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Eminent Ophthalmologist VK Raju honored by Egyptian Ophthalmology Society



Founder-President of Eye Foundation of America Dr. VK Raju was honored by the Egyptian Ophthalmology Society with a medal for his contribution in the field of prevention of blindness among children worldwide

CAIRO (TIP): Dr. VK Raju, an eminent ophthalmologist based in Morgan Town, West Virginia, USA was invited to Cairo by the Egyptian Ophthalmology Society to speak on childhood blindness. He lectured on difficult cataract surgery, prevention of blindness in premature children. The condition is called ROP (retinopathy of prematurity). *contd on Page 32*

Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga to step down, insider Miebach tapped



Banga is credited with steering the company through a period of turmoil in 2008-09 to great strength

NEW YORK (TIP): Mastercard's chief executive officer of 10 years, Ajay Banga, will step down at the start of the next year, the company said on Tuesday, February 25 *contd on Page 32*

Trump: 'Namaste, America loves India...America will always remain a loyal friend to India'

NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP): After a productive and awe-inspiring trip to India, US President Donald Trump said that US-India relationship has never been as good as it is right now.

President Trump made his first official visit to India along with First Lady Melania Trump, daughter Ivanka and son in law Jared Kushner. The two-day schedule was packed with both working meetings and visits to cultural landmarks such as the Taj Mahal. On Feb 24 President Trump received a roaring welcome from over 100,000 people at a rally in Ahmedabad, hosted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

contd on Page 32

President Trump (left) and Prime Minister Modi making a joint declaration in Delhi, February 25.

Photo / Mohammed Jaffer-SnapsIndia



Delhi Communal clashes snuff out 42 Lives; More than 350 injured; Property worth thousands of crores destroyed

Change of guard in Delhi Police



A scene of the destruction

NEW DELHI (TIP): As the death toll rose to 42 amid uneasy calm in the riot-affected northeast Delhi, the Centre decided, February 28, to give additional charge of the city police chief to Special Commissioner (Law & Order) SN Shrivastava with effect from Sunday, March 1.

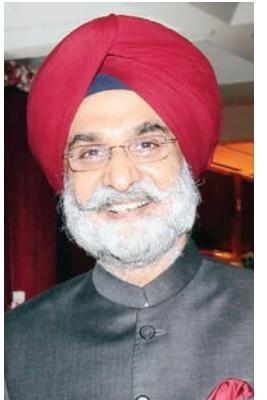
Shrivastava, a 1985-batch IPS officer, will take charge from incumbent Amulya Patnaik, who retires from office on Saturday, a Ministry of Home Affairs order said.

On Monday, Shrivastava was repatriated from the Central Reserve Police Force and appointed Special Commissioner of the Delhi Police amid the riots. *contd on Page 32*

India's Ambassador to the US Taranjit Singh Sandhu to be accorded a Welcome reception in New Jersey on March 15

Diaspora community organizations of NY-NJ-CT to participate

ISELIN, NJ (TIP): Consulate General of India, New York and the Federation of Indian Associations NY-NJ-CT will be hosting a welcome reception to Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu who took over as India's Ambassador to the United States of America following the transfer of Harsh Vardhan Shringla as Foreign Secretary in January, 2020. The Tri-State of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut community organizations are supporting and participating in the welcome reception scheduled for Sunday, March 15 from 6 to 9 P.M. at Marriott Woodbridge, 515 US Highway 1 South. Iselin, NJ 08830. Ambassador Sandhu assumed office on February 3 and presented his credentials to the President of the United States of America, Donald Trump at the Oval office of the White House, February 6. *contd on page 32*



Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu is no stranger to Indian Americans. He was with PMI in New York from July 2005 to February 2009. He has had two long stints in Washington-1997-2000 and 2013-2017.

Photo / Jay Mndal-on assignment



Andy Singh

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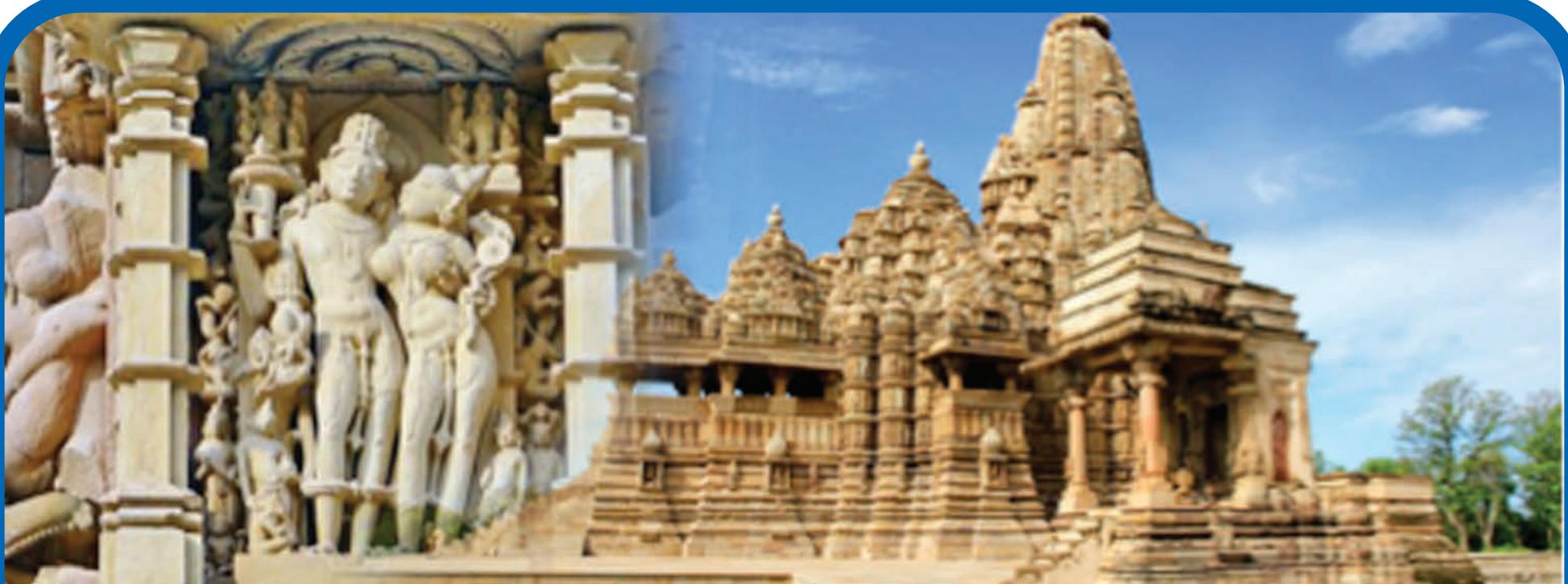
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Indian Economy Needs to Open Up: Arvind Panagariya

BIDISHA ROY

NEW YORK (TIP): India's slowdown has bottomed out and now its economy needs to be opened up if the country wants to fulfill the goal of a 10 per cent growth rate, Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Professor of Economics, Columbia University and former Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog, Government of India, has said.

The Consulate General of India, New York in partnership with the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) hosted a discussion on "Towards a US\$ 5 Trillion Economy: Budget 2020, Visit of President Trump & India US Economic Relations" on February 25, 2020. Dr. Arvind Panagariya was the keynote speaker. Rajiv Anand, Partner, Deloitte and Susan Ritchie, Vice President of Technology, Media, and Telecommunications at USISPF were the other panelists.

Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty gave a brief introduction of the speakers in his welcome speech.



Columbia University Economics Professor Arvind Panagariya painted a rosy picture of Indian economy going forward. Seen from L to R: Rajiv Anand, Partner, Deloitte, Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Susan Ritchie, Vice President of Technology, Media, and Telecommunications at USISPF, and Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty. Consulate General of India, New York Facebook photo

In his keynote address, Panagariya said in the next fiscal year, India's GDP growth is expected to be 6 percent and then it will get back to 7-8 per cent which has been the

case in the last 15-16-year.

"On the slowdown, my own assessment is that we have bottomed out. In the second half of the current fiscal year,

which would be ending on March 31, we should see some bit of recovery, not a big one but certainly the second half (of the fiscal year) should look better than the first half," he said.

Panagariya welcomed the decision to sell Air India, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), reduced stake of the government in public sector banks (PSBs) and disinvestment in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC).

According to him, the worrisome feature in the budget is the measures announced in the area of international trade like increased tariff rate and license permit raj-era protectionism.

Arvind Panagariya, a professor of Economics at Columbia University, was nominated by PM Modi as the first Vice Chairman of Government of India's think tank NITI AYOG and served in that capacity between January 15 and August 2017. He is supportive of the BJP's economic vision which he did push forward during his term with NITI AYOG.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel shared his State's Growth and Needs with IOC Delegation



Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel (sixth from right) with IOC delegation and officials from his State

NEW YORK (TIP): The officials of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA, held a meeting with Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Bhupesh Baghel in New York and congratulated him for the great comeback of the Congress Party in the 2018 election and for the innovative development plans that he has put in place. Mr. Baghel was on an official trip to the United States, showcasing Chhattisgarh and promoting the State for Trade and Investment.

In 2018, the Congress party stunned the political pundits by winning 67 out of the 90 seats and wresting the State from BJP showcasing its best signs of resurgence in the 2018 elections. BJP was reduced to only 18 seats while Janata Congress-Bahujan Combine won seven.

A resource-rich state, it is a source of electricity and steel for the country, accounting for 15% of the total steel produced as well as a significant contributor of coal, Chhattisgarh is one of the fastest-developing states in India.

Even as there is an economic slowdown nationally, Chhattisgarh's

economy under Mr. Baghel is doing well. Its development indicators are sound. The markets in the State are robust. This is primarily due to a set of conscious policies forwarded by the current Administration. After the formation of the Government in 2018, it decided to adopt Mahatma Gandhi's model of gram swaraj that focuses on the importance of human capital in social development, and also emphasize the role of nature and the environment in growth.

IOC leaders who participated in the meeting included Mohinder Singh Gilzian, president, George Abraham, Vice-Chairman, T.J. Gill, Sr. Vice-President, Malini Shah, Vice-President, Pradeep Samala, Vice-President, Manoj Shinde, Chairman IT Cell, Sophia Sharma, General Secretary, Leela Maret, president, Kerala Chapter, Pavan Darisi, President, Andhra Pradesh Chapter, Rajeswara Reddy, President Telangana Chapter, Dr. Jayesh Patel, President, Gujarat Chapter, Thomas Mottackal, Rajeev.M and Pallav Shah who has accompanied the Chief Minister during his trip across USA.

SAMHIN Organizes Suicide Prevention Workshop - Finding Light at the End of the Tunnel



Organizers with panelists and Rajeev Bhambri

Suicide results in more deaths than war, homicide and natural disasters combined. Over 42,000 people die by suicide in the U.S. every year. It is difficult to find anyone whose life has not been affected by the suicide of someone they know. Grief, confusion and guilt often plague those left behind.

JERSEY CITY, NJ (TIP): On January 22, 2020, SAMHIN conducted an educational workshop on suicide prevention. The audience had an opportunity to hear from a panel of psychiatrists and suicide loss survivors. Presenters discussed the extent of the problem of suicide, warning signs and risk factors, and myths and facts about suicide and tips on preventing suicides.

About 70 people from across Central and Northern New Jersey and NYC, majority being from Jersey City, attended the workshop on suicide prevention. The four-hour workshop at Vaibhav Restaurant in Jersey City was followed by a delicious dinner. Workshop was supported by a grant from Partnership for Healthier Jersey City. Hudson County Freeholder William

O'Dea commented recognized the importance of getting help for depression and other mental illnesses that can lead a person to thoughts of suicide. He highlighted how frightening the rise in suicides is, especially in teenagers.

Lily Arora, MD, an addiction psychiatrist and Anu Upadhyay, MD, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, discussed common misconceptions about suicide and contrasted them with facts. For example, one myth is a belief that asking someone about thoughts of suicide could actually drive them to do it. In reality, reaching out to someone and asking them if there is something wrong could lead them to realize that such a drastic choice is not the right answer to their problems. Dr. Arora highlighted a correlation between living in isolation, or in areas with a larger presence of firearms with increased rates of suicide.

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Indian Origin Suella Braverman Sworn in as UK's New Attorney General



Suella Braverman was appointed as Attorney General by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson on 13 February

LONDON (TIP): Indian origin Suella Braverman QC MP was sworn-in Feb 24 at the Royal Courts of Justice as Attorney General for England and Wales.

The Lord Chancellor, the Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, the Lord Chief Justice, The Lord Burnett of Maldon, and the Chair of the Bar Council, Amanda Pinto QC, spoke at the ceremony to welcome the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP to her role.

"I am delighted to welcome the new Attorney General to this vital and historic role. The relationship between the Law Officers and the Lord Chancellor is a crucial one. I look forward to working closely with the Attorney on matters relating to the rule of law, which is the cornerstone of our democracy and a major factor in our success as a civilized and prosperous nation", The Lord Chancellor said.

Commenting on the ceremony the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP said: "It is a privilege to be sworn in as Attorney General and a moment I will cherish as the second woman to be appointed to this historic role. Restoring confidence in the criminal justice system is my top priority. I want to thank my predecessor for his work in this area and his distinguished service to Government."

Called to the Bar in 2005, Suella Braverman specialized in public law and judicial review. From 2010-2015 she was on the Attorney General's Panel of Treasury Counsel. She has defended the Home Office in immigration cases, the Parole Board in challenges by prisoners and the Ministry of Defense in matters relating to injuries sustained in battle.

Suella Braverman was Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union from January to November 2018. She was elected as the Conservative MP for Fareham in May 2015.

Suella was educated at Heathfield School in London and went on to study Law at Queens' College, Cambridge. She gained a Masters in Law from the University of Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne and qualified as a New York Attorney.

Indian American Author Receives Prestigious NEA Creative Writing Fellowship

PITTSBURGH, PA (TIP): Pitt English professor Anjali Sachdeva recently received prestigious NEA Creative Writing Fellowship for prose, attached with \$25,000 in prize money. She is among the 36 writers chosen this year out of 1,700 applicants. Previous NEA fellows include best-selling authors Anthony Doerr, Jennifer Egan and Louise Erdrich.

Anjali Sachdeva published a collection of nine short stories titled "All the Names They Used for God" in February 2018. It was the winner of the 2019 Chautauqua Prize. It was named a Best Book of 2018 by NPR, Refinery 29, and BookRiot, longlisted for the Story Prize, and chosen as the 2018 Fiction Book of the Year by the Reading Women podcast. The New York Times Book Review called the collection "strange and wonderful," and Roxane Gay called it, "One of the best collections I've ever read. Every single story is a stand out."

Sachdeva is a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and has taught writing at the University of Iowa, Augustana College, and Carnegie Mellon University. She also worked for six years at the Creative Nonfiction Foundation, where she was Director of Educational Programs. She currently teaches at the



Anjali Sachdeva's short story collection, All the Names They Used for God, is the winner of the 2019 Chautauqua Prize.

University of Pittsburgh and in the MFA program at Randolph College. She has hiked through the backcountry of Canada, Iceland, Kenya, Mexico, and the United States, and spent much of her childhood reading fantasy novels and waiting to be whisked away to an alternate universe. Instead, she lives in Pittsburgh, which is pretty wonderful as

far as places in this universe go.

Sachdeva grew up in Pittsburgh and is a graduate of Shadyside's Winchester Thurston School, Yale University and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. She teaches writing and composition classes at Pitt and is working on creating new classes for the Public and Professional Writing major.

Indian American Wins Princeton University's Top Honor for Graduate Students



Karan Singh was awarded the SEAS Award for Excellence in 2018

PRINCETON, NJ (TIP): Indian American Karan Singh along with three others have been named winners of the Porter Ogden Jacobus Fellowship, Princeton University's top honor for graduate students. The Jacobus Fellows were honored at Alumni Day ceremonies Saturday, Feb. 22, at Jadwin Gymnasium.

The fellowships support the students' final year of study at Princeton and are awarded to one Ph.D. student in each of the four divisions (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and engineering) whose work has exhibited the highest scholarly excellence. The fellows all plan to pursue academic careers.

Karan Singh, a doctoral student in computer science who came to Princeton in 2015, earned a bachelor of technology in computer science from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur.

His dissertation, "Provably Efficient

Algorithms for Reinforcement Learning & Control," seeks ways to improve feedback-driven interactive learning algorithms.

While these algorithms can potentially negotiate challenging tasks thought to be characteristic of human creativity and ingenuity, they are limited in that they require unreasonably large numbers of interactions, excessive amounts of computation, and are limited to tasks with well-defined or easily specified objectives, Singh said.

"The results in my thesis are aimed at designing principled algorithms for Reinforcement Learning addressing these issues with provable guarantees on computational and statistical efficiency, under reasonable assumptions," Singh said. "Quite often, distilling down a problem to its mathematical essence enables the exchange and interoperability of techniques and ideas from diverse fields of study. This is a recurring theme in my thesis, which combines tools from control theory, dynamical systems, harmonic analysis and theoretical computer science."

In 2018, Singh was awarded the SEAS Award for Excellence. He received the Spotlight Prize at the New York Academy of Sciences' 12th Annual Machine Learning Symposium and the ICML 2017 Travel Award.

Indian American Mahesh Palashikar Named Member of USIBC Global Board of Directors



Palashikar took over as president and chief executive officer (CEO) of GE South Asia on February 1

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US India Business Council (USIBC) announced two new members of the Global Board of Directors -- Lockheed Martin International Senior Vice President Tim Cahill and GE South Asia President & CEO Mahesh Palashikar.

On February 1 Palashikar took over as president and chief executive officer (CEO) of GE South Asia with the responsibility for the India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka markets. Palashikar has 20 years of experience in GE, working with the company's manufacturing operations, global supply chain, and within GE's Healthcare, Power and Renewable Energy businesses. Till recently, he led GE's onshore wind business for Asia Pacific. During his GE career, Mahesh has lived in India, USA and China.



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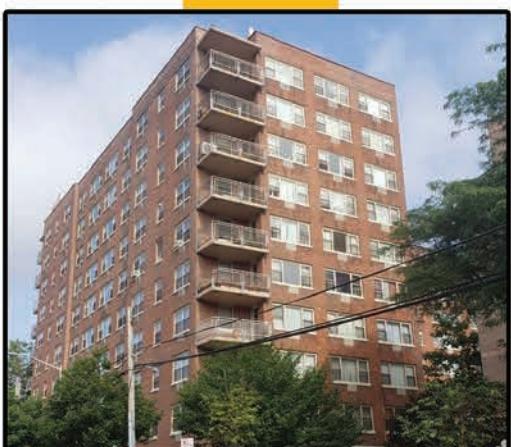
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Judicial anguish: High Court red-flags inaction over Delhi violence

The political leaders who fanned the flames both during and after the Delhi Assembly elections can't wash their hands of the violence that has claimed 35 lives so far, even as their party leadership has largely taken a lenient view of their irresponsible utterances. On Wednesday, the Delhi High Court expressed anguish over the Delhi Police's failure to register FIRs against four BJP leaders over their hate speeches. A Bench of justices S Muralidhar and Talwant Singh wondered why the police, who had lodged several FIRs in connection with incidents of arson, looting and stone-pelting, had not shown similar urgency to bring to book politicians who made incendiary remarks. The police's reluctance to take action against the hate-mongers found an echo in the Centre's view that the court should not hurriedly order the lodging of FIRs, which would eventually be registered when the situation became 'conducive'. What the Centre is doing to restore normalcy is anybody's guess.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

Minimum government: On breakdown of governance in Delhi

The Centre faces a trust deficit as it seeks to restore public order in riot-hit Delhi

The communal violence that has claimed 42 lives since Sunday has been subdued but tensions continue to simmer in Delhi. Stories of human courage and camaraderie that shone through amid orchestrated mayhem offer hope, but what rankles is the complete breakdown of governance from top to bottom in the national capital. Several credible accounts of horrendous acts of omission and commission by the Delhi Police have emerged. Instead of taking the police to task and wringing them into action, the Central government and the Delhi Lieutenant-Governor have fielded the Solicitor-General to shield them from judicial scrutiny. The Centre's position in the court that action cannot be taken against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders who made incendiary speeches until the police had perused all such speeches is analogous to arguing that one criminal cannot be probed unless all others are also probed - a bizarre logic. The Delhi High Court, which took up the

matter with the urgency that the situation demands on Wednesday, incapacitated itself a day later as a different bench headed by the Chief Justice D.N. Patel put the case off to April 13. Meanwhile, Kapil Mishra, one of the BJP leaders against whom police action was sought, called for a rally on Saturday, purportedly for peace but clearly intended to stoke the fire. The arguments of the country's law officer were a public admission of the government's refusal to act against members of the BJP. With such blatant partisanship and abdication of responsibility, the government cannot be expected to stop violence and restore communal peace.

