

## 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 8, 2019 to salujaindra@gmail.com For any question, please call 646-247-9458.

## RBI cuts key lending rate by 25 basis points



The central bank, however, kept monetary policy stance 'Neutral' over uncertainty over monsoon.

**MUMBAI (TIP):** In an attempt to propel economy ahead of the General Election, the RBI on Thursday lowered the benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 6 per cent, the second cut in a row, to the lowest level in one year on softening inflation.

*contd on Page 32*

## Trump threatens tariffs if Mexico does not help with immigration, drugs

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** President Donald Trump threatened on Thursday, April 4, to put tariffs on cars coming from Mexico into the United States if Mexico does not continue to help Washington deal with the immigration situation along the southern US border.

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## Christ Church, NZ massacre suspect to face 89 charges



Mourners pay their respects at a makeshift memorial near the Masjid Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, Saturday, March 16, 2019.

**WELLINGTON (TIP):** The man accused of carrying out the Christchurch mosque attacks will face 50 murder charges and 39 attempted murder charges when he makes his second court appearance, the New Zealand police said on Thursday, April 4.

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# Jaipur Foot gives lease of life to people, illustrates Gandhi's message of compassion to humanity: Ambassador Shringla

**NEW YORK (TIP):** India's "international brand", the Jaipur Foot has provided a "lease of life" to over a million people, India's Ambassador to the US Harsh Vardhan Shringla said underscoring that the life-changing contributions of the prosthetic limb organization illustrates Gandhi's message of service and compassion to humanity.

Jaipur Foot USA and the Consulate General of India in New York hosted an exhibition and seminar on 'India for Humanity' Thursday, April 4, as part of the commemorations planned worldwide to mark Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary this year.

Ambassador Shringla, the Chief Guest at the event, said besides the fact that Jaipur Foot provides prosthetics to such a large number of people, "it gives a lease of life to people. Over 1.75 million have been touched by it."

*contd on page 3*



Jaipur Foot "gives a lease of life to people. Over 1.75 million have been touched by it", said Ambassador Harsh Vardhan Shringla

Photo / Jay Mandal- On assignment

## 2nd European Games in Minsk, Belarus from June 21 to 30, 2019

Special Photo Presentation made at the UNHQ

**UNITED NATIONS (TIP):** CEO of Minsk European Games Organizing Committee (MEGOC) George Katulin, in the presence of Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus Andrei Dapkiunas and Under Secretary General Vladimir Voronkov, opened a special photo presentation at the UN HQ, April 3 in the run-up to the 2nd European Games, world class multi-sport event to be held in Minsk from June 21 to 30, 2019.

*contd on Page 3*

Attorney Ravi Batra and Diwali Stamp Foundation Chairperson Ranju Batra receiving tickets for the games at Minsk. Seen, from L to R: Belarus Ambassador Valentin Rybakov, Ravi Batra, Belarus Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Dapkiunas, Ranju Batra, CEO Second European Games George Katulin, Under Secretary General -Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov



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# Jaipur Foot gives lease of life to people, illustrates Gandhi's message of compassion to humanity: Ambassador Shringla

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He said Jaipur Foot USA is doing a lot to support the endeavor of the Jaipur Foot, citing Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) Founder and Chief Patron D R Mehta, who said "this is not charity, it is help that we are rendering to people to stand on their own feet." Shringla also pointed out that the "significant" technical collaboration between Jaipur Foot and eminent American universities such as Stanford, MIT and the Chicago Rehabilitation Institute is making Jaipur Foot more effective and helping keep the costs as low as possible.

In October last year, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had launched the 'India for Humanity' initiative under which the External Affairs Ministry will partner BMVSS for holding artificial limb fitment camps in about 12 countries as part of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary commemoration.

"A very important component is the support that the Ministry of External Affairs will give to Jaipur Foot for a number of camps the Jaipur Foot will undertake in India and different parts of the world in this endeavor of marking Gandhi's own service to humanity and his compassion for humanity," Shringla said.

He recalled Gandhi's message of truth, non-violence and compassion, saying the "linkage between Gandhi's own beliefs and philosophy with the practical aspects of what Jaipur Foot is doing to extend his ideology into the realm of doing service



Jaipur Foot USA Team with Ambassador Shringla, Consul General Sandeep Chakraborty, guest of honor Paritosh Prasad and other invited guests  
Photo / Jay Mandal- On assignment



Singer, rapper, inspirational speaker Sparsh Shah being honored with a plaque by Ambassador Shringla. Consul General Sandeep Chakraborty and Jaipur Foot USA President Prem Bhandari are also seen.

for the people, is critical."

Shringla also shared personal stories from his career highlighting Jaipur Foot's contribution in helping rehabilitate disabled people across the world, especially those wounded in conflicts. He said that at the end of the conflict in Sri Lanka, India sent several de-mining teams to the neighboring nation and Jaipur Foot established camps in areas like Jaffna, where a large number of people had lost their limbs because of landmines and the prolonged conflict. A large number of people were "rehabilitated physically, economically, socially through the endeavors of the Jaipur Foot."

"The philosophy of the Jaipur Foot is that it operates on a low cost basis, so those people working in the organization are doing it out of cause for humanity. There are no profit margins, it's all about giving back to society," he said.

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## 2nd European Games in Minsk, Belarus from June 21 to 30, 2019

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Attorney Ravi Batra and Diwali Stamp Foundation Chairperson Ranju Batra were presented tickets to attend the Opening Ceremony of the Games in Minsk.

Present on the occasion, among others, were India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin and Minister Deepak Misra.



A view of the gathering



Ravi Batra speaking on the occasion

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Karamvir Dahiya

## Indian-American elected as member of top US think tank



Arun M Kumar has been elected as a member of a top US think-tank, the Council on Foreign Relations

**WASHINGTON DC (TIP):** Arun M Kumar, an Indian-American and a former Obama Administration official, has been elected as a member of a top US think-tank, the Council on Foreign Relations. Currently chairman and CEO of KPMG in India, Kumar, 66, served as a top US commercial diplomat in the Obama Administration.

In his role as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Global Markets and Director General of the US and Foreign Commercial Service, he led the trade and investment promotion efforts for the US Government.

"We take pride in Arun's election as a member of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), which has been an influential voice in international relations not just in the US, but across the globe. I am confident that with his global business and diplomatic experience, Arun will add immense value to the CFR," said Bill Thomas, chairman of KPMG International. "I am honored to join the Council of Foreign Relations. The work of the CFR is more relevant than ever before, especially in Asia and the part of the world where I now live," Kumar said. "I look forward to working with other members of the CFR to foster leading ideas and conversations around vital and strategic foreign policy and business issues in the Indo-Pacific corridor," he said. (Source: Agencies)

## Indian-Origin Woman Who Posed as Doctor Faces Jail in UK

**LONDON (TIP) :** An Indian-origin woman who posed as a doctor to dupe elderly people into engaging her services for a fee has been convicted of seven counts of fraud by false representation and three counts of supplying a prescription-only medicinal product by a UK court.

Kamlesh Bassi, 58 years old, used different aliases to pretend to be a qualified medical doctor, a nurse, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, an osteopath and a chiropractor. Warwick Crown Court was told at a hearing last week.

She targeted elderly people and persuaded them to hire her as a medical professional, also offering services as a masseuse and household help.

Read full story on  
[www.theindianpanorama.news](http://www.theindianpanorama.news)

# Indian Americans Monika and Natasha Samtani to host show on Rukus Radio

**WASHINGTON DC (TIP):** Indian Americans Monika Samtani and Natasha Samtani will host a show amplifying women's voices on the new South Asian American radio station Rukus Radio Avenue, which goes on air next week.

Rukus Radio, promoted as the first mainstream South Asian radio station in North America, will be launched on April 8. It is being launched by Rukus Avenue Music Group, which was also North America's first South Asian record music label, in partnership with DJ Skee and Dash Radio.

The Samtanis are the co-hosts and co-founders of the platform The Fem Word. The duo will bring along their own unique creative style to the show, along with their impressive credentials.

Monika, based in Washington, DC, was the first South Asian female TV news anchor in the nation's capital. Natasha has to her credit an impressive body of work in the music industry and has advocated for artists and creators.

The mother-daughter co-hosts and co-founders created The Fem Word, a global platform, to amplify women's voices. "We are excited to dive in to the real, raw stories of women from all ages and stages," they said in a statement. "The Fem Word is shifting



the feminist narrative and broadcasting conversations that spark positivity and encourage women around the world to live their best life."

The Fem Word's new one-hour radio

show premieres on April 9 and airs every Tuesday at 4 pm PST in North America, and every Wednesday 12 pm GMT in the United Kingdom and 4:30 pm IST in India.

## Indian Americans arrested for H-1B visa fraud in California and Texas



**SACRAMENTO / DALLAS (TIP) :** Three Indian Americans were arrested last week in California and Texas for H-1B visa fraud.

Businessmen Kishore Dattapuram, Kumar Aswapathi and Santosh Giri, who set up a consulting firm by the name of Nanosemantics Inc. in Santa Clara, CA, allegedly submitted fraudulent H-1B applications between May 2012 and 2015. In the indictment, the Department of Justice said that this was done in order to gain a competitive advantage over competing firms. The trio, who hail from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in India, were arrested on March 27.

Dattapuram, of Santa Clara, Aswapathi, of Austin, Texas, and Santosh Giri, of San Jose, CA, have each been charged with a count of conspiracy to commit visa fraud and 10 counts of substantive visa fraud. "The defendants were arrested yesterday in their respective towns of residence," a release published on the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website says. Dattapuram and Aswapathi made their initial appearances in federal court in San Jose and Austin, respectively. Giri made his initial appearance today in federal court in San Jose. All three defendants entered pleas of not guilty and were released on bonds. Defendants are next scheduled to appear at 1:30 p.m. on May 13, 2019, for a status conference before the Honorable Judge Edward J. Davila, U.S. District Judge."

If convicted, the defendants face a maximum sentence of ten years, and a fine of \$250,000, plus restitution if appropriate for each violation of 18 USC 1546(A) (visa fraud). The men can also face a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000, plus restitution if appropriate for the conspiracy count. (Source: DOJ)

## Indian-Origin Sentenced for Call Centre Phone Fraud

**ATLANTA (TIP) :** The crackdown on India-based call center fraud continues in the US with the sentencing of yet another Indian-origin for his role in a scam that ripped off \$200,000 from over 340 people here.

Mehboob Mansurali Charania was sentenced to 16 months in prison by Federal Judge Steve Jones in Atlanta.

This was the second sentencing of an Indian this week in a fraud involving the use of India-based call centers. Earlier this week, in a separate case, a federal judge in Florida had hit Nishit Kumar Patel with a prison term of more than eight years. Three of his accomplices were awaiting sentencing.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, J. Russell George, said: "Our investigations have identified 140 scammers who, like Mr Charania, have or are, facing federal criminal proceedings."

More than 15,000 victims have suffered over \$75 million in losses since October 2013 to telephone scammers impersonating tax officials, he added.

Federal prosecutor Byung J. Pak said that Mr Charania was part of "a sophisticated scheme organized in India, that included a network of call centers", which "used lies, intimidation, and fear to extort or outright steal from unsuspecting citizens".

The prosecutor's office said in a statement that the scams included impersonation of US tax officials to claim the victim owed back taxes, soliciting upfront payments for fictitious grant programs and computer hacking that would lock out the user and demand a ransom to free it.

Mr Charania collected the money and sent it to India using a hawala scheme, the statement said.

In October 2016 alone, five Indian companies and 56 persons, most of them of Indian descent, were charged with participating in similar schemes.



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## Consulate General of India, New York makes clarifications about voting by Overseas (NRI) Voters of India

It has been brought to our notice that some misleading information is being spread in some sections of the media, especially social media about the online voting/voting in the Consulate or through proxy/mail by Overseas (NRI) Indian Voters in the forthcoming general election in India.

2. The position has been clarified by Election Commission of India spokesperson saying that no such facility has been extended to NRIs. The Election Commission of India (ECI) has also filed a complaint with the Delhi Police, asking it to track down those spreading "fake news" that NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) can cast their vote online in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

3. The current position with regard to voting by NRI voters in the general election in India is reiterated as follows:

Under Section 20A of the Representation of People Act, 1950 and rules made there under every citizen of India:

(a) whose name is not included in the electoral roll; (b) who has not acquired the citizenship of any other country; and (c) who is absenting from his place of ordinary residence in India owing to his employment, education or otherwise outside India, is entitled to have his/her name registered in the electoral roll as "Overseas electors" in the constituency in one's place of residence in India as mentioned in one's passport is located.

4. The application for this purpose can

be filed in the prescribed form in person before the concerned Electoral Registration Officer or sent by post or can be filed online on the website of Chief Electoral Officer of the concerned state or website of Election Commission of India ([www.eci.gov.in](http://www.eci.gov.in)). After getting enrolled in the electoral roll, such person though will not be issued Elector Photo Identity Card but can cast one's vote in India during Assembly or Parliamentary election at the respective polling station after showing his/her valid original Indian passport. However, provision for alternative options for voting for overseas Indian elections is under consideration.

The Consulate General of India in New York requests all the NRIs in the consular jurisdiction of CGI, New York to get their names registered on the electoral rolls as NRI voters to enable them to become the part of the election process.

(i) For further information regarding overseas electors, please refer to website of Election Commission of India <http://ecisveep.nic.in/voters/overseas-voters/> or [www.nvsp.in](http://www.nvsp.in)

(ii) A Guide on How Do I vote, prepared by Election Commission of India for Electoral Voters and Service Voters can be seen at the following websites:

<https://mea.gov.in/Images/pdf/nri-brochure-english-at-18012019.pdf> and

<https://mea.gov.in/Images/pdf/service-voter-brochure.pdf>

## Report: New York has 316,244 Immigrant Entrepreneurs that Employ 825,557

**State's Immigrant Households Wield \$117.8 Billion In Spending Power**  
Findings reveal that DACA-eligible individuals and TPS holders also generated \$547.5 million in federal, state, and local taxes

**NEW YORK (TIP):** New American Economy (NAE), a bipartisan research and immigration advocacy organization, released, April 4, new data through Map the Impact, an interactive map that quantifies immigrant contributions at the national, state, city, and congressional district levels, and across industries. Map the Impact now features new findings at the state level, based on analysis of the latest data available from the American Community Survey on immigrant tax contributions, spending power, entrepreneurship, demographics, voting power, and more.

This year's Map the Impact also features new analysis showing how DACA recipients and TPS holders are especially important contributors to New York state's economy. These findings are especially timely as Congress considers legislation to protect DACA and TPS holders.

### Key findings for New York include:

- In 2017, immigrant households paid about \$51.6 billion in taxes and held almost \$117.8 billion in spending power.
- In 2017, immigrant-owned firms employed nearly 825,557 workers
- Over 55 percent of construction workers were foreign-born workers
- In 2017, more than 26 percent of STEM workers and 59 percent of health aides

in the state were foreign-born.

"This data shows the central role immigrants play in every state in the union as workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, and homeowners," said John Feinblatt, President of New American Economy. "The findings show that immigration creates an economic opportunity -- creating jobs, filling workforce gaps, and helping communities thrive."

Focusing specifically on the DACA-eligible population and TPS holders in New York, NAE finds that:

- In 2017, 76,262 DACA-eligible people lived in New York.
- DACA-eligible residents earned \$1.8 billion in total income in 2017 alone, paying \$359.3 million in federal income, state, and local taxes, leaving them with nearly \$1.4 billion in spending power.
- 93 percent of the DACA eligible population in the labor force that is employed.
- In 2017, there were 27,347 immigrants with Temporary Protected Status in New York. 97 percent of TPS holders were working age and 94.9 percent of TPS holders were employed.
- TPS holders paid \$188.2 million in federal income, state, and local taxes. They held nearly \$551 million in spending power.

## Jaipur Foot gives lease of life to people, illustrates Gandhi's message of compassion to humanity: Ambassador Shringla

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He pointed out that Jaipur Foot camps have also been organized in Bangladesh, benefiting thousands of people. Underscoring the "humanitarian aspect of diplomacy", Shringla said New Delhi has worked very closely with Dhaka in providing humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Shringla further stressed Gandhi's focus on environment and his message that man should be compatible with nature. "Mahatma Gandhi was the first advocate of sustainable development. In the UN, there is a lot of emphasis on the UN Sustainable Development Goals but Gandhi, more than a 100 years ago, was already expounding on the concept of the need to stay within the environment."

He further said that leader of the American civil rights movement Martin Luther King was greatly inspired by Gandhi and King's movement followed the principles of non-violence. He recalled his meeting with Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, who told him that if King "had not followed the principles of non-violence, America would not be the society it is today."

Shringla told the audience Lewis is initiating a resolution that recognizes

Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary and links to King's 90th birth anniversary and which suggests that this should lead to exchange of research scholars between India and the US who are working on the concepts of peace and development.

India's Consul General in New York Sandeep Chakraborty described Jaipur Foot as "India's international brand," saying it is one of the most popular and famous Indian brands across the world.

Jaipur Foot USA Founder Chairman Prem Bhandari said that from the time BMVSS was founded in 1975, nearly 1.75 million differently abled people have benefited through 73 camps in 30 countries. He noted that Jaipur Foot USA has zero administrative cost and donations go directly to furthering the work of the organization. Bhandari added that Jaipur Foot US will organize free of cost artificial limb fitment camps this year in Patna and Jamshedpur. One of the camps will be in Agra with the help of Houston based businessman Rajiv Daga, who donated \$250,000 to Jaipur Foot US.

Paritosh Prasad, a doctor, critical care medicine specialist and Gandhi's great grandson, who was a guest of honor, said there can be no better example of demonstrating the Mahatma's dedication

than the efforts of Jaipur Foot. "It is in the actions of Jaipur Foot and the incredible gifts they give, identifying the need and meeting that need, choosing not to ignore all of our fellow brothers and sisters as we walk this life together, that is the greatest way that we can cherish what we have been gifted from Babu ji and reinvigorate our responsibilities to carry that teaching and way of life into the future," he said.

Addressing the gathering of eminent diplomats and prominent members of the Indian-American community, Consul General of Bangladesh in New York, Sadia Faizunnesa commended Jaipur Foot and its US affiliate for their "tremendous contribution to people and humanity" across the world, including in her country. "This is really a true match about what the Mahatma wanted to say about humanity and what Jaipur Foot is doing," she said adding that Jaipur Foot has collaborated with local hospitals in Dhaka and "through their amazing work, changing lives of marginalized people at zero cost." She stressed on the close ties between India and Bangladesh, expressing gratitude to India for supporting the humanitarian action taken by Bangladesh in supporting the forcibly displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar. "We thank

India profusely for its very proactive humanitarian role in that sector also," she said. Gandhi has "upheld the humanity of Indian subcontinent to the world. Bangladesh, its government and its people are very much thankful to Gandhi ji for his philanthropic views that he has conveyed to the world," she said as she thanked Jaipur Foot for the wonderful work it is doing not only in Bangladesh but also in other parts of the world.

Malawi's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Lot Dzonzi said while India is thousands of miles away from his country "but Jaipur Foot, the arm that India extended to my country last year, was able not only to touch over 500 people but was able to change the lives of those 500 people.

"People who came crawling, leaning on a stick, on a wheelchair were able to walk back home standing straight. Able to walk back because somebody decided to deprive themselves of a little comfort and give a gift that has transformed lives," he said. On the occasion, singer, rapper, inspirational speaker Sparsh Shah, who was born with a genetic disorder that makes his bones extremely brittle, performed Gandhi's favorite bhajan 'Vaishnav Jana to.' (With inputs from PTI)

# Light in a dark time: Sikhs in New Zealand exemplify courageous compassion

Their offer of space for namaz in gurdwaras is an example in creative mediation for those mediating the Ayodhya matter

BY GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI

In the darkness of death, New Zealand's Sikh population has brought this shabad to life. For Christchurch's tourniquet of pain, balm came from "Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen, Auckland" and Young Sikh Professionals Network NZ with the speed of light. Not just in the traditional form of opening a langar for those arriving at the venue to help, but in another basic, immediate and most cathartic of needs. The many dead in Christchurch needed obsequies. And all at the same time. In coming forward to move the bodies to the cemetery, washing them and readying them for burial, the Sikh community became to the Muslim slain, next of kin.

