

India Bulletin

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Student from India killed in Charlotte



Vivek Pathipati was killed while crossing a busy, dark street on his way home. **Page 4**

Modi defends Kashmir decision



PM Modi trumpets Kashmir and Muslim marriage moves in Independence Day speech. **Page 9**

Forthcoming film Dream Girl



Starring Ayushmann Khurrana, *Dream Girl* is an upcoming comedy drama film. **Page 16**

Shastri to continue as head coach



Ravi Shastri will continue as head coach of the Indian senior men's cricket team, cricket board (BCCI) said. **Page 23**

INDEX	Entertainment.....	Page 16
	Business.....	Page 20
	Sports.....	Page 23
	Health.....	Page 24
	Astrology.....	Page 30

Former Indian finance minister arrested in corruption case

By Suchitra Mohanty and Manoj Kumar

NEW DELHI - A court on Thursday ordered former finance minister P. Chidambaram into police custody for questioning for four days, in a case stemming from government approval of foreign investment in a local media company, a judge said.

The rare action against Chidambaram, a top leader of the main opposition Congress party and a trenchant critic of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government, drew opposition accusations that the authorities are pursuing a political vendetta.

Chidambaram was arrested at his New Delhi home on Wednesday after federal agents jumped over the wall when they found the gates closed. On Thursday he appeared before a federal police court which said it needed to hold him until Aug. 26 for further questioning.

"Considering all the facts of the case, the police custody is justified," judge Ajay Kumar Kohli said.

The allegations in the case



India's former Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram (C) looks on as he leaves a court after a hearing following his arrest, in New Delhi, India on August 22, 2019.

centre around the role of Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram, and several former government officials, in approving

foreign direct investment in local media firm INX Media in 2007.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) says the approval was illegal and that it was a case of "abuse of power".

Chidambaram was taken into custody on suspicion of conspiring with a Mauritius-based firm to illegally obtain money for his son's company while he was India's finance minister in 2006.

His son Karti Chidambaram has already been named as a defendant in the money-laundering case involving 3 billion rupees (\$43 million).

Chidambaram denies the allegation and accuses Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government of pursuing a political vendetta. He suffered a setback as a court Tuesday rejected his bail plea in the case.

Chidambaram who was fi-

nance minister at the time said the approvals were done by a government committee and he didn't have any role to play. His son who runs a consultancy also denied any wrong.

Chidambaram, 73, looking slightly pale, appeared in court flanked by police agents and lawyers. The court said his family could see him for 30 minutes each day during his custody.

The Congress party accused the Modi government of building a false case against the former finance minister.

"The vindictive, selective and malicious manner in which former finance minister and home minister P. Chidambaram has been persecuted and prosecuted is nothing short of a brazen, personal and political vendetta by Modi government," the party said in a statement.



Supporters of India's main opposition Congress party burn an effigy depicting Home Minister Amit Shah during a protest against the arrest of former Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram, in Kolkata, India on August 22, 2019.

Thought of the Week: "Though nobody can go back and make a new beginning... Anyone can start over and make a new ending." - Chico Xavier

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In this present lifestyle, it is almost impossible for any human being to live without making any mistakes knowingly or unknowingly.

On the sacred day of Samvatsari
MICHHAMI DUKKADAM to the Jain Community

Besieged Kashmiri neighbourhood in test of wills with Modi



FILE PHOTO: Kashmiri women shout pro-freedom slogans before offering Eid-al-Adha prayers at a mosque during restrictions following the scrapping of the special constitutional status for Kashmir by the Indian government, in Srinagar on August 12, 2019.

By Zeba Siddiqui
and Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR - For more than a week, the young men of Soura, a densely populated enclave in Kashmir's main city of Srinagar, have been taking turns to maintain an around-the-clock vigil at the entry points to their neighbourhood.

Each of the dozen or so entrances have been blocked with makeshift barricades of bricks, corrugated metal sheets, wooden slabs and felled tree trunks. Groups of youths armed with stones congregate behind the biggest obstacles. The aim: to

keep Indian security forces, and particularly the paramilitary police, out of the area.

"We have no voice. We are exploding from within," said Ejaz, 25, who like many other residents in Soura interviewed by Reuters gave only one name, saying he feared arrest. "If the world won't listen to us too, then what should we do? Pick up guns?"