Meanwhile, the Delhi police have acted swiftly against Tahir Hussain, an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Councilor accused of involvement in murder and keeping sticks, stones and petrol mobs on the terrace of his house that was surrounded by a mob. The AAP has since suspended him from membership and endorsed the

police action against him. While the protests against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act took a communal turn in several places, a counter-mobilization also on communal lines has pushed the city to the brink in recent weeks. Right to assemble and protest is a fundamental right, but its exercise has to be in accordance with requirements of public order. It is the duty of the police to ensure that constitutional guarantees are upheld on the one hand, while, on the other, life and work goes on normally for the general population. The Central and Delhi governments, the police, and the judiciary have come up short against these markers of the rule of law. They are all facing a severe deficit of trust among the citizens. Peace and normalcy can be achieved only through restoration of the majesty and impartiality of the government. Unfortunately, there is no effort visible in that direction.

(The Hindu)

South Asian and Indo Caribbean Media Roundtable on the 2020 Census on March 2

NY City Mayor's Census Office and New York Immigration Coalition Collaborate

NEW YORK (TIP): NYC Census 2020 and the New York Immigration Coalition are hosting a South Asian and Indo-Caribbean Media Roundtable for media that represent and serve these communities in New York City on March 2, just nine days before the launch of the 2020 Census.

The Roundtable on Monday, March 2 will be held from 10:30 AM to Noon at New York Immigration Coalition: 131 W 33rd Street, Ste 610 (between 6th and 7th Avenues), New York City.

Present on the occasion will be Meeta Anand, Senior Fellow, New York Immigration Coalition (moderator); Amit Singh Bagga, Deputy Director, Mayor's Census Office (New York Census 2020); Fahd Ahmed, Executive Director, DRUM (Desis Rising Up and Moving); Aliya Bhatia, Census Manager, ABNY (Association for a Better New York); Mariam Rauf, Census Outreach Manager,



Asian American Federation; Ahsia Badi, New York State Census Director, Emgage USA and Annetta Seecharan, Executive Director, Chhaya Community Development Corporation.

The South Asian and Indo-Caribbean media roundtable will focus on the critical importance of the census in determining billions of dollars for education, healthcare, housing, transportation, and more, as well as ensuring that all New Yorkers from all backgrounds are fully represented in the nation's once-in-a-decade count of its populace.

Collectively, NYC's South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities are among the largest, most diverse, and fastest-growing immigrant groups in New York City. Though South Asians and Indo-Caribbean groups have had a discernible presence in New York City since the 1960s, populations are continuing to rapidly grow and diversify, yielding new opportunities, challenges, and forms for community-based organizing.

Lava Mobiles Signs \$90 Million Equity Investment Agreement with Global Emerging Markets (GEM)

NEW DELHI / NEW YORK (TIP): India-based Lava International Ltd (the "Company") is pleased to announce that on February 25, 2020, it has signed an agreement ("Agreement") with GEM Global Yield Fund LLC SCS ("GEM"), part of the Global Emerging Markets Group, for the investment of up to U.S. \$90 million into the Company over the period of next 36 months through a Share Subscription Facility. The facility will allow the Company to sell American depositary receipts to GEM in exchange for drawing down available funds and can be used entirely at the Company's discretion subject to certain requirements.

The Company will use the funds to strengthen its business by funding its research, development and business expansion activities, with the objective of becoming a market leader in the sub-\$150 cellular phone segment.

Rajiv Khanna, Daniel Richey and Sarah Tobias of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney P.C. represented Lava International Limited in this transaction.

About GEM

Global Emerging Markets ("GEM") is a \$3.4 billion alternative investment group that manages a diverse set of investment vehicles focused on emerging markets across the world and have completed 370+ transactions in 70 countries. GEM's investment vehicles provide the group and its investors with a diversified portfolio of asset classes that span the global private investing spectrum. It's



family of funds and investment vehicles provide GEM and its partners with exposure to Small-Mid Cap Management Buyouts, Private Investments in Public Equities (PIPs) and select venture investments. GEM's funds include the CITIC-GEM Fund (matured in December 2015), Kinderhook Industries (GP and LP non-voting stakes), GEM Global Yield LLC SCS, GEM India and VC Bank/GEM Mena Fund (GEM exited both its GP and LP stakes in these funds in 2015 and 2010, respectively).

About Lava Mobiles

Lava International Limited is an Indian multi-national company in the mobile handset industry with a presence of over 20 countries, founded in 2009 and is primarily involved in designing, manufacturing & selling handsets (both feature phones and smartphones), tablets and accessories in India and abroad. The company has already developed India's first "India Designed Feature Phone" and is currently 2nd largest feature phone brand in India, with a market share of 18%. The company is set to expand its activities to further capture significant market share in sub \$150 segment market.

<https://www.lavamobiles.com/>
(Press Release)

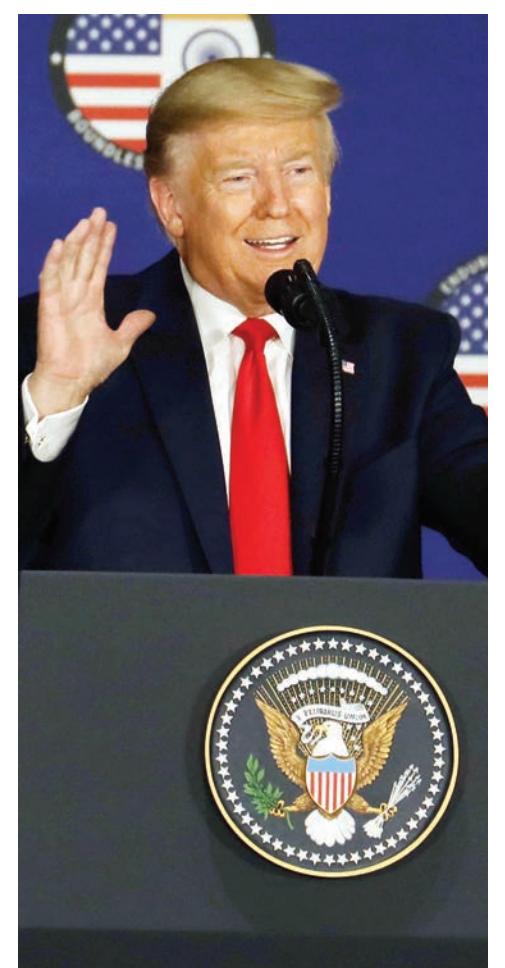
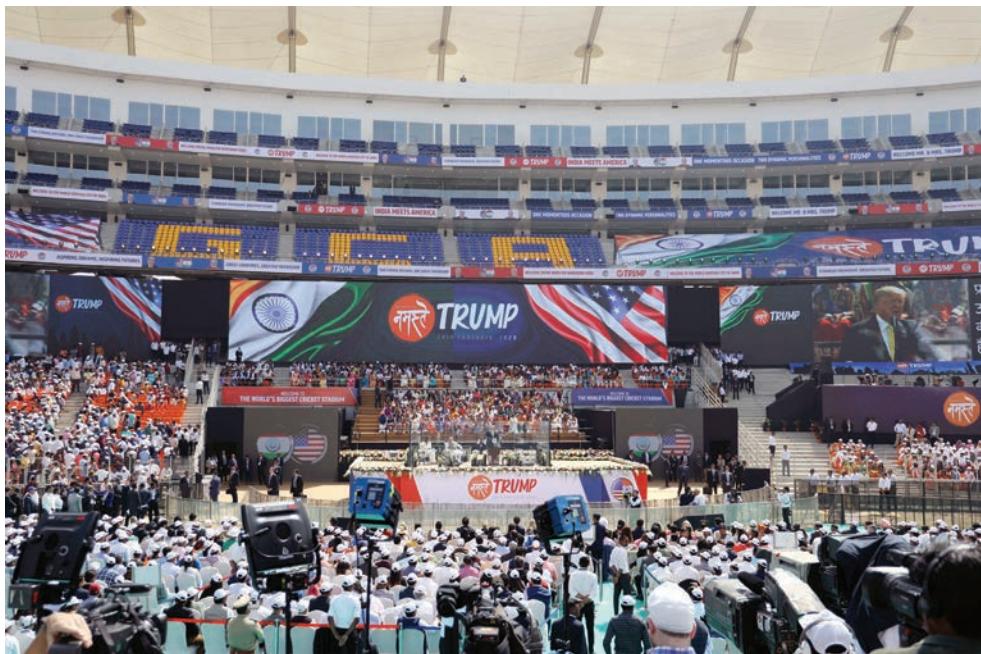


President Donald Trump's historic India visit through the lens of Mohammed Jaffer

One of The Indian Panorama photographers Mohammed Jaffer of SnapsIndia accompanied US President's

press pool which covered the President's two day visit to India, February 24 and 25.

Jaffer filed with us a couple of photographs of the historic event which we share here with our readers.





By Maj Gen Amrit Pal Singh (Retd)

Religious extremism and intolerance are dominating the landscape. Politicians have elevated religious differences to a terror form. The terrorists operate in a familiar pattern and are fed on virulent ideologies, backed by political patronage. The fact that the courts have had to pass diktats to the executive indicates that the powers that be have been found wanting.

Having fought terrorists in J&K and in the North-East, most soldiers must be at a loss in understanding the terror unleashed in our cities by religious extremists, egged on by politicians. The scourge of terrorism has always been associated with terror emanating from foreign soil, and in some cases, from home-grown terror outfits. This form of terror is being addressed with reasonable success by multiple agencies. However, the terror unleashed by religious groups and violence in the name of nationalism and religious fundamentalism is something that we as a nation need to be prepared for. We were not, as the riots in Delhi have clearly demonstrated.

Religious extremism and intolerance are dominating the landscape, spurred by permissive or even supportive political leaders. They have elevated religious differences to a terror form - what else is it if houses burn and lives are lost to mob fury? These musclemen have rebranded themselves as local political supporters and have entered mainstream politics, albeit of hate, and thriving on the bogey of insecurity. These terrorists operate in a

familiar pattern and are fed on virulent ideologies, backed by political patronage.

The fact that the courts have had to pass diktats to the executive indicates that the powers that be have been found wanting - and primarily have allowed the police forces to go adrift. Stark comparisons of the police inaction in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and the present violence cannot be missed.

In 1984, the Delhi Police were mute spectators and ineffective in the discharge of their duties. The police watched as the pogrom was perpetrated by mobs, led in most cases, by local political heavyweights - all displaying allegiance to the ruling party at that time. The mobs were organized and armed with lists of residents to target localities and houses of Sikhs. The trigger to the violence was prematurely given a communal tenor and a section of the police took sides.

In 2020, too, the fault-lines along religion are being leveraged. Some in the police have taken sides. Entire colonies have been attacked and gutted on the basis of the demographic and religious profile by organized and well-controlled mobs.

The build-up to this violence in the NCR was not a surprise or an intelligence failure. Many experts opine it was to be anticipated and expected. However, it was allowed to fester and ferment by the law and order machinery, probably based on a design. The actions of the cops ranged from the extremes of inaction to overreaction, as demonstrated from the incidents at JNU and Jamia Millia Islamia.

Prompt and decisive action, as allowed by law, could have thwarted arson, lynching and public brandishing of weapons. The mere excuse that action would lead to being branded ham-handed is escapist and unacceptable from a professional force. Intelligence inputs were either ignored or did not percolate to the actionable levels, leading to a perceptible ostrich mentality and focusing on the mega visit of US President Donald Trump. If this

AS I SEE IT

Perpetrating communal violence is terrorism



was done to dispel the impression (to the world) of a police state due to heavy deployment of forces, then it obviously backfired.

In both 1984 and 2020, the police forces have mirrored the ideology of the ruling political dispensation. There has been a partisan response to threats and the police seem to be functioning ruthlessly as an agent for the government in power. This has made basic community policing difficult to discharge and has led to a loss of public confidence.

The Dhingra Commission investigating the 1984 anti-Sikh riots was scathing in its comments against the Union Government and the Delhi Police for not finding the perpetrators of the riots, murder and looting by lack of interest shown by the police to proceed with investigations and punishing the culprits. It opined that, instead, they hushed up cases and shielded them, as is happening now with armed police personnel providing protection to hate-mongering politicians.

The leadership of the police force has also been under a cloud since the lawyers-versus-police clashes that took place in the Tis Hazari courts in November 2019. The Delhi Police leadership's credibility took a hit when the force was made to back down while elements in it felt they were acting in

upholding of the law. The handpicked leadership was found wanting, yet it was allowed to carry on despite the threat increasing with the anti-CAA protests, the Delhi elections and Trump's visit. There is no substitute for impeccable leadership and the politics of deep selection of the top brass has probably led to this debacle that the Home Ministry and the police face today despite being flush with resources.

The projection of the business-as-usual image attempted by the government to downplay the simmering tensions by the Balakot strike anniversary also being celebrated like the Uri surgical strike was avoidable. These operations on the tactical and operational scale are definitely indicators of our political resolve to combat terror. Tinkering with the selection of military leaders to choose 'a few good men' may result in a weak and pliant top brass eager to please and flex military muscle to further political gains. It is hoped the armed forces' leadership doesn't go the police way. Identifying and prosecuting such terror is as urgent as dealing with foreign terror. We must deny these groups' credibility and destroy their narratives. Such hate-mongers must be declared terrorists and their goons must be dealt with under the law.

(The author is a Military commentator)



COMMENT

Prof I.S. Saluja

1 3000 SOS calls made over 4 days of communal violence raging in some parts of Delhi, and no response from 85000 strong Delhi Police force to come to the aid of the victims. The result: 42 lives snuffed out. Over 350 injured. Property worth thousands of crores destroyed. And relationships ruptured, may be, beyond repair.

Reminds one of 1984 when thousands of Sikhs made frantic calls without any response from police. The result, over 10,000 lost their lives. Hundreds of women were raped. Thousands were injured.

Had the police done their duty in 1984, the barbaric and tragic incident could have been avoided, and precious

lives saved. The pattern was repeated in 2002 when in Gujarat, communal violence erupted taking a heavy toll of life and property. Police even there preferred to look the other way while the arsonists and perpetrators of violence continued to loot and kill without a finger being raised by the police.

It has happened again, in Delhi where over three to four days, goons went around, beating and killing, damaging property right under the nose of the police. Reports say, at places, police actively connived with the goons. So, the 1984 and 2002 pattern were repeated in 2020. Is it a coincidence that the police in Delhi in 1984 and in 2020 conducted itself in a similar fashion as police did in Gujarat

in 2002? Are the police all across the country trained that way? Or, is it the dharma of the police to obey, not the law, but those who control political power?

Is it a coincidence that 2002 Gujarat communal violence took place under the duo of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah when they were Chief Minister and Home Minister respectively of the State, and the 2020 Delhi communal violence took place under the same team with one being the Prime Minister and the other being the Home Minister? It is an interesting coincidence.

However, getting back to the conduct of police in Delhi, it is quite strange that the High Court had to pull up police to move forward incases of hate

speech which surely provoked people into violence. Those who make provocative statements and instigate people to communal violence are guilty of creating conditions of civil war and destabilizing the nation, and as such, should be treated as traitors.

India has suffered enough. Indians have suffered enough from 1947 through 1984 and 2002. Already, another wound has been inflicted in the body of the nation in the form of recent Delhi Communal clashes. Every time there is a communal clash it is a stab in the heart of Mother India. Let those who love Mother India desist from any further crimes against their mother.

Let us pledge today: "No more 1947; no more 1984; no more 2002 and no more 2020."

No More 1947; no more 1984; no more 2002; no more 2020

Scripting an audacity of hope, the Sanders way



By Vivek Chibber

“Mr. Sanders is succeeding because he is attracting voters who are either ignored or actively discouraged from voting by his Party. And with every victory, his campaign is gaining exponentially in strength. After five decades of neglect and abuse, working-class Americans had given up on the system. Their cynicism and sense of hopelessness was not only accepted by the two Parties but encouraged by them. Up to this past weekend, the message on the airwaves was, ‘he cannot win’. The idea is for every household to feel that even if they feel attracted to his program, they are alone in their sentiments - that that the mythical ‘center’, will reject him”.

The emergence of Bernie Sanders as the frontrunner in the Democratic Party primaries has stunned the world. But it shouldn't have. The U.S. is merely joining in the wave of electoral insurrections that are upending the political order across the world. Underneath it are two fundamental drivers. First, the phenomenal growth in inequality, both of income and wealth. After a period of four decades, from the 1930s through the 1970s, in which the gap between the rich and poor actually narrowed, economic inequality today is back to the levels not seen for 100 years.

But it isn't just that the rich have got richer. It is also that the standard of working class living has actually declined in many ways. Wages have stagnated for 40 years, and to maintain their income, families have had to work longer and longer hours. As a result, health indicators among the poor have declined as overwork, exhaustion, and anxiety have become epidemic. Several recent studies report not only dramatic increases in psychological stress among Americans, but also that its main cause is job insecurity and overwork - economic factors. All this while the U.S. is the only industrial country without a national healthcare plan. Hence, the physical and psychological breakdown goes untreated - and we have the hitherto unimaginable fact that life expectancy among adult males has actually decreased in recent years, for the first time in over a century - and that too, among white males, the section of the population pilloried by the left as "privileged". In the richest country in the world, the lifespan of working-class men is now getting shorter.

This collapse in living standards has been overseen by both political parties in the U.S.'s two-party system. This is the second driver. The Democratic Party was once seen as the party of the working class. And while this description was

always a bit of an exaggeration, the unions and advocacy groups representing working Americans did have some influence within it. Because of that, the Democratic Party was behind the two waves of expansion of the welfare state - first the New Deal under Franklin D. Roosevelt, and then Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society programs in the late 1960s. But, by the 1980s, this connection was severed. Under Bill Clinton, the Democrats became Republican-lite - committed to the same neoliberal economic principles. As Gore Vidal brilliantly described it: "There is only one Party in the United States, the Property Party... and it has two right wings: Republican and Democrat."

Rebellion against the elites

What is unfolding now is something akin to a rebellion against this order, with Mr. Sanders at its helm. The Vermont Senator has never been a Democrat. He has always run as an Independent, eschewing any connection with either Party. But once he decided to run for President, he knew that it would be suicide to try it outside the Democratic Party. This was Ralph Nader's great error in 2000, because in a winner-takes-all system, small third-party campaigns are inevitably viewed as spoilers. They not only lose, but end up draining votes from their closest ideological competitor - in this case, it would be the Democrats. Mr. Nader lost, and then was vilified for supposedly draining votes away from Mr. Gore. So, Mr. Sanders registered in the Party and ran under its umbrella, first in 2016 and then again in this cycle.

But make no mistake, Mr. Sanders is also running against the Democratic Party. And the Party's leadership understands that, which is why it is trying its best to defeat him. The last time anyone ran on a platform as progressive as Mr. Sanders's was in 1984, when Jesse Jackson took on the emerging right wing in the Party with his 'Rainbow Coalition'. Mr. Jackson's campaign was in many ways very similar to Mr. Sanders's. It proposed national healthcare, a raise in the minimum wage, extending the social safety net and also a shift in foreign policy. Nobody expected it to succeed, and yet he made a serious run for the Party nomination - so much so, that a panicked Party had to take desperate measures to prevent its success, including shutting down polling booths in many cities where Mr. Jackson was gaining momentum. But Mr. Sanders's campaign is more radical, if only because the forces it is taking on are so much more entrenched after 40 years of neoliberal turn. Mr. Jackson ran when unions and civic organizations still had some weight inside the Party, and he could garner some support from them. Mr. Sanders stands virtually alone, having only the forces he built up, or has helped build up since 2016, as his support base.

Mr. Sanders's success has upended several myths about the American electorate, which the two parties have used to justify their neoliberal policies. The first is that the reason America does not have a robust welfare state is that the public is uniquely suspicious of "big government". In other words, when politicians refuse to



The rise of the Vermont Senator as a frontrunner has upended many myths and opened up several possibilities. Bernie Sanders, the presidential candidate emerging as the favorite to win the Democratic nomination, shakes hands with supporters

Photo / Courtesy Sanders Campaign

even consider social insurance policies, they are merely reflecting American values. But in fact, public opinion polls have shown for decades that, when the question is posed appropriately, Americans have expressed the same desire for social insurance as publics everywhere else. It is not that they are suspicious of big government, but that they have given up hoping that the state will ever do anything for them. Mr. Sanders is the first political figure in almost two generations to break through the embargo, and it has caught fire.

