

The INDIAN PANORAMA

VAISAKHI SPECIAL EDITION

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

Articles and advertisements for publication in the Vaisakhi special edition may please be emailed by April 5, 2019 to salujaindra@gmail.com For any question, please call 646-247-9458.

Sultanpur Lodhi pledges to open doors for devotees



The historic gurdwara at Sultanpur Lodhi

SULTANPUR LODHI (TIP): The 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev may still be months away (November 12), but residents of Sultanpur Lodhi and adjoining areas

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Iceland's WOW Air budget carrier folds up; cancels all flights, leaving thousands stranded



of the troubled airline, which transports more than a third of those

REYKJAVIK (TIP): Iceland's budget carrier WOW Air said it had ceased operations and cancelled all flights on Thursday, stranding thousands of passengers. The collapse

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India Shoots down Weather Satellite; Joins the Space 'Superpower' Club

NEW DELHI (TIP): India has joined a club of space superpowers, India's prime minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday, March 27 after successfully shooting down one of its own satellites with a locally-developed missile.

Narendra Modi made the surprise announcement in a press conference that India was "now an established space power".

The leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) added that the missile had destroyed the 190-mile distant satellite in less than three minutes.

He said the test made India the world's fourth country to have developed and demonstrated the anti-satellite missile capability after China, Russia and the US.

"India has always maintained that space should not be an area for warfare and that remains unchanged in spite of this test", Modi declared in a televised address to the nation.

But India, he stated, also wanted to defend itself and it was with this intent that it had pursued and achieved the missile capability.

In an official statement India's foreign ministry declared that the debris generated from the impact would "decay and fall back to earth within weeks" as the test was executed in the "lower atmosphere".

The foreign office also stressed that the test was not directed against any country but added that the capability provided India "credible deterrence against threats to its space-based assets from enemy missiles".

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Space Shot (Image for representation only)

House fails to override Trump's veto over national emergency wall fight



Trump shows the Veto he signed on March 15

WASHINGTON (TIP): The House failed Tuesday to override President Donald Trump's veto after both chambers of Congress sought to overturn his national emergency declaration to build more border wall.

The vote was 248-181, with 14 Republicans voting with Democrats to support the override. It was a steep hill to climb for opponents of Trump's national emergency as the House would have needed two-thirds of its members to back the veto override. Thirteen Republicans voted for the resolution in the first place.

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Trump meets Pichai, says Google committed to US military, not China

WASHINGTON (TIP): President Donald Trump said Wednesday, March 27 that Google is totally committed to the US military as he met the Internet giant's Indian-American CEO Sunder Pichai at the White House, days after he accused the tech company of helping China and its army.

Trump, who has been at loggerheads with several big companies, earlier this month said, "Google is helping China and their military, but not the US".

On Wednesday, after a meeting with Pichai at the White House, the US President said: "Meeting ended very well".

"Just met with @SunderPichai, President of @Google, who is obviously doing quite well," he said.

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Sunder Pichai, CEO Google
Photo / Courtesy Google



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550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji celebrated at the Indian Consulate

Prachi Makkar sang Gurbani with accompanists Gurleen and Surya Makkar

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Consulate General of India in New York organized a Gurbani Kirtan at the Consulate, March 27. Prachi Makkar, a trained classical singer who has for long been singing devotional songs at Gurudwaras and temples, sang a couple of hymns (shabads). She was accompanied by Gurleen Kaur, trained in classical singing, on Surmandal, and Surya Makkar on Tabla. Surya plays 5 musical instruments with equal aplomb. Besides Tabla, he is good at dhol, dholki, harmonium and saxophone.



Ambassador Sandeep Chakraborty paid tribute to Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

The three enthralled the audience for an hour. Prachi cast a spell with her melodious voice. The roomful audience appeared to be in a trance while Prachi sang 5 shabads, followed by recitation of Anand Sahib and ardas (prayer).



Prachi Makkar doing Gurbani kirtan. To her right is Gurleen Kaur on Surmandal. On extreme left is Surya Makkar on Tabla

People came from far and near to listen to Gurbani Kirtan. They included men, women and children.



Ambassador Chakraborty presented bouquets and plaques to performing artists- Prachi (extreme right), Gurleen (second from right) and Surya (extreme left)



Performers and some of the children with Ambassador Chakraborty

It was the second Gurbani Kirtan session organized by the Consulate in commemoration of 550th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Earlier this year, eminent Gurbani singer Bhai Baldeep Singh had sung Gurbani Kirtan in classical ragas.

The Sikh community has greatly appreciated the initiative of Ambassador Sandeep Chakraborty, the Consul General who took a lead in having the Gurbani Kirtan session



Performing artists with their parents, teachers, and Ambassador Chakraborty

organized. It was his idea that the younger generation should be involved and encouraged to participate in promoting Indian culture in whatever form. Mr. Chakraborty and his wife Taruna Chakraborty listened to Gurbani Kirtan with rapt attention.

Ambassador Chakraborty presented bouquets and plaques to the team of Hymn singers who were joined by their parents and teachers for a group photograph.

Mr. Dave Makkar, father of Prachi and Surya Makkar played a pivotal role in putting together the event. Mrs. Rashmi Makkar, mother of Prachi and Surya, father of Gurleen Kaur and a teacher of the three artists were also present.

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Indian-Americans Take a Stand to Fight Food Insecurity in NYC



Pictured (left to right): Indian American Council Founders and Advisors Aradhana "Anna" Asava and Raj Asava, and Co-Chair Payal Sharma

NEW YORK (TIP): Indian Americans across New York are coming together to fight food insecurity with Food Bank For New York City. The newly formed Indian American Council (IAC) kicked off their Million Meal March campaign at Baar Baar restaurant on Tuesday, March 12. The launch event garnered more than 100 attendees and raised over 610,000 meals for New Yorkers in need.

The group has mobilized the Indian-American community with the rallying cry of "Hunger Mitao!", which means Wipe Out Hunger. The Council's Co-Chair is Payal Sharma, the Managing Partner of Baar Baar restaurant, and its Founders and Advisors are Raj Asava and Aradhana "Anna" Asava. The council will raise awareness, improve engagement, and channel resources and contributions of the Indian-American community in New York City to support Food Bank's mission.

"In the spirit of 'give where you live,' the Indian-American community - through IAC - has enabled close to 5 million meals in Texas in just over a year," said Raj Asava. "We are excited to bring this model to New York City and are confident that the Indian community here will galvanize around Food Bank and provide millions of meals for NYC's food insecure children, seniors, veterans and vulnerable families," added Anna Asava.

"In order to be Food Bank FOR New York City, it's imperative that New Yorkers from every community see a place for leadership within our mission," said Margarett Purvis, President & CEO of Food Bank For New York City. "We are grateful to be selected as the recipients of the great passion, commitment and focus of the Indian American Council. Their important work punctuates how every New Yorker has a role to play in the fight against hunger."

Originally launched in North Texas, the Co-founders have since expanded the Indian American Council to Houston, as well. For 35 years, Food Bank For New York City has been the city's major hunger-relief organization working to end hunger throughout the five boroughs. New Indian American Council will work to raise awareness, improve engagement and channel community resources to help end hunger in the five boroughs.

Indian American Appointed President of California State University, Fullerton

SAN FRANCISCO (TIP): The California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees has appointed Framroze "Fram" Virjee to serve as president of California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). Virjee has been serving as campus president under a term appointment since January 2018 and will assume the permanent presidency immediately.

"Joining the Titan family has been the most rewarding professional experience of my career," said Virjee. "I am thrilled at the opportunity to continue working alongside the tremendously talented faculty, staff and administrators to further the great work enabling student achievement and degree completion that we've started, and to chart the path forward for CSUF."

Virjee becomes the sixth permanent president of CSUF. He was subsequently appointed by CSU Chancellor Timothy P. White to serve as president of CSUF until the next president was appointed by the Board of Trustees.

"We conducted a national search that included many exemplary candidates, and it became apparent that the best person to be the next president of CSUF was already serving the campus," said CSU Trustee Silas Abrego, chair of the CSUF search committee. "In his



Virjee has been serving as campus president under a term appointment since January 2018

time leading CSUF, Fram has demonstrated unbridled energy and passion for the campus and students, and under his leadership CSUF will reach even greater heights."

From January 2014 through December 2017, Virjee served as executive vice chancellor, general counsel and secretary to the CSU Board of Trustees. In that capacity, Virjee led

a staff of attorneys, paralegals and support personnel, and oversaw all legal services for the 23-campus CSU. Virjee also served as chief legal officer to the Board of Trustees, advising them on all legal issues including open meeting laws, board rules and procedures and education code compliance.

Prior to joining CSU, Virjee was a partner in private practice for almost 30 years at O'Melveny & Myers, the oldest law firm in Los Angeles and one of the largest in the nation. At O'Melveny, Virjee specialized in labor and employment law with an emphasis in representing educational institutions in the areas of collective bargaining, education code compliance, and discrimination and employment litigation. Virjee's practice included representing employers in employment litigation, providing preventative advice through client counseling, policy and procedure review and drafting, and extensive in-house training and education on important labor and employment issues. Virjee also served in several leadership positions at O'Melveny, including Secretary to the Management Committee, Chair of the Employment Committee, and the Partner-in-Charge of both Lateral Hiring and Diversity.

Indian American Amit Jani Appointed to New Jersey's Hudson County School Board



Amit currently serves in New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's Administration

JERSEY CITY, NJ (TIP): Amit Jani, a leader in the South Asian and general Asian American Pacific Islander community was appointed to the Board of Education for the Hudson County Schools of Technology in New Jersey. He was sworn in and attended his first board meeting on Thursday, March 14. "Amit Jani has established himself as a dedicated community leader and public servant, and as an alumnus of County Prep High School he's an ideal choice to join our HCST Board of Education," said Hudson County Executive Tom DeGise. "The South Asian community in Hudson County is continuing to grow and we're proud to once again embrace Hudson County's diversity with this appointment."

Amit currently serves in New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's Administration and also helps to lead the New Jersey Leadership Program, a non-profit organization to expose South Asian youth in the state to government and politics. "We are proud that we have a leader and member of the South Asian community in Amit Jani as a Board of Education Member for the Hudson County Schools of Technology," said South Asians For America Co-chair Neha Dewan. "Diversity and representation are integral at all levels of government, and we hope to continue advocating for more members of the South Asian community to enter public service." He has also served as the Asian American Pacific Islander Outreach Director for Phil Murphy's gubernatorial campaign, as well as the re-election campaign for U.S. Senator Bob Menendez. He previously worked as a Congressional Aide to Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. and Judy Chu.

Indian American Arish Mudra Rakshasa Named Earlham's Next Watson Fellow



The Neuroscience and Biochemistry major from India will receive \$30,000 in support of a year of independent study and travel to continue his campaign to eradicate HIV/AIDS

RICHMOND, INDIANA (TIP): Indian American Arish Mudra Rakshasa has been selected as one of just 41 undergraduates from around the country to receive the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship in 2019, Earlham College, a national liberal arts college located in Richmond, Indiana announced.

The Neuroscience and Biochemistry major from India will receive \$30,000 in support of a year of independent study and travel to continue his campaign to eradicate HIV/AIDS. He is the 38th Earlhamite chosen for the award since 1981.

"My professional aspiration is to work at the intersection of science and society, as a science diplomat striving to unite science and government in the struggle to end HIV/AIDS," Mudra Rakshasa says. "I hope to lead intergovernmental organizations such as the World Health Organization as a scientist and diplomat in order to bring together people, communities, and nations in these efforts."

Enter the Watson. During the 2019-20 academic year, Mudra Rakshasa will travel to Australia, South Africa, Spain, Chile and France, to gain a break from the microscopic view of HIV and look at the impact that the disease has on the holistic human condition.

Earlier this academic year, he was selected by the Global Liberal Arts Alliance to represent Earlham at the sixth annual New York Times Athens Democracy Forum on full scholarship. The experience gave him a chance to network and share his goals with global leaders.



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550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji celebrated at the Indian Consulate

CONTD FROM PAGE 3

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Chakraborty described Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji as not only the Guru of the Sikhs but of all humanity. He spoke of oneness of humanity and of all beings as



Ambassador Chakraborty releasing the book "Global Religions". Seen in the picture, from left, Mrs Loveleen Kaur Bagga, Darshan Singh Bagga, publisher of the book, Ambassador Chakraborty, Mrs. Taruna Chakraborty.



Prof. Indrajit S. Saluja emceed the event

equal. His message, Ambassador said, is universal and relevant for all times. He said he was very happy to see young singers performing Kirtan. He announced there will be more such kirtan sessions in the run up to the birthday of Shri Guru Nanak Dev ji in November.

Earlier, Prof. Indrajit S Saluja welcomed the sangat and introduced the artists. He also thanked all for their gracious presence and cooperation.

On the occasion, Ambassador Chakraborty released a coffee table book "Global Religions - The Great Faiths Explored and Explained. The book is a collection of articles on various faiths published in the 7 issues of an interfaith journal- One World Under God- which is edited by Parveen Chopra. Darshan Singh Bagga is the publisher of the book.

Rajat Gupta's book of memoirs 'Mind Without Fear' launched

NEW YORK CITY (TIP): Rajat Gupta launched March 28 his book of memoirs "Mind Without Fear" at a launch ceremony organized by Indian American Arts Council.

Rajat Gupta, Ex- CEO of McKinsey & Co was engaged in a conversation by Rakesh Kaul, Vice Chairman, of Indo American Arts Council. Mr. Gupta also signed his book for the guests.

In 2011, Rajat Gupta was a leading business icon, philanthropist, and trusted advisor to the global elite. Then to the shock of the international business community, he was charged and found guilty of insider trading in one of Wall Street's biggest scandals. In this deeply moving memoir, Mind Without Fear, Gupta brings the reader inside the boardroom, the courtroom and jail. Gupta describes a spiritual journey that few have experienced but all can relate to.

For nine years, Rajat Gupta led McKinsey & Co.-the first foreign-born person to head the world's most influential management consultancy. He was also the driving force



Rajat Gupta (Left) in a conversation with Rakesh Kaul, March 28, 2019
Photo:/ Jay Mandal-On Assignment,

Rajat Gupta signing his book for a guest

Photo / Jay Mandal-On Assignment,



behind major initiatives such as the Indian School of Business and the Public Health Foundation of India. He sat on the boards of the Gates Foundation and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, as well as corporate boards including Goldman Sachs, American Airlines, and Procter & Gamble.

Gupta was sentenced to two years imprisonment, which he served in Massachusetts. Throughout his trial and imprisonment, Gupta has fought the charges and maintains his innocence to this day. Gupta reflects on the heartbreaks of his childhood, challenges as a young executive in the United States, a rare glimpse into the elite and secretive culture of McKinsey, and the hardships of prison life.

Indian American Rochester Man Sentenced for Visa Fraud

ROCHESTER, NY (TIP): An Indian American from Rochester, NY was sentenced March 22 to serve 12 months and one day in prison and fined \$5,000 by Chief U.S. District Judge Frank P. Geraci, U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy, Jr. announced. Anjaneyulu Katam, 46, was convicted of visa fraud in September 2018.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kyle Rossi, who handled the case, stated that between 2011 and 2017, Katam ran businesses in which he falsified immigration documents for Indian nationals to enter the U.S. and work in tech industries involving computer programming. The defendant manipulated the H-1B visa program, which allows U.S. employers temporarily to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations. Katam falsified visa applications, work experience documents, and work contracts, which he then submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of State, in order to secure illegal H-1B visas for Indian nationals. This resulted in the unlawful entry and employment of several Indian nationals within the United States. As part of the investigation, federal agents identified multiple assets, including strip malls, and bank accounts, which were acquired by Katam utilizing proceeds of the visa fraud. The defendant will forfeit approximately \$1,090,490.32 to the Government.

Indian Businessman in Virginia Sentenced to Prison for Investment Fraud Scheme

ALEXANDRIA, VA (TIP): An Indian businessman in Virginia was sentenced March 15 to 2 1/2 years in prison for orchestrating a \$1.3 million Ponzi scheme that caused losses to more than 40 victims.

According to court documents, Amrit Jaswant Singh Chahal, 31, of Fairfax, operated an investment fraud scheme through The Kane Capital Investment Group, LLC (Kane Capital), a company he established and operated. Chahal held out Kane Capital as a private capital investment group that sought to earn profits and investment returns on behalf of its clients by purchasing, trading, or otherwise investing in commodities for future delivery and other financial instruments.

Chahal executed this fraud through falsely representing that Kane Capital had earned returns of roughly 28 to 34 percent annually, when in fact, Chahal had suffered substantial losses in managing investors' funds. Chahal also created falsified brokerage statements to conceal the losses he had sustained and siphoned off some of his investors' funds by transferring the money to accounts he controlled or by spending the funds on personal items. When investors asked for returns on their investment, Chahal frequently used money from newer investors to pay disbursements to older investors, without disclosing this fact to his investors. In addition, Chahal opened an unauthorized bank account in the name of one of his investors to further divert funds to his personal use.



GUEST COMMENT

India enters the anti-satellite weapons club

The successful testing of an anti-satellite weapon (ASAT) has propelled India to the exclusive club of superpowers that have demonstrated the capability to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic military purposes. The US, Russia and China are nations that have destroyed satellites in space earlier. The DRDO can be proud of its achievement, and indeed, the continuing success of India's space program has been

the pride of the nation and envy of many. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's televised announcement about the success of Mission Shakti, as the program was called, was sparse on details, but it is clear that a low orbit satellite was destroyed.

Even as political leaders across the spectrum hailed the DRDO and Indian scientists, their reactions to the PM's announcement reflected their political alignments, with the BJP leaders hailing it as the PM's achievement, and Opposition leaders pointing out that such matters are

no flash in the space but the result of programs that require long planning and gestation periods. Congress leaders lost no time in highlighting that the program was initiated by the Manmohan Singh government. While the announcement ticked the right notes of patriotism, nationalism and pride in the country's defense prowess, it remains to be seen how it plays out with the voters, and what role it has in shaping the poll narrative.

Space is, indeed, the final frontier, and even though nations have long had the

power to destroy man-made objects up there, this option has never been exercised except to demonstrate capability. The US and Soviet Union did this in 1959-1960. China followed suit in 2007 and now India has demonstrated a capability it was regarded as having for a while. The shooting of the satellite will, no doubt, provide the country with a strategic advantage, but it will be for the political leadership and the diplomats to leverage it to the best advantage of the country.

(Tribune, India)

AS I SEE IT

UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE IN INDIAN ELECTIONS 2019



By Ven Parameswaran

CHINA CREATED 375 MILLION JOBS IN 40 YEARS (1978-2018). CAN INDIA EMULATE CHINA? VIETNAM IS ALREADY DOING IT!



In the next election, more than 130 million first time voters are expected to vote to cast their ballots, making them potential kingmakers. Young people's frustrations were evident at a massive protest march in the capital on Feb.7. They demand employment and quality education.

2.4 million government jobs remain vacant and wonder what is stopping the authorities from filling them, especially when there is such a huge job crisis. Before Modi came to power, he promised to create 20 million new jobs a year. 65 million youth were jobless during the last financial year alone.

The ABP News-CVoter survey forecast 233 seats for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, 167 for the INC-headed United Progressive Alliance and 143 for other parties, while the India Today-Karvy Insights Mood of the Nation Poll predicted the NDA would get 237 seats, the UPA 166 and others 140.

The Regulations and policy on land, labor or environmental clearances, and taxation impedes investment and growth. Every month India is adding 1.8 million youth reaching working age. The lack of infrastructure pushes up the logistics cost, which at 14% of GDP is the highest globally. There is no vocational training to help the youth to qualify for jobs.

