitley said.

Even as Manmohan Singh claimed he had given a free hand to the armed forces, Arun Jaitley said the UPA government did not act against terrorists.

Even as Mannohan Singh claimed he had given a free hand to the armed forces, Arun Jaitley said the UPA government did not act against terrorists.

CPI (Maoist) chief ‘plotted’ Gadchiroli attack

GADCHIROLI (TIP): Sources in the Gadchiroli Police have said that Nambala Keshava Rao alias Basavaraj is suspected to have masterminded Wednesday’s Naxal attack in which 15 personnel of Maharashtra’s Quick Response Team and a civilian were killed.

According to the Gadchiroli Police, preliminary probe into yesterday’s attack in which Naxals blew up a private bus using an IED points towards the involvement of Basavaraj, who is the chief of banned CPI(Maoist).

According to sources, the attack was planned by Basavaraj and executed by Naxals from both Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

Basavaraj is believed to have instructed local Naxal units of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh to carry out the attack. Post the incident, Basavaraj is believed to have gone into hiding in Abyahmad forest area of Chhattisgarh.

Following the revelation, Maharashtra Police have established contact with their counterparts in Chhattisgarh to carry out further investigation.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis informed that the state Cabinet met this morning and discussed the Gadchiroli attack.

“In today’s Cabinet meeting, we discussed the Gadchiroli Naxal attack where our jawans were martyred. The DGP and other officials have gone to the spot. Once they finish their assessment, there will be a detailed meeting. I’ll be visiting the spot today,” the CM said. As these developments happened, it was reported that Naxal banners emerged near the site of attack in Gadchiroli.

On Wednesday, 15 policemen and the driver of the private bus in which they were travelling were killed when Naxals blew up the vehicle using an improvised explosive device. Police sources also said today that they suspect some locals could have helped the Maoists in carrying out strike.

IED blast took place at Lendhari nallah in Kurkheda area. State Director General of Police Subodh Kumar Jaiswal has refused to call the Naxal attack a result of intelligence failure.

US commerce secretary Ross to meet Suresh Prabhu on May 6

NEW DELHI (TIP): India is looking forward to the visit of US commerce secretary Wilbur Ross next week as an opportunity to discuss several contentious issues, including withdrawal of benefits under the GSP programme and the ending of exemptions to sanctions on Iranian oil imports.

Ross, who is visiting New Delhi to participate in the Trade Winds Business Forum and Mission, the US commerce department has invited him to scheduled to meet commerce minister Suresh Prabhu on May 6, people familiar with developments said.

“There is a bilateral [between the US and India],” said a commerce ministry official who did not wish to be named.

The people said the US would allow the two sides to discuss the US sanctions on Iranian oil imports, which kicked in on Thursday and Thursday was brake on any ‘legitimate’ trade, with the US commerce department considering withdrawal of benefits under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said the brief of the minister was that US government was making clear that commercial considerations and “legitimate energy and commercial security interests” will guide India’s decisions on future oil imports.

India will get additional supplies from other oil-producing countries based on a “robust plan” drawn up by the petroleum ministry, he added.

PepsiCo withdraws cases against potato farmers in Gujarat

NEW DELHI (TIP): Snacks and beverages maker PepsiCo India Holdings Pvt Ltd has decided to withdraw lawsuits it had filed against nine Gujarat farmers for allegedly growing a potato variety owned by the company.

The company had registered cases of infringement of proprietary rights against four farmers in April 5 and five in 2018, demanding Rs 1 crore from each in damages.

The company had claimed that the farmers had grown potatoes of a variety known as FL2027, which it had developed and registered as a protected strain under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers’ Rights Authority’s (PPVFRA) Act. The company was involved in talks between farmer groups and the company to settle the matter. “After discussions with the government, the company has agreed to withdraw cases against farmers,” Pepsi said in a statement Thursday.

The company had pressed charges of infringement of its exclusive rights over the seed variety, which it uses in Lay’s crisps, against farmers,” Pepsico said in a statement Thursday. The Gujarat government was as a protected strain under the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers’ Rights Act, 2001.

Farm activists however claimed that section 39 of the Act allows Indian farmers to freely grow, use or sell a proprietary or a protected variety of seed as long as they don’t sell it as a “branded” item.

“PepsiCo had wrongly charged the farmers because it doesn’t give farmers the freedom to use or grow protected seeds,” the Indian legal system governing farmers because the same Act gives farmers the freedom to use or grow protected seeds. Farmers because the same Act gives farmers the freedom to use or grow protected seeds.

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**THEATER IN NYC - Plays**

By Mabel Pais

**Miracle in Rwanda**

“This story resonates with anyone who has ever found it hard to forgive. Come and see how Immaculée did it!” - Leslie Lewis, Playwright

**All Our Children**

“All Our Children,” the American premiere production of Stephen Unwin’s new play is being performed at the Sheen Center for Thought & Culture, after an acclaimed run in London’s West End.

Tony Award® winner John Glover (“Saint Joan,” “The Drowsy Chaperone,” “Love! Valour! Compassion!” on Broadway; TV’s “Smallville”) is featured in a company including Jennifer Dundas (“The Little Foxes,” “Arcadia on Broadway”), Karl Kenzler (“Piddler on the Roof,” “You Can’t Take It With You” on Broadway; “Law & Order; “House of Cards”), Tasha Lawrence (“The Looming Tower; Hulu; Royal Pains”) and Sam Lilja (“The Iceman Cometh” on Broadway). It is directed by Ethan McSweeny (Gore Vidal’s “The Best Man,” “A Time to Kill” on Broadway).

It is Germany, 1941. A terrible crime is taking place in a clinic for disabled children. The perpetrators argue that it will help struggling parents and lift the financial burden on the mighty German state. One brave voice is raised in objection. But will anyone listen? “All Our Children,” Stephen Unwin’s riveting new morality play for our time, memorializes this overlooked aspect of the Holocaust, remembering the 200,000 children and young people who died and the brave few who fought against this injustice. Karl Kenzler plays Victor Franz, a doctor who heads a clinic for disabled children, and John Glover plays Bishop von Galen, a real-life Catholic bishop who was outspoken in his opposition against the Nazis’ treatment of these young Germans.

“A powerfully performed compelling drama...about the care that people, and nations, owe to the weakest among them...it is, at its core, about the sanctity of life.” - The New York Times

“A Riveting theater...she drives home both the outward terror of the situation and (Immaculee) libigaza’s inner spiritual growth.” - The Village Voice

**The Indian Panorama**

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2019
ANANYA PANDAY: VARUN KNOWS I AM IN LOVE WITH HIM AND IT’S AWKWARD

In an interview with Elle India, Ananya Panday, who covered Elle India’s April issue in style, confessed her “love” for the former student when asked about the stars she looks up to. Mentioning Alia Bhatt and Kareena Kapoor Khan, Ananya said: “Alia Bhatt and Kareena Kapoor Khan. I am obsessed with both of them. Even Varun Dhawan! His energy, and he is so cute. He knows I am in love with him and it’s a bit awkward.”

Well, this shouldn’t come as a surprise as on Varun Dhawan’s birthday this year, Ananya poured her heart out to Varun as she wrote in her post: “Happiest birthday to the student I’ll always be crushing on!” In the comments section, Varun replied: “We must get a better picture. You’re looking solid.”

Ananya Panday also scored a hug from her favourite Alia Bhatt, who makes a special appearance in Student Of The Year 2’s Hook Up Song. “Team Shanaya for life,” Ananya captioned the photo.

The 54-year-old filmmaker, known for movies like Main Hoon Na and Om Shanti Om, says Mrs Serial Killer does not have any song, dance and no item number.

JACQUELINE TO PLAY A GIRL NEXT DOOR IN MRS SERIAL KILLER

Farah Khan’s films are known for their elaborate song and dance sequences – something also common to the movies that Jacqueline Fernandez, the lead actress of the choreographer-filmmaker’s next production Mrs Serial Killer, does. But this new project won’t have any of it.

Mrs Serial Killer is written and directed by Farah’s husband Shirish Kunder. It will go live on streaming platform Netflix later this year. The film will mark Jacqueline and Farah’s foray into the digital world.

Why was Jacqueline cast in the film? “It is about a girl next door. When Jacqueline and Shirish met and discussed it, she said that she was also hunting for something to do something she had never done before,” Farah told IANS over phone.

The 54-year-old filmmaker, known for movies like Main Hoon Na and Om Shanti Om, says Mrs Serial Killer does not have any song, dance and no item number.

TROLLS ADVISE VOTERS TO ‘USE FINGER WISELY, NOT LIKE SWARA BHASKER’

Actor Swara Bhasker has hit back at trolls who shamed her for her masturbation scene in Veere Di Wedding. The trolls shared pictures of themselves holding up placards, advising voters not to be like Swara and saying ‘use your fingers wisely’ this election season.

Swara took to Twitter to call them out for their misogynist comment. “Awwwwwww!!!!! My trolls are hard at work again, sweating it out in the heat to popularise my name. You guys are 90 dedicated & sweet!!! Don’t mind the slut-shaming guys their imagination is a bit limited. But loving the effort you two,” she wrote in a tweet.

Swara’s tweet found support from her followers. “A Bollywood actor does a scene portraying a woman masturbating in film. That alone becomes a defining moment for a bunch of regressive lunatics who seem to believe women don’t deserve or have a right to pleasure. Definitely more of a commentary on the loony bunch than the actor,” wrote one. “What the what? The regressive lunatics, although urban, apparently educated youngsters are just enraged by a woman speaking her mind? And a masturbation scene in a film is their only reference point?” wrote another.

