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Car blast kills 51 in Iraq, scores wounded

Islamic State claims responsibility



The blast site

BAGHDAD (TIP): A car packed with explosives blew up on Thursday, February 16, in southern Baghdad, killing at least 51 people and wounding 55, security and medical sources said, in the deadliest such attack in Iraq this year, says a Reuters report. Islamic State, which is on the defensive after losing control of eastern Mosul to a US-backed Iraqi military

contd on page 20

Vikas Swarup is India's new envoy to Canada



Vikas Swarup who has been MEA spokesman since 2015 is now heading to Canada as India's envoy

Photo courtesy PTI

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Ministry of External Affairs is all set to get a new public face with its current spokesperson Vikas Swarup headed to Canada as the High Commissioner.

Gopal Baglay, Joint Secretary in charge of Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan Division in the ministry, is likely to succeed Swarup. Baglay earlier served as Deputy High Commissioner in Pakistan and as Director in MEA's External Publicity Division.

Swarup, a 1986-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, had replaced Syed Akbaruddin as the MEA spokesperson in 2015. He shot to fame when his novel Q&A was made into a Hollywood movie, 'Slumdog Millionaire', which won eight Oscars. He is expected to take up his new assignment shortly.

US, Russia agree to boost military talks

WASHINGTON (TIP): The US and Russian militaries agreed to "enhance communications" after a meeting between their top commanders in Azerbaijan today (February 16), the Pentagon said. Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Joe Dunford and his Russian counterpart Valery Gerasimov

contd on page 20

Trump rails at media for its reporting, repeating umpteenth time CNN is 'fake media'

The leaks are real. But the news about them is fake. The White House is a fine-tuned machine. Russia is a ruse.

WASHINGTON (TIP)

It was a 90 minute show of bravado by a super performer. Trump bullied reporters, dismissed facts and then cracked a few caustic jokes - a combination that once made the candidate irresistible cable TV fodder. Now in office, he went even further, blaming the media for all but sinking his not-yet-launched attempt to "make a deal" with Moscow.

For its stunning moments and memorable one-liners, Donald Trump's first solo news conference as president has no rivals in recent memory. For all the trappings of the White House and traditions of the forum, his performance was one of a swaggering, blustery campaigner, armed with grievances and primed to unload on his favorite targets.

contd on page 20



Texas Governor's Office Introduces New Reward Program for Crime Stoppers

AUSTIN, TX (TIP)

The Office of the Governor, The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and Texas Crime Stoppers announced a new reward program today, February 16, related to the Texas Ranger Unsolved Crimes Investigation Program.

A press release said the new program, funded by the Governor's Criminal Justice Division and administered by DPS, is designed to help generate investigative leads in the unresolved or cold case homicides.

"It is a tremendous affront to society when a heinous crime like murder goes unsolved, and the

state of Texas has an obligation to the victims and our communities to help ensure justice is ultimately served," Governor Abbott said. "This new reward program was created to help identify the perpetrators of these crimes and provide overdue closure in these cases."

The rewards payout will now be up to \$3,000 for any person who provides information that leads to the arrest of the person/persons responsible for a cold case listed on the DPS Unsolved Homicide website at <http://www.dps.texas.gov/TexasRangers/UnsolvedHomicides/index.htm>.

In addition, an increased reward of up to \$6,000 will be

given for information leading to arrests for featured cases, if the tip comes before the next case is featured in the following month, according to the press release.

In 2015 DPS launched a public awareness campaign featuring one unsolved case every month in an effort to generate new leads and bring attention to unresolved or "cold cases" across the state.

"DPS is committed to the ongoing search for crucial evidence needed to close these cases - no matter when the crime occurred," said DPS Director Steven McCraw. "These victims and their loved ones deserve justice, and we urge anyone with information related to an

contd on page 20



Governor of Texas Greg Abbott's office is focused on stopping crime

Sasikala's pick Palaniswami takes over as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister



Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami after taking the oath of secrecy administered by governor Vidyasagar Rao during the swearing-in ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Chennai on February 16. Photo courtesy PTI

A long-time confidante of former AIADMK supremo and chief minister J Jayalalithaa, Sasikala's hopes to become the CM were dashed when the Supreme Court sent her to prison for four years in a two-decade-old corruption case, prompting her to name Palaniswami as her successor and brought two nephews into the party who were expelled by Jayalalithaa.

CHENNAI (TIP): The political potboiler in Tamil Nadu ended on February 16 with the swearing-in of jailed AIADMK general secretary VK Sasikala's proxy, Edappadi K Palaniswami, as the chief minister.

Palaniswami retained almost all the ministers in the O Panneerselvam government, barring the ousted chief minister as well as education minister MF Pandiarajan who have rebelled against Sasikala.

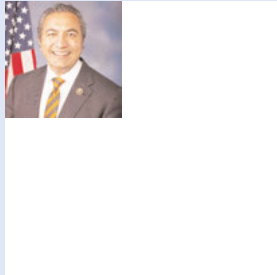
Governor C Vidyasagar Rao administered the

oath of office to the chief minister and his 30-member council at a function in which Sasikala's family members took the front row, leaving no room for guesswork as to where the party leaders draw their strength from. The governor invited Palaniswami to form the government after he presented a list of 124 AIADMK lawmakers supporting him. The new chief minister will have to take a floor test in the assembly in a fortnight to prove that he enjoys support of the majority of legislators.

contd on page 20

Indian American Congressman Ami Bera named ranking member of House space subcommittee

WASHINGTON (TIP): House Democrats have named Rep. Ami Bera (D-Calif.) as the new ranking member of the space subcommittee as they finalized the roster of members who will serve on that subcommittee.



Bera, entering his third term in the House, succeeds Donna Edwards

Bera, entering his third term in the House, succeeds Donna Edwards, a Maryland Democrat who previously served as the top Democrat on the subcommittee. Edwards chose not to run for reelection to the House in 2016, unsuccessfully running for the Senate instead.

"As a kid who grew up during the height of the space race dreaming of what lay beyond us, it's an honor to be selected to serve as the ranking member for the subcommittee on space," Bera, 51, said in a Feb. 14 statement about his selection as subcommittee ranking member. His district, which covers part of the Sacramento area, includes a major Aerojet Rocketdyne facility.

Indian American State Representative Niraj Antani Named AMVETS 2016 'Legislator of the Year'



Antani is the second Indian-American state elected official in Ohio history and the first Indian-American Republican

COLUMBUS (TIP): State Representative Niraj Antani (R-Miami Township) has received the 2016 Legislator of the Year award by American Veterans (AMVETS) Department of Ohio.

"I am very thankful to AMVETS for this award, but I am more thankful for all the veterans they serve who protected our nation while in the military," Antani said. "I will continue to fight for our veterans at the Statehouse. The post 9/11 veteran unemployment rate in Ohio is abysmal. Our veterans deserve better when they return home, and I will fight for them."

Each year, AMVETS Department of Ohio recognizes legislators who have shown continued support of veterans issues and demonstrated the ideals and goals of the AMVETS Department of Ohio. Antani accepted this award on Saturday, February 11th, 2017 in Columbus.

Antani is serving his second term in the Ohio House. He represents the 42nd District, which covers most of southern Montgomery County. Having been elected age 23, now 25, he is the youngest currently serving member of the House. In addition, he is the second Indian-American state elected official in Ohio history, and the first Indian-American Republican.

Antani was named to Forbes Magazine's list of the top "30 Under 30" people in the United States for Law & Politics in 2015. In 2016, the conservative media organization Newsmax named him the 2nd most influential Republican in the nation under age 30. In addition, in 2013 he was named to the "Top 30 Conservatives Under Age 30 in the United States" list by Red Alert Politics and the Montgomery County Republican Party named him the "Republican Man of the Year."

Two Indian American Princeton Students selected as 2017 Scholars in Nation's Service Initiative

NEW YORK (TIP)

The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University has selected 10 students, including two Indians, for the 2017 cohort of the Scholars in the Nation's Service Initiative (SINSI). Kishan Bhatt and Nabil Shaikh were among 10 Princeton University students.

Established in 2006, SINSI is designed to encourage, support and prepare the nation's top students to pursue careers in the U.S. federal government, in international and domestic agencies. Through rigorous academic training integrated with work experience, the goal of the highly competitive scholarship program is to provide students with the language and workplace skills needed to succeed in the public policy arena.

Kishan Bhatt, a senior from Edison, New Jersey, is a Wilson School concentrator and a certificate candidate in global health and health policy and American studies. A U.S. health policy scholar at Princeton's Center for Health and Wellbeing, he cares deeply about policies that encourage medical innovation, disease prevention and value-based health care delivery. During summer 2016, Bhatt analyzed clinical cost and outcomes data for Remedy Partners, a technology start-up that serves 1,300 hospitals participating in Medicare's \$12 billion Bundled Payment for Care Improvement program. Previously, he researched counter-



Kishan Bhatt and Nabil Shaikh were among 10 Princeton University students named 2017 Scholars in the Nation's Service Initiative

bioterrorism strategy at the Federation of American Scientists, publishing a report for federal officials on the legal and biological tools to deter and detect potential disease threats. Bhatt has studied abroad in Spain and directed an international exchange program connecting 80 high school students from Japan and the United States. He serves as a four-year senator for the Undergraduate Student Government, a peer career adviser, an Orange Key tour guide and a fellow with the Human Values Forum.

Nabil Shaikh, a senior from Reading, Pennsylvania, is a politics major and a certificate candidate in global health and health policy and in values and public life. Shaikh, who cares deeply about global access to health care and health disparities, has spent his time at

Princeton broadening his understanding of how various actors and policies shape health and wellness in society. During summer 2016, Shaikh spent two months as a Princeton Global Health Scholar in Hyderabad, India, where he performed thesis research surveying more than 100 terminally ill cancer patients on their experiences with accessing end-of-life care. He then spent time in Trenton, New Jersey, as a policy research intern at the New Jersey Department of Health, focusing on minority and multicultural health. Shaikh is active in the activities of the Muslim Life Program, Muslim Advocates for Social Justice and the Office of Religious Life. He has served as treasurer for the Pace Council for Civic Values and as a freshman trip leader for Community Action.

Indian American NASA Scientist Detained at U.S. Border

WASHINGTON (TIP): A U.S.-born Indian American NASA scientist was detained by U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officials and was not permitted to enter the country unless he unlocked his PIN-protected work phone.

Sidd Bikkannavar, who works in NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was detained Jan. 30 upon returning to the U.S. from Santiago, Chile, the Verge reported.

Bikkannavar said he was pressured to give the CBP agents his phone and access PIN. Since the phone was issued by NASA, it may have contained sensitive material that wasn't supposed to be shared.

Bikkannavar's phone was returned to him after it was searched by CBP, but he doesn't know exactly what information officials might have taken from the device.

Bikkannavar is a natural-born U.S. citizen enrolled in CBP's Global Entry program, which allowed participants who have undergone a background check to speed up their entry into the U.S.

He had not visited any of the countries mentioned in Donald Trump's 'Muslim' travel ban, but Bikkannavar told the Verge that agents may have become suspicious about his family name, which is southern Indian.

The JPL scientist returned to the U.S. four days after the signing of a sweeping



Sidd Bikkannavar, 35, was held with others who were stranded under the ban on entry of Muslims from seven countries

and controversial executive order on travel into the country. The travel ban caused chaos at airports across the U.S., as people with visas and green cards found themselves detained, or facing deportation.

Within days of its signing, the travel order was stayed, but not before more than 60,000 visas were revoked, according to the U.S. State Department.

"Sorry for my absence. On my way back home to the U.S. last weekend, I was detained by Homeland Security and held with others who were stranded under the Muslim ban," he wrote on Facebook.

"CBP officers seized my phone and wouldn't release me until I gave them my access PIN for them to copy the data.

I initially refused since it's a JPL-issued phone and I must protect access."

He added, "Just to be clear - I'm a U.S.-born citizen and NASA engineer, traveling with a valid U.S. visa."

Bikkannavar said he was eventually released. His employers gave him a new phone.

According to the Verge, Bikkannavar was yet to receive an explanation for why he was stopped at Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

He had traveled to South America for personal reasons, pursuing his hobby of racing solar-powered cars. He had recently joined a Chilean team.

"It was not that they were concerned with me bringing something dangerous in, because they didn't even touch the bags," he said. "They had no way of knowing I could have had something in there. You can say, 'Okay well maybe it's about making sure I'm not a dangerous person,' but they have all the information to verify that."

Earlier this week, Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly said in a statement that people visiting the U.S. may be asked to give up passwords to their social media accounts.

"We want to get on their social media, with passwords. What do you do? What do you say?" Kelly told the House Homeland Security Committee. "If they don't want to cooperate, then you don't come in."



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USCIRF Report on India's Deteriorating Religious Freedom

INOC USA expresses concern, HAF questions Credibility

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian National Overseas Congress, USA expressed serious concern over the recently issued annual report by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a powerful freedom body that exercises considerable influence on the US Senate and Administration, which cited that religious tolerance has deteriorated and religious freedom violations have increased in India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's regime.

On the other hand, The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) slammed the report saying that "US Religious Freedom Commission Outsourced Its Credibility with Attack on Hinduism and India."

"It is unfortunate that the last two years have witnessed a steady deterioration of religious freedom and human rights in India especially that of the minorities and the current administration cannot shirk their responsibility in that regard," said George Abraham, Chairman of the Indian National Overseas Congress, USA.

According to the recently released report, India faces serious challenges to both its pluralistic traditions and its religious minorities. Christians, Sikhs, and Jains generally are fearful of what the future portends. Dalits also are increasingly being attacked and harassed.

But HAF feels the report by Iqtidar Cheema, a Pakistan-origin author known for his anti-India stand and director for Institute for Leadership and Community Development, in Birmingham, England, is completely biased. In a blog post, HAF executive director Suhag Shukla wrote, "Cheema's work provides cover to Pakistan's long-standing support of a bloody proxy war to separate the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir from India. Not surprisingly then, this report fails to mention the plight of over 300,000 Kashmiri Hindu Pandits cleansed from their ancestral homeland in the Valley at the hands of Islamist radicals. Previous commission reports have ignored the same."

She also feels that USCIRF has lost its credibility. "How could USCIRF outsource a report harshly critical of India, one of the most important democratic allies of the United States, to an activist with a history of supporting separatist causes against India that too often employ terrorism against innocent civilians? How can USCIRF give its imprimatur to a report citing debunked sources and smearing the Hindu religion?"

In the report, USCIRF urged the Indian government to immediately lift its sanctions against non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are working for the welfare of the minorities in India. It also pointed out that FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) is increasingly being used as a tool to shut down foreign-funded minority NGOs.

In an unusually sharp criticism of the Modi Administration, the USCIRF wants the US administration to identify and act against "Hindutva groups that raise funds from US citizens and support hate campaigns in India", adding "such groups should be banned from operating in the US if they are found to spread hatred against religious minorities in India."

INOC, USA urged the growing Indian community in the United States to refrain from funding these organizations that promote hatred and bigotry against the minorities in India.

'No work...no school': Dallas among U.S. cities targeted for 'Day Without Immigrants' protests

DALLAS (TIP): Organizers in cities across the U.S. are telling immigrants to miss class, miss work and not shop on Thursday as a way to show the country how important they are to America's economy and way of life.

"A Day Without Immigrants" actions are planned in cities including Dallas, Austin, Philadelphia, Washington and Boston. The protest comes in response to President Donald Trump and his 1-month-old administration. The Republican president has pledged to increase deportation of immigrants living in the country illegally, build a wall along the Mexican border, and ban people from certain majority-Muslim countries from coming into the U.S. He also has blamed high unemployment on immigration.

In Dallas-Fort Worth, activists encouraged immigrant parents to pull their children out of school as a show of solidarity.

Read full story www.theindianpanorama.com

Trump campaign aides had repeated contacts with Russian intelligence': Sources

WASHINGTON (TIP)

Phone records and intercepted calls show that members of Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and his other associates had repeated contacts with senior Russian intelligence officials in the year prior to the election, officials said.

President-elect Trump and then-President Barack Obama were both briefed on details of the extensive communications between suspected Russian operatives and people associated with the Trump campaign and the Trump business, US officials familiar with the matter told CNN.

The communications were intercepted during routine intelligence collection targeting Russian officials and other Russian nationals known to US intelligence, the report said on Wednesday.

Among several senior Trump advisers regularly communicating with Russian nationals were then-campaign chairman Paul Manafort and then-adviser Michael Flynn.

Adding to US investigators' concerns were intercepted communications between Russian officials before and after the US elections discussing their belief that they had special access to Trump, said two US law enforcement officials. The intercepted communications also included other associates of Trump, whom the officials



Michael Flynn's resignation as Trump's National Security Advisor has kicked more dust than settled. There is an outcry for a thorough investigation in to Trump campaign's links with Russia.

declined to identify. On the Russian side, the contacts also included members of the government outside of the intelligence services, they said.

The call logs and intercepted communications were part of a larger trove of information that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was sifting through as part of an investigation on the links between Trump's associates and the Russian government, as well as the hacking of the Democratic National Committee computers, according to federal law enforcement officials.

Manafort denied that he was in contact with Russians known to US intelligence. "This is absurd," he said.

"I have no idea what this is referring to. I have never knowingly spoken to

Russian intelligence officers, and I have never been involved with anything to do with the Russian government or the (Vladimir) Putin administration or any other issues under investigation today," he said.

Manafort, who has held business ties with Russian and Ukrainian individuals, also emphasized that his work for the Yanukovich government in Ukraine should not be interpreted as closeness to the Russians.

The intercepted calls are different from the wiretapped conversations in 2016 between Trump's former National Security Adviser Michael T. Flynn and Sergey I. Kislyak, Russia's Ambassador to the US.

In those calls, which led to Flynn's resignation on Monday night, the two men discussed sanctions that the Obama administration imposed on Russia in December.

On Tuesday, top Republican lawmakers said Flynn should be one focus of the investigation, and that he should be called to testify before Congress. Senator Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Intelligence Committee, said Flynn's resignation would not stop the committee "from continuing to investigate General Flynn, or any other campaign official who may have had inappropriate and improper contacts with Russian officials prior to the election." **(Source: IANS)**

H 1B visas help American firms remain competitive, says Indian envoy Navtej Sarna

WASHINGTON (TIP):

H1-B visas, sought-after by Indian IT professionals, help make US firms competitive globally and contribute to generating jobs locally, India's envoy has said amid reports the Trump administration plans to cut down the scheme.

"The H1B scheme has been crucial in making US companies competitive globally in increasing their client base, in increasing their innovation. And it is the Indian tech industry, which has actually been creating jobs here (in the US)," Ambassador to the US Navtej Sarna told a news channel.

"There are reports and analysis by very respected houses, which say that over 400,000 jobs have been directly and indirectly supported in the US," he said, adding that Indian tech companies had invested USD 2 billion in four years and paid USD 20 billion in taxes.

H1-B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows American firms to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The tech companies depend on it to hire thousands of employees each year.

"Out of every 100, H-1B visas have resulted in support to 183 jobs in the US. This is very important because nine out of the 15 top tech companies in India are American companies," Sarna said.



"The H1B scheme has been crucial in making US companies competitive globally in increasing their client base, in increasing their innovation. And it is the Indian tech industry, which has actually been creating jobs here (in the US)," Ambassador to the US Navtej Sarna told a news channel.

"This is a relationship which is symbiotic and which has a potential of becoming even stronger for both the countries," he added.

India is one of the top sources for international workers in the American tech industry, accounting for a major chunk of all H1-B visas. And any move by Trump, who has vowed to put an "America First" policy, will have an adverse impact in India.