Soura, home to about 15,000 people, is becoming the epicentre of resistance to Indian government plans to remove the partial autonomy that was enjoyed by Jammu and Kashmir, the country's only

Muslim-majority state.

The enclave, which has effectively become a no-go zone for the Indian security forces, is now a barometer of the ability of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government to impose its will in Kashmir after its dramatic move on Aug. 5 to tighten its control over the region.

The change, the government said, was necessary to integrate Kashmir fully into India, tackle corruption and nepotism, and speed up its development, which Modi says is the key to securing lasting peace and defeating terrorism.

In Soura, it's hard to find anyone who supports Modi's move. Many of the more than two dozen residents interviewed by Reuters over the past week referred to the Indian prime minister as "zaalim", an Urdu word meaning "tyrant".

The constitutional change will allow non-residents to buy property in Jammu and Kashmir and apply for jobs in local government. Some Muslims in Kashmir say they fear that India's dominant Hindu population will overrun the lush state at the foot of the Himalayas,

and Kashmiris' identity, culture and religion will be diluted and repressed.

"We feel like we are guarding the LOC here," said Ejaz. The LOC refers to the Line of Control, the highly militarised de facto border between the Indian and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmir.

For decades, Kashmir has been a source of friction between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan. Both nations claim the region in full and have fought two wars over the territory since 1947.

Residents in Soura say that dozens of people have been injured in clashes with the paramilitary police over the past week. It is unclear how many have been detained.

DAILY BATTLES

In Srinagar, the government has banned gatherings of more than four people, set up scores of roadblocks to prevent movement, and detained more than 500 politicians, community leaders and activists. Internet and cell phone services have been out for more than two weeks throughout the city and the rest of the Kashmir valley,

making it difficult for opponents of the government's decision to organise protests.

Landline phone service has begun to return to the region but not to Soura, which is best-known for a Muslim shrine and a well-regarded teaching hospital.

Residents have found other ways to organise. When they spot security forces trying to enter the area, residents say they rush to a mosque and sound the alarm by playing a devotional song calling for people to "stand against illegal occupation", or by issuing an alert over the loud-speaker.

At intersections in the warren of narrow lanes that make up Soura, a largely lower middle class area with a lake and marshy wetlands to its west, there are piles of bricks and stones for use against Indian troops.

At one barricade, concertina wire had been strung across the road. The young men patrolling the barrier said the wire had been stolen from Indian security forces.

"Every day they are trying to attack us here, but we are fighting back," said Owais, in his early twenties. "We feel like we are trapped."

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Man accused of sexually assaulting student at Skokie religious school



Mohammedimran A. Mulla

SKOKIE, IL - A Cook County judge on Monday ordered that a man charged with sexually assaulting a 10-year-old student at a Skokie religious school remain held without bail.

Mohammedimran A. Mulla,

32, of Skokie, pleaded not guilty to felony predatory sexual assault and aggravated criminal sexual abuse charges during a brief hearing at the Skokie courthouse. Prosecutors said the investigation of Mulla is continuing.

Prosecutors said in court that Mulla is the owner of the Noor Learning Center, at 3929 Oakton St. in Skokie. After he was arrested, authorities said Mulla was a teacher there. His attorney, Sami Azhari, on Wednesday said Mulla is "an owner" of the not-for-profit school.

Mulla has been held without bail since his arrest in July. Judge Aleksandra Gillespie on Monday refused a request by Azhari that his client be released

on bail, put on electronic home monitoring and allowed to live with his parents in Skokie.

Azhari on Monday said Mulla was born and raised in the Chicago area, that he denies the charges against him and that he does not have a criminal background.

"People in the community have the nicest things to say about him," he said.

But in denying to set bail, Gillespie said Mulla poses

"a danger to the community."

Several of Mulla's family members were in court on Monday including Mulla's father, who wept.

Assistant State's Attorney Jaclyn Lantz said on Monday that Mulla is still under investigation.

Mulla faces up to 22 years in prison if convicted on all charges, Lantz said.

Prosecutors also disclosed more details of the alleged assaults that they said took place

between January and June. According to prosecutors, Mulla took the 10-year-old girl into various private rooms at the school on at least 10 occasions and, despite her protests, he forced her to perform sex acts. Mulla told the girl he would beat her if she told anyone about the alleged acts, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors said Mulla is a onetime ride-share driver who earned a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies.