Swara has often been shamed online for the scene from Veere Di Wedding. She was also asked on Twitter about it last year: “How masturbating related to empowerment, and that empowerment does not mean that one should masturbate in public. It’s private”. She had replied, “Sakshi was in her ‘private’ bedroom, not public. Masturbation is about owning ur body, sexuality. Empowering. In a culture that largely silences or ignores or shames female sexuality showing a girl gratifying herself in a film in a non judgemental way is empowering,” she had said.
CHARLIZE THERON USED TO FEEL LIKE ‘LOSER’ AFTER WATCHING ROM-COMS

KATY PERRY SHOWS OFF HER STYLE IN AN ELEGANT WRAP DRESS

Katy Perry commanded attention on Tuesday evening as she dined out in London, shortly after flying to London from her native Los Angeles.

The American singer showed no sign of jetlag after paying a visit to upmarket Mayfair restaurant Sexy Fish, where she caught the eye in an elegant wrap dress.

With a distinctive blue and silver print, it ensured Katy, 34, stood out as she made her way inside for a meal with friends.

Katy showed off her style credentials in the flowing number which cinched in her tiny stomach.

Kristen Stewart: ‘Charlie’s Angels’ reboot is woke and grounded

Actor Kristen Stewart said the upcoming reboot of ‘Charlie’s Angels’ is woke and grounded. The actor, who will play one of the members of the trio alongside Ella Balinska and Naomi Scott, said even though the feel of the film is a bit different from the original, it does have a fun side to it.

“At one point I think we said it was woke and grounded, and everyone was like, ‘Wait, is it still fun?’ And I’m like, ‘Yeah dude, obviously, it’s ‘Charlie’s Angels’,” Stewart told.

Elizabeth Banks is directing the film and will also star in it as Bosley, a role made famous by Bill Murray.

Stewart teased that more female stars can feature in the film.

“If you were to make that movie right now, there needs to be more than three girls. We’re all in it together. There’s an entire network of women across the entire world that are supporting each other. It feels really well-intentioned. And it’s funny and weird, too, so hopefully people have fun watching it,” she said.

SCARLETT JOHANSSON BREAKS SILENCE OVER BLACK WIDOW STAND-ALONE MOVIE

Avengers star Scarlett Johansson says the much-anticipated stand-alone of her Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) character Black Widow, will happen when the time is right. Johansson has been playing Black Widow aka Natalia Romanova since 2010’s Iron Man 2 and her latest outing as the character is Avengers: Endgame.

“I think everything happens when it’s supposed to. All I’ll say is that I think I have a greater understanding of the character now than I ever possibly could have had before.

Whatever iteration you see of this character, may or may not see of this character in the future, will be the better because of it,” the actress said.

There have been reports that Jac Scaeffer is currently penning the Black Widow movie, but neither Marvel Studios nor its parent company Disney has confirmed the news. It was also reported in March that actors Rachel Weisz, Florence Pugh, David Harbour and OT Fagbenle will star in the movie.

Source: PTI
Special Spotlight on the New York premiere of Gurinder Chadha’s “Blinded By The Light” Plus Focus on Bengali Cinema that includes Bengali Master Buddhadev Dasgupta’s “Urojahaj” (The Flight)

The New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF), the longest running, most prestigious South Asian Film Festival in North America, recently announced its 19th edition that takes place May 7 - May 12.

The New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF), full lineup celebrates Independent, art house, alternate, and diaspora films from the Indian sub-continent. May 7-May 12, at the Village East Cinemas in the Lower East Side of Manhattan (181-189 2nd Avenue, New York, NY 10003).

Dedicated to bringing these films to a New York audience, the festival will feature 32 screenings (29 narrative, 3 documentary and 32 short films). NYIFF will be featuring 7 World Premieres along with an International Premiere and 5 US premieres and the rest of the films being NY premieres.

NYIFF has been the go-to festival to see South Asian diaspora films that have not been seen in New York City and is continuing with this mission for the nineteenth year:

This year NYIFF has the largest number of regional (non-Hindi) language films - 20 in total. The languages focused on are Assamese, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Kannada, Ladakhi, Punjabi, and Harayanavi and all the films will have English subtitles.

NYIFF Festival Director Aseem Chhabra said “We are thrilled to share our lineup for this year. The NYIFF programming team has spent a number of months working, tracking films and we now present to the audience the best of Indian cinema.”

Returning to NYIFF is award-winning filmmaker, Gurinder Chadha with her new film. The festival will be hosting a Special Spotlight of Chadha’s “Blinded by the Light,” which will be making its New York debut after its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival. The film is inspired by the true story of journalist Sarfraz Manzoor and his lifelong love of Bruce Springsteen.

Bengali Master Buddhadev Dasgupta’s “Urojahaj” (The Flight) will be a part of the special focus on Bengali cinema that NYIFF will be presenting this year. Seven features will be a part of this presentation, many by first-time filmmakers, putting a spotlight on a resurgence of films from West Bengal.

Arijit Singh, a widely popular Bollywood singer will be highlighted at the festival with his second directorial venture “Sir” - a tribute to Satyajit Ray and Ravi Shankar. Anoushka Shankar plays sitar for the film.

The Opening Night film is “Sir” by Rohena Gera on May 7 following the Red Carpet and cocktail reception.

The Closing Night film of Vikas Khanna, “The Last Color” starring Neena Gupta will be honoring mothers around the world on Mother’s Day. Celebrity Chef and filmmaker Vikas Khanna was named the Brand Ambassador of the Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC). Khanna is a Michelin-star chef as well as a cookbook author, humanitarian, filmmaker and was once voted New York City’s hottest chef.

The Centerpiece film is “Photograph” by Ritesh Batra. Other highlights of the festival include

Assamese filmmaker, Rima Das whose last film “Village Rockstars” was India’s official entry for the 2019 Oscars. Rima’s new film “Bulbul Can Sing” will have its NY premiere at NYIFF along with Assamese master and National Film Award Winner Jahnua Baruwa’s World premiere of his new film “Bhoga Khirikee” (Broken Window).

Short Filmmakers Ashuman Sharma (“Jalchi”) and Vick Krishna (“Mokshi”) who were in attendance at the NYIFF Launch event on Thursday, April 18 at the Consulate General of India, New York are a part of NYIFF’s four short programs that includes a total of 32 short films.

Sunil Hall, Executive Director and President, IAAC said, “We have received tremendous support from Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty and Consulate General India, New York. Corporate sponsors such as AIR INDIA, State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda, ICICI Bank amongst others have come forward with significant contributions. The PIERRE from Taj Group continues to expand the relationship with IAAC. Local regional and community associations such as Sadhu Vaswani Centers; continue to help in supporting our expanded mandate to promote regional films.

Film schools have joined hands and now the leading broadcaster, IndiaCast with Viacom18 is our exclusive broadcast partner for NYIFF2019 in USA powered category. A special 30-minute curtain raiser and a 90-minute special on NYIFF2019 will be produced by IndiaCast and aired on Aapka Colors and Colors Rishtey. We look forward to building such relationship to make NYIFF2019 a great success.”

We are thrilled to share our lineup for this year. The NYIFF programming team has spent a number of months tracking films and we now present to the audience the best of Indian cinema”

A special 30-minute curtain raiser and a 90-minute special on NYIFF2019 will be produced by IndiaCast and aired on Aapka Colors and Colors Rishtey. We look forward to building such relationship to make NYIFF2019 a great success”

- Sunil Hall, Executive Director and President, IAAC

Day Passes are available. Students (w/ID) get discounted priced tickets

About NYIFF

The New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF) is the oldest, most prestigious film festival screening premieres of feature, documentary and short films made from, of, and about the Indian subcontinent in the Independent, arthouse, alternate and diaspora genres. Seven days of screenings, post-screening discussions, industry panels, awards ceremony, special events, networking parties, red carpet galas, media attention and packed audiences build an awareness of Indian cinema, entertain; educate North Americans about the real India, and add to the amazing cultural diversity of New York City.

About IAAC

The IAAC supports all the artistic disciplines in classical, fusion, folk and innovative forms influenced by the arts of India. We work cooperatively with colleagues around the United States to broaden our collective audiences and to create a network for shared information, resources and funding. Our focus is to help artists and art organizations in North America as well as to facilitate artists from India to exhibit, perform and produce their work here. The IAAC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.

(Mabel Pais writes on the Arts and Entertainment, Social Issues, Spirituality, and Health & Wellness)
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA
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Bhavan’s Nartanrang Dance Academy is dedicated to the loving memory of Matsushri Anasuya Amritial Shukla.
*Program is subject to change without any prior notice.
What we are is what we eat and what we eat, how we eat is related to our identity. In the changing world, more and more people are migrating to other countries. India is known for its unity in diversity. Each one of the 29 states of India and seven Union Territories offer different traditional dresses as well as different delicacies. The variety of religious practices also offers different types of foods. Jewish community has its own unique practices, more and more people in India as well as across the globe are becoming familiar with Jewish dietary regulations. This means food that may be consumed according to halakha, this is known as ‘Kosher’.