SKILLS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN A DEGREE

IBM Chairperson Ginni Rometty spoke during a company conference in Mumbai on March 13, related to the global issue of job and employment. She said that most Indians are not employable enough, not because they don't have a degree, but they lack the required skill sets, expected to be obtained from beyond the set educational frameworks, according to news reports in Indian and other media. Rometty said, "in India, you have the same issues. Open jobs, (but)no matching skillsets. You have got to believe in a few different things than I think you believed in the past." One of them, she said, is to believe that skills are perhaps more important than a degree. "It can be that you can have folks with less than a university degree but participate well in this industry." Rometty said. I.T. industry is a \$180 billion industry in India alone, where 4 million Indians are directly employed, and according to

reports, approximately 30% of IBM employees in the world are Indians.

I must point out that the Indian I.T. industry applied capitalism and began with almost zero capital. Narayana Murthy, the founder of Infosys invested Rs.250,000. Not only he is a billionaire, but Infosys has created several billionaires. It applies to I.T. industry as a whole. The government did not provide any help. Narayana Murthy, Azim Premji, founder of Wipro, and others took initiative and put together organizations to deliver outsourcing service. These enterprising men provided the infrastructure required including electricity, water, roads, etc. They did not depend on government for anything. Fortunately, the government did not interfere, but offered incentive by not taxing. This is how, India started earning foreign exchange though in a small way but became highly successful. The 180 billion I.T. industry is an example of success of capitalism in India. The Indian I.T. industry has invested several billions in the U.S.A. If the government does not interfere, Indians are smart enough to grow India's economy.

INDIA CAN EMULATE CHINA AND CREATE MULTIMILLION JOBS

The next Prime Minister of India has no choice but to build most modern infrastructure in a hurry. This will enable the private industry to start building large scale factories that can manufacture clothing for export in 100 million pieces each of underwear, pyjamas, shirts, bedsheets, tablecloth, pillow cases, towels, dresses, etc. and many household goods. India has a comparative advantage in wages over China. India has a large supply of labor force needing well-paying jobs. As of now, Vietnam has advanced more than India in emulating China. Irrespective of whoever wins in the next election, top priority should be to deliver the modern infrastructure so that several huge factories could be built all over India. India's goal should be to grow its GDP @10% for the next decade to start with. If India fails to grow its GDP, the youth of India will be restless, and they could start a revolution to throw the government out. The Indian unemployed youth is going to say, enough is enough, and make sure the power of the bureaucrats are cut to size depriving corrupt practices.

The USA, headed by President Trump and India's Prime Minister Modi have signed "Closest Ally" relationship on a par with the U.K. It is now upto India to take full advantage of the special relationship. India can attract massive foreign investment in multibillion, year after year. I must reiterate once again that India has no choice but to privatize all public sector corporations for better productivity and efficiency. Too many public sector corporations, including AirIndia, are running in huge loss. By privatizing India can cut red tape and corruption. By opening up the economy, and liberalizing, India can become the easiest place to do business.

(Ven Parameswaran, MBA, Columbia University, former President & CEO, First Asian Securities Corporation, is a Senior Adviser to Imagindia Institute, a think tank in New Delhi. He can be reached at vpwaram@gmail.com)

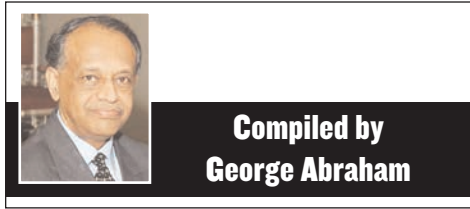
“In the next election, more than 130 million first time voters are expected to vote to cast their ballots, making them potential kingmakers. Young people's frustrations were evident at a massive protest march in the capital on Feb.7. They demand employment and quality education.”

“Before Modi came to power, he promised to create 20 million new jobs a year. 65 million youth were jobless during the last financial year alone. Unemployment in India is at its 45-year high.”

Unemployment in India is at its 45-year high. India needs to create at least 8 million new jobs yearly. Prime Minister Modi has failed to formulate policies and strategies to create the much-needed jobs. In 1978, Indian economy was ahead of China's. As I have repeated, India does not have to invent a new wheel to solve its critical economic problems. Both India and China have huge population, almost the same size. In 1978, China had nothing but two big enemies, the USA and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union and China were claiming each other's territory. China compromised with the USA. Necessity is the mother of invention. China was highly impressed with the U.S. economic growth and its capacity to consume. China was not impressed with the Soviet Union, that had military superiority, but its economy was poor. Though China was the largest Communist country, it was courageous enough to decide that it should accept capitalistic tools to grow its economy. You may call it neo-capitalism allowing its economy to grow while retaining communist control of its central government. This strategy has worked miracles for China. For India, it is easier to embrace American capitalism because India is the largest democracy. True democracy and capitalism flourish together. Therefore, as I said in my earlier article, the first thing India must do is to create 100 million new jobs in the next decade, India must shed its Socialism and go for full and complete capitalism. Compared to China, India has lost 40 years.

Not only did Modi government did not create additional jobs, it also snatched the employment of small traders and their workers because of demonetization. Thus, Modi created a constituency that is opposed to him. People impacted negatively on account of demonetization is large and they will not vote for Modi. The unemployed youth is also fiercely opposed to Hindu nationalism. The protesters are demanding a bigger slice of the budget for education and an end to "the saffronization in universities."

A Report Card on the Performance of Modi Government, as India Goes to Polls



Compiled by
George Abraham

“

It is essential for every voter in India to take a good look at Modi's record as the Chowkidar of the nation and vote their conscience. If this record meets their standard of achievement, India's future may be bleak, and the wellbeing of its democracy may even be in danger.

”

India is indeed facing a critical election in the coming weeks and the question on everyone's mind is whether this will be a referendum on Modi's accomplishments in the last five years of his governance! If it is one, he apparently has not only failed to deliver his campaign promises on the economic front but also damaged the institutions he was sworn in to protect and preserve.

Corruption:

One of the biggest accusations against UPA government by BJP was that it was immersed in corruption. Although coalition politics was partly to blame for that fiasco, Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister was beyond reproach in this regard, and he has led a nation with integrity and honor. Although the opposition and the media were quite harsh in their judgment of his tenure, the history will be much kinder to him.

However, the Rafale deal looks like the mother of all scams. As reports indicate, "the scam caused a slew of collateral damages: heavy loss to the exchequer, undermining of a national institution like Hindustan Aeronautical Limited, compromise on national security, and unfair favoritism to Anil Ambani enabling him to make undue profits." How Anil Ambani who has failed with Reliance Communications was chosen to build an advanced jet aircraft bypassing an established

Institution like HAL is beyond anybody's comprehension!

The Modi Government has also dropped key conditions for anti-corruption penalties and an escrow account for payments days before the Rafale deal was signed. The PMO's office appeared to have overruled strong objections by the Defense Ministry during the negotiations casting serious doubts on the integrity of this deal between India and France. The Government not only failed to make full disclosure on the details of the negotiations but also actively misled the Supreme Court. It is to be noted that though BJP came to power on the anti-corruption plank their failure to appoint a Lokpal is another glaring omission that should not go unnoticed.

Demonetization:

On November 8, 2016, Modi Government unleashed the most reckless demonetization policy upon the nation. The devastating effect of this policy reverberated throughout the land costing 140 of its citizens their dear lives and plunging the GDP from 8.01% to 6.5%. According to CMIE's surveys, 3.5 million jobs were lost during the final quarter of 2016-17. Small business took the brunt of the hit and business was down by as much as 50% for small traders.

The farmers, especially small and marginal who largely depended on cash to buy seeds, fertilizers and to pay for sowing, borrowing water for irrigation remained worst affected and could not complete the crop-related activities. Many people in the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder lost their life savings and the poor traders went without business and so their families without essential food items. However, the rich and the privileged faced no problems and were given a gift-wrapped opportunity to convert all their black money into white money.

Jobs

When Modi was running for election in 2014, he promised 2 crore jobs every year. What is the situation today? In 2017-18, the country's unemployment situation worsened as the rate stood at 6.1%, a 45-year high. Joblessness was recorded at 7.8% in urban areas and 5.3% in rural areas. The Center for Monitoring Indian Economy says that 11 million jobs were also lost in the 2017-18 period. According to the NSSO, the joblessness among youth was at a higher level compared to the previous years and much higher compared to that in the overall population.

The youth of the country feel betrayed, and their hopes dashed as the Modi government appeared to have no road map for job creation. Half of India's working-age population, for the first time, is not contributing to any economic activity according to the National Sample Survey office's latest job-survey. "In a country of over 1.2 billion people, India is creating about 450 jobs per 24 hours while China is creating 50,000 jobs in the same 24 hours. Our Prime Minister doesn't think this is a problem," said Rahul Gandhi, Congress President addressing a rally.

Farmer's Plight

The Indian farmer appeared to have suffered the most under Modi administration as this important sector took the brunt of the effect of the brutal demonetization policy as the agricultural growth was sluggish at 1.9% which is half of what was during the previous UPA government. Farmer's suicide went up so much during Modi rule, the government stopped printing the suicide figures from February 2017. The BJP reneged on



implementing its promise in the manifesto for 2014 elections that it would evolve the National Agricultural Market to give farmers the best price, cost + 50%, for their products.

Modi Government has also earned the dubious distinction of being the first government ever to tax agriculture. Modi Government has imposed 5% GST on fertilizers, 12% GST on tractor/agriculture implements, 18% GST on pesticide, 18% GST on tire, tube, transmission parts and 18% on cold storage equipment. While the Government has written off Rs. 2.4 lakh crore bad loans for crony capitalists, it is not generous with small and marginal farmers to get rid of their debts.

GST:

"It is Gujarat Sabotage Tax," Modi said of the GST in 2011 when the UPA government introduced it in the Parliament. However, it became an ideal tax scheme only when he became the Prime Minister. Although it was a much-needed reform the messy implementation and clumsy rollout sent panic waves among the business class that was not ready for the change in taxation. One year after GST rollout, small business was reporting drop in sales and struggling with the high cost of compliance.

Filing returns became a huge headache for small businesses as they have to rely on professionals, and that became an additional financial burden for them. Compliance process was further slowed down as the Information technology took a long time to resolve cumbersome registration and audit processes. In addition, GST moved the power center so much away from the States as it started impacting the relationship in a Federal power-sharing structure.

National Security:

Mr. Modi's stint as Prime Minister will be also be known for weaker national security, a rise in militant attacks and higher tolls in the army and civilian deaths. The dastardly Pulwama attack by the militants resulted in the death of 44 Security personnel. Under Modi's watch, 498 soldiers and 278 civilians were killed as we saw an uptick in terrorist activities in Kashmir and across the LOC. In the case of Pulwama, how did a suicide bomber acquire 300Kgs of RDX and permitted to enter the most secure Jammu-Srinagar National highway despite the 'standard operating procedure' for sanitizing the convoy stretch? Undoubtedly, it is a massive intelligence failure that needs to be further looked into.

And also it is shameful in a manner in which the BJP and Narendra Modi government tried to gain political capital over the Pulwama tragedy accusing those expressing skepticism of the outcome of the surgical strikes as anti-nationalists. It is their leader Yeddyurappa who made the statement that this counterattack will fetch BJP 22 seats in Karnataka. While taking the patriot cover behind the army, the government's allocation in the 2018-19 Budget

was just 1.58 percent of the GDP, lowest since 1962. A parliamentary standing committee under Major General B C Khanduri exposed the neglect of the armed forces saying 68% of the equipment was vintage and there was no money for the purchase of emergency weapons.

Intolerance and Communal frenzy:

Communal differences and religious intolerance reached a new height during the regime of Narendra Modi with Hindu nationalists are having a free run in killing, assaulting and intimidating people of other faiths. Modi never uttered a word deprecating the dangerous breed of cow vigilantes who have killed at least 118 Muslims and Dalits during his governance. The Modi regime, on assuming power, made cow an instrument of political warfare and men from the fringes sprang up from all over. Lynching became a national pastime as there were instances where BJP leaders were openly garlanding the lynchings.

India witnessed an alarming rise in violence against Dalits after Narendra Modi took over. The national Crime record Bureau registered a six to eight times upsurge in the rate of crimes committed against Dalits in the last five years. Dalits who supported BJP in the last election felt let down by the Modi regime as the policies were blatantly against them. Several decisions and utterances of the government especially the way UGC changed the formula for calculating reserved posts reinforced the lack of trust among Dalits. The suicide of research scholar Rohit Vemula was a final stroke that led to a widespread feeling of alienation among Dalits, and students in particular.

Institutions:

India's democracy survived and thrived because of the resilience of its venerable Institutions. However, Narendra Modi was quite successful in demolishing these entities that formed the pillars of democracy. Today, we see these Institutions like Judiciary, Parliament, Cabinet, Planning Commission, Reserve Bank, Election Commission and Law Enforcement System being undermined. The world had witnessed a rare event when four Supreme Court judges held a press conference to warn against undermining judiciary while stating that the very system of democracy itself could be in danger.

It is alleged by the opposition that CBI is being misused by Modi to intimidate political opponents in the same way in which the Gestapo was used by the Nazi regime of Adolf Hitler. Narendra Modi was singularly responsible for the shameful drama that unfolded at various venues under the title 'CBI vs CBI', pitting the two top officials against each other. CBI's credibility has touched an all-time low under Modi government and increasingly being perceived as a political arm of the ruling party.

Saffron Splurge:

While skimming on funds to aid the flood victims in Kerala, Modi lives a larger than life story traveling the world over spending a whopping 2000 crores of Rupees. With the 2989 crores spent on building a Sardar Patel Statue, India could have built two IIT campuses or launched 6 Mars missions. The project shows the vanity of the office as these funds could have been put into much better use in areas where funds are desperately needed. On the other side of the spectrum, many of the flagship projects envisaged by the Modi government, purportedly to help the poor flopped due to lack understanding of the people's needs or not appropriating sufficient funds.

contd on Page 32

19 killed in B'desh fire, rescue operations on

DHAKA (TIP): At least 19 persons, including a Sri Lankan national, were killed and over 70 injured when a massive fire engulfed 22-storey building in Dhaka's posh Banani area on March 28, in the latest blaze to hit the Bangladeshi capital.

The incident, which happened on Thursday afternoon in a building that houses several garment shops and internet service providers, left several people trapped inside as the blaze spread to two adjacent buildings.

"Until now we can tell you that the inferno killed 19 persons, one of them being a Sri Lankan national," Farman Ali, an officer-in-charge of Banani police station, told reporters. At least six of the killed, including the Sri Lankan national, died after they jumped off from various floors of the high-rise building for safety.—PTI

Pak minister brands US envoy 'little pygmy' in Twitter

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistani minister has branded the US ambassador to Kabul a "little pygmy" in a high-level diplomatic Twitter row that erupted over ongoing peace talks between Washington and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The furore underscores the delicate balance of regional tensions as the US steps up a push to find a way out of Afghanistan, more than 17 years after the invasion. AFP

Singapore to tighten alcohol norms for pilots

SINGAPORE (TIP): The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) announced here on Thursday that it would tighten the regulatory regime on alcohol abstention to mitigate the risk of pilots operating under the influence of liquor. According to CAAS, the authority will implement the Airport Alcohol Testing Programme (AATP) and start random testing of pilots at Changi and Seletar airports on March 31, the Xinhua news agency reported. Reuters

Bangladeshi woman gives birth to twins 26 days after first delivery

DHAKA (TIP): A 20-year-old Bangladeshi woman has given birth to twins nearly a month after delivering a baby, media reported on March 20. All three newborns are alive and healthy.

Arifa Sultana gave birth to a premature baby boy in February, but just 26 days later she complained of abdominal pains and was rushed to a hospital on March 21 when she delivered twins, the BBC quoted Sheila Poddar, the gynaecologist who performed the caesarean, as saying.

Her twins were found to be healthy and were discharged with no complications.

Sultana's case is one of "uterus didelphys", which means she has two separate uteruses. "When the patient came in, we performed an ultrasound and found there were twin babies... We were both shocked and surprised. I have never observed something like this before," Poddar said. "If you go for a scan beforehand it would be very obvious to see two sets of uteruses," Ng told the BBC. "It's likely that three eggs ovulated and were fertilised at the same time during her fertile period which resulted in three embryos," he added. — IANS

No decision taken on opening of Sharda temple corridor in PoK: Pakistan

Earlier in the week, quoting sources in Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Express Tribune reported that the Pakistani government has approved a proposal to establish a corridor that will allow Hindu pilgrims from India to visit the ancient Hindu temple and cultural site.

ISLAMABAD (TIP): Pakistan said no decision has been taken so far on the opening of the Sharda temple corridor for Hindu pilgrims from India in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and asserted that there should be "a positive atmosphere" for taking such steps.

Earlier in the week, quoting sources in Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Express Tribune reported that the Pakistani government has approved a proposal to establish a corridor that will allow Hindu pilgrims from India to visit the ancient Hindu temple and cultural site.

Addressing a weekly press briefing here, Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal rejected the report, saying, "To the best of my knowledge, no decision has been taken so far (on opening the Sharda temple corridor)."

"A positive environment is required to move forward on all such issues," he added.

In its report, the media had also quoted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) member of the National Assembly (MNA) Ramesh Kumar as saying Pakistan has decided to open the Sharda Temple. Work on the project will start from the current year which Hindus in Pakistan will also be able to visit the site.

It is also one of the three famous holy site for Kashmiri pandits, the other two being the Martand Sun Temple in Anantnag and the

Amarnath Temple.

Kashmiri Pandit organizations have been

demanding opening the Sharda Peeth corridor for many years (PTI).



Ex-Pak PM Sharif out of prison on medical grounds

LAHORE (TIP): Pakistan's former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was released from jail on March 27, a day after the Supreme Court granted him six weeks' bail to receive medical treatment within the country. Sharif (69), was lodged in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail since December last year, serving a seven-year imprisonment in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills graft case. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo, who denies wrongdoing, has suffered four angina attacks in recent weeks, according to his daughter Maryam Nawaz. (PTI)

13 killed in military helicopter crash in Kazakhstan

ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN) (TIP): A military helicopter has crashed in southwestern Kazakhstan, killing all 13 servicemen on board, the defence ministry said on Thursday.

The crash involving the Russian-made Mi-8 aircraft occurred on Wednesday, the ministry said in a statement.

"13 servicemen were killed... while performing their military duty," it said.

Kazakhstan's new president Kassym-Jomart Tokayev tweeted that he had ordered an investigation into the crash.

A Soviet-era workhorse first built in the 1960s, the Mi-8 helicopter is widely used to transport passengers and supplies to remote sites.

It has been involved in a number of recent accidents.

In August last year, 18 people were killed in a crash in Siberia.

The defence ministry said on Thursday that the families of those killed would receive compensation.

Tokayev became Kazakhstan's president last week following the shock resignation of long-ruling 78-year-old strongman Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has retained key decision-making powers in the Central Asian country of 18 million. AFP

Thai Election Commission says junta party won popular vote

BANGKOK (TIP): Thailand's Election Commission says it has counted 100 per cent of the votes from the recent General Election and a party allied with the ruling junta has won the most votes, though the results are not yet official.

In a news conference on Thursday, the commission did not say how many seats that would translate into. The commission said earlier that the main anti-junta party had won the most constituency seats in Sunday's vote, the first since a 2014 military coup.

Both parties say those results mean they have a mandate to form the next government.

The election was for 500 seats in the Lower House. Of those 350 seats are determined by who won each constituency, while another 150 are divided between parties based on a proportion of the overall vote. — AP

Nine arrested in Thailand for posting election 'fake news'

BANGKOK (TIP): Nine people have been arrested in Thailand for spreading "fake news" on Facebook with posts about sacked election officials and bogus ballots in the wake of controversial polls in the kingdom.

Junta-ruled Thailand held its first vote since a 2014 coup on Sunday, with a military-backed party and its main rival linked to a self-exiled billionaire both claiming the right to govern.

Full official results have not yet been released, but questions are mounting over election irregularities that may have skewed initial numbers.

A Thai official said on Thursday that nine people were arrested for sharing fake news on Facebook claiming two election commissioners had been sacked and that 600,000 illegitimate ballots were mixed into the vote count. The Election Commission is expected to release more results on Friday which could clarify the outcome of the vote. Rights groups say the Computer Crimes law provides broad powers to crack down on online content and to target regime critics. The head of the millennial-friendly Future Forward Party, poised to become Thailand's third largest faction, was accused of violating the act after a Facebook live broadcast criticised the junta last year.