However, those demanding a revision of the policy say the program

hurt American interests.

In an op-ed piece in 'Fortune' magazine Senator Chuck Grassley, argued that the flaws in H1B program hurt American workers, American innovation, and even H1B workers, who are in many cases "benched" without work or pay for long periods.

Grassley is Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and co-author of H1-B and L1 Visa Reform Act of 2017.

Earlier this year, he introduced the bipartisan legislation with Senator Dick Durbin to tackle these problems and return the program to its original intent: filling gaps in America's skilled labor market.

Schumer said his bill explicitly prohibits companies from replacing qualified American workers with H1-B workers. It also requires companies to post job openings and make good faith efforts to hire qualified American workers before seeking H1-B visas.

"Companies would also be prohibited from laying off American workers 180 days prior to and following the hiring of an H1-B worker. These provisions ensure that qualified American workers are considered for jobs first," he said.

"To ensure that limited number of annual H1-B visas go to the best and brightest workers, our bill prioritizes petitions, starting with foreign nationals who received advance science and engineering degrees right here in the US," he said.

Indian Ambassador hosts Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill



As many as 27 US lawmakers will be visiting India this month in what Indian Ambassador Navtej Sarna regards as "a very important milestone" that is demonstrative of the high degree of American interest in India and the strong bipartisan support for the India-US relationship.

WASHINGTON (TIP)

Ambassador of India Navtej Sarna hosted a Congressional Reception at the Capitol "to celebrate India's engagement with the 115th US Congress" on February 14.

Addressing an impressive gathering of members of Congress, prominent Indian-Americans, congressional staffers, business representatives and media, Ambassador described the upcoming visit of 27 distinguished members of Congress as a very important milestone and demonstrative of the high degree of interest in India, and the strong bipartisan support for the India-US relationship, based on shared democratic values and converging strategic interests. He looked forward to a more robust economic and commercial cooperation as India retains its spot as the fastest growing major economy.

Congressman Steny Hoyer, House Democratic Whip echoed the bipartisan support for the India relationship and emphasized cooperation on security issues between the two largest democracies. Congressman Pete Olson spoke glowingly of the positive contributions of the Indian-American community in the way of life of Texans.

He emphasized the significance of the port of Houston for energy exports. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, Chairman of House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats emphasized the importance of US-India cooperation in addressing the threat arising from extremist radical terrorism. He also spoke of the potential of US companies contributing in the economic transformation of India. Congressman Ami Bera, Democratic Chair of the House India Caucus said that the increase in number of elected Indian-Americans currently in Congress is a testimony to the remarkable strides that the Indian-American community has made and the growing closeness between the two countries that is based on shared values. He noted that the India Caucus is the largest one on the Hill and his firm belief that the US-India relationship will be a defining one for the 21st century. Congressman George Holding, Republican Chair of House India Caucus spoke of the importance of building the economic cooperation alongside the political relationship and looked forward to his upcoming visit to India. Congressman Hank Johnson noted India's millennial old history and

reputation for peacefulness and the link between the non-violent movement for civil rights led by Dr. Martin Luther King and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and looked forward to his forthcoming visit to India.

Other Members of Congress present included Senator Jeff Flake, Congressman Bob Goodlatte- Chairman of House Judiciary committee, Congressman Andy Harris, Congressman Ted Poe- Chairman House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation and Trade and Congressman Joe Kennedy.

Two distinguished Congressional delegations shall be visiting India in the week of 19th February. One delegation travelling under the auspices of the Aspen Institute and comprising 19 senior Congressmen shall be visiting Delhi, Hyderabad and the other led by Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Chairman Bob Goodlatte, and comprising 8 distinguished Congressmen has Delhi and Bangalore on its itinerary. They would have the opportunity to engage with Indian Ministers, decision makers, thinkers, business representatives and partake of the rich Indian cultural palette.

Sikh Gurdwarasin Aid of Evacuees Fleeing Possible Dam Break in North California

SACRAMENTO (TIP): More than 200,000 people - including Indian American farmers and laborers - were evacuated from the Yuba/Sutter counties in Northern California Feb. 12 when state officials detected a hole in an auxiliary spillway for the Oroville Dam, the largest dam in North America.

"There's three and a half million acre feet of water behind the Oroville Dam. If that dam were to breach, we would lose everything," Indian American farmer Karm Bains told India-West. Bains is the son of Didar Singh Bains, the legendary "peach king of California," who owns an estimated 1,600 acres of land in the region.

The Yuba and Sutter County region has been home to Punjabi American farmers for more than a century. Indian Americans here own an estimated 50,000 acres of land worth approximately \$1.3 billion, and grow almost the entire crop of the nation's canned peaches, and almost two-thirds of its walnuts, almonds, pistachios and plums.

Following the mandatory evacuation order, gurdwaras in neighboring Sacramento, West Sacramento, Rio Linda, and Stockton immediately opened their doors to shelter temporarily-homeless people, who - at press time Feb. 14 - had no timeline for returning to their homes.

Punjabis and non-Punjabis have been going to take shelter in gurdwaras. The West Sacramento gurdwara - the largest in the state - is currently providing shelter, food, and medical care to about 200 people, and has a capacity of 400 in its worship hall and auxiliary area, sources said.

"Our doors are open to everyone - white, brown, black. This is about humanity in the Sikh tradition," he said. The gurdwara has been providing three meals a day of Punjabi food. A gurdwara manager said everyone - including non-Indians - are enjoying the vegetarian meals. He noted that the kitchen is equipped to feed 3,000 people.

The temple is currently in need of donations of blankets, pillows and other bedding, said Singh, adding that baby food and snacks for children were also needed. Extra clothing, diapers and toiletries would also be useful, said the manager, noting that most people quickly evacuated once the order was announced, taking little with them.

Regular religious services have been held at the temple since the evacuation.

Gurdwaras in Roseville, Rio Linda, Sacramento, Manteca, and Tracy have also opened their doors to anyone needing emergency shelter.

Hospitals, assisted living facilities, and even jails had to be evacuated under the order, said Bains. "Everything has come to a standstill here. It is a very stressful situation."

Indian Americans raise pitch against 'travel ban'

SACRAMENTO (TIP):

According to a study at California State University San Bernardino's Center for Study for Hate and Extremism, the anti-Muslim hate crimes in the US rose sharply in 2015 to the highest levels since the aftermath of the September 11 terror attacks. The study also suggested that President Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric could have contributed to this backlash against American Muslims.

And recently we saw the President going as far as severely restricting the entry of nationals of seven majority Muslim countries, causing a rash of protests across the country with various Indian communities taking part in it.

The Sikh Center of Seattle is one such religious organization raising its voice

against the so-called travel ban. Recently, the Center deputed Harjinder Singh Sandhawalia for a roundtable discussion of all faith leaders of the Seattle held in the Redmond city mosque. This meeting was hosted by the Muslim community of the area. It was in this meeting that Congresswoman Suzan DelBene said she had introduced a bill (HR 489) in the Congress to stop the order registering Muslims in the country. Sandhawalia was present in the discussion and called for protecting religious freedom of minority communities.

Members of other Sikh communities have also joined hands in the protest marches being organized across the country. Ravinder Singh, CEO of the Khalsa Aid Foundation who has been involved in humanitarian work at the Syria border, has also condemned the decision in his tweets. 'Donald #Trump only

BANNING MUSLIMS from countries where he has ZERO business interest! Well done USA' reads one of his tweets.

With more American Indian communities joining the protests, the anti-Trump voices are now being amplified collectively across the country. A Punjabi community calling itself Punjabi Aunties took to streets holding placards written in Hindi and Punjabi. Swaroop Kaur, homemaker from Seattle, has been running a Vegan store for 22 years now. Swaroop finds this decision demeaning and hurting. "22 years in Seattle, will you Mr Trump, still call me an immigrant?" she questions.

On the other hand, Jamie Quinn consultant physiotherapist at Swasthya Kendra Clinic, vehemently opposes the decision on the Internet. She writes, "It's not about who is banned and who isn't. This is a **** move

towards several refugees who are just trying to escape war and for several students and working people who want to earn money for a good life in the USA. Aaj unko ban Kiya toh kal hume bhi kar sakte Hai (today they have banned them, tomorrow it could be us)."

While on ground, protests gain momentum, social networking sites, FB pages being run by Indian communities staying in America are also garnering support from non-Indian communities: 'Stop Donald Trump', 'Stand Against Trump', 'Trump O Bar', 'Hindi Hai Hum' are some of the pages that have been rallying support against the President's order.

Anita Vohra, a Google employee in San Francisco led a silent protest in her vicinity with other Google employees joining her.

(Source:Tribune)

CONSTITUTION BENCH TO DECIDE PETITIONS ON TRIPLE TALAQ: SUPREME COURT

NEW DELHI (TIP): A five-judge constitution bench would be set up by the Supreme Court to hear and decide on a batch of petitions relating to the practice of triple talaq, 'nikah halala' and polygamy among Muslims.

A bench headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar took on record three sets of issues framed by parties with regard to the cases and said the questions for consideration of the constitution bench would be decided on March 30.

The bench, also comprising Justices N V Ramana and D V Chandrachud, said "the issues are very important. These issues cannot be scuttled".

Referring to the legal issues framed by the Centre, it said all of them relate to the constitutional issues and needed to be dealt by a larger bench.

The bench asked the parties concerned to file their respective written submissions, running not beyond 15 pages, by the next date of hearing, besides the common paper book of case laws to be relied upon by them during the hearing to avoid duplicity.

When a woman lawyer referred to the fate of the apex court judgement in the famous Shah Bano case, the bench said "there are always two sides in a case. We have been deciding cases for last 40 years. We have to go by the law and we would not go beyond the law."

The bench also made it clear that it is willing to sit on Saturdays and Sundays to decide on the issue as it was very important.

During the last hearing, the apex court had said it would decide the issues pertaining to 'legal' aspects of the practices of triple talaq, 'nikah halala' and polygamy among Muslims but not deal with the question whether divorce under Muslim law needs to be supervised by courts as it fell under the legislative domain.

'Nikah halala' means a man cannot remarry a woman after triple talaq unless she has already consummated her marriage with another man and then her new husband dies or divorces her.

The bench headed by the CJI had said "You (lawyers for parties) sit together and finalise the issues to be deliberated upon by us."

VIKAS SWARUP APPOINTED CANADA ENVOY

NEW DELHI (TIP): Ministry of external affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup will be the next Indian high commissioner to Canada, the government said on Thursday. Swarup, whose novel 'Q & A' was made into the Oscar-winning movie 'Slumdog Millionaire', had been at the helm of the MEA office since April 2015. He is credited with expanding MEA's social media outreach. Swarup is currently an additional secretary in the MEA. Gopal Baglay, joint secretary in the Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan division in MEA, will succeed Swarup.



Isro creates world record with 104 satellites launch

NEW DELHI (TIP): Isro successfully placing a record 104 satellites—101 foreign satellites and three Indian ones—in orbit in a single launch cements India's position as a global leader in space technology. But, more important, it also underlines the fact that the space agency has made innovation in low-cost space technology somewhat of a habit, and that could pay rich dividends in the coming years. In the present instance, there were 103 small satellites—apart from the main satellite, India's Cartosat-2, that formed the bulk of the launcher's payload—88 of which were from Planet Labs, an American company that acquired Google's satellite imaging subsidiary recently; the

company was using Isro's PSLV for the second-time. In all, 96 of the 101 foreign satellites were from the US—the largest spender on space technology—while the rest were from Israel, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), The Netherlands and Switzerland. While UAE, whose own space agency was created only in 2014, plans to set up a human colony on Mars by 2117, Israel is a major spender on defence and agriculture, both of which require cutting-edge satellites in orbit to transmit critical intelligence. All this should throw into sharp relief the opportunity Isro—or rather, its commercial arm, Antrix—has in building up a reputation as a low-cost, high-efficiency

launcher of small satellites (weighing less than 500 kg).

According to a projection by Space Works Enterprise Inc, a research firm, roughly 5,000 "micro" (10-100 kg) and "nano" satellites (1-10 kg) need to be hurled into space in 2020—compared with just 92 launched in 2013. Over 60% of these satellites will be from the commercial sector—viz. companies with play in communication, weather-tracking, remote-sensing, providing high-speed internet in remote areas, etc. Softbank-funded OneWeb alone is looking to launch 648 small satellites, as per a Business Standard article.

'Indian economy is resilient to global headwinds': Dr. Raghavan Seetharaman

Prakash M Swamy

CHENNAI (TIP): The US ruling on cancellation of H-1B visa rules poses risk towards IT companies immigrants and offshore projects, expectation is that costs may escalate for these companies operating in US. Global growth is challenging, however Indian economy is resilient to global headwinds on account of the strong domestic fundamentals, said Dr Raghavan Seetharaman, CEO of Doha Bank in Qatar.

The recent budget had given thrust on infrastructure, agriculture and aims to revive the growth of Indian economy. India exported \$6 billion worth of drugs to the US in 2015 and restrictions on pharmaceutical imports and manufacturing abroad could impact the industry in India, he said.

The Indian government has encouraged global investors to participate through FDI. The recent budget has stated that foreign investment promotion board will be abolished, which will improve ease of doing business.

IMF has pegged India growth at 7.2 percent in 2017. India's Current Account Deficit decreased from about 1 percent of GDP last year to 0.3 percent of GDP in first half of 2016-17. India has pegged fiscal deficit for 2017-18 at 3.2 percent and its Forex Reserves at \$361 billion offer a comfortable cover for 12 months of imports thanks to better financial management by Narendra Modi government, he said.

Contentious issues are coming between developed and developing world on global trade and investment. The lack of convergence between politics and economics could impact global growth. We're entering a new stage of international global relations where national policies could shape how globalization eventually develops, he said.

Dr. R. Seetharaman highlighted the opportunities for India arising from global developments. "After Brexit better trading opportunities with India than is possible as part of a 28-member EU. India has had a trade surplus with UK in the recent years. It is thus crucial for India to have a first mover advantage by executing a bilateral trade agreement



Seen in the picture from L to R: Poet Vaira Muthu, Justice PN Prakash, Justice Dr Lakshmanan, Dr Seetharaman and Lt Gen Ahluwalia.

with UK encompassing goods, services and technology.

For UK, India is an attractive trade partner, given its high proportion of skilled working-age population and high growth rate. This strengthens the possibility of an FTA between UK and India and presents a significant opportunity for India's financial and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sectors. European Union (EU) hopes to soon re-engage with India on negotiations regarding the proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA), he said.

Dr. R. Seetharaman said "India should also continue to strengthen bilateral relationships with GCC in trade and in other segments. GCC - India Bilateral trade is close to \$100bn in 2015-16. In Feb 2016 India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) signed a wide-ranging set of seven agreements, including on cyber security, infrastructure investment and insurance.

GCC Sovereign Wealth funds can look forward to participate in India's infrastructure development. UAE and India have agreed to collaborate closely to identify bottlenecks to trade and new areas of trade with the aim of increasing two way trade by 60 per cent in five years while significantly boosting investment. The new goal set by both sides is to boost trade by 60 per cent by 2020. Qatar and

India can look beyond the buyer-seller relationship to include joint ventures, joint research and development and joint exploration. Indian can invest in the port sector of Qatar. Indian companies can participate in Qatar's infrastructure development pertaining to FIFA World Cup 2022. Qatar and India will enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of cyber security, including prevention of the use of cyberspace in support of terrorism and extremism."

The Institute of Directors hosted a Felicitation Function of Doha Bank CEO, Dr. R. Seetharaman on being recognized by the Government of India with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, the Highest Honor Conferred on Overseas Indians. The felicitation was held on Feb 10 at Hotel The Residency Tower Town Hall, Chennai, India.

Justice Dr AR Lakshmanan, former Judge of Indian Supreme Court and former Chairman of Law Commission of India released a book on Dr Seetharaman titled "In search of truth" a biography on him in Tamil and first copies were received by Poet Laureate Vairamuthu, Judge of Madras High Court Justice PN Prakash and Lt.Gen JS Ahluwalia, President of Institute of Directors. The authors of the book- Prof Aranga Nedumaran and NC Mohandas of Kuwait -were also honored.

Assembly Elections 2017

65% voter turnout in UP, 68% in Uttarakhand

LUCKNOW (TIP): A voter turnout of 66% was recorded in Uttar Pradesh as 69 constituencies went to the polls in the second phase of Assembly elections. In the first phase of polls in the state, 63% of the electorate voted. In Uttarakhand, where elections to 69 seats were being held, 68% of the electorate came out to vote till 5 pm.

Voting began at 7 am in both states on Wednesday. In Uttar Pradesh, there were reports of glitches at some electronic voting machines.

Polling in Uttarakhand's Karnaprayag seat was postponed to March 9 on as Bahujan Samaj Party candidate Kuldeep Singh Kanwasi's died in a road accident on Sunday.

Around 74.2 lakh voters will elect the next government in Uttarakhand. As many as 628 candidates are in the fray. The ruling Congress party, headed by Chief Minister Harish Rawat, is combating anti-incumbency as well as corruption charges. The Bharatiya



Janata Party, on the other hand, hopes to gain from this. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had accused the Congress of turning the "dev bhoomi" into "loot bhoomi".

In Uttar Pradesh, the 67 constituencies that are voting today are

spread across 11 districts. The ruling Samajwadi Party had won 34 of these seats in the last Assembly election. However, the BJP and the BSP have upped the stakes this time, highlighting the state's poor law-and-order situation.

I'm UP's adopted son, won't betray, says PM Modi

HARDOI (TIP): Calling himself the "adopted son" of UP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the future of the state cannot be ensured without ridding it of the SP, BSP and Congress.

Invoking Lord Krishna at an election meeting here to suggest a strong connect between Gujarat and UP, Modi, who represents Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency, said the state was his 'mai-baap' (parents) and he would not desert it.

"Lord Krishna was born in UP and made Gujarat his 'karam bhoomi' (land of work). I was born in Gujarat and UP has adopted me...Uttar Pradesh is my 'mai-baap'. I am not the son who would betray his 'mai-baap'. You have adopted me and it is my duty to work for you," he said in an emotional speech at a poll rally here.

"Vote for a full majority to the BJP government. I promise to show you the ways of all problems you are facing within five years," he said, telling the crowd that all pollsters have predicted BJP getting massive support in the first two phases of polling.

Highlighting the problems faced by the state and its national importance, Modi said poverty would be removed from the country only when it is eradicated from UP. "This is the land of Ganga and Yamuna where the land is most fertile with crores of labourers but poverty still exists here...why is this so? There is nothing wrong with the people here or their capabilities or shortage of resources," he said. "It is the problem of the government's lack of intention (which is responsible for it). SP, BSP and Congress have not thought as to how the state should be developed...all those who



SP-Cong alliance to continue for LS poll

Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad on Thursday said the SP-Congress alliance will continue for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections and that other secular parties would also be part of this coalition

When asked whether BSP will be part of this grand alliance, Azad said they were asking all secular parties to come together and fight the saffron party

"The secular parties suffered a loss during the 2014 elections and BJP gained from this and that is why they were able to win 73 seats in UP. However, if Congress, SP and RLD fight the 2019 Lok Sabha elections together, BJP will only be able to get 10-15 seats in the state," Azad said

'Inexperience' barb: Akhilesh hits back

CM Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday made light of the PM's 'inexperience' barb at him, saying he has learnt to cycle fast so that neither BSP's elephant nor BJP's lotus can come anywhere near the SP

A day after the PM questioned as to how the SP chief could form a coalition with 'those who tried to murder' his father, Akhilesh said Modi's advisers could have done better by telling him to cite a more recent example of Firozabad

"Modiji said in Kannauj that by entering into an alliance with Congress, I have shown inexperience...we have done this so as to remove all doubts about government formation," he said

had been at the helm have only worked to safeguard their vote bank, help them in whichever way possible...the future of UP

cannot be changed till it is freed of SP, BSP and Congress," he said.