As per the Jewish Center of Public Affairs, “The Jewish community of India is the fourth largest Asian Jewish community after Israel, Asian Russia, and Iran. In 1948, at the time of the founding of the State of Israel, India had a Jewish population of approximately 30,000. Since then some 20,000 have migrated to Israel and several thousand elsewhere, leaving a community of seven to eight thousand, according to the official estimates, most of Bene’ Israel origin. No one knows for sure, but the lower figure is perhaps more correct.”

The innovative approach has helped in the growth of food industry and consumers got variety of food products. Each cook has a unique style, same ingredients may result into totally different taste. The presence of technology in the field of food has changed traditional cooking.

There are very few cooks who understand the importance of traditional cooking as well as the significance of baking. Renuka V Bhojraj was born in Bangalore, she has approached the art of baking with artistic eye. She has motherly sensitive touch for food products and backed by study of baking technology, she has successfully modified existing products and processes. She also has development of new products to her credit.

Renuka is trained, experienced and creatively inclined. Which has enabled her to serve as distinct Baking Artist with appreciation of cultural understanding of Kosher-Indian Baking.

She has been in the field of baking for nearly three decades. When she talks about products like bread, Pastries, cookies, Cakes and millet products, you could get a sense of excitement for these items in her voice. She is trained in the use of various lab equipment like Muffle Furnace, Sedimentation Shaker and Kjedahlapparatus, enzyme studies, granulation test and baking test.

Renuka is determined to learn. This passion for understanding the use of advanced technology brought her to USA. She is certified in Baking Technologies from American Institute of Baking, Manhattan. She considers herself fortunate to have a natural gift of connecting and working with people with diverse cultural identities. She says, when you love what you do, sharing it with others or training them becomes natural.

Renuka believes, baking technology is capable of producing food products with human touch, because mix of right ingredients and proportion has a human heart behind the process. She respects food and her considerate approach towards consumers makes her a sought-after baking artist, who is in demand, not just for her work but also for someone who can train others and instill the sanskaras of becoming baking artist with special aye on Kosher baking.

(The author, a Co-founder of Insight for Creativity, is passionate about empowerment of woman. A law graduate and a postgraduate in Social Sciences, she works as a para-legal with an immigration attorney in New York. She can be reached at Insight4creativity@gmail.com)
Venezuela tense as Guaido supporters clash with army

CARACAS (TIP): May Day clashes between opposition supporters and Venezuela’s armed forces in Caracas left a woman dead and 46 persons injured on Wednesday, with opposition leader Juan Guaido attempting to rally demonstrators against President Nicolas Maduro.

Jurubith Rausseo (27), died at a clinic after being hit by a “bullet in the head during (a) demonstration,” the non-governmental Venezuelan Observatory of Social Conflict said on Twitter, condemning her “murder.” Human rights organisations and health services reported 46 people injured in Wednesday’s clashes, including one person with a gunshot wound.

Tensions in Venezuela have soared since Guaido, who heads the National Assembly legislature, invoked the constitution to declare himself acting president on January 23, claiming Maduro’s re-election last year was illegitimate. National Guard troops fired tear gas at stone-throwing protesters attempting to block a highway close to the airbase in eastern Caracas where Guaido had tried on Tuesday to spark a military uprising.

second day of confrontations between opposition supporters and Maduro’s security services came as the United States said it was prepared to take military action, if necessary; to stem the crisis in the South American nation.

At least one journalist was injured when National Guard soldiers fired rubber bullets at a group of reporters covering the clashes.

Miguel Ramirez, 17, told AFP at one medical center that he had been shot in the foot while protesting on the highway near the La Carlota air base. “I didn’t manage to run and hide,” he said.

Guaido rallied his supporters in Caracas in the Labor Day demonstrations, urging them to stay in the streets.

His appeal came despite the apparent failure the day before of a revolt by some soldiers and members of the Bolivarian National Guard who joined his side.

In Tuesday’s clashes, one person was killed and dozens injured, according to human rights monitors. More than 150 people were arrested, the government and human rights organizations said.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned Venezuela’s authorities not to use deadly force against demonstrators, while the US and Russia accused each other of making the crisis worse, evoking Cold War confrontations of the past.

In a phone call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo accused Moscow of “destabilising” Venezuela. Lavrov, in turn, charged that US interference was “destructive” and “in flagrant violation of international law.”—AFP

Putin fast tracks Russian citizenship for Ukrainians

MOSCOW (TIP): Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a new decree fast-tracking Russian citizenship for some Ukrainians despite concerns the move will exacerbate the crisis between the countries.

Under a decree published on Wednesday, several categories of Ukrainian nationals will have the right to a simplified nationality process including those who already have Russian residence permits.

Other categories include Ukrainian citizens who were born in Crimea but left the peninsula before Russia annexed it in March 2014.

The fast-track procedure is implemented to protect “rights and human and civil freedoms”, said the decree which Putin signed on Monday.

The move comes after a comedian with no political experience, Volodymyr Zelensky, won a landslide victory in presidential elections in Ukraine last month. The Kremlin has not congratulated Zelensky while Putin said Moscow was thinking of making it easier for all Ukrainians to obtain Russian citizenship.

Putin had already signed a decree on April 24 allowing people living in breakaway regions of eastern Ukraine to receive a Russian passport within three months of applying for one.

President-elect Zelensky, in response, pledged to grant Ukrainian citizenship to Russians who “suffer” under Kremlin rule.

There were hopes bilateral ties might improve under a Zelensky presidency but that is now looking unlikely, analysts say.

Kiev and the West have condemned the Kremlin, accusing Putin of seeking to further destabilise Ukraine, while critics at home say the moves would be a major burden for the already-struggling Russian economy.

After a pro-Western uprising in Kiev ousted a Kremlin-backed regime in 2014, Moscow annexed Crimea and extended support to Russian-speaking separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Some in Kiev and the West worry that Moscow’s offer of citizenship to Ukrainians would give the Kremlin a justification to move troops across the border under the pretext of protecting the interests of Russian nationals. —AFP

UK PANEL GRILLS TWITTER, FB OVER ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN

LONDON (TIP): The UK Parliamentary Human Rights Committee has grilled Twitter and Facebook representatives over violent and misogynistic abuse of women users, including women MPs. MP Joanna Cherry accused Twitter of “displaying a pattern of relaxed tolerance to tweets containing violent attacks on women”. “There seems to be a pattern of Twitter initially ruling that extremely offensive and violent tweets directed at women in public life are acceptable, and that Twitter only reviews their decision when they are pressed by other figures in public life,” The Guardian reported. IANS
HAVE YOU FOUND YOUR SOULMATE IN YOUR PARTNER

Soulmates is a concept that usually makes us feel quite wary and hesitant because they are only supposed to exist in romantic comedies and romance novels. But sometimes, the stars are aligned and everything that’s meant to happen, happens! You meet your soul mate! At the risk of sounding corny, soul mates do exist in real life too. Here are signs to know if you’ve found your soul mate in your partner.

Both of you may be quite dissimilar but you balance each other out

Despite all the differences in your personality, your partner and you get along like great wine and cheese, and it’s because these very differences that find a way to balance each other and bring you closer together.

You find bliss in the silence

You know he is your soul mate when there’s bliss even between those long silences. Silences can be quite intimidating sometimes and they even make you feel vulnerable. But when you’re with your partner, even silence is comforting and peaceful.

You want to comply because you want to see him happy

We’re not talking about one-sided giving, which happens in a co-dependent and unhealthy relationship. But a relationship wherein both partners are willing to give in to the other only because it makes their counterpart happy. It’s always a two-way street.

You’re okay to not always do something exciting

When you’re with your partner (read: soul mate), it’s not always about finding the coolest pub to hit or going for an interesting date. Even if it means staying at home in your PJs with your partner, you still enjoy each other’s company.

You sense that he gets you

It’s not like he is a complete mindreader (that’d be creepy), but he gives the feeling that he understands your dreams and aspirations. His words and actions will always be supportive and as cheesy as it sounds, it feels like he is the wind beneath your wings.

He’s got your back

Whether it’s your career or your future aspirations, a partner who’s truly committed to your happiness and well-being will not only support you but also encourage you to strive for them. And as you make your climb up (sometime fall off) the professional ladder, he’s right there, in all your highs and lows.

You matter so much to each other

When your partner sticks by you even when times are rough, you know he’s in it for the long run. And when you’re down and out, feel completely wounded and tell him that, he’s not only comforting you, he empathises with you. When you’re truly in love, your partner’s pain becomes yours as well, and you try to do everything in your capacity to make it disappear.

Source: Femina

Unwanted sexting can lead to psychological distress

Latest findings draw a link between sexting and psychological distress among young adults. While sending or receiving nude electronic images may not always be associated with poorer mental health, being coerced to do so and receiving unwanted sexts was linked to a higher likelihood of depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms, a recent study suggests.

As part of the study, the researchers found that receiving unwanted texts and sexting under coercion was also associated with lower self-esteem. Furthermore, males receiving unwanted sexts had poorer mental health outcomes.

The findings of the study were published in the Journal of Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking.

“With more of our lives playing out online, sexting and other seemingly private communications may be contributing to an indelible digital footprint. Digital sex is a much-needed topic in today’s sexual education programmes to ensure responsible use of technologies,” explained Brenda K. Wiederhold, lead author of the study.