The community spokesperson, Daljit Singh, said: "The Sikh community stands strongly and firmly with the Muslims because this act of terrorism happened in a place of worship, and we will spare no effort in supporting them." Asking gurdwaras to support New Zealand's Muslim community in the gurdwaras' respective regions, the Young Sikh Professionals proceeded to issue a statement. It is a model in phrasing for any spokesperson of government anywhere: "This kind of violence and the hate it perpetuates has no place in any country and we have a collective responsibility to stand up and say no - this is not us. We are reminded of the tragedies at Pittsburgh, Oak Creek and Charleston that were driven similarly by racial, religious and ethnic hatred and urge our community, and in particular our elected officials, to denounce this attack in the strongest possible terms." They would have filled Gandhi and Netaji with hope.

When the Sikhs of New Zealand said of the Christchurch carnage "This is not us", they were paraphrasing their prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, who said the terrorist was "not us", immediately after saying of the slain, "They are us." She spoke not just nobly but transformatively.

The reflexive activation of the core of their faith as enunciated by Guru Nanak in the Guru Granth Sahib had another feature: the offering of votive space to Muslims to undertake namaz in gurdwaras. For sheer originality and sublimity, this gesture was unique, redemptive. And there it holds, quite unintendedly but unquestionably, a great lesson for India locked in the mandir-masjid issue around Ayodhya. No greater example in creative mediation can be found than in this for the three eminent gentlemen who are now tasked with mediating in the Ayodhya matter.

But to return to Sikhs and Sikhism. Social media redeemed its abysmal image and reputation in the ensuing flow of tweets. One from a Sikh lady said: "The Sikh community's response is moving me to tears." Another from a Sikh gentleman: "This is what it means to be a Sikh." A Maharashtrian gentleman tweeted: "Salute to you and to all Sikhs!" And crowning all tweets, from a sensitive soul by the name of Emily Cragg: "Will Sikhs civilize the rest of the world? Possibly... Hugs to you all."

Reading these tweets, two images came to mind. The first was of a tall Sikh, Colonel Niranjan Singh Gill of the Indian National Army, and of Colonel Jivan Singh, also of the INA, who volunteered with other INA soldiers to go to Noakhali, in 1946, to help quell communal riots. The Sikh-led INA group was not large but it was right there, beside Gandhi, during the most intense crisis. Pyarelal writes in his biography of Gandhi (The Last Phase, Part II): "The I.N.A. had built up a fine tradition of bravery and patriotism under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Bose. They had banished communalism wholly from their midst whilst they were under colors. 'We had worked in the Indian National Army,' ran one of their manifestos, 'and we are happy to be able to say that we had forgotten all distinctions of caste, creed or Province. It was Jai Hind for all of us. The memory of those days still persists.' Before



Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen, Auckland

Photo / Facebook page of the organization

**To be imbued and attuned to the shabad; to be kind and compassionate; to sing the kirtan - these are the most worthwhile actions in this Dark Age of Kali Yuga**

their final surrender, Netaji had told them by way of parting advice that on their return to India, they would have to convert themselves into soldiers of non-violence and take their orders from Gandhiji."

This cameo was of Sikhs at the line of fire, quelling it. The second was of Sikhs again at the line of fire but receiving it. It comes from New Delhi, November 1, 1984 and is of five Sikhs, including two famed for their heroism in war - the country's only Marshal of the Indian air force, Arjan Singh, and Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, the hero of 1971. The other three were the writer, Patwant Singh, the distinguished diplomat, Gurbachan Singh, and Brigadier (retired) Sukhjit Singh. Shocked into disbelief by the carnage and rapine let loose on Delhi's Sikh population after the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the benumbed but determined group first called on the then president, Giani Zail Singh, who was agonized but immobile. Then on the then home minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao. "The Army will be called this evening," the home minister told the group. Lt Gen Aurora asked, "How will it be deployed?" The minister said, "The Area commander will meet the Lt Governor for this purpose." Aurora responded grimly, "You have called the Army 30 hours too late." A wound of incalculable pain was inflicted on Sikh India. Not until the former prime minister, Manmohan Singh, in an act as courageous as it was conscientious, apologized from the floor of Parliament for 1984 was the wound suffered by Sikhs in 1984 addressed. Real healing would have come if, overcoming his personal bereavement, the just-inducted prime minister then, Rajiv Gandhi, had stepped out, gone to Trilokpuri, Jahangirpuri and other affected sites, embraced and addressed the victims as Jacinda Ardern did in Christchurch and, putting the fear of god in the murderers and rapists, assuaged the Sikh community. He must have wanted to do that, but was held back by political advisers.

Sikhs, in a place as far from home as Christchurch is from Chandigarh, have brought, with reflexive, imaginative, sublimity, the great shabad on compassion to light and life. Becoming, in Pyarelal's memorable phrase,

'soldiers of non-violence', the Sikhs of New Zealand have created a history of sorts and we must salute them.

Historical veracity requires any narrative on the Sikhs to acknowledge that in the record of communal violence during the partitioning of India, in 1947, Sikh India is not unstained. Likewise, the world's annals of terrorist violence include acts in the 1970s and 1980s, of those Sikhs who did not scruple to assassinate political adversaries, including security forces on duty and innocents. Caste discrimination has not been purged by Sikh India.

And yet, there is that 'something' in the Sikh persona, illumined by the shabad and by its ten Gurus that, these painful and self-condemning transgressions notwithstanding, it continues to stand tall.

In a letter to Mahadev Desai written on January 4, 1936, Rabindranath Tagore said: "Sikhism has a brave message to the people and it has a noble record. How great would be its effect, if this religion is to get out of its geographical provincialism, shed its exclusiveness inevitable in a small community..."

Away from all geographical provincialism, New Zealand's 20,000 Sikhs and their 13 gurdwaras would have made Tagore proud.

But, though reported in Indian media, this example of humanity, of courageous steadfast compassion, has been lost on us. Why? No deep introspection is required to answer that question.

We are practicing the opposite of "They are us". We are getting used to "They are they, we are we". We are getting drilled, slowly but steadily, into ever wanting victory, triumph. Success is seen only in the Other's defeat, accomplishment in the Other's failure. Peace is pious, victory exciting. Reconciliation is found in dead texts, revenge in living media. Three Vs drive us now: Vengeance, Vanquishing, Victory. Manava rasa guided human help to victims of the massacre. But the rasa of our times in India is vira rasa.

And yet, somewhere, a vein of hope keeps a feeble pulse going - a miracle. And for that, again, we have Guru Nanak to thank. Pulwama terror and Balakot notwithstanding, India and Pakistan have kept bilateral talks on the Kartarpur corridor on track.

Lifelines can be slender. But they retrieve life from death. In this Kali Yuga, the light of the shabad referred to at the head of this article, working at Christchurch and Kartarpur, must do that.

**Waheguru Ji ka Khalsa Waheguru Ji ki Fateh.**

(Source: The Telegraph)



## GUEST COMMENT

A political party out to regain power invariably promises the moon to the voters. And the Congress is no exception. Its 2019 election manifesto, twice as long as the 2014 document, caters to almost every section of the electorate. There is special focus on farmers, the vital vote bank that helped the Congress make a dramatic comeback in the Hindi heartland states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh late last year.

## Congress manifesto: Promises galore, roadmap hazy

The promise of loan waiver, duly implemented soon after the party took charge in these states, had proved to be the game-changer; in 2017, it had done the trick in Punjab as well. Taking its pro-farmer policy to the next level, the Congress foresees a transition from 'karz maafi' (loan waiver) to 'karz mukti' (freedom from loans) through remunerative prices, lower input costs, and assured access to institutional credit. The innovative idea of presenting a separate Kisan Budget every year could give the farm sector another reason to

support Rahul Gandhi and Co.

Apparently bitten by the BJP's acronym bug, the grand old party has come up with NYAY (Nyuntam Aay Yojana), an ambitious minimum income guarantee scheme that promises Rs 72,000 per year to the poorest 20 per cent households in India. The scheme, a throwback to Indira Gandhi's Garibi Hatao campaign of 1971, is likely to cost a whopping Rs 3.6 lakh crore annually. With the tagline, 'Congress will deliver' (*Hum Nibhayenge*), the manifesto aims to upstage the ruling BJP by offering a single 'moderate' rate of

GST, scrapping the sedition law and amending the contentious Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.

Though there is nothing sacrosanct or legally binding about poll manifestos, the Congress has stolen a march on the BJP by unveiling its document first, even as the roadmap for implementation leaves a lot to be desired. The saffron party, which is busy writing off the rival's manifesto as a bundle of lies, would have to come up with something special to make the voters sit up and take notice

(Tribune, India).

## AS I SEE IT

# The many and different faces of terror



By M.K. Narayanan

## It is premature to read the Islamic State's defeat as the start of a more peaceful phase

**"Internet-enabled terrorism, and resort to remote plotting, will grow as the 21st century advances. Counter-terrorism experts will need to lay stress on multi-domain operations and information technologies, and undertake 'terror gaming' to wrestle with an uncertain future that is already upon us," says the author.**

Terrorism is a well-recognized form of asymmetric warfare, and has been around for centuries. Some terror strikes tend to resonate more than others, for reasons that are inexplicable. The Munich Olympics massacre in 1972, the 9/11 terror attack on the Twin Towers in New York in 2001, and the November 26, 2008 terror attack on multiple targets in Mumbai are, for instance, more deeply etched in the memories of people than many other terror events. It is important, however, not to take an episodic view of terrorism, since history is relevant to a proper understanding of the threat posed by terrorism.

**SINCE THE 1980S** : Radical Islamist extremism has been the dominant terror narrative, post the 1980s. This was possibly an off-shoot of the decade-long Afghan war (1979-1989), which let loose an avalanche of 'mercenaries' who had honed their skills during the Afghan Jihad, and employed violence indiscriminately. Over time, terrorist outfits seemed to gain greater transnational reach, and were no longer fettered to geographical locations. New organizations, such as al-Qaeda and its acolytes, as also the Islamic State (IS), gained pre-eminence among a growing multitude of terror groups. Regional variants such as Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, the Pakistan-sponsored Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in South Asia, and the Boko Haram in Africa were no less deadly.

More recently, especially in the West, a new narrative has been unfolding. Sporting different labels, extreme right-wing elements are proving to be no less violent and dangerous than jihadi terrorist groups. They appear, at present, less organized than many outfits, and the violence they perpetrate seems more random. Their targets, which included, for instance, a Jewish synagogue (in the U.S.), political personalities such as President Emmanuel Macron of France and Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of Spain, members of immigrant communities and minority groups (in Europe) are, nevertheless, carefully chosen. Many do appear to be lone wolves such as the Norwegian Anders Breivik (2011) and the Australian man responsible for the March 15, 2019 Christchurch massacre, in which 50 people were killed. Non-denominational terror, loosely described as right-wing terror, has in the process become as threatening as jihadi terror. Clearly, the topographical anatomy of terrorism does not change, even if motivations differ.

The evolution of terrorism in the 21st century, and the constantly shifting tactics of terror groups, does make terrorism look like an 'existential threat'. This would, however, be too far fetched. What does need to be recognized is that the terror threat is rapidly transcending from what we see happening, to what we can imagine might happen.

**NEW BREED OF TERRORISTS**: Take, for instance, the year 2016 in India. Pakistani terror outfits randomly carried out daring attacks on the Pathankot Air Force base, an Army brigade headquarters in Uri, and an Army base in Nagrota. In February this year, the JeM carried out its most audacious attack to date, targeting a Central Reserve Police Force convoy, in which 40 personnel were killed, the highest casualty figure for security forces personnel in Jammu and Kashmir. The use of a suicide bomber, driving a vehicle containing a few hundred kilograms of explosives to strike a high-profile target, represents a new pinnacle in terrorist violence. It is representative of the newer breed of terrorists, as also the transmutation in the nature of terror.

Globally, spectacular jihadi attacks may be fewer, but attacks are on the increase. In January this year, Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, with links to the IS, killed 20 people attending a church service in Sulu province. In the U.K., on New Year's Eve (2018-19), three people were stabbed at a Manchester train station by an IS supporter. In March this year, explosives were found at transport hubs in and around London, and also at the University of Glasgow, leading to a major terror scare in the U.K. Also in March, the Netherlands



witnessed a terror attack in Utrecht, when a jihadi suspect indiscriminately shot at commuters in a city tram.

Meanwhile, terrorists are further honing their skills, and are able to strike at targets at will. Cross-pollination of concepts and ideas among terror groups, and in many cases even pooling of resources, has made this possible. A decade of violence in Iraq and Syria has produced a reservoir of battle-hardened fighters, who are bolstering the capabilities of disparate terror groups in different parts of the world. As in the 1980s, we are seeing a majority of those who took part in the violence in Syria and Iraq currently adding to the cadres of existing terror groups in Asia, Europe and Africa.

It would, hence, be premature to celebrate the decline of terrorism, based on the so-called demise of the IS. The territory controlled by the IS Caliphate may have shrunk dramatically compared to 2014, but its obituary cannot be written just yet. The IS remains a fount of support and inspiration for several hundreds of fighters across Asia, Africa and Europe. Many IS networks are still operating clandestinely. Many of their dispersed supporters are ready to revive their activities once the pressure relaxes. There are unconfirmed reports already that the IS has directed several of its recruits to return to their country of origin and strengthen the nucleus of IS groups there. The estimate is that anything up to 20% of those who were part of the IS bandwagon in Syria and Iraq have returned to their homelands. As the IS declines in Syria and Iraq, other IS entities such as the Islamic State of Khorasan (which includes parts of India) will be the beneficiaries.

**CALIPHATE AS AN IDEA**: The Caliphate is an idea which is still relevant. The Internet remains its main vehicle for radicalizing Muslim youth. What is most likely is that the IS will make a shift to guerrilla warfare tactics. It is likely to strengthen its 'Emni' (intelligence and security branch) to carry out reconnaissance before launching attacks. The lone wolf syndrome will be pursued with renewed vigor. Already, there are some indications of this. In December 2018, a lone IS gunman killed five people in Strasbourg (France); in January 2019, a suicide bomber at a restaurant in Manbij (Syria) killed 19, including four Americans. More such attacks could occur.

Al-Qaeda, the other leading jihadi outfit, is separately engaged in enlarging its global network. Violence by al-Qaeda affiliates might have been overshadowed by the IS more recently, but al-Qaeda affiliates in Africa, such as the Boko Haram, have not been far behind. Al-Qaeda affiliates in East and South Africa, the Sahel and Yemen are the largest and most feared terrorist groups in their regions. Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is said to be exploiting alleged incidents of violence against Muslims in the subcontinent to strengthen itself. Al-Qaeda affiliate LeT (based in Pakistan) represents the main terror threat to India, along with the JeM. The rest of Pakistan's network of terror reads like an alphabetic soup, viz. HUJI (Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami), the (Harkat-ul-Mujahideen) and HM (Hizbul Mujahideen). Pakistan is also reportedly training outfits to carry out underwater operations. Developments in technology, information and doctrine will in all likelihood alter the character of 21st century terrorism. In the Pulwama attack, the suicide bomber is reported to have used a 'virtual SIM' to contact his JeM handlers in Pakistan. It is difficult at this point to determine which of the disruptive technologies will turn out to be the most dangerous.

**GUIDED BY CONTROLLERS**: The concept of 'enabled terror' or 'remote control terror', viz, violence conceived and guided by controllers thousands of miles away, is no longer mere fiction. Internet-enabled terrorism, and resort to remote plotting, will grow as the 21st century advances. Counter-terrorism experts will need to lay stress on multi-domain operations and information technologies, and undertake 'terror gaming' to wrestle with an uncertain future that is already upon us.

(The author is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal)



## INDIA'S GENERAL ELECTIONS

# Indians vote to elect 543 Members of Parliament in a month-long voting, beginning April 11; Results on May 23



By Ven Parameswaran

“Modi is still enormously popular, especially compared with his most prominent challenger, Rahul Gandhi. That appeal should ensure he is the Prime Minister after the election. But analysts predict his victory this time will be less emphatic, and he will be reliant on coalition partners who will demand their spoils.”

The world's largest exercise in democracy looms in 2019. In the beachside of Kerala state, the mountain villages of the Himalayas and across the dusty cities of the Gangetic plain, an estimated 700 million people will cast their votes in India's national election starting on April 11 and ending on May 19. The Indian electorate takes participatory democracy seriously. The 2014 election saw a record-high turnout of more than 550 million voters, or nearly two-thirds of eligible voters-66.4%. That is greater than the 61% who cast ballots in the 2016 U.S. general election.

**COST OF ELECTION: EXPECTED TO BE \$10 BILLION :** 2019 election will almost be the most expensive in Indian history, and among the most expensive in the world. Parties and candidates spent \$5 billion in 2014, according to the New Delhi-based Center for Media Studies, and some experts have predicted that figure could nearly double in 2019. In comparison, the combined cost of the 2016 U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections was estimated at about \$6.5 billion, according to OpenSecrets.org.

Federal security forces watch over polling stations, a mammoth undertaking that requires voting to be spread across a five-week period. Voting will take place on

● 900 Eligible Voters ● 1 Million Polling Stations ● 10 Million Election Officials

seven different days between April 11 and May 19, with dozens of constituencies casting ballots each day. Votes will be counted on May 23 and the results announced the same day.

**MAJOR NATIONAL PARTIES:** The ruling BJP, headed by Prime Minister Modi is challenged by the main opposition party, the Congress, that has dominated Indian politics since independence from the British rule in 1947. It is led by Rahul Gandhi, the fourth-generation scion of a political dynasty that includes India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi's great-grandfather. Congress' platform is secular and pro-poor, but its most recent tenure leading a coalition government from 2004-2014 was marred by corruption, scandals and slow economic growth. The party is banking on dissatisfaction with Modi to turn the 2019 election into a close contest.

**2,293 REGISTERED PARTIES:** Regional parties, including some that compete only in one of India's 29 states and are caste- or language-based, wield significant influence, especially when forming coalitions. In 2014, half of all Indians voted for a party other than the BJP or Congress. But some of the registered parties don't even field candidates, leading to allegations that they are merely a conduit for money laundering, because political donations are tax-exempt.

**6.1% UNEMPLOYMENT RATE:** The low statistic of 6.1% unemployment is not at all reliable from the American standards. With rising numbers of jobless youth, approximately 135 million, concerns about unemployment are at the top of the political agenda. The nationwide unemployment has risen to a 45-year high and Raghuram Rajan, former governor of the Reserve Bank of India identifies unemployment as the major issue in the election. I wrote on this in my article that was published last week.

**FARM SECTOR WOES :** Farmers are



Voters at an election station in 2014 general elections

(File photo)



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP President Amit Shah- all out bid to retain the title

India's biggest voting bloc. Modi promised to double agrarian incomes by 2022, but the farm sector has been hurt by bumper harvests and declining commodity prices. Farmers have staged enormous protests across India's biggest cities demanding loan waivers and guaranteed crop prices. Both major parties have rolled out welfare measures, with the BJP promising direct cash transfers and the Congress proposing a guaranteed minimum income of Rs.72000 (\$1000) yearly for the poorest Indians.

**218 HATE CRIMES IN 2018:** Critics have accused Modi's party of tolerating- and in some cases encouraging-violence by Hindu groups against religious minorities. An Amnesty International HATE CRIME TRACKER -using reports from Hindi and English newspapers-has documented 721 reported hate crimes

since September 2015, when a Muslim villager was lynched outside New Delhi for allegedly killing a cow, an animal that Hindus regard as sacred. India is the 2nd largest Muslim country in the world with a population of 220 million. India has approximately 20 million Christians and 15 million Sikhs. The total minority population of 250 million is not likely to support Modi's BJP.