Source: PTI

SUPREME COURT GETS FIVE NEW JUDGES

New Delhi, February 17

The Supreme Court on Friday got five new judges, taking its strength to 28, which is still three short of its sanctioned strength of 31.

The new judges were administered oath of office by Chief Justice of India JS Khehar at 10.30 am.

Those elevated to the Supreme Court are Madras High Court Chief Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice Naveen Sinha, Kerala High Court Chief Justice Mohan M Shantanagouder, Chhattisgarh High Court Chief Justice Dipak Gupta and Karnataka High Court Judge S Abdul Nazeer.

The top court—which has almost 60,000 cases pending—had been functioning with only 23 judges. The appointments were stuck due to differences in the collegium as Justice J Chelameswar raised the issue of lack of transparency in its functioning.

President Pranab Mukherjee had signed the Warrants of Appointment for the five judges earlier this week. Four of the judges elevated to the top court were chief justices of state high courts while one was a high court senior judge.

Chief Justice of India JS Khehar, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose and Justice Prafulla Chandra Pant are due to retire later this year.

Chargesheets in just four 1984 riot cases, SIT had taken up 59 cases for reprobe

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Centre-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) has filed chargesheets in only four of the 59 anti-Sikh riot cases taken up for further probe. Almost 3,000 people were killed, most of them in Delhi, in the riots that broke out after the assassination of then PM Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984.

In a status report filed in the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has said while 38 cases have been closed, 17 are under investigation. "It is being ensured that the investigation is carried out expeditiously and thoroughly," the report, filed on the directions of the apex court, says. The MHA, which extended the SIT tenure till August 11 this year, has written to the Delhi Government and the Delhi High Court for designating a single court to hear the cases. The SIT has been notified as a police station with jurisdiction over the entire Delhi.

Also, of the 293 cases taken up for scrutiny, 199 have been closed with preliminary enquiries (PEs) held in 35 cases. "A large number of representations related to these cases were received from the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee and private persons/bodies, which are being examined by the SIT," says the report. The SIT has recorded statements of more than 1,000 witnesses, including one from New York.

Source: The Tribune

24% MPS, MLAS ARE 'TOO POOR' TO PAY TAX

NEW DELHI (TIP): In tax returns filed a year before they were elected, 72 pc BJP and Congress MPs and MLAs claimed they earn less than Rs 10 lakh, according to an analysis of affidavits of 4,848 (of 4,910) lawmakers.

About 75 pc of MPs and MLAs nationwide declared annual income less than Rs 10 lakh. Around 35 pc of lawmakers said their annual income is less than Rs 2.5 lakh while 40 pc declared income between Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh.

As many as 1,141 (24 pc) MPs and MLAs claimed exemption from income tax or have no income at all.

If the annual incomes of family (incomes of spouse and dependents, as declared in their respective tax returns) are added to the incomes of MPs and MLAs, 62 pc legislators' households have an income less than Rs 10 lakh.

Of 1,843 MPs and MLAs with family incomes of more than Rs 10 lakh, 106 declared household assets of less than Rs 1 crore. Only 25 pc (1,236 of 4,848) of MPs and MLAs declared in tax returns that their annual incomes were more than Rs 10 lakh; 35 pc (1,676 of 4,848) declared income less than Rs 2.5 lakh.

While 63 pc Lok Sabha MPs declared annual income of less than Rs 10 lakh, only 13 pc Rajya Sabha MPs declared annual incomes of less than Rs 10 lakh. Among states, over 80 pc of MLAs in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha declared annual incomes less than Rs 10 lakh.



GUEST COMMENT

Early setback for Mr. Trump

President Donald Trump suffered a big political blow on Monday, barely a month into office, when his National Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, resigned over his Russia contacts. Mr. Flynn, a close aide of Mr. Trump, admitted that he had "inadvertently" briefed Vice-President Mike Pence with "incomplete information" about his phone conversation with the Russian ambassador in Washington, Sergey Kislyak. The allegation is that Mr. Flynn discussed American sanctions on Russia with Mr. Kislyak in the waning days of the Obama presidency and told him that Russia should wait till Mr. Trump's inauguration. He later denied speaking of the sanctions, and based on his brief, Mr. Pence publicly defended him. But after the media reported that they had sources vouching that Mr. Flynn had discussed the sanctions with the envoy, it became impossible for the White House to defend him. Technically, Mr. Flynn's calls with the Russian ambassador before he became part of the government are a breach of an 18th century law, the Logan Act, that makes it illegal for private individuals to conduct foreign policy. The context is grave for the Trump administration. There are already allegations that Moscow interfered in the presidential elections in favor of Mr. Trump and that the Russians have some compromising personal information about Mr. Trump.

The resignation, however, is unlikely to contain the scandal. It raises even more questions about administration officials' dealings with Russia and the way the government functions. Mr. Flynn, for example, already faces allegations that he acted with the knowledge of others in Mr. Trump's transition team, and his past Russian links are being probed. If the scandal widens, it could derail Mr. Trump's Russia reset plans. He could have avoided this early embarrassment had he paid more heed to those who questioned his picks for top jobs in the administration. Mr. Flynn, who was fired by President Barack Obama in 2014 as head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, was particularly unpopular in Washington. Mr. Trump's other picks, be it Attorney General Jeff Sessions who faces allegations of racism, or Education Secretary Betsy DeVos who needed the Vice-President to cast a tie-breaking vote in the Senate for confirmation, are other cases in point. Such decisions cannot be unmade now. But Mr. Trump could learn some lessons from the Flynn episode. He could use better judgment when he chooses his next NSA. He should set his house in order and formulate a cohesive approach towards domestic and foreign policy issues, including stating clearly what his Russia policy is. If not, his administration could well be trapped in crisis mode. *(The Hindu)*

THE INDIAN PANORAMA

PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER:

Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja

VICE PRESIDENT: Chitagam Saluja

CHIEF EDITOR: Prof Indrajit S. Saluja

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Bidisha Roy

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CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Vijay Shah -Photo Journalist.

Gunjesh Desai/ Masala Junction

Mohammad Jaffer/ SnapsIndia

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Vaaho Photographers

Mohammad Shahzad, Zia Khan

DISTRIBUTOR: Sukhwinder Singh

CORRESPONDENTS:

SACRAMENTO: Parminder S. Aujla

NEW YORK: Chitagam

FRESNO: Tarlochan Singh

DALLAS: Harjit Dhesi, Amarjit Dhillon

OVERSEAS CORRESPONDENTS

DELHI BUREAU CHIEF:

Ashishpal Singh

CHANDIGARH: Manjit Sidhu

LUDHIANA: A.S. Arora, R.P.Sharma

PATRON: Dr. Navin Mehta

The Indian Panorama

P.O. Box No. 190067, South Richmond

Hill, NY 11419, Tel: 646-247-9458

Email:

editor@theindianpanorama.com

DALLAS EDITION

P.O. BOX 121695,

ARLINGTON, TX 76012

Lovlien Kaurr, VP & Bureau Chief

E-mail tipdallas01@gmail.com

Phone: 646-595-5026

Karan Beri

E-mail

karan@theindianpanorama.com

Phone: 646-431-4064

www.theindianpanorama.com

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AS I SEE IT

Sasikala's new identity: Qaidi Number 9234 in Bengaluru Central Prison



By Harish Khare

Tamil Nadu has a new chief minister. And the new chief minister's name is not VK Sasikala. Even if the new man, Edappadi K Palaniswami happens to be a Sasikala proxy, the Indian democracy has something to celebrate. A judicial intervention has stopped a power grab in its tracks. Instead of lording over the secretariat at Chennai, Ms Sasikala now has to do with the crowded quarters in cell number 9234 in Bengaluru Central Prison. Why this sense of relief?

Over the decades the Indian democracy has indeed become inured to many aberrations and absurdities. After all, we have had the spectacle of a Rabri Devi presiding over Bihar, in circumstances somewhat similar to what prevailed after Jayalalithaa's death. We have the family format now firmly consecrated. The Chautalas, the Badals, the Muftis, the Abdullahs, the Gandhis, the Deve Gowdas, the Karunanidhis, the Lalu Yadavs, and many other aberrations have mocked our democratic pretensions. Yet there was something so blatant, so ignominious in the Sasikala's chief ministerial push that it disturbed our collective equanimity. Rabri Devi was 1997; 20 years later, we do not feel we need to countenance 'a chief minister Sasikala'. Have we not evolved as a polity? Has our democracy not deepened these last two decades? Why was the sense of a cheapening of our democracy felt so acutely, not just in Tamil Nadu but across the land?

Maybe we were offended because Ms Sasikala sought to extend the principle of 'family' to 'household' control. Her only claim to the AIADMK leadership was/is that she was a trusted aide and a confidante of "Amma" and, therefore, was best equipped to carry forward the revolutionary leader's legacy. Suddenly, we felt our democratic sensibilities violated. Irrespective of whatever help and assistance and comfort she provided to Jayalalithaa in the privacy of the Poes Garden, this companionship did not qualify her for a public role. What the country witnessed was how an established political party, with a sizeable presence in the two Houses of Parliament, had got reduced to a den of intrigue and conspiracy. All of a sudden we understood that why our political parties have become so devoid of legitimacy and respectability.

Admittedly, Tamil Nadu is no stranger to this household syndrome. Not long ago, the Karunanidhi household had produced its own script of warring sons, greedy cousins, rapacious daughters, formal and informal wives, each more wayward than the other, each extracting corrosive rent from the formal structure of government. That type of family control and its collateral benefits were deemed 'normal' and acceptable. But the

“ We have the family format now firmly consecrated. The Chautalas, the Badals, the Muftis, the Abdullahs, the Gandhis, the Deve Gowdas, the Karunanidhis, the Lalu Yadavs, and many other aberrations have mocked our democratic pretensions. Yet there was something so blatant, so ignominious in the Sasikala's chief ministerial push that it disturbed our collective equanimity”, says the author



Sasikala - yesterday and today

Photos courtesy PTI

stench could be smelled all the way up in New Delhi. The DMK's first family can claim the dubious honor of blue-printing this family control and command model. The only redeeming aspect of the Karunanidhi clan was that its major honchos got themselves sanctified and certified in the electoral arena.

Despite this familiarity was the family nexus, there was something deeply disagreeable about Sasikala's hijacking of the AIADMK leadership. It is bad enough that political parties stand reduced to family heirlooms, but a profound transformation was inflicted in converting a political outfit into a household arrangement. And it was her chief ministerial putsch that got our democratic goat. As has been pointed out by every sensitive observer, Ms Sasikala has had no experience of public or political life. As part of the Jayalalithaa household she may have domain knowledge of the AIADMK's internal affairs but these limited encounters in intrigue and conspiracy could not make up even remotely for her total unfamiliarity with the rites and obligations of public office. Whatever trust or confidence Jayalalithaa reposed in this domestic impresario could not be deemed as certificates of competence for a chief ministerial innings.

This narrow escape should also make us re-state the meaning and purpose of an electoral 'mandate.' In this time and age of democratic discontent no leader or a political party can claim that a certain number of seats in the Vidhan Sabha/Lok Sabha bestows a license for experiments in authoritarianism. Political parties in India are beyond the reach of most institutional arrangements of accountability. Sasikala could come so close to a total usurpation of the chief ministerial gaddi because as a political party the AIADMK is beyond public scrutiny. Henceforth, this immunity would need to be justified and located in public good.

And, it also follows that just because a 'leader' is successful in leading a political party to victory at the hustings does not necessarily mean that he or she be granted god/goddess-like reverence and obeisance. No chief minister or

prime minister need be elevated beyond the democratic mortal ordinariness. Nor does a victory in an election give to anyone a mandate to subvert the established procedures of decision-making and lawful conduct of authority.

Tamil Nadu is a good example of governing arrangements being reduced to rogue operations. It is no consolation that the DMK and the AIADMK could take turns in allowing their leaders, cadres and activists to inflict unhappiness on the citizens. Time has come to note that such delinquencies go unchallenged only because the bureaucracy becomes an enabling agent. Had the Sasikala chief ministerial gambit come to pass, she would have not had any difficulty in securing the requisite acquiescence of a handful of IAS and IPS officers and their state-level counterparts. This nexus has to be smashed, not just in Tamil Nadu but all over India and in New Delhi as well.

No one can foresee whether the new chief minister of Tamil Nadu would allow himself to be dictated to by the Sasikala-aligned mafia. But it must be devoutly hoped by one and all that trappings and pomp of the office would make the worm turn, sooner than later. Any attempt to govern decently and reasonably would garner its own public goodwill and support - two basic ingredients in good governance. Civil society has found its voice and it must not allow itself to be shut down by the new goons.

Perhaps it is possible to suggest that we are entering an inflection phase in our national political life. In a changing India we seem ready to demand that political arrangements justify themselves in terms larger and nobler than just a will of the 'leader' or the 'demand of the cadres' or the 'internal affairs' of a party. It is inevitable that sooner or later our democratic energy and vibrancy would demand that the political parties become an institution of popular aspiration rather than a handmaiden of private control and command. This Tamil Nadu spasm has painful lessons way above the Deccan plateau.

(The author is the editor-in-chief of Tribune group of newspapers)

Modi's war on civil society; Minority NGOs are specially targeted



By George Abraham

“Indian law stipulates that non-governmental groups register under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) to operate while receiving foreign donations. Increasingly this provision is being used by this government as a political tool to stifle dissenting opinions and to undermine the constitutional rights of its citizens”, says the author.

During the recent confirmation hearing for the job as the U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson was urged by Cory Gardner, the Senator from Colorado to take up the issue of 'Compassion International,' a Christian Charity that operates 580 centers in India for destitute children, with authorities in India.

'Since 2014, Compassion (International) has been the target of multiple coordinated governmental attacks because of its unapologetically Christian belief, but it has been delivering humanitarian services to hundreds of thousands of Indian Children. But due to restrictions by the Indian Government, they have been unable to fund its India operations since February 2016, despite having broken no laws. I believe the State Department should take notice that this ill treatment of Compassion International should stop, and it is a broader pattern by the Government of India, where other NGOs have seen similar problems', Senator Gardner said at the hearing.

Mr. Tillerson responded by saying that he appreciated the Senator bringing this issue during the hearing and assured that he would work with the Senator on the matter once he is confirmed. The Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee Mr. Bob Corker who was said to be actively engaged with the Indian Government over this issue for a year now followed up the exchange with a comment of his own saying that he was grateful for Senator Gardner for raising this issue and further stating that the Chairman Ed Royce of the House International Committee also cares deeply about this matter.

The broad pattern that was referenced by the Senator on Non-Governmental Organizations in India appears to be real and disconcerting to freedom loving people everywhere. What is unraveling in Modi's India today is the systematic banishment of those organizations that do not share his sectarian or environmental vision.

Indian law stipulates that non-governmental groups register under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act (FCRA) to operate while receiving foreign donations. Increasingly this provision is being used by this government as a political tool to stifle dissenting opinions and to undermine the constitutional rights of its citizens.

Civil rights activist Teesta Setalvad, who has fought hard for justice for the 2002 riot victims of Gujarat and accused the Modi Government of allegedly overseeing the violence now stands accused of defrauding funds from 'Unity for Peace & Justice and Sabrang International,' an organization she headed and subsequently lost the FCRA license. Green Peace India's Priya Pillai was removed from a flight en route to London to attend a conference on the charges that she would have damaged India's 'national interest' and further yanking out its FCRA privilege. Even NGOs who were engaged in Rights-based advocacy work such as Amnesty International were not spared.

Cancellation of these FCRA licenses would mean that henceforth these organizations are



forbidden to receive foreign donations, thereby essentially killing their operations. Many of these NGOs solely depends on the foreign funding as Corporations or other entities in India are reluctant to fund them often characterizing them as either politically charged or a risk due to fear of reprisals from the power centers. It should also be noted that with all the wealth creation that occurred in the last three decades or so, the Indian attitude towards charitable giving is still much to be desired!

It is estimated that FCRA licenses of 20,000 NGOs have been canceled. Some of these organizations have come together and issued a joint statement accusing Modi government of using FCRA as a tool of repression. 'Prima facie it appears FCRA license non-renewal is neither legal nor objective and thereby impinging on the rights of the human rights defenders in access to funding, including foreign funding,' the apex human rights watchdog in the country said in a notice.

Apart from the sound and fury created by these exchanges between some of the world renowned NGOs such as Green Peace and Amnesty International and the government, there is also a secret war being waged against Christian NGOs that are engaged in welfare work for the very poor in rural India. Caritas International that works with 350 NGOs across India that boasts a force of 25000 volunteers is another victim to Government's authoritarian agenda and being accused of indulging in anti-India activity.

Undoubtedly, there appears to be an unprecedented, deliberate and systematic effort to dislodge various Christian NGOs from India that may have nothing to do with their performance or violations of any rules. A joint statement from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch said the government was using the FCRA to muzzle NGOs. "The law's use of broad and vague terms such as 'public interest' and 'national interest' have left it open to abuse", read the statement. The 'national interest' government invokes in these cases seems to be an excuse for strengthening the Hindu identity of the country and is egged on

by the Hindutva activists led by RSS.

Almost eighty percent of the Charity work among the poorest of the poor is delivered by Christian NGOs in India often on difficult terrains and under trying conditions. 'Compassion' began operating in 1968 in India, where today its Indian-staffed development centers care for more than 145,000 children. 'Compassion sends about \$50 million per year in humanitarian aid to India. That makes it the single largest contributor of aid for children living in extreme poverty' said Tim Glen, the US communication director for the organization.

Why Modi government is shutting down 'Compassion' and denying vital services to this vulnerable part of the society may be debatable considering that this particular organization or similar entities rarely get involved in policy debates to the discomfiture of the establishment! However, one thing is certain, the politicians and bureaucrats who are formulating these disastrous policies are unaffected in their own bubble and do not seem to give a hoot about the well-being or the future of these children. "In Compassion's case, Prime Minister Modi's Government has since April blocked \$3.5 million in aid to India's most vulnerable children, as far as we can tell, no other reason than that Compassion is founded on and demonstrates Christian values" wrote Compassion president and CEO Santiago Mellado in an article for the 'Hill'. The Ministry of Home Affairs views Christian values as a threat to the 'national interest', particularly if those values are taught to the poor' said Charity's lead Attorney Stephen Oakley.

In December 2016, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce convened a hearing to discuss Compassion International's work in India. The hearing was entitled "American Compassion in India: Government Obstacles". As the Chairman of the India Caucus and champion of the US-India civil nuclear agreement on the House floor, Mr. Royce was well placed in mediating a resolution to the standoff but to no avail. The belligerence from the administration was

finally on full display when a Compassion official was subjected to a 'dressing down' at the Ministry of External Affairs thereby dashing any hope for a positive outcome.

These moves appear to be consistent with the Hindutva philosophy that the Modi government has embraced to advance the saffron agenda that challenges the very idea of India as a multi-cultural and pluralistic society. Modi appears to pay lip service to Gandhiji's idea of India upon his visits abroad but remains silent when Institutions that are supposed to promote those principles come under attack back at home.