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**Food Corner**

**Bread Biryani**

**Ingredients**
- Basmatic rice - 1 cup
- Coconut milk - 1/2 cup
- Green peas - 1/4 cup
- Radish - 1/4 cup, grated
- Carrot - 1/4 cup, grated
- Coconut - 1/4 cup, grated
- Onions - 2, chopped
- Bread slices - 4, crusts removed, sliced in small pieces
- Cashews - 5
- Almonds - 5, soaked, peeled
- Black pepper powder - 1/2 tsp
- Cumin powder - 1/2 tsp
- Gasa gasa - 1 tsp
- Cardamom - 1
- Cloves - 1
- Cinnamon - 1
- Ginger garlic paste - 1 tsp
- Ghee - 3 tsp
- Curry leaves - few
- Coriander leaves - few
- Salt as per taste

**Method**
- Dry roast and grind the cardamom, cloves and cinnamon to a fine powder.
- Heat a little ghee in a pan. Fry the basmati rice for 30 to 45 seconds.
- Remove and keep aside.
- Add a little ghee to the pan and fry the bread pieces till crisp.
- Keep aside.
- Grind the almonds, cashewnuts, coconut and gasa gasa to a smooth paste.
- Heat a little ghee in a pressure cooker.
- Add the cinnamon powder, ginger garlic paste, onions, salt and curry leaves.
- Saute well for a minute or two.
- Add the radish, carrot, green peas and ground coconut paste.
- Stir well and add the fried paneer pieces.
- Simmer for a minute and remove from flame.

**Paneer Spinach Dal**

**Ingredients**
- Moong Dal - 500 gms
- Tomato - 1, small, finely chopped
- Onion - 1, small, finely chopped
- Oil - 2 tblsp
- Garlic - 2 cloves, crushed
- Ginger - 3/4 tsp, grated
- Coconut Milk - 750 ml
- Paneer - 400 gms, cubed
- Spinach Leaves - 200 gms, chopped
- Coriander Leaves - handful
- Salt as per taste

**Method**
- Wash and rinse the dal.
- Boil for 10 to 15 minutes until tender and drain well.
- Heat oil in a pan over medium flame.
- Saute the tomatoes, onions, ginger and garlic for 3 minutes.
- Add the coconut milk and cooked dal to the pan.
- Simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Heat little oil in a nonstick pan.
- Fry the paneer cubes until light golden brown and keep aside.
- Add the spinach leaves to the dal and mix well.
- Cook for 5 minutes and add the fried paneer pieces.
- Simmer for a minute and remove from flame.
- Garnish with coriander leaves.
- Serve as a side dish to naan, roti or fried rice.
SUFFERING FROM HIGH BP? DON’T TAKE WORK STRESS LIGHTLY

If you are finding it hard to deal with the pressure at the workplace, there is more reason to worry. New research has found that work stress and impaired sleep are linked to a threefold higher risk of cardiovascular death in employees with hypertension.

“Sleep should be a time for recreation, unwinding, and restoring energy levels. If you have stress at work, sleep helps you recover,” said study author Karl-Heinz Ladwig, Professor at Technical University of Munich, Germany.

“Unfortunately poor sleep and job stress often go hand in hand, and when combined with hypertension the effect is even more toxic,” Ladwig said.

The study included around 2,000 hypertensive workers aged 25-65, without cardiovascular disease or diabetes.

Compared to those with no work stress and good sleep, people with both risk factors had a three times greater likelihood of death from cardiovascular disease, showed the findings published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology. People with work stress alone had a 1.6-fold higher risk while those with only poor sleep had a 1.8-times higher risk, the study said.

In the study, work stress was defined as jobs with high demand and low control—for example when an employer wants results but denies authority to make decisions. “If you have high demands but also high control, in other words you can make decisions, this may even be positive for health,” said Ladwig.

Source: IANS

NATURAL WAYS TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE

Walk and exercise regularly
Exercise is one of the best things you can do to lower high blood pressure. Regular exercise helps make your heart stronger and more efficient at pumping blood, which lowers the pressure in your arteries.

Reduce your sodium intake
Salt intake is high around the world. In large part, this is due to processed and prepared foods. For this reason, many public health efforts are aimed at lowering salt in the food industry.

Drink less alcohol
Drinking alcohol can raise blood pressure. In fact, alcohol is linked to 16% of high blood pressure cases around the world. While some research has suggested that low-to-moderate amounts of alcohol may protect the heart, those benefits may be offset by negative effects.

Eat more potassium-rich foods
Potassium is an important mineral. It helps your body get rid of sodium and ease pressure on your blood vessels. Modern diets have increased most people’s sodium intake while decreasing potassium intake.

To get a better balance of potassium to sodium in your diet, focus on eating fewer processed foods and more fresh, whole foods.

Breastfeeding important for brain growth of premature babies

Feeding premature babies mostly breast milk during the first month of life appears to stimulate more robust brain growth, suggests a recent study. The details were presented in the Meeting Pediatric Academic Societies.

“Our previous research established that vulnerable preterm infants who are fed breast milk early in life have improved brain growth and neurodevelopmental outcomes. It was unclear what makes breastfeeding so beneficial for newborns’ developing brains,” said Katherine M. Ottolini, lead author of the study published in the journal Cell Metabolism.

The research-clinicians enrolled babies with low birth weight (less than 1,500 grams) and 32 weeks gestational age or younger at birth in the first week of life. The team then gathered data from the right frontal white matter and the cerebellum — a brain region that enables people to maintain their balance and perform muscle coordination and that supports high-order cognitive functions.

The team generated light signatures for key metabolites and calculated the quantity of each metabolite.

- Cerebral white matter showed significantly greater levels of a molecule similar to glucose for babies fed breast milk, compared with babies fed formula.
- And the infants whose parents were fed breast milk was associated with significantly greater levels of both water-soluble nutrients.
- “Key metabolite levels ramp up during the time babies’ brains experience exponential growth. Seeing greater quantities of this metabolite denotes more rapid changes and higher cellular maturation. Choline is a marker of cell membrane turnover; when new cells are generated, we see choline levels rise,” said Katherine M. Ottolini, the study’s lead author.

Already, children’s national leverages an array of imaging options that describe normal brain growth, which makes it easier to spot when fetal or neonatal brain development goes awry, enabling earlier intervention and more effective treatment.
PLASMA-SPewing BLACK HOLE DRAGGING SPACETIME

Astronomers have discovered a black hole, almost 8,000 light-years from Earth, pumping rapidly swinging plasma jets into the surrounding universe at a speed so fast that it is dragging spacetime. The research, published in the journal Nature, shows jets from V404 Cygni’s black hole behaving in a way never seen before on such short timescales. The jets appear to be rapidly rotating with high-speed clouds of plasma—potentially just minutes apart—shooting out of the black hole in different directions. This is one of the most extraordinary black hole systems I have ever come across,” said Associate Professor James Miller-Jones, from the Australia’s Curtin University node of the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR).

Like many black holes, it is feeding on a nearby star, pulling gas away from the star and forming a disk of material that encircles the black hole and spirals towards it under gravity.

MICROSOFT 365 GETS MORE PRIVACY CONTROLS

With the aim of helping organisations strengthen their data privacy practices, Microsoft has added new features to ‘Microsoft 365’ that include controls to automatically expire or revoke access to encrypted emails and data investigation capabilities.

‘Microsoft 365’ is an integrated bundle of Windows 10, Office 365 and Enterprise Mobility and Security (EMS) solutions by the tech giant, sold on a subscription basis.

“Now with Office 365 Advanced Message Encryption, admins have additional controls to automatically expire or revoke access to encrypted emails through a secure web portal,” Budra Mitra, Partner Director of Microsoft 365 Security and Compliance, wrote in a blog post on Tuesday.

“For example, with Advanced Message Encryption, you can leverage sensitive information types—such as health IDs—and automatically encrypt and expire the message after 30 days, which may be specified by the organisation’s internal or external compliance requirement,” Mitra added.

The update in Microsoft 365 also allows organisations to quickly delete sensitive information in the event of a data leak.

“In the event of a data leak, you can create an investigation to search and identify impacted content or people then delete the email messages that may contain confidential information to prevent end users from accessing the content,” Mitra noted.

Microsoft also added new features in Teams, including data loss prevention and information barriers, to help organisations prevent sensitive information unintentionally being shared or leaked when using Teams.

NETFLIX SAYS ITS NEW HIGH-QUALITY AUDIO IS EQUIVALENT TO A MASTER

Netflix announced today that it’s bringing “studio quality” sound to its audiences. The company is increasing its audio bitrate up to 640 kbps on devices that support 5.1 surround sound and up to 768 kbps for Dolby Atmos – though you’ll need to be a Premium subscriber for that. It’s also bringing adaptive streaming, a feature it’s long used for video, to your speakers. So, your audio bitrate will be based on network conditions and device performance limitations.

The goal is to make the sound more crisp, more immersive and to “bring the viewer closer to the story.” It also helps out users with slower internet connections, since the adaptive streaming can scale down audio quality instead of stopping the video and forcing it to re-buffer.

According to Netflix, its “high-quality sound feature is not loud but that it is perceptually transparent.” So while the audio will be compressed, you won’t notice the difference between what your surround sound system delivers and the studio version - or so Netflix says.

Through internal tests, Netflix determined that, for Dolby Digital Plus, 640 kbps is the point at which additional quality is imperceivable, and for Dolby Atmos, Netflix says the threshold is 768 kbps. Theoretically, bitrates higher than that would only slow devices. Some audiophiles might disagree.

Apparently, the changes were inspired by the Duffer Brothers. When Netflix invited the duo to view Stranger Things 2 in a living room setting to get a feel for audiences’ perspective, they were less than impressed with the way the audio came across. Netflix boosted the bitrates for the show, and since then, it says it’s been working to roll out similar improvements more broadly. Of course, this could just be an easy bullet point to highlight the next time Netflix decides to raise prices.