India is bewilderingly complex. Parties hone drastically different campaign pitches for different states. But, as I said, if any larger theme could decide Modi's fate, it is jobs. Though India's economy is growing faster than that of any other major country, it is not doing so quickly enough to create work for the expanding population. Each month for the next several years, an estimated 1 million Indians will turn 18. Unemployment has been ticking upwards. India's railways ministry said it received 20 million applications for 100,000 jobs in March. The discontent is palpable: the Pew Research Center found Indians' confidence in the economy had fallen by 27 percentage points in the past year, the largest drop of any country it measured.

**MODI IS MOST LIKELY TO WIN, BUT NOT WITH AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY:** Modi is still enormously popular, especially compared with his most prominent challenger, Rahul Gandhi. That appeal should ensure he is still Prime Minister after the election. But analysts predict his victory this time will be less emphatic, and he will be reliant on coalition partners who will demand their spoils. "Last election, with the BJP winning a majority of seats by itself, was an aberration," says Prof. Katharine Adeney, from the Asia Research Institute at the University of Nottingham, U.K. Modi is the most virulent Hindu nationalist ever to occupy the Prime Ministership. A victory would give him five more years to reshape the very idea of India from its most influential political vantage point. It is clear voters will be entering booths asking a more prosaic question: "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?"

(Ven Parameswaran is a Senior Adviser to Imagindia Institute, a think tank in New Delhi. His email: vpwaren@gmail.com)



Principal challengers: (Clockwise)- Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav, Mayawati, Mamata Banerjee, Yadav, Dave Gowda, Biju Patnaik

## Pak court notice to ex-PM Zardari for hiding assets

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** The Islamabad High Court on April 5 issued a notice to Pakistan's former president Asif Ali Zardari on a petition seeking his disqualification as an MP for hiding his assets worth over US\$ 1 million, including a flat in New York and bulletproof vehicles in the election nomination papers last year. The petition was filed by the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders Khurram Sher Zaman and Usman Dar.

Chief justice Athar Minallah said Parliament is the right forum for such matters but issued a notification to 63-year-old Zardari who is also the co-chairman of the Opposition Pakistan People's Party. — PTI

## Malaysia former PM Najib goes on trial

**KUALA LUMPUR (TIP):** Malaysia's disgraced ex-leader Najib Razak pleaded not guilty to all charges against him as he went on trial on Wednesday over a multi-billion-dollar fraud, almost a year after his shock election loss.

The 65-year-old faced the first of several trials over his alleged involvement in the looting of sovereign wealth fund 1MDB, a state investment vehicle established to develop the economy of the Southeast Asian nation.

He had been tipped to win another term in office easily last year and extend his coalition's six-decade stranglehold on power, only to be soundly defeated by his former boss, Mahathir Mohamad, who rode a wave of public anger over 1MDB to the premiership.

A small crowd of supporters was waiting for Najib as he arrived at the Kuala Lumpur court ahead of his trial, and he prayed with them for a few minutes before entering the building to shouts of "Long Live Najib". — AFP

## Pak army promotes 40 Brigadiers

**ISLAMABAD (TIP):** Pakistan Army on April 3 promoted 40 Brigadiers to the rank of Major General.

The approval for the promotions was given by Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa at an army promotion board meeting held in Rawalpindi.

In a statement, the army said the board "approved promotion of 40 Brigadiers to Major General". It said 11 of them were from the Army Medical Corps.

These promotions are considered as a routine affair but they came amid tensions between Pakistan and India after the deadly Pulwama terror attack and subsequent Indian air strikes on terror camps in Balakot. — PTI

# Zardari asks supporters to 'march towards Islamabad'; topple Imran Khan's govt

**KARACHI (TIP):** Former President and opposition Pakistan Peoples Party co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari on April 4 asked his supporters to "march towards Islamabad" and topple Prime Minister Imran Khan's government.

Addressing a rally at Garhi Khuda Baksh in Larkana on the 40th death anniversary of former prime minister and PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Zardari said it was time for the Khan's government to go.

"We cannot give them more time. We have to march towards Islamabad to oust the government to save this country," Zardari said.

He also accused the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government of trying to repeal the 18th Amendment, which took away powers from the President to dissolve an elected government and impose martial law.

"Before the elections, I told you that they want to repeal the 18th Amendment," Zardari said.

"That's why they are lodging cases against us. At the time, some friends believed me and some people made fun."

"Now you have seen that the 'selected' prime minister's (bubble) has burst. He said he does not have funds. If you can't collect funds through the FBR (Federal Board of Revenue) then leave," he added.

Zardari, his son and PPP co-chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, and his other close associates and business partners are facing money laundering and corruption charges from the National Accountability Bureau and the arrest of the former president and other key figures appears likely.

Earlier in the day, the Islamabad High Court issued a notice to Zardari on a petition seeking his disqualification as a lawmaker for hiding assets worth over USD 1 million including a flat in New



York and bulletproof vehicles in the election nomination papers last year.

The petition was filed by the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Khurram Sher Zaman and Usman Dar.

Zardari told the crowd that Khan as prime minister has sent Pakistan 50 years back with his economic policies.

"They don't care about the poor. We can't give them more time, we have to march to Islamabad for the sake of the country," he added. In his speech, Bilawal asked why justice for Bhutto's "judicial murder" has not been served despite four decades having passed by.

Bhutto, the father-in-law of Zardari and father of Pakistan's slain Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, was hanged in jail on April 4, 1979 on court orders in a murder case.

"Today is the 40th year of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's judicial murder," Bilawal said.

"This is a tragic chapter of history.

This day is asking a question from this country: why was the protector of poor public murdered? He opened the way for 90,000 prisoners to return home, he turned this country into an atomic power. Who signed his death warrant? That question is still awaiting an answer.

"The (former) president submitted a request eight years ago that we should get answers for the murder of our founder. Why do the scales of justice tip one side when it comes to us (Bhuttos)?" he asked.

Bilawal accused Khan and his ministers of becoming arrogant after coming into power.

He warned the government that if any attempt was made to repeal the 18th Amendment his party would end the government. He also claimed that the prime minister didn't care about Sindh province, which is governed by the PPP. — PTI

# Gravity lightens the load for Nepal's hard-working rural women

**Ratada (Nepal) (TIP):** Until recently, Belkosh Bohora faced a brutal daily workload.

With her husband away labouring in India much of the time, she not only managed all the household chores and farming but also regularly carried heavy loads of apples, potatoes and medicinal herbs to market a two-hour walk away, returning along the muddy and steep paths with her pack full of rice.

Over the years, the relentless hard work resulted in eight miscarriages, she said.

"I used to carry goods even a week after giving birth to my children, as we would go hungry if I didn't," the 41-year-old said.

Many women in her village, in Kalikot district, similarly have regularly suffered from miscarriages or uterine prolapse in the face of heavy workloads,

she said. But the women of Ratada now have help to lighten the load, in the form of a gravity-assisted rope-and-cable system that lets them transport heavy loads across their steep rural terrain in a basket suspended from a wire.

Ratada's cable system, installed about seven months ago by development charity Practical Action, stretches 680 metres (2,200 feet) from the hillside village down to the Karnali highway.

The 3 million rupee (\$43,000) system was funded by the European Union, Jersey Overseas Aid and local authorities, with the community contributing labour, said Dev D. Bhatta, who manages projects for Practical Action in the region.

It is one of four such systems now installed in Kalikot and neighboring Jumla district, in Nepal's Karnali province, he said.

Residents of Ratada, which has 130 households, say it is literally a load off their backs.

"Now the situation is different. It is very easy for us. Goods are easily carried to our village," said Bohora.

"My daughter has reached the age when she had to carry goods but now she doesn't need to," she added.

Instead, in a province where the literacy rate is just 58 percent - lower than Nepal's national rate of 66 percent - children that used to help their mothers carry produce to market are attending school regularly, Bohora said.

The cable can carry about 100 kg (220 pounds) of goods downhill, with the downhill force harnessed to simultaneously pull about a third of that amount of weight uphill at the same time, Bhatta said. (Thomson Reuters Foundation)

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## US 'clamouring for avocados' after Trump threat to shut Mexico border

**MEXICO CITY (TIP):** US President Donald Trump's threats to shut the border with Mexico are now affecting what some might argue is the softest spot in bilateral relations — avocados.

Fearing that a border lockdown would prevent Mexico from shipping the 80 per cent of avocados that the United States consumes, processors and wholesalers have started stockpiling the prized fruit used in guacamole or as spread on toast.

Avocado prices have jumped nearly 50 percent over the last week alone as a consequence.

Stefan Oliva, a research analyst at Gro Intelligence, which collects and analyzes agricultural data, said "procurement managers, wholesalers and processors" are "clamouring" for avocados in case the border is shut ahead of the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Cinco de Mayo commemorates the 1862 Battle of Puebla in which Mexican troops defeated invading French forces and is celebrated all over the United States, but in Mexico the day is mainly celebrated in Puebla.

The United States imported nearly \$2.1 billion worth in avocados from Mexico in 2018, or more than 9,00,000 tonnes, he said.

That is some 10 times the value of avocados it buys from the rest of the world and more than 10 times what the United States currently produces, Gro Intelligence data shows.

"Even those very, very vague threats are enough to scare wholesalers and processors that are relying on consumers," Oliva said. "If there is a border shutdown, they will have to circumvent the border and pay an extreme premium." Trump has taken a step back from his threat to close the border to fight illegal immigration, as pressure mounted from companies worried that a shutdown would cause chaos to supply chains. It could disrupt millions of legal crossings and billions of dollars in trade.

David Magana, a senior analyst specializing in food and agribusiness at Rabobank, said he had observed a 44 per cent jump in the price of avocados over the past week, and that it could go higher still.

"If the border closes, this would be uncharted territory," Magana said. "The prices could rise considerably." Alejandro Saldana, chief economist at Ve Por Más, a Mexican bank that specializes in lending to the agricultural sector, said that a border shutdown could impact other produce.

"We could see a real impact on the industrial integration there is between Mexico and the US," Saldana said. "There will possibly be disruptions in manufacturing, particularly because a lot of the goods cross the border." Reuters

## Is Donald Trump's net worth \$10 bn or \$3.1 bn?

**NEW YORK (TIP):** How rich is Donald Trump really? If the Democrats are successful in their campaign to unearth his tax filings, it may finally be known if his net worth is \$10 billion as he has claimed or less than a third of that as estimated by others.

On Wednesday, House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal demanded that the Trump administration turn over the boastful billionaire's and his businesses' tax returns for the past six years.

As the head of the panel that deals with tax matters, Neal has the authority to see confidential the tax documents. Trump immediately refused to provide them and may go to courts to keep them secret.

The legislators may be interested in examining the tax filings for irregularities and possible violations, but the public would be more keen to find out how rich the billionaire real estate developer really is and how much taxes he has paid - or avoided paying them or reduced them because of business losses or other deductions.

Trump has used his claims of wealth and business acumen as his qualification to be president and to justify his



unconventional negotiating tactics at home and abroad.

While he is no doubt the richest US President in history and did not rise from a log cabin like Abraham Lincoln, Trump's claims of wealth have been controversial. During the election campaign, he claimed a net worth of \$10 billion, but Forbes magazine, which tracks the world's billionaires, estimates it at \$3.1 billion and ranks him the 715th richest person, while Bloomberg says he is worth only \$2.8 billion.

His former personal lawyer Michael Cohen has told a House panel that Trump had claimed in documents a net

worth of \$4.5 billion in 2012 and that it had suddenly jumped to \$8.6 billion the next year when he sought a loan from Deutsche Bank to buy an American football team.

While all modern presidents and most presidential candidates have disclosed their tax filings for transparency in their finances, Trump has refused to do so, even though the Democrats made it an election issue. He maintains his tax filings are still being audited and he will not release them till the audits are over.

Meanwhile, amid stiff Republican opposition, the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee voted on Wednesday to authorise Chairman Jerry Nadler to compel Attorney General William Barr to turn over the full report prepared by Special Counsel Robert Mueller that had, according to a summary by Barr, absolved Trump of colluding with Russians in his election.

The Mueller report summary issued last month by Barr was a blow to Democratic hopes that it would implicate Trump in a clandestine election deal with Russia. But Barr's statement that report neither exonerated Trump nor found him guilty of obstruction of justice gives Democrats hope finding something to go against Trump. (IANS)

## Huffman, Loughlin warned about discussing US college scam with their kids

**BOSTON (TIP):** A federal judge on April 3 warned parents charged in the largest college admissions scandal in US history, including actresses Felicity Huffman and Lori Loughlin, to be careful discussing the case with their children, who are potential witnesses.

Prosecutors had wanted US Magistrate Judge M. Page Kelley in Boston to go further and prohibit the 12 wealthy parents who appeared before her from talking about the case with their children without a lawyer present.

But while Kelley told the parents to consider seeking legal advice before discussing the case with their children to avoid exposing themselves to obstruction of justice charges, she said she did not think the prosecution's proposed conditions on parental communications could work.

"I just don't think that's realistic," Kelley said. "Desperate Housewives" star Huffman and "Full House" actor Loughlin said little during the hearing other than to say that they understood the charges prosecutors brought against them. They are among 50 people, including several college athletics coaches, charged with participating in fraud and bribery schemes.

Prosecutors said the schemes involved cheating on college entrance exams and paying \$25 million in bribes to help the wealthy parents' children gain



admission at well-known universities including Yale and the University of Southern California (USC).

Some of the 33 parents charged in the scheme have begun plea negotiations with prosecutors. On Wednesday, packaged food entrepreneur Peter Sartorio became the first to reveal he plans to plead guilty. Two others said they were also in plea talks.

Prosecutors say the scheme was overseen by California college admissions consultant William "Rick" Singer, who has admitted to facilitating the cheating scam and bribing coaches to

present the parents' children as fake athletic recruits.

Loughlin walked into the courthouse past a group fans yelling "Lori, we love you," and left smiling. Huffman exited the court holding her brother's hand.

Prosecutors allege that Loughlin and her husband, Los Angeles fashion designer Mossimo Giannulli, agreed to pay \$5,00,000 to have their two daughters named as recruits to USC's crew team, even though they did not row competitively.

Huffman, who is married to the actor William H. Macy, is accused of making a \$15,000 contribution to Singer's foundation in exchange for having an associate of Singer's in 2017 secretly correct her daughter's answers on an SAT college entrance exam at a test center that prosecutors say Singer "controlled." Huffman later made arrangements to engage in the scheme again on her younger daughter's behalf before deciding not to, prosecutors said.

Sartorio, who is expected to plead guilty later this month, similarly paid \$15,000 to have his daughter's ACT exam corrected by Singer's associate, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors have not charged any applicants, and said that in some cases the parents involved took steps to try to prevent their children from realizing they were benefiting from fraud. Reuters

# Threat of nuclear weapon being used is higher than it has been in generations: Top UN official

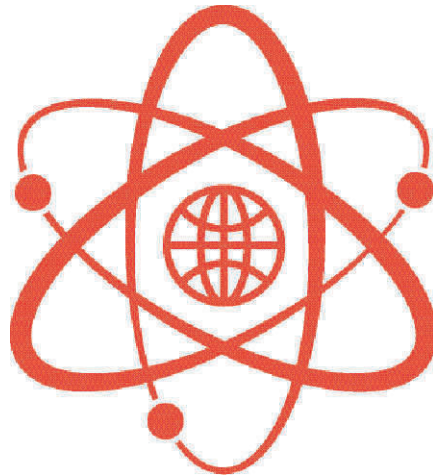
**UNITED NATIONS (TIP):** The threat of a nuclear weapon being used is "higher than it has been in generations" as the current international environment is defined by "competition over cooperation", and the "acquisition of arms prioritised over the pursuit of diplomacy", a top UN official said.

Rapid technological developments will begin to impact the international security environment in many different ways, including potentially lowering barriers to the acquisition of nuclear weapons, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu told a Security Council meeting on Tuesday.

The meeting was convened in support of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), ahead of the next conference, scheduled for 2020, to review the historic accord.

"Today we find ourselves in an international environment defined by competition over cooperation, and the acquisition of arms prioritised over the pursuit of diplomacy," Nakamitsu said.

"Regional conflicts might heighten proliferation drivers. The disarmament and arms control framework upon which the gains of the post-Cold War era were made is eroding, but we have nothing else yet with which to replace it," she said, adding that "as a result, the prospect of the use of nuclear weapons is higher than



it has been in generations".

The NPT, which entered into force in 1970, represents the only multilateral, binding commitment to the goal of disarmament by the states which officially stockpile nuclear weapons.

Its objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and disarmament overall.

Nakamitsu said the use of nuclear weapons, "either intentionally, by accident, or through miscalculation", is one of the greatest threats to international peace and security, and that

"the potential consequences of a nuclear war would be global and affect all member states".

The Treaty, she said, is widely acknowledged as "the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation of nuclear disarmament. Its role as a pillar of our collective security is likewise an accepted fact".

Describing disarmament and non-proliferation, the two pillars of the NPT, as "two sides of the same coin", the disarmament chief said, "Backward movement on one will result in backward movement on the other". The durability of the NPT, which has lasted for almost half a century, cannot be taken for granted, she said, adding there is currently nothing to replace the disarmament and arms control framework which is foundational to the post-Cold War era.

With the Treaty coming under increasing stress, the upcoming Review Conference in 2020, she said, will be a "defining moment". It could either highlight divisions between states and raise questions about their willingness to seek collective security for all, or present "a golden opportunity to make the practical gains that will ensure the Treaty's continued viability".

(PTI)

## US-China trade negotiations progressing 'very nicely': Trump

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** President Donald Trump said on Thursday, April 4, that US-China trade talks are progressing "very nicely" but that he insists on all US concerns being resolved or will not sign a deal.

"It looks like the deal is moving along very nicely," he told reporters at the White House, where he was due to meet Chinese trade envoy Liu He later in the day.

"Everything is covered, there's nothing that's not covered," Trump said, referring to the scope of US demands.

"It's got to be a great deal," he said. "If it's not a great deal, we're not doing it."

(Source: Agencies)

## Trump threatens tariffs if Mexico does not help with immigration, drugs

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** President Donald Trump threatened on Thursday to put tariffs on cars coming from Mexico into the United States if Mexico does not continue to help Washington deal with the immigration situation along the southern US border.

Trump told reporters at the White House he would put tariffs on cars or close the border, but he said he may start with the tariffs. He also said he would give Mexico a year to try to stop the flow of drugs before putting tariffs in place. — Reuters

## US tourist kidnapped in Uganda for \$5,00,000 ransom

**KAMPALA (TIP):** Four armed men kidnapped an American tourist in Uganda and have demanded \$5,00,000 as ransom, the country's police force has confirmed. The American citizen, a woman, and a Ugandan driver were kidnapped at gunpoint at Queen Elizabeth National Park while on a game drive on Tuesday evening, CNN reported on April 3. "The kidnappers, using the victim's phone have demanded \$5,00,000," the police said, adding, "We strongly believe this ransom is the reason behind the kidnap."

An "elite squad" was dispatched from the Tourism Police to the park to actively pursue the gunmen and have closed all exit areas on the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "We strongly believe the perpetrators and victims could still be trapped within our search area," the police statement added. Rights groups who led the protests to the country's parliament in Kampala city, said more than 20 people, mostly women, and children, were abducted for ransom last year and called on the police to make these cases a priority. — IANS

## Prison for mother as son took gun to school

**HARTFORD CITY (US) (TIP):** An Indiana woman whose 15-year-old son took a handgun to school has been sentenced to four years in prison. The 40-year-old was sentenced after pleading guilty to dangerous control of a child. The charge refers to cases where a parent or guardian permits a child to possess a firearm. She acknowledged to investigators she was aware her son had a firearm, but never discussed the matter with him. AP

## Nearly 70% Americans okay with gay president: Poll

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** A new poll has revealed that nearly 70 per cent of Americans said they would be either enthusiastic about or comfortable with a candidate who is gay or lesbian. The NBC-Wall Street Journal poll, released earlier this week, revealed that those under 35 year of age who said they were enthusiastic or comfortable with a gay candidate increased by 28 percentage points between 2006 and now, jumping from 47 per cent to 75 per cent. And, while seniors were more likely to voice reservations about gay candidates, a majority (56 per cent) now said that they did not have any objections. (IANS)

## Black, gay woman elected Chicago Mayor in historic vote

**CHICAGO (TIP):** In a historic first, a gay African-American woman was elected Mayor of America's third largest city on April 2, as Chicago voters entrusted a political novice with tackling difficult problems of economic inequality and gun violence.