While the BJP government is hard at work restricting Christian NGOs from receiving funds from abroad, no such limitations are placed on the Sangh Parivar organizations that collect millions of dollars from Western Democracies. A recently released report from the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) states that "While the Indian government continues to use the FCRA to limit foreign funding for some NGOs, Hindutva supported organizations have never come under the scrutiny of the FCRA. With the new amendment to the FCRA, these foreign-based radical Hindu organizations will be able send funds to India, without restriction, to support hate campaigns. Under the new definition of FCRA, so long as the foreign company's ownership of an Indian entity is within the foreign investment limits prescribed by the government for that sector, the company will be treated as "Indian" for the purposes of FCRA." The latest report on the constitutional and legal challenges faced by religious minorities in India comes after the controversy last March when Indian government denied USCIRF the visas to visit the country. The powerful US religious freedom body that exercises considerable influence on the US Senate and Administration had at that point described the situation in India as "worrisome".

It is also common knowledge that Christian church leaders from the United States have a harder time obtaining a visa to visit their fellow faithful in India or attend a conference while no such restrictions are placed on Indians based on religious affiliations. It is indeed hypocritical to deny a religious conference visa to an American citizen while crying foul about H1B visa program that could take jobs away from American workers!

More than 100 million children in India live without access to proper nutrition or other basic needs. The government does not have well established anti-poverty programs to address this critical issue and relies primarily on foreign aid groups for humanitarian relief. It would not only be irresponsible on the part of the government but immoral to let these children fall through the cracks for the sake of political expediency or in the name of religious bigotry.

(The author is a former Chief Technology Officer of the United Nations and Chairman of the Indian National Overseas Congress, USA)

AVI DANDIYA: A Crusader for environmentally and socially clean India



Avi Dandiya is a restless person who desires to bring about certain fundamental changes in human society, in India, in particular, and elsewhere, in general. He is a terrific social change script writer, with having been noted by no less a person than the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi for his initiatives, particularly the one dealing with environmental cleanliness.

Avi Dandiya, the Dallas-based designer who originally hails from Jaipur, has taken many 'Clean India' initiatives back home to create an environmentally and socially clean India. He came to US in 2000. He lived in New York for a few years then moved to Dallas in 2009. Avi is Founder of Team Clean Jaipur (TCJ), Founder of ScreamsOfSoul.Org and Chief Patron of Be in Humanity Foundation.

Team Clean Jaipur - An initiative launched in December 2012 by Avi, 47, now has more than 44 schools and more than 2 Lakh children as members and growing each day to save environment and Nature. Nobody has taken such initiative before Avi. "You need to teach younger generation how to save environment and Nature from the very early age. Our initiative has changed Jaipur in the last 3 years", claims Avi.

Avi does not have any NGO; he only has ideas. He has also worked actively on rape issues. He challenged Supreme Court for its verdict that a rape victim cannot be named or cannot make public appearance. In 2013, he held a dharna at Jantar Mantar in Delhi with 50 rape victims including an eleven year old. "People should meet them (rape victims) to know their problems. Many of them lost their jobs."



A votary of love among people, he has taken upon himself to spread the message of one humanity across the world

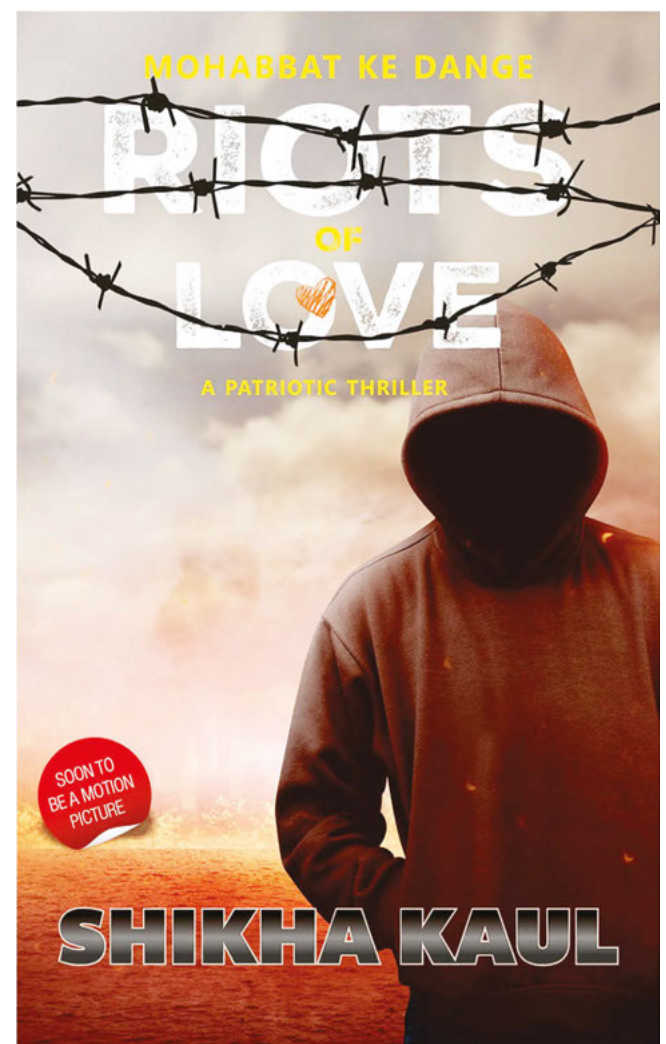
He is also part of another initiative - Hand for Uttarakhand Victims. In its endeavor to work for the betterment of the society, Helping India initiated a project Walk the Talk Cause with the intention to work for Rehabilitation of Victims of Natural Calamity in Uttarakhand, with support of people. Dandiya raised over 5,500 dollars on a crowd funding website and went there with 2 tons relief material in the form of clothes and utensils etc. collected from his friends in the US.

Avi also organized 40 events in just one year to promote communal harmony and gathered people from across the globe. He got along some people without whom the initiative would not have been possible - Rafique Ahmad, Shuaib Khan, Faizan Ahamad, Anjum Singh, Shalani Khan, Shakeel Ansari, Manjit Singh, Ramniet Mukherjee, Shikha Kaul, Arman Khan, Papu Khan Warsi, and Pintun Shah. They launched an online community connect program - Mohabbat Ke Dange (Riots of Love) - to create bond between different religious communities. "In India hatred between Hindus and Muslims went extreme due to political motivation. I want to stop clashes between them. I am working on it through social media and other events." They also published a book 'Riots of Love.' Now Avi wants to make a film on it with Nana Patekar as Director and lead actor.

He wants to keep himself miles away from politics, as he feels that "Politicians don't want to solve any serious issue, like drugs. Their focus is only the vote bank. All political parties in India invited me to join. But I told them my only party is India and symbol is the national flag."

For eradicating drugs in India Avi has a specific solution. He has a special 'Kit' with which parents can easily detect whether their kids are taking drugs. Then they can take specific actions. And he is ready to distribute it in any numbers. "The problem in India is that people do not understand the difference between political and social issues. Politicians take full advantage of that", feels Avi.

Avi strongly believes that NRIs should and must do more for



Inspired by Shikha Kaul. Avi is planning to have a film made on her book Riots of Love, with Nana Patekar in the lead and as director

India. "You need money to do things. If 10 million NRIs donate 1 dollar per month for PM's fund then it becomes 10 million dollar a month. There should be an umbrella organization for that and all Indian associations should come under the umbrella organization. NRIs should support social reform issues."

Screams Of Soul is another initiative by Avi Dandiya along with Ramniet S Mukherjee (Founder HI - Helping India, Gurgaon), Harsh Taneja (Kumaun Bureau Chief, Crime Story Newspaper, UK) Kundan Srivastava (Founder Be In Humanity Foundation) in collaboration with all fellow Indians to be the voice and back-end support of all the victimized women of India. The founding members started this initiative, for they took it as their responsibility to strengthen the children's morals and make the society safe for daughters, mothers and sisters in India.

+91-83759 08441

'MOHABBAT KE DANGE'

#EkDeshEkParivaar
#RiotsOfLove

Let's Finish
HATREDS
in Our Beloved
COUNTRY...

MOHABBAT KE DANGE
EK DESH, EK PARIVAAR

"Aman Ka Paighaam
Hindustan Ke Naam"

The message of Mohabbat ke Dange



150-yr-old wedding dress found after social media appeal

LONDON (TIP): A 150-year-old hand-made antique wedding gown has been retrieved following a social media plea by a distressed bride in Scotland, months after it was lost.

The dress was a family heirloom from the 1870s, which had belonged to the great-great grandmother of Tess Newall from the town of Morham in the East Lothian region of Scotland. It went missing when Kleen Cleaners in Edinburgh closed down permanently as a result of bankruptcy last year. The 29-year-old wore the antique lace gown when she married husband Alfred Newall, 30, in June 2016 and gave it in for dry-cleaning later that year.

A recent Facebook post about the loss of her dress was shared more than 200,000 times across social media. She posted an update this week saying the dress was found "in a crumpled heap" at the closed shop. "My parents received a phone call this afternoon from the landlord of the property where the dry cleaners is, whose nephew had read about the dress," she told BBC.

"He really searched and he found a pile of old lace which he realised was what he thought was the dress. My parents went straight there and were just overjoyed and couldn't believe it was the dress, not cleaned, and still with its ticket," Newall added.

She said she still planned to have the dress cleaned, but probably at a lace specialist in London. She added: "Somewhere where we can't let it out of our sight". (PTI)

Greece evacuates 75,000 to defuse WW II bomb

THESSALONIKI (TIP): A massive evacuation has begun in the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki so experts can defuse a 500-pound unexploded World War II bomb.

An estimated 75,000 people are being evacuated in a nearly 2-kilometer radius today. The bomb, dropped during an air raid in the 1940s, was found this month during work to expand storage tanks under a gas station.

A state of emergency has been declared in the three municipalities involved and about 1,000 police and 300 volunteers helping out. Trains have been halted and church services cancelled. Thessaloniki's Deputy Governor Voula Patoulidou told The Associated Press "it's the first time something like this is happening in Greece."

Residents are being bused to schools, sports halls and cultural centers during the operation. (AP)

Buckingham Palace offers £30,000-a-year to run Queen's Twitter

LONDON (TIP)

Buckingham Palace is offering a 30,000 pounds annual package for a job to run Queen Elizabeth's personal Twitter account, having 2.77 million followers.

A job advertisement has been placed on the Queen's official website seeking a new 'digital communications officer' to join a "fast-paced" and "dynamic" team.

The full-time role will involve managing the Queen's Twitter account and letting the world know about her work and the Royal Family's public role.

Tasks will include writing posts on the Queen's social media accounts including Facebook and YouTube as well as documenting state visits, award ceremonies and Royal engagements, The Sun newspaper reported.

The Royal job comes with a "comprehensive benefits package" and the perks include 15 per cent employer contribution pension scheme as well as training and "personal development".

The online advert reads: "It's knowing your content will be viewed by millions. It's finding new ways to maintain The Queen's presence in the public eye and on the world stage".

"This is what makes working for the



Royal Household exceptional," it said.

According to the advertisement, the right candidate must be university educated with an "eye to the future" and experience of managing websites.

They also need to be "innovative and with creative flair" and have good photography and video skills.

The advertisement, which is posting a maternity cover role, reads: "The reaction to our work is always high-

profile, and so reputation and impact will be at the forefront of all you do".

The Queen also personally tweeted on her 90th birthday in June last year.

She posted: "I am most grateful for the many digital messages of goodwill I have received and would like to thank you all for your kindness. Elizabeth R."

The monarch has 2.77 million followers on Twitter, as well her own website and Youtube channel. (PTI)

Hitler lookalike arrested in Austria

VIENNA (TIP)

Austrian police arrested an Adolf Hitler lookalike on Monday after he was spotted wandering around the Nazi dictator's hometown sporting his infamous moustache and side parting, a spokesman said.

The 25-year-old Austrian national was detained in his flat in the quaint northern town of Braunau am Inn where the Fuehrer was born on April 20, 1889.

The man, who reportedly called himself "Harald Hitler", was arrested under a 1947 Austrian law which made it illegal to promote Nazi ideology.

"It was obvious that he glorified Hitler," police spokesman David Furtner told AFP.

Authorities became aware of his existence after photos emerged on social media of the man posing outside Hitler's



actual birth house, a large yellow corner house in the town's historic centre.

Other snaps showed him standing in a Braunau pub dressed in traditional garb including a loden jacket and lederhosen.

According to local media reports, the copycat introduced himself to patrons as "Harald Hitler" and insisted on being served "Austrian mineral water".

The suspect who offered no resistance during his arrest had moved to Braunau in mid-January, police said.

The case once again puts the spotlight

on Braunau, a town of 17,000 on the German border which has repeatedly made headlines because of its historical ties to Hitler.

Most recently it drew attention after the government in December expropriated the dilapidated building where Hitler came into the world.

The move followed years of bitter wrangling with owner Gerlinde Pommer who had been renting the premises to the interior ministry since the 1970s and refused to sell or carry out essential renovation works.

The government said the seizure had been necessary to stop the building from becoming a pilgrimage site for Nazi sympathisers.

In response, Pommer launched proceedings against the expropriation last month, arguing it was unconstitutional. The court is yet to rule on the case. (AP)

China warns US against fresh naval patrols in South China Sea

BEIJING (TIP)

China's Foreign Ministry on Wednesday warned Washington against challenging its sovereignty, responding to reports the United States was planning fresh naval

patrols in the disputed South China Sea.

On Sunday, the Navy Times reported that US Navy and Pacific Command leaders were considering freedom of navigation patrols in the busy waterway by the San Diego-based Carl Vinson carrier strike group, citing unnamed defence officials.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said tension in the South China Sea had stabilised due to the hard work between China and Southeast Asia countries, and

urged foreign nations including the US to respect this.

"We urge the US not to take any actions that challenge China's sovereignty and security," Geng told a regular news briefing on Wednesday.

The United States last conducted a freedom of navigation operation in the area in October, when it sailed the guided-missile destroyer USS Decatur near the Paracel Islands and within waters claimed by China.

Dave Bennett, a spokesman for Carrier Strike Group One, said it did not discuss future operations of its units. "The Carl Vinson Strike Group is on a regularly scheduled Western Pacific deployment as part of the US Pacific Fleet-led initiative to extend

the command and control functions of the US 3rd Fleet," he said.

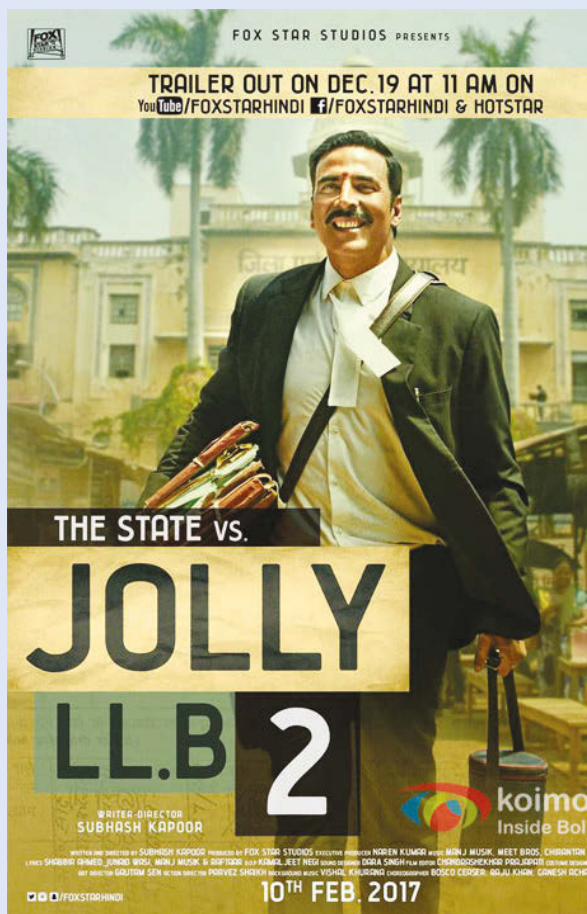
"US Navy aircraft carrier strike groups have patrolled the Indo-Asia-Pacific regularly and routinely for more than 70 years," he said.

China lays claim to almost all of the resource-rich South China Sea, through which about \$5 trillion worth of trade passes each year. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also claim parts of the waters that command strategic sea lanes and have rich fishing grounds, along with oil and gas deposits. The United States has criticised Beijing's construction of man-made islands and build-up of military facilities in the sea, and expressed concern they could be used to restrict free movement. (AP)



MOVIE REVIEW

Jolly LLB 2



CAST: Akshay Kumar, Huma Qureshi, Anu Kapoor, Saurabh Shukla

DIRECTION: Subhash Kapoor

GENRE: Comedy

DURATION: 2 hours 19 minutes

STORY: Jagdishwar Mishra aka Jolly (Akshay) starts out as a prominent lawyer's sidekick in Kanpur. Driven by ambition, he hoodwinks a pregnant widow, Hina Siddique (Sayani Gupta) on the lookout for justice. He lands the murder case of her husband, but when she realises he is a fraud, she kills herself. Leaving Jolly with guilt on his conscience and an unresolved case in his hands. Now, he wants justice more than ever.

REVIEW: On the face of it, apna Jolly is a novice indulging in petty crimes because he knows the loopholes in the law. At home, he is the hen-pecked husband of lush, Pushpa Panday(Huma) who loves whisky, Gucci dresses and her chubby son in that order. But these are just asides and not the main premise of courtroom drama, which in many ways follows the template of the 2013 prequel, Jolly LLB.

Writer-director Subhash Kapoor who has studied India's burgeoning legal system of 'I-will-see-you-in-court', definitely knows as much about the Indian Penal Code as most legal sharks because of his deep study of the subject. While the last instalment dealt with a hit-n-run case, this one deals with the case of mistaken identity of a J & K terrorist. The plot has enough laugh-out-loud situations and emotional outbursts to keep you invested especially in the razor-sharp first half. The film also provides the right dose of action inside and outside the courtroom. With cops playing villains and terrorists changing religions, legal greenhorn Jolly finds himself dodging bullets in Kanpur, Lucknow and Manali(doubling up for Kashmir).

Post interval though, the film hits a pause button at times. The maker tries to pack in too much legal diatribe between Jolly and his adversary, the topnotch, Pramod Mathur(Annu Kapoor), in Judge Tripathy's (Saurabh Shukla, delightful as always) Lucknow courtroom. Their weighty arguments do educate and entertain to some degree. But there are portions that seem contrived.

Akshay changes shades from crooked to straight, like a chameleon. In top-form, he puts up a perfect display of a street-smart lawyer who hasn't read legal tomes but who has instead picked up tips from courtroom corridors to become Jolly LLB. Huma and Annu are also compelling enough. It is the fine display of histrionics by all these refined actors, which makes the movie, worth seeing.

ILEANA D'CRUZ DOES THE 'MACARENA' DANCE WITH FRIEND

Actress Ileana D'Cruz says she couldn't find a 'corny' photograph for Valentine's Day and instead ended up doing the 'Macarena' dance with her best friend. Ileana shared a black and white video of herself along with her friend on Instagram on Tuesday.

The two can be seen sporting unicorn onsies. "I tried to find a corny photo of me holding a heart up or something, but I didn't have any so I decided on this video instead, of my bestie and I dancing to the 'Macarena' in onesies, of course. She's gonna kill me after she sees this Happy Valentine's Day to you!" Ileana captioned the video.

On the work front, Ileana will be seen in Anees Bazmee's upcoming film 'Mubarakan'. The film also stars Anil Kapoor, Arjun Kapoor and Athiya Shetty.

The film is set to hit the screens on July 28. *Source: IANS*



KAREENA KAPOOR: I WANT PEOPLE TO ACCEPT ME IN EVERY PHASE

Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has revealed that though she was wary about her post pregnancy look, she wants her fans to accept her in all phases.