The second myth is that the only way to win is by veering toward the 'center', which makes a Sanders platform suicidal because centrist voters are hostile to the policies it espouses. This has been the most common justification for eschewing progressive policies for decades, and it is a variant of the first myth. Once again, politicians are supposedly just following what the public wants. But what is not mentioned is that only about half of the American electorate participates in presidential elections - and it is the wealthier half. Poorer voters have given up on the system precisely because the system is not only indifferent, but hostile to them. They choose not to vote. So, the 'center' of the voting population is much to the left of the part that typically votes. It is to this section, shunted aside and ignored, to which Mr. Sanders is making his appeals, and it is working.

Welfare of minorities

The final myth is that Mr. Sanders is proposing "white" policies that ignore issues of race and ethnicity. This is the most toxic of the shibboleths. It supposes that economic issues - of wages, healthcare, education, etc. - do not attract black and brown voters. And yet, Mr. Sanders has built up the biggest following of all the candidates among non-white voters. He is the most trusted and most loved by minorities of any politician in America. In Nevada, Mr. Sanders garnered a staggering 70% of the Latino vote and was a close second to Joe Biden among the Blacks. The reason is obvious - because

minorities are the most economically desperate section of the American population. They are the natural constituency for a campaign centering on economic justice.

Mr. Sanders is succeeding because he is attracting voters who are either ignored or actively discouraged from voting by his Party. And with every victory, his campaign is gaining exponentially in strength. After five decades of neglect and abuse, working-class Americans had given up on the system. Their cynicism and sense of hopelessness was not only accepted by the two Parties but encouraged by them. Up to this past weekend, the message on the airwaves was, "he cannot win". The idea is for every household to feel that even if they feel attracted to his program, they are alone in their sentiments - that that the mythical 'center', will reject him.

But with every win, every success, the brute facts have become impossible to ignore. Iowa showed that he had a real base; New Hampshire confirmed that it was not a fluke; Nevada has shown that he is not only able to attract minority voters, but that he is by far the most popular candidate among them. Mr. Sanders got more votes in Nevada than the next three candidates combined. The Party is in full-blown panic and, over the next months, will do everything it can to stop him.

But its power is limited. The fact is that the American Parties have very little control over who can and cannot run on their tickets. Anyone is free to enter a primary, and if they can attract enough votes, it is very hard to stop them. And the Party leadership's helplessness is becoming palpable. The last weapon they had was their fear mongering, and now that too has become ineffective.

Mr. Sanders has tapped into a deep, simmering sentiment among the American people. It is far more dangerous than anger. It is hope - and it threatens to overturn the entire political establishment.

(The author is a Professor of Sociology at New York University and editor of Catalyst magazine)

China to send 'duck army' to help Pakistan fight locusts

BEIJING (TIP): China is planning to dispatch a 100,000-strong army of ducks to help Pakistan combat a massive locust infestation, a local newspaper reported Thursday. The legion of lotus-eating waterfowl will be sent from the eastern province of Zhejiang following the earlier dispatch of a team of Chinese experts to Pakistan to advise on a response to the infestation that is being called the worst in 20 years, the Ningbo Evening News said. AP

Missing teen found dead inside lion's cage at Lahore zoo

LAHORE (TIP): An 18-year-old boy who was reported missing earlier this week was found dismembered inside a lion's cage at a zoo in Lahore.

Identified as Bilal by local media, the boy had been reported missing since Monday but his family came forward to search for him in the park on Wednesday. The News International quoted the Safari Park Lahore administration as saying.

According to Safari Park Lahore Director Chaudhry Shafqat, the remains of the teen's body were discovered after the family contacted the park administration on Wednesday morning.

Police investigation revealed that the boy had climbed the fence and entered the park to cut grass.

Bilal's uncle was an employee of the park, police said, adding that while he was cutting grass the lions attacked him.

The police claim to have found a sickle, grass and human remains from the site, adding that the incident took place on Monday. IANS

Pakistan confirms its first two cases of coronavirus

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan on Wednesday confirmed its first two cases of the novel coronavirus as the deadly infection reached the country despite all out efforts to keep it away.

"I can confirm first two cases of coronavirus in Pakistan. Both cases are being taken care of according to clinical standard protocols & both of them are stable," Dr Zafar Mirza, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health, tweeted.

He said there was "no need to panic" as the "things are under control".

Mirza said he was currently at the country's Taftan border crossing with Iran and would return to Islamabad on Thursday and address a press conference. His tweet came moments after the Sindh health department said a 22-year young man had tested positive for the coronavirus in Karachi. "The patient travelled to Iran where he acquired the virus," said Meeran Yousuf, Coordinator to the Health and Population Welfare Minister of Sindh government. PTI

In Malaysia, Mahathir, Anwar vie for power

KUALA LUMPUR (TIP): Malaysia was plunged into a bitter power struggle on Wednesday as Mahathir Mohamad sought to form a unity government following his shock resignation, but old foe Anwar Ibrahim also pushed to become premier.

The developments deepened a crisis that began when the ruling coalition — which included both men when it stormed to a historic poll victory in 2018 — fell apart after a failed bid to establish a new government without Anwar.

Anwar was Mahathir's designated successor, but he would likely have been pushed out and blocked from becoming leader if the weekend bid had succeeded.

Their notoriously stormy relationship has shaped Malaysian politics ever since Mahathir — during a first stint in office in the 1990s — sacked Anwar as his deputy, and he was jailed on dubious sodomy and corruption charges.

They reconciled ahead of the 2018 polls to oust a corruption-plagued coalition led by Najib Razak, but many were sceptical Mahathir — at 94, the world's oldest leader — would stick to a vow to hand power to Anwar.

Mahathir quit on Monday as premier but it remains unclear whether he had a hand in the plot to topple the government, although analysts suspect he at least gave it his blessing. He has been named interim leader and initially appeared to have strong support to remain as premier.

But backing fell away early Wednesday and rumours swirled Anwar had garnered enough support from MPs



for the top job, fuelling expectations that Mahathir might finally cede power.

The elderly leader, however, announced in a televised address to the nation that he wished to establish a unity government, and was willing to return as premier.

"Party politics must be put aside for now," said Mahathir. "If allowed, I will try to form an inclusive government, not siding with any political parties." "If I still have the support I will return. If not I will accept whoever is chosen," he added.

Moments later at a press conference at his party headquarters, Anwar said he had received backing from three parties in the "Pact of Hope" coalition -- the grouping in power until Mahathir quit -- to become premier.

Anwar, 72, said the coalition had

invited Mahathir to a meeting on Tuesday evening aimed at reviving the coalition, but after he failed to show they decided to put him forward as their candidate.

"Since the attempt to topple the government last week we have remained steadfast in defending the mandate of the Malaysian people," he said.

After reading a statement, he added: "We leave it to the palace to decide".

Officially the king appoints the prime minister, and he has been interviewing all the country's MPs since Monday to work out who they support.

A candidate must have the backing of at least 112 MPs — but it was not clear whether Anwar or Mahathir would achieve that, and there are likely to be days of political horse-trading ahead. — AFP

Rising sea levels put Myanmar's villages on frontline of climate change

BAGO (MYANMAR) (TIP): Three years ago, the villagers watched as the Sittaung River on Myanmar's southeast coast crept closer to them, swollen by powerful tidal surges from the Gulf of Mottama that eroded its banks.

Eventually, the 1,500 residents of Ta Dar U had to accept the inevitable: move or be washed away.

Dismantling their wooden homes, they relocated several kilometres inland, away from the fertile fields they had cultivated for decades.

"Where we now see water, our farming land used to be," said farmer Tint Khaing. "It was very big, nearly three hours' walking distance. We all lost our farmland to the sea." Ta Dar U is among hundreds of villages at the frontline of Myanmar's climate crisis, where extreme weather patterns and rising sea levels have amplified and accelerated natural erosion.

Environmentalists consider Myanmar to be particularly vulnerable. It was among the top three countries affected by extreme weather between 1998 and

2018 on the Global Climate Risk Index, published by environmental think tank Germanwatch.

Sea levels are projected to rise about 13 cm (5 inches) by 2020, putting at risk about 2.5 million coastal residents, said Myint Thein, a US-based groundwater consultant and member of Myanmar's natural water resources committee.

"Flooding will be worst during the rainy season and high tide, dragging salty water up into the land," he said.

Rapid erosion has already devoured 10 villages in the past four years, said Jos van der Zanden, chief technical adviser to the Gulf of Mottama Project, a Swiss-based organisation that provides assistance to displaced villagers.

Fading future

After their homes fell into the sea, the people of Ta Dar U, mostly rice farmers, scattered across the delta.

Saltwater contaminated their lands and they were forced to take up new occupations, with little success.

Nearly 200 students now travel hours every day to attend school after their

own, which once stood near the town centre, was reduced to a crumbling pile of rubble on the riverbank.

"If the erosion continues at this rate, the future of the students will fade as well," said Myo Min Thein, the sole teacher at a makeshift school, who said he is struggling to teach the 26 students, ages 4 to 14, by himself.

Myanmar's climate change department has drafted plans to address rising waters but is not involved in resettling those displaced, deputy director Thin Thuzar Win told Reuters.

An official from the disaster management department said it did not have specific programmes for those displaced by riverbank erosion. Regional government officials did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

Low-lying villages should be moved immediately to areas at least 7 metres (23 feet) above sea level, said Myint Thein.

"It will be costly but it must be done," he said. "The environment has changed, so the people must learn to adapt." Reuters

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Vijay Advani Appointed New Chair of Global Board of USIBC



Vijay spent 11 years at the World Bank advising governments on developing their financial markets and arranging equity, quasi-equity and debt financing

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US-India Business Council has appointed Vijay Advani as new Chair of its Global Board of Directors.

Prior to assuming his current role as Executive Chairman in January 2020, Advani served as the CEO of Nuveen. Earlier, he was also Co-President of Franklin Templeton Investments. In Franklin Templeton Investments, in a career of more than 20 years, he was responsible for long-term strategic initiatives and the firm's investment management, trading and global retail and institutional channels. Prior to joining Franklin Templeton, Vijay spent 11 years at the World Bank advising governments on developing their financial markets and arranging equity, quasi-equity and debt financing.

Vijay is a member of the Board of Governors of the Investment Company Institute (ICI). He also serves on the Boards of Jumpstart, FCLTGlobal and the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN). He is also an advisory board member for The Hive Incubator in Palo Alto, charter member of TiE Silicon Valley and past board member of the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) and the Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI) at the University of Pennsylvania. Vijay is a committee member of the San Francisco-Bangalore Sister City Initiative, member of the India Advisory Committee and Investment Committee at the Santa Clara University (SCU) and former board member of Lok Foundation. He graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Mumbai and an M.B.A. from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Delhi Communal Riots Ring Alarm Bells in Washington

US Congress members criticize Delhi riots



WASHINGTON (TIP): At least four members of the US Congress have expressed concern over the violence in Delhi and urged Washington to speak up about increasing sectarianism in India. They based their observations on US media's negative coverage of the closing hours of Donald Trump's two-day visit to India that ended on Tuesday, February 25. All three Representatives and the lone Senator are Democrats and critical of Trump's domestic and foreign policies.

Rashida Tlaib, with nearly one million followers on Twitter, said the real story of the Trump visit should be the communal violence targeting Muslims in Delhi. "We cannot be silent as this tide of anti-Muslim violence continues across India," she said while posting a Washington Post article that said the riots represent a serious escalation of

tensions after months of protests against the CAA and growing frictions between PM Modi's supporters and opponents.

Democratic presidential candidate and Senator Elizabeth Warren said, "It's important to strengthen relationship with democratic partners like India. But we must be able to speak truthfully about our values, including religious freedom and freedom of expression, and violence against peaceful protesters is never acceptable."

Representative Pramila Jaypal tweeted, "Democracies should not tolerate division and discrimination, or promote laws that undermine religious freedom. The world is watching."

Representative Alan Lowenthal also castigated Trump for "failure of moral leadership" and wanted the US

Government to speak out. He quoted an article from Politico that wrote, "Trump did say, though, that he had confronted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in private about his country's treatment of Muslims."

Though US President Donald Trump reposed faith in PM Narendra Modi on finding the right answers to the CAA, an influential panel of the US Congress will hold a hearing on March 4 on how citizenship laws are leveraged to deny religious minorities the legal protections of citizenship, making them vulnerable to exploitation, discrimination and mass atrocities.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) said the CAA and the proposed NRC could become a tool to target religious minorities.

Tax Talk

Tax Time Guide: IRS.gov's 'Where's My Refund?' tool is fastest, easiest way to check on tax refunds

WASHINGTON (TIP): The Internal Revenue Service is reminding taxpayers that the best way to check on their tax refund is by using the "Where's My Refund?" tool at IRS.gov or through the IRS2Go Mobile App.

This news release is part of a group of IRS tips called the Tax Time Guide. The guide is designed to help taxpayers as they near the April 15 tax filing deadline.

As of Feb. 21, the IRS had already issued more than 37.4 million refunds averaging \$3,125.

While the majority of tax refunds are issued within 21 days, some may take longer. Just as each tax return is unique and individual, so is each taxpayer's refund. There are a few things taxpayers should keep in mind if they are waiting on their refund but hear or see on social media that other taxpayers have already received theirs.

The IRS works hard to issue refunds as quickly as possible, but some tax returns take longer to process than others. Many different factors can affect the timing of your refund after we receive your return. Also, remember to take into

consideration the time it takes for your financial institution to post the refund to your account or for you to receive it by mail.

There are several reasons a tax refund may take longer:

Some tax returns require additional review.

The return may include errors or be incomplete.

The return could be affected by identity theft or fraud.

The return includes a claim for the Earned Income Tax Credit or Additional Child Tax Credit.

The time between the IRS issuing the refund and the bank posting it to an account since many banks do not process payments on weekends or holidays.

The IRS will contact taxpayers by mail if more information is needed to process a return.

Fast and easy refund updates

Taxpayers can use "Where's My Refund?" to start checking on the status of their return within 24 hours after the IRS acknowledges receipt of an

electronically filed return or four weeks after the taxpayer mails a paper return. The tool's tracker displays progress through three phases: (1) Return Received; (2) Refund Approved; and (3) Refund Sent. To use it a taxpayer must enter their Social security number or ITIN, their filing status and the exact whole dollar amount of their refund. The IRS updates "Where's My Refund?" once a day, usually overnight, so there's no need to check more frequently.

Ignore refund myths

Some taxpayers mistakenly believe they can expedite their refund by ordering a tax transcript, calling the IRS or calling their tax preparer. Ordering a tax transcript will not help a taxpayer get their refund faster or find out when they'll get their refund. The information available on "Where's My Refund?" is the same information available to IRS telephone assistors.

(Read full story on
www.theindianpanorama.news)

Punch 111 for Mark Kalish as state representative of 16th House District, IL

CHICAGO, IL (TIP): Meet & Greet, Mark Kalish as state representative of 16th House District, Illinois was on Friday - February 21, 2020 at 3775 W Arthur Ave, Lincolnwood, IL. Event was organized by Bhavesh Patel from Sahil and Nick Patel from LA TAN. Bhavesh and Nick is pioneer in USA for organizing big shows of Bollywood star in Chicagoland area. Ray Nanato; Political Consultant, many leaders from many different fields such as medical, sports entertainment, political, teaching spiritual leaders and prominent community leader were present at Meet & Greet.

Yehiel "Mark" Kalish is a Democratic member of the Illinois General Assembly, presiding over the 16th House district which includes parts of Skokie, Morton Grove, Lincolnwood, and Chicago's 50th Ward. He has an extensive background in non-profit work and government advocacy.

His work in the Illinois legislature includes voting for and passing bills that deal with mental health parity, the rising cost of health care premiums and prescription drugs with the inclusion of pre-existing conditions, the Equal Pay Act, as well as common-sense gun laws like the Fix the FOID Act. Kalish is one of ten Democrats to serve on the House Firearms Public Awareness Task Force.

As a resident of the 50th Ward, Kalish experienced firsthand its lack of



Babubhai Patel (Blue T shirt), Bhailal Patel, Bhavesh Patel, Mark Kalish, Ray Nanato and Nick Patel

representation in the statehouse and has been working hard to make changes in that regard to ensure that all parts of his district are represented equally.

Kalish knows that Democrats are far Better Together than divided. Despite nuanced differences, Kalish understands that progress can only be achieved when we promote inclusivity while welcoming a difference of opinions within the party.

Representative Kalish is willing to put petty politics aside and is emphatic about keeping the Democratic Party united in order to keep legislative majorities throughout the country.

We urge all Voters to Punch 111 for Mark Kalish as state representative of 16th House District, IL on March 17, 2020 Election.

(Photographs and Press release /Asian Media USA)

Indian Man Shot Dead by Masked Man at Grocery Store in Los Angeles



A masked man shot dead Maninder Singh Sahi at a grocery store in Los Angeles in the early hours of Saturday, Feb 22

LOS ANGELES (TIP): A masked man shot dead an Indian national at a grocery store in Los Angeles in the early hours of Saturday, Feb 22. Maninder Singh Sahi had arrived in the US less than six months ago and had sought political asylum. He was working at a 7-Eleven grocery store in the Whittier City in Los Angeles County of California.

Originally from Karnal, Sahi who had turned 31 last month, was married and a father of two small children, ages 5 and 9.

(Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)

Upset Hindus urge Oregon brewery to rename Shavasana beer & apologize

NEVADA (TIP): Upset Hindus are urging Newport (Oregon) based Rogue Ales & Spirits brewery to apologize and rename its "Shavasana" (Imperial, Granola Blonde Ale) beer; calling it highly inappropriate.

Hindu statesman Rajan Zed, in a statement in Nevada, said that inappropriate usage of Hindu concepts or symbols or icons or scriptures or deities for commercial or other agenda was not okay as it hurt the devotees.

Zed, who is president of Universal Society of Hinduism, stated that Shavasana, a highly important posture in yoga, was the ultimate act of conscious surrender and was also used in Yoganidra meditation. Yogis slipped into blissful neutrality in Shavasana. It found mention in Hathayoga-pradipika, a text reportedly composed in the 15th century CE.

Yoga, an integral part of Hinduism, was considered Union with God and was a mean for transforming consciousness and attaining liberation. It found mention in ancient Hindu scriptures Upanishads and took many forms in sacred Bhagavad-Gita. Using yoga to



push beer was highly insensitive and trivializing of the immensely revered body of sacred and serious knowledge, Rajan Zed pointed out.

Hinduism is the oldest and third largest religion of the world with about 1.1 billion adherents and a rich philosophical thought and it should not be taken frivolously. Symbols of any faith, larger or smaller, should not be mishandled, Zed noted.

Rajan Zed further said that Hindus were for free speech and expression as much as anybody else if not more. But faith was something sacred and attempts at trivializing it hurt the devotees.

"Shavasana" (ABV 8%, IBU 13, SRM 7.5), releasing in March and described as "a cool-down beer"; is brewed with granola, coconut and sweet oats.

Awards-winning Rogue Ales & Spirits, founded in 1988 "as one of America's first microbreweries", claims to be "the only farmer-brewer-distiller-cooper in the United States". It is said to be "available in all 50 states as well as 54 countries". Dharma Tamm is President.

Indian American Murder Suspect Released Pending Further Investigation



Sonam Saxena, 43, of Bellevue, Wash., was taken into police custody following the discovery of the body of his wife Smriti Saxena near Aneahoomalu Bay

WASHINGTON (TIP): An Indian American Google employee who was arrested on the count of second-degree murder after his wife's body was found on a beach in Hawaii has been released pending further investigation, the Hawaii Island Police announced in a press release.

According to the press release, on Tuesday (February 18), at approximately 11:20 p.m., Sonam Saxena (M-43 of Bellevue, Washington) reported his wife Smriti Saxena (F-41, also of Bellevue, Washington) as a missing person.

On Wednesday (February 19), at approximately 7:30 a.m., a body of a female was located along the shoreline. Detectives continued their investigation and were able to confirm that the body was that of Smriti Saxena.

At 1:30 p.m. on (February 19), Sonam Saxena was arrested on the count of Murder in the second-degree and was being held at the Kealakehe Police Station as the investigation continued.

An autopsy was conducted and further testing is needed to determine the exact cause of death.

On Friday (February 21) at 1:20 p.m., after conferring with prosecutors, Sonam Saxena was released pending investigation. Detectives with the Area II Criminal Investigation Section are continuing this investigation.

Tax Talk

Interest rates remain the same for the second quarter of 2020

WASHINGTON(TIP): The Internal Revenue Service today announced that interest rates will remain the same for the calendar quarter beginning April 1, 2020. The rates will be:

five (5) percent for overpayments [four (4) percent in the case of a corporation]; two and one-half (2.5) percent for the portion of a corporate overpayment exceeding \$10,000; five (5) percent for underpayments; and seven (7) percent for large corporate underpayments. Under the Internal Revenue Code, the rate of interest is determined on a quarterly basis. For taxpayers other than corporations, the overpayment and underpayment rate is the federal short-term rate plus 3 percentage points. (Read full story on www.theindianpanorama.news)



CLOSE TO BREAKTHROUGH IN PULWAMA ATTACK CASE: NIA

NEW DELHI (TIP): The NIA is close to a breakthrough in the Pulwama attack case, the agency claimed on Thursday. It also clarified that it had found no evidence against Yousuf Chopan, one of seven over-ground workers arrested in connection with a terror case, and that this man was not linked to the Pulwama case.