A decision on whether to indict him and two other party members has been delayed until April. AFP

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US approved secret nuclear power work for Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON (TIP): US Energy Secretary Rick Perry has approved six secret authorisations by companies to sell nuclear power technology and assistance to Saudi Arabia, according to a copy of a document seen by Reuters on March 27.

The Trump administration has quietly pursued a wider deal on sharing US nuclear power technology with Saudi Arabia, which aims to build at least two nuclear power plants. Several countries including the United States, South Korea and Russia are in competition for that deal, and the winners are expected to be announced later this year by Saudi Arabia.

Perry's approvals, known as Part 810 authorizations, allow companies to do preliminary work on nuclear power ahead of any deal but not ship equipment that would go into a plant, a source with knowledge of the agreements said on condition of anonymity.

The approvals were first reported by the Daily Beast. The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) said in the document that the companies had requested that the Trump administration keep the approvals secret.

"In this case, each of the companies which received a specific authorization for (Saudi Arabia) have provided us written request that their authorization be withheld from public release," the NNSA said in the document. In the past, the Energy Department made previous Part 810 authorizations available for the public to read at its headquarters. A Department of Energy official said the requests contained proprietary information and that the authorizations went through multi-agency approval process.

Many US lawmakers are concerned that sharing nuclear technology with Saudi Arabia could eventually lead to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told CBS last year that the kingdom would develop nuclear weapons if its rival Iran did. In addition, the kingdom has occasionally pushed back against agreeing to US standards that would block two paths to potentially making fissile material for nuclear weapons clandestinely: enriching uranium and reprocessing spent fuel.

Concern in Congress about sharing nuclear technology and knowledge with Saudi Arabia rose after US-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed last October in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The Part 810 authorizations were made after November 2017, but it was not clear from the document whether any of them were made after Khashoggi's killing.

Representative Brad Sherman, a Democrat, called on Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during a congressional hearing on Wednesday to release the names of the companies that got the approvals by the middle of April, and Pompeo said he would look into it.

Sherman also said the Trump administration had attempted to evade Congress on sharing nuclear power with the kingdom. Pompeo said the administration was working to ensure any shared technology nuclear power would not present proliferation risks. Last month, Democratic House members alleged in a report that top White House aides ignored warnings they could be breaking the law as they worked with former US officials in a group called IP3 International to advance a multibillion-dollar plan to build nuclear reactors in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia. Reuters

US Republicans intensify counter-attack after Mueller investigation

WASHINGTON (TIP): A second US Senate committee on March 27 sought to examine the motives of federal agents and investigators who launched the Trump-Russia probe as a Republican effort gathered momentum to seek retribution on behalf of President Donald Trump.

Homeland Security Chairman Ron Johnson told Reuters he planned to join Judiciary Chairman Lindsey Graham, a fellow Republican, in a review of what motivated an investigation that led to US Special Counsel Robert Mueller's 22-month probe of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and possible collusion with the Trump campaign.

"How was this pushed by members of the FBI, Department of Justice and the intelligence community? We're fully aware of the bias that existed in those agencies under the Obama administration," Johnson said, referring to Democratic President Barack Obama, who preceded Trump.

"I've been talking to Senator Graham. I want to work hand-in-glove, our two committees, to try and get that information and make it public for the American people," he said.

Trump, who, along with fellow Republicans, has seized on the disclosure that Mueller did not find his campaign conspired with Russia to meddle in the election, has been calling for investigations into how the probe got started.

"He is on fire. Anybody who thinks this is going to go by the wayside does not understand the issue of retribution," said a Trump confidant who speaks to the president regularly. "Hell hath no fury like a president scorned." Trump advisers predict Trump will make much of the matter at a rally for supporters in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on Thursday, his first major appearance since the Mueller investigation concluded.

A Trump ally, Graham laid out plans for his own investigation this week and urged US Attorney General William Barr to name a special counsel to look into the matter separately.

US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler told reporters he was very concerned that Barr would not submit Mueller's report to Congress by next Tuesday as Democrats had requested. Nadler said he had a 10-minute phone conversation with Barr on Wednesday.



"I asked whether he could commit that the full report, an unredacted full report with the underlying documents evidence would be provided to Congress and to the American people. And he wouldn't make a commitment to that. I am very concerned about that," Nadler said.

Mueller's report was submitted on Friday to Barr, who issued a summary. Trump said he had been completely exonerated, even though the report did not clear him on the question of obstructing justice. Trump still faces congressional investigations into his personal and business affairs. But Republicans are hoping Mueller's findings will help Trump's 2020 re-election prospects and rebound against his Democratic accusers.

A focus of Republican inquiries is a Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) warrant for former Trump adviser Carter Page, based in part on information in a dossier compiled by Christopher Steele, a former British intelligence officer who co-founded a private intelligence firm.

Page, a foreign policy adviser during Trump's campaign, drew scrutiny from the FBI, which said in legal filings in 2016 that it believed he had been "collaborating and conspiring" with the Kremlin. Page met with

several Russian government officials during a trip to Moscow in July 2016. He was not charged.

Johnson also hopes to unearth facts about alleged discussions at the Justice Department both to surreptitiously record conversations with Trump and to approach Cabinet members about replacing him under the US Constitution's 25th Amendment.

Johnson said federal law enforcement officials would have done better to approach Trump quietly about concerns they had involving members of his campaign.

During his investigation, Mueller brought charges against 34 people, including Russian agents and former Trump aides.

Asked about the Republican push to investigate the investigators, Democrat Jamie Raskin of the House Judiciary Committee said: "There is a scramble to obscure the reality that nobody has seen the Mueller report yet."

"So, it was perfectly predictable," he added, "that once they declared the president completely and totally exonerated by a report no one has read, they would turn in vindictive fashion to try to go after the people whoever raised questions about the president's conduct." Reuters

Boeing rolls out software fix to defend 737 MAX franchise, awaits US regulator's approval

SEATTLE/WASHINGTON (TIP): Boeing Co on March 27 took its most aggressive moves yet to defend its core 737 airliner franchise, saying it had developed software fixes to prevent failures of an automated flight control system that is being scrutinized after two deadly crashes in the past five months.

Boeing, in the midst of one its worst crises in years, is under pressure from crash victims' families, airlines, lawmakers in Washington and regulators around the world to prove that the automated flight control systems of its 737 MAX aircraft are safe, and that pilots have the training required to override the system in an emergency.

The 737 MAX planes were grounded worldwide following an Ethiopian Airlines disaster on March 10 that killed 157 people, five months after a Lion Air crash in Indonesia that killed 189 people.

A Boeing official in Seattle said on Wednesday the timing of the software upgrade was "100 percent independent of the timing of the Ethiopian accident," and the company was taking steps to make the anti-stall system "more robust." There was no need to overhaul Boeing's regulatory relationship with the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) now, the company said.

"We are going to do everything that we can do to ensure that accidents like these never happen again," Mike Sinnett, vice president for product strategy and future airplane development, told reporters.

The FAA said it had not reviewed or certified the software upgrade yet. The FAA has agreed to significantly improve its oversight of organizations performing certifications on its behalf by July, US Transportation Department Inspector General Calvin Scovel told a Senate panel on

Wednesday. US Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and some lawmakers on Wednesday questioned why Boeing did not require safety features on its top-selling plane that might have prevented the crashes.

Executives with US airlines welcomed Boeing's moves, but want US regulators to sign off on the upgrade.

Southwest Airlines Co, which on Wednesday became the first major airline to formally cut its financial outlook for the year after being forced to pull its MAX fleet of 34 jets out of service, supported Boeing's decision.

Current 737 MAX pilots have criticized Boeing for not disclosing more details about MCAS initially. Sinnett said the company has added details on MCAS to its flight crew operations manual. All pilots will need to complete this training before returning to the skies, he said. Reuters

Indian American Lawmakers Call for Public Release of Full Mueller Report



Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, Rep. Ami Bera and Rep. Ro Khanna have demanded that Attorney General Barr release the full Mueller report

WASHINGTON (TIP): Indian American Lawmakers are calling for the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's full report after receiving a summary of the investigation from Attorney General William Barr that clears President Donald Trump of involvement with Russia in the 2016 election.

Mueller's probe did not get a conclusion on whether Trump obstructed justice, Barr said in a four-page letter to Congress. According to Barr's letter, Mueller did not find evidence that anyone associated with the Trump campaign knowingly conspired with the Russian government in efforts to interfere with the 2016 election. Though the report did not determine the president committed a crime, he said, it also did not exonerate him.

"The letter from Attorney General Barr reveals his own interpretations of Special Counsel Mueller's conclusions, introduces a range of unanswered questions, and reaffirms the need for maximum transparency that can only be achieved by releasing the Special Counsel's full report and the underlying documents supporting it. The American taxpayers paid for the Mueller Report and should be able to see what they paid for. Congress and the American people cannot rely on the Attorney General's interpretations and conclusions alone", Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said in a

statement. "According to Attorney General Barr's summary, the Special Counsel's investigation did not exonerate the President. It is imperative that Congress have the opportunity to examine these findings in full while continuing our broader investigations and informing the American people as to what happened in 2016 and how Russian interference, and interference by any foreign power, can be prevented in the future."

Representative Pramila Jayapal slammed Attorney General for not taking 'No further action on this very serious charge' and demanded release of full Mueller report.

"It is clear that, even after a 22-month investigation, Special Counsel Mueller was not able to exonerate the President from the charge of obstruction of justice. Equally disturbing is the fact that Attorney General Barr took less than 48 hours to determine that he will take no further action on this very serious charge. The Attorney General has made it clear - through his broad support for sweeping presidential power and authority and his past criticism of the Special Counsel's inquiry - that he is not an unbiased participant. It is, therefore, even more urgent that Congress immediately receive the full report and all the underlying documentation and evidence so that we can make our own determinations" said Jayapal.

"The Special Counsel's investigation is one critical piece of a much broader set of investigations, including the work of the Southern District of New York, that have already revealed a shocking level of wrongdoing. Mueller has held Trump's top personal, campaign and White House advisors to account - five of whom have been found guilty and a sixth who is on trial for lying and other offenses. The House Judiciary Committee has the responsibility to investigate and conduct oversight into abuse of power, public corruption and obstruction of justice. As a member of that Committee, I look forward to immediately receiving the full Mueller report and the underlying evidence and continuing to ensure that we uphold the Constitution", she further added.

"If Mueller wanted Barr to make the call about obstruction he would have asked him 3 weeks ago and included in his final report. That he didn't indicates that Mueller wants Congress to make this determination. Barr is an usurper in this process. Mueller report should be released to the public so that the American people can assess the facts for themselves", tweeted Congressman Ro Khanna.

"Now that Robert Mueller has finished his report, the people have a right to know what he found. This is about protecting our democracy", tweeted Congressman Ami Bera.

Bayer must pay \$80 mn to man in Roundup cancer trial: US jury



SAN FRANCISCO/NEW YORK (TIP): A US jury on March 28 awarded \$80 million to a man who claimed his use of Bayer AG's glyphosate-based weed killer Roundup caused his cancer, in the latest legal setback for the company facing thousands of similar lawsuits.

The jury in San Francisco federal court said the company was liable for plaintiff Edwin Hardeman's non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

It awarded \$5 million in compensatory damages and \$75 million in punitive damages to Hardeman after finding that Roundup was defectively designed, that Monsanto failed to warn of the herbicide's cancer risk and that the company acted negligently.

Bayer bought Roundup maker Monsanto last year for \$63 billion.

The company in a statement on Wednesday said it was disappointed with the jury's decision and that it would appeal the verdict.

"This verdict does not change the weight of over four decades of extensive science and the conclusions of regulators worldwide that support the safety of our glyphosate-based herbicides and that they are not carcinogenic," Bayer said.

The company added that the verdict in Hardeman's case had no impact on future cases and trials, "as each one has its own factual and legal circumstances."

The trial is only the second of more than 11,200 Roundup lawsuits set to go to trial in the United States. Previous litigation setbacks and a prior jury verdict against the company have sent Bayer shares plunging.

The verdict comes after the same jury on March 19 found Roundup to have been a "substantial factor" in causing Hardeman's cancer, allowing the trial to proceed to a second phase to determine liability and damages. Bayer shares fell more than 12 percent after last week's jury finding.

In the trial's second phase, Hardeman's lawyers were able to present previously excluded internal documents allegedly showing the company's efforts to influence scientists and regulators about the widely used product's safety.

Lawyers for Hardeman were seen by a Reuters reporter cheering in the elevator outside the courtroom after the verdict was announced.

"As demonstrated throughout trial, since Roundup's inception over 40 years ago, Monsanto refuses to act responsibly," Hardeman's lawyers said in a statement, adding that the company instead focused on "manipulating public opinion and undermining anyone who raises genuine and legitimate concerns about Roundup."

'Hasn't sunk in' After the verdict, Hardeman told reporters he was "overwhelmed." "It hasn't sunk in yet," he said. Hardeman's case was considered a bellwether trial to help determine the range of damages and define settlement options for the more than 760 other federal cases pending in the same court before US District Judge Vince Chhabria. (Reuters)

2 killed, 2 injured as gunman opens fire during Seattle rush hour

LOS ANGELES/ATLANTA (TIP): Two people were killed and two critically injured when a gunman opened fire on two motorists and a Metro bus in Seattle on March 27 and then caused a collision as he tried to flee in a stolen car during the afternoon rush hour, police said.

The incident unfolded in a northeastern Seattle neighborhood when the suspect approached a motorist at an intersection and shot her before walking into the street and firing on the bus, police said in a statement.

The bus driver, identified by the Seattle Times newspaper and other media as Eric Stark, 53, was shot but managed to turn the bus around and head away from the assailant, police said.

The suspect then approached a second motorist in a Toyota Prius and opened fire,

killing the driver.

The gunman climbed into the Prius as police arrived and sped away but collided with a nearby vehicle, killing that driver.

Officers pursuing the suspect took him into custody after a brief standoff, police said.

Authorities did not immediately offer an explanation for what might have precipitated the shooting or specify the type of weapon used.

"We only believe that this is a one, lone suspect involved in this random, senseless act", said Seattle Deputy Police Chief Marc Garth Green, according to NBC News. "We're outraged at what this suspect did."

The unidentified suspect was taken to a Seattle hospital, where he remained under guard while being treated for injuries that

were not life-threatening, according to police.

Police said one motorist was killed by gunfire and the other motorist was killed in the collision. Both were men. None of the victims was immediately identified by police.

The Times reported late on Wednesday that the gunman was a 33-year-old Seattle resident. The man who was fatally shot was 50 and the man who was killed in the collision was 70, it said.

King County's Metro transit authority said on Twitter the bus driver had activated an emergency alarm to report being shot, and that none of his 12 passengers was injured.

Although wounded in the torso, the bus driver was able to walk to a gurney to be transported by paramedics to hospital, the Seattle Times quoted a transit union president as saying. Reuters



Why not Varanasi: Priyanka to party workers' plea to fight from Rae Bareli

RAE BARELI (TIP): Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Thursday sent ripples across the political spectrum after her swift riposte "Why not Varanasi" (the Lok Sabha seat of Prime Minister Narendra Modi) to the party workers' request to contest elections from her mother Sonia Gandhi's parliamentary constituency Rae Bareli.

Her remark came at an interactive meeting with party booth workers, block presidents, gram panchayat and nagar panchayat heads at a guest house here, about six km from the district headquarters.

As Gandhi, the party in-charge for eastern Uttar Pradesh, told the gathering that her mother was tense as she could not come among them, some workers asked her to contest from Rae Bareli instead.

At this, she smilingly said: "Why not Varanasi?" Priyanka Gandhi also said that she had told her mother not to worry as she would look at the work of her constituency.

If the younger Gandhi sibling jumps into the fray against Modi, then it would be the most high-profile contest of the current Lok Sabha polls. But for now, it seems to be only a quick retort made by her. *Source: IANS*

Shatrughan meets Rahul, to join Congress



NEW DELHI (TIP): Lok Sabha MP Shatrughan Sinha on Thursday ended speculation over his joining the Congress after meeting party president Rahul Gandhi at his residence in New Delhi. After meeting Gandhi, Sinha announced he will join the Congress.

"Joining will happen soon, we will give you a positive news during Navaratri. I will join Congress now," news agency ANI quoted Sinha as saying.

Senior Congress leader Shaktisinh Gohil tweeted that Sinha will join the party on April 6. "BJP MP Shatrugna Sinha ji met our Congress President Shri @RahulGandhi today and in national interest has decided to join tur Congress. Hw wil formally join Congress on April 6," Gohil wrote on Twitter.

This came after another senior Congress leader RK Anand said that a decision on Shatrughan Sinha's induction in the party was expected "after 2 pm". News agency ANI quoted Anand as saying, "It will be decided after 2 pm, there is no fight on his joining or his seat, just a delay. Adjustments are happening."

Modi harps on national security

LUCKNOW/SRINAGAR (TIP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday touted his government's national security credentials, citing the 2016 surgical strike, the airstrike in Pakistan, and the anti-satellite missile test as evidence of its decisiveness, while attacking the opposition for asking questions about the military operations.

Launching the BJP's campaign for the Lok Sabha polls with a rally in Meerut, Modi weaved his discourse around the 'chowkidar' narrative, addressing himself as 'chowkidar' throughout his speech.

Claiming that his government had been more decisive than the previous dispensation in responding to the designs of Pakistan, Modi said some Indian leaders were in a popularity race in Pakistan and questioned the valour of Indian soldiers. "They are all over Pakistani media. You tell me what does our nation want? A hero of India or of Pakistan?" he asked the cheering gathering.

"The country doesn't need evidence, it needs worthy sons. Those who seek evidence abuse the sons of this soil," he said, targeting those who had asked questions about the surgical strike and last month's airstrike.

He repeated his attack on the opposition on the issue at a rally in Jammu later in the day. "After the Indian attack on terrorists in Balakot, every Congress leader is saying things which are not in the interest of the country. Even those (NC and PDP) who ruled Jammu and Kashmir for decades are talking on those lines...."

No citizen of the country can accept such talk, which brings cheers in Pakistan," Modi said. Modi was accompanied by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and other state leaders at the rally in Meerut, which will go to the polls along with seven other constituencies in UP on April 11. Voting for all five Uttarakhand seats will be held the same day. Modi didn't forget to target the Congress over corruption, referring to Robert Vadra, who is facing a money laundering case, and dynastic politics.

Later, addressing a rally in Rudrapur in Uttarakhand, the PM asked the gathering if it was proper to abuse the Army chief, referring to criticism of Army chief Gen. Bipin Rawat,



who hails from Uttarakhand, after the 2016 surgical strike.

He said the hill state was not only a seat of one of the four dhams, Badrinath, but a fifth 'dham' as well as it was 'sainik dham', the land of soldiers.

In Jammu, Modi asserted that those running terror factories across the border were living in fear now. "It is the first time that terrorists from across the border, who have been spreading terror in India, are living in fear," he claimed.

PM takes "SARAB" swipe At UP alliance

PM Narendra Modi on Thursday coined a new term, 'sarab', for the opposition alliance in UP. "Sapa (Samajwadi Party) ka 'sa', RLD ka 'Ra' aur Baspa (BSP) ka 'ba', matlab 'sarab' (Take the 'Sa' of Samajwadi Party, 'Ra' of Rashtriya Lok Dal and 'Ba' of Bahujan Samaj Party)," Modi said. The Congress demanded his apology, accusing him of stooping to a new low.

Yogi, not Modi, to lead BJP charge in UP

LUCKNOW (TIP): Even as the saffron brigade will be banking on Prime Minister's magic to repeat the 2014-like performance in Uttar Pradesh, chief minister Yogi Adityanath, and not Narendra Modi, will

spearhead the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Lok Sabha poll campaign in the state.

Yogi, who launched the campaign from Shakumbhari Devi temple in Saharanpur on Sunday, will be addressing rallies in all the 80 Lok Sabha constituencies, said BJP spokesperson Chandramohan.