"I did not know what's in store for me post pregnancy. I did not know what this phase would be like. I am lot more energetic, happy and content. I work I am multitasking I enjoy everyday," Kareena said during a 'Facebook chat' last evening with celebrity dietitian Rujuta Diwekar.

"Everything has been changing around in the nine months and it takes time to get back (in shape). I remember telling Rujuta that let's get back to 'Tashan' diet (referring to her 'size zero' look) and she told me we can't do it and we need to do it in progression," the 36-year-old star said.

Actresses are often under scanner for their weight gain post pregnancy and Kareena too was talked about on the social media and called overweight post delivery of her son in December last year.

"How can somebody say I am overweight? We are monitored always. I want people to accept me in every phase," she said.

According to Rujuta, Kareena's diet has been sustainable and she is glowing and looking good.

"I have heard one should not have dairy products but Rujuta thinks otherwise. I have been having a glass



full of milk, yogurt. I have bajra roti with ghee, jaggery, rice twice a day - morning and night or khichdi. It's about eating right kind of food and in right proportion, quantity."

Beside following the diet, Kareena said she walks, which according to her

is the best form of an exercise.

"I do walk. At my house if I sit with my son in my arms he cries and so I walk around the house. He wants me to walk. He is keeping me on my toes. He is preparing me for the future, for the days to come," she said. *Source: PTI*

SOFIA VERGARA CALLS HUSBAND JOE HER 'HINDU MONK'

Modern Family' star Sofia Vergara has revealed that she calls husband Joe Manganiello her 'Hindu monk'.

The 44-year-old actress has shared in an interview her significant other has helped her become a calmer person.

"Joe is very spiritual and deals with everything very well. I call him my Hindu monk. I'm all, 'Aaaaaaaahhhhh' and he's like ... nothing," Sofia said.

The star added that she is grateful to Manganiello for teaching her the art of meditation and he is 'never in a bad mood'.

"Thank goodness he showed me how to meditate... Finding Joe has brought me a lot of peace. A very profound calm," she added.

Source: PTI



BEING A WORKING MOM AN INCREDIBLE CHALLENGE: SCARLETT JOHANSSON

Hollywood star Scarlett Johansson says being a working parent is both incredibly challenging and yet, a gift. And she feels she's "barely holding it together".

"I don't profess to know anything about parenting, anything more than anybody else, (but) being a working mom is an incredible challenge, (and) it's an incredible gift," Johansson told etonline.com.

"I think you always feel a little bit of guilt... If you're at work, you feel like you're missing out on those special moments with your kid. If you're with your kid, you feel like you're not giving enough to your job. It's a balance. I have a lot of huge admiration for working moms. I'm barely, barely holding it together," she added.

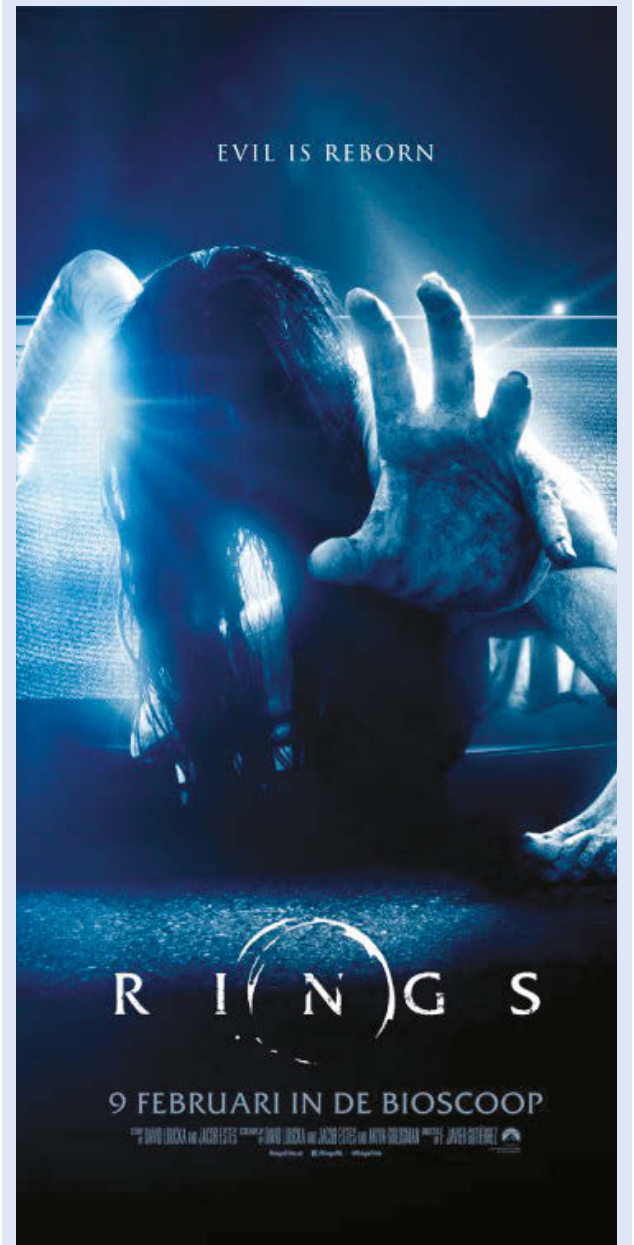
The actress' marriage has been rumoured to be in trouble, and she brought her mother, Melanie Sloan, along as her date to the amfAR Gala here on Wednesday. The 32-year-old star couldn't have thought of anyone "better" to take along to the event. She said: "I really couldn't think of anybody else that I'd rather (have) with me here tonight. (She's) been incredibly inspiring for me in many, many ways, but certainly as a young girl. "She never shielded us from what was going on in the zeitgeist in culture. She always made us aware, you know, socially aware. She always encouraged us to be politically and socially active, so I couldn't imagine a better date tonight."

Source: IANS



MOVIE REVIEW

RINGS



CAST: Matilda Anna Ingrid Lutz, Alex Roe, Johnny Galecki

DIRECTION: F. Javier Gutiérrez

GENRE: Horror

DURATION: 1 hour 47 minutes

STORY: In order to save her boyfriend, a woman called Julia watches the 'cursed videotape' that kills its viewer within the next seven days. As per the tape's rule, Julia gets a phone call soon after warning the same. Turns out, what Julia sees is a never-seen-before extended version of the footage. What's the twist?

REVIEW: The third instalment of the The Ring horror franchise, based on the famous Japanese films is less of a sequel and more of a remake. The ghostly girl (Samara) with long dark hair, who crawls out of the television, is not scary anymore. You want to shave her head and tell her that Phoebe's artwork in 'Friends' (read Gladys) was more terrifying. Nothing about Samara intrigues you so it's time the makers let her evil character rest in peace. You'd rather see her hilarious parody in the Scary Movies.

What makes this outing the worse among its series so far is its imitation of the 'Final Destination' death pace and sensibility. People die in various ways before you bother to care and the uninspiring investigation that follows fails to arouse interest. At least the 2002 Naomi Watts film kept the mystery alive till the end, involving you in its story. Its eerie silence and unhurried proceedings allowed fear to creep in.

The 2005 sequel was tolerable too if not as effective but the latest film is a total damp squib. The lead actors meet obscure characters, who help decode Julia's signs as people die. The plot is clichéd and unnecessarily complicated. By the time the protagonists solve the puzzle, you lose interest in their existence or consecutive death. There seems to be a serious dearth of scares as not a single scene manages to leave you shaken.

If you love horror as a genre, skip this one and revisit the 2002 film instead or perhaps, watch Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh's latest MSG film. That's bound to give you the creeps.

Indians in the United States of America: Significant Achievers



By Zafar Iqbal, PhD

Dr. Zafar Iqbal describes here the immense talent of Indian Americans who have made their mark in different fields and have made significant achievements which make them outstanding and an embellishment to the US; at the same time, doing India proud.

India gained independence from British raj on August 15, 1947 and adapted a constitution becoming a Republic on 26th January 1950. On this occasion of 68th Republic Day, we can very proudly say that Indians have been contributing significantly in the building and progress of their homeland and adapted land-USA. With a population of about 3.8 million (either born in India or reported Indian ancestry or race), they are among the wealthiest communities in the US, with a median annual household income of \$88,000 compared with the national median of \$49,800. They are among the most highly educated racial or ethnic groups in the U.S. According to the data from the American Community Survey, 40.6% of Indian Americans 25 and older have graduate or professional degrees, and 32.3% have bachelor's degrees; an additional 10.4% have some college education. constitute ten percent of all medical students in America.

Indian migrants began arriving in the United States in the beginning of 19th century. In 1813, a group of daring Indians established a Ghadar Party with dedicated patriots like Lala Har Dayal, Sohan Singh Bhakna, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Abdul Hafiz Mohamed Barakatullah, and Rashbehari Bose. They started a weekly Urdu newspaper "Ghadar" launching Ghadar Movement seeking India's independence from Britain. Many members of this Party were later executed by the British Sarkar on their visit to India. The Washington Chapter of the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) launched centenary celebration of the Ghadar Movement that was followed up by multiple events at different parts of the USA. I had the great honor and privilege to be the president of GOPIO at that time.

Indian Americans are becoming increasingly visible in US politics, journalism, academia, or business. In the field of science and technology, Indians have become back bone of recent inventions. Two Indians have been awarded Nobel Prize for their contributions to science and medicine. They are: Hargovind Khorana Nobel Prize for Physiology & Medicine in 1968, and S. Chandrashekar Nobel Prize for Physics in 1983.

Indian doctors, numbering more than 35,000, constitute over five percent of all physicians in USA and about 36% of scientists at NASA are Indians.

Indians with significant achievements as academicians, inventors, and high-level administrators include: Vinod Khosla (co-founder of Sun Microsystems), Vinod Dham (creator of the Pentium chip), Sabeer Bhatia (founder and creator of Hotmail), Arun Netravalli (president of AT & T-Bell Labs), Rajiv Gupta (GM of Hewlett Packard), Sanjay Tejwrika (Microsoft Testing Director of Windows 2000), Victor Menezes, Rajat Gupta, and Rana Talwar (Chief Executives of CitiBank, Mckensey & Stanchart), Rakesh Khurana (Dean of Harvard College), Jamshed Bharucha, (President Emeritus of Cooper Union previously Dean of Arts & Sciences at Dartmouth College and Provost at Tufts University), Vijay K. Dhir (Dean of the UCLA Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science), Dinesh D'Souza (President



Amartya sen



Ami Bera



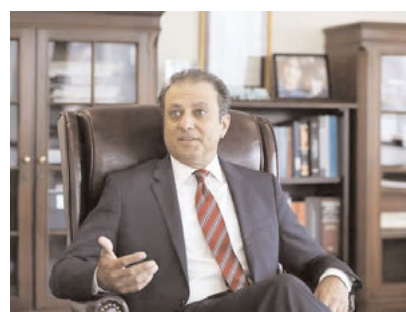
Fareed Zakaria



Indra Nooyi



nikki-haley



Preet Bharara



Satya Nadella

Indian Americans today are on top in various fields, be it medicine, economics, technology, public life or any other field. They are everywhere and kissing eminence.

of The King's College, New York), Anjali Jain (Executive Director of CampusEAI Consortium), Dipak C. Jain (former Dean of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University), Vistasp Karbhari (President of the University of Texas at Arlington), Pramod P. Khargonekar (Vice Chancellor of Research, University of California, Irvine), Renu Khator Chancellor of the University of Houston System and President of the University of Houston), Pradeep Khosla (Chancellor of the University of California, San Diego), Vijay Kumar (Associate Dean of School of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Pennsylvania), Geeta Menon (Dean of the Undergraduate College at New York University Stern School of Business), Nitin Nohria (Dean of Harvard Business School), Sethuraman Panchanathan (Executive Vice President and Chief Research and Innovation Officer at Arizona State University), Michael Rao (President of Virginia Commonwealth University), Beheruz Sethna (President of the University of West Georgia), Dr. Paul Shrivastava (Distinguished Professor and Director, David O'Brien Centre for Sustainable Enterprise, Concordia University), Molly Easo Smith (President of Manhattanville College), Kumble R. Subbaswamy (Chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst), Subra Suresh (President of Carnegie Mellon University), Satish K. Tripathi (President of University at Buffalo).

Other academicians of international fame are: Manjul Bhargava (Professor of mathematics at Princeton University and winner of Fields Medal, 2014), Abhijit Banerjee (Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics at MIT), Kaushik Basu (Chief Economist of the World Bank), Jagdish Natwarlal Bhagwati (Professor of Economics at Columbia University), Raghuram Rajan, Professor University of Chicago and former Governor of Reserve Bank of India), (Salman Akhtar, Distinguished Professor at the Jefferson Medical College), Muzaffar Alam and C. M. Nain (Professors in

South Asian Languages & Civilizations at the University of Chicago), Akhil Amar (Professor of Law at Yale Law School).

Indra Nooyi (Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of PepsiCo), Satya Nadella (CEO of Microsoft), Sundar Pichai (CEO of Google), Ajay Banga (President and CEO of MasterCard), Rono Dutta (former President of United Airlines; Chairman of Air Sahara), Rajiv Gupta (General Manager of Hewlett Packard), Anshu Jain (former co-CEO of Deutsche Bank), Sanjay Jha (CEO of Global Foundries and former CEO of Motorola Mobile Devices), Vyomesh Joshi (Executive Vice President of Imaging and Printing Group, Hewlett-Packard Company), Thomas Kurian (President of Product Development at Oracle Corporation), Victor Menezes (Chairman of Clearing House Association; former Chairman and CEO of Citibank), Satya Nadella (CEO of Microsoft), Ranji H. Nagaswami (Chief Investment Officer for AllianceBernstein Fund Investors), Shantanu Narayen (CEO of Adobe Systems), Dinesh Paliwal (Chairman and CEO of Harman International), Arati Prabhakar (Director of DARPA), Rajeev Suri (CEO of Nokia), Padmasree Warrior (CTO of Cisco Systems), Rakesh Gangwal (former CEO and Chairman of US Airways Group), Rajat Gupta (former Managing Director of McKinsey & Company), Vikram Pandit (former CEO of Citigroup), Kanwal Rekhi (former EVP and CTO of Novell), Deven Sharma (former president of Standard & Poor's), Salman 'Sal' Khan (founder of Khan Academy, a free online education platform), Amar Bose (founder and chairman of Bose Corporation), Bharat Desai (co-founder and chairman of Syntel), Sant Singh Chatwal owner of the Bombay Palace chain of restaurants and Hampshire Hotels & Resorts), Vinod Khosla (founder of Khosla Ventures; co-founder of SUN Microsystems), Vinod Dham (designed the Intel Pentium Chip Processor).

Indians are being recognized in the field of arts and entertainment. Some of the recent successes include: Nina Davuluri, Miss America 2014; M. Night Shyamalan

(Hollywood director), Mira Nair (director and producer), Kal Penn (actor), Omi Vaidya (actor), Sheetal Sheth (actress), Waris Ahluwalia (fashion designer), Aziz Ansari, Russell Peters, Aman Ali, Russell Peters, Rajiv Satyal, Anish Shah, Azhar Usman ((actors and comedians). Norah Jones (singer and winner of multiple Grammy Awards).

Fareed Zakaria (columnist for Time magazine and host of Fareed Zakaria GPS on CNN), Zubin Mehta (former conductor, New York Philharmonic Orchestra; receiver of a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame), Zarin Mehta (executive director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra), Nicki Minaj (pop singer and rapper), Nina Davuluri (crowned Miss America 2014).

Kiran Desai (winner of the 2006 Man Booker Prize), Siddhartha Mukherjee (physician and 2011 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction), Anita Desai (novelist; shortlisted for the Booker prize three times), Vikram Seth (poet, novelist, travel writer), Uday Singh Taunque (first Indian American to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom; posthumously awarded Bronze Star and Purple Heart gallantry awards),

Indians have started making their mark in political and administration both at local and national level. Notables include: Kamala Harris (United States Senator from California), Nikki Haley (former Governor of South Carolina and now US Ambassador to the UN), Kumar P. Barve (majority leader Maryland House of Delegates), Mervyn M. Dymally (41st Lieutenant Governor of California, 1975-1979; member of the U.S. House of Representatives (1981-1993), Kashmir Gill (mayor of Yuba City, California, Faz Husain (first native of India to win elected office in Michigan), Bobby Jindal (former Governor of Louisiana; Vice Chairman of the Republican Governors Association), Aruna Miller (member of the Maryland House of Delegates), Ami Bera (U.S. Representative for California's 7th congressional district), Raja Krishnamoorthi (U.S. Representative for

contd on page 20

IMMIGRATION UNDER TRUMP ADMINISTRATION: EXECUTIVE ORDERS UNDER REVIEW



By Pallavi Ahluwalia, Esq.

In less than a month in the Oval Office, President Trump has issued few Executive Orders (EO), each of which has potential to stir extreme vetting, racial profiling and deportations. We briefly discuss some of the EO below and their immediate impact.

Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States: This EO placed a 90-day ban on the issuance of US visas and to entry into the United States of any one who is a national of one of the seven

"designated" countries - Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen, suspended the US Refugee Admission Program for 120 days (for Syrian refugees, the ban was indefinite), suspended visa interview waiver program and extensive review by Department of Homeland Security of any individual, from their country to determine their visa, admission or other immigration benefit and that they are not threat to security or public safety.

Current Impact: The impact of this EO is currently neutered. The US District Judge James Robart granted Temporary Restraining Order on a "nationwide basis" and the Ninth Circuit unanimously refused to reinstate EO. If Supreme Court takes up the case, it will be a split decision and Ninth Circuit's decision would stand. But is believed the Trump administration may reintroduce

this EO with some changes in it. Nevertheless, this EO created climate of chaos and confusion and clearly showcased discrimination based on religion. We hope this stays on hold permanently.

Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States: This EO directs the Executive departments and its agencies to employ all lawful means, to enforce the immigration laws of the United States. It sets aliens on priority who have criminal backgrounds, committed crimes, abused public taxpayer benefits or are a national security concern. Federal grants will not be given to sanctuary cities. The Department of Homeland Security will deputize state and local law enforcement officers to perform functions of federal immigration agents.

Current Impact: This EO may cause greatest danger to the unauthorized

immigrants. The local police will transform in to Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) officers. The "enforcement priority" will effectively include all the unauthorized immigrants in the United States, irrespective of their criminal record. An instance of this was witnessed on February 14, 2017, when ICE agents near Seattle, WA, detained and threatened to deport a 23 years old immigrant who is currently under the DACA program with no criminal background. This arrest appears to be arbitrary and denial of administrative and constitutional rights. The past week also observed raids by ICE agents throughout the country and detaining people with criminal background.

We are hopeful checks and balances are placed on the President's power and the Government policies adhere to the American values!

Trump's H-1B Visa Bill spooks India's IT companies

It may not be a good time to be a non-American in Trump's America.

NEW YORK (TIP):

India, the largest exporter of IT workforce to the US, could be jolted if the H-1B Visa Bill, which was tabled in the House of Representatives, becomes a law.

The country's biggest IT companies, TCS, Infosys, Wipro and others, that enjoy significant cost advantages by sending Indian engineers to the US, are likely to be hit if the minimum salary cap for H-1B visas is raised to \$130,000 from its current \$60,000.

In anticipation of the eventuality, India's top four IT company stocks plunged on the Bombay Stock Exchange today. Mashable India reached out to these companies but they declined comment.

Meanwhile, NASSCOM, the industry body

for software and services companies, was not pleased with the development. "The bill does not treat all IT service companies with H-1B visa holders equally, and the provisions are biased against H-1B dependent companies," it said in a statement.