"In the Pulwama attack Case... in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed in the suicide attack, significant leads have emerged and a breakthrough in the case is expected shortly," a statement by the agency said.

The statement from the agency came in the wake of reports that a special court had granted bail to an accused in the Pulwama attack case. Raising the issue, the Congress said it was an "insult" to the security personnel killed in the terror attack and demanded Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation.

The Pulwama case has been stuck for several months now as all the identified accused are either dead or in Pakistan. Even though NIA identified the attacker and traced the car used in the attack to its owner, it could not move beyond as the attacker died in the suicide attack and his local handler and car owner were killed in an encounter.

Meanwhile, the NIA said it had found no evidence against one of seven overground workers arrested in connection with a terror case, who has now been granted bail. Chopan was arrested along with six others in the case. Two more accused were killed in an encounter. One of them, Mudassir Ahmed Khan, was alleged to have been involved in the Pulwama attack.

KANHAIYA, NINE OTHERS TO FACE SEDITION TRIAL

NEW DELHI (TIP): Seven months after its standing counsel advised against prosecution sanction to Delhi Police in the 2016 JNU sedition case against former JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar and nine others, the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government has given police the go-ahead.



In an order Thursday, the Deputy Secretary (Home) stated: "Whereas on perusal of the chargesheet under Sections 124-A and 120-B IPC at Vasant Kunj (North) police station, and on consideration of the allegations made in case, and other material and evidences placed on record, it appears to the government of NCT of Delhi that the accused, Kanhaiya Kumar, Syed Umar Khalid, Anirban Bhattacharya, Aquib Hussain, Mujeed Hussain Gattoo, Muneeb Hussain Gattoo, Umair Gul, Rayees Rasool, Bharat Ali and Khalid Bashir Bhat, have prima facie committed an offence under Section 124-A and 120-B IPC." IPC section 124-A relates to sedition and 120-B to criminal conspiracy.

"And whereas, it is necessary in the interest of justice that prosecution sanction should be granted against the said accused in the court of competent jurisdiction for their trial in respect of the said offence alleged to have been committed by them. Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by the sub-section (1) of section 196 of CrPC, 1973 (2 of 1974), the government of NCT, Delhi, hereby grants prosecution sanction against all the ten accused. This issues with the approval of LG, Delhi," it stated.

Third quarter GDP growth slows down to 4.7 per cent

NEW DELHI (TIP): The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate slumped to a 27-quarter low of 4.7 per cent in October-December even as the government retained the 2019-20 forecast at 5.0 per cent, an 11-year low, in the second advance estimate released by National Statistical Office (NSO) Friday.

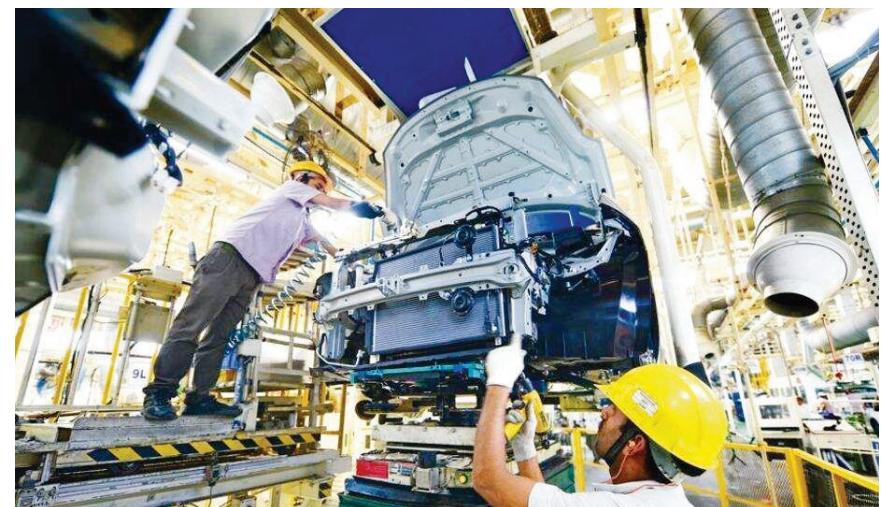
The slowdown in GDP growth in the third quarter was marked by tepid growth in manufacturing, electricity and construction, coupled with a contraction in investment and weak exports, the data showed.

Despite the December quarter generally being one of the strongest quarters due to the festival season uptick and higher rural spending driven by the Kharif harvest, the continued growth slowdown is seen as worrying, especially in the context of some high-frequency data sets pointing to a rebound.

Economists also warn of the downside risks due to the impact of the COVID-19, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stating in Mumbai Friday said the outbreak could "emerge as a challenge for India" if issues were not resolved in the coming three weeks.

Barring a minor rise in Q1 GDP growth rate, the 4.7 per cent growth rate for October-December now marks a slowing rate of growth for the seventh consecutive quarter. It's the lowest since 4.3 per cent growth in January-March 2012-13.

For this fiscal, the GDP growth rates were revised up sharply to 5.6 per cent for April-June and 5.1 per cent for July-September from earlier estimates of 5.0 per cent and 4.5 per cent, respectively. This follows the January 31 GDP release, where the growth for 2018-19 was



revised down to 6.1 per cent from earlier estimate of 6.8 per cent.

With the growth rate seen at 5 per cent for the whole year, back of the envelope calculations show that the GDP growth is estimated to remain broadly flat at 4.7 per cent in the fourth quarter as well.

Both the government and the RBI see growth picking up in next financial year with the Economic Survey expecting growth rate to be 6-6.5 per cent and the Reserve Bank of India pegging it at 6 per cent. "We have already bottomed out," Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakrabarty told reporters after the NSO released its data.

"At present, it is difficult to conclude whether the risks arising from the rapid spread of the coronavirus for domestic tourism, trade and manufacturing, would outweigh the improved outlook for the agricultural sector and rural spending, engendered by the encouraging outlook for the rabi crop. The continued slowdown in economic growth in Q3 FY2020 suggests that the MPC may well undertake another rate cut, but only

when the CPI inflation retraces considerably towards the 4 per cent mark. Therefore, we continue to expect a pause, at least in the April 2020 and June 2020 policy reviews," said Aditi Nayar, Principal economist, ICRA Ltd.

Growth rate in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA), which is GDP minus net product taxes and reflects supply-side growth, is seen slowing to 4.9 per cent in 2019-20 from a revised 6.0 per cent growth in the previous year, while for the October-December quarter it is estimated at 4.5 per cent as against a 5.6 per cent growth in the same period last year.

The nominal GDP growth rate, which accounts for inflation, is estimated to grow at 7.5 per cent in 2019-20, lower than 11.0 per cent in the previous year.

Sector-wise breakup showed a pickup in agricultural GVA growth to 3.5 per cent in October-December from 2.0 per cent a year ago and GVA growth in "public administration, defence and other services" to 9.7 per cent in October-December from 8.1 per cent a year ago.

NIA arrests JeM operative for Pulwama attack

SRINAGAR (TIP): In a major breakthrough in the Pulwama terror attack, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested a Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) over-ground worker from south Kashmir.

Shakir Bashir Magrey, 22, of Hajibal-Kakpora village of Pulwama district was arrested from his home. According to NIA, Magrey provided shelter to suicide bomber Adil Ahmad Dar, and delivered arms, ammunition, explosive material and other logistical assistance to him.

"Today, in a major breakthrough in the Pulwama case, NIA arrested one accused, Shakir Bashir Magrey, a JeM over-ground worker," NIA spokesperson Alok Mittal said. At least 40 CRPF personnel were killed on February 14, 2019, at Lethpora in Pulwama after their convoy was struck by an IED-laden vehicle driven by Dar.

Magrey is the first arrest in the attack. He owns a furniture shop near Lethpora bridge and allegedly conducted reconnaissance of the movement of CRPF convoy on the Jammu-Srinagar highway in January 2019. "Magrey was introduced to Dar in mid-2018 by a Pakistani terrorist, Mohammad Umar Farooq. He has disclosed that on several occasions, he collected and delivered arms, ammunition, cash and explosive material to the JeM terrorists including those involved in Pulwama attack," NIA said. Magrey revealed that he harboured Dar and Farooq in his house from late 2018 till the attack in February 2019, the central agency said.

Magrey, NIA said, was also

involved in modifying the Maruti Eeco car, which was used in the attack, and fitted the IED in it in early February 2019.

NIA said the explosives used in the attack were determined to be ammonium nitrate, nitro-glycerin and RDX through forensic investigation. "Investigation has also confirmed the identity of the suicide bomber to be Adil Ahmad Dar through DNA matching with that of his father," NIA said.

Other key terrorists involved in the attack have been identified as Muddasir Ahmad Khan — JeM's divisional commander of south Kashmir who was killed in an operation on March 11, 2019 — Pakistani terrorists Muhammad Umar Farooq and IED expert Kamran, both killed on March 29, 2019, car owner Sajjad Ahmad Bhat, who was killed on June 16, 2019, and JeM's commander Qari Yassir killed on January 25.

GLOBAL PRESSURE OVER CAA-DRIVEN VIOLENCE IN INDIA, SAYS MEA

NEW DELHI (TIP): India on Thursday faced criticism and calls to protect religious freedom and the safety of its citizens from across the world, including two US presidential candidates and the UN human rights chief, following the communal violence in New Delhi.

The government pushed back against the criticism, with external affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar describing the comments by organisations and individuals as "inaccurate and misleading" and aimed at politicising the situation.

There was also condemnation from quarters that have been inimical to India in recent months, such as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which was dismissed by New Delhi.

"Our law enforcement agencies are working on the ground to prevent violence and ensure restoration of confidence and normalcy. Senior representatives of the government have been involved in that process. The prime minister has publicly appealed for peace and brotherhood," Kumar said.

Communal violence linked to protests in New Delhi against the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) flared up as US President Donald Trump began a visit to India on Monday, claiming 38 lives and injuring almost 350 people this week. The violence received widespread coverage in the international media as it coincided with the visit.

Bernie Sanders, a leading Democratic Party candidate in the US presidential race, tweeted: "Over 200 million Muslims call India home. Widespread anti-Muslim mob violence has killed at least 27 and injured many more. Trump responds by saying, 'That's up to India.' This is a failure of leadership on human rights."

Elizabeth Warren, another Democratic presidential candidate, tweeted that it is "important to strengthen relationships with democratic partners like India", but the US "must be able to speak truthfully about our values, including religious freedom and freedom of expression – and violence against peaceful protesters is never acceptable".

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) expressed grave concern at the violence, including reports of mobs specifically targeting Muslims. "The brutal and unchecked violence growing across Delhi cannot continue," said USCIRF commissioner Anurima Bhargava.

"The Indian government must take swift action to ensure the safety of all of its citizens. Instead, reports are mounting that the Delhi police have not intervened in violent attacks against Muslims, and the government is failing in its duty to protect its citizens. These incidents are even more concerning in the context of efforts within India to target and potentially disenfranchise Muslims across the country, in clear violation of international human rights standards."

The USCIRF has already convened a hearing in Washington on March 4 to discuss how the citizenship law is being "used to target religious minorities" in India. The Trump administration's pointperson for South Asia, Alice Wells, also said in a tweet that the US echoes Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for calm and normalcy and "urges all parties to maintain peace, refrain from violence, and respect the right of peaceful assembly".

In the UK, the Boris Johnson government told Parliament it believes the CAA is divisive and that it has raised concerns over the law's impact with Indian authorities. The issue was discussed in the House of Lords on Tuesday evening, with contributions from several members such as Meghnad Desai, Raj Loomba and Indarjit Singh.

The CAA has also been divisive in the 1.5 million-strong Indian community in the UK, the government said. Elizabeth Sugg, junior minister in the Foreign Office, said: "To conclude, the CAA has clearly been divisive in India. Its full impact remains unclear. We hope and trust the government of India will address the concerns and protect the rights of people of all religions, in keeping with India's constitution, its democratic values and its inclusive traditions."

Illegal guns, outside goons fuelled Delhi mayhem

NEW DELHI (TIP): The death toll in Delhi's worst riots in more than three decades reached 38 on Thursday as violence ebbed and hundreds of people began picking up the pieces of their shattered lives and livelihoods - many also leaving the area for now.

But four days after clashes broke out in northeast Delhi between pro and anti-CAA groups and spiralled into bloodshed, arson and looting, also leaving more than 200 wounded, here comes another shocker.

Investigators are gathering that guns and goons from Haryana and UP's Loni, Ghaziabad and Baghpat might have added fuel to the fire.

On Thursday, the Delhi Police transferred the case to the Crime Branch and formed two Special Investigation Teams (SITs). What has startled cops is the fact that many people have died due to bullet injuries.

Rioters had no fear of the police as they opened fire on innocent people in broad daylight. The causes of 22 deaths have been ascertained. As many as 10 people were shot dead. Many of the over 200 injured have gunshot injuries.

Take the case of slain Delhi Police head constable Ratan Lal. In initial stages, it looked like he died due to stone-pelting during clashes in Gokalpuri. But his postmortem report has now revealed that he was shot dead.

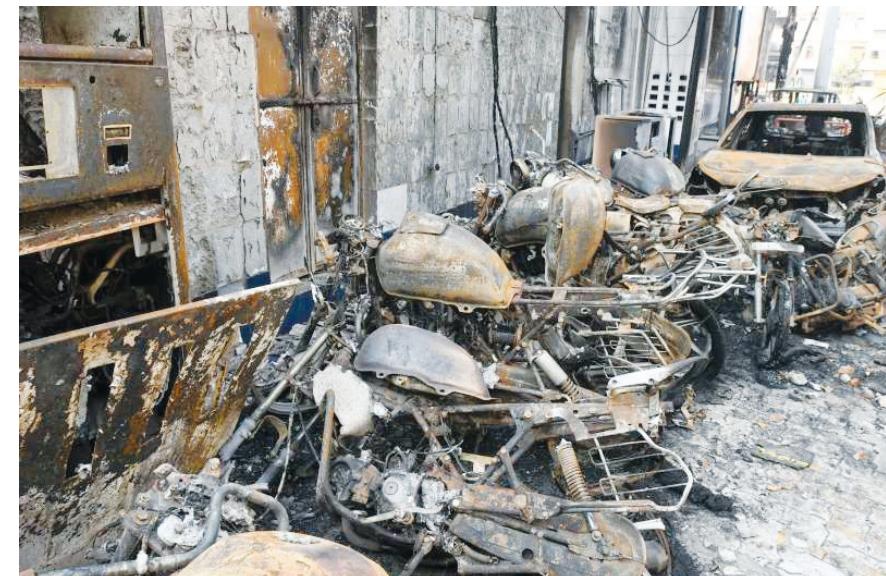
Four died due to stabbing, while fire killed the others. It is not clear whether they were set afire or they got trapped in fire during the violence. The bullet shells recovered from the violence-hit areas also indicate that country-made pistols along with sophisticated weapons were used on a big scale.

Is northeast Delhi becoming a hub of illegal arms? The Delhi Police have got many videos and CCTV footages in which rioters can be seen using pistols.

"It is easy for gunrunners to make supplies to northeast Delhi as it borders Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh" said a police source. Crackdowns on illegal gun factories in Bihar's Munger and some areas in Madhya Pradesh such as Khargone and Barwani forced them to move closer to Delhi, he said.

These areas were considered to be the main sources of weapons for criminals in Delhi-NCR, he added. Now raw materials come to places like west UP's Meerut where production is done. In western UP, one can easily get a pistol for Rs 10,000. A country-made pistol comes as cheap as Rs 1,500.

Last month, just before the Delhi Assembly elections, the Delhi Police's Special Cell busted an illegal firearms manufacturing factory in Meerut and arrested two men for pushing supplies into Delhi. Cops had seized 60 semi-automatic pistols along with



unfinished firearms and machinery.

Those arrested had confessed that they bought one weapon for Rs 3,000 and sold it at Rs 10,000 to 35,000. DCP (Special Cell) Pramod Kushwaha said, "We recently busted a gang in Delhi and recovered 30 pistols and a carbine. It had procured the weapons from Barwani in Madhya Pradesh."

The Delhi Police have registered 48 FIRs related to rioting. Cops are probing the sources of all types of weapons. Special Commissioner of Police Praweer Ranjan said, "All angles will be probed, including how illegal weapons were used by miscreants, by the SITs."

OUTSIDE GOONS ON THE RAMPAGE

Investigations are also probing the role of those who came from western UP's Loni, Ghaziabad and Baghpat. Senior police officials did not rule out the connections of the riots with the violence in northeast Delhi's Seemapuri and Seelampur during the anti-CAA protests in December.

"Teenagers were used as a front during the clashes. The outsiders mingled with locals to know about the demography of the area to arrange the logistics - stones, bricks, bottles, etc," said a senior police official who did not want to be named. On Wednesday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal while speaking in the Delhi Assembly also blamed "outsiders", and "political and anti-social elements."

So far police have arrested 120 persons, most of them outsiders. Police officials said that those involved in stone pelting, arson and torching of properties also spread rumours on social media to instigate people. They said that the rioters were planning to spark violence in Shaheen Bagh and Jamia areas.

"But after a spontaneous violence in Maujpur on Sunday, rioters got a chance to act and attack," said a top cop who has been investigating the case. Post Sunday night, sources said, the outsiders, particularly from the bordering states, came and

indulged in arson.

"Since Monday, the violence was no more between the protesters, it became communal," one of the reports (informal notes) mentioned. The phones that have been seized revealed that the proper mobilisation was being done using social media.

During the probe, the Delhi Police found many WhatsApp groups and broadcast messages circulated post Sunday's violence. "These messages suggest the local violence was overpowered by the outsiders who came from neighbouring states. Chats such as 'It's time to act', were also shared on Sunday late night," a source said.

"Various provocative videos and speeches of influencers were shared continuously in the last two months," he said.

'SITUATION NORMAL'

Delhi Police PRO MS Randhawa said the situation was normal and that "adequate" security forces had been deployed in the affected areas.

"350 peace committee meetings have been held. We will address all individual cases. We have multiple footages. We are investigating from all angles," he said.

SN Srivastava, Special Commissioner of Police (Law and order), who visited the affected areas, said: "I've come here to assure people that we're with them and for their welfare. People here have responded positively and assured that they'll work together through aman committees to bring back the feeling of brotherhood."

SN Srivastava appointed Delhi police commissioner

IPS officer SN Srivastava was appointed as the next commissioner of Delhi Police on Friday, days after he was brought in as the special commissioner of police for law and order amid violence in the city.

Srivastava will take over as the new Delhi Police chief on Sunday, a day after the current commissioner Amulya Patnaik retires.

SEE ALSO P16, 17

Why cops failed to control Delhi violence

NEW DELHI (TIP): Over three days, Delhi Police watched even as hundreds clashed in the North-east Delhi neighbourhoods such as Jafrabad, Yamuna Vihar, Babarpur, Khajoori Khas, torching vehicles and shops and houses, in the worst communal riots in the capital in at least two decades.

Once touted as the model police for all states, Delhi Police, experts say, has lately failed to handle law and order situations due to several reasons: inexperience of the top brass in dealing with violent clashes; lack of faith in the leadership; and department's repeated failure in assessing situations.

Several retired and serving officers pointed out that the majority of Delhi Police DCPs (Deputy Commissioners of Police) currently serving in the districts have zero or little experience in handling riots as Delhi has not seen such large scale violent clashes since the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, sporadic incidents during Mandal Commission, tension during LK Advani's Rath Yatra, and the 1992 riots after demolition of Babri Masjid. Indeed, they add, most people directly handling the situation — ACPs (Assistant Commissioners of Police), Inspectors — have not handled any major riot in their lifetime.

Among the senior leadership of Delhi Police, outgoing Commissioner of Police Amulya Patnaik (his extension ends at the end of the month) himself has spent most of his policing tenure in special units such as Crime Branch, vigilance or administration. For several months, his leadership skills have been severely tested.

He has had to motivate his force after policemen were attacked by lawyers; defend it from charges that it overlooked attacks on Jawaharlal Nehru University students by masked goons; and had to explain why the police entered the library of Jamia University and attacked students during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act. He now has to handle questions on how and why the force wrongly assessed the situation in North-east Delhi and, subsequently, struggled to restore peace.