Indian national sentenced for filming sexual abuse of an 11-year-old child

FORT MYERS, FL - U.S. District Judge Sheri Polster Chappell has sentenced Divesh Valanju, 30, of India to 21 years and 10 months in federal prison for producing child pornography. Valanju had pleaded guilty on April 11, 2019.

According to court documents, Valanju met an 11-year old child via two online messaging apps. He lied about his

name on the apps and exchanged sexually-explicit images with the child. On two occasions, Valanju arranged to meet the child at Max Hasse Park in Collier County. After the victim's parents dropped her off at the park, purportedly to meet her friends, Valanju picked the child up, drove her to a motel and filmed sex acts that he performed with the child.

Indian student killed while crossing a busy, dark street on his way home

CHARLOTTE, NC - The UNC Charlotte community is mourning an international graduate student who was killed while crossing a dark stretch of University City Boulevard on his way home this month.

Vivek Pathipati, a 24-year-old from Bangalore, India, was fulfilling his parents' dream of a university education when he was hit just before midnight near Mallard Creek Road, according to an online message to students by UNCC's International Student and Scholar Office.

He was pronounced dead at the scene by Medic, Charlotte-Mecklenburg police said in a



Vivek Pathipati

news release.

Pathipati "was either standing or walking in the right lane ... near the white dashed divider lines" when a van driver hit him

in the 9800 block of the boulevard, according to the CMPD release.

Pathipati "was not in a designated crosswalk or near an intersection," police said. "Speed is not suspected to be a factor in this crash."

The stretch of road is unlit, and the driver stayed at the scene, according to police.

Support has poured in for Pathipati's family: \$35,648 has been raised on GoFundMe to send his remains to India and help pay for his funeral and memorial expenses. First cousin Manoj Maddipatla of Connecticut started the page.

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Chicago man threatened 'slaughter' at abortion clinic, feds say

CHICAGO - A Chicago man has been arrested on federal criminal charges for allegedly threatening to commit violence at a women's reproductive health clinic.

Farhan Sheikh, 19, is charged with transmitting a threat in interstate commerce. Sheikh was arrested last Friday night and made an initial court appearance on Monday morning before U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan E. Cox. Judge Cox ordered Sheikh to remain in custody pending a detention hearing set for the

following day. The case was investigated by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Sheikh posted the threatening communications on or about Aug. 13, 2019, on the social media platform iFunny, according to a criminal complaint and affidavit filed Saturday in U.S. District Court in Chicago. In one of the posts, Sheikh allegedly stated, "I am done with my state and thier (sic) [expletive] abortion laws and allowing innocnt (sic) kids to be slaughtered for the so called 'womans

right' [expletive]." According to the complaint, Sheikh wrote later in the post that he would visit the clinic on Aug. 23, 2019, and "proceed to slaughter and murder any doctor, patient, or visitor I see in the area and I will

not back down. consider this a warning for anyone visiting..."

Sheikh also wrote that his iFunny account is "NOT a satirical account. I post what I mean, and i WILL carry out what I post," according to the complaint.

The charge in the complaint is punishable by a maximum sentence of five years in prison. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

NC doctor found guilty of illegally prescribing opioids

NEW BERN, NC (AP) - A jury has convicted a North Carolina sports medicine doctor of illegally distributing opioids through a cash-only business.

The Justice Department says the jury handed down Sanjay Kumar's verdict on 13 counts, including illegal distribution of oxycodone, money laundering and tax evasion.

Prosecutors said Kumar wrote about 9,500 prescriptions for addictive opiate pain killers and other drugs between 2011 and

2016. The News & Observer reports witnesses said Kumar wrote prescriptions without examining patients in a cash-only business.

North Carolina Medical Board records show Kumar's license expired in 2017 and wasn't renewed.

The Medical Board also scheduled an October hearing to consider accusations that two of Kumar's patients died from overdoses under his care.

Kumar faces sentencing in January.

JEFFERSONVILLE, IN (AP) - A man who pleaded guilty in the slaying of southern Indiana businessman during a robbery has been sentenced to 50 years in prison.

The News and Tribune reports 36-year-old Antonio J. McRae learned his sentence in a Clark County courtroom. A plea agreement called for a term of 45-65 years in prison.