“The challenge is bringing this to the most members possible,” Sean Sharma, Netflix’s director of engineering, said during an interview with Engadget.

Google to let you auto-location tracking data

Water found in samples from asteroid Itokawa

Scientists, including one of Indian origin, have found water in the samples from the surface of asteroid Itokawa that were collected by the Japanese space probe Hayabusa.

The first-ever measurements of water contained in the samples from Itokawa suggest that impacts early in Earth’s history by similar asteroids could have delivered as much as half of our planet’s ocean water, said researchers from the Arizona State University (ASU) in the US.

Itokawa is a peanut-shaped asteroid about 1,800 feet long and 700 to 1,000 feet wide. It circles the Sun every 18 months at an average distance of 1.3 times the Earth-Sun distance.

Part of Itokawa’s path brings it inside Earth’s orbit and at farthest, it sweeps out a little beyond that of Mars.

“We found the samples we examined were enriched in water compared to the average for inner solar system objects,” said Ziliang Jin, a postdoctoral scholar in ASU’s School of Earth and Space Exploration.

“The team’s idea of looking for water in the Itokawa samples came as a surprise for the Hayabusa project. Until we proposed it, no one thought to look for water,” said Maitrayee Bose, an assistant professor at ASU.

“I’m happy to report that our hunch paid off,” said Bose, co-author on the researcher paper published in the journal Science Advances.

In two of the five particles, the team identified the mineral pyroxene. In terrestrial samples, pyroxenes have water in their crystal structure.

Bose and Jin suspected that the Itokawa particles might also have traces of water, but they wanted to know exactly how much.

Itokawa has had a rough history involving heating, multiple impacts, shocks, and fragmentation.

These would raise the temperature of the minerals and drive off water, researchers said.
TRUMP AGAIN GOES AFTER INDIA ON TRADE
SAYS IT SLAPS ‘BIG TARIFFS’ ON AMERICAN PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON (TIP): US President Donald Trump has criticised India’s “big tariffs” on American paper products and the iconic Harleys-Davidson motorcycle, saying the US has been losing billions of dollars to countries like India, China and Japan.

Addressing a Republican political rally in Wisconsin capital city on Sunday, Trump alleged that every country has been ripping off America for years.

The President has repeatedly claimed that India is a “tariff king” and imposes “tremendously high” tariffs on American products.

“For so many decades we’ve been losing tens of billions of dollars to China and Japan, and India, and we lost it all...we lost more money,” he said to cheering supporters.

He said that the US was being charged high tariffs on foreign paper products.

“We charge other countries zero tariffs on foreign paper products, but when Wisconsin paper companies want to sell paper to China, and China charges us big tariffs, India charged us big tariffs, Vietnam charged us massive tariffs,” Trump said.

He claimed that people of the US demanded a government that puts America first.

“Yesterday we announced that we’re going to put 20 per cent tariffs on Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Look at Harley-Davidson. I met with them three years ago, they would tell me tough to do business in certain kind. I asked ‘How you’re doing in India?’ and they said, ‘Oh, we don’t do any business’. They weren’t even complaining because it’s been a long time.

“So India charged a 100 per cent tariff on Harley-Davidson, but when they send their motorcycles and they may come to us, ‘we charge them nothing’,” Trump said.

“So I called up Prime Minister Modi, I said unfair, be cut it 50 per cent...but that’s not good enough because look, it’s 50 per cent to nothing. And what we’re doing is changing all of that stuff, changing all of that rapidly,” he added.

India is pressing for exemption from the high duty imposed by the US on certain steel and aluminum products, resumption of export benefits to certain domestic products under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme, greater market access for its products from agriculture, automobile, automobile components and engineering sectors.

On the other hand, the US is demanding greater market access through a cut in import duties for its agriculture goods, dairy products, medical devices, IT and communication items. India has stated that it would be difficult for them to cut duties on IT products. Source: PTI

Apple logs $58-Bn revenue, services hit record high

CUPERTINO (TIP): Riding on the growth in its Services and wearable segments, Apple has posted a revenue of $58 billion for its second quarter of 2019—a decline of 5 per cent from the year-ago quarter.

The revenue from iPhones was $31.65 billion — down from the year-ago quarter but enough to make up over 53 per cent of the entire revenue.

The revenue from Apple’s non-hardware business like iCloud, Apple Music and App Store surged to $11.5 billion this quarter.

“Our March quarter results show the continued strength of our installed base of over 1.4 billion active devices, as we set an all-time record for Services, and the strong momentum of our Wearables, Home and Accessories category, which set a new March quarter record,” Apple CEO Tim Cook said in a statement late Tuesday.

This is a good quarter for Apple compared to the last one where the company admitted poor iPhone sales and revised its earnings guidance. A The iPhone sales had fallen 15 per cent from the year prior in Apple’s first quarter.

Maruti sales skid 17%

NEW DELHI (TIP): The country’s largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India today reported 17.2% decline in sales at 1,43,340 units in April.

The company had sold 1,72,986 units in April last year.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said in a statement.

Domestic sales declined by 18.7% at 1,34,088 units last month as against 1,48,978 units in the year-ago month, it added.

Sales of mini cars comprising Alto were at 22,766 units as compared to 37,794 units in April last year, down 39.8%.

Sales of compact segment, including models such as Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire, were down 13.9% at 72,146 units as against 83,834 units in April last year, the company said.

India manufacturing, retail top priority: Apple CEO Tim Cook

CUPERTINO (TIP): Reiterating that India is an important market for Apple, CEO Tim Cook said the current iPhone manufacturing will see maximum growth in days to come amid the renewed push to open its branded retail stores in the country.

In an earnings call with analysts after declaring its Q2 results late Tuesday, Cook said the company has made some “adjustments in India and have seen preliminary some better results there”.

“India is a very important market in the long-term in state the company says in the short-term. But we’re learning a lot. “We have started manufacturing there which is very important to be able to serve the market in a reasonable way. And we’re growing that capability there,” said the Apple CEO.

Giving an impetus to its India manufacturing plans, Apple has started the assembling of iPhone 7 at its supplier Wistron’s facility in Bengaluru. Taiwanese industrial major Wistron already assembles iPhone 6s in the country. Cook also emphasised on the company’s plans to open its branded stores in India.

“We would like to place retail stores there. And we’re working with the government to seek approval to do that. And so, we plan on going in there with sort of all of our might,” said Cook.

Apple is slowly but steadily strategizing its plans to make deeper inroads in a country where over 450 million people use smartphones, mostly Android and from China.

Amazon’s freight service has a truckload of rivals

LOS ANGELES (TIP): As Amazon.com Inc targets traditional brokers that match shippers with truckers, it’s also battling a bevy of startups — including Uber Freight and a company funded by the e-commerce giant’s founder Jeff Bezos.

The world’s biggest retailer made a splash in truck brokerage circles after Freight Waves reported on Friday that Amazon’s freight service, launched in a handful of Northeastern states last summer, was discounting market rates by as much as one-third.

“The analysis suggesting dramatic undercutting of pricing is false,” Amazon said in a statement.

The company — which is investing billions of dollars to build an air, sea and land shipping network to contain its own costs — has never been shy about squeezing the companies it seeks to unseat.

Analysts said its fight for a slice of the more than $700 billion U.S. companies spend on trucking each year could pose a long-term threat to leading truck brokers like C.H. Robinson Worldwide and United Parcel Service.

But, they added, that could be offset by Amazon’s penchant for competing with the companies that sell on its site or pay for its services. “Not all customers will be looking to turn over their confidential supply chain data to Amazon, particularly larger players in the retail and consumer products businesses,” Cowen & Co analyst Jason Seidl said in a note.

Investors are betting that technology can transform the fragmented truck brokerage business that ran for decades on personal relationships and telephone calls.

They’ve poured millions of dollars into startups like Uber, Transfix and Convoy — the latter of which raised nearly $270 million from Bezos and other backers.

Anheuser-Busch InBev, Colgate-Palmolive Co and other companies have kicked the tires on those upstarts, which aim to dominate by building a massive network of shippers and drivers.

Three shippers, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said Uber Freight is pricing aggressively as it fights for a foothold and its parent Uber Technologies racks up massive losses.

David Uncapher, Owens Corning’s director of global transportation until late last year, said Convoy’s prices were 5 to 15 percent lower than the company’s other brokers, which had far greater geographic reach.

Amazon declined to comment on Convoy, which did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Skeptics said startups don’t have a lock on new technology and noted that Coyote Logistics, the truck brokerage UPS bought for $1.8 billion in 2015, did a better-than-expected job of holding down the delivery company’s costs during the 2018 holiday shipping surge. Source: Reuters
Aries:
Ganesha says new vistas will beckon and there will be meetings and prolonged travel. You may also make contact with old associates from a long time ago and there could be many fun-filled moments. There will be time for leisure and indulging in your favourite hobbies. This is also a great time for the creatively inclined. An interesting period with fun and success, assures Ganesha. There will also be a lot of travel. You will be moving fast and making fruitful contact.

Taurus:
Expenses mount and you look seriously at cutting back on non-essentials. There will be partying, new friendships and many fun times. Ganesha's blessings are with you. As the period ends, there is movement and bluster. Expenses mount and there could be domestic worries. Accidents and possible hospitalization may also be a cause for concern. New projects will also get underway and you have your plate full. There will be romantic dinners, overnight trips, exotic travel and shopping.