He will also be addressing public meetings in support of party candidates across the country, including the North East. While on Monday, he addressed public meeting in Mathura in support of party candidate Hema Malini, on Tuesday he addressed public meeting in Gorakhpur and Varanasi.

"The party has planned more rallies of Yogi in constituencies where BJP is facing strong challenge from the BSP-SP-RLD alliance or the Congress," said a BJP leader.

Besides winning maximum seats, the challenge of regaining the Gorakhpur seat that BJP lost in the by-poll also rests on Yogi's shoulder.

In 2018 by-poll, the BSP-SP-NISHAD party alliance had shocked the BJP by winning the seat that Yogi has represented for five consecutive terms.

In fact, the BJP's defeat in Gorakhpur by-poll has played an important role in crystalizing the alliance for the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

Congress to give 3-year blanket pass to new ventures, abolish angel tax: Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI (TIP): Unveiling his economic agenda, Congress President Rahul Gandhi Thursday said if voted to power his party will cut red tape for businesses, exempt new enterprises from seeking any permission in first three years, make it easier to get bank loans and scrap angel tax on start-ups.

In an exclusive interview to PTI a fortnight ahead of the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls starting April 11, Gandhi said his government's focus will be on job creation and that entrepreneurs will get fiscal and tax incentives based on their ability to create jobs.

These will form part of Congress party's election manifesto that will be released next month, he said.

"For the first three years of setting up a new business, we are going to free you up from red tape. You will not need to ask for permission for anything," Gandhi said. "Don't bother about anything, there is no permission you need. Start your business, get to work." Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often been accused of giving a jobless economic growth and Gandhi's emphasis on cutting red tape and removing bureaucratic hurdles for starting business is aimed at



wooing youth wanting to start new ventures as well as create jobs.

"We've said that we will remove the draconian and ill-conceived angel tax. I have made that commitment and it's going to be done," Gandhi said.

Since 2012, start-ups were conditioned to what is called angel tax on the premiums obtained over their fair market value. According to a new section introduced to the Income Tax Act in 2012, if a closely held company issues shares at a price more than its fair market value, the excess amount will be taxed at 30 per cent, as income from other

sources. However, sometime last year, the Income Tax department started to send notices to various startups on investments received by them from angel investors. Since then this tax has been coined angel tax.

Last month, the government relaxed the angel tax norms by giving a blanket exemption for up to Rs 25 crore of capital raised by DIPP registered startups from any sources. Capital beyond that will be taxed.

Gandhi said this "powerful idea" came after he held discussions with several entrepreneurs, during which they stressed that their biggest problem was getting all kinds of permissions from different agencies before starting their enterprises.

The entrepreneurs said different agencies ask lots of questions and bribes, and hence "we said, we believe in you; we trust you, and so for the first three years of setting up a new business, we are going to free you up from the red tape".

The Congress president said another idea that came up during discussions with entrepreneurs was the opening of the banking system to young business-persons and providing them access. *Source: PTI*

India backs UN move against terror funding, points to 'serial offender' Pakistan

NEW YORK/NEW DELHI (TIP): Welcoming the recognition in the resolution of the essential role of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in setting global standards, India's permanent representative at the United Nations, Syed Akbaruddin on Friday said the states who are "apologists" for terrorists will continue to provide alibis to justify their actions and inaction.

Akbaruddin also said 'serial offenders' will continue to support terrorism, in a veiled reference to Pakistan.

"Terrorists are going to be more creative in finding ways to violate the rule book also the unfortunate reality is the states which are apologists will continue to provide alibis to justify their actions and inactions to as was done by a serial offender earlier today," he noted. Global momentum to rein in terrorism is picking up after the US moved a resolution against Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar. Now, the UN Security Council has adopted a resolution to combat the financing of terrorists. It has linked FATF with the UN.

Asserting that the global community is impatient for action, Akbaruddin said, "We welcome the recognition in the resolution of the essential role of FATF as a saying goes the proof of the pudding is in its eating, the utility of any resolution will, therefore, be in its implementation."

FATF has put Pakistan in the dock for terror financing and after review, there is a



India's permanent representative at the United Nations, Syed Akbaruddin

possibility of sanctions to be imposed and Pakistan to be put in greylist.

Stating that effective and sustained efforts at countering terror financing is at the heart of the issue of addressing terrorism, Akbaruddin added, "Terrorists rely on resources to sustain themselves and their activities across the world. We, therefore, welcome this initiative to bring together, in a comprehensive manner, various existing norms and regulations. It is a milestone in global efforts to set up a normative framework to criminalize terrorist financing."

It is strategically very important for India that UNSC will collaborate with FATF to punish states involved in terror financing.

India also emphasised that non-compliance of crucial sanction measures in case of UN proscribed terrorists, entities render all the member states at high risk of challenges from these terrorist groups/organisations who are well funded and armed despite international measures.

India's permanent representative to the UN said, "Nevertheless we the international community need to be determined to continue evolving our toolbox and go by our rulebook rather than distracted and stray from our determination. The global community is impatient for action, going forward, UN collectively needs to do more and do it more effectively, for its part India will be a willing partner in this endeavour"

India said combatting terrorism is viewed by many states as fundamental security policies that require global responsiveness. India also termed the UN's move as a milestone in global efforts to set up a normative framework to criminalise terrorist financing.

Akbaruddin said, "Effective and sustained efforts in countering terrorist financing is at the heart of the issues addressing terrorism, therefore, we welcome this initiative to bring together in a comprehensive manner various existing norms and regulations."

1984 ANTI-SIKH RIOTS

Supreme Court grants 2 more months to complete probe into 186 cases

NEW DELHI (TIP): The Supreme Court on Friday granted two more months to SIT to complete its probe into 186 cases of 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

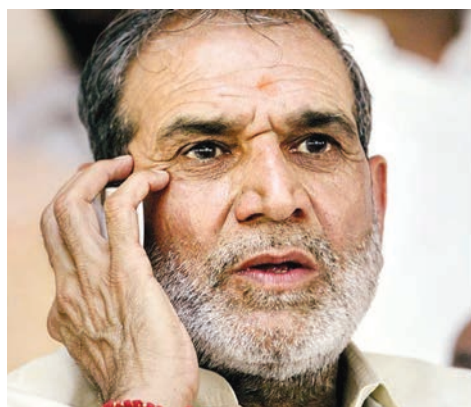
The SC issued notice on plea seeking inquiry into role of 62 policemen named in 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

On January 10, the Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered that 186 cases from the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi be reopened and probed by a three-member special investigation team (SIT) headed by a retired high court judge.

The court said it will nominate the members of the probe team on Thursday, after a consensus between the petitioners and the government on who should be a part of it.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra took the decision after going through a supervisory panel's report that scrutinised 241 cases closed by a Central government-appointed SIT between February 2015 and August 2017. The supervisory panel of Justices JM Panchal and KSP Radhakrishnan submitted their report in a sealed cover on December 6, 2017.

Senior advocate HS Phoolka, appearing for the families of the riot victims, suggested the names of three retired judges as the possible chairman of the probe team -- former Delhi High Court Chief Justice AP Shah, former Punjab and Haryana High Court chief justice Mukul Mudgal, and former Delhi High Court judge SN Dhingra -- but the bench said it



wanted a list from the government as well.

The other two members will be an IPS officer of the rank of inspector general and a serving IPS officer of the rank of superintendent of police, the bench said.

The court wanted to finalise the members of the SIT but additional solicitor general Pinky Anand requested for an adjournment, saying the government needed a day to put a list of candidates together.

"The bench's decision to have an SIT under a retired HC judge is good news for the victims who have been waiting for justice for the last 33 years," Phoolka said.

In one of the darkest chapters in Delhi's history, nearly 3,000 people were killed after riots that broke out following the assassination of then prime minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984. Some senior

politicians, many of them from the Congress party, were accused of inciting violence and fomenting tensions.

SAJJAN INSTIGATED MOB, WITNESS TELLS DELHI COURT

A key prosecution witness in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case told a Delhi court on Thursday that Sajjan Kumar had instigated the mob to kill Sikhs.

The witness, Joginder Singh, also identified Kumar, who was present before District Judge Poonam A Bamba, as the person who instigated the mob.

"When I went to lodge an FIR, the police had declined to name Sajjan Kumar in the FIR. Sajjan Kumar was the person who was leading the mob and provoking them," the witness said in his statement while being examined by advocate Tarannum Cheema, appearing for the prosecution.

Joginder Singh had lost his brother in the riots.

The court has now posted the matter for April 9 for further proceedings in the case.

Earlier, two other key prosecution witnesses — Cham Kaur and Sheela Kaur — had identified Kumar as the one who had instigated the mob in Sultanpuri.

The case was transferred from Karkardooma court to Patiala House court here by the Delhi High Court, which directed the district judge to video record the proceedings at the cost of the accused.

Jaitley: Art 35-A 'constitutionally vulnerable, has denied JK a booming economy

NEW DELHI (TIP): Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Thursday said Article 35A is "constitutionally vulnerable" and is an impediment to the economic development of Jammu and Kashmir. The article, incorporated into the Indian Constitution in 1954, grants special rights and privileges to the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a blog post entitled "The Rule of Law and the State of Jammu and Kashmir", Jaitley said many today raise doubts about the "Nehruvian course" and look at it as a "historical blunder". "Does our policy today have to be guided by that erroneous vision or an out of box thinking which is in consonance with ground reality?" he asked. Jaitley said the seven-decade history of the state now confronts changing India with several questions.

Jaitley called Article 35A a "surreptitious executive insertion in the Constitution". He said it was neither a part of the original Constitution, nor was it an amendment that needs to be approved by two-third majority of both Houses of Parliament.

He said the article gives the right to the state government to discriminate between citizens. "Lakhs of Indian citizens in J&K vote in Lok Sabha elections but not in Assembly, municipal or panchayat polls," he said. "Their children cannot get government jobs. They cannot own property and their children cannot get admitted to governmental institutions. The same applies to those who live elsewhere in the country. The heirs of ladies marrying outside the state are disinherited from owing or inheriting property."

Congress fields Urmila Matondkar from Mumbai North LS seat



MUMBAI (TIP): The Congress on Friday fielded actress Urmila Matondkar from Mumbai North Lok Sabha constituency two days after she joined the party.

Matondkar had joined the Congress after meeting Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday and had later said that she was "here to stay".

"The Congress central election committee has approved the candidature of Urmila Matondkar as party candidate to contest the ensuing general elections from Mumbai North parliamentary constituency in Maharashtra," a party statement said.

After joining the party, Matondkar had said she felt the need to join the Congress party as the freedom to express was under attack in the country and there are numerous examples in this regard in the last five years.

She had said the Congress party has participated in the freedom struggle and it stood for freedom.

SPOTLIGHT EVENT at SRFF 2019

By Mabel Pais

"This project was made even more obvious, as doctor Mukwege is.....an example not only for Africa but for the world of humanitarian engagement, political courage and the determination to fight against forces of evil..."

- Thierry Michel, Film Director

"Social media is a gift... to mankind. It's up to (us) to take advantage of it. Social Media is power to the people, its power should be used especially for the benefit of the vulnerable..."

- Dr. Marie Claudine Mukamabano, Rwandan Orphan-Survivor

One of the highlights of the Socially Relevant Film Festival (SRFF) was the Spotlight Event held on Monday, March 18. It was in 2 parts:

A Spotlight documentary film and a panel discussion.

SPOTLIGHT EVENT

The Socially Relevant Film Festival (SRFF) in collaboration with the Women's International Forum (WIF) brought the movie "The Man Who Mends Women" for the Spotlight Event. The movie chronicles the life and work of the 2018 Nobel Prize gynecologist and human rights activist Dr. Denis Mukwege and his efforts to heal the women who have been raped in the conflict of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The movie was followed by a panel discussion in the presence of the director Thierry Michel. WIF's Board Member Cathleen de Kerchove was a panelist.

Spotlight Documentary Film: The Man Who Mends Women

About 2018 Nobel Prize Peace Prize Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege In the presence of the director Thierry MICHEL

Dr. MUKWEGE

Winner of the Sakharov Prize 2014, Doctor Mukwege is internationally known as the man who mends thousands of women who have been raped during the 20 years of conflicts in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of the poorest countries on the planet, despite its extremely rich sub-soil.

His endless struggle to put an end to these atrocities and denounce the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators is not welcome.

At the end of 2012, the doctor was the target of another attempt on his life, which he miraculously survived.

Threatened with death, this doctor with an exceptional destiny now lives cloistered in his hospital in Bukavu under the protection of the United Nation peacekeepers.

But he is no longer alone in his struggle. The women to whom he has restored physical integrity and dignity, stand beside him, true activists for peace, hungry for justice.

Thierry MICHEL

Director, journalist and photographer Thierry Michel was born in Belgium in an industrial region "Black Country." From coal mines to prisons, from Brazil and the Maghreb to black Africa, he has always denounced peoples' distress and shared their revolts, doing this sometimes in a mixture of fiction and reality.

He started work in Belgian television, then went on to filmmaking. He directed two feature-length fiction films. Yet in his oeuvre (body of work) stand out his many documentaries that have been shown around the world and received international recognition and awards.

About ten years ago, while shooting another film in the Congo River, Africa, he filmed the tragic circumstances of women who were victims of rape and mutilation, designed to wreak havoc on the social cohesion of the families and communities to which they belonged. Besides gathering the testimony of a huge number of victims, he also heard the senseless stories of rapists, including the Mai-Mai militia who encourage this behavior. He describes themselves as rabid dogs capable of the most extreme violence, including that against unarmed women.

Subsequently, he decided to film the path taken by one of these doctors, at the heart of this region of huge lakes, infighting and ethnic wars in which women were among the main victims. This Dr. Mukwege, carries out, in the province of Kivu, exceptional work, with utter determination.

Dr. Mukwege is an example of honor and pride not only for Africa but for the world of humanitarian engagement,



Spotlight Panelists: From left to right - Marie Claudine Mukamabano, Cathleen de Kerchove, Nora Armani, Susan O'Malley, Thierry Michel.

Photo / Courtesy SRFF Festival Committee



In foreground (second from left) - Dr. Denis Mukwege with UN Security Forces

Photo / Courtesy SRFF Festival Committee



Nora Armani on Closing Night 2019.

Photo / Courtesy SRFF Festival Committee

political courage and the determination to fight against the forces of evil, risking his own life every day against obscurantist forces, in a similar way to Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King.

Panel Discussion: WOMEN and CHILDREN in CONFLICT ZONES

Moderator, Nora Armani, Founder-Artistic Director, SRFF

Panelists:

Ms. Susan O'Malley, Chair, NGO-CSW

Mrs. Cathleen de Kerchove, Director, Les Enfants de Panzi et d'Ailleurs (The Children Of Panzi)

Dr. Marie Claudine Mukamabano, Rwanda Orphans Support Project

Thierry Michel, Film Director, "The Man Who Mends Women"

Ms. Susan O'Malley, Chair, NGO-CSW

She is the Main Representative to the UN (NY) for the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW). She has chaired NGO CSW/NY since 2015 and was vice-chair for the previous four years.

She has been a participant in 404 panels going on for the last few weeks at the UN and adjacent venues in Women's History Month.

In addition to her involvement in various UN committees and previously at the CUNY (City University of New York), she has published articles/chapters in books and edited books and journals on civil rights, disability, higher education, human rights Shakespeare, and early modern women's cultural studies.

Cathleen de Kerchove, Co-Founder-Executive Director, Enfants de Panzi (Children of Panzi)

The Children of Panzi and elsewhere is a Belgian organization founded by four women with different political sensitivities but all having been touched by sexual violence against children in conflict zones.

The organization gathers together professionals and other volunteers who deal with and aim to achieve the psychological support to children with post traumatic stress disorders.

The children born out of rape, without a legal identity, are just as ostracized from their families and villages. They are sometimes considered as bringing bad luck, which leads them to move away and live elsewhere.

Violence and rape in the context of children presents a particular problem. The organization recognizes the enormous surgical work on female rape victims conducted by Dr. Mukwege. Many of these women are young girls. The legal age for passing from a minor to an adult in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is 18 years. Rape of young adolescent girls in puberty is frequent.

Dr. Marie Claudine MUKAMABANO

He is a Rwandan Orphan Genocide Survivor, a victim of the 1994 violence as a teenager.

Dr. Claudine is an inspirational, transformational leader and influential speaker. She is an author, entrepreneur, humanitarian, actress, artist, and super model.

During the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Government's leaders coined the slogan "Extremist Hutu Power" using the power of television, newspapers, radio and word-of-mouth to transform their message of hate into a policy of genocide which killed millions of innocent Rwandans in just 100 days. Their aim was, through their evil ideology, to exterminate all Tutsi ethnic groups as well as moderate Hutu people in what they coined, "ITSEMBATSEMBA N'ITSEMBA BWOKO" (liberate).

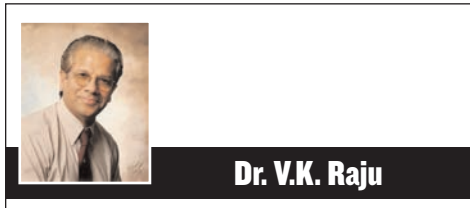
After coming to America, among her many accolades and recognitions in the USA, she was a CNN Hero nominee, the winner of Miss Global Peace 2019. Using her qualities of faith, forgiveness and gratitude, she turns her pain, sorrow, and story into one of positive impact by using the power of social media to save lives and change the lives of Rwandan orphans, one life at a time.

Mukamabano founded in 2005, "Why Do I Exist? (KUKI NDIHO) RWANDA ORPHANS SUPPORT PROJECT," a charitable organization to raise money for Rwandan orphans. This project was nominated by 2 million votes out of 1064 projects to be the 2019 ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Successful Stories for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 17 (The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, global warming, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice). This ceremony will happen in Geneva, Europe, April 8- 12, 2019. She is the 2019 WSIS (World Summit Information System) Prize Champion.

She is working on her new workshop "Maximize Your Network" & "Forgiveness Will Set You Free," She does all this as a memorial to her late mother, "Liberty" who was killed in the refugee camp.

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

Thoughts on Rivers of India: We don't have to clean the river; we have to stop dirtying it



“ How ironic it is that in India, the river is considered as a loving mother, dispensing bounty, fertility, and prosperity, worshipped in words and utterly neglected in practice. ”

Recently, an editor of a well-known Indian magazine sent me the HT Spotlight article. In this one, journalist Victor Mallet describes "How can India worship rivers but let them die?" This was during the Jaipur Literary Conference (needs to be corrected).

Two weeks ago, I returned from India. I have lived in the United States (Morgantown, WV) longer than in India. I visit India 3 or 4 times a year in connection with prevention and treatment of eye diseases, especially in children. This has been the work of Eye Foundation of America since 1977. The Eye Foundation of America has built an eye institute (Goutami Eye Institute) in my hometown, Rajahmundry, AP.

A month ago, I was in Rajahmundry. In the morning, I walk along the river bank enjoying the breathtaking scenery, but I'm ashamed of the horrible polluted conditions of the river (it was never like this during my childhood when we used to bathe and swim during our summer holidays).

"In the heart of the rivers, Oh King Varnuna, your golden home is built." -says Atharva Veda.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was an American philosopher, writer, and sage. He wrote in his book (Walden) he states, "The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges."

He goes on, "It appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans, Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta drink at my well. In the morning, I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita, since whose composition, years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions."

Henry David Thoreau had never been to India, yet he expresses thoughts that only a yogi is capable of. If Thoreau were to read Victor Mallet's essay on Ganga, what would he say?

This is what Victor Mallet said about the

Bigger threats include dams and projects to hold back silt which can cause serious consequences. The growth of superbugs has been aided by polluted water, making India a place where 58,000 infants die yearly due to untreatable diseases. India has the perfect storm of factors: 1) high number of diseases, 2) very poor sanitation, 3) big pharma industry and poor use of antibiotics."



Woeful images of River Godavari at Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh, India. Dirtying the river and then campaigning for cleaning it.