"In all these incidents, it seems there was no planning, action, tactical deployment or understanding of the crowd and the area. Why hasn't Delhi Police imposed curfew in affected areas of North-east Delhi yet? It will reduce the loss of lives and property," said a retired IPS officer who handled multiple riot situations in Delhi including 1984 riots.

A few hours after the officer spoke to HT, there were reports that curfew had indeed been imposed in some of the areas.

"Seeing what's happening today, I am ashamed I was part of this force. How can you (referring to police commissioner Amulya Patnaik) watch while students are being beaten up, your own men are being thrashed and not do anything? Delhi Police was the number 1 force in all of India but look where it has reached today," said this officer who asked not to be identified.

Importantly, since the events of November 2019, when lawyers thrashed Delhi Police officers, there is a clear disconnect between the top brass and lower-level officers. The junior ranks are scared of taking impromptu decisions on the ground fearing their leader won't stand up for them.



When the Delhi high court ordered the sacking of two senior officers after the clash with lawyers in November, Patnaik faced protests from his own men, the first time this has happened in the history of the department. However, a serving officer, who didn't wish to be named, said "he (Commissioner) hasn't done anything to rebuild the trust of his men".

Patnaik did not respond to calls seeking comment.

Another reason for Delhi Police's struggles is weak human intelligence about protests. Local area DCPs, SHOs (station house officers), ACPs and the special branch of Delhi Police are supposed to gather human intelligence by networking with the local community and religious leaders -- particularly in areas where there could be communal clashes.

"The deployment of forces was earlier done on the basis of this assessment but it appears that there is no preparation on Delhi Police's part (now)," said the serving officer cited above. Over the years, Delhi Police has also become increasingly dependent on technical intelligence instead of its men doing the legwork. The intelligence bureau (IB), which, like Delhi Police, comes under the ministry of home affairs, too has repeatedly failed to analyse the situation in Delhi.

Some of the retired officers also said it was surprising that the home ministry did not pull up Delhi Police after a series of lapses.

Ashok Chand, who was in Delhi Police for around 35 years, said: "It is the responsibility of Delhi Police to maintain law and order and it has failed. Delhi Police needs to introspect, analyse the reasons for its failure, and take remedial action so that it performs effectively in future. There seems to have been no planning on how to handle a riotous situation keeping in view the area's topography, composition of the population and local areas of flashpoint".

CAN'T LET ANOTHER 1984 HAPPEN IN COUNTRY: HC



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it won't let another 1984 happen in India under its watch while hearing a petition concerning communal riots in the national capital which have already led to 22 deaths, including a cop and an IG employee.

The 1984 anti-Sikh riots, a series of targeted killings, in response to the assassination of former PM Indira Gandhi, had led to the deaths of about 3000 people belonging to the Sikh community. A bench of Justices S Muralidhar and Anup J Bhamhani termed as "extremely unfortunate" the killing of IB officer in the ongoing violence in which over 180 people have sustained injuries besides the number of deaths mentioned above. It also said that the highest constitutional functionaries who move with Z-security should reach out to the affected people to give them confidence that law is functioning.

The court had held a midnight hearing

after receiving a call from an advocate explaining the dire circumstances under which the victims were unable to be removed from a small hospital to the GTB Hospital wherein it directed the police to ensure safe passage to government hospitals and emergency treatment for those injured.

The court held a special hearing, which started at 12:30 am, at the residence of Justice S Muralidhar.

The bench had also called for a status report of compliance, including information about the injured victims and the treatment offered to them.

The HC applauded the police for prompt action in evacuating the injured in north-east Delhi where communal violence erupted over the amended citizenship law.

"While the order was being dictated midnight, the police was implementing it right there and rescuing injured persons," the bench said during the day's hearing.

Delhi Police forms 2 SITs to probe all riot-related cases



NEW DELHI (TIP): The Delhi Police said two Special Investigation Teams (SITs) were being set up to investigate the communal riots that rippled through the Northeast district of the national capital.

The teams are being headed by two deputy commissioners of police (DCP) — Rajesh Deo and Joy Tirkey, while Additional Commissioner of Police, Crime, B.K. Singh will head the overall investigation.

The Delhi Police have so far registered 48 FIRs of arson and rioting, and have arrested 170 people in the last four days. The cases have now been transferred to the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police.

According to a police source, two SITs were being formed to ensure "comprehensive and effective investigation" of the cases.

The Crime Branch is currently also investigating the JNU violence cases of 3 and 5 January, but is yet to make an arrest.

Deo was the police officer who linked Kapil Gujjar, the man who opened fire at Shaheen Bagh on 1 February, to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), resulting in him being barred from election duty.

The Election Commission took exception to his statements at the time since an investigation was still ongoing, and said it could hamper "free and fair elections".

Deo had said that Gujjar had joined AAP in 2019 and had also circulated some of his photos with AAP ministers.

Tirkey had investigated the sexual harassment case against former Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, who was eventually given a clean chit by a three-judge in-house committee that found "no substance" in the allegations.

HOW THE INVESTIGATION WILL RUN?

According to a police officer, each SIT will have four assistant commissioners of police (ACP).



Each ACP will head a team of three inspectors, four sub-inspectors and three head constables.

"All these individual cases will be looked into by senior officers who are a part of these two SITs. The investigation is on in full swing and we are making arrests on a daily basis," the police source said.

DCP M.S. Randhawa said the police have accessed footage from multiple cameras that were installed in the area and have also sought video clips available with local residents and journalists to identify the miscreants.

"We have collected multiple footage and are going through it. The investigation is on," Randhawa said.

"The situation is now under control. We have deployed adequate force in the area and have also conducted 350 Aman committee meetings so far," he added.

Aman committees are the Delhi Police's peace committees that engage with local leaders during such situations.

WhatsApp groups under scanner

Police said a unit of the SIT has been tasked with scanning all

WhatsApp groups that were used to circulate videos and messages, which eventually lead to the violence.

According to a source, the buildup to the violent clashes started Monday morning when messages on groups of both Hindus and Muslims began circulating.

"From the arrests that have been made, we have found that all of them used WhatsApp as a medium to not only instigate people but also to coordinate (the mob attacks)," the source said. "We have seized the phones and are going through their chats," he said.

Another source said that police recovered chats that show people were encouraged to bring stones to Maupur and Kardampuri where protests were on.

"There are almost 100 to 120 WhatsApp groups that are being scanned," he said.

The police are also looking at the role of "outsiders" in the violence.

"We suspect that many people came from UP... These are the people who also got weapons with them," the police source said.

Delhi Police claims to have recovered over 500 cartridges from the Northeast district.

AS NORMALCY RETURNS IN NATIONAL CAPITAL, LOCALS DISTRIBUTE FOOD TO INJURED

NEW DELHI (TIP): Normalcy seems to be returning in Delhi after days of violence over the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) marked certain areas, especially in the northeast district, in the national capital.

In these trying times, a positive image of brotherhood and social harmony, much in need, was also witnessed in Delhi. Throughout Thursday, locals were seen distributing food and necessary supplies to those who were injured in the riots and now lay recuperating at the Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) hospital in the national capital.

Food was also distributed to the families of the injured who were coming to the hospital.

"We are distributing food to help people who are coming here to meet or collect bodies of their relatives or a family member. People are also coming from Haryana. Locals leaving here have taken this initiative to help the people at their difficult times," Moosa Alvi, one of the organisers, told news agency ANI.

He added that it was not sponsored by any political party but that it was a spontaneous gesture stemming from humanity. The Delhi Police has also made a fresh appeal to the people, urging them to come forward and give statements regarding the violence that had ensued over the past few days and share relevant pictures and video footage with the cops.

"Whereas incidents of clashes have taken place in the northeast district, Delhi since February 23. All those who are witnesses to the incidents or have captured any activity on their mobile phones or camera are hereby requested to come forward and give their statements, footage and pictures in their possession at DCP office, northeast district, Seelampur, Delhi, during office hours, on any working day within seven days," B K Singh, Additional CP Crime Branch, said.

AAP's Tahir Hussain, booked in IB officer's murder, suspended

NEW DELHI (TIP): Tahir Hussain, the councilor of Aam Aadmi Party, was booked in connection to the murder of Intelligence Officer Ankit Sharma, whose body was found from a drain in Northeast Delhi.

And in what served as a double whammy for him, Hussain was also suspended by Arvind Kejriwal-led party late on Thursday.

An FIR was registered against the politician after Ankit's family lodged a complaint.

A few days ago, Delhi was hit by riots, killing 38 people from both Hindu and Muslim communities. Ankit, went missing on Tuesday, soon after he returned home at 4:30 pm.

He stepped outside to see what was happening and was taken away, allegedly by Hussain and his aides, Ankit's brother Ankur said.

An autopsy report revealed that Ankit was stabbed multiple times.

Later, clips from the spot showed rioters throwing petrol bombs and stones from the rooftop of Hussain's house. "The mob that snatched and killed my brother was operating from Hussain's house," Ankur said.

Ankit's father, Ravinder Kumar, also blamed Hussain for the horrific turn of events. Hussain was booked for murder and kidnapping in the FIR, that was registered at Dayalpur police station.

Meanwhile, Hussain claimed innocence. Saying that rioters forcefully entered his house, Hussain added that he took his wife and three children and hid on the ground floor.

"A group of people tried breaking the gate of the house and we tried physically blocking it but they succeeded. I called the police several times and they helped us get out," Hussain was quoted by IE.

Hussain's alleged involvement with Ankit's murder earned criticism for Kejriwal.

When asked about this, the CM said, "Police isn't under me. Be it people from AAP, BJP or Congress, those who fanned the communal fire, those who orchestrated riots, should all be punished even if it is someone from my Cabinet. If he is from AAP, give him double the punishment."



KALKI KOECHLIN IS ENJOYING 'SLEEP DEPRIVED' DAYS WITH DAUGHTER SAPPHO

Actress Kalki Koechlin embraced motherhood when she delivered her baby girl Sappho earlier this month. Ever since she has been deprived of sleep which she revealed in her latest Instagram post. Sharing an adorable photo with her baby daughter, she said that the past few weeks after delivery have been a 'state of sleep deprived bliss' for her. The monochromatic picture shows the mother and daughter all cozied up for the camera smiling softly.

Kalki along with the photo wrote, "The past few weeks have really been a state of sleep deprived bliss. Thanks for the perfect photo @salomerebello."

Sometime back, she shared another picture of the baby with her father and Kalki's boyfriend Guy Hersberg.

PRITHVIRAJ: MANUSHI CHHILLAR TO ROAR LIKE A LIONESS

Akshay Kumar-starrer Prithviraj, which is set to hit the theatres on Diwali this year, is one of the most anticipated movies of the year for several reasons.

The movie happens to be a period drama based on Samrat Prithviraj Chauhan. While it will be Akshay's first attempt for historical drama, Prithviraj will also mark the debut of former beauty queen Manushi Chhillar who will be seen playing the role of Sanyogita. Interestingly, the reports about Manushi's big Bollywood debut have been rife for quite some time now.

While she was rumoured to be a part of several big budget movies, Manushi chose to make her debut with this Yash Raj Films production. Ever since she has been roped in for Prithviraj, all eyes have been on this debutant and fans ecstatic to know about every detail about her preparation for the period drama. Maintaining the curiosity among the fans, Manushi shared an interesting picture of herself wherein she was seen posing with a doodle of her character Sanyogita.

The doodle of the princess had 'roar like a lioness' written on it along with 'Sanyogita' on the top. Explaining the doodle, Manushi wrote that she has been drawing her character on the instructions of her director. "Taking the director's instruction with me wherever I go. #Sanyogita #Prithviraj #TerminalChhillar," she captioned the image. To note, this isn't the first time when the former beauty queen gave a glimpse of her character from the character drama. Earlier, the actress had shared silhouette images of herself dressed as Sanyogita. While the lady is creating a lot of buzz for her Bollywood debut, it will be interesting to see if she will be able to stand true to the audience's expectations.



TAAPSEE PANNU'S THAPPAD GETS U CERTIFICATE WITH NO CUTS

Bollywood star Taapsee Pannu's upcoming film Thappad has already impressed a lot of people with special screenings and it has received another shot in the arm with the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) awarding it with a U (unrestricted) certificate without any cuts.

Among the three kinds of certificates given by the CBFC - U, U/A (unrestricted public exhibition subject to parental guidance for children below the age of twelve) and A (restricted to adult audiences), U is the most sought after by producers. It means the film is fit for viewing for audiences of all age groups, widening its reach. There is a fourth category - S (restricted to specialized audiences such as doctors or scientists), but that is limited to specific movies.

Director Anubhav Sinha has produced the film that will be released at a reel length of 144.28 minutes - a little less than 2.5 hours of run time.

Thappad is about a homemaker who refuses to stay with her husband after he slaps her. The main reason for such a smooth CBFC certificate could be that the filmmakers have not focussed on displaying violence in the film, despite essentially addressing the rampant issue of domestic violence in our society.

Taapsee recently told Hindustan Times in an interview, "We deliberately refrained from making it into an excessive domestic violence film because then people might try to disconnect with it, saying 'Yeh hamare ghar pe nahi hota. Yeh hum upper middle class ya educated logo ke ghar pe nahi hota hai'. Hota sab ghar mein hai and so it was deliberately kept like that."

Anubhav's last film - Ayushmann Khurrana starrer Article 15 that hit theatres last year, had the CBFC suggest four-five modifications before they handed the UA certificate to the makers.



SIDHARTH MALHOTRA'S FIRST MOVIE IN A DOUBLE ROLE

Bollywood actor Sidharth Malhotra's next, a remake of the Tamil film Thadam, is set to go on the floors in May. The movie will also see him playing a double role for the first time, that of a businessman and small-time thief.

According to a report, Thadam Bollywood remake will be shot in a two-month-long start-to-finish schedule in Delhi as the makers are looking for a metro city with a nightlife as the film's setting. In the matter, a source said, "After several rounds of discussions and recce, they zeroed in on Delhi. The team will shoot at real locations in the Capital city. The chase sequences will be canned on busy streets."

Tamil action-thriller Thadam (2019) was written and directed by Magizh Thirumeni and revolved around a murder plot involving two identical men, leading to a cat and mouse chase with the police.

The source also informed that Sidharth will be undergoing look tests for his two roles in April in order to create the perfect avatar for the Bollywood remake. The makers are also on the lookout for a A-list actress to be cast opposite him in the film.



QUENTIN TARANTINO, WIFE DANIELLA WELCOME THEIR FIRST CHILD TOGETHER

Filmmaker Quentin Tarantino and his wife Daniella Pick have become parents to a baby boy. A representative of the couple shared the news on Wednesday in a statement to an agency.

"Daniella and Quentin Tarantino are happy to announce the birth of their first child. A baby boy born February 22," the spokesperson said.

The couple had announced Daniella's pregnancy in August last year.

Tarantino, 56, and Pick, 36, met during the making of his 2009 feature 'Inglourious Basterds' but it wasn't until 2016 that they started dating. They got engaged in 2017.

The couple tied the knot in November 2018 in a ceremony which was attended by the filmmaker's close friends like Harvey Keitel, Tim Roth and Eli Roth.

CHRIS PRATT COMPARES JURASSIC WORLD 3 WITH AVENGERS: ENDGAME



Chris Pratt says the scale of the third Jurassic World movie is equivalent to the 2019's superhero blockbuster Avengers: Endgame.

The third chapter of the rebooted Jurassic Park franchise is set to feature original stars Sam Neill, Laura Dern and Jeff Goldblum, besides Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Jake Johnson and

Omar Sy among others.

Appearing on Ellen DeGeneres' show, Chris Pratt said the film's script, penned by director Colin Trevorrow and Emily Carmichael, is "unbelievable" and he just can't wait to work on it.

"It's got everybody. It's got pretty much everybody in it. Maybe I just blew it, but I don't care. All of the cast from

the original Jurassic Park is coming back, so it's going to feel very much like how Endgame brought everything together at Marvel," the actor said.

"It's a massive movie, it's a big movie. We'll be all over the world. The story is really, really engaging, really cool. It's gonna be big," he added.

Jurassic World 3 has a release date of June 11, 2021.

Tom Cruise's 'Mission: Impossible VII' shoot halted in Italy over coronavirus outbreak

Production on the latest film in the 'Mission: Impossible' series starring Tom Cruise has been stopped in Italy following the outbreak of coronavirus cases, US media reported Monday.

According to an entertainment portal, the seventh instalment of the Paramount Pictures franchise was scheduled to shoot in Venice for three weeks.

"Out of an abundance of caution for the safety and well-being of our cast and crew, and efforts of the local Venetian government to halt public gatherings in response to the threat of coronavirus, we are altering the production plan for our three-week shoot in Venice," a Paramount spokesperson said in a statement.

The spokesperson added that Cruise had not traveled to Italy, and that crew members were allowed to return home until production started.

Italy reported its seventh death from the new coronavirus Monday, but officials called for calm and reported a lower rise in the number of infections after a spike over the weekend.



The number of cases now stood at 229, the head of Italy's civil protection department Angelo Borelli said at a press conference on Monday evening, the highest number in Europe.

In addition to 'MI7', the spread of the virus has disrupted high-profile events including Milan Fashion Week and the Venice Carnival. On Monday evening, sports minister Vincenzo Spadafora announced that six Serie A football matches would be played behind closed doors.

PARIS HILTON: SPLITTING WITH CHRIS ZYLKA WAS THE BEST DECISION I MADE

Socialite Paris Hilton does not regret breaking her engagement to Chris Zylka in 2018. She calls it the best decision that she ever made.

Speaking of the split to Cosmopolitan UK, Hilton said: "No. It was the best decision I've ever made in my life. I just don't think (he) was the right person. I feel like I'm an incredible woman and I deserve someone so amazing. I just didn't feel right. I've worked way too hard to just give my life to someone. They have to be perfect."

Hilton dated Zylka for two years. She said she was loving her single life because she did not want to have "someone controlling me."

She added that dating certain people increased the risk of not trusting them and implied that if she went away, she fears they would do "something to embarrass me."

The former couple ended their engagement in November 2018, only 10 months after he proposed Hilton with a \$2 million ring.



SLAY THE DRAGON, Docu-Film

By Mabel Pais

"It was a complete revelation." "I had heard of gerrymandering, of course, but like a lot of us, I didn't completely understand it." - Barak Goodman: Co-Director - Co-Producer

".....we realized this was a film that could live in the present, but a present informed by what had happened in the recent past." - Chris Durrance: Co-Director - Co-Producer

REDMAP was "the most audacious political heist of modern times," - David Daley: Former Editor-In-Chief - Salon.com, Author: *Ratf**ked*

In today's political climate, this film is a MUST SEE for all moviegoers, to learn and challenge gerrymandering.

In "Slay the Dragon," filmmakers Barak Goodman ("Woodstock: Three Days That Defined A Generation," "Oklahoma City") and Chris Durrance track the origins of modern gerrymandering and follow the activists working today - from the grassroots to the Supreme Court - to change the system. The film lays out in plain English how gerrymandering happens, what effects it has, and how it can be remedied.

The film tells the story of activist Katie Fahey, who, in 2016 was a 26-year-old with no experience or connections in politics and activism. Following the 2016 election she was concerned about political polarization and the erosion of representative democracy across the country, so she posted a call-to-action on Facebook. Two years later, she had spearheaded a massive grassroots campaign to change redistricting laws in the state. Katie's campaign mobilized thousands of volunteers across the state, survived a legal challenge from Republicans in the state Supreme Court, and earned an astonishing 61% of the vote for a ballot measure that would end



Katie Fahey



A Scene from "Slay The Dragon"

Photos / Courtesy Participant Media

partisan gerrymandering in Michigan.

Now Katie is the co-founder and executive director of 'The People,' a group that pushes for nonpartisan governmental reforms.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION : The inspiration for the new documentary Slay the Dragon came in early 2017, when filmmaker Barak Goodman picked up a copy of Ratf**ked: Why Your Vote Doesn't Count by veteran journalist David Daley. The 2016 book tells the story of REDMAP, a national plan by a group of political strategists to use dark money, Big Data and the power of redistricting to remake the electoral map in order to reestablish Republican dominance in the wake of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential victory.

Although gerrymandering has existed for centuries in the U.S. and has been used by Democrats as well as Republicans, REDMAP was "the most audacious political heist of modern times," according to Daley, the former editor-in-chief of Salon.com and a senior fellow at FairVote, a nonpartisan, not-for-profit group that promotes voter empowerment.

THE DRAGON : Gerrymandering, defined as manipulating the boundaries of an electoral district in order to provide one party with an advantage over an opposing party, has been around for more

than 200 years. The term (originally spelled Gerry-mander) was first used in 1812 in the Boston Gazette in response to the redrawing of Massachusetts state senate districts in a bill signed by Governor Elbridge Gerry. One of the districts, remapped to benefit Gerry's Democratic-Republican Party over the rival Federalist Party, was so weirdly shaped that critics said it resembled a mythical, dragon-like salamander.