Gemini:
There will be many things to binge on and you may have to watch your weight. You could go overboard with all the drinking and eating. This is a period of indulgence. You will have to be a bit careful here. This is an auspicious period for behind-the-scenes activities. Ganesha suggests caution, since there's a danger of accidents. You will need to use tact and patience in all your dealings, but more so at work, since there is the likelihood of setbacks.

Cancer:
There could be likelihood also, of a hurt, a sense of sorrow / disillusionment or pain. Better times will come, and then your plans and hopes will click smoothly, without your needing to worry too much, says Ganesha. This period will see you pulled in different directions. At one level, work and domestic responsibilities weigh you down. At another level, you want time to indulge your fantasies and fly. You want to dream and be carefree.

Leo:
You are busy with all sorts of things and your energies are diffused. You are caught up in the frenzy of activity. There are also many domestic issues calling your attention. You are walking the tightrope. The tide steadies somewhat as the period wears on. There are important forces at play here and you are pushed into career expansion at full throttle. There may be some travel thrown in too, but you emerge the winner in the cauldron of events that try to snare you.

Virgo:
These are grand times and you just want to partake of the miracle of life with gusto. The expansion of last period in several spheres of your life continues unabated. You look at new horizons and new targets and set very high goals for yourself. So, there is a lot happening on all fronts and you are hard pressed. This period gives you an extra edge to succeed. Passion overwhelms you.

Libra:
Ganesha asks you to be careful while playing with fire. Put a cap on your famed passion and temper as they are both very inflammable and could only get you into trouble. There will be tremendous appreciation for your work and loyalty and your image catapults into the stratosphere. You are basking in the spotlight. The 3 P's - power, pelf and privileges - are yours. There is also a good chance that you could indulge in philanthropy.

Scorpio:
You meet up with friends and extended family and take a break from the mundane and the humdrum. As the period unfolds, the work area intensifies. You slog away and burn the midnight oil. You are in an expansion mode and are making new contacts and connections. There could be a rich haul if all the new contacts are optimized. It is a hectic period. Plans and projects will click. Ganesha says always stay happy and healthy in life.

Sagittarius:
Ganesha says don't be in a tearing hurry to get things done, and keep your personal equations balanced. You will try to make this a time to consolidate your gains and then try to build further. Ideas, plans, long-term projections for the future will come spontaneously and you will know just how to implement them. As a continuation, Ganesha gives you a truly marvellous period to fulfill your desires.

Capricorn:
You are renewing old contacts and making new ones. There are journeys of all kinds ahead. You go full steam to achieve your goals. You are a great hit with people. Though normally reticent and retiring by nature, you make waves in group activities. Right now, you are riding the crest of the tallest wave and enjoying every delirious moment. You look for a super power or a greater consciousness to guide you.

Aquarius:
There will be luck escorting you in all your ventures and so you needn't worry. Ganesha's blessings will always be with you. This is also a great time for creative work, and you will be well rewarded. Writers, painters, musicians, actors, artists will be in for windfall as they make money and earn fame. You love the whiff of money and are also sensible enough not to waste hard-earned bucks.

Pisces:
Ganesha says that you will manage to communicate magnificently, make contacts with new people, gain a stronghold on new work, new contacts, new assignments, and do it well. You will cultivate the right mindset to deal with people of all kinds. Also, you will be signing important documents and contracts and cheques. Loans and other monetary instruments will occupy your time as you make serious decisions to forge ahead.
The word “akshaya” means indestructible. In Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna had said that his devotees can never perish and will remain invincible. He ensured that the mahatmas, who were involved in loving and selfless devotional service to him, received special care and attention. He provided them with the virtue of fearlessness, known as abhaya, from all sorts of material entrapment and anxieties. Akshaya Tritiya’s festivities have a similar symbolism.

According to Bhagavad Gita, when the results of pious activities are exhausted, people return to this mortal planet again from Swargaloka (heaven). If they have done bad deeds, then they are pushed into the dark regions of hellish planets where they suffer incessantly.

This day, however, also carries Lord Vishnu’s blessings. Any pious deed performed on this day is carried forth by the door and they can reap eternal benefits from it. Akshay Tritiya generally falls in late April or early May. Mostly it is celebrated on the 108th day of the year. This festival of immortality is equally revered by the Hindu and Jain community and is associated with various traditions and rituals. It is said that any initiative taken on this day awards the person with unending merits throughout their life. This year Akshaya Tritiya falls on May 7.

Did you know that there is another aspect of a Chandan Yatra that’s associated with Akshay Tritiya. The festival of Chandan Yatra is celebrated in Vrindavan and Jagannath Puri, whereby the deities of Lord Krishna and his forms are decorated with huge amounts of sandalwood paste, completely covering his entire body in chandan.

History of Akshaya Tritiya

The celebration of every festival in Vedic religion is associated with a story mentioned in the scriptures. The pious day of Akshaya Tritiya, blessed by Lord Vishnu, is loaded with spiritual significance.

The starting of Treta Yuga

Every yuga has a starting day and an ending day. The second celestial cycle or Treta Yuga (having a span of 1,296,000 years) started on the auspicious day of Akshaya Tritiya.

Commencement of compilation of the Mahabharata

Srila Vyasa-deva, the great herculean task of compilation of the great epic Mahabharata with Lord Ganesha on this day.

The appearance day of Lord Parshuram

As per Skand Purana, Lord Parshuram, the son of Mahrishi Jamdagni and Mother Remuka appeared on this day.

The meeting of Lord Krishna and Sudama

It is said that on this day, Lord Krishna’s Brahmin Friend Sri Sudama visited him in Dwarka and offered him a handful of chipped rice as an offering out of unconditional love.

Breaking of one year-long fast by Lord Rishabhdeva

According to Jain literature, it is said that Lord Rishabhdeva, the first Jain Tirthankara broke his one-year long fast on this day, which he had been observing by drinking only sugar cane juice.

Receiving of Akshaya Patra by the Pandavas

Lord Krishna gave the Pandavas, an Akshaya Patra or an imperishable vessel, during their period of exile. It provided them with a supply of an infinite amount of food.

The commencement of 21 days of Chandan Yatra

The devotees in Jagannath Puri and Vrindavan smear the idols’ faces with a huge amount of sandalwood paste. They do that in order to give them relief from the scorching heat of the summer. This is in accordance with the time that occurred with Srinali of Nathdwara and his dear devotee, Sri Madhavendra Puri.

The opening of the doors of Lord Badrinath

On this day, doors of Lord Badrinath are opened and devotees go and worship him.

The lotus feet darshan of Sri Bankey Bihari in Vrindavan

Only on this day, there is Mangala Aarti in Sri Bankey Bihari Mandir of Vrindavana and people get a chance to have a darshan of his lotus feet.

Significance of Akshaya Tritiya

The day of Akshaya Tritiya holds great significance for the Hindus and Jains. They perform various rituals on this day to keep their mind and heart sacred. Following the advice of the shastras, some people observe fast on this day and worship Lord Krishna with 16 items of puja, called Shodashopchar Puja. People visit temples and offer items such as grains, wheat, rice, clothes, gold, gemstones, water, etc., in charity to the Brahmins and the poor and needy people. Many people organise a big community feast called bhandara and feed people.

It is also a custom to purchase some gold and other valuable items on this day as it is believed that purchasing gold will provide one with the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi and allow prosperity and wealth to flourish at home.

According to astrology, Akshaya Tritiya is considered as the day when the lines of destiny or fate change and, hence, people are advised to propitiate and venerate the deities so as to get their blessings. As per Muhurat Chintamani, the day of Akshaya Tritiya is considered as Swayam Siddha Muhurat. Any auspicious work can be done on this day without worrying about timings. Hence, a lot of weddings and other auspicious ceremonies take place on this day.

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.”
Indian Man Charged with Kidnapping in Middletown, Ohio

MIDDLETOWN, OH (TIP) - Dalvird Singh from India, age 24, who is addicted to heroin, was taken into custody by Middletown Division of Police in Ohio and charged with 2 counts of Kidnapping, felonious assault for dragging an elderly lady, and grand theft. On 4-25-2019 at 4:18pm the Middletown Division of Police received a call that a car with children inside had been stolen at Atrium Medical Center and an elderly lady was injured. We found that Nita Coburn, age 69, had taken another woman to the hospital and her two grandchildren were with her in the back seat. When they got to the emergency room, Nita pulled up close to the door and was helping the other woman into the Emergency Room. About ten seconds after she got out of the car a man, Dalvird Singh, jumped into the driver’s seat and took off with the vehicle as it was moving. Nita didn’t realize the children were able to escape because they flew out of the passenger side and by this time, she was chasing the car on the driver’s side. Nita opened the driver’s door to regain control of the vehicle she thought her grandchildren were in, Dalvird slammed the door shut again and locked the door. She hung onto the vehicle panicking because she thought the children were still inside. The vehicle drug her until it accelerated at a high rate of speed and she was forced to let go. Officers Kirby and Engleka observed the stolen vehicle fleeing the scene on University Blvd. near Nelbar St. It was stopped and Dalvird Singh was taken into custody.

Chief Mutterspaw stated, “This little guy is a hero. No question. He pulled his sister out of the car with no concern for his own safety. That is incredible at his age and outstanding work by Officers Kirby and Engleka to find the suspect and take him down without incident. So proud of their work.”