Lori Lightfoot, a 56-year-old former federal prosecutor and practicing lawyer who has never before held elected office, was elected the midwestern city's mayor in a lopsided victory.

She beat out Toni Preckwinkle, who is also an African American woman, by a wide margin of 74 to 26 per cent in early voting results with most ballots counted.

Lightfoot will become Chicago's first openly gay mayor and the first African American woman to hold the post. Since 1837, Chicago voters have elected only one black mayor and one female mayor.

Preckwinkle is the chief executive of Cook County where Chicago is based, which analysts said worked against her during a change election as voters sought to shake up city hall.

"People (are) hoping for something different to come along. To be the vessel for that is overwhelming," Lightfoot told reporters earlier after the polls opened.

Voters had left little doubt they want the next mayor to tackle major issues vexing the city of 2.7 million people—especially economic disparities and gun violence that claims more lives than in other major American cities.

More than 550 people were killed in Chicago last year due to gang violence often fueled by the drug trade—most in economically-struggling and majority African American neighborhoods. — AFP



## Rajnath Singh decries Congress plan to scrap sedition law

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Union home minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said he said he was surprised by the Congress's promise in their election manifesto to scrap the sedition law.

"Someone threatens to destroy India, and action will not be initiated? How is it possible? I feel ashamed of people who speak these things," he said.

Singh was in his parliamentary constituency Lucknow where he attended several events as part of the Lok Sabha election campaign.

Speaking at an event organised by various traders' organisations at the Scientific Convention Centre here, Singh said: "The Congress president has no plan to eradicate poverty from the country. At one point, he talks about giving Rs 12,000 per month to the poor and at another point he assures Rs 72,000 per year."

Singh was referring to the Congress's proposed Nyay (Nyuntam Aay Yojna) scheme.

Continuing his attack on the Congress, Singh said: "I do not want to give any assurances. In the past 70 years, only assurances have been given. Had these assurances been implemented, the country would have become number one in the world 25 years ago."

Talking about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and projects rolled out by the Centre, Rajnath Singh said: "During the tenure of former PM Manmohan Singh, only 25 lakh Pradhan Mantri houses were constructed between 2008-2014."

But in the last five years of PM Modi's governance, 1.25 crore Pradhan Mantri houses were built, Singh added.

## The chowkidar will be behind bars after polls, says Rahul Gandhi

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** A day after Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi said in Gondia that Opposition leaders will be in Delhi's Tihar jail after the polls, Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said that all those who "claim to be chowkidars will find themselves in jail after the elections".

At a massive election rally in Nagpur on Thursday evening, Gandhi said if the Congress and its allies come to power, an inquiry will be conducted against Modi over his alleged involvement in the Rafale deal. "The chowkidar will be behind bars and a real chowkidar will be on guard," he said, in a sharp contrast to the Congress manifesto which largely steered clear of Rafale deal.

Renewing his allegation of corruption and financial misdemeanour in the deal, he said, "Why couldn't someone from Vidarbha get the deal?"

He also gave an open challenge to Modi for a live debate on corruption, unemployment and farmers' issue for 15 minutes. "Why is he afraid of holding a press conference with the media," he asked.

The Congress, in their manifesto, said if voted to power, they will deposit Rs 72,000 annually in the accounts of the poor under the Nyay scheme. "The scheme was finalised only after consulting experts. It will be a surgical strike on poverty. I am a man of commitment. Believe me and wait for my action," he said.

# BJP never considered political opponents as 'anti-national': Advani

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** BJP senior leader Lal Krishna Advani, who has been dropped from the party's list of candidates for the Lok Sabha Elections 2019, has finally spoken.

In a blog titled "Nation first, party next, self last", LK Advani wrote that the party of which he is a founding member never called its political opponents 'anti-national' and it has been committed to 'freedom of choice of every citizen'.

The blog is addressed to BJP workers and is written ahead of the party's Foundation Day on April 6.

The 91-year-old Advani said that this is an important occasion for all of us in the BJP to look back, look ahead and look within.

"I deem it to be my duty to share my reflections with the people of India, and more specifically with the millions of workers of my party, both of whom have indebted me with their affection and respect," Advani said.

Reminding the fundamental principle of the democracy, LK Advani said: "The essence of Indian democracy is respect for diversity and freedom of expression. Right from its inception, the BJP has never regarded those who disagree with us politically as our 'enemies', but only as our adversaries."

"Similarly, in our conception of Indian nationalism, we have never regarded those who disagree with us politically as "anti-national. The party has been committed to freedom of choice of every citizen at personal as well as political level," he said.

Advani, who is the longest serving BJP



LK Advani, who is the longest serving BJP president, said that 'Nation First, Party Next, Self Last' has been the guiding principle of his life.

president, said that 'Nation First, Party Next, Self Last' has been the guiding principle of his life and had tried to adhere to this principle in all situation of life.

Advani along with senior leaders like Murlī Manohar Joshi and BC Khanduri have been denied ticket for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections 2019 after the party decided that senior leaders aged 75 years, or more, will not hold any public office.

Advani, who served as Union home minister and deputy prime minister during the Atal Behari Vajpayee government, had vacated the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat for BJP president Amit Shah. Advani had been fighting elections from Gandhinagar since 1998, a time when Shah used to be his poll manager. He had won from Gandhinagar for the first time in 1991, and retained the seat in 1998, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014.

## Rahul sends out 'One India' message

Files papers in Wayanad, says won't target Kerala's CPM-led govt

**KALPETTA (TIP):** With sister Priyanka Gandhi by his side, Congress president Rahul Gandhi today filed his nomination papers from Wayanad in Kerala and said he was fighting the Lok Sabha polls from a second seat in the South besides the party bastion Amethi in the North to send a message of unity and that "India is one".

In a bid to reach out to the Left, Gandhi, 48, also said he wouldn't say a word against the state's CPM-led LDF government during his campaign and that he would "absorb all its criticisms with happiness". The Left is miffed with Gandhi's candidature from Wayanad.

Wayanad will witness a triangular contest with Left Front constituent CPI's PP Suneer and BJP-backed NDA candidate Thushar Vellappally also in the fray. Gandhi, who was also accompanied by senior Congress leaders KC Venugopal and Mukul Wasnik, submitted the papers before district collector AR Ajayakumar at Wayanad district headquarters in Kalpetta.

Hundreds of workers of the Congress and other allies in the party-led UDF assembled outside the district collectorate as Gandhi filed the papers. Wayanad, a scenic hill area in the Western Ghats, has a presence of various ethnic tribal groups. It is a Congress stronghold in South India.

After completing the procedures, Rahul along with Priyanka and senior leaders of the Congress-led UDF in Kerala held a roadshow to greet the voters of the constituency.

Talking to reporters after filing his papers, Rahul said he was fighting the polls from South to send a message that India was one.



Congress president Rahul Gandhi files nomination papers for the Wayanad constituency with chief electoral officer A.R. Ajayakumar, who is also Wayanad district collector, at Kalpetta on Thursday. AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Malappuram DCC president V.V. Prakash are also seen.

"There is a feeling in South India that the way the Narendra Modi government is functioning, their (South) culture, language, history all are being attacked.

"So I wanted to give a message that I will fight from North and South," the Congress chief said, in response to his main opponent in Amethi, Union minister Smriti Irani, who had alleged that his decision to fight from

Wayanad was an insult to the people of Amethi.

Priyanka appealed to people of Wayanad to take care of her brother and assured he would not let them down. "My brother, my truest friend, and by far the most courageous man I know. Take care of him Wayanad, he won't let you down," she tweeted after the roadshow.

Source: PTI

# Kartarpur corridor: India says no response from Pak over its concerns

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Pakistan is yet to respond to India's concerns over reports that controversial elements have been appointed by Islamabad to a committee which is to be associated with the Kartarpur corridor; the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

Sources had last week said India had summoned Pakistan's deputy high commissioner here and conveyed its concerns over the presence of a leading Khalistani separatist in the committee appointed by the neighbouring country on the Kartarpur corridor project.

India had also sought clarifications on several issues related to the Kartarpur corridor from Pakistan.

"We had sought clarifications from Pakistan on a number of issues...on the number of pilgrims that can be received daily on visas. These are the clarifications which remain unaddressed by Pakistan.

"We had also shared our concerns on reports that controversial elements have been appointed by Pakistan to a committee, which is to be associated with the Kartarpur corridor. We are yet to receive a response from Pakistan," MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said.

India had offered to hold the technical discussions to finalise other aspects of the corridor, he added.

"As and when Pakistan responds to that offer, the technical-level talks will take place," Kumar said.

Sources had said India would wait for a response from Pakistan on the issue and was



Darbar Sahib gurdwara in Kartarpur, Pakistan.

not going ahead with a previously agreed meeting on the Kartarpur corridor on April 2 on the Pakistani side at Wagah.

Last November, India and Pakistan had agreed to set up the border crossing, linking Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikh faith's founder Guru Nanak Dev, to the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Gurdaspur district.

Kartarpur Sahib is located in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi, about four km from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had, on November 26 last year, laid the foundation

stone of the Kartarpur corridor in Gurdaspur district.

Two days later, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan had laid the foundation stone of the corridor in Narowal, about 125 km from Lahore.

On the issue of efforts to get Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Masood Azhar listed as a global terrorist, Kumar said India had thanked the unprecedented number of countries that had joined the effort.

"We are continuing with our diplomatic efforts to ensure that terrorists involved in heinous attacks on our citizens are brought to justice," he said. *Source: PTI*

## US findings 'contradict' India's claim that it shot down Pak's jet on Feb 27

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** A US count of the F-16s with Pakistan has found that none of them are "missing" and all the fighter planes were "present and accounted for", according to a report in a prominent American magazine.

The finding by the US on the ground in Pakistan "directly contradicts" India's claim that its air force shot down an F-16 fighter jet during an aerial dogfight on February 27.

The Indian Air Force on February 28 displayed pieces of the AMRAAM missile, fired by a Pakistani F-16, as evidence to "conclusively" prove that Pakistan deployed US-manufactured F-16 fighter jets during an aerial raid targeting Indian military installations in Kashmir.

Pakistan had categorically said that no F-16 fighter jets were used and denied that one of its planes had been downed by the IAF.

According to the Foreign Policy magazine, Pakistan invited the United States to physically count its F-16 planes after the incident as part of an end-user agreement signed when the foreign military sale was finalised.

"A US count of Pakistan's F-16 fleet has found that all the jets are present and accounted for, a direct contradiction to India's claim that it shot down one of the fighter jets during a February clash," Lara Seligman of the magazine reported on Thursday.

The count of the F-16 fighter planes in Pakistan has been completed, and "all aircraft were present and accounted for," an unnamed defence official was quoted as saying by the magazine.

The Department of Defence did not immediately respond to a question on its count of F-16 fighter jets in Pakistan. "As details come out, it looks worse and worse for the Indians," MIT professor Vipin Narang told Foreign Policy magazine.

"It looks increasingly like India failed to impose significant costs on Pakistan, but lost a plane and a helicopter of its own in the process," he said. Generally, in such agreements, the US requires the receiving country to allow its officials to inspect the equipment regularly to ensure it is accounted for and protected, the news report said. Tensions between India and Pakistan escalated after the suicide bomber of JeM killed 40 CRPF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14. India launched a counter-terror operation against a JeM training camp in Balakot. The next day, Pakistan Air Force retaliated and downed a MiG-21 in an aerial combat and captured its pilot, who was handed over to India on March 1. *Source: PTI*



## AUGUSTA DEAL

### ED's supplementary chargesheet mentions one 'Mrs Gandhi'

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday filed a supplementary chargesheet against British national Christian Michel, the alleged middleman in the Rs 3,600-crore AugustaWestland VVIP chopper deal case, in which it has mentioned one "Mrs Gandhi", but not named her as an accused in the case, sources said.

Sources confirmed that the names of one "Mrs Gandhi" and a few Congress leaders are mentioned in the chargesheet, but not as accused in the case.

However, it is not clear who "Mrs Gandhi" is and in which context her name was mentioned.

It is also learnt that kickbacks were paid separately under different agreements between companies of Christian Michel James, middleman Guido Haschke and AugustaWestland.

The agency has said that kickbacks of euro 70 million were paid to Air Force official, bureaucrats and important persons of the then ruling political party directly or through middleman who helped Christian Michel and Guido Haschke in influencing the decision of the government.

The chargesheet has named Michel's partner David Syms and his company Global Services Ltd and Global Trading Ltd as accused in the case.

Michel had used the companies as a conduit for receiving money. *Source: IANS*

## SC agrees to hear plea against release of Modi biopic on Monday

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a writ petition against the release of a biopic on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The top court will hear the plea on Monday.

The film follows PM Modi's life from his humble beginning to his rise first as the Gujarat chief minister and then electoral victory in 2014, catapulting him as the prime minister.

The Congress and the Left complained to the Election Commission of India against the release of the film, saying it violates the Model Code of Conduct.

Arguing on the behalf of petitioner senior advocate and Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi contended in the Supreme Court that while the poll code is in place, release of the film, produced by people connected to ruling party, would affect free and fair polls.

Congress spokesperson Aman Panwar has filed a petition in the top court seeking stay on the release of the film on PM Modi. A bench headed by Justice SA Bobde will hear the plea on Monday. The matter has reached the Supreme Court after three high courts refused to interfere with the release of the movie starring Vivek Oberoi, who plays the character of PM Modi. The high courts of Madhya Pradesh, Bombay and Delhi have disposed off similar pleas over past few days.

The high courts have stated that the Election Commission should take a call on deferring the release of the film.

## CRPF jawan killed, another injured in Chhattisgarh

**RAIPUR (TIP):** A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan was killed and another injured in an encounter with Naxals in Chhattisgarh on Friday, police said.

The skirmish took place in the forest near Chameda village in Dhamtari district when a joint team of CRPF's 211 battalion and District Force (DF) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, a police official told PTI.

He said the patrolling team, comprising around 50 personnel of the CRPF and 10 of the DF, had launched the operation on April 3 in the interiors of Khallari and Borai police station areas.

On Friday morning, when security forces were advancing through Chameda, around 150 km from Raipur, a group of Naxals opened fire on them, leading to a gunfight, the official said.

## Riots inside central jail in Srinagar; inmates burn temporary shelter

**SRINAGAR (TIP):** Riots broke out on Thursday evening inside a high security central jail here after rumours started floating that some inmates were being shifted out of the Kashmir valley, officials said. The inmates burnt a temporary shelter and tried to come to the outer cordon of the jail located in the downtown area of the city, they said.

Senior police officers and additional companies of the CRPF were rushed to the jail to bring the situation under control, the officials added. *Source: PTI*

# NJSO presents Academy Award Winner *Mary Poppins* in Concert

By Mabel Pais

## Disney Concerts

Disney Concerts is the concert production and licensing division of Disney Music Group, the music arm of The Walt Disney Company. Disney Concerts' concert packages include a variety of formats, such as "live to picture" film concerts and themed instrumental and vocal compilation concerts; they range from instrumental-only symphonic performances to multimedia productions featuring live vocalists and choir. Current titles include the Star Wars Film Concert Series (Episodes IV-VII), *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Fantasia*, *Pixar In Concert*, *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Alice In Wonderland*, *Frozen*, *Ratatouille*, *The Pirates of the Caribbean* series (Episodes I-IV) and *Silly Symphonies*, which last year collectively accounted for more than 400 performances in many of the world's top concert venues, including Lincoln Center, Royal Albert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Tokyo Forum and the Hollywood Bowl. Numerous new concert packages and touring productions from Disney's portfolio of studios, including Disney's feature animation and live action studios, Pixar, Lucasfilm and Marvel, are currently in development.

### New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by *The Wall Street Journal*, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb musicians. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People; NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez; and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners program.

For more information, visit [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org) or email [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org).

State Theatre New Jersey

State Theatre New Jersey-creating extraordinary experiences through the power of live performance. The theater exists to enrich people's lives, contribute to a vital urban environment and build future audiences by presenting the finest performing artists and entertainers and fostering lifetime appreciation for the performing arts through education.

For more information, visit [www.STNJ.org](http://www.STNJ.org).

### Count Basie Center For The Arts

The Count Basie Center for the Arts, Red Bank is New Jersey's premier center for the cultural arts, dedicated to fostering powerful, inclusive artistic experiences and creative exchange of ideas.

The Basie mission is to inspire, educate and entertain through its distinct and engaging cultural and artistic offerings that reflect the diversity of the region. As a nonprofit organization, the Basie is committed to enriching the community's quality of life by generating opportunities for participation in the arts, partnering with schools, collaborating with other mission-based organizations and driving regional economic prosperity.

For more information on Count Basie Center, visit [www.thebasie.org](http://www.thebasie.org).



**"(NJSO)... a vital, artistically significant musical organization"**

**-Wall Street Journal**

**"(Mary Poppins)....one of the best-loved movies of all time is capturing hearts in a whole new way...." - Broadway.com**

Step in time, it's one heart-tugging, toe-tapping song after another in the beloved film "Mary Poppins!" This family-friendly, symphonic cinema event features the five-time Oscar-winning Disney film unfolding on the big screen with the NJSO performing the charming and delightful musical score. Don't miss this Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious wonder live with the NJSO!

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) presents "Mary Poppins" in Concert, April 12-14 in Red Bank, Newark and New Brunswick respectively. The family-friendly symphonic cinema event features the five-time Oscar®-winning Disney film unfolding on the big screen with the NJSO performing the Sherman brothers' award-winning musical score live.

### The Program

Mary Poppins in Concert with the NJSO Orchestra to screen the Academy Award®-winning film with Sherman brothers' award-winning score performed live

Fri, Apr 12 at 8 pm | Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank

Spring into Music Gala is Apr 13 at NJPAC in Newark

The NJSO's annual Spring into Music Gala at NJPAC includes the April 13 performance, plus pre-concert cocktails, dinner and a silent auction. For more information, visit [www.njsymphony.org/springintomusic](http://www.njsymphony.org/springintomusic).

Sat, Apr 13 (concert only) at 8 pm | NJPAC in Newark

Sun, Apr 14 at 3 pm | State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick

Stuart Chafetz, conductor

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

NJSO Accents: Singalong Fun - Fri, Apr 12, at 7 pm and Sun, Apr 14, at 2 pm

Concertgoers are encouraged to come early and sing along to an entertaining selection of song favorites.

For more information on the performance, visit [www.njsymphony.org/marypoppins](http://www.njsymphony.org/marypoppins).

Released in 1964, "Mary Poppins" garnered 13 Academy Award nominations and won five Oscars, two of which the Sherman brothers received for "Chim Chim Cher-ee" and the film's original musical score.

In this classic Disney film, a magical English nanny, Mary Poppins, arrives at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Banks, facing the park at No. 17 Cherry Tree Lane in London, to the delight of their young children, Jane and Michael. The proper English father is too preoccupied with his responsibility at the bank; the mother, an ardent suffragette, is not really aware that their two children, left in the care of one nanny after another, are unhappy and unable to communicate with the parents they truly love. Mary Poppins has come to change all this. She settles into the house, and soon has everyone wrapped around her little finger. Mary, along with her friend Bert and a host of chimney sweeps, teaches the children how to have fun, and in so doing makes the Banks household a happier place. By the time she opens her umbrella and flies off on a beautiful spring evening, the family is united together in the park, flying a kite.