"The bill does nothing to address the underlying shortage of STEM-skilled workers, which has led all companies to have a calibrated strategy of hiring locally and bridging the skills gap by bringing skilled workers on non-immigrant visas including H-1Bs," it added.

The US issued more than a million visas to Indians in 2016, which accounted for 70% of all H1B visas issued worldwide.

India happens to be the largest receiver of

H-1B visas in the world. The US issued more than a million visas to Indians in 2016, which accounted for 70% of all H1B visas issued worldwide, according to news reports.

IT analysts reckon that the new law, if and when it passes, will have far-reaching implications not only on Indian companies but on the US economy as well since most US-based Fortune 500 organizations are "deeply invested and dependent" on Indian IT services providers.

"Skilled foreign workers who come to work in the US by the route of H1-B visas don't just directly supplement the US IT industry with specialized skillsets, they also contribute indirectly to other industries in the US. Often H1-B workers bring their families along and

thereby bring additional business for other industries like real estate, banking, hospitality to name a few. The effects of this announcement will impact the GDP and the overall business economy and growth of US," says Sanchit Vir Gogia, chief analyst at Greyhound Research

While the final outcome of the Bill is yet to be known, NASSCOM said it will continue to engage with the US administration and legislators both directly and through the Government of India. The focus would be on highlighting the value contribution of India's IT sector as a "net creator" of jobs in the US.

FUN FACT: The CEOs of both Microsoft and Google are of Indian origin.



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YOU MATTER!! YOUR IMMIGRATION MATTERS!!



FATE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP RESTS ON HOME DÉCOR?

He wants minimalism. She wants luxe' glam. He wants parties, she wants a quiet home. And never the twain shall meet. Newsflash: the fate of your relationship can rest on your home decor. According to a study by Lindsay Graham, a psychology graduate student in the College of Liberal Arts, a couple's house reveals a surprising amount of information about the state of their relationship. In her study she says: "Home environments are very important to people, meeting both their practical and psychological needs. One common challenge that many new couples face is deciding how to integrate their individual possessions and preferences into a shared space where they can both feel at home."

Get some love in

Home is where a couple meets their psychological, emotional and physical needs - a place where they make love and go to war. Coffee-tables, kitchen corners, lounge sofas become more than decor items and transform into relationship builders. Relationship expert Nisha Khanna says, "How you do up your space as a couple is also an important milestone of your relationship. The biggest tip for creating love in the bedroom is to leave your smartphone out of the bedroom."

According to Professor Jay Lebow, marital therapist and researcher at Northwestern University in Chicago, things like fighting over lamps and rugs can make one person feel less adequate. Psychologist Dr Linda Papadopoulos says, "A couple's home becomes a place of shared identity.



We're no longer decorating and living for just ourselves, me is now we and this is reflected in the way we live."

Sharing spaces

From the time you move in, there are practical concerns like sharing cupboards and negotiating wardrobe space. Then there's the stuff like deciding where the art print goes. Papadopoulos says, "Each decision is evidence of what you share, how you compromise and what you hope to build together."

Interior designer-turned-sexologist Dawn Michael suggests turning the lights down, playing some soothing music, and painting your room deep and dark. Why? "Love is a mood. You can change your mood with decorating it right. Use sexy products

or design material, have dim lights and candles, create an ambience for closeness," she explains. Her advice: Keep the kids' room separate from yours.

Love nest 101

- Get a coffee table. Let this be the space where you cosy up with your cuppa.
- Dim the lights. Install dimmer lights - it sets the mood for love.
- Get rid of clutter. Clutter distracts partners from dealing with real relationship issues.
- Think neutral colours. Colour on walls should be neutral as it makes you more romantic.
- Get a red couch. And get on it for some couple couch therapy.

Source: TOI



ACNE-CAUSING HABITS YOU SHOULD STOP

Not washing your face properly : It is important to use good medicated cleansers twice a day, but hard cleansers and washing too frequently can make the acne worse and face drier.

Using dairy products on a daily basis : Dairy products have abundance of hormone IGF 1 (Insulin-like growth factor 1) which is specially found in milk. It can cause inflammation in humans. Milk causes insulin spike in humans that makes the liver produce IGF 1. This can cause excess sebum production causing more clogged pores and thus, the acne. Try to reduce dairy product consumption.

Using smartphones too much : Smartphones are one of the common causes of breakouts. This is because when your phone is placed on skin while talking to someone, you press bacteria into your pores and ultimately, get pimples. So, use ear phones to keep a check on breakouts.

Applying body cream on face : Many body care products can give you acne on your face. Some people apply body products on their face to get some more beauty benefits. But it is better not to use body products on face. Feel free to use face cream on dry patch of body, but using a body lotion on your face could cause acne.

This could specifically be the case if your skin is sensitive and the facial lotion you generally use is oil and fragrance-free, and then you reach for a scented and thicker body lotion in the hope to achieve the same hydrating results.

Diet issue : Sweet food items may not always be good for skin. Diet rich in sugar or food with high glycemic index can be a cause for acne. Avoid sugar, carbohydrate-rich food and starch for acne-free skin. Eat small meals with diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

Here's how you can choose your night cream smartly

Night time is when one's skin gets the maximum rest, repair and time to rejuvenate. So always remember to wash and deep cleanse your face before you apply your night time moisturiser for the best results. But how do you decide what constitutes a good moisturiser? Divya Mehta, co-founder of skincare brand Epique, shares tips to keep in mind when deciding on a good night cream:

It doesn't need to have the word 'night' to describe it : The difference between a night cream and any other is that it doesn't have UV protection or any sunscreen ingredients in it. Hence you don't necessarily need to use a cream that uses the word 'night' to define it. So long as the cream does not contain sunscreen, works well with your skin type and is rich in active ingredients, you are good to go!

High concentration of active ingredients : Look for components such as boswellia serrata, coffee bean extract, centella asiatica, andrographis, liquorice, coleus forskolin, horse chestnut, oils, vitamins like E and C and other antioxidants to name a few (in your night creme). In addition to these, actives need to be highly concentrated to address specific mature skin issues.

Deep penetrating and light weight in texture : Ensure the cream texture is light, penetrates deeply and is comfortable for your skin. Try avoiding creams that sit on the skin's surface and don't get absorbed well, causing the skin to feel oily.

Choose a night cream that is compatible with your skin type : This step may require some trial and error. Whether your skin is oily, dry or combination, there is a perfect solution for you out there. Find a moisturizer that is compatible with your specific skin type. Try testing the cream on the back of your hand before you buy it. The product should sink into your skin easily and leave a dewy look. That is a good sign that this cream may work well for you.

FOOD

FISH BIRYANI

INGREDIENTS

1 kilograms fish fillets, 1 cup ghee, 4 teaspoon powdered, turmeric, 5 chopped onion, 2 teaspoon coriander powder, 6 cloves, 1 cup beaten yoghurt (curd), 2 tablespoon sultanas, 5 cup basmati rice, 1 teaspoon salt, 5 tablespoon cashews, 4 teaspoon Red chilli powder, 2 inches cinnamon, 5 chopped tomato, 3 litre water

For Marination

1 teaspoon powdered turmeric
2 ml lemon juice

METHOD

Mix the marinade ingredients, lemon juice and turmeric and rub into fish fillets. Keep aside for about 30 to 45 minutes.

Heat 2 tablespoon ghee in a pan. Saute rice for about 10 to 15 minutes. Add 2 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon turmeric powder and 3 litres of warm water. Mix gently and bring to a boil.

Lower the flame and cover pan with a lid and cook till water is absorbed. Heat 1 cup of ghee. Fry the sultanasa and remove. Add cashewnuts and fry till golden brown. Fry onions in the same pan till golden brown. Add chilli powder, coriander powder and 3 teaspoon turmeric powder. Add 8 to 10



teaspoon of water and the whole spices. Mix well.

Fry for about 3 to 4 minutes, stirring all the time. Add the fish pieces along with 2 teaspoon salt and saute for about 5 to 8 minutes. Pour 1 cup of water and bring it to a boil. Add tomatoes and curd. Reduce heat and cook till gravy thickens. Grease a heavy bottomed pan with 1 tablespoon ghee. Spread the fish pieces, rice and reserved sultanasa and cashewnuts in layers. Repeat until the topmost layer is rice garnished with sultanasa and cashewnuts. Cover pan and cook over low heat for 5 to 8 minutes. Remove and serve hot, garnish with fried onions or spring onions.

EXERCISE IN PREGNANCY MAY HELP OBESE WOMEN AVOID COMPLICATIONS

Exercise may be an efficient way for obese pregnant women to lower their risk of diabetes, dangerously high blood pressure and other complications, research suggests.

"The study suggests that a prenatal exercise-based intervention leads to both decreased costs and improved outcomes in obese women," said Leah Savitsky, a medical student at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland who led the study.

As reported at the 37th annual meeting of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine in San Diego, California, Savitsky and her team analyzed previously published research on the effect of exercise on pregnant women with a body mass index (BMI) of at least 30.

The normal range for BMI - a ratio of weight to height - is 18.5 to 24.9; a BMI of 30 or more indicates obesity. (A BMI calculator is here, on the website of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Based on their analyses of those earlier studies, the researchers estimated the benefit of exercise for women who are obese at the start of their pregnancy.

They calculated that for every one million such women, there would be 38,176 cases of a dangerous pregnancy-related blood pressure problem known as preeclampsia among those who exercised, compared to 113,000 cases among those who didn't exercise.

Exercise would also be linked to a decrease in so-called gestational diabetes, with a rate of 195,520 per million among exercisers compared to 305,500 among non-



exercisers, according to their calculations.

Likewise, they estimated, for every million obese pregnant women the preterm birth rate would drop from 105,059 to 90,923 with exercise, the maternal death rate would fall from 90 to 70 and the neonatal death rate would drop from 1,932 to 1,795.

Based on a cost-effectiveness threshold of \$100,000 per quality-adjusted life year, an exercise intervention could save money as long as expenses are held to just under \$3,000. The effects of exercise may be even more beneficial than the study suggests, Savitsky said. "This study did not consider additional downstream benefits on control of weight beyond pregnancy as well as the downstream potential benefits on hypertension and diabetes," she told Reuters Health by email.

Women who are not obese may benefit as well. The researchers applied their model to women with a normal BMI of 18.5 - 24.9

and found similar improvements in outcomes among those who exercise, although the cost-effectiveness thresholds were lower.

"With the obesity epidemic looming in our society, perhaps we should be turning our attention to prevention of disease. It does not seem to be too late even for obese pregnant women to engage in lifestyle change that may substantially reduce health care costs," Mottola told Reuters Health by email.

The current study was not designed to develop specific exercise guidelines for obese pregnant women; these women should consult their obstetricians for guidance. In the meantime, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists advises obese pregnant women to "start with low-intensity, short periods of exercise and gradually increase as able."

Source: Reuters

SODA, PIZZA AND SALTY FOOD UP LIVER DISEASE IN KIDS: STUDY

Children who regularly intake fructose present in soda, sweetened beverages, pizza and salty food, biscuits, yogurt may be prone to liver disease, researchers warn.

According to a study, led by researchers from Bambino Gesù Hospital in Italy, dietary fructose increases serum uric acid concentrations.

Both uric acid concentration and fructose consumption may be high in individuals with non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) -- a condition where extra fat is accumulated in liver cells in people who drink little or no alcohol.

It is estimated to affect up to 30 per cent of the general population in Western countries and up to 9.6 per cent of all children and 38 per cent of obese children across a spectrum of liver disease, including NASH (defined as steatosis, hepatocyte ballooning and inflammation).

Although NASH is a less aggressive form of NAFLD, it can progress to severe fibrosis and cirrhosis, with development of hepatocellular carcinoma in adults.

The findings suggested that fructose consumption was independently associated with high uric acid, which occurred more frequently in patients with NASH than in not-NASH patients.

"It is plausible that dietary fructose intake and uric acid concentrations are potential risk factors for liver disease progression in NAFLD," said Valerio Nobili from Bambino Gesù Hospital in Italy.

EAT LESS TO LIVE MORE, FINDS STUDY

Finally, an answer to the question 'How to live a long life?' has been found. At least, that's what it seems from a recent research.

There's a multi-billion-dollar industry devoted to products that fight signs of ageing, but moisturizers only go skin deep. Ageing occurs deeper, at a cellular level, and scientists have found that eating less can slow this cellular process.

Recent research published in Molecular and Cellular Proteomics offers a glimpse into how cutting calories impacts ageing inside a cell. The researchers found that when ribosomes, the cell's protein makers, slow down, the ageing process slows too. The decreased speed lowers production but gives ribosomes extra time to repair themselves.

"The ribosome is a very complex machine, sort of like your car, and it periodically needs maintenance to replace the parts that wear out the fastest," said Brigham Young University biochemistry professor and senior author John Price. "When tyres wear out, you don't throw the whole car away and buy new ones. It's cheaper to replace the tyres."

So what causes ribosome production to slow down in the first place? At least for mice: reduced calorie consumption.

Price and his fellow researchers observed two groups of mice. One group had unlimited access to food while the other was restricted to consume 35 percent fewer calories, though still receiving all the necessary nutrients for survival.

"When you restrict calorie consumption, there's almost a linear increase in lifespan," Price said. "We inferred that the restriction caused real biochemical changes that slowed down the rate of ageing."

Price's team isn't the first to make the connection between cut calories and lifespan, but they were the first to show that general protein synthesis slows down and to recognize the ribosome's role in facilitating those youth-extending biochemical changes.

Brain unable to form new memories when you're sleep deprived

Alert! Your memories are in danger of being lost if you are sleep deprived, suggests a study.

Studying mice, scientists at Johns Hopkins have fortified evidence that a key purpose of sleep is to recalibrate the brain cells responsible for learning and memory so the animals can "solidify" lessons learned and use them when they awaken -- in the case of nocturnal mice, the next evening.

A summary of their study appears online in the journal Science.

The researchers, all of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, also report they have discovered several important molecules that govern the recalibration process, as well as evidence that sleep deprivation, sleep disorders and sleeping pills can interfere with the process. "Our findings solidly advance the idea that the mouse and presumably the human brain can only store so much information before it needs to recalibrate," says Graham Diering, Ph.D., the postdoctoral fellow who led the study. "Without sleep and the recalibration that goes on during sleep, memories are in danger of being lost."



Diering explains that current scientific understanding of learning suggests that information is "contained" in synapses, the connections among neurons through which they communicate.

On the "sending side" of a synapse, signaling molecules called neurotransmitters are released by a brain cell as it "fires"; on the "receiving side," those molecules are captured by receptor proteins, which pass the "message" along. If a cell receives enough input through its synapses, it fires off its own neurotransmitters. More specifically,

experiments in animals have shown that the synapses on the receiving neuron can be toggled by adding or removing receptor proteins, thereby strengthening or weakening them and allowing the receiving neuron to receive more or less input from nearby signaling neurons.

Scientists believe memories are encoded through these synaptic changes. But there's a hitch in this thinking, Diering says, because while mice and other mammals are awake, the synapses throughout its brain tend to be strengthened, not weakened, pushing the system toward its maximum load. When neurons are "maxed out" and constantly firing, they lose their capacity to convey information, stymieing learning and memory. One possible reason that neurons don't usually max out in a process that has been well-studied in lab-grown neurons but not in living animals, asleep or awake. Known as homeostatic scaling down, it is a process that uniformly weakens synapses in a neural network by a small percentage, leaving their relative strengths intact and allowing learning and memory formation to continue.

Source: ANI



WhatsApp

WHATSAPP TO SOON ROLL OUT SNAPCHAT LIKE STORIES FEATURE IN IOS

Facebook-owned WhatsApp might be planning to soon add a new feature that might be very similar to Snapchar's Stories feature.

However, the feature will come to iOS (for iPhones) first and then later might be rolled out to Android. This means that iPhone users will be able to put forth photos and videos in their Status with their contacts if the latest leaked image is believed to be true. The feature is similar to Snapchat Stories, which will disappear after 24 hours.

WABetaInfo tweeted an alleged image of the upcoming feature on iOS along with the text that read, "Status introduction text updated in WhatsApp beta for iOS 2.17.4+." The feature has been on the cards since November 2016.

The image that was leaked also shows that the new feature will come with privacy settings as well and there is a high possibility that the update will be soon rolled out.

Facebook has been emulating Snapchat features and the new speculative feature comes as no surprise. Earlier reports also indicate that WhatsApp will soon allow users to track friends and follow them. Another new feature is also on cards which will notify users once their contacts change their status. Users will also be able to comment on the new status.

Other reports also indicate that the company might be working on a feature that helps users edit sent messages or revoke them altogether.

Facebook introduces 'security key' to protect data

To minimise data breach, Facebook has added a new login option with 'security keys' that requires a user to enter a special security code from their phone in addition to the password when they login from a new browser.

According to a Facebook blog post, though most people get security code for login approvals from a text message (SMS) or by Facebook app to generate the code directly on their phones, SMS is not always reliable and having a phone back-up may not work well for them.

"You can register a physical security key to your account so that the next time you log in after enabling login approvals, you will simply tap a small hardware device that goes in the USB drive of your computer," said Brad Hill, security engineer at Facebook.

Security keys can be purchased through companies like Yubico, a key manufacturing firm, and the keys support the open Universal 2nd Factor (U2F) -- an authentication technology initially developed by Google -- standard hosted by the 'Fast Identity Online' (FIDO) Alliance.

FIDO Alliance is a group of big corporations that collaborate on ways to make sign-ins safer and easier online.

According to a report in Fortune, "a security key ensures that only the person in possession of it (and password) can access accounts so protected," the report noted.

Users can set up a security key to protect their account by buying one online at an e-commerce shop and then go to the Facebook 'settings'.

Click on 'security', where they can see an option for 'security keys'.

Simply select 'add key' and the account is secured. To add a security key from computer, users need to use the latest versions of Chrome or Opera browser. However, security keys have their own limitations currently.

SOUND WAVES COULD TAKE A TSUNAMI DOWN A FEW NOTCHES

Acoustic-gravity waves would exchange energy with destructive water wave

A tsunami's immense wall of water may not be stoppable. But there may be a way to take the ferocious force of nature down a few notches, using a pair of counterwaves.

If released at the right moment, a type of sound wave known as an acoustic-gravity wave could subdue a tsunami, applied mathematician Usama Kadri of Cardiff University in Wales reports January 23 in *Heliyon*. These acoustic-gravity waves, which reach deep below the ocean's surface, can stretch tens or hundreds of kilometers and easily travel long distances at high speeds.

In Kadri's plan, two acoustic-gravity waves would be launched through the water at the earthquake-triggered ocean surge. The waves would be tuned to exchange energy with the tsunami as they speed past, spreading the tsunami out by redistributing its energy and thereby decreasing its maximum height.

The tsunami sapper is still theoretical



WAVE GOODBYE Firing a pair of sound waves at a tsunami, like this one that hit Japan in 2011, could weaken the wall of water and decrease its height, a researcher proposes.

— scientists don't yet have a way to create the high-energy waves needed. But Kadri suggests his approach could have shrunk the amplitude of the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami

by almost 30 percent. Such a reduction translates to a five-meter decrease in the height the water reached above sea level, enough to potentially save lives and property. *Source: ScienceNews*

New desalination tech could help quench global thirst

The world is on the verge of a water crisis. Rainfall shifts caused by climate change plus the escalating water demands of a growing world population threaten society's ability to meet its mounting needs. By 2025, the United Nations predicts, 2.4 billion people will live in regions of intense water scarcity, which may force as many as 700 million people from their homes in search of water by 2030.

Those water woes have people thirstily eyeing the more than one sextillion liters of water in Earth's oceans and some underground aquifers with high salt content. For drinking or irrigation, the salt must come out of all those liters. And while desalination has been implemented in some areas — such as Israel and drought-stricken California — for much of the world, salt-removal is a prohibitively expensive energy drain.