Applications for the post of Chauffeur invited

Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations, New York invites applications for the post of Chauffeur.

For more details visit https://pminewyork.gov.in/

The last date for submission of proposals is 20 May, 2019.
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MARKETING STAFF REQUIRED

We are looking for marketing persons for The Indian Panorama print editions and the web portal at a couple of locations which include Long Island, Queens, Manhattan and Buffalo in New York, Jersey City and Edison in New Jersey, Stamford in Connecticut, Atlanta in Georgia, Houston and Dallas in Texas, and Chicago in Illinois.

Persons with experience in newspaper reporting will be preferred.

The individual must be a person with experience in marketing and public relations, confident, independent and able to handle marketing on his/her own with minimum support from the management.

Compensation will be based on experience with up to 40% revenue created by the individual.

Anyone who would like to work with us part time and on the basis of revenue sharing may email to salujaindra@gmail.com or contact at 646-247-9458.
The designation of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist came as a victory for American diplomacy. "Congrats to our team at @USUN for their in negotiating JEM's Masood Azhar's #UN designation as a terrorist. The long-anticipated action is a victory for American diplomacy and the international community against terrorism, and an important step towards peace in South Asia," US-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted. "Imran's China trip played crucial role".

The "breakthrough" in designating Masood Azhar as a global terrorist came during Imran Khan’s recent visit to China where the two sides agreed to withdraw their opposition to the latest move to blacklist the JeM chief, a media report said here on Thursday.

The US, France along with the UK had moved the proposal to designate Azhar as a "global terrorist" in the UN Security Council’s 1267 Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee in February, just days after Islamabad moved the proposal to designate Azhar, the Express Tribune, quoting a report published in Times of India.

Hours after sanctions were imposed on Azhar, the Express Tribune, quoting diplomatic sources, reported that Pakistan and China held extensive discussions before making a decision on the Azhar issue. "It is believed that the breakthrough came during the recent visit of PM Imran Khan to China where both sides agreed to withdraw opposition to the latest move after realising that Islamabad’s concerns were addressed," the report said.

But the source told the paper that the listing does not mean the person should be detained. Another official claimed that authorities were unaware of Azhar’s whereabouts. The report also claimed that Islamabad agreeing to the designation of Azhar as a global terrorist was a "paradigm shift" in the counter-terrorism policy.

An official said Khan had made a public commitment that Pakistan’s soil would not be used against any country. (PTI)

**TRUMP PROPOSES NEW RESTRICTIONS FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Trump has signed a Presidential Memorandum April 29 to ensure legitimate asylum-seekers can access asylum while more efficiently processing and removing illegal immigrants who are not eligible and who do not qualify.

"The biggest loophole drawing illegal aliens to our borders is the use of fraudulent or meritless asylum claims to gain entry to our great country," said Trump.

The President is directing his Administration to propose regulations to:

- Streamline the court proceedings for aliens who pass initial fear determinations.
- Adjudicate all asylum applications in immigration courts within 180 days of filing.
- Require fees for asylum applications and work permit applications.
- Ban aliens who have entered or attempted to enter the country illegally from receiving provisional work permits prior to being approved for relief.
- Immediately revoke the work authorization of aliens who receive final removal orders.

The President is directing the Secretary of Homeland Security to reprioritize the assignment of immigration officers to improve the integrity of credible fear adjudications, strengthen law enforcement, and enforce removal orders from immigration judges.

According to White House statistics, US immigration system has reached a breaking point as we continue to see an overwhelming surge of migrants, with more than 100,000 arriving at our border in March alone. As a result of loopholes in United States immigration law, migrants claiming fear are often released into communities across the United States, where they often remain indefinitely.

In order to remain in the country, they often fail to show up to court hearings, fail to file an asylum application, or fail to comply with removal orders once their claims have been denied.

The White House further states that illegal migrants with meritless claims have used the asylum system to enter the US illegally and remain here indefinitely.

On average, out of every 100 aliens subject to expedited removal who claim a fear of persecution, only about 12 will ultimately be granted asylum. Around half of all aliens who make a credible fear claim and are subsequently placed in removal proceedings do not actually apply for asylum.

The number of aliens who do not show up to court and are ordered removed in absentia has soared, with 17,200 removal orders issued in absentia in the first quarter of fiscal year (FY) 2019.

**MASSIVE SIKH DAY PARADE TAKEN OUT IN NEW YORK CITY**

The Parade started from 37th Avenue on Madison and headed to 25th Street where free food (langar) was served.

A Sikh conference, as always, was held at which the Sikh leaders spoke about the agenda before the community.

A huge diplomatic victory for India, the appointment of Masood Azhar as a global terrorist came in international community against American diplomacy and the unilateral action of the US.

It is a big relief to Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), mainly Sikhs, who have taken asylum in foreign countries as this will help the asylum-takers get consular services in the USA and other countries of the US.

Many of the beneficiaries will be asylum-shedding from Punjab who had taken asylum in countries like Canada and the US, citing fear of religious pursuit back home during the crackdown on pro-Khalistan movement. They had been facing problems in getting visa and OCI benefits in their respective Indian missions that maintain local black lists comprising names of such asylum-seekers in addition to the central black list.

According to the report, the Modi government, acknowledging the sensitivities of many Sikh asylum-takers and their family members who have not been able to visit their native places or relatives even years after the end of Sikh militancy, has now issued instructions to all missions/posts abroad to abolish local black lists. The missions have been asked to provide all asylees and their family members with visas and OCI services, including visa services and OCI-related benefits. At the same time, it has directed the missions to continue with the usual checks and due diligence in line with the existing orders.

Sources said the decision reflects the reorientation of the asylum policy of the government of India, in which economic migrants were forced to pass themselves off as victims of political persecution in order to escape the bleak economic conditions in India.

The Indian Panorama reached out to Ambassador Sandeep Chadhary, Consul General of India in New York, to verify the TOI report who said details and certain clarifications were awaited from government of India. Once, the picture is clear; he said, he will issue a press note. He also added he may invite community leaders to inform them about India’s counter-terrorism policy with regard to providing consular services to the asylees.

**DEALING WITH FUNDAMENTALIST TERRORISM**

Integrate intelligence-gathering and coordinate with all investigating and intelligence agencies.

Though it was never established, the concept had some major lacunae. Unless the NCTC is empowered to conduct counter-terrorism operations like its US counterpart, on which the Indian version was expected to be based, urban terrorism in the country will remain a cause for concern. Without an effective NCTC or a similar organization, the planning and execution of India’s counter-terrorism policies will remain muddled.

Post-investigation is aimed at unravelling the identities of the planners and the plotters and bringing to justice the perpetrators of the incident of terrorism. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) must be reconstituted as it lacks teeth in its present form. It should be re-modelled on the US FBI to give it both preventive and investigative powers. While there is no need to blindfold any country, there is no harm in learning from the best practices abroad and incorporating them into Indian policies.

India’s intelligence coordination and assessment apparatus at the national level and counter-terrorism policies remain mired in the days of innocence. We are now living in the age of ‘new terrorism’ that is far more violent and diabolical than before and policies must keep pace with the emerging developments. For example, with the Islamic State striving to extend its reach to India, counter-radicalization and de-radicalization policies must be formulated early.

(Th eauthor is a former Director, Centre for Land Warfare Studies, New Delhi)
Mahabalipuram (also Mamallapuram) is situated just 60 km off Chennai on the Bay of Bengal coast in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The city is well connected through a network of roads from Chennai and other important cities of South India.

History
The history of Mahabalipuram is an intriguing one. Although its ancient history remains unclear, numismatics, temples and other sources of historical evidence suggest that it was a place of significance even before the temples were built. Some historical facts about Mahabalipuram are mentioned below:
- Mahabalipuram is a historic city and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- It became a prominent center of art and literature between 3rd and 7th century CE.
- Ancient mariners referred to Mahabalipuram as the “land of the Seven Pagodas”.
- Several coins excavated from here reveal the existence of trade with Romans in ancient times.

Tourist Attractions
Mahabalipuram is home to several tourist attractions that make for great exploration and sightseeing. There are several temples which are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Besides other attractions which never stop amazing the visitors.
Here are the most famous tourist attractions in Mahabalipuram:

Group of Monuments
The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram is nestled on the Coromandel Coast of Bay of Bengal. The coastal city of the wonderful architectural treasures is situated in close proximity to Chennai in Kancheepuram district, Tamil Nadu. The architectural grandeur of the 7th and the 8th century monuments are the breathing illustration of ancient civilization and beliefs.

History of Monuments
Mahabalipuram or Mamallapuram was the capital region during the reign of Pallava Dynasty in the 7th century AD. The Pallavas rulers used to hold the definitive command in the southern part of India. Pallava rulers were popular for their inclination towards Tamilian art and culture. The power and creativity was at its peak during the kingdom of Narasimha Varman-I and Narasimha Varman-II. The rulers immortalized their glories with the splendid temples they built.

The Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram are their witness to their architectural splendor, cultural knowledge and the essence of their greatness which left a huge impact in the pages of history.

The Group of Monuments

Shore Temple
The Shore Temples was built in the 7th century, during the reign of Rajasimha. The temple depicts the peak of Pallava art. These temples are refreshing orderly; unlike later grandiose Dravidian architectures. The designs are simple and innovative but the beauty shines through. The temple with its beautiful polygonal dome enshrines Lord Vishnu and Shiva. These beautiful temples, ravaged by wind and sea have been declared world heritage by UNESCO.