Photos by the author

present-day Ganga, "How can India worship rivers but let them die?" He goes on to comment that Indians are deeply apathetic to their state, treating them cruelly, contributing to the death of the rivers. He adds 'River of Life, River of Death: Ganges and India's future'. The pollution of the Ganges is contributing to misery and poor health of 5 million people. Ganga is not dead and could be saved, just like the river Thames was rescued in England. The Chicago river, which was filthy and polluted a few years ago, has also been cleaned up. There is enough money in India that is often underused or wasted that could have helped clean up the Ganges. Several action plans were put in place since 1980, but they have come to naught. A recent CAG report blamed the government for the RS

2,500 crore lying unused and not a single drop of the river had been cleaned.

Bigger threats include dams and projects to hold back silt which can cause serious consequences. The growth of superbugs has been aided by polluted water, making India a place where 58,000 infants die yearly due to untreatable diseases. India has the perfect storm of factors: 1) high number of diseases, 2) very poor sanitation, 3) big pharma industry and poor use of antibiotics."

(Yet in our national Indian doctor's meetings in the USA, the pharmaceutical companies of India, which have contributed to both the health of the people and devastating pollution of the environment, are held in high esteem).

1) All hope is not lost.

2) The Indian government has made cleaning the polluted rivers a priority.

3) Above all, we don't have to clean the river; we have to stop dirtying it.

How ironic it is that in India, the river is considered as a loving mother, dispensing bounty, fertility, and prosperity, worshipped in words and utterly neglected in practice.

May I end by offering the Arabian proverb, "A mouth that prays, a hand that kills."

(The author is an eminent ophthalmologist based in Morgantown, West Virginia, USA. Founder President of the Eye Foundation of America, his mission is to create a world without childhood blindness. He can be reached at vkrajumd@gmail.com)



ALIA BHATT CLOCKS 30 MILLION INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

Actress Alia Bhatt has crossed over 30 million followers on Instagram. Celebrating it and thanking her fans for making her reach the mark, Alia on Wednesday uploaded a special video on the photo-sharing app. The one minute-video gives a glimpse of her seven-year-long film journey.

Along with the video, she wrote: "It's been a wonderful journey so far... but it's just the beginning. 30 million."

The 26-year-old made her Bollywood debut in 2012 with the film Student of the Year. Later, she featured in films such as Highway, 2 States, Udta Punjab, and Dear Zindagi. Her role of a spy in Meghna Gulzar's Raazi helped her bag the Filmfare Award this year.

MALAIKA ARORA AND ARJUN KAPOOR TO GET MARRIED ON APRIL 19?

Reports have been doing rounds for quite some time now that Malaika Arora and Arjun Kapoor will be getting married this year. The couple will reportedly tie the knot on April 19.

According to the buzz, the rumoured couple will have a Christian wedding and the guest list include celebrities like Kareena Kapoor Khan, Karisma Kapoor, Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh.

Arjun and Malaika, spotted together multiple times, had kept mum on their relationship. Talking about the rumours, Arjun had told IANS: "When there is something to talk about, you will all know."

But Arjun Kapoor, neither confirming nor denying, said - "One can pick how much information to share in the public domain".

Arjun was quoted saying, "It's your choice how much you put out there or yourself and your availability. Today, you have a lot of control over how much you want people to know about your life. Speculation and gossip is a part of it. I am not the first actor or the last. Our entire tribe is immune to it... because it is the nature of the business."

Malaika, ex-wife of actor-producer Arbaaz Khan, had denied the marriage rumours in one of the interviews saying it is all "media made".

She never said that she was dating



Arjun, but often spoke about the concept of finding love after divorce.

"Everyone wants to be in love again, to be in a relationship. Nobody wants to be

alone and single for the rest of their life. Irrespective of what everyone said around me, I am glad that I made this choice on my own," Malaika had said.

JAYALALITHAA'S BIOPIC 'THALAIVI' STARRING KANGANA RANAUT TO GO ON FLOORS BY JULY THIS YEAR



After playing the historical character of Rani Laxmibai in her debut directorial 'Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi', Kangana Ranaut is gearing up to star in the biopic of late Tamil Nadu political mascot Jayalalithaa titled 'Thalaivi'. The film produced by Vishnu Vardan Induri and helmed by Vijay has been granted the status of an official biopic and the team of the makers has received a no objection certificate from the late Chief Minister's nephew Deepak Jayakumar.

Earlier, it was reported that the actress would be paid a record Rs 24 crore for the film, the highest amount an Indian actress would have received for a regional film. However, later the makers refuted the reports and now it is being reported that the actress would be paid somewhere around Rs 12 crore.

As per reports, the trilingual film to be shot in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi will go on floors from July. The dialogues of the film will be penned by 'Baahubali' writer Vijayendra K Prasad, who had also written Kangana's previous film

'Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi.' The casting of Kangana is believed to help the film reach a pan-Indian audience.

Kangana will be appearing in her second film with 'Thalaivi'. The actress has earlier played the female lead in Jayam Ravi starrer 2008 film 'Dhaam Dhoom'.

Kangana pointed out that her life story is similar to that of J Jayalalithaa's. "I was working on my own biopic, but her (Jayalalithaa) story is very similar to my story. In fact, it is a bigger success story than mine. When I heard the narration of this film, I found many similarities between both the stories. So when I had the option to do a film based on her story or my story, I decided on the former," she added.

Thalaivi aka Jaya will be primarily made in Tamil and will also release in Hindi. Kangana also added that she will be learning Tamil for the film. "Unless I fail miserably and they (the makers of the film) have to look for an option for my dubbing. But I will definitely learn the language," Kangana exclaimed.



Selma Blair's 'After' to release in India in April

Based on Anna Todd's young adult romance novel of the same name, the film narrates journey of a young woman who falls for a guy with a dark secret and the two embark on a rocky relationship.

Directed and written by Jenny Gage, 'After' also features Hero Fiennes-Tiffin, Josephine Langford, Shane Paul McGhie, Samuel Larsen, Khadijha Red Thunder, Swen Temmel, Inanna Sarkis, Peter Gallagher, Jennifer Beals, Pia Mia, Meadow Williams and Dylan Arnold.

MANDY MOORE HONORED WITH STAR ON THE HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME

Singer-actress Mandy Moore has been honoured with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Moore received the star in the company of her 'A Walk to Remember' co-star Shane West.

Excited to be a part of Hollywood Walk of Fame, Moore said, "It is a tremendous honour to join the ranks of talents whose stars and legacy line Hollywood boulevard. As a little girl from Orlando, Florida, who got her start singing the National Anthem, I'm not sure I ever would have dreamed this big."

"I never thought anything like this would ever come to light and yet here we are and it's deeply humbling."

West congratulated Moore with an emotional speech at the gala.

He said: "Mandy, you are an absolute gem, your smile is absolutely ridiculous -- seriously. It's ridiculous, and it lights up the room when you walk in. Your energy is irresistible, and your heart is second to none. I couldn't be more proud of you, I couldn't be more happy for you. Love ya."

Later, Moore took to Twitter to share the photographs from the ceremony and captioned them: "Stars have always sort of been our thing. Thankful to West for his kind words on this very special day, one which I will never forget. It was a walk (of fame) to remember."



Eva Mendes finds inspiration from family memories



She has been on a hiatus from her career as an actress and has been focusing on motherhood and her clothing line for New York & Company.

And Eva Mendes opened up about her creations and the inspirations behind them in the forthcoming issue of People.

'Whatever special occasion holds a dear place in my heart, I usually remember what I was wearing or what my mother was wearing or my sisters,' explained the 45-year-old actress in the interview.

Eva's memories of clothing date back to her childhood: 'When I was really little, my mom worked at the Chinese Theater in Hollywood.

'We would ride the bus to go to work, [and] I'd go to work with her. She would wear this red geisha gown that you had to wear at that time, and it was so beautiful.

'There's so many memories tied to that.'

Now she is making new memories with children of her own, and they stick out equally in her mind.

Speaking about a recent trip she made with her four-year-old daughter Esmeralda to the Los Angeles Opera House for performance of Hansel and Gretel, she said of the navy and white polka-dot wrap dress her daughter wore, 'That's a beautiful memory in that dress that I treasure.'



JULIA ROBERTS SPENT TIME WITH PROSTITUTES BEFORE FILMING 'PRETTY WOMAN'

Actress Julia Roberts spent time with prostitutes who were paid \$35 each to talk to her before filming 'Pretty Woman'.

Barbara Marshall, a former nurse and the widow of the movie's director, Garry Marshall, has opened up on how she was volunteering at a free clinic here in 1989 when she got a call from her spouse.

She said, "Garry would never visit me at the clinic, because he was a hypochondriac and afraid of getting a disease. But he asked if

Julia could come and talk to some of the patients. I recruited two young women who came to the clinic regularly, and I paid them \$35 each to meet with Julia. I went back to work, and about 20 minutes later, Julia yelled from the end of the hall, 'Bye, Barbara. We're going to take a drive. We'll be back later.'"

Marshall panicked and called her husband and told the director, "Your star just left with a group of girls, and I think they were heading to Hollywood Boulevard. I'm worried. What if she doesn't come back?"

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Third Brexit vote today to break deadlock

LONDON (TIP): Prime Minister Theresa May will put her twice-rejected Brexit divorce deal to a third parliamentary vote on March 29 in a renewed bid to avoid a chaotic split from the European Union in two weeks.

May's throw of the dice comes a day after her dramatic pledge to resign in order to persuade her rivals to finally back her vision for breaking Britain's 46-year membership of the bloc. The PM's back is against the wall as she tries to keep Britain's economy from imploding and the pound from plunging when a post-Brexit border splits the two tight trading partners.

Andrea Leadsom, the government's representative in Parliament, said the new vote gave recalcitrant lawmakers the chance to secure Britain's delayed departure from the EU on May 22. "I encourage all MPs to support it and ensure that we leave the EU... giving people and businesses the certainty they need," she told MPs. The government is hoping that holding the vote on the day when Britain was meant to leave the bloc could win over some still sceptical MPs.

House of Commons Speaker John Bercow gave his approval to hold the vote after he had rejected a similar attempt last week, ruling then that May's text was essentially the same one that lawmakers had voted down. "(It) is new, substantially different and in conformity," he said of the deal to be put to MPs on Friday's vote, which will only cover the main withdrawal pact in May's plan and not an accompanying political declaration for future EU ties.

Another House vote would be required before Brexit can actually go ahead. Any failure by lawmakers to pass the pact that was signed off last year by May and the 27 EU leaders could result in a feared "no-deal Brexit" scenario on April 12. Britain might then try to avoid crashing out by seeking a much longer extension that would force it to take part in European Parliament polls in May. — AFP

Japan court acquits man jailed for 13 years on murder charge

TOKYO (TIP): A Japanese court on March 28 acquitted a man who spent 13 years in prison for murder, finding there was "no material evidence" he committed the crime, his lawyer and media said.

"He was found innocent," Fumio Takemura, lead lawyer for the now 85-year-old Koki Miyata, told AFP.

Miyata was sentenced to 13 years in prison in 1986 after being convicted of stabbing an acquaintance to death in the town of Matsubase in southwestern Japan.

His sentence was confirmed by the Supreme Court four years later and he was not released until 1999.

He has since suffered several strokes that have left him partially handicapped.

Among the best-known cases is that of former boxer Iwao Hakamada who was sentenced to death after being convicted of murdering four people and spending 48 years on death row.

In 2014, a court granted him a retrial and he was released pending the new process. But last year the Tokyo high court reversed that ruling, pushing the case up to the Supreme Court, which has yet to issue a verdict. — AFP

11 dead as Somalia bomb blast hits restaurant at lunchtime

MOGADISHU (TIP): At least 11 people died when a bomb exploded on a busy street and ripped into a nearby restaurant in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on March 28, medics said.

Security officials and witnesses reported bodies strewn on the ground as plumes of smoke rose high into the air after the bomb detonated on Mogadishu's Maka Al-Mukarama road, one of the seaside capital's main thoroughfares, an area busy with businesses and travellers.

It struck as people were eating lunch.

"The death toll we have confirmed so far is 11 people, with 16 others wounded," said Abdulkadir Abdirahman Adan, director of the Aamin Ambulance service, adding that the toll could still rise.

"There could be more losses."

Witnesses described scenes of devastation.

"The car bomb struck a restaurant along the road," said Abdulahi Osman, who was nearby to the explosion.

"This really was a disaster."

Vehicles were tossed into the air by the blast, which also damaged nearby buildings.

Witnesses said several cars and three-wheeler motorbikes were destroyed by the force of the explosion.

"I saw 16 people carried from the blast scene—and more than 10 of them were already dead," Osman added.

Ambulance workers rushed in to help take the wounded to hospital.



"I don't know whether they were dead or wounded, but I could see several people strewn in the street—some of them were motionless," said Suado Ahmed, another witness who was at the scene moments after the blast. The bombing is the latest in a recent string of blasts in the capital, which has been hit regularly by Shabaab attacks.

"There was a heavy blast—presumably caused by a vehicle loaded with explosives," said Adan Abdikadir, a government security officer. There was no immediate claim of

responsibility for the bombing. However, Mogadishu is regularly targeted by the Al-Qaeda affiliated Al-Shabaab insurgents, who have been fighting for over a decade to topple the government.

Shabaab fighters fled fixed positions they once held in Mogadishu in 2011, and have since lost many of their strongholds.

But they retain control of large rural swathes of the country, and continue to wage a guerrilla war against the authorities. — AFP

Australia's station evacuated after busker mistaken for gunman on train

MELBOURNE (TIP): One of Australia's busiest train stations in Melbourne was evacuated on March 28 after passengers panicked when an Aboriginal busker with "suspicious behaviour" was mistaken for a gunman.

The musician, identified as Will Austin, was carrying an instrument in a duffel bag, was doing breathing exercises to prepare for his performance when another passenger mistakenly thought his instrument bag was a rifle case and raised a false alarm, local police said.

"Look, obviously people ring us with a lot of jobs and things that happen," Inspector Jacob Bugeja said, adding "They saw someone acting unusual on the train."

"They have seen a bag and were unsure what was in the bag and, coupled with the behaviour of the person, they were a bit worried and just wanted to let us know about the man who had been seen acting suspiciously," Bugeja said.

People in Australia are little jittery after the March 18 attacks by an Australian white-supremacist on two mosques in New Zealand's Christchurch that resulted in the deaths of at least 50 people.

The musician had been on the way to play his guitar in the Central Business District when the Flagstaff train station was suddenly shut down during the morning peak hour commute.

"A dozen cops came running past," a passenger said.

When police finally approached the man, they realised he was only carrying a sports duffel bag that looked "nothing like" a gun bag.

Police spoke with the man for about 20



minutes and confirmed he was not actually carrying a weapon before the train station was opened again.

They confirmed that there had been no threat to the commuters.

"He was a local busker who was there to play an instrument in town," Bugeja said at a press conference.

"There was a bag that the person was carrying and he had his tools to busk with him."

"There were special response units running around everywhere, they had fully automatic weapons and riot shields and they were yelling at people to get back in the train," a student on the train was quoted as saying by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Terrified passengers started calling their loved ones. Witnesses said some passengers were in hysterics, fearing a terrorist attack, the report said.

"Everybody started panicking. There was a

woman next to me in hysterics, she was calling her whole family, telling them that she loved them, that she wasn't sure what was going on. She thought it was a terrorist attack."

"It was just really scary."

Later, Aboriginal busker Austin said he was approached by police at the Flagstaff Station.

"When you get swarmed by police at flagstaff station after reports of a gunman, looking suspicious on a mission and carrying a Yidaki and a bag full of artefacts. I'm not carrying no rifle or ammunition fellas. But seriously though, stay safe all you mob out there travelling through the city this morning!" he said on Facebook and posted a selfie of himself holding the instrument following the dramatic shut down of Flagstaff Station.

The incident threw Melbourne's train network into chaos, with major delays reported by Metro on all lines. PTI

China says probing more people after former Interpol chief's fall

BEIJING (TIP): China's Public Security Ministry said it would conduct further investigations into its own senior ranks late on March 27 after a decision to prosecute former Interpol chief Meng Hongwei, and warned that disloyalty to the Communist Party would not be tolerated.

China had announced earlier on Wednesday that an investigation had found Meng spent "lavish" amounts of state funds, abused his power and refused to follow party decisions, and that he had been expelled from the party and sacked as deputy public security minister.

Last October, Interpol, the global police coordination agency based in France, said Meng had resigned as its president, days after his wife reported him missing after he travelled back to China.

In statement late on Wednesday following an internal meeting, the public security ministry said Meng was "totally to blame" for the decision to expel him from the party and sack him.

"When it comes to party loyalty and sincerity, it is absolutely not allowed to be duplicitous, to agree overtly but oppose in secret, or to be a two-face person, or lead a double life, or engage in political social climbing," it said.

"It is absolutely not allowed to make decisions without authorisation, to do or say



as you wish." While the statement gave no details, the party's ongoing anti-corruption campaign, championed by President Xi Jinping, has increasingly been focused on those it judges are disloyal to the party or question the decision of the top leadership.

China has persistently denied its war on graft is about political manoeuvring or Xi taking down his enemies. Xi told an audience in Seattle in 2015 that the anti-graft fight was no "House of Cards"-style power play, in a reference to the Netflix U.S. political drama.

The ministry said there needed to be a "thorough rooting out of Meng Hongwei's pernicious influence", and that there would

be further probes on others.

"For those in leadership positions in the Public Security Ministry connected with Meng Hongwei's case, no matter how high or low, no matter who is involved, no matter their position, all must be seriously handled in accordance with the law and discipline."

The government announced its plans to prosecute Meng after Xi returned from a state visit to France, where Emmanuel Macron raised the issue of human rights in China and certain specific cases, a French presidency official said.

It has not been possible to reach Meng for comment since he was detained, and unclear if he has been allowed a lawyer.

Meng's wife, Grace Meng, told French television on Sunday that she had written to Macron ahead of Xi's trip seeking his help protecting their "fundamental human rights".

Meng is certain to be found guilty when his case eventually comes to trial as the courts are controlled by the party and will not challenge its accusations.

Meng became president of the global police cooperation agency in late 2016 as China widened its bid to secure leadership posts in international organisations.

His appointment prompted concern at the time from rights groups that Beijing might try to leverage his position to pursue dissidents abroad. Reuters

North Korea embassy raid group promises 'bigger things ahead'

SEOUL (TIP): A shadowy dissident group allegedly behind last month's raid on North Korea's embassy in Madrid promised "bigger things ahead" on March 28, but said they would temporarily suspend operations because of intense media scrutiny.

The Cheollima Civil Defense (CCD) group emerged from the shadows this week to claim responsibility for a commando-style raid on Pyongyang's embassy to highlight illicit activities rampant in North Korea's foreign missions. On March 27 a Spanish court named Adrian Hong Chang, a Mexican national, as being the leader of the group which burst into the diplomatic mission and roughed up employees before fleeing with documents and computers.

"We are a group of defectors who have come together with compatriots around the world," the CCD said in a statement posted on its website.

Various preparations to "shake the Kim Jong Un regime by the root" were under way, it added, but had been hampered by a spike in media interest. In the past, the group has said it responded to requests for protection from "compatriots" and thanked countries including the Netherlands, China and the United States for their help. It has also said it was "not seeking anything in return" and that it has "already given help" to North Koreans. — AFP

2 killed, 2 injured as gunman opens fire during Seattle rush hour

LOS ANGELES/ATLANTA (TIP): Two people were killed and two critically injured when a gunman opened fire on two motorists and a Metro bus in Seattle on March 27 and then caused a collision as he tried to flee in a stolen car during the afternoon rush hour, police said.

The incident unfolded in a northeastern Seattle neighborhood when the suspect approached a motorist at an intersection and shot her before walking into the street and firing on the bus, police said in a statement.

The bus driver, identified by the Seattle Times newspaper and other media as Eric Stark, 53, was shot but managed to turn the bus around and head away from the assailant, police said.

The suspect then approached a second motorist in a Toyota Prius and opened fire, killing the driver.