McRae was arrested in Decem-



Antonio J. McRae

Man sentenced to 50 years in Indiana businessman's killing

ber in connection with the fatal October shooting of 49-year-old Praful Patel. McRae had told reporters he had planned to rob Patel but not to kill him.

Patel was killed while working at the Stop N Go convenience store that he and his wife owned in Jeffersonville.

McRae's attorney, Dave Mosley, has said McRae is remorseful and "feels horrible for Mr. Patel's family."

Iowa doctor pleads guilty to not paying employment taxes

DAVENPORT, IA (AP) - A Bettendorf doctor has pleaded guilty to failing to pay nearly \$500,000 in employment taxes for employees at businesses he owns.

Federal prosecutors for Iowa say 66-year-old Nirander Kumar,

of Bettendorf, pleaded guilty. Investigators say Kumar withheld, but didn't pay, employment taxes for part of 2014. In all, Kumar admitted to willfully failing to pay about \$187,000 in employment taxes withheld from Jai Mata Lakshmi employ-

ees, more than \$234,000 of withheld from Bettendorf Pediatric employees' pay, and more than \$39,000 withheld from employees of Funky Desi, in Moline, Illinois.

Kumar faces up to five years in prison when he's sentenced

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NATIONAL NEWS

Lawsuit: Mississippi puts burdens on eyebrow threading



Dipa Bhattarai

JACKSON, MS (AP) - A group that advocates limited government is suing Mississippi over the state's licensing requirement for people who earn money by plucking eyebrows with thread.

Mississippi Justice Institute filed the lawsuit on behalf of Dipa Bhattarai, a University of Mississippi graduate student. She grew up in Nepal, where she learned the technique of using a single strand of cotton thread to remove hair.

Mississippi requires people who receive money for eyebrow threading to earn an esthetician's license. The license requires training and exams, but none of the training deals with eyebrow threading.

The Mississippi Board of Cosmetology shut down Bhattarai's eyebrow threading business, and she wants to reopen it.

Bhattarai told the Clarion Ledger that she started earning money by threading eyebrows while she was a student at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus.

"It's going to sound cliche, but I just started my business with \$240," Bhattarai said.

She had a chair, some thread and not much else. Bhattarai said the owner of a shopping mall in Columbus let her set up a kiosk for free and later gave her a discounted price when she moved into a storefront.

"They didn't believe I was going to make any money," she said.

Bhattarai said she worked up to 20 hours a week at the eyebrow threading kiosk. In less than two years, the kiosk grew to a store in Columbus and a store in Starkville. Families, sororities and members of the Mississippi State University football team came to her business to get their eyebrows threaded, she said.

In December 2017, Bhattarai said she was threading eyebrows at her business in Co-

lumbus when a state Board of Cosmetology inspector handed her a citation.

"The lady walked in and said I couldn't do it. ... I was really surprised," Bhattarai said.

Her Starkville business was soon shut down, Bhattarai said, leaving two full-time employees and one part-time employee without jobs and her on the hook for rent.

Mississippi Justice Institute director Aaron Rice said in a news release that Bhattarai wants to "pursue the American Dream, by putting her own skills and work

ethic to use in a safe and worthwhile trade."

"Unnecessary laws and regulations are preventing her from doing that," Rice said in a news release. "We want to help people like her fight back against this kind of job-killing red tape."

Mississippi Justice Institute is the legal arm of Mississippi Center for Public Policy, which advocates free markets and limited regulation. The lawsuit names the Mississippi Board of Cosmetology and Attorney General Jim Hood as defendants. The attorney general's office represents state

agencies.

The institute's news release said eyebrow threading does not involve skin-to-skin contact between the customer and the person plucking the eyebrows, does not use the same tools on different customers and does not involve sharp instruments, harsh chemicals or heat.

The institute said the Texas Supreme Court struck down a similar law in 2015. It also says Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arizona repealed licensing requirements for eyebrow threading after lawsuits were filed.

Husband, wife, teen killed after their plane crashes behind home

WILLOW GROVE, PA (AP) A small plane crashed in the backyard of a suburban Philadelphia home, killing a husband and wife and their 19-year-old daughter, who were the only people on board.

The plane went down around in Willow Grove, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) north of Philadelphia, shortly after taking off from Northeast Philadelphia Airport en route to Columbus, Ohio. Officials said that wasn't

the final destination but couldn't elaborate.

The plane hit several trees before it stopped, and the debris was spread across four backyards, said Upper Merion

Police Chief Michael Murphy.