Scientists and engineers, however, aren't giving up on the quest for desalination solutions. The technology underlying modern desalination has been around for decades, "but we have not driven it in such a way as to be ubiquitous," says UCLA chemical engineer Yoram Cohen. "That's what we need to figure out: how to make desalination better, cheaper and more accessible."

Recent innovations could bring costs down and make the technology more accessible. A new wonder material may make desalination plants more efficient. Solar-powered disks could also serve up freshwater with no need for electricity. Once freshwater is on tap, coastal floating farms could supply food to Earth's most parched places, one scientist proposes.

Watering holes

Taking the salt out of water is hardly a new idea. In the fourth century B.C., Aristotle noted that Greek sailors would evaporate impure water, leaving the salt behind, and then condense the vapor to make drinkable water. In the 1800s, the advent of steam-powered travel and the subsequent need for water without corrosive salt for boilers prompted the first desalination patent, in England.

Most modern desalination plants use a technique that



differs from these earlier efforts. Instead of evaporating water, pumps force pressurized saltwater from the ocean or salty underground aquifers through special sheets. These membranes contain molecule-sized holes that act like club bouncers, allowing water to pass through while blocking salt and other contaminants.

The membranes are rolled like rugs and stuffed into meter-long tubes with additional layers that direct water flow and provide structural support. A large desalination plant uses tens of thousands of membranes that fill a warehouse. This process is known as reverse osmosis and the result is salt-free water plus a salty brine waste product that is typically pumped underground or diluted with seawater and released back into the ocean. It takes about 2.5 liters of seawater to make 1 liter of freshwater.

Demonetisation had a significant impact on India business in Q4: Indra Nooyi

NEW DELHI (TIP): PepsiCo India may emerge from the setback caused by demonetisation only by the April-June quarter, global chief executive officer Indra Nooyi said, the seventh leader among consumer companies to voice concerns over the note ban's significant impact on sales.

"Our hope is that by the time Q2 rolls by, we would be through the bulk of the demonetisation challenges," Nooyi told investors on a call after the US beverage and snacks maker announced its fourth-quarter results on Wednesday. "The new currency and the digital currency will be back in circulation and we'll be back to retail activity coming back to normal. I'm not sure we are totally out of the woods."

Nooyi said scrapping of the high-denomination rupee notes in November was a massive change because 80% of the currency was taken out of circulation and the implementation of the measure had its share of challenges.

"Demonetisation had a significant impact on our India business in Q4. It hit individual retailers significantly. And there's still some lingering effects. India is a big country," she said.

While New York-based Pepsi-Co did not specify India numbers, it said the Asia, Middle East and North Africa (AMENA) region was negatively affected by issues such as operating cost inflation and higher raw material costs. Net income fell 18% to \$1.4 billion in the fourth quarter, while net revenue increased 5% to \$19.5 billion from a year earlier.

On the outlook for the first quarter of 2017, Nooyi said: "At this stage of the quarter, we expect organic sales to decline at our AMENA division, driven by increased levels of volatility throughout the region."



PepsiCo's global beverage sales rose 1% in the fourth quarter and sales of food and snacks went up 3%.

India's carbonated drinks sales are estimated at over Rs 14,000 crore. Volume growth has been in the low single digits for at least four quarters as consumers in urban markets increasingly prefer healthier drinks, while in the rural areas, they've been scaling down on discretionary spending.

Nooyi told analysts the company was making "significant progress in transforming its portfolio."

The maker of Pepsi and Mountain Dew fizzy drinks and Lay's chips said last year it would reduce the sugar content in juices and carbonated drinks across markets including India by 2025. Nooyi said the company had a 'pipeline of innovations' such as Tropicana Essentials functional juices and Quaker foods, which she said were helping to fuel sales in developed markets such as the US.

Globally, the Pepsi cola trademark contributes 12% of net revenue, while 25% comes from everyday nutrition products such as bottled water and foods and drinks packed with grains, fruits and vegetables.

Food and beverage makers are facing pressure from consumers, health activists and governments to make their products healthier in order to rein in obesity and diseases such as diabetes.

Measures to reduce sugar include replacing it with natural and artificial sweeteners and making smaller packs of beverages and snacks. In India, while PepsiCo is using plantbased sweetener stevia in 7UP, leading to a cut of 30% in sugar content, it is selling colas in smaller 150 ml cans.

Demonetisation announced on November 8 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi led to slowing down of sales across consumer goods, with global heads of companies ranging from Coca-Cola to Unilever and Colgate-Palmolive stating that the currency curbs had significantly impacted their India numbers.

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21-YEAR-OLD DELHI STUDENT GETS RS 1.25-CRORE JOB OFFER FROM UBER

DELHI (TIP): A student of Delhi Technological University (DTU) has received a job offer with an annual salary of Rs.1.25 crore from United States-based cab-hailing company Uber Technologies.

This is the second-highest offer received by a student at DTU ever. In 2015, software giant Google hired a student for an annual salary of Rs.1.27 crore.

Sidharth, a computer science engineering student, has been offered the position of a software engineer at the San Francisco office of Uber, and the salary includes basic pay and other benefits. Sidharth's basic pay package is Rs 71 lakh, which goes up to Rs 1.25 crore with other benefits.

"It was a delight to have received the job offer and I am now looking forward to move to San Francisco," said Sidharth. An alumnus of Delhi Public School, Vasant Kunj, the 21-year-old said he was looking to travel around the world with the money from his new job.

He described the recruitment process as grilling, where he had to solve problems on the spot.

"I had actually done a seven-week internship with Uber earlier. So this is a pre-placement offer that I have received. Along with me, I think there is someone from one of the IITs," he said.

The eldest son in the family, Sidharth had scored 95.4% in his Class 12 board examinations, with 98 out of 100 in computer science and mathematics. He says his percentage dipped because of a low score in English.

He later cleared the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main and landed a seat at DTU-- formerly known as Delhi College of Engineering.

"From the beginning, I wanted to do computer science engineering and with my score I was not getting the subject at any of the IITs. Moreover, I love Delhi and did not want to move from here," he said.

He is the first engineer of the family. His father is a planning consultant and mother a freelance transcriber. He has a younger brother who also studies at DPS Vasant Kunj.

Samsung chief Lee arrested as South Korean corruption probe deepens

SEOUL (TIP): Samsung Group chief Jay Y. Lee was arrested early on Friday over his alleged role in a corruption scandal rocking the highest levels of power in South Korea, dealing a fresh blow to the world's biggest maker of smartphones and memory chips.

The 48-year-old Lee, scion of the country's richest family, was taken into custody at the Seoul Detention Centre after waiting there overnight for the decision. He was being held in a single cell with a TV and desk, a jail official said.

Lee is a suspect in the influence-peddling scandal that led parliament to impeach President Park Geun-hye in December, a decision that if upheld by the Constitutional Court would make her the country's first democratically elected leader forced from office.

Shares in flagship Samsung Electronics Co Ltd opened down 1.2 percent+, while shares in Samsung C&T Corp, the de facto holding company of Samsung Group, opened down 3.2 percent compared with the wider market's drop of 0.45 percent. Prosecutors have up to 10 days to indict Lee, Samsung's third-generation leader, although they can seek an extension. After indictment, a court would be required to make a ruling within three months.

No decision had been made on whether Lee's arrest would be contested or whether bail would be sought, a spokeswoman for Samsung Group said.

Samsung and Lee have denied wrongdoing in the case. "We will do our best to ensure that the truth is revealed in future court proceedings," the Samsung Group said in a brief statement after Lee's arrest.

The same court had rejected a request last month to arrest Lee, but prosecutors on Tuesday brought additional accusations against Lee, seeking his arrest on bribery and other charges.



Sidharth

H-1B visas help American firms remain competitive: Navtej Sarna

WASHINGTON (TIP): H-1B visas, sought-after by Indian IT professionals, help make US firms competitive globally and contribute to generating jobs locally, India's envoy here has said amid reports the Trump administration plans to cut down the scheme.

"The H-1B scheme has been crucial in making US companies competitive globally in increasing their client base, in increasing their innovation. And it is the Indian tech industry, which has actually been creating jobs here (in the US)," ambassador to the US Navtej Sarna told CNN.

"There are reports and analysis by very respected houses, which say that over 400,000 jobs have been directly and indirectly supported in the US," he said, adding that Indian tech companies have invested \$2 billion in four years and paid \$20 billion in taxes.

H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows American firms to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The tech companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year.



"Out of every 100, H-1B visas have resulted in support to 183 jobs in the US... This is very important because the US companies - nine out of the 15 top tech companies in India are American companies," Sarna said.

"This is a relationship which is symbiotic and which has a potential of becoming even stronger for both countries," he added.

India is one of the top sources for international workers in the American tech industry, accounting for a major chunk of all H-1B visas. And any move by

Trump+, who has vowed to put an "America First+" policy, will have an adverse impact in India.

However, those demanding a revision of the policy say the programme hurt American interests.

In an op-ed piece in 'Fortune' magazine Senator Chuck Grassley, argued that the flaws in H-1B programme hurt American workers, American innovation, and even H-1B workers, who are in many cases "benched" without work or pay for long periods. Grassley is Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and co-author of H-1B and L1 Visa Reform Act of 2017. Earlier this year, he introduced the bipartisan legislation with Senator Dick Durbin to tackle these problems and return the programme to its original intent: filling gaps in America's skilled labour market. Schumer said his bill explicitly prohibits companies from replacing qualified American workers with H-1B workers. It also requires companies to post job openings and make good faith efforts to hire qualified American workers before seeking H-1B visas.

Source: PTI

Source: Reuters

contd from page 1

Trump rails at media for...

That matters, Trump said in one of his many improvisational asides, because he'd been briefed and "I can tell you ... nuclear holocaust would be like no other."

This was his and his aides' attempt to get the boss his groove back. Trump used the event to try to claw his young administration back from the brink after a defeat in court and the forced resignation of his top national security adviser.

He taunted reporters and waved away their attempts to fact-check him in real time. He (incorrectly) touted his Electoral College total and repeatedly blasted his November opponent - somehow mentioning Hillary Clinton more than anyone else in his defense of his administration's early days. He bragged that his White House is "a fine-tuned machine" and claimed "there has never been a presidency that has done so much in such a short period of time."

If only the news media would give him credit. Over and over, he accused the political press of being dishonest and suggested that any negative coverage of his administration was "fake news." He unloaded a torrent of grievances while positioning himself as the stand-in for the everyman, who, he declared, hates and distrusts reporters as much as he does.

"The press - the public doesn't believe you people anymore. Now, maybe I had something to do with that. I don't know. But they don't believe you," Trump charged. "But you've got to be at least a little bit fair, and that's why the public sees it. They see it. They see it's not fair. You take a look at some of your shows and you see the bias and the hatred."

It was a far cry from the "buck stops here" mantra popularized by Harry Truman and other presidents who believed that the ultimate responsibility for any White House struggles lay with the president himself. Trump was eager to assign blame elsewhere, ignoring the nation's healthy economy and relative peace when he took office to say "to be honest, I inherited a mess, a mess, at home and abroad, a mess."

He mostly blamed the media for his woes, rebuffing suggestions that he was undermining confidence in the press or threatening the First Amendment by trying to convince the nation that "the press honestly is out of control."

"The press has become so dishonest that if we don't talk about it, we are doing a tremendous disservice to the American people," he said. "Tremendous disservice."

Never before has a president stood in the White House and so publicly maligned the press or attacked reporters by name, according to presidential historians. Not even Richard Nixon in the days of Watergate.

But for Trump, it continued a defining theme and amplified his chief strategist Stephen Bannon's decree that the media are "the opposition party."

Trump had put claims of press prejudice at the center of his campaign in an unprecedented way and earlier this month falsely accused the media of refusing to cover terrorist attacks across the world. Though Thursday's news conference was a messy, fact-challenged affair, it may well have been cheered by Trump supporters across the country who had packed arenas last year to jeer reporters and chant "tell the truth" at the press pen.

An Associated Press-GfK poll taken on the eve of the election revealed that 87 percent of Trump's supporters saw the media as biased against him.

Trump retains support among Republicans, and solid majorities of Americans say he is following through on his promises and is viewed as a strong leader, according to a Gallup survey. But his overall job approval rating is much lower than those of past presidents at the same point in their administrations. According to a Pew Research Center survey, 39 percent of Americans approve of his job performance while 56 percent disapprove.

But he also made a point of complimenting a softball inquiry about the first lady as "a very nice question." He teased CNN reporter Jim Acosta for having the same last name as his new pick for labor secretary - Alexander Acosta, whose appointment was ostensibly the reason for the news conference - and said he asked his staff to make sure the men weren't related.

He chided a Jewish reporter wearing a kippah for asking a question about anti-Semitism. He asked an African-American reporter whether she could help set up a meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus. He displayed a rare moment of introspection when he discussed his love for kids amid his "very, very hard" decision whether to potentially deport young immigrants who came to the United States illegally as children.

But mostly it was Trump's bravado on display, as when he incorrectly asserted that his Electoral College victory had

been the largest of any president since Ronald Reagan - and then simply dismissed a reporter's attempt to correct him.

"Well, I don't know, I was given that information," said Trump. "But it was a very substantial victory, do you agree with that?"

Car blast kills 51 in Iraq, scores...

offensive, claimed responsibility for the bombing in an online statement.

As it cedes territory captured in a 2014 offensive across northern and western Iraq, the ultra-hardline group has stepped up insurgent strikes on government areas, particularly in Baghdad. Security sources said the vehicle which blew up on Thursday was parked in a crowded street full of garages and used car dealers, in Hayy al-Shurta, a Shi'ite district in the southwest of the city.

The death toll could climb further as many of the wounded are in critical condition, a doctor said.

The bombing is the second to hit car markets this week, suggesting the group has found it easier to leave vehicles laden with explosives in places where hundreds of other vehicles are parked. (Reuters)

Sasikala's pick Palaniswami...

The AIADMK posted on its twitter handle that the trust vote will be held on Saturday.

Senior party leaders said the leadership wanted to get it done without delay - lest some of the legislators changed their mind and crossed over to the Panneerselvam camp that has vowed to fight the "wrongdoing".

Until then the MLAs would remain at Golden Bay resort at Kuvathur, 80km from Chennai, where they have been staying since Sasikala corralled them there last Wednesday night to stop them from switching loyalties.

Panneerselvam backers were confident about several legislators joining their side.

"During the floor test, even if seven MLAs switch sides, the government will be in a minority. Wait and see what happens," former education minister Pandiarajan said.

The Panneerselvam camp requested the election commission to nullify the election of Sasikala as the AIADMK general secretary, alleging that the process violated the party constitution.

"Freeing the party from the control of Sasikala is the larger battle and this is a step in that direction," said Rajya Sabha member V Maitreyan, who went to poll panel with the request in New Delhi.

The 61-year-old Sasikala - a long-time confidante of former AIADMK supremo and chief minister J Jayalalithaa - had been anointed as the late leader's successor by the ruling party and was due to be sworn in last week.

But she was pulled into a bruising power struggle by Panneerselvam, who alleged he was forced to resign. Since then, he has been backed by several MPs and MLAs who have switched sides but a majority of the party lawmakers is said to be behind Sasikala.

Her hopes were dashed when the Supreme Court sent her to prison for four years in a two-decade-old corruption case, prompting her to name Palaniswami as her successor and brought two nephews into the party who were expelled by Jayalalithaa.

The conviction disqualifies her from holding a public office and contesting elections for the next 10 years. She is now lodged in Bengaluru central jail as prisoner number 9324, but political analysts said she would wield the remote control with a proxy heading the government.

Panneerselvam, also known as OPS, vowed to free the state from the clutches of Sasikala and her family.

"We will defeat them in the assembly," he told his supporters outside his home in Chennai. But for now, the initiative appears lost in the rebel camp. Sasikala supporter and senior minister OS Manian was confident that the government would complete its term, a little more than four years to the next assembly elections. "Most of the MLAs with OPS will return to us. You wait and see," he said, hinting that the cabinet would be expanded after trust vote.

The lawmakers would prefer to complete their term, rather than going for fresh elections without their charismatic leader, Jayalalithaa, and with the burden of an ugly power spat. The fear of facing the ballot will bind the AIADMK legislators, political analysts said. (Source: HT)

US, Russia agree to boost...

discussed military relations between the two countries as well as security in Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere during their meeting in the capital Baku.

The two sides "have undertaken efforts to improve operational safety of military activities in order to decrease

the prospects for crisis and avoid the risk of unintended incidents," the Pentagon said in a statement. "The leaders further agreed to enhance communications on such stabilizing measures."

The United States and Russia already maintain a permanent military communications line over their air operations in Syria to avoid incidents between their aircraft. The last face-to-face meeting between the two highest US and Russian military officers took place in January 2014 between Gerasimov and Dunford's predecessor Martin Dempsey. The Baku meeting comes amid widespread speculation about the future of US-Russian relations following US President Donald Trump's election.

contd from page 14

Indians in the United States of...

Illinois's 8th congressional district), Ro Khanna (U.S. Representative for California's 17th congressional district), Pramila Jayapal (U.S. Representative for Washington's 7th congressional district), and Dalip Singh Saund (first Asian-American member of the U.S. House of Representatives from California).

Preet Bharara (United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York), Cathy Bissoon (judge for the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania), Nisha Desai Biswal (Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs), Joy Cherian (first Asian head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), Huma Abedin (aide to United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton), Arif Alikhan (former Assistant Secretary for Policy Development at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; former Deputy Mayor for Homeland Security and Public Safety for the City of Los Angeles), Preet D. Bansal (member and past chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom; former Solicitor General of New York), Aneesh Chopra (Federal Chief Technology Officer of the US), Rashad Hussain (U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Neel Kashkari (former interim Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Stability in the United States Department of the Treasury), Neal Katyal (Solicitor General of the United States), Gopal Khanna (Chief Information Officer of Minnesota), Narayana Kocherlakota (President of Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis), Kris Kolluri (New Jersey Commissioner of Transportation), Vivek Kundra (Federal Chief Information Officer of the US), Farah Pandith (Special Representative to Muslim Communities for the United States Department of State), Rachel Paulose (former United States Attorney for the District of Minnesota), Anant Raut (counsel to the U.S. House Judiciary Committee), Rajiv Shah (former Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics; current Administrator of USAID), Ambassador Islam A. Siddiqui (Chief Agricultural Negotiator in the Office of the United States Trade Representative), Rajen Anand (Executive Director, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion), Sabita Singh (first judge of Indian descent in Massachusetts history), Subra Suresh (Director of National Science Foundation), Vinai Thummalapally (served as U.S. Ambassador to Belize), Richard Verma (Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at the Department of State), Vince Girdhari Chhabria (judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of California), Manish S. Shah (judge of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois), Srikanth Srinivasan (judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit), Kalpana Chawla (NASA space shuttle astronaut, who died in space shuttle blast), Sunita Williams (NASA astronaut), Vivek Murthy (Surgeon General of U.S.; former Vice Admiral of U.S. Health Corps), Sanjay Gupta (neurosurgeon; CNN chief medical correspondent; declined offer by President Barack Obama to be nominated U.S. Surgeon General) Our young generation is making us proud. About 73% of National Spelling Bee winners since 1999 have been Indian Americans. Indian Americans Account for Nearly One-Third of Science Talent Search Finalists.

(The author can be reached at 1509 Coat Ridge Road, Herndon, VA 20170; raabta.india@gmail.com)

Texas Governor's Office...

unsolved case to come forward and take a stand against crime."