The gunman climbed into the Prius as police arrived and sped away but collided with a nearby vehicle, killing that driver.

The unidentified suspect was taken to a Seattle hospital, where he remained under guard while being treated for injuries that were not life-threatening, according to police.

Police said one motorist was killed by gunfire and the other motorist was killed in the collision. Both were men. None of the victims was immediately identified by police. The Times reported late on Wednesday that the gunman was a 33-year-old Seattle resident. The man who was fatally shot was 50 and the man who was killed in the collision was 70, it said. King County's Metro transit authority said on Twitter the bus driver had activated an emergency alarm to report being shot, and that none of his 12 passengers was injured. Although wounded in the torso, the bus driver was able to walk to a gurney to be transported by paramedics to hospital, the Seattle Times quoted a transit union president as saying. Reuters

Syria repels Israeli air 'aggression' in Aleppo province: report



DAMASCUS (TIP): Syria said on March 27 that Israel had attacked targets just north of the city of Aleppo and that its defences had shot down several missiles.

"Army air defences repels an Israeli air aggression that targeted a number of industrial sites in Sheikh Najjar industrial zone, north-east of Aleppo, and downed a number of the hostile missiles," the official SANA news agency said, citing an unnamed military source.

A number of residents of Aleppo city told AFP that the attack led to a power cut in the whole city.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the Israeli bombardment hit "ammunition stores belonging to Iranian forces and allied groups, and caused huge explosions."

If confirmed, this would be the first attack on Syrian territory since US President Donald Trump signed Monday a proclamation recognising Israel's 1981 annexation of the strategic Golan Heights plateau which it seized from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Earlier this year in January, Israel targeted a number of Iranian installations in the country, hours after intercepting a rocket fired from Syrian territory.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 21 people, mostly Iranians, were killed in those attacks.

Israel insists that it has the right to continue to target positions in Syria held by Iran and its Lebanese ally Hezbollah.

In May 2018, Israeli strikes killed 27 pro-regime fighters including 11 Iranians in strikes on dozens of Iranian targets inside Syria. — AFP

Brunei to punish adultery with death by stoning

LONDON (TIP): Brunei will punish homosexual sex and adultery with death by stoning under a new law, which comes into effect next week.

From April 3, any individual found guilty of the offences will be stoned to death in the small southeast Asian nation, according to a new penal code. The punishment will be "witnessed by a group of Muslims," the BBC reported on Thursday.

The country's strict new laws were announced in 2014, and have been rolled out gradually. The brutal new provisions were quietly announced on the Brunei attorney general's website on December 29, 2018.

Human rights groups were quick to express horror at the penal code, which also provides for amputation as a punishment for theft.

"Brunei must immediately halt its plans to implement these vicious punishments and revise its penal code in compliance with its human rights obligations. The international community must urgently condemn Brunei's move to put these cruel penalties into practice," Rachel Chhoa-Howard, Brunei Researcher at Amnesty International, said in a statement.

In comparison to its neighbours, Brunei has grown conservative in recent years, including banning the sale of alcohol.

The new penal code was announced by the Sultan of Brunei, Hassanal Bolkhiah, who also acts as the country's Prime Minister. In announcing the change, the government website quoted the Sultan saying his government "does not expect other people to accept and agree with it, but that it would suffice if they just respect the nation in the same way that it also respects them." IANS

MAKE YOUR MAKEUP LAST ALL DAY

If you spend hours doing your make-up and it hardly stays, then you're probably missing a few important steps. To make your make-up last longer, you must follow moisturise, prime and set. Follow these three simple rules and don't let your make-up fade away easily. Here's how you should do it:

POLISH THOSE PORES

Exfoliation is key to prepping your skin for makeup application – the smoother the surface, the more even it can be applied and therefore the longer it lasts. Twice a week polish away dead surface cells with a good exfoliator. If you've got the money, the Goldfaden MD Doctor's Scrub (£65) is uh-mazing but equally the No7 total Renewal Microdermabrasion Face Exfoliator (£11) delivers on its promises.

USE A CLEVER MOISTURISER

Ever noticed that your makeup starts to collect into fine lines and creases come mid-morning? Hydration levels and sebum production fluctuate through the day causing your skin to look more uneven, but there are moisturisers that respond to 'over-day ageing' to aid this. Vichy Liftactiv Supreme (£23.25) smoothes and firms skin while you wear it.

IT'S ABOUT PRIME

Primer 'seals in' your moisturiser and provides a smooth, even surface for makeup. Not only this, it keeps your makeup from being absorbed, giving it greater staying power. If you have oily skin and feel like your makeup 'slips off', try an oil-free formula like Smashbox Photo Finish Foundation Primer Light (£28) for an all-day matte finish, however



if you feel your makeup fails to wear well because you're battling dry patches try the Smashbox Photo Finish Hydrating Foundation Primer (£28) which seals in moisture for hours. Use a different primer for the delicate eyelid skin, we love the YSL Couture Eye Primer (£23.50) which intensifies your makeup, ensuring it doesn't crease, slip or shift.

CARE FOR LONG-WEAR

Long-wear makeup is so-called for a reason; good ones boast budge-free formulas without looking heavy. We love the Bobbi Brown Long-Wear range that covers everything from gel eyeliner to mascara and their Long-Wear Even Finish Foundation (£31) is great for dry and dehydrated skin, while the Clinique

Stay-Matte Oil-Free Makeup (£22.50) which contains shine absorbers is perfect for oily skin types.

LAYER IT

Building up your makeup products in light layers will make it last way longer than applying one heavy layer, and it always looks more natural too. This rule applies to your base, eye makeup and lipstick.

SET WITH POWDER

For longevity, always seal your makeup with powder to help it stay put. While people remember to set foundation on the t-zone, concealer in is often neglected but a gentle sweep to set your under-eye makeup will keep bags at bay longer.

FOOD CORNER



WHOLE ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

INGREDIENTS

- 1 clean and dry small to medium Cauliflower head
- 1 heaped tbsp thick and creamy plain Greek Yogurt
- 1 tsp red chilly powder or paprika (or add to taste)
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper (or add to taste)
- 1 tsp garlic powder (or paste)
- 1/2 tsp ginger powder (or paste)
- 1 tsp onion powder (or paste)
- 1/4 tsp Garam Masala (mixed Indian spices)
- 1/2 tsp ground coriander (dhanian powder)
- 1/2 tsp ground fennel (saunf powder)
- Salt to taste
- Ghee or clarified butter to brush on the cauliflower



METHOD

- Preheat oven to 375°F.
- Grease a baking dish and keep ready. If you like, use an aluminium foil to line the baking dish for easy clean up – and grease the foil.
- Pull back all extra leaves on the cauliflower head to get rid of them.
- Clean the head under running water and using an absorbing kitchen paper-towel, pat dry completely.
- Place the cauliflower head down on a cutting board. With a sharp knife, carefully make a “v-cut” to remove the central stem in the middle, taking care to not cut too deep or separate out the florets.
- Turn the cauliflower head up. It should now be able to stand on the baking dish upright. Brush the cauliflower with ghee and sprinkle salt generously all over.
- Rub the ghee and salt on both sides of the cauliflower. This coating ensures that the veggie is evenly salted and that the spices stick well on to it.
- In a bowl and using a spoon, mix the ground spices with the yogurt.
- Brush and coat the cauliflower head all over with the spices mixture.
- Place the baking dish with the cauliflower, on the lowest or middle rack inside the pre-heated oven.
- Roast and bake at 375°F for 1.5 hours or until the cauliflower is roasted into a rich brown color head and is done. Try pricking into the cauliflower with a knife or food skewer. The tough central core should be tender and soft. The skewer and knife must come out clean and easy.
- Take out the cauliflower head from the oven. Let it stand for 5 minutes to cool down just a bit. Carve and serve with your favorite bread, rice and gravy or side it with anything you love! This one will add a great spicy goodness to your meal.

Keep your relationship healthy

Romantic relationships are important for our happiness and well-being. Yet with more than 40 percent of new marriages ending in divorce, it's clear that relationships aren't always easy.¹ Fortunately, there are steps you can take to keep your romantic partnership in good working order.

Talking openly

Communication is a key piece of healthy relationships. Healthy couples make time to check in with one another on a regular basis. It's important to talk about more than just parenting and maintaining the household, however. Try to spend a few minutes each day discussing deeper or more personal subjects to stay connected to your partner over the long term.

That doesn't mean you should avoid bringing up difficult subjects. Keeping concerns or problems to yourself can breed resentment. When discussing tough topics, though, it pays to be kind. Researchers have found that communication style is more important than commitment levels, personality traits or stressful life events in predicting whether happily married couples will go on to divorce. In particular, negative communication patterns such as anger and contempt are linked to an increased likelihood of splitting up.

Keeping it interesting

Between kids, careers and outside commitments, it can be difficult to stay connected to your partner. Yet there are good reasons to make the effort. In one study, for example, researchers found couples that reported boredom during their seventh year of marriage were significantly less satisfied with their relationships nine years later.



To keep things interesting, some couples plan regular date nights. Even dates can get old, though, if you're always renting a movie or going to the same restaurant. Experts recommend breaking out of the routine and trying new things — whether that's going dancing, taking a class together or packing an afternoon picnic.

When should couples seek help?

Every relationship has ups and downs, but some factors are more likely than others to create bumps in a relationship. Finances and parenting decisions often create recurring conflicts, for example. One sign of a problem is having repeated versions of the same fight over and over. In such cases, psychologists can help couples improve communication and find healthy ways to move beyond the conflict.

NEW THERAPY: TREAT 'TENNIS ELBOW' WITHOUT SURGERY

Tennis elbow, painful chronic condition that affect job performance and quality of life, can be effectively treated without surgery, scientists say.

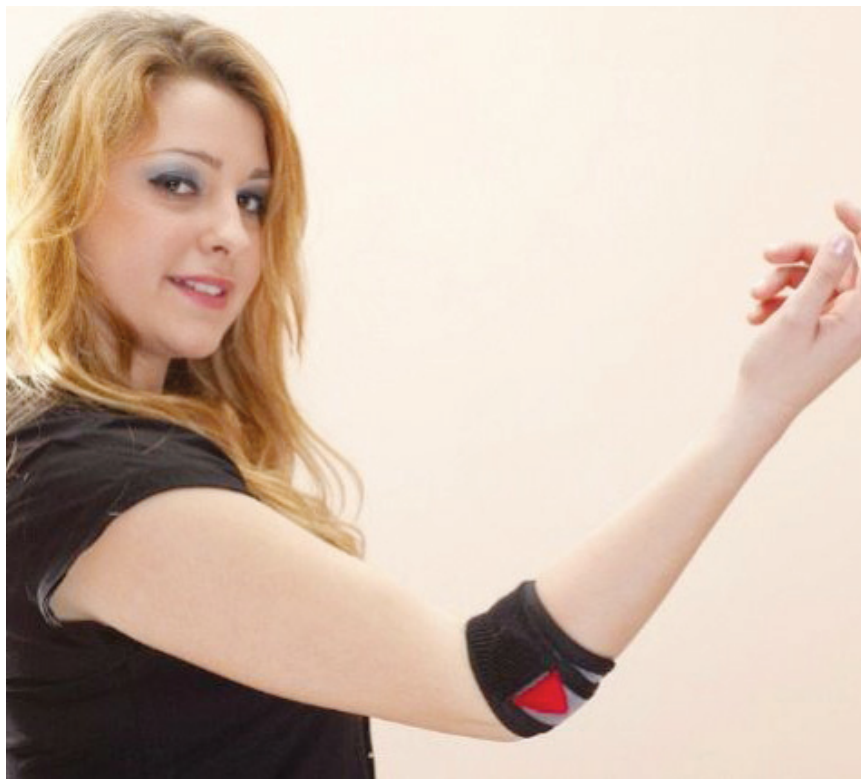
The condition, also known as lateral epicondylitis, stems from repetitive stress injuries that occur in activities such as sports, typing and knitting, and the injury is common in carpenters, cooks and assembly line workers.

Researchers found that through transcatheter arterial embolisation (TAE), an image-guided, non-surgical treatment that decreases abnormal blood flow to the injured area to reduce inflammation and pain, the condition may be treated.

"Tennis elbow can be difficult to treat, leaving many patients unable to perform the simplest tasks, such as picking up their children, cooking dinner, or even working on a computer," said Yuji Okuno, founder of the Okuno Clinic in Japan. "With this frustration, many patients turn to invasive major surgery after years of failed physical therapy and medication use," said Okuno, lead author of the study.

"We were interested to see if this technique, already in use in other areas of the body, would be effective for this common, debilitating condition and help people immediately regain a range of motion that many of us take for granted in our everyday tasks," he said.

The team conducted a prospective study in 52 patients with tennis elbow who did not find relief from other forms of treatment. The patients received TAE between March 2013 and October 2017 and were followed for up to four years after the treatment. The researchers said they found statistically significant reductions in pain-rating scores, and



pain-free grip strength. Images taken in 32 patients two years after undergoing TAE showed an improvement in tendinosis and tear scores.

The treatment can be completed in approximately one hour and requires only a needle hole to access the radial artery in the wrist under local anesthesia. A catheter is moved through the wrist to the elbow where the inflamed blood vessels are embolised, preventing excessive blood flow to the affected part of the elbow. The treatment is safe and effective and does not require physical therapy, researchers said. No adverse events were observed and no

patients experienced negative effects to the surrounding bones, cartilage or muscles.

Tennis elbow is caused by overuse and repetitive stress to the tendons and muscles around the elbow. It typically affects people who play sports with repetitive swinging motions, such as tennis or golf, but it can also affect job performance of carpenters, cooks, assembly-line workers and others. While pain is a hallmark symptom, chronic tennis elbow can cause loss of grip and arm strength, limited use of the arm, and burning sensations on the outer portion of the arm.



Hypertension drug shows promise in liver disease

A drug used to lower blood pressure within a system of veins and inflammation could effectively treat a potentially life-threatening condition of the liver, say researchers, including one of the Indian origin.

The study on mice showed that the drug sivelestat may lower portal hypertension - associated with cirrhosis and other chronic liver diseases - thereby improving symptoms and its outcomes.

Portal hypertension is a condition where there is an increase in pressure within the portal vein that carries blood from abdominal organs to the liver.

While there are therapies to treat some forms of liver diseases, including hepatitis C and autoimmune hepatitis, options have been limited for treating portal hypertension.

"Sivelestat has been safely used in humans with acute lung injury and bronchopulmonary dysplasia. This suggests sivelestat and similar drugs constitute a potential means to decrease portal hypertension in patients with chronic liver disease," said Vijay Shah, gastroenterologist at Mayo Clinic in the US.

The study, published in the journal *Gastroenterology*, showed deposits of a blood clot-causing protein contributed to portal hypertension.

Fibrin was formation by inflammatory cells known as neutrophils, which when slowed by sivelestat were able to decrease portal hypertension.

"The study paves the way for developing new drugs and repurposing of existing compounds to target inflammation in the liver driven by disease-related mechanical forces," said Moira Hilscher, researcher at the varsity.

Although the study was obtained from mouse models, it was also confirmed in liver samples from humans.

Menstrual cycle influences sleep quality in women: Study

Young women are more likely to experience sleep disruption in the days leading up to their menstrual period, a study has found.

"Sleep is more disrupted in the several days directly prior to menses in young healthy women," said Anne E Kim, a medical student at Case Western Reserve University in the US.

"Increased sleep disruption was found in the late luteal phase, which corresponds with the days directly prior to menses," said Kim.

Menstrual phase affected sleep efficiency, wake after sleep onset (WASO), number of awakenings per night, and sleep fragmentation index, in keeping with increased sleep disruption in the late luteal phase.

Compared with the early follicular phase, sleep efficiency decreased by 3.3 per cent, WASO increased by 15 minutes, and number of awakenings per night increased by three in the late luteal phase.

Researchers collected daily sleep data from 10 healthy women between the ages of 18 and 28 who had regular menstrual cycles. The researchers tracked the women's sleep during two of their cycles.

The women wore actigraphic sensors on their wrist to record patterns of activity and rest over 578 sleep episodes and they provided morning urine samples for measurement of concentrations of luteinizing hormone (LH), estrone-3-glucuronide (E1G), and pregnanediol-3-glucuronide (PDG).

All participants ovulated in both cycles.

The women also completed five-day diets during the early follicular phases of each cycle.



The diet during one cycle contained neutral energy availability, and the diet during the other cycle contained 55 per cent fewer calories.

Menstrual cycle lengths were standardized to 14-day follicular and 14-day luteal phases, centered on the day of ovulation.

"Short-term caloric restriction had negative effects on sleep in both the late follicular phase, just before ovulation, and in the late luteal phase, just before the onset of menses," said Kim, who performed this study.

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WHATSAPP WON'T TRACE ORIGIN OF MESSAGE IN INDIA

As experts demand Facebook-owned WhatsApp to disclose information about where a message in question has originated from, the company has reiterated that such proposed changes are overboard and are not consistent with the strong privacy protections that are important to people.

WhatsApp offers end-to-end encryption by default which means only the sender and the recipient can see the messages in circulation—not even WhatsApp.

In a recent media workshop, WhatsApp categorically said that tracing the origin of message is not possible given the end-to-end encryption that it provides and it would require the company to re-architect WhatsApp, leading us to a different product, one that would not be fundamentally private.

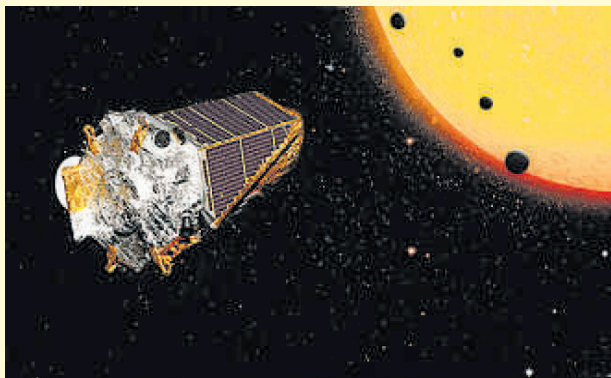
"Imagine if every message you sent was kept with a record of the fact that you sent it and with a record of your phone number. That would not be a place for private communications," said a WhatsApp spokesperson.

WhatsApp is removing over two million accounts per month for bulk or automated behaviour—over 75 per cent without a recent user report.

"These efforts are particularly important during elections where certain groups may attempt to send messages at scale," said the company.

WhatsApp said its service is not a broadcast platform.

"We place limits on group sizes and how users send messages. Approximately 90 per cent of the messages sent on WhatsApp are from one person to another, and the majority of groups have fewer than 10 people. WhatsApp requires the message sender to know the phone number of the recipient," said the company.



Two planets discovered from space telescope data

Scientists have used artificial intelligence (AI) to uncover two more hidden planets in the data collected by the Kepler space telescope.

The technique shows promise for identifying many additional planets that traditional methods could not catch.

Researchers from The University of Texas at Austin in the US created an algorithm that sifts through the data taken by Kepler to ferret out signals that were missed by traditional planet-hunting methods.

The process, described in the *The Astronomical Journal*, should help astronomers find many more missed planets hiding in Kepler data.

"K2 data is more challenging to work with because the spacecraft is moving around all the time," said Andrew Vanderburg, from UT Austin.

This change came about after a mechanical failure. While mission planners found a workaround, the spacecraft was left with a wobble that AI had to take into account.

COMPUTER TOOL PREDICTS RISK OF DEADLY IRREGULAR HEARTBEATS

Scientists have developed a computer system that can accurately predict which patients with a rare heart condition will suffer from a potentially fatal event, and whether they may benefit from life-saving implanted devices.

The tool, developed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University in the US, may help avoid unnecessary—and potentially risky—surgeries to place the devices.

An estimated 1 in 5,000 people have arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy (ARVC), a complex, multigene, inherited disease of the lower heart chambers that can cause deadly arrhythmias, or irregular heartbeats.

Although rare, it is a very frequent cause of sudden death in young adults, researchers said.