The film's original motion picture soundtrack featured 14 original songs by now-legendary Disney songwriters and composers Richard and Robert Sherman. In 1965, the soundtrack was the number-one album on Billboard's Top 200 Album chart for 14 consecutive weeks, maintaining the top position that year longer than the Beatles (Beatles' 65, Beatles VI and the Help! soundtrack), Elvis Presley (Roustabout soundtrack), the Rolling Stones (Out of Our Heads) and The Sound of Music soundtrack. The soundtrack won two Grammy Awards (Best Original Score Written for a Motion Picture or Television Show and Best Recording for Children).

Tickets are available from the NJSO online at [www.njsymphony.org](http://www.njsymphony.org), by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or in person at the NJSO Patron Services office.

Tickets for the April 14 performance are also available from State Theatre New Jersey online at [www.STNJ.org](http://www.STNJ.org), by phone at 732.246.SHOW (7469) or in person at the State Theatre Guest Services office.

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



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## NARGIS FAKHRI IS LOSING WEIGHT

Actress Nargis Fakhri, who has dealt with body shaming in the recent past, says living life in the public eye can be very difficult and that she is working towards weight loss by making healthy choices.

The 39-year-old actress has opened up on body shaming in an Instagram post in which she has shared two photographs of herself.

“Living life in the public eye can be difficult sometimes. As much as it is a blessing, it also comes with its downside. Over the last two years, I’ve gained weight,” she wrote.

Describing the pictures, the Rockstar actress added, “On the left I weighed 178 lbs (80 kg) and on the right, I was 129 (58 kg). I have since lost 20 lbs (9kg) through making lifestyle changes. If I can do it, so can you.” Nargis has urged everyone to “nurture mind, body, and soul with positive thoughts and healthy choices”.

# KANGANA WALKS OUT OF ANURAG BASU’S IMALI

A few months ago, Kangana Ranaut announced that she would be teaming up with Anurag Basu, who launched her in Bollywood with *Gangster* (2006), for a project. *Imali*, as the film was tentatively titled, would have been the actress’ third collaboration with the filmmaker. But now, we have learnt that she has opted out of the project.

Kangana says, “Last year, when I announced *Panga* and *Imali* together, Anurag Basu’s film was supposed to go on floors in November 2018. But I had to direct and reshoot *Manikarnika: The Queen Of Jhansi*. So, I had to push *Imali*. I was also meaning to be a director for a while, so I couldn’t have said no to this. Meanwhile, *Panga* had already started and I couldn’t not do that.”

The busy schedules of her films have caused a few shifts in her choices, too. Kangana has picked the Jayalalithaa biopic, which goes on floors this October after she wraps up work on Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari’s sports drama. The *Queen* heroine explains, “*Manikarnika* has done very well, so I want to take my directorial career further. I can’t not direct now. I had signed the Jayalalithaa biopic because it’s a strong character and in sync with whatever I’m doing with regards to women empowerment.”

Kangana adds that it was a “tough call” for her to make. “Anurag and I have spoken about it. I feel extremely bad because *Imali* was giving me an opportunity to work with my mentor again, but I’m on the verge of announcing my own film in a few weeks from now. That has taken a lot of my time and I have



conveyed it to Anurag, who understood my situation,” she adds.

Ask her if she and Anurag will reunite for a project soon and she replies, “We will work together at some point. *Imali* is a

beautiful love story and we can do that later. But right now, my focus is on my next directorial venture because I’ve just delivered an Rs 100-crore film and it’s the right time for me,” she signs off.

# SHWETA TIWARI’S DAUGHTER PALAK MAKES HER DEBUT



Shweta Tiwari’s teenaged daughter Palak has made her acting debut, but in an advertisement. The ad was shared by Shweta on her Instagram page where she called herself a proud mother.

Sharing it, Shweta wrote: “ME = ‘Proud Mom !!! @palaktiwarii.’” The ad shows Palak having a conversation with her mother as her parents are having dinner. She too is seated on the same table but we are to presume that she is elsewhere. Soon the conversation begins: both struggle to talk as the call keeps dropping. Whenever voice does travel, it takes long. Palak, playing the daughter, keeps saying “hello” repeatedly.

18-year old Palak was expected to make her film debut opposite Taare Zameen Pe child actor Darsheel Safari in a film called *Quickie*. This was supposed to be the first film of Darsheel as an adult. However, in June last year, Shweta had taken to Instagram to refute the news and clear the air. She had categorically stated that Palak was in Class 12 and her education was of paramount importance.

She had written: “For the past

few months I was constantly bombarded with questions regarding *Quickie*, and Palak’s debut. We really wanted *quickie* to be the way to go but the process was too protracted and Palak’s 12th grade has now begun. Therefore we decided it would be best if we retracted ourselves from the project since Palak’s education is of paramount importance at this point in time. We wish *Oddball* the very best, but sadly we had to come to this decision. However i assure you, Palak’s debut is soon enough.”

Palak is active on Instagram as well and keeps posting selfies and pictures. In one such post, she had been accused by some Instagram users that she had gone under the knife. A viewer had called her out for “botox-filled lips”, to which she had replied, saying: “I’m only 17, and not somebody who’s a supporter of changing myself based on what the world may or may not like. So no Ma’am, that’s a false accusation, and it’s because of such accusations that going under the knife is considered a trend, and is ultimately promoted. I’m not for it ma’am. Sorry to disappoint you, have good night and best wishes.”



## AMY JACKSON ON CHILD WITH BOYFRIEND: IT WAS TOTALLY UNPLANNED

**A**my Jackson and her multi-millionaire fiance George Panayiotou are on cloud nine as they are expecting their first child in October. The couple, who got engaged in January 2019 had planned to get married in early 2020 in Mykonos Island in Greece.

Now, the couple has opened up about their pregnancy to a UK magazine. Indian-Brit actress Amy is now 15 weeks pregnant and revealed that it came across as a surprise. She said, "It was totally unplanned. We had no idea."

However, the 27-year-old actress reveals that she and her fiance are ready to become parents. "We're at that stage where we're definitely ready for it. I don't think you can ever plan something perfectly, but we're in such a good place. We're happy together, we have a beautiful home and we're excited to be a mum and dad," she exclaimed.

Amy disclosed that the pregnancy has brought her closer to boyfriend George. "We know each other pretty well - the good, the bad, the ugly and everything in between. We were inseparable before, but this is a different closeness," she explained.

The 2.0 actress also added that she is planning to balance motherhood and work properly. She said, "It's important to have your own career and identity, but it's nice to have this time to think about what's next. I've always gone from one film to the next so I'm using this as a bit of respite - for now."

In an adorable post, Amy Jackson took to social media yesterday (March 31) to announce the happy news to fans. She wrote, "I've been waiting to shout it from the rooftops, and today, being Mother's Day, it couldn't be a more perfect time... I already love you more than anything in this world, the purest most honest love. We can't wait to meet you our little Libra one (sic)"



### Drew Barrymore wants to make more movies with Adam Sandler

**H**ollywood star Drew Barrymore said she wants to reteam for a movie with her frequent collaborator and good friend Adam Sandler. "Adam Sandler, obviously, just because I want to make movies with him forever. We just talked on the phone the other day. We talk on the phone often, and we were like, it feels like something, I don't know. We always get like a time and an instinct thing. We've done it three times now, so we know we have more to go," Barrymore told when asked if she would like to work with any of her previous co-stars again.

The actor had also credited Sandler for her success in her 2015 book 'Wildflower'.

"He was hot s\*\*\* and he believed in me. It's a little bit of a love letter to him because I have grown with this person," she had written in the book in a chapter dedicated to Sandler, titled 'Adam'.

## Angelina Jolie to debut in Marvel with The Eternals?



**A**ngelina Jolie is in negotiations to make a foray into the Marvel Cinematic Universe with The Eternals. The actor eyeing Marvel Studio's superhero team adventure feature being directed by award-winning indie director Chloe Zhao, according to a source to Hollywood Reporter.

Though Jolie is no stranger to fantasy films, Maleficent being case in point, this would be her first stint in a superhero film.

The Oscar-winning actor has chosen the project based on the Jack Kirby-created title about super-powered and near-immortal beings known as Eternals and a more monstrous offshoot known as the Deviants that were created by the cosmic beings called Celestials. The details about the film

are being kept under wraps but one of the insiders has revealed one aspect to the story involves the love story between Ikaris, a man fuelled by cosmic energy, and Sersi, who relishes moving amongst humans.

It is unclear what character Jolie will play. Marvel had no comment.

Zhao, a name behind the critical hits The Rider and Songs My Brothers Taught Me, will direct from a script by Matthew and Ryan Firpo.

Jolie is currently working with Marvel's parent company Disney on two films - Maleficent sequel, Maleficent: Mistress of Evil, which will release later this year and animation/live-action hybrid project The One and Only Ivan, which she is also producing.



## SANDRA BULLOCK FIRST CHOICE TO PLAY NEO BEFORE KEANU REEVES

**T**he Matrix producer Lorenzo di Bonaventura has revealed that before Keanu Reeves was chosen to play Neo, he initially wanted Sandra Bullock for the role.

Di Bonaventura, whose filmography includes discovering the cult classic sci-fi franchise at Warner Bros and Transformers film series, said there were far more than two options to choose from.

Several A-listers including Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio and Will Smith were considered for the part.

"We went out to so many people I don't

remember. We were getting desperate. We went to Sandra Bullock and said 'We'll change Neo to a girl.' (Producer) Joel Silver and I worked with Sandra on Demolition Man and she was and continues to be a very good friend of mine," said the producer.

"It was pretty simple. We sent her the script to see if she was interested in it. And if she was interested in it we would try to make the change," he told The Wrap in an interview as part of the film's 20th anniversary year.

"It just wasn't something for her at the time. So really it didn't go anywhere," di Bonaventura added.

# HOLI-HOLA MOHALLA

**HICKSVILLE, NY (TIP)** The community celebrated, for the first time, the Holi and the Holi Mohalla together at a celebration organized by Prof. Indrajit Saluja, Anu Jain and Jay Jasbir Singh on March 31 at Lotus here. Jay had to be away in Canada and was missed.

Ambassador Sandeep Chakraborty and his wife Taruna Chakraborty were chief guests. The large number of guests included representatives of various organizations and institutions. Some friends came from far off places. Dr. VK Raju, President of the Eye Foundation of America came all the way from Morgantown in WV. He was accompanied by Dr. Leela Raju and Director of the Foundation April. Rekha Maitra came from California.

Mr. Ven Parameswaran and his wife Priscilla came all the way from Scarsdale. Mr. Devraj Aiyar and his wife Usha Aiyar came from New Jersey. Mr. Dave Makkar with his wife and son Surya Makkar travelled all the way from New Jersey to be the part of celebrations.

It was a fun-filled event with a lot of color and entertainment, besides a great cuisine. Children from Gurdwara Baba Makhan Shah Lobana gave a great display of the Sikh martial art called Gatka. About 20 kids in batches gave memorable performance of the art with traditional weapons which included sword and shield. Mr. Daler Singh, their coach said of the sport that it needed very tough training and he was happy the children gave a good account of themselves. He was honored with a shawl presented by Ambassador Sandeep Chakraborty.

Girls trained by Choreographer Shilpa next took the stage and enthralled the gathering with graceful dances. Mrs. Taruna Chakraborty honored Shilpa with a shawl.

Dr. Krishna Jhaveri, well known in the community for his sense of humor related a few anecdotes which sent the gathering in peels of laughter.

Dr. Bindeshwari Aggrawal, as usual was brilliant with her poems of humor. Dr. Shakuntala Pandey and

Rekha Maitra who came from California delighted with their poems.

Surya Makkar made all dance to the tune of his Dhol. Dr. Sanjay Sahai not only gave a great time with his soulful singing, he also acted the DJ.

Anu Jain organized an interesting painting session. Guests were called upon to paint anything on the canvas which many did, including Ambassador Chakraborty, Dr. VK Raju, Ms Bhuvana Rao, Ravi Batra, Dr. Satish Anand, Dr. Krishna Jhaveri, Dr. Ajay Lodha, Mr. KL Sardana, Dr. Raj Bhayani, Mr. Tirlok Malik, Malini Shah, Prof. Indrajit Saluja, among others. The painting was later auctioned for funds to be sent to Bharat Ke Veer Fund. Mr. Devraj Aiyar was the sole bidder for \$1100.

Mr. Zinda Singh, his wife Tina Shah and their friends honored Ambassador Chakraborty with a shawl.

Many friends helped out in organizing the event which probably will be remembered for long. **(TIP Bureau)**



# CELEBRATION IN PICTURES



# Holi - Hola Mohalla Celebration In Pictures



# Australia targets social media firms in new extremist footage laws

**SYDNEY (TIP):** Social media executives could be jailed if they fail to remove extremist material from their platforms quickly, under controversial Australian laws adopted April 4, in the wake of the live-streamed mosque shootings in Christchurch.

Lawmakers voted overwhelmingly in favour of the laws, which make it illegal not to remove footage of “a terrorist act,” murder, torture, rape and kidnapping, and spell out that internet service, content and hosting providers will be held culpable.

Platforms like Facebook and YouTube could face fines approaching billions of dollars—or 10 percent of global annual turnover—for failing to allow the “expeditious removal” of the offending material, while executives could face 3 years in jail.

Technology companies, policy experts and lawyers pilloried the legislation—which was jammed through parliament in two days and faces an uncertain future beyond elections expected in May.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who is facing a difficult reelection battle, said: “Big social media companies have a responsibility to take every possible action to ensure their technology products are not exploited by murderous terrorists.” The opposition Labor party expressed serious misgivings but voted in favour of the legislation.

Australia’s Law Council described the legislation as “knee-jerk” and warned it could have “serious unintended consequences.” President Arthur Moses



warned the laws could be used to curb whistleblowers, and “could also lead to censorship of the media, which would be unacceptable.” Attorney-General Christian Porter said the legislation could be used to target platforms used by the far-right like 4Chan and 8Chan.

It will be up to a jury to decide whether the platforms acted with good speed to take down offending content, raising questions about how the law will be implemented.

The Institute of Public Affairs described the legislation as a “blatant attack on the freedom of the media.”

“Throwing media executives in jail will increase costs to taxpayers without improving community safety or addressing concerns about violent content being shared on social media platforms,” said researcher Andrew Bushnell. “Companies and executives may respond to the threat of criminal penalties by erring on the side of censorship.” The laws are expected to be followed by steps toward treating social media giants more like publishers, which would make them legally responsible for the content on their platforms. — AFP

## China deploys new missile destroyer, frigate in its anti-piracy fleet

**BEIJING (TIP):** China has deployed its latest guided missile destroyer and frigate in the fleet of naval ships participating in anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and Somali coast in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, a media report said on April 4.

China’s 32nd convoy fleet to the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters set sail from a military port in Zhoushan, east China’s Zhejiang Province on April 4, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy official announced.

The naval fleet includes the guided missile destroyer Xi’an, the missile frigate Anyang and the Gaoyanghu, a comprehensive supply ship, state-run Global Times reported.

It is the first time Xi’an and Anyang are participating in an escort mission, it said.

India expressed concern to Sri Lanka in 2015 when a Chinese submarine, reportedly part of the convoy of the naval fleet that took part in the anti-piracy operations, docked at the Colombo port. — PTI

## Ex-Nissan chief Ghosn rearrested on new charges

**TOKYO (TIP):** In an extraordinary move, Tokyo prosecutors on April 1 rearrested former Nissan Motor Co. Chairman Carlos Ghosn, who had been released on bail, on suspicion of misappropriating the company’s money.

His fourth arrest came less than 24 hours after he announced from a newly launched Twitter account that he was “getting ready to tell the truth about what’s happening”, and would hold a news conference in Tokyo on April 11, reports The Japan Times.

“My arrest this morning is outrageous and arbitrary,” Ghosn said in a statement released to media outlets shortly after his re-arrest was reported.

“It is part of another attempt by some individuals at Nissan to silence me by misleading the prosecutors... I will not be broken. I am innocent of the groundless charges and accusations against me.”

Ghosn was released on bail from the Tokyo Detention House on March 6 after having spent 108 days in confinement, as the long detention drew criticism from many legal experts in other countries.

On April 4 re-arrest could reignite international criticism of Japan’s law enforcement system.

The prosecutors have recently been investigating Nissan’s alleged payments to a distributor in Oman.

They have alleged that some of the money, which came from a budget controlled by Ghosn, was channeled for his own personal use. (IANS)

## Fire disrupts one terminal at Kenya’s main airport in Nairobi

**NAIROBI (TIP):** Kenya has closed one departure terminal at the Jomo Kenyatta Airport in Nairobi after a fire sparked by a baggage system malfunction forced authorities to evacuate passengers and staff, the state-run airports operator said on April 4. JKIA, as the airport which is the main gateway into the East African nation is known, suffered severe flight disruptions in August 2013 when it was engulfed by another fire. “All passengers and staff at the terminal were evacuated safely and the fire contained by the airport’s fire team,” it said. The KAA did not say if any flights had been disrupted by the incident. Flight operations at the affected terminal had been moved to an adjacent terminal while authorities worked to re-open it, it said. Apart from the national carrier, Kenya Airways, which uses JKIA as its hub, the airport also serves other airlines including Emirates, Turkish Airways, British Airways and Ethiopian Airlines. Reuters

## New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern helps out fellow mum

**WELLINGTON (TIP):** New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern confirmed on April 4 she paid for a harried mother’s groceries in a gesture sure to enhance a reputation already soaring because of her response to the Christchurch mosque attacks. Ardern was reluctant to discuss the incident, revealed on social media, involving a mother-of-two who was ahead of the Prime Minister at a supermarket checkout when she realised she did not have her purse. “(Ardern) paid for my friend’s shopping in the supermarket the other day when she had forgotten her purse and had two screaming kids in tow,” Twitter user Helen Burness posted, adding: “Like we didn’t love her enough.” The New Zealand Herald has described her actions as a mix of “solace and steel” after she donned the hijab while comforting devastated families and also moved swiftly to tighten gun laws. AFP

## US tourist kidnapped in Uganda for \$5,00,000 ransom

**KAMPALA (TIP):** Four armed men kidnapped an American tourist in Uganda and have demanded \$5,00,000 as ransom, the country’s police force has confirmed.

The American citizen, a woman, and a Ugandan driver were kidnapped at gunpoint at Queen Elizabeth National Park while on a game drive on Tuesday evening, CNN reported on April 3.

“The kidnappers, using the victim’s phone have demanded \$5,00,000,” the police said, adding, “We strongly believe this ransom is the reason behind the kidnap.”

An “elite squad” was dispatched from the Tourism Police to the park to actively pursue the gunmen and have closed all exit areas on the border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“We strongly believe the perpetrators and victims could still be trapped within our search area,” the police statement added.

Uganda recorded a spate of kidnapping incidents last year, which prompted street protests amid claims the government was not doing enough to address the security issues.

Rights groups who led the protests to the country’s parliament in Kampala city, said more than 20 people, mostly women, and children, were abducted for ransom last year and called on the police to make these cases a priority. — IANS

# ANNOYING HABITS OF HUSBANDS THAT CAN DRIVE A WIFE CRAZY

Does your spouse do something on a daily basis that annoys the heck out of you? It doesn't matter how much you love him, how long you've been married, or how good of a father he is. He can be the most generous, caring person. But he's only human.

As his wife, you have to pick and choose your battles. Pick one or two, or maybe even five, of his bad habits and try to change them. But remember, it's not easy to teach an old, snoring Mastiff new tricks. But you can have fun trying.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** Chews with his mouth open even when you're eating at someone else's house.

**FIX:** Buy a pot-bellied pig and sit it at the table with you so your husband can see what he looks like. If you don't want to purchase the pig, secretly videotape him at the dinner table. One evening, when he thinks the two of you are going to watch some porn, play the video montage you created so he can see what he looks like.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** He snores like there's a big giant drooling Mastiff in bed next to you.