REDMAP (short for Redistricting Majority Project) was a relatively inexpensive strategy, but it worked extraordinarily well, according to Goodman. By focusing resources on state legislative races in the 2010 midterms, Republicans were able to gain majorities - and in some cases, super-majorities - in more than 20 state houses. With those majorities came control of many of those states' redistricting processes.

"When you have a gerrymandered district, the real battle happens in the primary because there's no real threat from the other party," explains Goodman. "So it's a race to the extremes. The only way you can lose your seat - and this is true in both parties - is if you're more moderate than your

primary challenger."

And as the film makes painfully clear using the Flint, Michigan, water crisis as an example, gerrymandered districts allow state representatives to blatantly ignore the will of their constituents.

Seeing people like Greenwood, Stephanopoulos and Fahey take up the fight against gerrymandering has renewed the filmmaker's faith in America. "It's still possible to change things by one citizen or a few people getting up off the couch and making things happen. Ironically, seeing them fighting this anti-democratic process has shown the strength and resiliency of democracy."

PRODUCTION CREDITS :

Participant Media presents, in association with React Films, a film by Barak Goodman, an Ark Media Production Slay the Dragon.

Directed and produced by Barak Goodman and Chris Durrance.

Executive producers are Jeff Skoll, Diane Weyermann, Coralie Charriol Paul and William von Mueffling.

SLAY THE DRAGON, IN ACTION :

In advance of the film's release, Participant Media - in partnership with advocacy groups - will work to accelerate the fundamental efforts underway to end the practice of gerrymandering. Through pre-screening events and curated discussions with the grassroots activists doing the work on the ground, this impact campaign will work to educate thousands of Americans to fight for fairer districts which means fairer representation to ensure that all citizens have an equal voice at the ballot box.

Run Time: 101 Minutes

Release Date: March 13, 2020

To learn more, visit slaythedragonfilm.com

VIRAL, Docu-Film: Anti-Semitism in 4 Mutations

BY MABEL PAIS

"Brutal, yet Vital.....the movie is must-see viewing in our current age of rising global hatred against not only Jews but ethnic minorities everywhere." - Hammer To Nail

"If we don't draw a red line in the sand when it comes to antisemitism, Muslims will be next, gays will be next and everyone else who is deemed a minority will be next." - Maajid Nawaz

By virtually every yardstick, antisemitism in the US and Europe is rising and worsening in ways not seen since the 1930s. It comes in the forms of vandalism, social media abuse, assault and murder. Like a virus, it mutates and evolves across cultures, borders and ideologies, making it all but impossible to stop.

Filmmaker Andrew Goldberg explores its infectious behavior in his film "Viral: Antisemitism in Four Mutations" as he travels through four countries to speak firsthand with victims, witnesses, anti-Semites, and interviewees including Bill Clinton, Tony Blair, Fareed Zakaria, George Will and Deborah Lipstadt.

The film examines how some on the American far right have incited such acts as the mass shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. In Hungary, we see how the Prime Minister has launched a massive campaign against Jewish Holocaust survivor and billionaire George Soros that's reminiscent of Nazi propaganda. Moving to the far left in England, we see members of the traditionally anti-racist Labour party conflating Israel and Jews with



Director Andrew Goldberg with Russel Walter, Republican from North Carolina

antisemitic vitriol, causing tremendous pain for the Jewish community. And in France, the film illuminates the seemingly endless wave of violence against Jews by Islamists and radicals.

The increasing bigotry, and at times violence, within each of these four countries paints a terrifying portrait of how global hatred disseminates and harms. As activist Maajid Nawaz says in the film, "If we don't draw a red line in the sand when it comes to antisemitism, Muslims will be next, gays will be next and everyone else who is deemed a minority will be next."

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS : ANDREW GOLDBERG, an Emmy Award-winning investigative



Jean-Luc Slackmon

producer/director Andrew Goldberg, is the founder-owner of 'So Much Film' in New York City. "Viral" is written, produced and directed by him. Goldberg is currently directing a fully funded feature documentary, currently in post-production, that explores the complex relationship between humans and animals. The film questions how animals are both respected in the world but also used for food, science, textiles and entertainment.

DIANA ROBINSON, Producer-Editor of 'Viral' has been in print journalism, and producer of documentaries for public TV. Viral is her first feature film.

Run time: 90 minutes

Release Date: Currently playing in Village East Cinema, New York City,

Expands nationwide starting February 28

To learn more, visit viralthefilm.com

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



Canada no longer to pay for Harry and Meghan security

OTTAWA (TIP): Canada will no longer pick up the security tab for protecting Prince Harry and his wife Meghan starting in March, the office of Public Safety Minister Bill Blair said Thursday. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have been living part-time in an oceanside mansion in westernmost British Columbia province since November.

Last month, they made a shock exit from life as working royals.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have provided security for the couple in this country under the internationally protected person's convention. But that will end "in the coming weeks, in keeping with their change in status," said a statement.

Canadians have been welcoming of the royal runaways. Local monarchists surveyed by AFP are excited, while tourism groups are even giddier about the prospects of a boost from the global attention on the couple.

But a recent poll found that 77 percent of Canadian taxpayers were not keen to pay for their security costs.

— AFP

Saudi Arabia halts travel to Mecca over coronavirus

DUBAI (TIP): Saudi Arabia on Thursday halted travel to the holiest sites in Islam over fears about a new viral epidemic just months ahead of the annual hajj pilgrimage, a move coming as the Mideast has over 220 confirmed cases of the illness.

The extraordinary decision by Saudi Arabia stops foreigners from reaching the holy city of Mecca and the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure the world's 1.8 billion Muslims pray toward five times a day. It also said travel was suspended to Prophet Muhammad's mosque in Medina.

The decision showed the worry about the outbreak potentially spreading into Saudi Arabia, whose oil-rich monarchy stakes its legitimacy on protecting Islam's holy sites. The epicenter in the Mideast's most-affected country, Iran, appears to be in the holy Shiite city of Qom, where a shrine there sees the faithful reach out to kiss and touch it in reverence. "Saudi Arabia renews its support for all international measures to limit the spread of this virus, and urges its citizens to exercise caution before traveling to countries experiencing coronavirus outbreaks," the Saudi Foreign Ministry said in a statement announcing the decision. — AP

33 Turkish soldiers killed in Syria's Idlib

ANKARA (TIP): At least 33 Turkish soldiers were killed as violence escalated in Syria's Idlib province after an air strike blamed on Damascus, with NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg condemning "indiscriminate" attacks by the Assad regime and Russia.

Dozens more soldiers were injured and taken to Turkey for treatment, Rahmi Dogan, governor of Turkish Hatay -- bordering Syria -- said on Friday.

The heavy losses in northwestern Idlib come after weeks of growing tensions between rebel supporter Ankara and Damascus ally Moscow.

Stoltenberg "urged all parties to de-escalate this dangerous situation and avoid further worsening of the horrendous humanitarian situation in the region", his spokesman said on Friday.

In a phone call with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, the NATO secretary general "condemned the continued indiscriminate air strikes by the Syrian regime and its backer Russia in Idlib province", according to the spokesman.

Turkey has urged the Syrian regime to withdraw from Turkish observation posts in Idlib, while Moscow has accused Ankara of aiding "terrorists" in Syria.

Under a 2018 deal with Russia meant to bring calm to Idlib, Turkey has 12 observation posts in the region -- but several have come under fire from Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hastily convened an emergency meeting in Ankara after the Idlib attack.

Erdogan's top press aide, Fahrettin Altun, said Turkey's military retaliated against all known positions of the regime after the air strike.

In a statement, Altun called on the international community to fulfil its responsibilities to end the violence in Idlib and the regime's "crimes against humanity". The latest attack means 53 Turkish security personnel have been



killed in the province this month.

There was a flurry of diplomatic activity as Turkey's presidential spokesman Ibrahim Kalin spoke with US national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, state news agency Anadolu reported without giving detail.

Jihadists and Turkish-backed rebels on Thursday re-entered Saraqeb, a key Idlib crossroads town they had lost earlier in February, reversing one of the main gains of the government's devastating offensive.

The counter-offensive could, however, be short-lived as Russian-backed Syrian troops continued to chip away at other parts of the rebel bastion, capturing 20 localities.

Seven civilians, including three children, were killed in regime and Russian bombardment of Idlib, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, adding to more than 400 such deaths since December.

The UN Security Council, where Moscow has systematically vetoed truce initiatives, met again on Thursday amid growing concern Idlib is witnessing the nine-year-old war's worst humanitarian emergency. State news agency SANA acknowledged there were "fierce

clashes" between the army and "terrorist groups on the Saraqeb front".

An AFP correspondent accompanied the rebels into Saraqeb, where he found a ghost town of bombed-out buildings.

The counterattack temporarily reverses one of the key gains of the government since its offensive against the country's last rebel enclave in December.

The cash-strapped government had been keen to fully secure the M5, a highway that connects Syria's four main cities and passes through Saraqeb.

The Syrian Observatory said the air strikes were carried out by Assad government ally Russia, heavily criticised by the West for the high civilian death toll from its bombing campaign.

State media accused the "terrorists" of launching car bombings and other suicide attacks against government forces attempting to retake the town.

It said the army had inflicted heavy losses on the attackers, despite the military support it said they had received from Turkey.

Some 950,000 civilians have fled the government offensive, raising fears in Ankara of a new influx of refugees. AFP

Russian President Vladimir Putin reveals plan to use body double

MOSCOW (TIP): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday revealed there was a secret plan to use a double to make public appearances for him, while insisting he vetoed it—and that he is the real Putin.

Putin's comments showed that a conspiracy theory widespread on the Internet that the Russian strongman has been impersonated over the years or even replaced by a lookalike is not entirely without basis.

TASS state news agency showed Putin a list of popular Russian-language Internet searches including "Putin double proof". "Are you real?" asked

interviewer asked. "Yes," said Putin. He said he has never had a double but when asked if the idea had ever been discussed, he confirmed it had. "I refused to have doubles," Putin said. "It was during the hardest times of the fight against terrorism." Putin as prime minister and then president oversaw the second war against separatists in Chechnya from 1999 to 2000. After Russian armed forces claimed victory, Islamist insurgent attacks became frequent in the North Caucasus while suicide bombers targeted Russia's main cities.

"Was that in the early 2000s?" asked

interviewer Andrei Vandenko, who is doing a series of interviews with Putin to mark 20 years since he became president. "Yes," said Putin. "The double would go where things were dodgy?" asked Vandenko. "Well yes, go, put in appearances," Putin confirmed. Conspiracy theories have long circulated suggesting that Putin had died and been replaced by a lookalike. These centred on the 67-year-old's apparent lack of signs of ageing, the disappearance of bags under his eyes and his seemingly worsening knowledge of German, which he learned when working as a Soviet agent in East Germany. AFP

Japan PM calls for nationwide closure of schools over virus

TOKYO (TIP): Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday urged schools nationwide to close for several weeks to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, as authorities reported the country's fourth death linked to the outbreak.

The move comes as crew members from the Diamond Princess, a coronavirus-stricken cruise ship quarantined off Japan, began leaving the vessel where more than 700 people have tested positive for the disease.

"The government considers the health and safety of children above anything else," Abe said.

"We request all primary, junior high and high schools... across the nation to close temporarily from March 2 next week until their spring break."

The spring break for public schools usually starts in late March in Japan and lasts several weeks. Local media said the call would not extend to nurseries and daycare facilities however. "Efforts to prevent the spread of infections among children are being made in various areas," Abe added.

Many public elementary schools and junior high schools in northern Hokkaido, where the death of a man in his 80s infected with the virus was confirmed on Thursday, were already closed after a cluster of infections prompted the governor to request public schools close for about a week.

The city of Osaka also said it will close



its kindergartens, elementary and junior high schools from Saturday for two weeks.

Abe's call comes after the government urged organisers of major events to consider cancelling them, and called on businesses to allow employees to work from home or commute off-peak.

Authorities have said the coming two to three weeks will be critical in determining whether they can stem the outbreak of the virus, which has infected nearly 200 people in the country.

"It's extremely important to prevent one patient cluster from creating another and we think we should take thorough measures," Abe said at a cabinet-level meeting on the virus.

He also urged ministers to work on

legislation to minimise the negative impact on the economy and the daily lives of Japanese. Japanese authorities have progressively stepped up their response to the outbreak, but faced criticism for acting slowly and for their handling of the Diamond Princess, where more than 700 people contracted the virus. Four former passengers have died after becoming ill on board.

Most passengers have now left the boat, including nearly 1,000 who were allowed to leave after testing negative. But several have since tested positive for the virus, and the health ministry admitted others were not tested during the quarantine period.

On Thursday, the health ministry said 240 crew members left the boat and more will disembark in the next couple of days. Those leaving the boat will be placed in medical observation for 14 days at government-designated dormitories before being allowed to leave Japan, they said. Hundreds of crew members remained on the vessel to continue operations while Japanese officials placed thousands of passengers in a quarantine after the ship arrived at a port near Tokyo on February 3.

Several government officials working on the ship have themselves contracted the infection, but authorities have defended a policy of not uniformly testing those working on the vessel, arguing that medical experts have the skills to avoid infections.— AFP

China reports 29 deaths, lowest since Jan

BEIJING (TIP): China on Thursday reported 29 more deaths from the new coronavirus epidemic, the lowest daily figure in almost a month, and the number of fresh infections rose slightly. The death toll now stands at 2,744 in mainland China, according to the National Health Commission. AFP

Bullied Australian boy to donate \$475,000 to charity

SYDNEY (TIP): An Australian boy with dwarfism whose distress from bullying became a viral video will donate hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to charity rather than a trip to Disneyland. The clip of nine-year-old Quaden Bayles showed him crying and repeatedly saying he wanted to die after being bullied at school, sparking an outpouring of support from around the world. The video prompted US comedian Brad Williams to start a GoFundMe page that eventually raised almost USD 475,000. AFP

German court upholds headscarf ban for trainee lawyers

BERLIN (TIP): Germany's highest court on Thursday upheld a ban on headscarves for Muslim trainee lawyers in courts, finding that the requirement of maintaining religious neutrality was justified. The Federal Constitutional Court's ruling came after a Frankfurt-born German-Moroccan legal trainee filed a challenge to Hesse state's rules. In the western state, trainees who keep their headscarves on are not allowed to take on tasks in which they may be seen to be acting as representatives of the judiciary or the state. AFP

Niger police rescue 232 victims of sex trafficking, forced labour

DAKAR (TIP): Police in Niger have rescued 232 victims of sex trafficking and forced labour, including girls as young as 10, in a major operation in the capital Niamey, Interpol said on Wednesday. "Operation Sarraounia" involved more than 100 police officers who conducted a series of raids over 10 days in late January, said the global police organisation, which provided assistance. (PTI)

Israel turns back travellers from Italy over virus fears

TEL AVIV (TIP): Israel denied entry to dozens of foreign nationals who landed on flights from Italy on Thursday, as the Jewish state discouraged travel as part of efforts to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

The interior ministry had announced travellers from Italy would not be granted entry, adding it to a list of barred countries including Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore as well as Macau and Hong Kong.

Three flights originating from Italy then landed at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport.

Twenty-five foreign nationals, including 19 Italians, who landed on the flight from Bergamo were denied entry and will be flown back, the interior ministry said.

Another 23 foreigners on an Easy Jet flight from Italy were also blocked from entering, a ministry spokeswoman said.

The Jewish state has also taken the rare step of discouraging its citizens from travelling abroad.

"Travel to conferences and other



international congregations should be avoided, including trips to religious events where people from many countries gather," the health ministry said.

Israel has recorded three confirmed cases of the COVID-19 virus, including two from the Diamond Princess cruise ship and an Israeli who had been in northern Italy.— AFP

WANT TO KEEP YOUR MIND SHARP AS YOU AGE? FIND AN OPTIMISTIC PARTNER

Having a partner who's optimistic may help you avoid cognitive decline as you age, say researchers.

The researchers from the Michigan State University explained that optimistic people often exhibit healthier behaviours that are linked to good cognitive function. An optimistic partner might then influence their spouse to follow the same.

Earlier studies have linked being optimistic with healthy cognitive function. Now, the new study has revealed that having a partner with an optimistic attitude could also help preserve a person's cognitive function as they age.

Not only they found that more optimistic people did better cognitively, being married to an optimist was led to better cognitive function.

Several factors may cause cognitive decline. Some of them are genetic predisposition, biological markers, and lifestyle factors.

When we talk about lifestyle factors, these include physical activity, healthy diet, healthy weight.

Optimistic people tend to eat healthier and stay more active. They are also more likely to engage in preventive healthcare. All these healthy behaviours help decrease risk for cognitive decline in optimists.

Giving all these reasons, the new study suggested that being in a romantic relationship with an optimist might also provide similar benefits.

The researchers hypothesize that an optimistic partner might set an example of healthy behaviour for their spouse.

Elaborating further on their finding, they said a couple might



also engage in "shared remembering".

The team suggests that optimism might also be helpful in preventing the cognitive decline associated with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Other ways to keep our minds sharp

While about 25 percent of optimism is heritable, it's a quality that can be learned, according to the

researchers. To cultivate optimism, they say you need to change your thinking to a more positive mindset.

There are many other steps you can take to keep our minds sharp. One prominent pathway is through greater activity engagement, say the researchers.

Physical fitness and social engagement are also shown to be valuable for maintaining cognitive functioning.

FOOD CORNER



ACHARI MURGH

Ingredients

750gms Chicken on the bone skinless medium sized pieces, 3 tbsp mustard oil or vegetable oil, 1 tsp fenugreek seeds, 1 tsp mustard seeds, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 1 tsp fennel seeds, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp nigella seeds or onions seeds, 4 dried whole red chillies, 2 tbsp ginger garlic paste, 1 large white onion finely sliced, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp tomato puree, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric powder, 2 tsp red chilli powder, 100 mls water, 100mls lightly beaten yoghurt, 1 tbsp lemon juice, Salt to taste, Chopped coriander to garnish.

Method

- In a heavy bottom sauce pan heat the mustard oil. Add the fenugreek seeds, mustard seeds, cumin seeds, fennel seeds and nigella seeds. Sauté until they start to sizzle and pop for a min or so. Also add the whole red chillies, stirring to make sure they don't burn.
- Add the sliced onion and fry until light brown in colour and have softened for about 8-10 mins. To the pan now add the ginger/ garlic paste frying for a few seconds. Mix well. Stir in the tomato puree, turmeric powder and chilli powder. Cook for a couple of minutes till the oil leaves the sides of the pan.
- Add the chicken pieces cooking on a medium heat to make sure the pieces are sealed and coated in the gravy for 5-7 mins. Add the water and bring the curry to a boil, then simmer covered on a low heat cooking for 20 mins until the chicken is cooked through and succulent, stirring a couple of times
- At this stage, add the yoghurt and stir, making sure not to let it split and continue cooking on a low heat with the lid on for 5-7 minutes. Add salt and lemon juice to taste. Garnished with coriander. Serve hot with roomali roti or naan. Enjoy!

RECHARGE YOUR SKIN ON THE WEEKENDS

Being an 'urbanista' and on-the-move throughout the week is exciting, however, there are many environmental and lifestyle factors linked to city living that can be very harmful to our skin.

Plabita Sharma, skincare expert at The Body Shop India says the weekend is the ideal time to make up for lost time with some truly necessary sleep after the chaotic work week.

"Great skin is not simply a matter of DNA. Your daily habits, in fact, have a big impact on what you see in the mirror. Ultimately, caring for your skin is simply personal. Normally working women don't get enough time to pamper themselves with an accurate skin care so weekends are more comfortable periods where women can let their skin breathe. Weekend skincare regime help in rejuvenation of the skin and gives a fresh radiant look for weekdays," she says.

With a busy life and limited excess to self-care during weekdays it's very important to have some me time during the relaxed weekend. To start with, take a decent hot shower to enable your muscles to unwind followed by a light sprinkle of cold water.



Show your skin some affection with the correct healthy skin items. Replenish your skin with a moisturizing treat while you rest at the end of the week by applying a medium-term face mask.

Additionally, go for some anti-oxidants and let your

skin breathe unreservedly.

Washing your face is the most significant and the initial phase for healthy skin to be centered around. Choose a face wash rich in charcoal because it cleanses away dirt and impurities and helps in unclogging pores to give soft and radiant skin. Post this, use a moisturizer to hydrate your skin.

Some of the special products to use during weekend skincare regimes are face masks, which not only improve the overall appearance of your skin, but can be quite therapeutic. Masks infused with aromatic essential oils like mint and rosemary can lift your spirit by stimulating your senses, giving a spa-like treatment at home.