The victims were identified as 60-year-old Jasvir Khurana, his 54-year-old wife Divya Khurana and their daughter Kiran, all from Lower Merion Township, in the Philadelphia suburbs.

Jasvir Khurana was a profes-

sor of pathology and laboratory medicine at Temple University's Katz School of Medicine, where he studied bone disease.

His wife, Divya Khurana, was a pediatric neurologist at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children and a professor at Drexel University College of Medicine.

There is no indication the pilot made a distress call and the plane was only in the air about three minutes before the crash.



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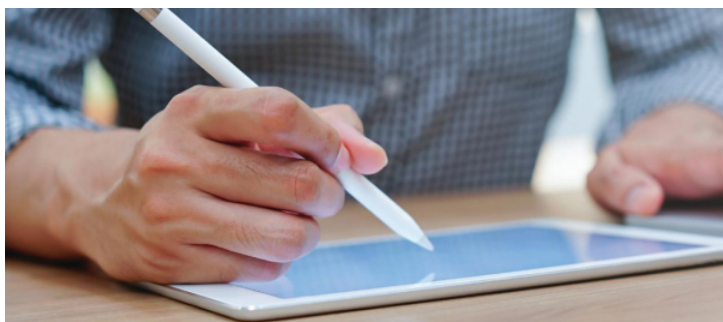
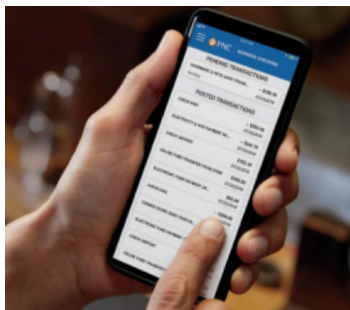
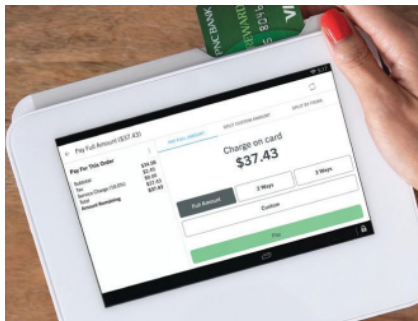
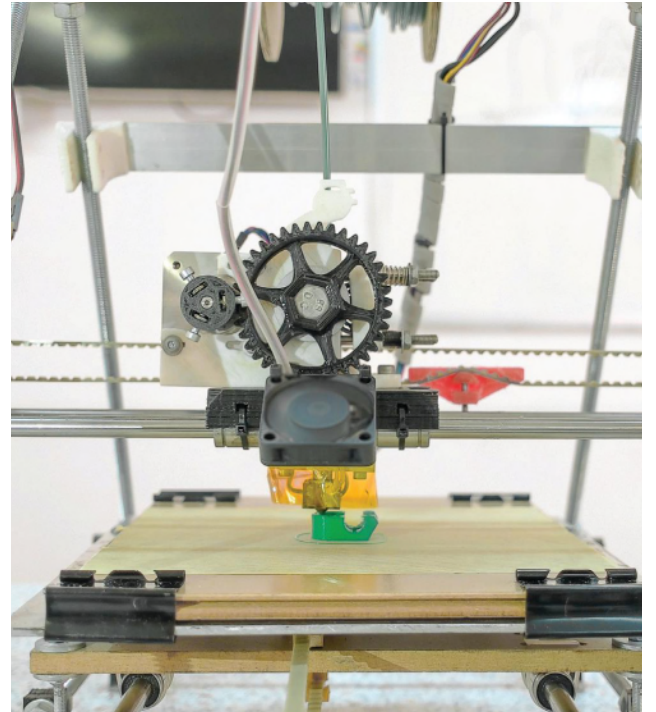
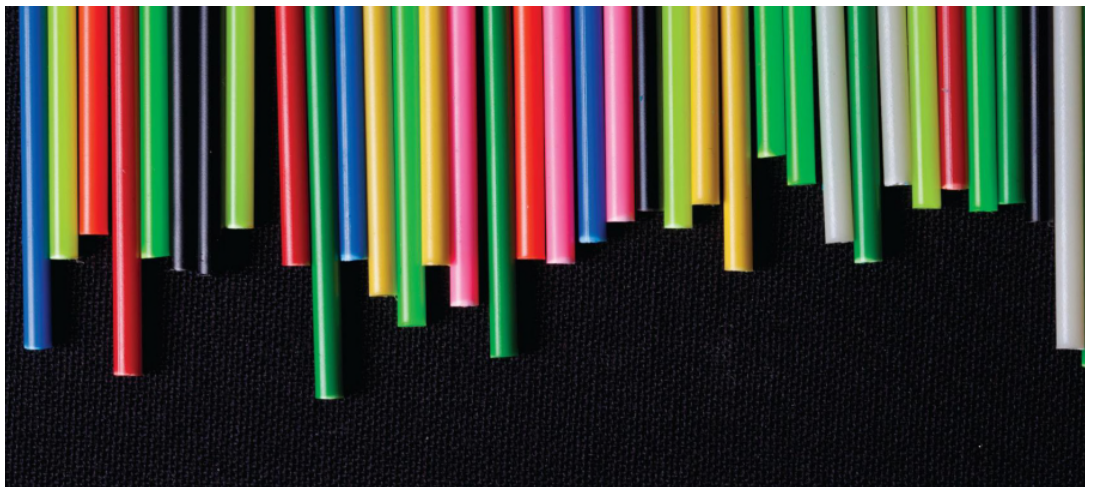
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Modi trumpets Kashmir and Muslim marriage moves in Independence Day speech