The average age of diagnosis is 31, although it can emerge from adolescence through middle age.

ARVC can be effectively managed in many cases with an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD), a device that detects electrical abnormalities in heart muscle and immediately shocks the heart to re-establish normal rhythm. ICDs prevent sudden cardiac death



and save lives. However, these devices come with risks and side effects, said Cynthia A James, assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins University.

The devices may deliver inappropriate shocks when patients are not experiencing life-threatening arrhythmias. The ICD itself or pacemaker leads placed in the heart to deliver a shock may fail over time, necessitating replacement with surgery. Infections brought on by these

devices—and even just wearing out the device's battery with time—also require replacement, hospitalisations and expense, she added.

"Because patients develop this condition at such a young age, they typically need several ICD replacements over the course of their lives," said James.

"For ARVC patients, getting an ICD is a big decision with serious consequences," she said.

Artificial womb to support extremely preterm infants



In a world-first, scientists have demonstrated the ability of an 'artificial womb' to support extremely premature lamb fetuses, an advance that may one day save human infants.

The research, published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology*, shows that an artificial placenta-based life support platform can maintain lamb fetuses weighing 600 to 700 grammes—equivalent to a human foetus at 24 weeks of gestation.

While previous research had demonstrated the feasibility of extended survival with artificial placenta technology in late preterm foetuses, there was no published evidence that demonstrated the use of the platform to support extremely preterm foetuses—the eventual clinical target of this technology. "For several decades there has been little improvement in outcomes of extremely preterm infants born at the border of viability (21-24 weeks

gestation)," said Matt Kemp, Associate Professor at Tohoku University in Japan.

"We have proven the use of this technology to support, for the first time, extremely preterm lambs equivalent to 24 weeks of human gestation in a stable, growth-normal state for five days, said Kemp. "This result underscores the potential clinical application of this technology for extremely preterm infants born at the border of viability. In the world of artificial placenta technology, we have effectively broken the 4 minute mile," he added. The findings represent a significant milestone in the technology's future implementation into clinical use.

"The technology was designed to revolutionise the treatment of severely premature newborns. The goal is to offer a bridge between a natural womb and the outside world to give babies born at the earliest gestational ages more time for their fragile lungs to mature," Kemp said.

Google letting Android users create events on Maps

Google is letting Android users create public events on Maps through the app's existing Contribute section, allowing them to set name, location, date and time of the event along with tags and images. "You can add public events to Google Maps from your Android phone or tablet," the search-engine giant wrote on the Maps support page.

Event listings would help users streamline time-specific activities and choose what suits them best.

"It's all part of the app's transformation from a service that tells you how to get somewhere into one that tells you where you might want to go in the first place," *The Verge* reported on Monday.

Google's plans for a wider roll-out of the feature remain unknown.

"Google Maps' implementation is a little laggy at the moment, with events taking up to an hour to actually appear on a map. Hopefully, this improves as the functionality is more widely rolled out," the report said.



AIRBUS SECURES \$35 BILLION CHINA DEAL IN NEW BLOW TO BOEING

LONDON/PARIS (TIP): Airbus SE secured a \$35 billion jet deal from China during a state visit by President Xi Jinping to the French capital, dealing a fresh blow to Boeing Co. as it grapples with the grounding of its best-selling jet.

The mammoth order consists of 290 A320-series narrow-body planes and 10 A350 wide-bodies, Toulouse-based Airbus said after the transaction was announced in Paris on Monday. The deal's value is almost double that touted by French President Emmanuel Macron in January 2018 during a trip to Beijing.

The Airbus coup comes while Boeing's own 737 Max narrow-body -- the chief global rival to the A320 -- has been idled following two fatal crashes in five months. The U.S. planemaker is also struggling with the fallout from a China-U.S. trade war that's seen sales to the Asian nation dry up, just as Airbus bolsters its position with an offer to expand production facilities in Tianjin.

China has become the world's most important aviation market as its fast-growing middle class spurs demand for travel. The country has traditionally sought to keep a balance between the two western planemakers as it seeks to jumpstart manufacturing on its own soil, but Chicago-based Boeing's order prospects have been complicated by the trade clash.

"I would see this as part of broader trade discussions," said Rob Stallard at Vertical Research Partners. "For the Chinese to put tariffs on Boeing aircraft would be nuclear, but you can send messages in other ways. This tells the Americans that you have got to play nice if you want us to reciprocate."

Macron originally put the value of a likely order at \$18 billion. A firm order failed to materialize last year despite a second French state visit in June and a



delegation of top Airbus executives in September.

The deal announced in Paris will include both Neo -- for new engine option -- and so-called classic or CEO versions of the A319, A320 and A321, though the majority will be A320neos and A321neos, according to officials. China typically orders planes in large batches and allocates them to airlines later.

The latest A320neo model has a list price of \$110.6 million and the A350-900 sells for \$317.4 million before discounts.

Airbus's incoming chief executive officer, Guillaume Faury, said at the press conference that construction of the A320s will take place both in Tianjin and Europe, adding that the deal is "a sign of the confidence" from China. Macron called the transaction "an excellent sign."

China will need 7,400 new passenger and freighter aircraft in the next two decades, representing almost 20 percent of total global demand, according to Airbus estimates.

The purchase provides a boost for Faury who takes over from Tom Enders in April. Airbus sales have had one of the slowest starts in the past decade, with the planemaker registering 103 cancellations and just four new orders in the first two months.

Separately, China is looking at excluding Boeing's troubled 737 Max jet from a list of American exports it would buy as part of a trade deal with the U.S., people familiar with the matter have said.

Airbus shares fell 0.5 percent in Paris on Monday, while Boeing climbed 2.3 percent in New York.



LEVI'S SOARS IN RETURN AS PUBLIC COMPANY

NEW YORK (TIP): Levi Strauss & Co.'s return to the public markets got an enthusiastic reception from investors who believe the iconic brand is ready for a comeback -- and still has a lot more room to grow.

The stock, which is listed under the ticker "LEVI," opened for trading Thursday at \$22.22, above the \$17 offering price and blowing past the originally expected range of \$14 to \$16. As of Thursday's close, shares popped nearly 32 percent, closing at \$22.41 per share. That gave Levi's a market value of \$8.64 billion, according to FactSet.

Levi's seems to have successfully convinced investors, at least for now, that it has a lot of opportunities to expand beyond just jeans, from tops to bolstering its women's business. In its prospectus, the company says it plans to use the proceeds from the public offering to expand more aggressively into China, India and Brazil and also build out more retail stores, which as of late last year totaled 824.

But jeans are still the company's mainstay and that was apparent on Thursday, when in a rare move the New York Stock Exchange suspended its "no jeans" policy to commemorate Levi's re-entry, transforming the floor from suits and ties into a sea of blue denim, with its traders sporting jeans and denim jackets.

More than 120 employees from Levi's global offices, including its CEO Chip Bergh outfitted in denim, were on the trading floor. On Wednesday, the NYSE even Tweeted, "Tomorrow we'll be in our 501s."

The 166-year-old company is proving to Wall Street there's staying power for a legacy name that dates back to 1853 when its namesake founder started a wholesales dry goods business in San Francisco. Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis invented jeans 20 years later after receiving a patent to create cotton denim workpants with copper rivets in certain areas like the pocket corner to make them stronger.

Ola to invest \$500 million in self-drive service



NEW DELHI (TIP): Ola Fleet Technologies, an arm of cab-hailing major Ola, will get around \$500 million funding over the next two years as it looks to launch self-drive service, according to sources.

According to the sources, Ola Fleet Technologies will get about \$500 million through a mix of equity and debt to offer self-drive services in the country.

This service, which is in a small-scale pilot in Bengaluru currently, is expected to be launched over the next few weeks.

The launch of self-drive service will pit Ola against the likes of Sequoia Capital-backed Zoomcar and Y Combinator-backed Drivezy.

They added that the Bengaluru-based company could deploy about 10,000 vehicles for the self-drive service.

When contacted, an Ola spokesperson said "basis market feedback, we are piloting our Ola Self-Drive offering in various formats like rentals, subscription and corporate leasing in select cities in the coming weeks".

"This space is currently under-served and there exists a tremendous opportunity to build a superior experience through an integrated mobility platform like Ola," the spokesperson added.

China to import more from US to balance bilateral trade: Official

BEIJING (TIP): Ahead of the crucial talks next month to finalise the texts of trade deal with the United States (US) to end the trade war, a top Chinese official said on Sunday that China will import more goods from the US to balance bilateral trade, a key demand of President Donald Trump.

Trump is demanding China to reduce the \$375 billion trade deficit and protection of intellectual property rights (IPR), technology transfer and more access to American goods to Chinese markets.

He has already increased the tariffs on over \$250 billion Chinese exports to the US and threatened to extend tariffs on \$200 billion Chinese imports to 25 per cent.

Trump held back his threat to impose additional tariffs on the rest of Chinese imports as both sides stepped up talks to finalise the text of the deal.

The White House said recently that talks between Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He, China's main trade negotiator and the US Trade Representative Robert Lighthize and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin will be held on April in Washington.

Ahead of the talks, Vice-Premier and Politburo Standing Committee member Han Zheng told the China Development Forum in Beijing on Sunday that China will work to boost



imports and achieve a more even balance of trade with the US.

Han told a gathering of foreign business representatives and former government officials from the US and other countries that his government was committed to levelling the playing field. "We do not aim to (increase the) trade surplus and sincerely want to increase imports to achieve trade balance," Han told the media.



Shree Ganeshaya Namah

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



Bejan Daruwalla is available for astrological consultations. He can be reached at info@bejandaruwala.com and on phone **011-91-8141234275 www.bejandaruwala.com**

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE APRIL 1 - APRIL 7, 2019

Aries:

Ganesha says there are several soft and emotional moments and deep, intimate bonding with your special partner. If newly married, this will be a blissful period. You realize that life needs the sweet smell of money to enhance and enrich it. Therefore, finances, funding, capital - raising, investments come to the fore and you are aware of the need to handle them imaginatively and well. You will also focus on building strong family ties, bonds of love and caring.

Taurus:

You know that both areas can be interdependent and so you turn your attention and efforts to the house, home and property once again. Buying and selling are all important, whether of assets, shares or real estate. Elders, parents, in-laws, siblings and extended family will also be in the picture. Ensure that you do not hurt or neglect dear ones and take care not to burn the candle at both ends. Your determination and enterprise will ensure that you pull through different situations.

Gemini:

This is a period of ideas and growth. There is harmony at home and accolades, rewards and awards at work. You can pull a rabbit out of the hat. This is a magical period and Ganesha hopes that you make the most of it. In this period you will have a special connection with the circuit of the brain. Mercury is turbo powering you for over a fortnight. Make the most of this period and success is yours. You are in line for windfalls.

Cancer:

You are in full flow and there is rampant progress in your affairs. The time has come for you to look at new decisions at work and play. You realize the necessity of steady work and income and look for new ways to augment earnings. You have a burning desire to achieve at the highest levels and you seriously look at new lines of business, a crash course, higher study and research, even accessing the internet to forge fresh links with the world.

Leo:

You understand well the great uses of technology and social networking and make the most of it. This phase will be very favorable in several ways. You fix new visions of the future and have the chance to share them with people who appreciate you as a person and as a serious professional. Ganesha blesses you. There could be a hike in domestic expenses and elders at home could be a cause for concern.

Virgo:

There is travel on the cards and you will be meeting many new people and making several profitable associations. In your decision-making, you have to focus on determining the right directions for the future. There are happy times at home with greater bonding with relatives, family members, parents and children. New enterprises and projects will materialize, but you will have to work hard and see to their completion.

Libra:

Some relationship and / or professional interactions could turn sour. People you interact with will blow hot and cold and you could be quite irritated, even outright resentful. It is vital that you deal with and resolve your own complexes and neuroses. Do not lose your natural generosity and understanding of life. Do not tread on toes or treat colleagues and subordinates with arrogance as, buoyed by all the success, you could lose humility.

Scorpio:

You know quite clearly the activities that will lead you to progress and happiness, and so focus all your attention on them. You fix your mind on much higher levels now as you look at vistas far removed from the mundane chores of work and family. Education and research will draw you like a magnet, and travel will be a great education broadening your horizons literally and figuratively. You want to expand your mind and grow as a human being and you will do everything possible to make it happen.

Sagittarius:

There will be pleasant times with friends and there will be wonderful moments of shared love with your partner or spouse. There are strong ego drives and Ganesha asks you to keep them under wraps. Children will be a source of joy. This is an emotional period and many maudlin thoughts travel through your mind. But this phase is a great one as there will be gains on many fronts and happiness in love. There will be marvelous results at work too.

Capricorn:

You are much more sympathetic, warm and caring, and make it a point to understand your own limitations and the other person's point of view. Humanitarian efforts, social reform and spiritual growth will bring out the best in you. There is money to be made and your mood is upbeat and euphoric. There are many expenses as you soldier on to your lofty goals. Your life is on an upswing and Ganesha is happy for you.

Aquarius:

You look for peace of mind amidst all this frenzy. Your spiritual strength will stand you in good stead as you cope with the world. There could be some health challenges and it will be necessary to take adequate rest. You could check out a health resort or yoga, meditation and deep breathing. You have been pushing too hard. Once again, this can be an expensive and demanding phase. There will be postponements and cancellations and delays along with compromises, meetings, negotiations and settlements.

Pisces:

Collaborations are also likely, maybe even a marriage or engagement, Ganesha ensures that success is yours despite the odds and the challenges. Once again, you are in the throes of a lucky spell. You do marvelously well in this period. The period favors travels, meetings, conferences, interviews, trips, more brain power, contacts, communication, correspondence, contracts. Make the most of this period as the period will help you achieve whatever you want.

POWERFUL MANTRAS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

We know by now that words have the power to change our reality, power to change the way we think and reprogram our subconscious mind. Mantras are sacred words that resonate deep within our soul, matching with the frequency of the universe and when repeated frequently it purifies the mind and soul, brings clarity and transforms the negative thought pattern into positive ones.

The Sanskrit word, Mantra means man – “mind” and tra means “tool or instrument,” so, its a tool to transport the mind to a place of stillness. Most of the mantras are written in Sanskrit, one of the oldest languages known to mankind. Some linguists also regard it as the perfect language that resonates with the microcosm of our bodies and the macrocosm of the universe.

It is based on the understanding of the science of sound; each sound of the Sanskrit alphabet creates a vibration that resonates with the natural energies of the body. When you chant a mantra, for example ‘Shanti,’ Sanskrit word for ‘peace,’ the vibration of peace is created in one’s whole being, dissolving duality and evoking a sense of interconnectedness with all beings.

The Buddhist Handbook describes mantras as, “highly compressed, power-packed formulas, usually of Sanskrit origin, which are charged with deep meaning and magical potency.”

Mantras also have the power to cleanse your environment, develop mindfulness, and when you sense the vibration of each word you utter in complete awareness, even if you aren’t aware of its meaning, you will notice a shift in your consciousness.

Mantras don’t need to have any religious bend to it, so don’t think that chanting a certain mantra makes you a Hindu or a Buddhist.

It’s medicine for the soul and that can be used to navigate your consciousness to higher planes. You can chant mantras any time of the day, during yoga, meditation, walking, cooking, doing your regular activities or when you are facing a stressful situation.

These are some powerful Sanskrit mantras that we can practice in daily life:

Om Sarvesham Svastir Bhavatu (universal peace prayer)

*“Sarvesam Svastir Bhavatu
Sarvesam Shantir Bhavatu
Sarvesam Purnam Bhavatu
Sarvesam Magalam Bhavatu”*

Meaning

May there be happiness in all
May there be peace in all
May there be completeness in all
May there be success in all

Benefits

Chanting this mantra several times during the day will make you feel centered, will evoke a sense of calmness within and also instills positive thoughts, especially on days when things get a bit edgy.

Gayatri Mantra

*“Om bhur bhuvā? sva?
tāt savitūr vāre?(i)ya?
bhārgo devāsya dhimahi*



dhīyo yó na prachodayat”

Meaning

The two words “Gayatri Mantra” might be loosely translated as “a prayer of praise that awakens the vital energies and gives liberation and deliverance from ignorance”. The meaning –

(O) Supreme one; (who is) the physical, astral (and) causal worlds (himself).

(you are) the source of all, deserving all worship

(O) radiant, divine one; (we) meditate (upon you)

Propel our Intellect (towards liberation or freedom)

Another translation is ...

We worship the word that is present in the earth,

the heavens and that which is beyond.

By meditating on this glorious power that gives us life,

we ask that our minds and hearts be illuminated.

Gayatri mantra is much revered of all the mantras, found in the Rig veda. I first heard this mantra during my yoga class, we would chant it at the end of the class and really struck a cord.

Although I didn’t know the meaning of the mantra at that time, I could feel the positive and healing effect of its vibrations on my mind and body. Prolonged repetition of the Gayatri mantra, opens up our minds and our hearts to the infinite possibilities in life.

Om Namah Shivaya

Meaning

It means “I bow to Shiva,” which is your true inner Self, the divine consciousness that resides within each one of us.

Benefits

This mantra brings calmness to a restless mind.

Builds self-confidence

Relieves stress and helps you relax

It helps you find a direction in life.

Om Gum Ganapatayei Namah

Meaning: I bow to Ganesh, the elephant-faced deity, who is capable of removing all

obstacles. I pray for blessings and protection.

Benefits

Ganesh or Ganapatayei is known to be the remover of obstacles and the lord of beginnings. Whenever you chant this mantra, you are calling upon the energy of Ganesh to assist you to face the challenges that life has to offer, moving towards your goals with conviction and aligning yourself with your desired outcome. Apart from the above mantras, you can also chant the Buddhist mantra, “Om Mani Padme Hum” and the most important of all, “AUM”– the sound of the universe and the sound of creation.

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“If Hindus don’t maintain Hinduism, who shall save it?”

“If India’s own children don’t cling to their faith, who shall guard it?”

“Indians alone can save India, and India and Hinduism are one.”



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Arriving Singers



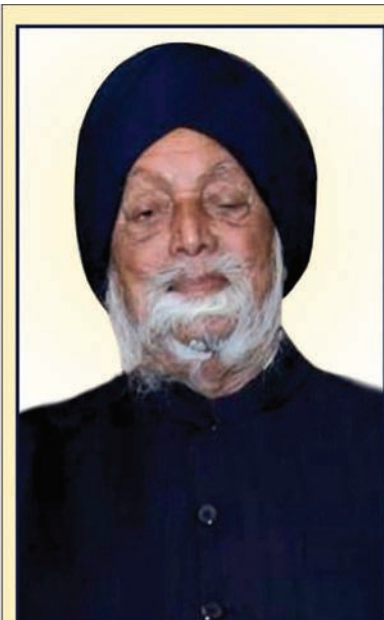
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SIDH SHAKTI BIBI SATYA DEVI SATSANG BHAWAN BANGA (CANADA)

Pritam Singh and Baldev Singh Gilzian Bereaved

Sardar Shingara Singh, revered father of Pritam Singh and Baldev Singh Gilzian passed away at the age of 91 on March 24 in New York.

Bhog and Antim Ardas for the dear departed will take place as per program in the following flyer.



Bhog & Antim Ardaas
With profound grief and deep sorrow we inform you the sad demise of our beloved Father
Sardar Shingara Singh
11-4-1928 to 03-24-2019
Bhog and Antim Ardaas will be held on
on Wednesday, 27th March, 2019
Aarambh Sri Akhand Path Sahib.....10:00am
on Friday, 29th March, 2019
Bhog Sri Akhand Path Sahib & Antim Ardaas.....4:00pm
at
Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Sikh Center
113-10 101st Ave, South Richmond Hill, NY 11419
Viewing on Thursday, 28th March, 2019
(7:00 pm to 9:00 pm)
Funeral on Friday, 29th March, 2019
(10:00 am to 1:00 pm)
at
Bergen Funeral Service
11430 Rockaway Blvd, South Ozone Park, NY 11420
Father of Pritam Singh & Baldev Singh Gilzian

Himat Singh Sarpanch Bereaved

Sardarni Mohinder Kaur, revered sister of Himat Singh Sarpanch has passed away in Greater Montreal, Canada.