**FIX:** Buy him some Breathe Right strips, have him do a nightly nasal saline rinse, or send him to the ENT doctor. Maybe he has a deviated septum. If all else fails, get earplugs.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** Picks his fingernails, sometimes with a folded up dollar bill.

**FIX:** Every time you see him picking, start singing, "I'm in the money." And then keep the money. That will start to get annoying.



**ANNOYING HABIT:** Mixes plaids and stripes. And thinks it makes him look hip.

**FIX:** Go through his closet and arrange his clothes for him in a Garanimals-like manner.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** Leaves the toilet seat up. Every single time.

**FIX:** Sorry, this annoying habit is older than the stars. And I don't think that there is anything that can be done to stop it, other than gluing down the seat.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** Leaves his dirty clothes on the floor next to his bed. Or next to the hamper. Or on the floor of his closet.

**FIX:** Just don't wash anything that doesn't make it to the dirty clothes hamper. When he runs out of clean

underwear, tell him you washed everything that was in the hamper.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** Leaves his dirty dishes not in the dishwasher and not even in the sink. But right next to the sink. Every single night.

**FIX:** Treat it like the laundry and let his dishes pile up. Eventually, he'll get it.

**ANNOYING HABIT:** Imitates the Geico Insurance Guy all the time. "Could switching to Geico really save you 15% or more on car insurance?" And it's not even a good imitation.

**FIX:** Constantly do your imitation of Flo, the Progressive Insurance girl. And don't do it well. He may actually think the role play is sexy and propose a merger of the two companies. Then the habit won't be so annoying.

## Take care of your chemically-straightened hair

Maintaining chemically straightened is a tough task. You need to use a combination of the right tools and techniques to keep it healthy and supple.

### AVOID ANY HEATING PRODUCTS

The last thing you wanna do is damage your hair just after infusing it with chemicals! Remember that hair dryers and straightening irons exude heat. So hold off on these for as long as you can. If you absolutely must use a blow dryer, make sure you opt for the cold setting. Note: Showering with hot water is a total no-no; use lukewarm water instead so you don't end up stripping moisture.

### CONDITION DAILY, BUT USE SHAMPOO SPARINGLY

Keep that fancy shampoo on the shelf and avoid eye contact as much as possible. Some veteran straightening divas even swear by the 'no shampoo philosophy.' But if you're too OCD for that, then at least make sure you cut down shampooing to every 2-3 days. Instead you should use conditioner daily for that shiny, straight look.

### PROTECT YOUR HAIR FROM SUN AND POLLUTION

Those long afternoons at the poolside to get the perfect tan need to be managed differently now. The harsh sun's rays, coupled with the dusty air can really damage your chemically treated hair. Here's a necessary purchase you can totally justify – a fancy sun hat, stylish scarf or fashionable umbrella. Who said you can't look cool while trying to look hot.

### STEP UP ON HAIRCUT FREQUENCY

Did you know that Straight hair is probably the most prone to split ends? Make sure you don't forget to get that trim every



four to six weeks to snip off split ends and keep them looking sharp and healthy.

### FIRST COMB, THEN BRUSH

Even your daily hair regime needs an upgrade if you want to keep your newly straightened hair looking glossy. First, run a wide-toothed comb through those locks and untangle any stubborn hair. Then run a brush through gently to give it that shine and volume.

## FOOD CORNER



### ITALIAN CHICKEN

#### Ingredients

4 Pieces of Chicken Breast  
2 Eggs ½ cup Maida  
½ cup Chicken Stock  
½ cup White Wine  
3 Tbsp Lemon juice  
2 Tbsp Olive Oil  
2 Tbsp Unsalted Butter  
2 sprigs Parsley Salt  
Pepper to taste

#### Method

- Whisk eggs in a bowl and season it with salt and pepper and let it rest.
- Place the flour on a large plate and season that with salt and pepper and set aside.
- In another bowl, combine together chicken stock, lemon juice and white wine.
- Coat the chicken breast in flour, dip it in beaten egg and shallow fry it on a sauce pan. Cook for about 3 minutes till it turns golden brown. Now that the bake chicken off the pan.
- And add the wine and stock mixture to the pan and let it cook for a few minutes until it reduces slightly and thickens, add some butter, parsley, salt and pepper, continue to cook. Now add the chicken breast back in the sauce and cook them together for just another minute. Serve it hot.

### POTATO CURRY

2 tablespoons vegetable oil, 1 medium yellow onion, diced  
4 cloves garlic, minced, 4 teaspoons curry powder  
1 ½ teaspoons paprika  
1 teaspoon cayenne  
2 teaspoons cumin powder  
½ teaspoon allspice, 2 teaspoons fresh ginger, minced  
½ teaspoon black pepper  
2 lb potato, peeled and cubed (907 g)  
15 oz chickpeas, 1 can, drained (425 g)  
1 cup vegetable broth (240 mL)  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
14 oz diced tomato, 1 can (395 g)  
14 oz coconut milk, 1 can (415 mL)  
rice, cooked, for serving  
naan bread, for serving  
fresh cilantro, chopped, for garnish

#### Method

- Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion and saute for about 3 minutes, until translucent.
- Add the garlic and saute for about 2 minutes, until fragrant.
- Add the curry powder, paprika, cayenne, cumin, allspice, ginger, salt, and pepper. Stir and cook for about 2 minutes until the spices are fragrant.
- Add the potatoes and mix well until well-coated in spices. Add the chickpeas and stir to incorporate.
- Add the broth, lemon juice, and tomatoes and stir, then pour in the coconut milk and stir to combine.
- Increase the heat to high and bring the mixture to a simmer. Once bubbling, reduce the heat to medium and cook for 15-20 minutes, until the potatoes are tender and easily pierced with a fork.
- Serve with cooked rice and naan and garnish with fresh cilantro.



# OMEGA-3 RICH DIETS LINKED TO LOWER ASTHMA SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN: STUDY

A new study has found that consuming a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids is linked to fewer childhood asthma symptoms which are triggered by indoor air pollution.

The study published in 'American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine', lays out that families and health care providers may be able to protect children from harmful effects of indoor air pollution by serving a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids while reducing foods rich in omega-6 fatty acids such as soybean oil and corn oil.

"Our group is working on ways to reduce the levels of indoor air pollution in Baltimore City homes," said lead author of the study, Emily Brigham.

"Results are promising, but we don't want to stop there," Brigham added.

The study found that for each additional gram of omega-6 intake, children had 29 per cent higher odds of being in a more severe asthma category. Conversely, with each 0.1-gram increase in levels of omega-3 fatty acids in the diet, researchers saw 3 to 4 per cent lower odds of daytime asthma symptoms.

Indoor air pollution, from sources including cooking, cleaning activities and cigarette smoke, is a known trigger for asthma symptoms.

Omega-3 fatty acids, which are found abundantly in fish and certain nuts and seeds, are considered healthy as they are known to reduce inflammation. Omega-6 fatty acids, primarily found in vegetable oils (including corn, soybean, safflower, and sunflower), as came out in other studies, have mixed effects on health, but have the potential to promote



## OMEGA-3 SUPPLEMENTS

People who cannot meet their omega-3 dietary requirements and those who experience high levels of inflammation may benefit from taking omega-3 supplements. There are several types of omega-3 supplement to choose from, including:

**Fish oil:** Fish oil is the most common omega-3 supplement, and it offers the highest available dose. Fish oil supplements include both DHA and EPA.

**Cod liver oil:** Cod liver oil is rich not only in DHA and EPA omega-3s but also in vitamins A and D.

**Krill oil:** Krill oil is another seafood oil that is rich in DHA and EPA.

**Algae oil:** For people following a vegetarian or vegan diet, algae oils are an excellent source of omega-3s. However, they contain a lower dose than most fish oil supplements, so people may need to take more of them. There are also fewer brands, and they may be more expensive. Some brands include only DHA, but a brand with both DHA and EPA will be more beneficial.

inflammation. The researchers, however, noted that it doesn't prove the relationship between fatty acids and asthma severity.

"Among populations known to be

disproportionately affected by asthma, we may find that improving diet and air pollution together has the greatest impact on health," said Brigham.



## Vitamin C doses may shorten ICU stay

Administering vitamin C to patients in intensive care unit (ICU) can help shorten their stay, scientists say. The researchers from University of Sydney in Australia and University of Helsinki in Finland carried out a systematic review of vitamin C for ICU patients.

They identified 18 relevant controlled trials, and 12 of them were included in the meta-analysis on the length of stay. On average, vitamin C administration shortened ICU stay by 7.8 per cent.

In six trials, orally administered vitamin C with an average dose of 2 grams per day reduced the length of ICU stay on average by 8.6 per cent.

"Vitamin C is a safe, low-cost essential nutrient. Given the consistent evidence from the trials published so far, vitamin C might be administered to ICU patients, although further studies are needed to find out optimal protocols for its administration," researchers said.

"A few common cold studies have indicated that there may be a linear dose response for vitamin C on common cold duration for up to 6 and 8 grammes per day," they said.

"Evidently the dose response for doses higher than 2 grammes per day should also be investigated for ICU patients," they added.

Source: PTI

## JUST AN HOUR OF WEEKLY WALKING WORKS WONDERS

Just one hour a week of brisk walking staves-off disability in older adults with arthritis pain, or aching or stiffness in a knee, hip, ankle or foot, a recent study suggests.

"This is less than 10 minutes a day for people to maintain their independence. It's very doable. This minimum threshold may motivate inactive older adults to begin their path toward a physically active lifestyle with the wide range of health benefits promoted by physical activity," said Dorothy Dunlop, lead author of the study.

An estimated 14 million older adults in the U.S. have symptomatic knee osteoarthritis, which is the most common form of osteoarthritis. Approximately two in five people with osteoarthritis -- most of whom have it in their lower joints - develop disability limitations. The study found an hour of weekly moderate-to-vigorous physical activity allowed older adults to maintain their ability to perform daily tasks like getting dressed or cross a street before a traffic light walk signal changed.

The weekly hour of exercise reduced their risk of mobility disability (walking too slowly to safely cross a street or less than one meter per second) by 85% and their risk of activities of daily living disability (difficulty performing morning routine tasks such as walking across a room, bathing and dressing) by almost 45%.

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# 'Cheat day' during keto diet may damage blood vessels

Having just a plate of fries or a bottle of soda while following a 'keto diet' may damage your blood vessels, say scientists who warn against going for a 'cheat day' while following the popular weight loss regime.

The ketogenic or keto diet has become very common for weight loss or to manage diseases like type 2 diabetes.

"It consists of eating foods rich in fats, moderate in protein, but very low in carbohydrates and it causes the body to go into a state called ketosis," said Jonathan Little, associate professor at University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada.

The diet can be very effective because once the body is in ketosis and starved for its preferred fuel glucose, the body's chemistry changes and it begins to aggressively burn its fat stores, Little said in a statement.

This leads to weight loss and can reverse the symptoms of diseases like Type 2 diabetes.

The often embraced 'cheat day' is a common theme in many diets. However, researchers found just one 75-gramme dose of glucose—the equivalent a large bottle of soda or a plate of fries—while on a high fat, low carbohydrate diet can lead to damaged blood vessels.

"We were interested in finding out what happens to the body's physiology once a dose of glucose is reintroduced," said Cody Durrer, doctoral student at UBC.

"Since impaired glucose tolerance and spikes in blood sugar levels are known to be associated with an increased risk in cardiovascular disease, it made sense to look at what was happening in the blood vessels after a sugar hit," said Durrer.

For their test, the researchers recruited nine healthy young

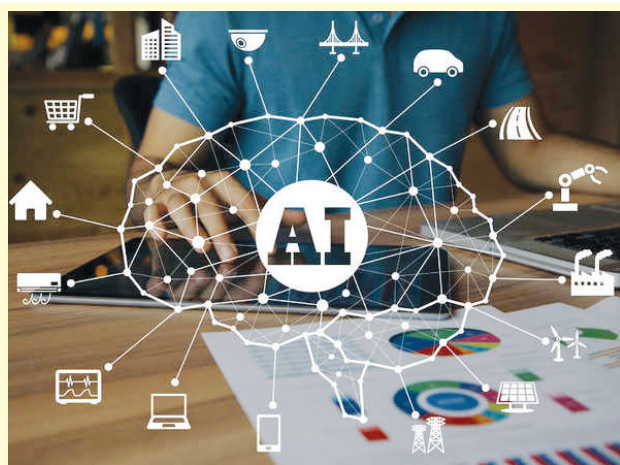


males and had them consume a 75-gramme glucose drink before and after a seven-day high fat, low carbohydrate diet.

The diet consisted of 70 per cent fat, 10 per cent carbohydrates and 20 per cent protein, similar to that of a modern ketogenic diet.

"We were originally looking for things like an inflammatory response or reduced tolerance to blood glucose. What we found instead were biomarkers in the blood suggesting that vessel walls were being damaged by the sudden spike in glucose," said Durrer.

Source: PTI



## LOGICALLY LAUNCHES AI PLATFORM TO CURB FAKE NEWS

As India prepares for the first phase of voting on April 11 amid fake news concerns, UK-based start-up Logically on Wednesday launched a human-centric Artificial Intelligence (AI) platform to act as a real-time filter for authentic information.

Powered by Extended Intelligence (EI), Machine Learning (ML) and Natural Language Processing (NLP), the news aggregator offers in-depth analysis with fair, authentic, credible and trusted (FACT) information.

"We are delighted to launch the Logically platform that will democratise AI and guide people from echo chambers," Lyric Jain, Founder and CEO, Logically told reporters here.

"We offer a bespoke fact-checking service where the claims we address are generated by our users," said the 22-year-old Cambridge and MIT graduate.

Logically uses text analytical, metadata and editorial insights to determine the quality and authority of the source while monitoring network behaviour to discover suspicious patterns.

The app is available on Android and web. *Source: IANS*

## Social network Google+ begins shutting down

Pulling away efforts of competing with social networking majors like Facebook and Twitter, Google has begun the process of shutting down its social networking app Google+.

Even though the process of completely deleting all personal Google+ accounts would still take a few months, content deletion including photos and videos from Google+ album archives have started, The Verge reported on Monday.

The search-engine giant's plans of putting an end to Google+ were officially announced in October 2018.

Apart from just low user engagement, the demise of Google+ also came as a result of a software design flaw that exposed some private user data to third-party developers including occupation, gender, age and email address.

The flaw had existed since 2015 and it could potentially have affected up to five lakh Google+ accounts.

The platform was launched as Google's own social networking platform in June 2011. *Source: IANS*

## Twitter eases account suspension appeal for users

Twitter will now allow users, suspended for violating its guidelines, appeal the decision directly within its platform.

Earlier, users whose accounts were frozen needed to fill an online form to appeal Twitter's decision and the response time varied from a few hours to over a week.

"We move quickly to enforce our rules but sometimes we don't have the full context and can make mistakes," the company tweeted late on Tuesday.

Twitter claimed the new in-app feature will cut down response time by 60 %.

"We added a way for people to appeal our decision in the app and have been able to get back to people 60 % faster than before," it said. Twitter can suspend accounts for being fake, abusive, threatening or for spamming or impersonating someone. Twitter is also considering to label tweets that violate its rules but which should remain on the platform because they're in the public interest.

In an interview with The Washington Post last week, Vijaya Gadde, Twitter's Head of Legal, Policy and Trust, said Twitter is working on how to label tweets that violate the company's abuse terms.

# WHATSAPP MAKES GROUP CHATS MORE SECURE, GIVES USERS MORE CONTROL

WhatsApp on Wednesday said it will now allow its users to decide whether they want to get added to groups on the instant messaging platform.

The move assumes significance, especially ahead of elections in the country, as social media platforms are expected to play a major role in political campaigns to reach out to citizens in large numbers.

"WhatsApp groups continue to connect family, friends, coworkers, classmates and more. As people turn to groups for important conversations, users have asked for more control over their experience," the Facebook-owned company said in a statement.

The messaging app has added that a new privacy setting in which an invite system will help users decide who can add them to groups. Previously, WhatsApp users could be added to groups without their consent.

To enable the feature, users can go to 'settings' option in WhatsApp app and select one of three options—"nobody," "my contacts," or "everyone."

If they choose "nobody", users will have to approve joining every group to which they are invited.

Upon choosing "my contacts" option,



users from the person's address book will be able to add them to groups.

In these cases, the person inviting you to a group will be prompted to send a private invite through an individual chat, giving the user choice of joining the group.

The user will be given three days to accept the invite before it expires, the statement said.

"With these new features, users will have more control over the group messages they receive," WhatsApp said.

These new privacy settings will begin rolling out to some users starting Wednesday, and will be available worldwide in the coming weeks to those using the latest version of WhatsApp, it added.

WhatsApp, which counts India as one of its largest markets with over 200 million users, had faced flak from the Indian government after a series of moblynching incidents, triggered by rumours circulating on the messaging platform, claimed lives last year. *Source: PTI*

## Soon, strong, transparent films for shatterproof smartphone screens

Smartphone screens may soon be shatterproof, say scientists who have created transparent polythene films stronger than aluminium, which could be used in displays and windscreens.

Researchers from University of Warwick and Queen Mary University of London in the UK showed devised a technique to create a lightweight transparent material with a significant strength and resilience exceeding that of metals.

Current methods of creating high strength plastic films such as hot-drawing of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) can lead to materials that can compete or even out-perform traditional engineering materials like metals.

"The microstructure of polymers before drawing very much resembles that of a bowl of cooked spaghetti or noodles, while after stretching or drawing the molecules become aligned in a way similar to that of uncooked spaghetti, meaning that they can carry more load," said Yunyin Lin, a PhD student at University of Warwick.

However, drawn polythene materials normally have an opaque appearance due to defects and voids introduced by the drawing process, limiting applications where both mechanical properties and optical transparency are required.

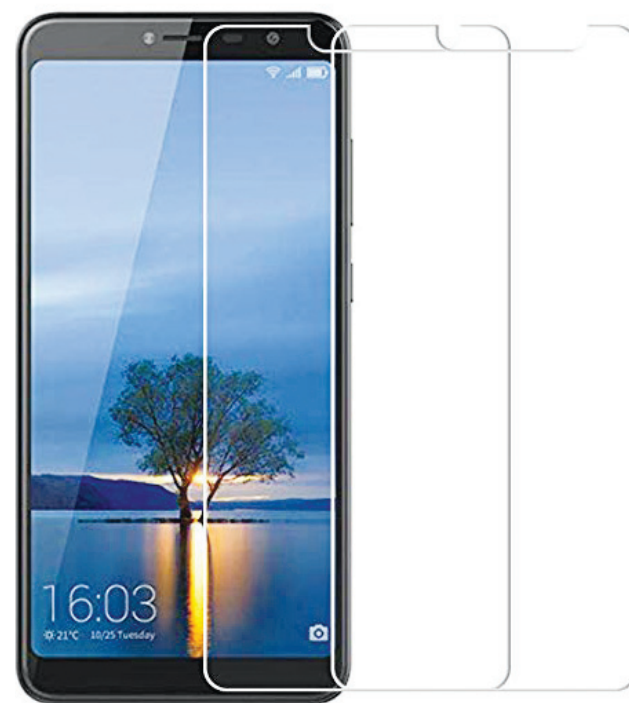
Some success has recently been achieved by using highly specific additives in hot-drawn HDPE materials that can then produce 90 per cent transparency while giving high strength.

However, the research team have now developed a new post-manufacturing technique for HDPE that endows strength and resilience while preserving transparency without using additives.

The researchers took HDPE polythene sheets and drew out these sheets at a range of temperatures below the melting temperature of HDPE. By tuning the drawing temperature they could achieve a transparency of 90 per cent in the visible range.

However, the best balance between strength and transparency was achieved at drawing temperatures between 90 and 110 degrees centigrade.

"We expect greater polymer chain mobility at these high drawing temperatures to be responsible for creating fewer



defects in the drawn films, resulting in less light scattering by defects and therefore a higher clarity," said Ton Peijs at the University of Warwick.