Use an exfoliator. Scrubbing is one of the most essential skin care regimens that you need to follow. Weekly exfoliation helps in gently removing dead skin cells and keep your skin clean.

No matter what the season is moisturization should be an essential part of skincare regime. Using a moisturizer every day can make your skin radiant and provide deep hydration.

MINERAL DEFICIENCY? HERE'S WHAT TO EAT

Many people are aware that it is very possible to have a vitamin deficiency. But did you know you can lack certain minerals that are essential too? Sometimes a simple blood test is all that is needed to determine which micro or macro minerals you might be missing.

But there are plenty of signs and symptoms that can act as first signals as well. Click through the gallery to learn what some of these are and what foods to incorporate into your diet should you be missing these essential compounds.

Chromium

A deficiency of this micro mineral can result in impaired glucose tolerance and weight loss.

Chromium

To boost chromium in your system, some foods you'll want to eat more of are: mushrooms, green leafy vegetables, soybeans, sunflower seeds, garbanzo beans, cashews, molasses, and liver.

Manganese

In humans, deficiency of this micro mineral is unusual. But on the rare occasion, symptoms can include poor bone growth, low fertility, and impaired glucose tolerance.



Experiencing stress may be linked to improved social benefits

Experiencing stress may make people both more likely to give, and receive emotional support from another person, according to a study which may lead to better interventions to help people feel more relaxed.

The study, published in the journal Stress & Health, suggested that while stress can lead to negative health outcomes, there are potential social benefits, as well.

"Our findings suggest that just because we have a bad day, that doesn't mean it has to be completely unhealthy. If stress can actually connect us with other people, which I think is absolutely vital to the human experience, I think that's a benefit," said study co-author David Almeida from The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) in the US.

"Stress could potentially help people deal with negative situations by driving them to be with other people," Almedia said.

According to the researchers, while the negative effects of stress -- such as heart disease, compromised immune function and depressive symptoms -- are well-documented, its potential benefits, such as emotional support remained unknown.

"Looking at the current research,



I realized that a lot of studies looked at how emotional support is beneficial to other health outcomes, but not many looked at the determinants of social support," said Hye Won Chai, another co-author of the study from Penn State. "We thought that stress could be a facilitator in these interpersonal exchanges," Chai said. For the study, the scientists interviewed 1,622 participants for eight consecutive nights.

They asked the participants about their stressors, and whether they gave or received emotional support on that day.

These stressors included arguments, stressful events at work or school, and stressful events at home, the study noted.

According to the researchers, the participants were on average more than twice as likely to either give or receive emotional support on days they experienced a stressor.



HOW TO LOWER ANEMIA RISK

People who suffer from iron deficiency are not likely to immediately figure it out. They usually feel fatigue, dizziness, weakness and shortness of breath. In the United States, about 10 million people are suffering from iron deficiency and this is largely due to the condition anemia.

There are two types of Iron deficiency anemia is due to the body running short of red blood cells, not being able to make enough hemoglobin. Without hemoglobin, the red blood cell count drops.

Hemoglobin is the protein that transfers oxygen to different parts of the body. This condition is referred to as anemia, where the red blood cells cannot transport oxygen.

You can also develop iron deficiency by losing blood since it is filled with iron.

The other type of anemia is called pernicious anemia, which is a result of the body not having enough folate and vitamin B12. In order to prevent this type of anemia, eating a diet rich in folate and iron is necessary. If you display any of the symptoms, consult your doctor on how to improve it.

Here are some of the steps that can be taken:

Supplements

In cases of severe iron deficiency, anemia treatment plans include daily iron supplements, which range from 150 to 200 milligrams per day. Making up for severe deficiencies is not easy to do through food alone, hence supplements are recommended. The supplements can be availed through prescriptions or over-the-counter supplements.

Meat

Heme iron is found in several meat products and seafood. It is absorbed faster by the body than nonheme iron present in plant foods. Venison, red meat and lamb are richer sources than poultry and chicken.

Of all the organ meats, liver is rich in folate and iron. Balancing the diet with nonheme sources could increase the level of absorption. Most fish, particularly canned salmon and canned tuna, are high in iron.

Nuts, Seeds and Legumes

Lima beans, chickpeas, soybeans and pinto beans are good sources of nonheme iron for vegetarians. Pumpkin seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds and sunflower seeds are rich in iron too. In the category of nuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios and pine nuts are filled with iron. Ensure you consume the raw varieties to get the most out of them.

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PRIVATE WHATSAPP GROUP CHAT LINKS AVAILABLE ON GOOGLE SEARCH

Google has indexed invite links to private WhatsApp group chats, meaning anyone can join various private chat groups (including several porn-sharing groups) with a simple search.

According to a report in Motherboard, invitations to WhatsApp group chats were being indexed by Google.

The team found private groups using specific Google searches and even joined a group intended for NGOs accredited by the UN and had access to all the participants and their phone numbers.

Journalist Jordan Wildon said on Twitter that he discovered that WhatsApp's "Invite to Group Link" feature lets Google index groups, making them available across the internet since the links are being shared outside of WhatsApp's secure private messaging service.

"Your WhatsApp groups may not be as secure as you think they are," Wildon tweeted on Friday, adding that using particular Google searches, people can discover links to the chats.

According to app reverse-engineer Jane Wong, Google has around 470,000 results for a simple search of "chat.whatsapp.com", part of the URL that makes up invites to WhatsApp groups.

SCIENTISTS HAVE FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO RECORD WHAT ATOMS DO WHEN THEY COLLIDE

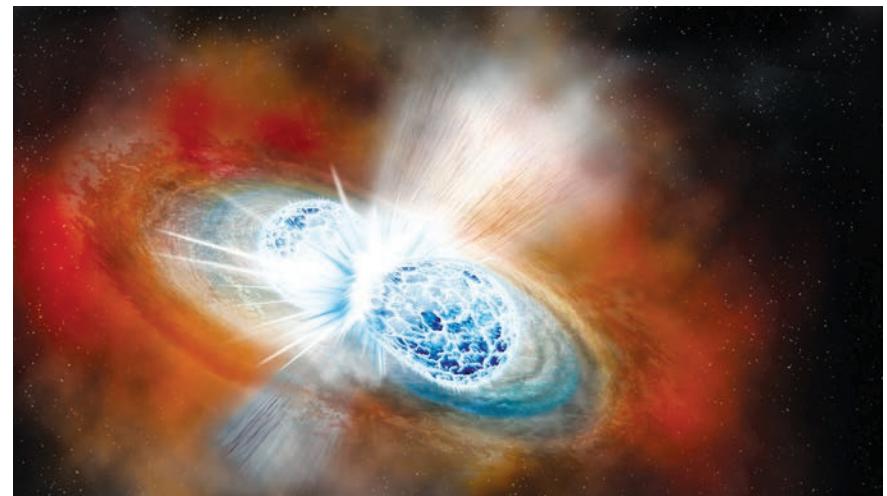
To understand the finer points of various atomic interactions physicists had to calculate correlations based on averages amongst a crowd of atoms that have been chilled down to the point that they all share an identity. Now, a team of physicists from the University of Otago, New Zealand seem to have bypassed this, by forcing atoms to pause long enough for their exchanges to be recorded.

To do this, you are required to have a tiny pair of tweezers, which can hold isolated atoms still and record the changes as they meet. Such pair of tweezers are made from specially aligned polarised light, which acts as optical traps for tiny objects. The atoms need to be cooled down to make them easier to catch. Such a process requires the right technology and a lot of patience to achieve.

"Our method involves the individual trapping and cooling of three atoms to a temperature of about a millionth of a Kelvin using highly focused laser beams in a hyper-evacuated (vacuum) chamber, around the size of a toaster," said physicist Mikkel F Andersen.

"We slowly combine the traps containing the atoms to produce controlled interactions that we measure," he added.

The study which took place, took



rubidium variety of atoms, which bond to form molecules of dirubidium. Till this, the project was a bit easy, but to model how the changes take place is the challenge. The experiment requires three atoms, in which two atoms bond, whereas the third, takes away the excess bonding energy to leave them connected.

Using three atoms, in theory, causes the atoms to be forced out of their trap. This experiment was captured using a special camera, which magnifies the changes. They were able to capture the moment when the rubidium particles came close together, revealing the rate of

loss was not anywhere near as expected.

Such a low rate of loss shows that the molecules weren't coming together as quickly as existing models. This could be explained by the fact that the atoms were confined and had short-range quantum effects.

The team said that the technique used "could provide a way to build and control single molecules of particular chemicals." Further experiments will help to refine those models, which will be able to better explain how groups of atoms operate together to meet and bond under various conditions.

Scientists accidentally discover first animal that doesn't breathe oxygen

A common assumption that all multicellular organisms must be breathing oxygen has now been proven wrong as researchers have accidentally discovered the first non-oxygen breathing animal.

The tiny, less than 10-celled parasite Henneguya Salminicola lives in salmon muscle, according to a study Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

As it evolved, the animal, which is a myxozoan relative of jellyfish and corals, gave up breathing and consuming oxygen to produce energy.

"Aerobic respiration was thought to be ubiquitous in animals, but now we confirmed that this is not the case," said Dorothee Huchon, Professor at Tel Aviv University in Israel.

"Our discovery shows that evolution can go in strange directions. Aerobic respiration is a major source of energy, and yet we found an animal that gave up this critical pathway," Huchon added.

Some other organisms like fungi, amoebas or ciliate lineages in anaerobic environments have lost the ability to breathe over time.

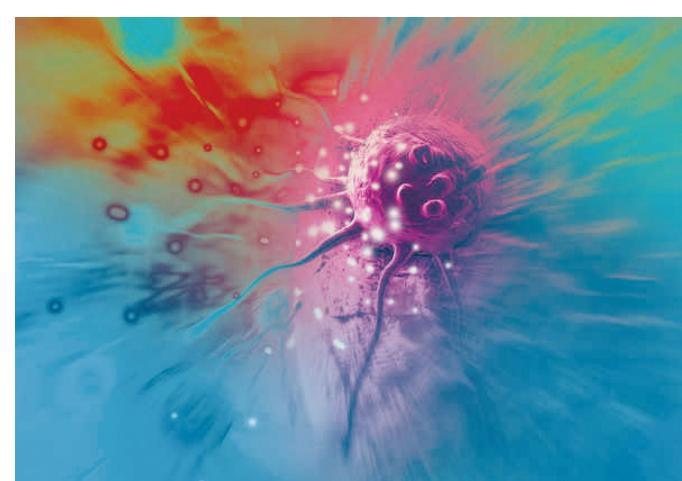
The new study demonstrated that the same can happen to an animal -- possibly because the parasite happens to live in an anaerobic environment.

The parasite's anaerobic nature was an accidental discovery.

While assembling the Henneguya genome, Huchon found that it did not include a mitochondrial genome.

The mitochondria is the powerhouse of the cell where oxygen is captured to make energy, so its absence indicated that the animal was not breathing oxygen.

Until the new discovery, there was a debate regarding the



possibility that organisms belonging to the animal kingdom could survive in anaerobic environments.

The assumption that all animals are breathing oxygen was based, among other things, on the fact that animals are multicellular, highly developed organisms, which first appeared on Earth when oxygen levels rose.

"It's not yet clear to us how the parasite generates energy," Huchon said.

"It may be drawing it from the surrounding fish cells, or it may have a different type of respiration such as oxygen-free breathing, which typically characterizes anaerobic non-animal organisms," Huchon said.

The discovery bears enormous significance for evolutionary research, Huchon said.

Trembling Mars gives up more seismic secrets

Mars is a constantly trembling "living" body, researchers said Monday as they unveiled measurements of seismic activity on the red planet showing similar tremble rates to Earth or the Moon.

For 15 months NASA's InSight robot craft scoured the surface of Earth's neighbour, and measured hundreds of so-called "Marsquakes".

These included several tremors that contained the same frequency patterns as tremors caused by the movement of Earth's own tectonic plates.

"This is the first mission focused on taking direct geophysical measurements of any planet besides Earth, and it's given us our first real understanding of Mars' interior structure and geological processes," said Nicholas Schmerr, an assistant professor of geology at the University of Maryland and a co-author of the study in Nature Geoscience. Another team of researchers found that at least 20 of the quakes measured by the InSight lander had the equivalent strength of a magnitude 3-4 earthquake.

After a six-and-a-half-month voyage through 480 million kilometres of space, the NASA probe landed on Mars' Elysium plain in November 2018, pressing an ear to the planet for the first time.

Mars had long been thought to be seismically active, but the InSight lander gave scientists proof of consistent and occasionally powerful tremors. While the studies show at least 170 tremors measured over 225 days, the quakes have continued to the present day, according to Philippe Lognonne, a researcher at Paris' Institut de Physique du Globe.

Cloud to help all firms build own tech: Satya Nadella

MUMBAI (TIP): Microsoft Corp.'s chief executive Satya Nadella said his company is preparing businesses for an intelligent cloud world where they can build their own digital and technological capabilities without relying on third parties.

Sharing his vision for the future at the Future Decoded summit in Mumbai, Nadella said that businesses can now utilise cloud to offer better learning and re-skilling opportunities.

"We envision an intelligent cloud world that is grounded in technology that helps everyone build their own tech intensity. How can we help business be more independent rather than dependent on us is the key fundamental of Microsoft," Nadella said.

He highlighted an intelligent edge and cloud model as a core strategy of the company. A similar model was proposed by the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Union budget announcement with a focus on data centre parks as an enabler for digital businesses.

He added that Indian companies have to build their own tech capability. "Whenever I speak to CEOs in other industries, I always say you will never be cool by association. Just because you do a press release with us you are not going to be cool. You have to build your own tech capability and solutions that are inclusive."

Nadella mentioned how Piramal Glass has been using a Microsoft-powered Internet of Things (IoT) management system across their factories among other successful projects.

At the event, Rajesh Gopinathan,



CEO and managing director of Tata Consultancy Services, highlighted how his company is utilizing cloud services as well as Github, an open source software development platform that Microsoft acquired in 2018, to hone expertise across its 446,000-strong workforce. "The millennial workforce is immensely talented and we are leveraging cloud to reimagine learning systems as a method to also drive retention," said Gopinathan. Late last year, TCS announced a Microsoft Business Unit to help train its employees in technologies such as artificial intelligence, automation and cloud.

Last month, Tech Mahindra announced a similar partnership with cloud rival Google Cloud for its own workforce. The talent demand-supply gap in AI and Big Data analytics is expected to grow from 62,000 to 140,000 over the next three years, according to a report

by the World Economic Forum.

India's IT industry has laid off thousands of people in the past 2-3 years as automation and digitisation disrupted jobs. About 20-35% of jobs in the IT-BPM sector are threatened due to automation, according to a Nasscom-Ficci-EY Future of Jobs in India study.

Nadella also focused on cyber security solutions for infrastructure, applications and devices. Cyber attacks are increasingly being targeted at a micro level much like digital marketing operations and have resulted in losses of \$1 trillion, noted Nadella.

He said that even these initiatives need digital and technology skills to be available across the board. "If we are to make progress in the next decade then we have to take every domain expert and citizen developer out there with this."

VODAFONE IDEA WRITES TO DOT, SEEKS STAGGERED PAYMENT, LOWER TAXES

Facing an adjusted gross revenue (AGR) payout of more than Rs 53,000 crore, Vodafone Idea Wednesday wrote to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) seeking certain relief measures such as lower tariff and refund of goods and services tax (GST) dues worth nearly Rs 8,000 crore, sources aware of the development told The Indian Express.

The telco has sought certain measures such as lower tax and spectrum usage charges, as well as expedited payment of its GST refund of the last financial year.

The company, which had a revenue of Rs 36,858 crore in FY19, is seeking refund of over Rs 8,000 crore.

In its letter to the DoT, the company also sought a payment schedule for staggered payment of AGR dues, and an extended moratorium on payment of licence fees, the sources said. Vodafone Idea has so far paid Rs 3,500 crore, half of its self-calculated principal AGR dues, and is looking at other avenues to raise funds for full and final payment. It has also been under the scrutiny of rating agencies, which believe that the telco does not have the ability to pay the required AGR dues by March 17.

Talks of the company's bank guarantees being encashed by the DoT, in case it fails to make the payments, have also been doing the rounds. The company's Mumbai-based chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla had over four days last week met various DoT officials, including Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash.

India's import of US oil jumps 10-fold to 2,50,000 bpd, says US Energy Secy

US oil supplies to India have jumped ten-fold to 2,50,000 barrels per day (bpd) in the last few years, visiting US Energy Secretary Dan Brouillette said. Speaking at a business meeting alongside US President Donald Trump, he said Indian imports of US oil were 25,000 bpd a couple of years ago, and have now risen to 2,50,000 bpd.

US is India's sixth largest oil supplier.

India began importing crude oil from the US in 2017 as it looked to diversify its import basket beyond the OPEC nations. It bought 1.9 million tonnes (38,000 bpd) of crude oil from the US in 2017-18 and another 6.2 million tonnes (1,24,000 bpd) in 2018-19.

In the first six months of current fiscal (2019-20), US supplied 5.4 million tonnes of crude oil to India. Iraq is India's top crude oil supplier, meeting close to one-fourth of the country's oil needs. It sold 26 million tonnes of crude oil to India during April to September.

India, which is 83 per cent dependent on imports to meet its oil needs, bought 111.4 million tonnes of crude oil from overseas during April-September.

Saudi Arabia has traditionally been India's top oil source, but has been relegated to the second spot, exporting 20.7 million tonnes of crude oil in the first six months.



ASIAN STOCKS SLIDE DEEPER AS PANDEMIC FEARS GROW

Oil and Asian share markets extended losses on Thursday as the rapid global spread of the coronavirus kept investors on edge and seeking safety in gold and bonds.

Rising fears of a pandemic, which US health authorities have warned is likely, had already wiped more than \$3.6 trillion from global stock markets by Wednesday's close.

China accounts for about 96% of cases and has instituted dire containment methods that have paralysed global supply chains.

But most new infections are now being reported elsewhere, with news on Thursday of a jump in cases in South Korea accompanied by a warning that the virus may be spreading in California.

South Korea reported 334 new cases on Thursday, its largest daily rise since its first case was confirmed on Jan. 20. China reported 433 new infections.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.5% and is down more than 4% for the week.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dropped 1% by lunchtime and has lost 7% this week. Japan's Nikkei fell 1.7% to its lowest since October. The Hang Seng fell 1%. Gold climbed 0.7%.

INDIA DECIDES TO LIFT BAN ON ONION EXPORTS

NEW DELHI (TIP): The government on Wednesday decided to lift the nearly six-month-old ban on export of onions in a bid to protect the interests of farmers as prices are likely to fall sharply due to bumper rabi crop.

Sources said the decision was taken at a meeting of a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Since the price of onion has stabilised and there is bumper onion crop, government has decided to lift ban on export of onions. Expected monthly harvest in March is over 40 lakh MT compared to 28.4 lakh MT last year," Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in a tweet on Wednesday.

The lifting of ban would be effective once the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) issues a notification in this regard.

The GoM on Wednesday also deliberated on whether to reduce or scrap the Minimum Export Price (MEP) on onion to facilitate outbound shipments, the sources said.

The MEP is the rate below which no exports are allowed.

Paswan, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba were present at the meeting.



IMPORTANCE OF TULSI OR THE HOLY BASIL IN HINDUISM

The 'tulsi' plant or Indian basil is an important symbol in the Hindu religious tradition. The name 'tulsi' connotes "the incomparable one". Tulsi is a venerated plant and Hindus worship it in the morning and evening. Tulsi grows wild in the tropics and warm regions. Dark or Shyama tulsi and light or Rama tulsi are the two main varieties of basil, the former possessing greater medicinal value. Of the many varieties, the Krishna or Shyama tulsi is commonly used for worship.

Tulsi As a Deity

The presence of tulsi plant symbolizes the religious bent of a Hindu family. A Hindu household is considered incomplete if it doesn't have a tulsi plant in the courtyard. Many families have the tulsi planted in a specially built structure, which has images of deities installed on all four sides, and an alcove for a small earthen oil lamp.

Some households can even have up to a dozen tulsi plants on the verandah or in the garden forming a "tulsi-van" or "tulsivrindavan" - a miniature basil forest.

The Holy Herb

Places that tend to inspire concentration and places ideal for worship, according to the 'Gandharv Tantra,' include "grounds overgrown with tulsi plants". The Tulsi Manas Mandir at Varanasi is one such famous temple, where tulsi is worshiped along with other Hindu gods and goddesses. Vaishnavites or believers of Lord Vishnu worship the tulsi leaf because it's the one that pleases Lord Vishnu the most. They also wear beaded necklaces made of tulsi stems. The manufacture of these tulsi necklaces is a cottage industry in pilgrimages and temple towns.