ਅੰਤਿਮ ਅਰਦਾਸ



ਆਪ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੇ ਦੁਖੀ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੂਚਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਾਤਾ ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਜੀ ਜੋ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਿਨੀਂ ਗਰੇਟਰ ਮੋਂਟਰੀਅਲ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੰਸਾਰਿਕ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਚਰਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾ ਬਿਰਾਜੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹ 82 ਵਰ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸ. ਹਿਮਤ ਸਰਪੰਚ ਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਭੈਣ ਅਤੇ ਸ. ਗੁਰਮੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ (ਬੇਟਾ), ਸੁਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ (ਬੇਟਾ) ਨੂੰ ਗਹਿਰਾ ਸਦਮਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਊਨਰਲ ਸਰਵਿਸ 4275, Boul, Des sources-des-Ormeaux, Qc H9B2A6 10 ਵਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ 12.30 ਵਜੇ ਤੱਕ ਅਤੇ 1.00 ਵਜੇ ਦਿਨ ਐਤਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕੀਰਤਨ 2 ਵਜੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਗਰੇਟਰ ਮੋਂਟਰੀਅਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।

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Bespoke CONTENT

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

contd from page 1

India Shoots down Weather Satellite; Joins the Space 'Superpower' Club

This was a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan and China that similarly destroyed a weather satellite in 2007, creating the largest orbital debris in history.

The Chinese test was also the trigger for India's defense and space establishments to develop anti-satellite missile capability which the foreign office claimed was not in violation of any international law or treaty to which New Delhi was a signatory. The timing of Modi's announcement, however, has raised awkward questions politically as the Model Code of Conduct before elections prohibits all parties from making announcements that could prove electorally advantageous.

The opposition parties said the satellite missile test announcement was Modi's latest bid to 'garner television time' and flex India's military muscle as his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) seeks to retain power in polls beginning on 11 April and ending on May 23, 2019.

Sultanpur Lodhi pledges to open doors for devotees

have already pledged to throw open the doors of their houses for the devotees expected to descend on the holy town.

The residents, both Sikhs and Hindus, have also offered to provide meals and transportation to the devotees, coming from abroad or far-off places in the country. Some NRIs have already handed over the keys to their vacant houses to neighbors or organizations arranging for the stay.

Many locals have offered to spare one or more rooms. Tent cities are also being set up by the government and social organizations. To ensure that the arrangement is foolproof, advance booking and liaison efforts are already on. The government, SGPC, gurdwara managers, political parties and social bodies are all charting out lists of such host and guest families.

Gurvinder Singh, who works in the team of environmentalist Balbir Singh Seechewal, said, "We will make arrangements for hosting one lakh families. So far, we have already arranged for the stay of 50,000. Around 20,000 vehicles have also been pledged. We began working on this around two years ago. We launched booking recently by opening portal www.parkashpurab550.in. We have also launched a mobile application for navigation. The guests will have to share their Aadhaar ID or passport numbers with the hosts for proper registration."

Gurvinder said, "We are covering houses not just in Sultanpur but in a 20-km radius around it, including in Shahkot, Nakodar and even Jalandhar city. The app that we provide will also send alerts to volunteers regarding their duty time. We have spent Rs 8 lakh on developing software and the app. But the entire service that will be extended will only be voluntary. I have myself offered my house at Ahmedpur village in Kapurthala."

AAP leader Sajjan Singh Cheema said, "I will be shifting to my house in Jalandhar in those days and will offer my house at Dabulian village in Sultanpur Lodhi to devotees. I have told all my party workers to at least share one room of their houses. We are preparing lists for the same."

Gurdwara Ber Sahib manager Satnam Singh said, "We are also making lists of hosts and guests. We are also arranging rooms in schools, colleges and sports academies to accommodate the sangat."

First on list of hosts

Manoj Sharma, who will offer an independent portion of his house in Sultanpur Lodhi along with his vehicle

Raju Dhir has two houses in PUDA colony, one of which will be kept open for the sangat

About 20 families of Gursharan Singh's Didwinda village have already offered portions of their houses for hosting devotees. (Source: Tribune, India)

Iceland's WOW Air budget carrier folds up; cancels all flights, leaving thousands stranded

travelling to Iceland, comes after buyout talks with rival Icelandair collapsed earlier this week.

"All WOW Air flights have been cancelled. Passengers are advised to check available flights with other airlines," the carrier said in a statement.

"Some airlines may offer flights at a reduced rate, so-called rescue fares, in light of the circumstances. Information on those airlines will be published, when it becomes available."

Iceland's government said it estimated that 4,000 travelers were stranded, including around 1,300 currently in transit.

At Reykjavik airport, hundreds of passengers were stranded as 30 WOW Air flights to Paris, New York, Montreal were cancelled.

WOW Air, founded in 2011, exploited Iceland's location in the middle of the North Atlantic to offer a low-cost service between Europe and North America as well as tapping into a tourist boom to the volcanic island.

However, it had flown into financial trouble in recent years due to heightened competition on transatlantic low-cost flights and rising fuel prices and had been searching for an investor for months.

On Monday WOW Air said it was in talks to restructure its debt with its creditors after Icelandair ended brief negotiations over buying a stake in the no-frills airline.

WOW Air was left needing USD 42 million to save the company, according to the Frettabladid newspaper.

The privately-owned airline has undergone major restructuring after posting a pre-tax loss of almost USD 42 million for the first nine months of 2018.

It has reduced its fleet from 20 to 11 aircraft, eliminating several destinations, including those to the US, and cutting 111 full-time jobs.

A report by a governmental work group has warned that a WOW Air bankruptcy would lead to a drop in Iceland's gross domestic product, a drop in the value of the krona and rising inflation. In 2018, WOW Air, which employs 1,000 people, transported 3.5 million passengers. (Agencies)

House fails to override Trump's veto over national emergency wall fight

"Today, Congressional Democrats attempted to block the President's National Emergency Declaration -- they failed," White House spokesman Hogan Gidley said in a statement after the vote. "Democrats continue to ignore the reality that our porous southern border is a magnet for illegal immigration, child smugglers, human traffickers, drug cartels, gangs and many other criminals. This national security and humanitarian crisis endangers every American and cannot be described as anything other than a National Emergency."

Both chambers of Congress had passed a resolution to overturn Trump's national emergency declaration to fund more border wall, which would use billions from the Treasury and Defense departments after Congress rejected giving Trump the full amount of border wall money he requested for the year. The decision sparked criticism from Republicans and Democrats alike, many of whom argued the national emergency action would violate the Constitution.

The House easily passed the resolution of disapproval in February. A few weeks later, 12 Senate Republicans joined with Senate Democrats to pass it, marking a sharp rebuke from members of the President's own party on a key issue to his base.

The President vetoed the bill one day after it cleared the Senate. "Congress has the freedom to pass this resolution and I have the duty to veto it," Trump said from the Oval Office before officially sending the measure back to Congress without his approval.

House Democrats, meanwhile, were quick to announce they would hold an override vote on March 26. "The House and Senate resoundingly rejected the President's lawless power grab, yet the President has chosen to continue to defy the Constitution, the Congress and the will of the American people," Pelosi said in a statement at the time.

But the House faced a high hurdle, needing a two-thirds majority -- rather than a simple majority -- to override the veto. The House first passed the bill 245-182.

House Democratic leaders were under no illusion that the veto override would pass. Speaker Nancy Pelosi said last week that the point of the vote is to make it clear the new Democratic-controlled House won't tolerate the President's persistence for a border wall.

"Whether we can succeed with the number of votes is not the point," Pelosi said at an event in New York. "We are establishing the intent of Congress."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said earlier this month that the National Emergency Act allows for a resolution of disapproval to come up every six months, and Democrats intend to bring it up again then. (Source: CNN)

Trump meets Pichai, says Google committed to US military, not China

Pichai "stated strongly that he is totally committed to the US military and not the Chinese military", Trump said.

"Also discussed political fairness and various things that @Google can do for our country. Meeting ended very well!" said the President. There was no immediate tweet from Pichai.

However, a Google spokesperson said that the company is pleased to have productive conversations with the President.

"We were pleased to have productive conversations with the President about investing in the future of the American workforce, the growth of emerging technologies and our ongoing commitment to working with the US government," said the Google spokesperson.

Trump's tweet criticizing Google earlier last month came after Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan and General Joseph Dunford, chairman joint chiefs of staff, said during a Congressional hearing that "Google was partnering with China... but the Internet search engine giant has shown a lack of willingness to work with the US Department of Defense".

During his trip to Washington DC, Pichai also met India's Ambassador to the US Harsh V Shringla.

"A thoroughly enriching experience to meet and interact with" Pichai on Google's positive engagement in India and elsewhere in the world, privacy laws, internet governance and a host of other issues, the ambassador said in a tweet. (Source: PTI)

CONTD FROM PAGE 9

A Report Card on the...

The Big Bank Loot:

While many of the proposed government schemes were lacking in funds, the Modi regime closed their eyes on the bank looting scam by the crony capitalists who defrauded the PNBs and some even fled the country. The scam involves 19000 bank fraud cases involving 90000 crores of Rupees of its funds. Going by the records, it is clear that NPA (Bad debt) of nationalized banks went up from 2.83 lakh crore from May 2014 to 12 Lakh crore in March 2018. What has been swallowed by sharks like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi, Vikram Kothari and many others is actually people's money.

It is essential for every voter in India to take a good look at Modi's record as the Chowkidar of the nation and vote their conscience. If this record meets their standard of achievement, India's future may be bleak, and the wellbeing of its democracy may even be in danger! However, the coming election is also an opportunity to turn the tables on those who not only broke their promises but also unsettled the nation with so much deception and misgovernance.

(Compiled by George Abraham, Vice-Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, USA. George can be reached at gta777@gmail.com)

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MUNNAR, A HAVEN OF PEACE AND TRANQUILITY

Munnar rises as three mountain streams merge — Mudrapuzha, Nallathanni and Kundala. 1,600 m above sea level, this hill station was once the summer resort of the erstwhile British Government in South India. Sprawling tea plantations, picturesque towns, winding lanes and holiday facilities make this a popular resort town. Among the exotic flora found in the forests and grasslands here is the Neelakurinji. This flower which bathes the hills in blue once in every twelve years, will bloom next in 2018. Munnar also has the highest peak in South India, Anamudi, which towers over 2,695 m. Anamudi is an ideal spot for trekking.

Let us now explore some of the options in and around Munnar that would provide travellers ample opportunities to enjoy the captivating hill station of Munnar.

Eravikulam National Park

One of the main attractions near Munnar is the Eravikulam National Park. This park is famous for its endangered inhabitant - the Nilgiri Tahr. Spread over an area of 97 sq. km., this park is also home to several species of rare butterflies, animals and birds. A great place for trekking, the park offers a magnificent view of the tea plantations caressed by blankets of mists. The park becomes a hot destination when the hill slopes here get covered in a carpet of blue, resulting from the flowering of the Neelakurinji. It is a plant endemic to this part of the Western Ghats which blooms once in twelve years.

Anamudi Peak

Located inside the Eravikulam National Park is the Anamudi Peak. This is the highest peak in South India, standing at a height of over 2700 m. Treks to the peak are allowed with permission from the Forest and Wildlife authorities at Eravikulam.

Mattupetty

Another prime draw for visitors, located about 13 km from Munnar Town, is Mattupetty. Situated at a height of 1700 m above sea level, Mattupetty is known for its storage masonry dam and the beautiful lake, which offers pleasurable boat rides, enabling one to enjoy the surrounding hills and landscape. Mattupetty's fame is also



attributed to the dairy farm run by the Indo-Swiss Livestock Project, where one can encounter different high yielding breeds of cows.

Pallivasal

Pallivasal, located at about 3 km from Chithirapuram in Munnar is the venue of the first hydro-electric project in Kerala. It is a place of immense scenic beauty and is often favoured by visitors as a picnic spot.

Chinnakanal & Anayirangal

Near Munnar Town lie Chinnakanal and its waterfalls, popularly known as the Power House Waterfalls, which cascade down a steep rock 2000 m above sea level. The spot is enriched with a scenic view of the Western

Ghat ranges. When you have traveled about seven kilometers from Chinnakanal, you reach Anayirangal. Anayirangal, 22 km from Munnar, is a lush green carpet of tea plants. A trip on the splendid reservoir is an unforgettable experience. The Anayirangal dam is surrounded by tea plantations and evergreen forests.

Top Station

Top Station, which is about 32 km from Munnar is at a height of 1700 m above sea level. It is the highest point on the Munnar-Kodaikanal road. Travellers to Munnar make it a point to visit Top Station to enjoy the panoramic view it offers of the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. It is among the prime spots in Munnar to enjoy the Neelakurinji

flowers blooming over a vast area.

Tea Museum

Munnar has a legacy of its own when it comes to the origins and evolution of tea plantations. Taking account of this legacy and to preserve and showcase some of the exquisite and interesting aspects of the genesis and growth of tea plantations in Kerala's high ranges, a museum exclusively for tea was opened some years ago by Tata Tea in Munnar. This Tea Museum houses artifacts, photographs and machineries; all of which have a story to tell about the origins and growth of tea plantations in Munnar. The museum is located at the Nallathanni Estate of Tata Tea in Munnar and is worth a visit.



Last-ball howler by umpires hands Mumbai six-run victory

BENGALURU (TIP): An umpiring howler on the last delivery cost Royal Challengers Bangalore dearly as Mumbai Indians pipped the hosts by six runs largely due to Jasprit Bumrah's brilliant spell at the death in an IPL encounter.

Needing six to take the game to the Super Over, Lasith Malinga's final delivery to Shivam Dube was a no-ball that was missed by the umpires as RCB managed 181/5 in reply to 187/8 by Mumbai.

Had the no-ball been given, AB de Villiers, who nearly took his team to victory with an unbeaten 70 off 41 balls, would have gotten a free-hit. The umpiring mistake left RCB captain Virat Kohli seething in anger. "We are playing at IPL level, not club cricket," Kohli said. "That's just a ridiculous call on the last ball. The umpires should have their eyes open; it was a no-ball by an inch," he added.

But nothing can be taken away from Bumrah's mastery as he won it for MI with superb 17th (one run and a wicket) and 19th (five runs and a wicket) overs.

KOLKATA'S KNIGHT SHINES AGAIN

KOLKATA (TIP): Andre Russell's second consecutive blistering knock made all the difference as Kolkata Knight Riders beat Kings XI Punjab by 28 runs in the IPL here today.

Russell, who hit a sensational 19-ball 49 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in KKR's previous match, bludgeoned his way to a 17-ball 48 to propel the home side to 218/4 after being sent in to bat. He later took two wickets for 21 runs to help KKR restrict KXIP to 190/4.

When on three, Russell was yorked by Mohammed Shami off the last delivery of the 17th over but to the horror of KXIP, the umpire signalled a no-ball as the visiting team was found to have one fielder short of the mandatory four



inside the 30-yard circle.

Kohli 2nd batsman to score 5000 runs in IPL

Virat Kohli continues to walk out to bat, he continues to peel off runs and cruise past records. In the match against Mumbai Indians, the Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper became the second batsman to breach the 5000 runs mark in

IPL cricket. Virat needed 46 runs to achieve the feat and he was a man who looked in control from the word go. He went after Jasprit Bumrah and smoked him for 3 successive boundaries to kickstart the innings. RCB were chasing 188 and Kohli was anchoring the chase beautifully along with Parthiv Patel and AB de Villiers when he reached the milestone.



ASHWIN SPARKS FURORE WITH 'MANKAD' DISMISSAL OF BUTTLER

Ravichandran Ashwin says his 'Mankad' dismissal of Jos Buttler in the Indian Premier League (IPL) on Monday was not against the spirit of the game despite the run out sparking a chorus of disapproval from fellow players and pundits.

Rajasthan Royals batsman Buttler was run out on 69 while backing up at the non-striker's end, with Kings XI Punjab skipper Ashwin choosing to whip off the bails as the runner stepped out of the crease instead of completing his delivery to the batsman on strike.

The dismissal, named after India bowler Vinoo Mankad who ran out Australia's Bill Brown in similar fashion in 1947, is permitted under cricket's laws but viewed by some as going against the spirit of the game.

Buttler departed after an angry exchange with Ashwin and his exit condemned the Royals to a 14-run defeat in their IPL opener in Jaipur.

"On my part, it was very instinctive," Indian offspinner Ashwin told a post-match news conference. "It wasn't planned or anything like that. It's there within the rules of the game.

"I don't understand where the spirit of the game comes (in). Naturally, if it's there in the rules it's there."

That view was not shared by Royals coach Paddy Upton.

"I think we'll leave it up to the IPL fans to decide if that's the kind of things they want to see, and we'll leave it up to the cricket world to judge R Ashwin's actions tonight," Upton said.

"But for us, we're certainly here to play cricket and entertain the fans and be good role models for people who love the game."

Former Australia spinner Shane Warne said Ashwin had committed a "low act".

"So disappointed in (Ashwin) as a captain and as a person," Warne wrote on Twitter. "(Ashwin) had no intention of delivering the ball ... this is not a good look for the IPL ... Why do such a disgraceful and low act like that tonight?"

England limited overs skipper Eoin Morgan said Ashwin had set a "terrible example" for young players, while former England skipper Michael Vaughan suggested the rules should be changed.

"If (Buttler) had been warned, well that's fine," Vaughan tweeted. "If he hasn't and it's the first time, I think Ashwin is completely out of order ... I would prefer a one warning rule, then after that it's a free for all."

Former Australian Test spinner Bruce Yardley dies at 71

SYDNEY (TIP): Former Australian Test star Bruce Yardley, who was later regarded as one of the world's leading spin-bowling coaches, has died aged 71 after a battle with cancer.

The West Australian played 33 Tests and was his country's first-choice spinner in the 1980s, taking 126 wickets at an average of 31.63.

He was also handy with the bat, holding the Australian record for the quickest Test fifty for 38 years.

Known as 'Roo', Yardley was equally well known for coaching Sri Lanka in the 1990s and being a big influence on the greatest Test wicket-taker of all time--Muttiah Muralitharan.

Yardley, who was the international cricketer of the year in 1981, was reportedly the man who advised the Sri Lankan great to start bowling his famous 'doosra' delivery.

India thrash Canada 7-3, to meet Korea in Azlan Shah final

IPOH (TIP): Striker Mandeep Singh scored a brilliant hat-trick as India outplayed Canada 7-3 to book a summit clash berth against Korea in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament here on Wednesday.

Korea beat hosts Malaysia 2-1 in another match of the day to set up a summit clash against India on Saturday.

The 24-year-old Mandeep fired in three quick field goals (20th, 27th and 29th minutes), all of them coming in the second quarter, after Varun Kumar had given India the lead in the 12th minute of the high-scoring match.

At the half time, India were 4-0 up in the match before Canada reduced the margin through a strike from Mark Pearson in the 35th minute. Amit Rohidas (39th), Vivek Prasad (55th) and Nilakanta Sharma (58th) struck later to take the game beyond the reach of the Canadians who scored two late goals through Fin Boothroyd (50th) and James Wallace (57th).

India and Korea, the two unbeaten sides in the tournament, now have 10 points each from four matches, with identical three wins and a draw. They both booked a berth in the final with a game in hand to be played on Friday.

India play Poland (zero point) in their final league match on Friday while Korea take on Japan (3 points from 4 matches) on the same day. Malaysia are third in the league table with six



points with one match left to play.

India and Korea had played out a 1-1 draw in the league stage on March 24. India showed progress match-by-match in the tournament with improved structure and discipline as they took on an unpredictable Canadian side. India had beaten Canada 5-1 in the group stage at the 2018 World Cup in Bhubaneswar.

India made an attacking start that put the opponents on the back-foot early in the match. A quick circle entry by Sumit Kumar Jr resulted to India winning a penalty corner in the 12th minute which was converted by Varun Kumar, scoring his third goal of the tournament.

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