To be eligible for the cash rewards, tipsters must provide information to authorities by calling the Crime Stoppers hotline at 1-800-252-TIPS (8477). All tips can be offered anonymously, and tipsters will be provided a tip number instead of using a name.

FOUR DENOMINATIONS OF HINDUISM

A SPLENDOROUS LOTUS WITH FOUR SUPERB PETALS

For over 200 years, Western scholars have struggled to understand Hinduism, a faith whose followers seemed (to outsiders) to arbitrarily worship any one of a dozen Gods as the Supreme, a religion vastly diverse in its beliefs, practices and ways of worship. Some Indologists labeled the Hinduism they encountered polytheistic; others even coined new terms, like henotheism, to describe this baffling array of spiritual traditions. Few, however, have realized, and fewer still have written, that India's Sanatana Dharma, or "eternal faith," known today as Hinduism and comprising nearly a billion followers, is a family of religions with four principal denominations Saivism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism and Smartism. This single perception is essential for understanding Hinduism and explaining it accurately to others. Contrary to prevailing misconceptions, Hindus all worship a one Supreme Being, though by different names. For Vaishnavites, Lord Vishnu is God. For Saivites, God is Siva. For Shaktas, Goddess Shakti is supreme. For Smartas, liberal Hindus, the choice of Deity is left to the devotee. Each has a multitude of guru lineages, religious leaders, priesthoods, sacred literature, monastic communities, schools, pilgrimage centers and tens of thousands of temples. They possess a wealth of art and architecture, philosophy and scholarship. These four sects hold such divergent beliefs that each is a complete and independent religion. Yet, they share a vast heritage of culture and belief karma, dharma, reincarnation, all-pervasive Divinity, temple worship, sacraments, manifold Deities, the guru-shishya tradition and the Vedas as scriptural authority. In this eight-page Insight, drawn from Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami's Dancing with Siva, we offer a synopsis of these four denominations, followed by a point-by-point comparison.

Each of Hinduism's philosophies, schools and lineages shares a common purpose: to further the soul's unfoldment to its divine destiny. Nowhere is this process better represented than in the growth of the renowned lotus, which, seeking the sun, arises from the mud to become a magnificent flower. Its blossom is a promise of purity and perfection.

Saivism

Saivite Hindus worship the Supreme God as Siva, the Compassionate One. Saivites esteem self discipline and philosophy and follow a satguru. They worship in the temple and practice yoga, striving to be one with Siva within.

Shaktism

Shaktas worship the Supreme as the Divine Mother; Shakti or Devi. She has many forms. Some are gentle, some are fierce. Shaktas use chants, real magic, holy diagrams, yoga and rituals to call forth cosmic forces and awaken the great kundalini power within the spine.

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavites worship the Supreme as Lord Vishnu and His incarnations, especially Krishna and Rama. Vaishnavites are mainly dualistic. They are deeply devotional. Their religion is rich in saints, temples and scriptures.

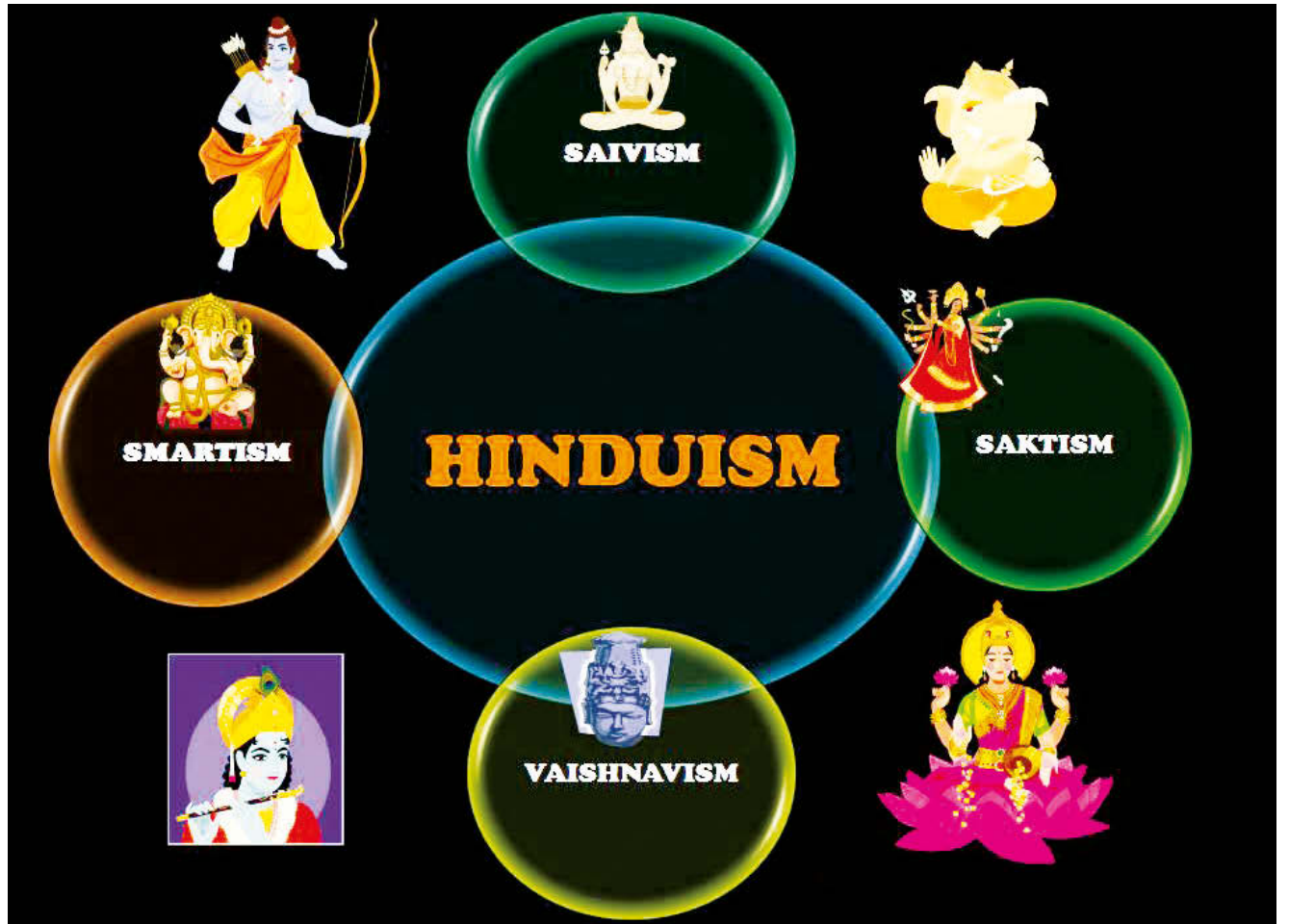
Smartism

Smartas worship the Supreme in one of six forms: Ganesha, Siva, Sakti, Vishnu, Surya and Skanda. Because they accept all the major Hindu Gods, they are known as liberal or nonsectarian. They follow a philosophical, meditative path, emphasizing man's oneness with God through understanding.

DEEPLY MYSTICAL SAIVA SECT?

Saivism is the world's oldest religion. Worshiping God Siva, the compassionate One, it stresses potent disciplines, high philosophy, the guru's centrality and bhakti-raja-siddha yoga leading to oneness with Siva within. Aum. Seated on Nandi, his bull mount, the perfect devotee, Lord Siva holds japa beads and the trident, symbol of love-wisdom-action, and offers blessings of protection and fearlessness. Mount Kailas, His sacred Himalayan abode, represents the pinnacle of consciousness.

Saivism is ancient, truly ageless, for it has no beginning. It is the precursor of the many-faceted religion now termed Hinduism.



Scholars trace the roots of Siva worship back more than 8,000 years to the advanced Indus Valley civilization. But sacred writings tell us there never was a time when Saivism did not exist. Modern history records six main schools: Saiva Siddhanta, Pashupatism, Kashmir Saivism, Vira Saivism, Siddha Siddhanta and Siva Advaita. Saivism's grandeur and beauty are found in a practical culture, an enlightened view of man's place in the universe and a profound system of temple mysticism and siddha yoga. It provides knowledge of man's evolution from God and back to God, of the soul's unfoldment and awakening guided by enlightened sages. Like all the sects, its majority are devout families, headed by hundreds of orders of swamis and sadhus who follow the fiery, world-renouncing path to moksha. The Vedas state, "By knowing Siva, the Auspicious One who is hidden in all things, exceedingly fine, like film arising from clarified butter, the One embracer of the universe by realizing God, one is released from all fetters." Aum Namah Sivaya.

MAGIC AND POWER OF SHAKTISM?

Shaktism reveres the Supreme as the Divine Mother; Shakti or Devi, in Her many forms, both gentle and fierce. Shaktas use mantra, tantra, yantra, yoga and puja to invoke cosmic forces and awaken the kundalini power. Aum.

Shakti, depicted in Her green form, radiates beauty, energy, compassion and protection for followers. Wearing the tilaka of the Shakta sect on Her forehead, She blesses devotees, who shower rosewater, hold an umbrella and prostrate at Her feet.

While worship of the divine mother extends beyond the pale of history, Shakta Hinduism arose as an organized sect in India around the fifth century. Today it has four expressions devotional, folk-shamanic, yogic and universalist all invoking the fierce power of Kali or Durga, or the benign grace of Parvati or Ambika. Shakta devotionalists use puja rites, especially to the Shri Chakra yantra, to establish intimacy with the Goddess. Shamanic Shaktism employs magic, trance mediumship, firewalking and animal sacrifice for healing, fertility, prophecy and power. Shakta yogis seek to awaken the sleeping Goddess Kundalini and unite her with Siva in the sahasrara chakra. Shakta universalists follow the reformed Vedantic tradition exemplified by Sri Ramakrishna. "Left-hand" tantric rites transcend traditional ethical codes. Shaktism is chiefly advaitic, defining the soul's destiny as

complete identity with the Unmanifest, Siva. Central scriptures are the Vedas, Shakta Agamas and Puranas. The Devi Gita extols, "We bow down to the universal soul of all. Above and below and in all four directions, Mother of the universe, we bow." Aum Chandikayai Namah.

DEVOTIONAL VAISHNAVA SECT?

Vaishnavism is an ancient Hindu sect centering on the worship of Lord Vishnu and His incarnations, especially Krishna and Rama. Largely dualistic, profoundly devotional, it is rich in saints, temples and scriptures. Aum. Vishnu is the infinite ocean from which the world emerges. He stands on waves, surrounded by the many-headed Seshanaga, who represents agelessness and is regarded as an extension of divine energy and an incarnation of Balarama, Lord Krishna's brother. The worship of Vishnu, meaning "pervader," dates back to Vedic times. The Pancharatra and Bhagavata sects were popular prior to 300 bce. Today's five Vaishnava schools emerged in the middle ages, founded by Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya. Vaishnavism stresses prapatti, single-pointed surrender to Vishnu, or His ten or more incarnations, called avatars. Japa is a key devotional sadhana, as is ecstatic chanting and dancing, called kirtana. Temple worship and festivals are elaborately observed. Philosophically, Vaishnavism ranges from Madhva's pure dualism to Ramanuja's qualified nondualism to Vallabha's nearly monistic vision.



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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? Indian alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one."

2017 IPL Players auction guide



NEW DELHI (TIP)

The 2017 IPL players auction in Bangalore on Monday has created a buzz ahead of the tenth season of the T20 league. Here's a rundown on the big event.

Player for sale

From an original pool of 799, there will be 351 cricketers up for auction; of these, 226 are Indian and the rest overseas players. The list of 351 includes 122 capped, 223 uncapped and six Associates players. A total of 76 players can be purchased, however.

Franchise purses

Kings XI Punjab - Rs 23.35 crore
Delhi Daredevils - Rs 21.5 crore
Sunrisers Hyderabad - Rs 20.9 crore
Kolkata Knight Riders - Rs 19.75 crore
Rising Pune Supergiants - Rs 19.1 crore
Gujarat Lions - Rs 14.35 crore
Royal Challengers Bangalore - Rs 12.825 cror
Mumbai Indians - Rs 11.555 crore

The most expensive players (base price INR 2 crore)

Angelo Mathews
Ben Stokes
Chris Woakes
Eoin Morgan

Ishant Sharma
Mitchell Johnson
Pat Cummins

Five potential jackpot winners (overseas)

Jason Roy
(recent T20 form: 157 runs @ 31.40, SR 135)

Ben Stokes
(recent T20 form: 46 runs @ 23, SR 117.94, 2 wickets @ 45, Econ 8.18)

Mitchell Santner
(recent T20 form: 3 wickets @ 23.66, Econ 6.45, SR 23.66)

Mohammad Nabi
(recent T20 form: 83 runs @ 41.50, SR 123.88, 9 wickets @ 19.88, Econ 7.35)

Evin Lewis (recent T20 form: 131 runs @ 43.66, SR 179.45)

Five uncapped Indians to watch for

Umar Nazir
Puneet Datey
Tanmay Agarwal
Ankit Bawne
Vishnu Vinod

ICC should know what happens if they try to kill Indian cricket, the golden goose: Shastri

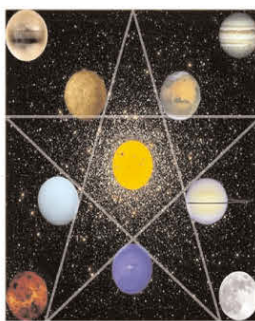
NEW DELHI (TIP): Indian cricket has rarely been in the pink of health, on the field, as it is now. The team, under the unified captaincy of Virat Kohli across formats, has begun to produce results consistently and Anil Kumble has put in place practices in the background that are ensuring steady growth. Off the field, however, turmoil has been the order of the day, with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), at large, and certain administrators in particular, coming to grips with the sweeping changes laid down via the courts.

Because of the string of performances overseas, about two years of playing in different conditions, the team developed at pace. The turning point was the tour of Australia, where they held their own and then beat Sri Lanka in Sri Lanka to become the No. 1 side in the world. To become the No. 1 side even before the long season at home was an achievement. Beating South Africa 3-0, and then the home season helped stretch the lead at the top to a strong position. The run of Tests at home helped balance the side, which will help them overseas as well. The challenge now will be Australia at home. With due respect to England and New Zealand, Australia will be the toughest of India's home assignments. To beat Australia, India will have to play their best game.

The turning point from the batting aspect was quite clear - KL Rahul got a hundred, [Ajinkya] Rahane made a strong century, Virat got four centuries. Then, having a very good World Cup gave the fast bowlers the confidence, the feeling that they could make teams hop, when [Mohammed] Shami, Umesh Yadav were on fire. It was very exciting. What is especially heartening to see is that all the good work the team put in behind the scenes has not gone to waste. The results are coming now.

Their last two visits to India, in their minds, are probably best forgotten. The one thing is that they will come out and play hard. Most of their players would've learnt a lot of Indian conditions and (there are also) players from the IPL: there will be caution and aggression. With the likes of [Steve] Smith and Warner in the ranks, and [Mitchell] Starc, [Nathan] Lyon and [Josh] Hazlewood in the bowling, makes for a very interesting series. It is the committee appointed by the courts that is in charge now. When transparency in administration and the electoral process are in place, BCCI, the institution, will be back to where it should be. (PTI)

"|| SHRI GANESHAYA NAMAHA ||"



BEJAN DARUWALLA

Email- info@bejandaruwalla.com

Phone : +91-9825470377

Predictions for the month of FEBRUARY, 2017

Aries



Ganesha says recreation, wining and dining, being entertained, extending hospitality - having a rare o'l time is what I see you doing now. Joy that is boundless and deep comes to you in the love / marriage angle. There could be both love and marriage happening now, too. Sometimes love preoccupies a person so that friendship gets excluded

Taurus



You may not want to, but you'll still have to focus very strongly on the finances now. You have to make some bold moves and decisions, the right choices according to your own conviction of where money and security lie. It won't be a time for boldness, though, on the family scene. There could be disputes and problems to sort out, feelings of real or imagined neglect to soothe, some gestures of conciliation to be made.

Gemini



You will consciously slow down the pace at which you're living and make an effort to take things easy. Maybe the allegations of neglect have rankled, even if they are not true. In fact, I should have said specially if they're not true. You bring a sense of style and lots of flair to your handling of people you're close to, sparing no effort. Even though it's done with restraint, there's no holding back.

Cancer



Now that your personal equations are ticking over so smoothly - to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned, I must add - your public persona has to live up to the gloss and glamour. Let me assure you that it does. You are gracious, warm, humane yet so brilliant and impressive that people are floored by it! Like Tendulkar attacking a bowler and hoisting the ball right into the stands, you may just be making people stand up and applaud!

Leo



No one can ever be in doubt of the fact that you approach to work is so committed that it's almost perfect! Your work angle is in focus now, and the results of your own willing, determined efforts. Your publicity will be so good that you might not believe in it. You will be genuinely helpful, sharing, sincere with your co-workers and colleagues, efficient with bosses, humane and fair with employees, even enemies / rivals

Virgo



Your expenses will be something else - they're so high. You've spent generously on all fronts; in fact money was burning a hole in your pockets. Now you have the money to make sure that you don't let anyone down, or renege on promises, deals, payments. If you have the income to cope - and you do; Ganesha ensures it - you're willing to spend some more.

Libra



You will be relaxed, comfortable, at ease, easygoing. All this is especially good considering that you're now hobnobbing with the rich and the famous, rubbing shoulders with the top brass, with people of distinction. You have the confidence to hold your own. It also makes it easier to continue with your devotion to family and loved ones, to older people and to those who depend on you.

Scorpio



Skill, efficiency, single - minded concentration and of course, efficiency - these are what you get now. They're all directed to your work at which you're truly brilliant without being self - centered. It is another matter entirely that you are equally brilliant at fun, socializing, pleasurable activities. You aim to please - in both work and pleasure.

Sagittarius



Something will transpire to make you take a very different line, a new modus operandi. It will be mental shift, not an action that makes you withdraw. What is hidden, mysterious, unrevealed will appeal to you. Parapsychology, metaphysics, little known sciences, exploration and archaeology, exploration of the mind, of genes, of cosmic truths - all or any of these could be drawing and beckoning you now.

Capricorn



If you analytical, you look back on the success and glory of the past period, you will feel thankful, of course, but will also seek to analyze, search for reasons for it. You will realize now that you get your power, strength, motives - all of them - from your joy in family, domesticity, the bonds of matrimony, love, kindness. You will renew your faith in them this period and give not only of yourself but also seek to repay them for all that they give you

Aquarius



Power: one word sums up the heightened awareness and activity of this phase in your sign. Many benefits in store for you now. You may have a wish - fulfilment, the realization of a dream. Relationships and ties, bonds and tie - ups are what matter most from the personal bonds of love and matrimony to the profession partnerships, collaborations that lead to future gain.

Pisces



All the power - plays of last period will show some fast, and glorious results. Rewards, recognition, all the parameters of success are yours once more. When I say all, though, I mean all. More money, more perks, more benefits add up to a fine financial angle, too. I must also enumerate (a) your own confidence and self - esteem and (b) the perception that others have of you in terms of being an achiever, success at whatever you do

Bejan Daruwalla is world's most famous astrologer today. He appears regularly on world wide TV shows. Bejan who has been a professor in English, has authored a number of books on astrology. India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on March 29, 2012, lunched one of Bejan's books, '2012- End of the World? Bejan contributes to a number of journals and

newspapers in many parts of the world which include Berkley Communications (London) Times of India (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai) and The Indian Panorama (New York and Texas). Bejan's predictions have mostly been correct and people the world over rely on his predictions.

Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwalla.com and on phone 011-91-9825470377



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