"Our results showed that a wide processing window ranging from 90 degree Celsius to 110 degree Celsius can be used to tailor the required balance between optical and mechanical performance.

"It is anticipated that these lightweight, low-cost, highly transparent, high strength and high stiffness HDPE films can be used in laminates and laminated composites, replacing or strengthening traditional inorganic or polymeric glass for applications in automotive glazing, buildings, windshields, visors, displays etc," said Peijs. *Source: PTI*

# INDIA ONE OF THE HIGHEST TAXING NATIONS IN WORLD, SAYS DONALD TRUMP

**WASHINGTON (TIP):** India is one of the world's "highest taxing nations", US President Donald Trump has alleged as he again criticised the country for imposing 100% tariffs on American products, including the iconic Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

Such a high tariff is not fair, Trump said on Tuesday while addressing the National Republican Congressional Committee Annual Spring Dinner here.

Earlier this year, at a White House event to announce his support for reciprocal tax, Trump had said he was satisfied with the Indian decision to reduce the import tariff on high-end Harley-Davidson motorcycles from 100% to 50%. "Even this is not enough, this is okay," he said at that time.

Trump has repeatedly claimed that India is a "tariff king" and imposes "tremendously high" tariffs on American products.

"I got a call from Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi of India. They're one of the highest taxing nations in the world. They taxed us 100%," Trump said reiterating his often-heard remarks on the Indian tariff structure.

"They charge us 100% tariffs on goods. So they send a motorcycle — and



**I got a call from Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi of India. They charge us 100% tariffs on goods. So they send a motorcycle — and they make a lot of them — Indian cycles. They send them to our country, we charge them nothing. We send a Harley Davidson to India and they charge us 100%. Not fair, okay. Not reciprocal. It's not fair.**

— Donald Trump, US President

they make a lot of them — Indian cycles. Davidson to India and they charge us 100%. Not fair, okay. Not reciprocal. It's not fair," Trump said. *Source: PTI*



## Asian Development Bank lowers India's growth forecast

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has cut India's growth forecast to 7.2% for 2019-20 because of a slower-than-expected pickup in investment demand.

ADB, which had estimated 7.6% economic growth in December, is the first multilateral lending agency to slash India's growth estimate.

Despite this, India will remain the fastest growing economy, as China is projected to grow at 6.3% in 2019, according to ADB's estimate. In February, India's statistics office revised its earlier growth forecast of 7.2% for 2018-19 to 7%. With ADB's downgrade of India's growth estimates, the attention shifts to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which had earlier projected 7.4% and 7.5% growth, respectively.

The IMF will release its World Economic Outlook next week, which will contain India's growth estimates as well.

"The recent pickup in investment growth is expected to continue, albeit at a slow pace. Growth in public investment is likely to be modest for lack of funds. Rural income and consumption will enjoy policy boosts from enhanced income support to farmers and hikes in procurement prices for foodgrain, while interest rate cuts and soft food and fuel prices will bolster consumption in urban areas," ADB said in its annual Asian Development Outlook (ADO) released on Wednesday.

Since inflation is expected to remain below the central bank's target in the first half of 2019-20, it has opened up scope for further policy rate cuts, ADB said, a day before RBI unveils its first bi-monthly monetary policy decision of the current fiscal year. *Source: HT*

## Jet Airways defers March salary payment to its 16,000 employees

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Cash-starved Jet Airways Wednesday deferred the March salary payment to its employees, citing "complexities" involved in the finalisation of the debt-recast plan, under which the SBI-led consortium of lenders has taken over the management control of the airline.

Earlier, the airline had been delaying the salaries of its pilots, engineers and senior staff since August who have not been paid since January.

The company has over 16,000 employees on its payroll. "Given the complexities of such (finalisation of the resolution plan) processes, it has taken us longer than expected. However, we continue to strive and are in continuous deliberations with the lenders and institutions to find a solution.

"In light of the current situation, please note that salaries for March 2019 will be deferred," Jet Airways chief people officer Rahul Taneja said in a communication to staff on Wednesday.

Though the management did not give a specific date for payment, it said the company will provide an update on the issue on April 9.

On March 25, Jet Airways board had approved a resolution plan formulated by SBI-led domestic lenders, under which had agreed to infuse an emergency funding of Rs 1,500 crore into the airline, and convert the same into equity worth 50.1 percent for a notional value of just Re 1 each share.

However, the funds are yet to be disbursed due to "technical" reasons.

"In the current difficult times, the management team has been working with the lenders and other institutions to finalise a resolution plan which will help us stabilise our operations and build a sustainable future for the airline," he added.

Jet Airways said it is making every "possible effort" to remit salaries at the earliest, adding, "we will provide you an update on the status of the pay-out by April 9 2019."

*Source: PTI*

## Apple starts iPhone 7 production in India

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Giving an impetus to its India manufacturing plans, Apple has started the assembling of iPhone 7 at its supplier Wistron's facility in Bengaluru.

Taiwanese industrial major Wistron already assembles iPhone 6S in the country.

"We are proud to be producing iPhone 7 in Bengaluru for our local customers furthering our long-term commitment in India," an Apple spokesperson told IANS on Tuesday.

The assembling of iPhone 7 began last month.

Wistron, which announced last-year plans to invest Rs 3,000 crore in the Narasupra industrial sector in Karnataka's Kolar district, started Apple operations with assembling low-end iPhone SE and later iPhone 6S.

According to Wistron India head Gururaj A, the company would set up an iPhone making unit in the 43 acres of land allotted to it, with employment potential of over 10,000 people.

The new Wistron facility is also set to manufacture a wider range of Apple's devices.

Apple is slowly but steadily strategising its plans to make deeper inroads in a country where over 450 million people use smartphones, and assembling iPhone 7 is another step towards gaining more ground.

According to Tarun Pathak, Associate Director at Hong Kong-based Counterpoint Research, the Indian electronics market is growing fast and has gained a significant advantage on some of the competing countries.



## Fitch affirms India's rating at 'BBB-' with stable outlook for 13th year in row



**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Fitch on Thursday retained India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, with stable outlook, saying a weak fiscal position continues to constrain its rating. This is the 13th year in a row that global rating agency Fitch has rated India at 'BBB-'. It had last upgraded India's sovereign rating from 'BB+' to 'BBB-' with a stable outlook on August 1, 2006.

"India's ratings balance a strong medium-term growth outlook and relative external resilience stemming from strong foreign reserve buffers, against high public debt, a weak financial sector and some lagging structural factors," Fitch said in a statement. It said a robust growth outlook continues to support India's credit profile. Fitch expects growth of 6.8 per cent in the current fiscal and 7.1 per cent in the next, supported by accommodative monetary policy, easing of bank regulations, and government spending.

"A weak fiscal position continues to constrain India's sovereign ratings. In this regard, the next government's medium-term fiscal policy will be of particular importance from a rating perspective," Fitch said while affirming the country's long-term foreign-currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook.

The general elections, to be carried out from April 11 to May 19, 2019, result in some temporary uncertainty about the policy agenda, it said, adding over the past 30 years, governments of different political persuasions have been generally reform-minded.



### 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@bejandaruwalla.com](mailto:info@bejandaruwalla.com) and on phone **011-91-8141234275** [www.bejandaruwalla.com](http://www.bejandaruwalla.com)**

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE APRIL 8 - APRIL 14, 2019

### Aries:

Ganesha says these are grand times and you must seize every opportunity. You may be swept off your feet by a potential lover. You are not excited by the person per se but by something within yourself that you are projecting upon him or her. When you finally learn the truth about the other person, you may have difficulty accepting the person and your fatal attraction. But that is how life is with its many mysteries and surprises.

### Taurus:

Ganesha says these are exciting times and you must savor each mouthful to games, partying, socializing, get-togethers. Yes, your plate is full and overflowing. Relationships, both personal and professional, give you great pleasure and benefit you in manifold ways. You look towards the future with hope and optimism. You find great satisfaction at work and this joyful spirit adds color to your life. Ganesha has truly blessed you.

### Gemini:

You live large and attract many liaisons, some of which can be dangerous. You could be attracted to an unattainable person. You may be setting yourself up for a situation in which you cannot win as the person you have set your sights on appears to be an unrealizable dream. You will be torn by several emotions. Should you continue and push ahead or should you withdraw? You attract attention with your actions and become the source of wonderment and, maybe, even envy.

### Cancer:

You make many new contacts and have remarkable career growth. There could be overseas travel and an affair with a person from a completely different culture. Of course, like I keep saying, nothing certain can be said until I refer to the personal horoscope. These are all mere generalizations. Ganesha is with you all the way. Relationships are the central theme of this period. You live a lot in a fantasy world.

### Leo:

Ganesha says by avoiding confrontations with real people, you also avoid a confrontation with yourself. You do this precisely because you fear that you will be the loser. Yet a real confrontation is just what you need. If you persist in any of these relationships, you will have to confront both yourself and your partner as real individuals. That will be the real test of the relationship. Along with all this, there will also be growth and progress.

### Virgo:

You can expect sudden windfalls, great wealth or luck, and all kinds of wonderful opportunities. You may also make investments in a second home and take a holiday with the family. Take life as it flows, says Ganesha. There will be many types of meetings that make you wiser and more mature and have a broader understanding of the world. You will reach out consciously and unconsciously and ask more of the world; along with this, you are also prepared to give more of yourself to the world.

### Libra:

This trend makes you feel either more demanding or more giving towards others. According to the law of conservation of energy in the universe, you can transform the energies in your life from one form to another, but you cannot create them out of nothing. Additionally, along with all this, you are also busy with loans, funds, rent, leases, legacies and inheritances. Certainly, by all accounts, Ganesha gives you a mixed and sumptuous period.

### Scorpio:

There is travel on the cards and new ideas and people to flirt with. Many old flames and friends from the past come into your life. There will be new circumstances that give you increased freedom or an opportunity to do something that you have never done before. There will be opportunities for higher education and travel. Sometimes this influence also brings about financial gains. This is an excellent time to invest or expand in business as long as you are very careful not to overdo it or overextend yourself.

### Sagittarius:

There is stability but along with it are many new influences. You have a strong need to express yourself by doing something that is different from your normal routine. It is not that you want to rebel but you definitely do not want the status quo to continue. You need to experience a new kind of freedom in your life and to discover dimensions of living that you have not known before.

### Capricorn:

You are keen on taking risks but just make sure that they are calculated ones. You may search for higher realities, for inner truth on the metaphysical or philosophical level, or you may just change jobs to experience a new adrenaline rush. It all depends on several factors including a personal horoscope reading to be more accurate. But the indications are that there will be change. These are exciting times and Ganesha is with you all the way.

### Aquarius:

You are much more receptive to new ideas now. You look for more novelty, more originality, and this is a good move as you are tired of the boring and the mundane which has dominated most of the recent past. You may have got into a rut and this is the time to get out of it and make new forays into the big, wide world. There will be new opportunities or a piece of good luck that seems to have emerged out of the blue and taken you by surprise.

### Pisces:

There will be sudden changes or an event that gives you a new chance in some way. There could also be a sudden windfall or promotion or even a sudden change encounter that works to your advantage. There are many openings and opportunities spread out before you, like a buffet. Make the most of it, says Ganesha. There is travel, expansion and growth. You are in the throes of success and that is most certainly a good feeling.

# CHAITRA NAVRATRI OR VASANTA NAVRATRI

The Chaitra Navaratri - a festival in which Goddess Durga is worshipped on all days in her nine avatars, normally falls in the month of March/April every year. This year, it will begin April 6 and will continue till April 14. The nine-day puja falls during the Chaitra month of the Hindu calendar. This particular Navratri holds special significance, since it heralds the transition from the season of spring to that of summer. It is also called Vasanta Navaratri.

## The Origin of Vasanta Navratri

In days long gone by, King Dhruvasindu was killed by a lion when he went out hunting. Preparations were made to crown the prince Sudarsana.

But, King Yudhajit of Ujjain, the father of Queen Lilavati, and King Virasena of Kalinga, the father of Queen Manorama, were each desirous of securing the Kosala throne for their respective grandsons. They fought with each other. King Virasena was killed in the battle. Manorama fled to the forest with Prince Sudarsana and a eunuch. They took refuge in the hermitage of Rishi Bharadwaja.

The victor, King Yudhajit, thereupon crowned his grandson, Satrujit, at Ayodhya, the capital of Kosala. He then went out in search of Manorama and her son. The Rishi said that he would not give up those who had sought protection under him. Yudhajit became furious. He wanted to attack the Rishi. But, his minister told him about the truth of the Rishi's statement.

## Yudhajit returned to his capital

Fortune smiled on Prince Sudarsana. A hermit's son came one day and called the eunuch by his Sanskrit name Kleeba. The prince caught the first syllable Kli and began to pronounce it as Kleem. This syllable happened to be a powerful, sacred Mantra. It is the Bija Akshara (root syllable) of the Divine Mother.

The Prince obtained peace of mind and the Grace of the Divine Mother by the repeated utterance of this syllable. Devi appeared to him, blessed him and granted him divine weapons and an inexhaustible quiver.

The emissaries of the king of Benares or Varanasi passed through the Ashram of the Rishi and, when they saw the noble prince Sudarsana, they recommended him to Princess Sashikala, the daughter of the king of Benares.

The ceremony at which the princess was to choose her spouse was arranged. Sashikala at once chose Sudarsana. They were duly wedded. King Yudhajit, who had been present at the function, began to fight with the king of Benares. Devi helped Sudarsana and his father-in-law. Yudhajit mocked Her, upon which Devi promptly reduced Yudhajit and his army to ashes.

Thus Sudarsana, with his wife and his father-in-law, praised Devi. She was highly pleased and ordered them to perform Her worship with havan and other means during the Vasanta Navaratri. Then She disappeared.

Prince Sudarsana and Sashikala returned to the Ashram of Rishi Bharadwaja. The great Rishi blessed them and crowned Sudarsana as the king of Kosala. Sudarsana and Sashikala and the king of Benares implicitly carried out the commands of the Divine Mother and performed worship in a splendid manner



during the Vasanta Navaratri.

Sudarsana's descendants, namely, Sri Rama and Lakshmana, also performed worship of Devi during the Vasanta Navaratri and were blessed with Her assistance in the recovery of Sita.

## Why Celebrate Vasanta Navratri?

It is the duty of the devout Hindus to worship the Devi (Mother Goddess) for both material and spiritual welfare during the Vasanta Navaratri and follow the noble example set by Sudarsana and Sri Rama. He cannot achieve anything without the Divine Mother's blessings. So, sing Her praise and repeat Her Mantra and Name. Meditate on Her form. Pray and obtain Her eternal Grace and blessings. May the Divine Mother bless you with all divine wealth!"

## What's the Significance of Navratri?

During Navaratri, we invoke the energy aspect of God in the form of the universal mother, commonly referred to as "Durga," which literally means the remover of miseries of life. She is also referred to as "Devi" (goddess) or "Shakti" (energy or power).

It is this energy, which helps God to proceed with the work of creation, preservation and destruction. In other words, you can say that God is motionless, absolutely changeless, and the Divine Mother Durga, does everything. Truly speaking, our worship of Shakti re-confirms the scientific theory that energy is imperishable.

It cannot be created or destroyed. It is always there.

## Why Worship the Mother Goddess?

We think this energy is only a form of the Divine Mother, who is the mother of all, and all of us are her children. "Why mother; why not father?", you may ask. Let me just say that we believe that God's glory, his cosmic energy, his greatness and supremacy can best be depicted as the motherhood aspect of God. Just as a child finds all these qualities in his or her mother; similarly, all of us look upon God as mother. In fact, Hinduism is the only religion in the world, which gives so much importance to the mother aspect of God because we believe that mother is the creative aspect of the absolute.

## Why Twice a Year?

Every year the beginning of summer and

the beginning of winter are two very important junctures of climatic change and solar influence. These two junctions have been chosen as the sacred opportunities for the worship of the divine power because:

(1) We believe that it is the divine power that provides energy for the earth to move around the sun, causing the changes in the outer nature and that this divine power must be thanked for maintaining the correct balance of the universe.

(2) Due to the changes in the nature, the bodies and minds of people undergo a considerable change, and hence, we worship the divine power to bestow upon all of us enough potent powers to maintain our physical and mental balance.

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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."**

## UK MPs back Brexit delay Bill by a vote

**LONDON (TIP):** British MPs have narrowly approved in favour of a bill seeking to delay Brexit as they attempt to avoid a no-deal exit from the European Union.

In a third reading, the House of Commons voted by 313 votes to 312 late on Wednesday, forcing Prime Minister Theresa May to seek an extension of the current Brexit date of April 12.

The Bill, put forward by Labour Party's Yvette Cooper, now needs to be approved by the House of Lords before it becomes law. The European Union will also need to agree to a delay, the BBC reported.

The development came as talks between the government negotiators and Labour were set to continue throughout Thursday after May and Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn agreed a "programme of work".

A No 10 spokesman said both parties showed "flexibility" and "a commitment to bring the... uncertainty to a close". Corbyn said the meeting was "useful, but inconclusive", adding there had not been "as much change as (he) had expected" in May's position. — IANS

## Ethiopian plane crew followed procedure, but lost control: Probe

**ADDIS ABABA (TIP):** The crew of the Ethiopian Airlines plane that crashed last month killing 157 persons, repeatedly followed procedures recommended by Boeing, but were unable to regain control of the jet, according to the investigators' report released on April 4.

The initial report, unveiled by Ethiopian Transport Minister Dagmawit Moges, cast further doubt on the system controlling the Boeing 737 MAX 8 model, which has been grounded worldwide for almost a month.

"The crew performed all the procedures repeatedly provided by the manufacturer, but was not able to control the aircraft," said Dagmawit Moges, unveiling results of the preliminary probe into the crash.

The report recommends "the aircraft flight control system shall be reviewed by the manufacturer," she said.

"Aviation authorities shall verify that the review of the aircraft flight control system has been adequately addressed by the manufacturer before the release of the aircraft for operations," she added.

The release of the report came after the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced a review of the certification of the automated flight control system on the 737 MAX.

Boeing is reviewing the report. — AFP

# Roads deadlier than guns in Libya

**TRIPOLI (TIP):** Roads in conflict-riddled Libya, where petrol is cheaper than mineral water, rank among the deadliest in the world.

Disregard for traffic rules, a dilapidated infrastructure and cars that fail to meet safety standards combine to make road accidents in Libya more lethal than incidents involving weapons.

In Tariq al-Siqqa, a public park in central Tripoli, hundreds of car wrecks are stacked up on top of each other as testimony of the carnage.

Some vehicles still carry blood stains, others have shreds of clothing or a shoe left lying inside.

The interior ministry's traffic department recorded 4,115 road accidents across the country in 2018, killing 2,500 people and injuring more than 3,000 others.

"Libya holds the (world) record for the number of deadly road accidents per capita," said department spokesman Colonel Abdelnasser Ellafi.

Last year's road deaths outranked the hundreds of people killed annually in clashes between rival armed groups since Libya's 2011 revolt that toppled dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

Speeding is the number one cause of accidents in Libya—a country of just over six million people and more than 4.5 million vehicles, according to the department. With a litre of petrol, which is subsidised by the government, costing only 0.15 dinars (around 10 US cents), less than the price of a litre of mineral water, gas-guzzlers are all the rage.

Some of Libya's dilapidated roads, however, "have not been repaired in 60 years", said traffic department head General Mohamad Hadiya, making them totally unsuitable. In Tripoli—home to



two million inhabitants—the number of privately-owned cars has almost quadrupled in nearly a decade, jumping from 600,000 in 2010 to two million this year. Together with state-owned vehicles, taxis and public transport, the number rises to three million in the capital alone.

Car salesmen have also flooded the market with imported cheap vehicles which are mostly used cars and lack basic safety measures such as seatbelts or airbags, officials say.

In a bid to fight back, the authorities in February passed a law banning the import of cars older than 10 years.