By Promit Mukherjee

MUMBAI - Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered an Independence Day speech last Thursday that spotlighted a decision to remove the special rights of the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir among the bold moves of the first 10 weeks of his second term.

Modi talked about his aim to turn India into a \$5-trillion economy within five years, by spurring wealth creation, boosting exports and tourism, and spending 100 trillion rupees (\$1.4 trillion) on infrastructure.

But he did not touch on sagging demand that has hit parts of the economy in recent months, especially the auto sector.

Modi said special constitutional status for the state of Jammu and Kashmir had encouraged corruption and nepotism, while creating injustice for women, children and minority communities in India's only majority-Muslim region.

"Today every Indian can proudly say 'One Nation, One

Constitution'," Modi, speaking from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort in New Delhi, said of the decision.

Critics of the policy say it will bring a backlash from Kashmiri Muslims, who had valued the previous ban on non-residents buying property in the state, which is also claimed by Pakistan, and benefited from the reservation of state government jobs for residents.

In a clampdown in the region since the Aug. 5 decision, authorities have cut internet and phone links, restricted movement with police roadblocks, and detained more than 500 leaders and activists.

KEY NEW MILITARY POST

Wearing a flowing bright saffron-coloured turban, Modi, who won a landslide election victory in May, also highlighted his government's ban on some Muslim communities' practice of allowing a husband to instantly divorce his wife.

Perhaps his most controversial

announcement was the creation of a new post of chief of defence staff to ensure better coordination of India's army, navy and air force, along the lines of Western military forces.

Defence experts have long called for such a post, recommended by a government panel in 1999, after India came close to war with Pakistan over Kashmir.

"To further sharpen coordination between the forces, I want to announce a major decision ... India will have a chief of defence staff," Modi said.

However, he did not address the weakening economy and calls from industry for swift government measures to spur demand.

India's growth rate has fallen to 5.8% for the three months ended March 2019, its lowest in 17 quarters, while research group CMIE estimates the jobless rate rose to 7.51 percent in July from 5.66 percent a year earlier.

Modi said he would invest 3.6 trillion rupees to improve water infrastructure and pipe clean



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves as he leaves after addressing the nation during Independence Day celebrations at the historic Red Fort in Delhi, India on August 15, 2019.

water to every home.

Standing below a fluttering Indian flag, Modi urged a halt to use of single-use plastics, suggesting a phase-out date of Oct. 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, regarded as the father of the nation.

During the last five years, Modi's government has made

it much easier to do business in India, he added, vowing to further streamline government procedure.

More small vendors should accept digital payments, Modi said, returning to a theme first spotlighted in 2016, when his government ordered an overnight ban of high-value banknotes.



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PM Modi raises Kashmir protests with British counterpart



REUTERS/Henry Nicholls

Demonstrators protest against the scrapping of the special constitutional status in Kashmir by the Indian government, outside the Indian High Commission in London, Britain on August 15, 2019.