‘Ratha’ Cave Temple
The magnificent ‘Ratha’ cave temple was built by the Pallava king Narsimha in the 7th and 8th centuries. The beauty of the rock-cut sculpture of the temple is reflective of the inventive tastes of the Pallava rulers. The monument is known especially for its Rathas. Rathas is simple words means temples in the form of chariots, mandapas (cave sanctuaries) and giant open-air reliefs. The famous sculptures of the temple are ‘Descent of the Ganges’, and the temple of Rivage, with thousands of sculptures to the glory of Shiva.

There are eight rathas at Mahabalipuram, out of which five are named after the “Pandavas” (five brothers) of Mahabharata and one after Draupadi. The five rathas that can be seen are Dharmaraja Ratha, Bhima Ratha, Arjuna Ratha, Draupadi Ratha and Nakul Sahadeva Ratha. These Ratha temples are constructed on the style of the Buddhist viharas and chaityas. The unfinished three-storeyed Dharmaraja Ratha is the largest. The Draupadi Ratha is the smallest, it is one-storied and has an interesting thatch-like roof. The Arjuna and Draupadi rathas are dedicated to Shiva and Durga respectively.

Panch Rathas
Punch Ratha is a monument complex at Mahabalipuram. The coastal city along the shores of Bay of Bengal was a major seaport of the ancient Pallava kingdom. It is currently one of the magnificent UNESCO World Heritage sites.

The Panch Rathas are five rock marvels in the monument complex. It is known for its, ‘rathas’ or monolithic rock temples cut out in the form of chariots. Constructed from multiple materials, the monolithic structures have bas-relief sculptures carved on it. The five Ratha temples stand majestically on the southermost extreme of Mahabalipuram.

Panch Ratha

Bhima Ratha
The longest of Five Rathas, the 12.8 m long, 7.3 m wide, 7.6 m high structure is built in Gopura style with gabled roof. It is said to be devoted to Anantasayana Vishnu as a large bas relief of Vishnu in the form of Sayanamurti is located inside. The building remains unfinished but fascinating. The sanctuary has a circumambulatory passage around it. Pillars of the shrine are adorned with figures of lions.

Arjuna Ratha
The Arjuna Ratha is devoted to Lord Shiva. Shaped like a small wooden shrine, the distinctive style in Southern India, it is an impressive building. Inside the shrine there are no embellishments, but the exterior is has interesting details. The facade is adorned with magnificent sculptures, showing gods and humans.

Nakula Sahadeva Ratha
This shrine is devoted to Indra and is associated with elephants. This ratha is the one which is not placed in a “procession”, it stands aside. The roof of this shrine is also shaped like a back of elephant. The relief sculpture of Arthanarishwar armons the walls whereas columns and pillars are decorated with seated lions.

Draupadi Ratha
The Draupadi Ratha is the smallest of Panch Rathas. This shrine is shaped like a thatched hut, with a square roof. It is devoted to goddess Durga and has amazing artwork. The fine carved panel, which shows Durga on a lotus pedestal is marvelous. Outside, above the entrance door, is carved a sea-monster. The most interesting sculpture is Devi Durga standing on a head of the demon Mahishasura.
Mumbai qualify for playoffs

Mumbai Indians prevailed over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Super Over to qualify for the IPL playoffs, the win propelling them to the second position in the pecking order.

Opting to bat, Mumbai Indians scored 162/6 in the allotted 20 overs and then saw Sunrisers Hyderabad end their innings at the same score. Needing nine to win in the Super Over, Hardik Pandya hammered Rashid Khan for a six over long off in the first ball and then Kieron Pollard took the side home with three balls to spare. In the one-over eliminator, Sunrisers Hyderabad managed 8/2 with Jasprit Bumrah bagging the wickets of Manish Pandey and Mohammed Nabi. Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma said, “We are rewarded for some real hard work we have put in throughout the tournament. We have played consistent cricket and have the results on board. We knew if we could get early wickets, we can put some pressure on them.”

**Rs 50cr for IPL adverts**

The IPL is considered one of the most popular tournaments in the world but even a top T20 league needs to be promoted and advertised. For this reason, BCCI had budgeted Rs 50 crore for advertisement and promotion of the 12th edition of the league. BCCI in its budget for the 2019 edition of the tournament pegged the expenses on advertising and promotion at Rs 50 crore. Interestingly, the 2018 edition had seen BCCI spending the same amount in promoting the tournament.

AGE-OLD SECRET OUT: SHAHID AFRIDI WAS NO TEEN SENSATION

NEW DELHI (TIP): One of cricket's greatest mysteries has finally been solved... sort of.

Shahid Afridi, as many fans have long suspected, is not as young as official records have had it all these years. Afridi himself has made the revelation in his autobiography Game Changer released in India and Pakistan this week. In a chapter in which he describes his call-up to the senior Pakistan team in October 1996, Afridi writes that he was born in 1975. Though he doesn't give a month or day, that makes him, just 6.74 runs per over - all as a 43- or 44-year-old. Fans will recall another public admission in the PSL this season, where he played eight games for Multan Sultans and took 10 wickets conceding just 6.74 runs per over - all as a 43- or 44-year-old.

The year 1975 would also mean that he was 19 at the time he made the statement; in fact, the real year of his birth, the same, number on his ODI shirt - 75 - was the official record his date of birth as March 1, 1980. ESPNcricinfo's player profile pages potentially, five years older than what he suspected, is not as young as official records have had it all these years. Shahid Afridi, as many fans have long suspected, is not as young as official records have had it all these years. Afridi himself has made the revelation in his autobiography Game Changer released in India and Pakistan this week. In a chapter in which he describes his call-up to the senior Pakistan team in October 1996, Afridi writes that he was born in 1975. Though he doesn't give a month or day, that makes him, just 6.74 runs per over - all as a 43- or 44-year-old. Fans will recall another public admission in the PSL this season, where he played eight games for Multan Sultans and took 10 wickets conceding just 6.74 runs per over - all as a 43- or 44-year-old.

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Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Wednesday defeated Delhi Capitals (DC) by a whopping margin of 80 runs at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai. Batting first, CSK posted a total of 179-4 in 20 overs after a smashing half-century by Suresh Raina and late blitz by MS Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja. Chasing the 180-run target, DC lost the plot as their batsmen got dismissed in regular intervals and were bundled out for a paltry score of 99 runs.

Suresh Raina roared back to form as he scored a brilliant 59 off 37 balls laced with eight boundaries and a six. Raina left behind his previous scores of 2, 38, 0 and 13 in his last four knocks and played a confident knock at a time when CSK had lost opener Shane Watson for a duck.

MS Dhoni continued his purple patch with the willow as he hammered an unbeaten 44 off 22 balls to help CSK post a competitive target of 179-4 in 20 overs. Dhoni was superbly supported by Ravindra Jadeja who smashed 25 players in 10 balls. Imran Tahir continued to bamboozle batters as he ripped apart the DC batting lineup to pick up four wickets. Tahir took his wickets tally for IPL 2019 to 21 and is just behind Kagiso Rabada (25) in the Purple Cap race.

Dhoni, Imran Tahir star as Chennai Super Kings mau Delhi Capitals

Delhi Capitals, with 35 points and 13 wins from 16 games, are fourth in the points table. Chennai Super Kings, with 43 points and 12 wins from 16 games, are second in the points table.

New Zealand in the MRF Tyres ICC Test Team Rankings has narrowed from eight to two points and England remain at the top of the MRF Tyres ICC ODI Team Rankings with only one point behind India in an expanded table.

TEST RANKINGS: India were on 116 points and New Zealand on 108 before the update but India's 30 w in over South Africa and 2-1 win in Sri Lanka being purged as part of the 2015-16 season sees them losing three points while New Zealand's two 2-0 defeats to Australia being removed sees them gain three points.

In the only change of positions on the table, England have overtaken Australia to fourth position and are on 105 points. Australia are on 98 points after dropping six points as they had won four of the five series in 2015-16, no more part of the calculations. In another significant movement, the gap between seventh-placed Pakistan and eighth-placed West Indies has dropped from 11 to two points.

ODI RANKINGS: England have retained the No. 1 ranking but to go into the World Cup as the top-ranked side, they will need to beat Ireland in an upcoming one-off ODI and then beat Pakistan 3-2 or better in a home series, or lose to Ireland but then beat Pakistan 4-1 or better.

South Africa have overtaken New Zealand into third position while another change in positions sees the West Indies moving ahead of Sri Lanka to seventh place. No team has dropped out of the top 10, thus ensuring that the World Cup will see the top ten-ranked sides in action.

Three of the four teams awarded ODI status at the end of the World Cup League Division 2 will join the rankings once they have played the requisite eight qualifying matches. However, PNG join the rankings immediately having played several ODIs prior to April 2018. The Netherlands, who already had ODI status, will need to play two more ODIs to achieve a ranking.

Olympics champ Semenya loses at CAS, must reduce testosterone

CAPE TOWN (TIP): Olympics 800m champion Caster Semenya lost her appeal against how the international Olympic Committee (IOC) rules on testosterone levels for female athletes.

Semenya, a South African who is among the world's fastest female runners, had been penalised for naturally high levels of testosterone and was told she must change her levels to compete in women's races.

Semenya had long argued that testosterone increases muscle mass, strength and haemoglobin, which affects endurance. Some competitors have said Semenya’s higher levels of the hormone give her an unfair advantage.

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