And for the first time in years, the government has set aside funds in its 2019 budget to repair the country's roads.

"The roads are systematically flooded after rain and bridges are unusable and need urgent maintenance work," said Ellafi. His department has also launched

campaigns to raise awareness among motorists about traffic laws and deploy patrols to catch traffic violators.

But with the country thrown into anarchy and awash with weapons since 2011, the patrols keep a low profile to avoid reprisals from angry motorists.

They mostly just direct traffic on the congested roads. "Young people have no respect for traffic cops because they know they won't be punished," said motorist Ahmad Rajab, as he stepped out of his 4X4 in Martyrs' Square.

"But we should not only blame drivers," the 35-year-old said, pointing to the state of the roads as well as the lack of road signs and traffic lights. "I was driving at night along an unlit road east of Tripoli and I hit a pole that was lying across the road," he said. "Road accidents have become silent killers that have claimed many lives in Libya." — AFP

## Canadian couple find lost ticket to become last-minute lottery millionaires



**MONTREAL (TIP):** A Quebec couple won 1 million Canadian dollar (USD7,50,000) in the lottery after finding a winning ticket that had been forgotten in a book for months, the province's Loto-Quebec organization said on April 4.

Nicole Pedneault and Roger Larocque only realised last weekend that they had a winning ticket from an April 5, 2018, drawing.

While looking through a book about Japan to help her grandson with a school project, Pedneault noticed something had fallen from the pages.

It was a lottery ticket the couple had bought for Valentine's Day last year.

"If my grandson hadn't asked me to give him some things for his presentation, I wouldn't have ever found the ticket," Pedneault said.

"The first thing I did when I found the ticket in the book was go look at the deadline for claiming winnings on the Loto-Quebec website," she said.

The ticket was still valid, but not for long—only until Friday.

"It's all just by chance that we found it at the last minute like that," the winner said as she claimed her check. — AFP

## Group says 5 Egyptians disappeared after being deported back

**CAIRO (TIP):** An international rights group has expressed concern about the disappearance of five Egyptians who were recently deported back to the country, saying they are at serious risk of torture.

Human Rights Watch said in a report on Thursday that Malaysia had deported four of the men in early March while Turkey deported the fifth in January.

Three of them were sentenced in Egypt over links to Islamist groups.

Michael Page, deputy Mideast and North Africa director at the New York-based watchdog, says "Egypt has a dire record of systematic torture, forcible disappearances, and unfair trials of dissidents."

It urged authorities "to provide full legal access to these deportees."

Egypt has waged heavy crackdown on Islamists and rights activists after the military's 2013 ouster of controversial Islamist President Mohammed Morsi. AP

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# Australian senator censured for blaming Muslim victims

**CANBERRA (TIP):** An Australian senator was censured by his colleagues on April 3 for seeking to blame the victims of last month's mosque shootings and vilify Muslims.

Sen Fraser Anning was the target of widespread condemnation for blaming the attack in New Zealand on immigration policies. He faced more criticism later for physically striking a teenager who cracked a raw egg on his head in a viral incident in Melbourne.

On Parliament's second sitting day since the March 15 attack in which 50 people died, government and opposition lawmakers moved the censure motion against Anning for divisive comments "seeking to attribute blame to victims of a horrific crime and to vilify people on the basis of religion, which do not reflect the opinions of the Australian Senate or the Australian people."

"Sen. Anning's comments were ugly and divisive. They were dangerous and unacceptable from anyone, let alone a member of this place," Government Senate Leader Mathias Cormann told the Senate.

Anning dismissed the censure motion as an attack on free speech. "It is also an exercise in left-wing virtue signalling of the worst kind," he told the Senate before the vote.

He sits as an independent lawmaker after defecting from the anti-Muslim One Nation party, whose two senators abstained from the censure vote. One Nation Sen. Peter Georgiou read a speech on behalf of party leader Pauline Hanson, who was absent. Hanson said while

Anning's comments were "untimely and therefore deemed highly insensitive, he still maintains a right to his opinion".

"If One Nation endorses your action to censure Sen. Anning, your freedom of speech as elected members of this chamber will be removed," the speech said. A day after the Christchurch attacks, Anning faced more criticism for physically striking the teenager who cracked an egg on his head at a Melbourne public appearance — 17-year-old Will Connolly, who became known around the world as "Egg Boy".

Anning on Wednesday criticised Prime Minister Scott Morrison for saying at the time that Anning should "be subject to the full force of the law" for his retaliation against Connolly.

Police investigated the altercation but no charges have been announced.

"It might have only been an idiot with an egg this time, but there is a continuum that begins with this and ends with a fanatic with a gun or a bomb," Anning said.

"But apparently, according to Prime Minister Morrison, that's okay, as long as the victims are conservatives," he added.

After New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern previously called Anning's comments on the shootings "a disgrace", her deputy Winston Peters on Tuesday called Anning a "jingoistic moron". Anning came under blistering criticism over tweets within hours of the massacre, including one that said, "Does anyone still dispute the link between Muslim immigration and violence?" AP

## Indian-origin men among 9 indicted on visa fraud and drug charges

**SOUTH CAROLINA (TIP):** Two Indian -origin persons, Saurabh Kumar Patel, of Orangeburg, South Carolina faces conspiracy charges while Tarang Patel, of Newport, Kentucky faces conspiracy and visa fraud charges.

The duo, along with seven law enforcement officers, has been indicted in federal court in South Carolina on visa fraud and drug charges. If convicted, Saurabh Kumar Patel and Tarang Patel face a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment.

One of the schemes alleged in the indictment involved fraudulent U Nonimmigrant Visas ('U-Visas'), which are set aside for victims of certain crimes who have suffered mental or physical abuse as a result of the crime.

To obtain a U-Visa, a law enforcement official must certify that the alien is assisting that law enforcement agency in the investigation or prosecution of the crime of which the alien was a victim.

According to the Indictment, four officers helped individuals obtain fraudulent U-Visas by taking bribes for fraudulent certifications and creating fraudulent incident reports indicating that aliens were victims of crimes.

The indictment further alleges that officers took bribes in exchange for protecting methamphetamine and cocaine or the proceeds of drug trafficking.

The others charged are Springfield Police Department Chief Lacra Sharod Jenkins, Springfield Police Department Officer Allan Hunter, Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office Deputy Carolyn Colter Franklin, Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office Deputy Nathaniel Miller Shazier, Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office Deputy Stanley Lavalle Timmons, Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office Reserve Deputy James Albert Tucker and Orangeburg County Sheriff's Office Deputy Willie Paul David Rogers.

"If these allegations are proved, these defendants do not deserve to wear the badge and should not be allowed to bring disrepute on the overwhelming majority of men and women in blue who serve South Carolina with integrity," United States Attorney Sherri Lydon said. "We will not tolerate the hypocrisy of those who would pretend to enforce the law, while violating it themselves as they seek to line their own pockets. We call that public corruption, and we will always call it out."

## conbd from page 1

### RBI cuts key lending rate by 25 basis points

The central bank, however, kept monetary policy stance 'Neutral' over uncertainty over monsoon.

It also lowered GDP growth forecast for the 2019-20 to 7.2 per cent from 7.4 per cent predicted in February policy.

In the second policy review under Governor Shaktikanta Das, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee voted 4:2 in favor of the rate cut.

The benchmark interest rate was cut by 0.25 per cent to 6 per cent, a move which will result in lower cost of borrowing for banks that are expected to transmit the same to individuals and corporates.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on February 7 had last cut interest rate to 6.25 per cent from 6.5 per cent.

Last time repo rate stood at 6 per cent was in April 2018.

The rate cut is in consonance of achieving the medium term objective of maintaining inflation at the 4 per cent level while supporting growth, the RBI said in its first bi-monthly monetary policy statement for 2019-20.

"The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) notes that the output gap remains negative and the domestic economy is facing headwinds, especially on the global

front. The need is to strengthen domestic growth impulses by spurring private investment which has remained sluggish," it noted.

In the monetary policy report the RBI said going forward, alternative farm support schemes and farm loan waivers announced by some state governments, higher minimum support prices and food procurement, and lower direct tax collections could put upward pressure on the combined fiscal deficit.

It also said that headline CPI inflation is expected to move up from its recent lows as the favorable base effects dissipate but is expected to remain below the target of 4 per cent.

Talking about upside risk to inflation trajectory, it said, higher crude oil prices, volatility in international financial markets, the risk of a sudden reversal in the prices of perishable food items, and fiscal slippages are some of the challenges. (Source: PTI)

### Trump threatens tariffs if Mexico does not help with immigration, drugs

Trump told reporters at the White House he would put tariffs on cars or close the border, but he said he may start with the tariffs. He also said he would give Mexico a year to try to stop the flow of drugs before putting tariffs in place.

## Christ Church, NZ massacre suspect to face 89 charges

The police had earlier filed a single, representative murder charge against 28-year-old Australian Brenton Harrison Tarrant. He is due to appear via video link during a brief hearing on Friday, April 5, and won't be required to enter a plea.

Fifty persons died in the March 15 attacks on two mosques and another 50 were injured.

The police said in a brief statement that they were considering filing more charges against Tarrant but couldn't comment further as the case was before the court.

Tarrant's first appearance was on the day after the attacks in the Christchurch District Court. His case has now been moved to the High Court due to the seriousness of the charges. Tarrant has reportedly been moved to a high-security prison in Auckland, which is why he'll appear via video link.

During the scheduled court hearing, media photographs won't be allowed and reporting on the proceedings will be severely restricted under New Zealand law. The intent of the law is to avoid the possibility the reporting and images would taint the views of potential jurors before they hear evidence in court.

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Blessed with bustling, dynamic cities, rich cultural heritage, historical treasures, pilgrimage sites, diverse flora and fauna, inviting beaches, and incredible topography encompassing coastal plains, plateaus and mountains, Karnataka is one of the beautiful states in southwest India that offers something to satisfy every traveler's appetite. Here, discover the best places to visit in Karnataka.

# BEST PLACES TO VISIT IN KARNATAKA

## Bangalore – The Silicon Valley

The first on the list has to be the capital of Karnataka, Bangalore. With its old-English architecture and cosmopolitan vibe, this city is a blend of traditional and modern. The India's Silicon Valley is booming with life, replete with vibrant nightlife, rich biodiversity, museums and art galleries, shopping streets and malls, amusement parks, gardens, temples, cafes and restaurants. Besides, the moniker 'Garden City' is befitting to Bangalore as the city is brimming with green spaces. The major sights to visit here includes Lal Bagh (botanical garden), Bannerghatta National Park, ISKCON temple, Tudor architectural style-built Bangalore Palace, Tipu Sultan's Summer Palace, shopping at Commercial Street, and Wonderla (amusement park). Those who want a little history and art, head to the city's one of the many museums and art galleries.

## Kabini

Kabini is a haven for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts alike. Located on the banks of its namesake river, this serene spot is home to one of the best wildlife sanctuaries in the state – the Kabini Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary is home to a diverse ecosystem of beautiful and rare creatures, including wild elephant, black panther, tiger, deer, and more than 350 species of bird species. Leopards are also known to call this sanctuary home, but notoriously difficult to spot. Wildlife safaris, nature walks and boat rides on the tranquil waters of the river create the perfect opportunity to marvel at these magnificent creatures and experience the wilderness at its best. Besides, its variety of plantations and lush greenery make this spot truly special.

## Mangalore – Rome of the East

The name 'Rome of the East' is befitting to Mangalore with regard to the historical architecture similarities. Surrounded by Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, Mangalore is one of the most tranquil spots, complete with striking historical architecture, pristine beaches, rich wildlife, rolling hills and coconut palms, and its delicious cuisine is worth making note of. Catch a glimpse of the spectacular sunrise/sunset and relax on the golden sands of Someshwar beach, Panambur beach and Tannirbhavi beach; get up-close with wildlife and nature at Pilikula Biological Park, and



don't miss the architectural marvels – St. Aloysius Chapel that is nestled on a lighthouse hill and Gokarnanatheshwara Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva. Plus, there's a plethora of outdoor activities to take part in, like horse riding, boating, parasailing and jet ski rides.

## Coorg – 'The Scotland of India'

Coorg, otherwise known as Kodagu is nicknamed the 'Scotland of India' because of the climatic and landscape similarities, i.e. comfortable and pleasant weather, hilly terrain and copious greenery. Far away from the hustle and bustle of city life, this hill station is famous for its coffee and spices. For the outdoorsy, there's plenty of things to do and see here, like walking on a hanging bridge and soaking in the stunning vistas of the Abbey falls and Iruppu falls; indulging in

wildlife safari at the Nagarhole National Park and getting a close-up view of the diverse wildlife, including tigers, leopards, nilgiri langur, elephants and over 270 bird species. There's also Dubare Elephant Camp that is home to more than 150 elephants where you can bathe and feed them, as well as enjoy a coracle ride on the Cauvery River. Be sure to visit the Raja's Seat that is known for its sunset point, garden of musical fountain and seasonal flowers. And don't forget to treat your taste buds with authentic Coorg food.

## Bylakuppe

Just an hour drive from Coorg lies Bylakuppe. It is the biggest Tibetan Settlement in South India. A popular attraction here is the Namdroling Monastery or Golden temple that exudes Tibetan architectural style. The inside of the temple is

filled with gold idols, paintings and Tibetan art.

## Mysore (Mysuru)

Mysore is a southern treasure, known for its royalty and opulence. The major attraction is the three-storey imposing Mysuru Palace, complete with sprawling halls, shrines, pavilions, gardens and several courtyards. Make sure you stay at the palace until the evening time – it is illuminated with lakh lamps and is truly a sight to behold. Other sights worth checking out include Jagmohan Palace that houses a huge gallery featuring exquisite artwork and artefacts from South India; Karanji Lake, which is the state's largest lake and home to over 147 bird species, making it a birdwatchers' paradise; and Brindavan Gardens (botanical garden).



# Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets

**NEW DELHI (TIP):** Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi played a pivotal role as Sunrisers Hyderabad dished out an all-round effort to record a five-wicket win over hosts Delhi Capitals and register their third consecutive victory in the IPL.

Nabi took two wickets and played an unbeaten knock of 17 runs to help Sunrisers keep their winning run intact. Chasing a modest 130, opener Jonny Bairstow smashed a 28-ball 48 to set the foundation but Sunrisers lost five wickets for 48 runs to slip to 111/5 by the end of the 16th over. Nabi and Yusuf Pathan (9\*) then held their nerves to take Sunrisers home, scoring 131/5 in 18.3 overs. The win took Sunrisers' overall head-to-head record against the Delhi team at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium to 4-1.

Earlier, Sunrisers dished out a superb bowling effort on a slow and dry wicket to restrict Delhi to 129/8. Delhi skipper Shreyas Iyer emerged as the highest-scorer with a steady 41-ball 43.

## Costly mistake

Bairstow got a reprieve early on when Axar Patel missed a caught and bowled chance in the second over.

The Englishman made Delhi pay for the mistake, blasting a six and a four off Sandeep Lamichhane in the next over.

He took Chris Morris to the cleaners, smashing three boundaries and another hit to the fence in the next over. Kagiso Rabada too was treated with disdain, being sent across the fence



thrice as Sunrisers once again did not lose any wicket in the Powerplay, scoring 62/0. Bairstow was finally dismissed in the seventh over with

Rahul Tewatia trapping him in front of the wicket. The opener asked for a review but the decision was not overturned. *Source: PTI*



## CAN'T PICK WORLD CUP TEAM ON IPL SHOW, SAYS ROHIT

**MUMBAI (TIP):** India have more or less a settled squad for the World Cup barring one slot and vice-captain Rohit Sharma feels skipper Virat Kohli's preference would matter a lot while sorting out that position.

Rohit believes that for World Cup selection, the players should be judged on the basis of "performance and form" in the last four years, not on how they perform during the IPL. The World Cup begins on May 30, just 18 days after the IPL concludes on May 12. Rohit said performances in the IPL should not be a factor in selecting a team for the 50-over format.

"With their inputs, the selectors will keep an eye on what is happening with those guys in IPL although I feel IPL should not be the criteria for team selection," he said at the launch of a cricket website. "They have played enough international matches to see where each individual stands. You can't select a team for the 50-over format from a 20-over event, it's my personal opinion. IPL is a different ball game. It's franchise cricket and yes, form matters a lot."

He did acknowledge that the IPL has helped him prepare for big series. "Every time we play IPL, there is some big event right after happening — a big Test series or big One-day series. It does help also. 35-plus or 40 guys will probably need some rest. I was talking to Jasprit (Bumrah) the other day," Rohit said. "He needs to play a lot of matches and bowl a lot to be match fit than be at home. I also, as a batter, need to play."

## RR vs RCB: Needed more runs, made too many mistakes while fielding, says Virat Kohli

**JAIPUR (TIP):** The winless streak continues for Royal Challengers Bangalore but skipper Virat Kohli took solace from the fact that they dragged the game against Rajasthan Royals deep and also hinted that they will make changes in the side to get right combination for upcoming games.

RCB managed 158 for 4 on a difficult wicket but the hosts chased it down with one ball to spare.

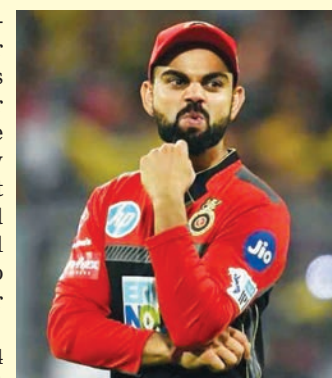
Kohli said they need a few more runs on the board. "Today, we were more competitive. but we were 15-20 short with the bat. I thought 160 was competitive, but with the dew factor, 15 runs more would've been more challenging," said Kohli.

The RCB fielders dropped a number of catches and Kohli acknowledged that such mistakes won't win them games.

Ajinya Rahane and Steve Smith were dropped and their contributions with the bat helped the hosts win.

"It was not easy to get the boundaries in the second innings but if we make that many mistakes (dropped catches), then we will fall on the losing side. In a tournament like IPL, when you have no momentum, then these things can happen," said Kohli.

"The team hasn't gone off to a good start, and these things look really bad. But we have to keep believing that we can turn things around. We played well in Mumbai and tonight, but we need to improve. We need to take some confidence from tonight's game though." Kohli said the team may make more changes in the side.



# MS Dhoni trumps Pandya's attempt to 'Mankad' him

**MUMBAI (TIP):** Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni on Wednesday once again proved why he is considered to have one of the sharpest minds in the world of cricket. Even as Mumbai Indians all-rounder Krunal Pandya 'probably' looked to "Mankad" him, the former India skipper outsmarted the bowler by keeping his bat inside the return crease.

Bowling to Kedar Jadhav, Mumbai all-rounder Krunal Pandya stopped in his stride and turned to walk to his bowling run-up. While it wasn't clear from the move if Pandya was looking to just warn Dhoni or wanted to 'Mankad' him, the CSK captain had already outsmarted him by staying in the crease.

'Mankading' has stolen the spotlight in recent times after Kings XI Punjab skipper R Ashwin 'Mankaded' Rajasthan Royals batsman Jos Buttler without warning him during their opening game of the season.

Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar who was in the commentary box applauded Dhoni and said: "Right instincts for Dhoni. The bat was inside, the ball was in the scene. He does most things right, just out of instincts. With Dhoni, very rarely will you see him do something that is incorrect."



Last week, Krunal warned Mayank Agarwal during MI's game against Kings XI Punjab even though he had the chance to 'Mankad' the batsman. Close on the heels of the Ashwin-Butler episode, Krunal was praised by former England captain Michael Vaughan. "Respect @krunalpandya24... that's exactly how you deal with a Mankad... Give the Batsman a warning then it's

open season after that...#IPL2019," tweeted Vaughan.

The current wording of Law 41.16 states: "If the non-striker is out of his/her ground at any time from the moment the ball comes into play until the instant when the bowler would normally have been expected to release the ball, the non-striker is liable to be run out."

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