Tulsi As an Elixir

Apart from its religious significance it is of great medicinal significance and is a prime herb in Ayurvedic treatment. Marked by its strong aroma and astringent taste, tulsi is a kind of "the elixir of life" as it promotes longevity. The plant's extracts can be used to prevent and cure many illnesses and common ailments like common cold, headaches, stomach disorders, inflammation, heart disease, various forms of poisoning and malaria. Essential oil extracted from karpoora tulsi is mostly used for medicinal purposes though of late it is used in the manufacture of herbal toiletry.

A Herbal Remedy

According to Jeevan Kulkarni, author of 'Historical Truths & Untruths Exposed,' when Hindu women worship tulsi, they in effect pray for "less and less carbonic acid and more and more oxygen - a perfect object lesson in sanitation, art, and religion". The tulsi plant is even



known to purify or de-pollute the atmosphere and also works as a repellent to mosquitoes, flies and other harmful insects. Tulsi used to be a universal remedy in cases of malarial fever.

Tulsi in History

Prof Shrinivas Tilak, who teaches Religion at Concordia University, Montreal has made this historical citation: In a letter written to 'The Times,' London, dated May 2, 1903 Dr George Birdwood, Professor of Anatomy, Grant Medical College, Mumbai said, "When the Victoria Gardens were established in Bombay, the men employed on those works were pestered by mosquitoes. At the recommendation of the Hindu managers, the whole boundary of the gardens was planted with holy basil, on which the plague of mosquitoes was at once abated, and fever altogether disappeared from among the resident gardeners."

Tulsi in Legends

Quite a few myths and legends found in the Puranas or ancient scriptures point to the origin of the importance of tulsi in religious rituals. Although tulsi is regarded as feminine, in no folklore is she described as the consort of the Lord. Yet a garland solely made of tulsi leaves is the first offering to the Lord as part of the daily ritual. The plant is accorded the sixth place among the eight objects of worship in the ritual of the consecration of the Kalasha, the container of holy water.

According to one legend, Tulsi was the incarnation of a princess who fell

in love with Lord Krishna, and so had a curse laid on her by his consort Radha. Tulsi is also mentioned in the stories of Meera and of Radha immortalized in Jayadev's Gita Govinda. The story of Lord Krishna has it that when Krishna was weighed in gold, not even all the ornaments of Satyabhama could outweigh him. But a single tulsi leaf placed by Rukmani on the pan tilted the scale.

In the Hindu mythology, tulsi is very dear to Lord Vishnu. Tulsi is ceremonially married to Lord Vishnu annually on the 11th bright day of the month of Karttika in the lunar calendar. This festival continues for five days and concludes on the full moon day, which falls in mid-October. This ritual, called the 'Tulsi Vivaha' inaugurates the annual marriage season in India.



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

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

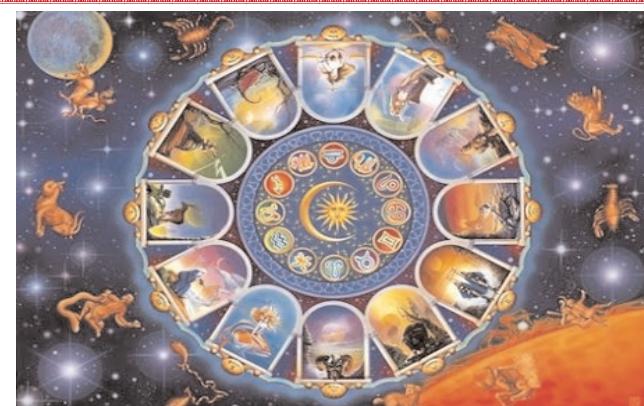
"Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."





Shree Ganeshaya Namah

Bejan Daruwalla is world's most famous astrologer today. He appears regularly on world wide TV shows. Bejan who has been a professor in English, has authored a number of books on astrology. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 29, 2012, launched one of Bejan's books, '2012- End of the World? Bejan contributes to a number of journals and newspapers in many parts of the world which include Berkley Communications (London) Times of India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai) and The Indian Panorama (New York and Texas). Bejan's predictions have mostly been correct and people the world over rely on his predictions.



Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwalla.com and on phone

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The Indian Panorama brings you Weekly and Birthday Horoscope from the World's most trusted astrologer Bejan Daruwalla. Latest correct prediction: Modi's historic victory

Weekly Horoscope March 2 - March 8, 2020

ARIES: Ganesha says this is a great period for sure. Your popularity and productivity will be at an all-time high. Ganesha promises a lot of frenetic activity in this period. You will be inventive, assertive, inspirational and ingenious. You get whatever you set your sights on, and what more is there to say now? As the period advances, the moon raises your sensitivities to a sharp, cutting edge.

TAURUS: You enter a lucky phase and are helped by strangers and friends. You make significant gains in your personal and domestic life. This is an excellent time to embark on new projects or to conclude any kind of transaction. You move ahead full throttle and nothing can stop you now. This is a lucky phase and I urge you to make the most of it. As I always say, there will be money and honey for the asking.

GEMINI: There is a lot of going for you this period. This is action time and you make rapid progress on all fronts. There is success and many domestic obligations to consider too. The continued impact of stars makes life even more pleasing. There is also great love and passion in store for you. Make the right choices as your plate could be overflowing.

CANCER: Ganesha ensures that you have the strength of mind to think clearly and make the right choices. As the period moves on, you realize that a lot of what you had thought of situations and persons in the past does not hold good anymore and you are willing to change and see the brighter side of things. There is no room for negativity and you need to operate from a higher consciousness.

LEO: There will be many collaborations and meetings and reunions with old friends. There will also be family gatherings and you will be in celebratory mode. There is a lot on your plate. Ganesha insists that travel, trade, commission, brokerage, higher studies, journeys and relationships, a grand reaching out to people and places, great mental astuteness and alertness, neighbourly ties, community service and social interactions of all kinds will hold forth.

VIRGO: There is international travel and you make connections that will play a vital role in the years to come. The focus is on family matters: children's health and education, relations with the spouse or partner and the health of elders. You are filled with revolutionary ideas which will force a transformation of some kind in your life. You learn a lot in this filmmakers, artists and photographers.

LIBRA: Ganesha says that this period is the focal point from the professional front. The focus shifts to the more personal arena of house, home and property. Pay extra attention to personal well-being and family investments. There is stability in your affairs and you move ahead with big plans. You are reaching out to the stars, if I may say so. With a little foresight and wisdom, you will do wonders.

SCORPIO: You begin the period well. You are filled with caution and prudence and take careful baby steps. You are ambitious but if you are not careful our life can be drab and boring. Please remember that life is many splendored and is not just about work and deadlines which is what you have made it out to be.

SAGITTARIUS: You have many insecurities and can be difficult to get along with; ask your near and dear ones and they will tell you the truth. You need to open your heart and mind to the limitless possibilities existing in the world. Learn to be less critical and less fastidious. Learn to love and be loved; try to loosen up a bit. Be less suspicious to others. If you have been unwell the previous period, you will show signs of recovery now.

CAPRICORN: You will be moving fast and getting things done in a trice. Money is a major preoccupation in your life, whether you like it or not. You need to be stable and like your larder well stocked. You will make rapid progress and earn well. You also have a spiritual bent of mind and Ganesha will protect you no matter what happens. This is a period for emotions to boil over.

AQUARIUS: Your ego gets in the way and superimposes itself over common sense despite your rational mind telling you to let go of it. There may be tense moments with others who seem to be getting in your way all the time. You may also get into disputes with colleagues over trifles. There will be misunderstandings that can be avoided. This influence challenges your sense of security.

PISCES: There is a lot of work on your plate but you need to prioritize. You need to brush up on people management skills. Ganesha urges you to show more restraint. There are many beautiful moments with close family and friends in this period. Make the most of it. The effects of this influence are unconscious and could lead to eruptions of energy which you are not quite sure what to do with.

Birthday Horoscope March 2 - March 8, 2020

MARCH 2: Ganesha says frustrations, obstacles, and upsets abound. People are bitter or angry, restless and independent, and no one reacts well to sudden alliance changes or hard-grind conditions.

MARCH 3: Even though there's more of an emotional landscape that you'd like, reason and logic return as well, so making decisions, especially this evening, bring warm and affectionate returns.

MARCH 4: Last night's smooth connections may

flow into today in the form of family love or happy domestic nesting. Even with a few problems, you'll feel comfortable at home. Maybe there's a fix-it task!

MARCH 5: A startling decision, unstable option, or sudden change, perhaps at work, might set off edgy, nervous repressed feelings. Maybe you need this change. Look for a partner's emotional support.

MARCH 6: Upsets of some sort can get the day off to a jarring start; avoid rushing around and taking

risks. Later, helpful relationship trends restore equilibrium, making all the difference.

MARCH 7: Nurture optimistic views; positive thoughts can open doors of perception to new, potentially profitable ways of thinking. Remember that what mind can conceive, it can achieve.

MARCH 8: The Moon livens things up over the new few weeks, thanks to new people arriving. Those already in your life are full of surprises, and you'll have a few up your sleeve for them as well.

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MADHYA PRADESH: EXPERIENCES OF A LIFETIME

From thrilling wild jungles to serene places of worship, and everything in between, the destinations of Madhya Pradesh offer experiences as vast and diverse as the state itself.

JAHAZ MAHAL

Floating over its own reflection, the Jahaz Mahal in Mandu looks like a ship that's about to sail. However, for centuries this ship made of stone and mortar never did. Instead, it stood floating over the twin lakes, bearing a silent witness to Mandu's long, rich and varied history.

The city of Mandu is adorned with spell-binding Afghan architecture surrounded by baobab trees, native to Africa. The grand palaces are still alive with royal romance while the gateways (darwazas) speak of a history of imperial conquests. A walk through Mandu will leave you awestruck, the way you used to be listening to stories from grandparents.

CHATURBUJU TEMPLE

The historic town of Orchha, nestled on the banks of river Betwa, was founded in the 16th century by the Bundela Rajput Chief, Rudra Pratap. Here, the river Betwa splits into seven channels, also called the Satdhara. Legend goes that this is in honour of the seven erstwhile Chiefs of Orchha.

The ancient town seems frozen in time, with its many monuments continuing to retain their original grandeur even to this day. Here you will find some of the most fascinating temples and palaces that will help you realise a childhood fantasy – travelling back in time!

THE GREAT STUPA

The town of Sanchi is synonymous with Buddhist Stupas - hemispherical structures typically containing relics of the Buddha or his followers. The Stupas of Sanchi were constructed on the orders of Emperor Ashoka to preserve and spread the Buddhist philosophy. Sanchi has been protecting these beautiful and sacred architectural wonders, just the way these wonders have been safeguarding ancient history and art of the Mauryan period.

The numerous stupas, temples, monasteries and an Ashokan pillar have been the focus of interest and awe for global audiences as well. In fact, UNESCO has given the status of 'World Heritage Site' to the Mahastupa.

RAM GHAT

One of Hinduism's seven sacred cities, Ujjain boasts a wealth of cultural heritage, largely in the form of temples.

Situated on the banks of the Shipra River, the city dates back to 600 BC and was once the residence of Ashoka. It was also the political and commercial hub of central India and the capital of the ancient Avanti Kingdom. Ujjain's spiritual charm is undeniable. The famous poet, Kalidas, described it as 'The town fallen from Heaven to bring Heaven to Earth'. The many temples give you glimpses of a glorious past.

JABALPUR

Under the brightly lit moon, 100 feet



tall mountains of marble change forms as the river Narmada passes through it. This view is so scenic that it stays with you for long. But this is just one of the many gifts that Jabalpur offers. Here you will enjoy the privilege to experience surreal spectacles of nature romance man's endeavours to carefully preserve the breath-taking imperial history. No wonder it has been a witness to some of the greatest episodes written by history, folklore and mother nature.

BHOJTAL

Split by a pair of lakes, Bhopal is two cities within a city. Two starkly contrasting cityscapes.

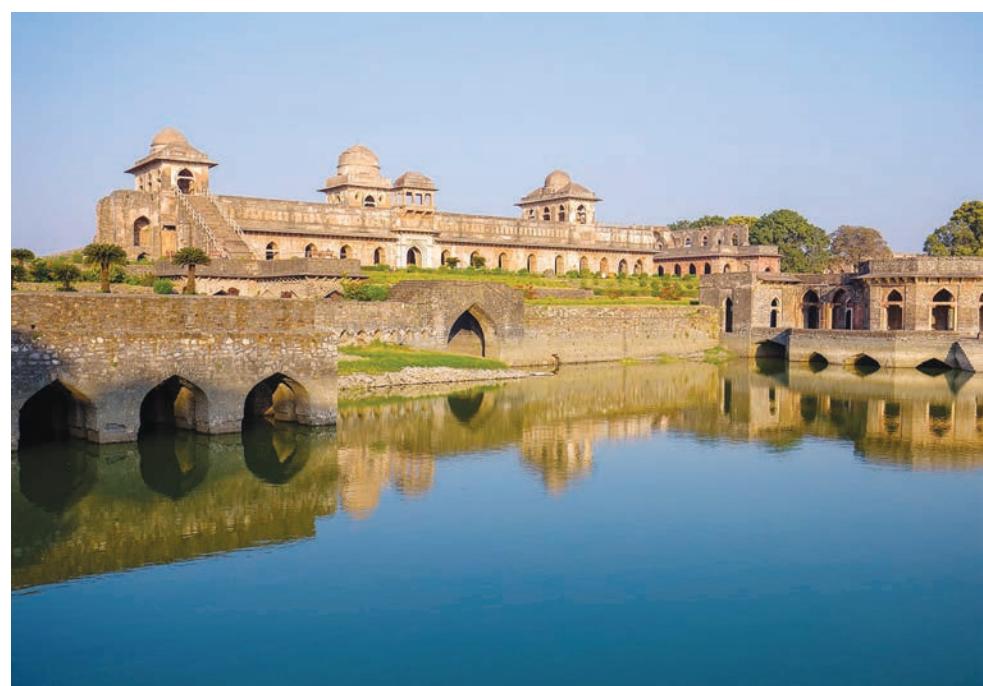
Towards the North you have the old city, a fascinating area of mosques, serpentine alleys, chowks, milling crowds, exotic havelis and crowded bazaars.

South of the two lakes is the new Bhopal. Modern, with wide roads, upmarket shopping complexes, and plush hotels and restaurants nestled comfortably in the Arera and Shamla Hills, which overlook the lakes and the old city beyond. The central district is known as New Market.

BANDHAVGARH

Bandhavgarh is a place of mythological and legendary significance. The ancient Bandhavgarh Fort is of great importance as it is believed to have been gifted by Lord Rama to his younger brother Lakshmana. 'Bandhav' in English means brother and 'Garh' means fort. Hence the name, Bandhavgarh. Bandhavgarh dates back to 2000 years ago and you will find several man made caves with inscriptions and rock paintings.

Bandhavgarh is also the land of tigers. This is the place to visit if you want to spot the big cat. India's top dwelling for tigers, Bandhavgarh National Park has the highest density of Royal Bengal tigers in the world. The sight of the majestic tiger, up close and personal, is said to trigger a sense of awe in you.



Through to semifinals, Harman wants to end group stage on high

MELBOURNE (TIP): Indian women's team captain Harmanpreet Kaur insisted that her side will take their final group game of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup against Sri Lanka seriously before shifting focus on to the semifinals.

India became the first side to sail through to the knockout stages after securing wins against defending champions Australia, Bangladesh and New Zealand. "I know we have qualified, but the next game is still crucial for us. We will be taking Sri Lanka very seriously," Harmanpreet said. "They've been doing well. I know they haven't won a game but they were almost there on both the occasions. We will be taking it very seriously before we start thinking about the semifinals," she added.

Victory over Sri Lanka tomorrow would see India top Group A and head into the semifinals high on confidence. "We try to take every wicket in all our games. Every wicket is an important one at this level. We just have to try and stick to our plan, especially to get out the likes of Chamari Atapattu early. That will be crucial,"



Harmanpreet said. Sri Lanka have arguably had the toughest start to the tournament, having lost to New Zealand and Australia in their opening two games. "We want to take victories in our next two games. We did well against Australia and New Zealand, but we

couldn't turn it into a win," Sri Lanka veteran Shashikala Siriwardena said. "We have to do what we have done well in the previous matches against India but at the same time we need to correct the mistakes we are repeating," she added.

MARIA SHARAPOVA RETIRES AT 32: 'TENNIS — I'M SAYING GOODBYE'

Maria Sharapova, the five-time Grand Slam champion and former No.1-ranked women's tennis player in the world, has called it quits.

The 32-year-old made the announcement not at a press conference, but in an essay she wrote for Vanity Fair and Vogue. Her choice of venue shouldn't exactly come as a surprise. Off the court, Sharapova has built a successful career in business and modeling.

In walking away from her 19-year professional career, she spoke directly to the game she loves, saying, "Tennis — I'm saying goodbye."

"How do you leave behind the only life you've ever known?" Sharapova asks in her essay published Wednesday. She describes the extremes of the game — the "untold tears and unspeakable joys" it brought her, adding that it's "a sport where [she] found a family, along with fans who rallied [her] for more than 28 years."

She also tweeted a picture of her as a young girl posing with a racquet along with the message: "Tennis showed me the world — and it showed me what I was made of."

The Russian-born Sharapova turned professional in 2001 at the age of 14. She won Wimbledon three



years later, in 2004, by upsetting Serena Williams in the final. She outlasted all other competitors to win the U.S. Open in 2006 and then the Australian Open in 2008. Her final Grand Slam titles came at Roland-Garros, winning the French Open in both 2012 and 2014.

The 6-foot-2-inch powerhouse was known for her grit and her groundstrokes and her grunting. She racked up a career singles

record of 645-171, including 36 titles, according to the Women's Tennis Association.

Sharapova, who was No. 1 in 2005, was most recently ranked as the No. 373 ranked singles player in the world, according to the WTA.

The official Twitter account for the French Open offered well wishes for the former champion, saying, "All the best for your future @MariaSharapova."

ASIA CUP TO BE PLAYED IN DUBAI, BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN WILL PLAY: SOURAV GANGULY

MUMBAI (TIP): BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Friday confirmed that the upcoming edition of Asia Cup will be held in Dubai, and ensured both India and Pakistan will feature in the continental tournament.

Pakistan was the designated host for the tournament, which is slated to be held in September this year, but with BCCI refusing to send the Indian team to the neighboring country due to security concerns, the event has now been shifted to Dubai.

"Asia Cup will be held in Dubai and both India and Pakistan will play," Ganguly was quoted as saying by PTI on Friday. The former India skipper was interacting with media persons at the Eden Gardens before leaving for Dubai for the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) meeting, which will be held on March 3. The BCCI had earlier clarified that they have no problem with Pakistan hosting the tournament, provided it is held at a neutral venue. Both the nation have not played a bilateral series since 2012-13 when Pakistan visited the country for a limited-overs series.

Due to the ongoing political tensions between the two countries, India and Pakistan have only met in major ICC competitions since early 2013.

Coronavirus: India pulls out of shooting World Cup in Cyprus

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has decided to pull out the Indian team from the March 4-13 International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Nicosia, Cyprus, due to novel coronavirus scare.

A member of the squad, training here at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Ranges, confirmed the development. "As of now we are not going as the hotel booking and air tickets have been cancelled," the member said.

The shooters attending the camp, that started February 21, went through routine training on Friday morning, but got a hint about withdrawal in the afternoon. The first batch of shooters was supposed to leave for Cyprus on March 2.

A podium finish in the season's first global competition would have brightened the Indian trap team's chances of earning global ranking points and subsequently become eligible to earn individual Olympic quota place by the end of May. As per the ISSF Olympic qualification rules, the highest-ranked athlete not yet qualified in any event, provided the concerned national federation doesn't have quota place in that particular event, will be awarded a berth.

"We had good chances as those nations which have had already won quota places weren't coming," said a trap shooter in the camp.

The focus now is on the March 15-26 World Cup here at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Ranges. "Performance in back-to-back World Cups would have carried more weight and enhanced chances of winning berth for Olympics. It will be more challenging since we aren't taking part in Cyprus to earn quota place now," said one of the shooters in the camp.

India have won 15 quota places including two in men's skeet. Each national sports federation is allotted two quota per event and quota places are for the country and not individual. However, the trap team (men's and women's) for the first time in a long time weren't able to grab the opportunity neither in the 2018 Olympic qualification period or in 2019 cycle that concluded with Asian Shooting Championships at Doha in November.

The women's trap team comprises of Shreyasi Singh, Seema Tomar and Rajeshwari Kumari while Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Tondaiman and seasoned shooter Manavjit Singh Sandhu were picked up for the men's side after the national selections trials.

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