By Sanjeev Miglani

NEW DELHI - Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spoken to his British counterpart, Boris Johnson, about violent demonstrations over Kashmir outside the Indian embassy in London, the foreign ministry said.

Thousands of people, many waving Pakistani and Kashmiri flags, protested outside the embassy last week, on India's Independence Day, against Modi's withdrawal of Kashmir's special status.

Modi's supporters and members of his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party said demonstrators had attacked

Indian women and children with bottles and eggs and that British authorities had failed to thwart them.

Modi, in a telephone call with Johnson on Tuesday, said vested interests were pursuing their agenda with violent means.

"In this context, he referred to the violence and vandalism perpetrated by a large mob against the High Commission of India in London on the last Independence Day of India," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"Prime Minister Johnson regretted the incident and assured that all necessary steps would be taken to ensure safety and security of the

High Commission, its personnel and visitors," the ministry said.

Police in London said four people were arrested for affray, obstruction of police and possession of an offensive weapon.

Modi's revocation of Kashmir's special status in the constitution means people there will lose exclusive rights to property, government jobs and colleges places and open them up to all Indians.

Modi says the reform will open up Kashmir's economy to the

benefit of all.

The change has sparked fury in Pakistan which claims the territory as its own.

Pakistan has sought the support of the United States, Britain and other powers to pressure India over Kashmir.

But India says it is an internal matter and that it would only hold talks with Pakistan if it stops supporting militants operating from its soil.

Pakistan denies giving material

help to the militants.

Modi told Johnson terrorism was a problem for both India and Europe and that measures had to be taken to fight it.

"He stressed the importance of effective steps to ward off the threats posed by radicalisation, violence and intolerance, particularly in the context of the expanding footprint of terrorist organisations such as ISIS," the ministry said, referring to the Islamic State militant group.

Fuel supply to Air India stopped at six domestic airports says sources

By Aditi Shah and Sudarshan Varadhan

NEW DELHI - Jet fuel supply to state-run carrier Air India has been stopped at six domestic airports because of unpaid dues to fuel provider, Indian Oil Corp, three sources said on Thursday.

"Jet fuel supply to Air India has been stopped for commercial reasons at six airports," a source at Indian Oil Corp told Reuters.

India, for years, has propped up the debt-laden airline by infusing equity to keep it alive - the government injected 39.75 billion ru-

pees (\$553 million) into Air India in the fiscal year that ended on March 31.

"In the absence of equity support Air India cannot handle the huge debt service liabilities," the airline said in a statement, adding its financial performance was improving.

Fuel supply to Air India has been halted since Thursday evening at six cities across the country including Mohali in the north, Vishakapatnam and Kochi in the south, Pune in the west and Ranchi and Patna in the east, one of the sources said.

The government failed last year in its attempt to sell a 76% stake in Air India due to a lack of interest from bidders who said they found some of the stake sale terms too onerous, making it a non-starter.

It is now redrawing the stake sale plans and as part of the effort it has hived off some of the loss-making airline's debt of \$8.5 billion.

India may now consider selling up to a 100% stake in the airline, a government official told Reuters in July, adding that it expects to get 150 billion rupees (\$2.1 billion) from selling the airline.

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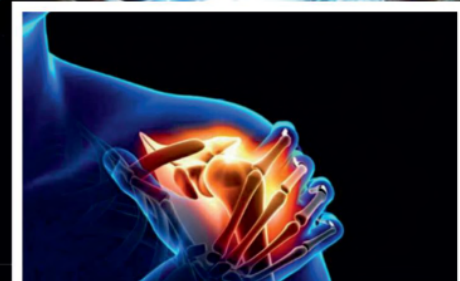
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India, Pakistan spar over using water as a weapon in Kashmir dispute

By Mehr Nadeem, Saad Sayeed and Neha Dasgupta

ISLAMABAD - Accusing India of waging “fifth-generation warfare”, Pakistan said on Monday New Delhi had failed to inform it about the release of water from a dam that could cause flooding across the border.

India, however, rejected the claim saying that under the terms of a water treaty between the two nations it had informed Pakistan about the release of excess water late on Monday when it crossed a certain threshold.

Islamabad said the unexpected

release of water into the River Sutlej that flows from India to Pakistan was part of an attempt by New Delhi to flout the long-standing treaty between the countries.

“They try to isolate diplomatically, they try to strangle economically, they’re trying to strangle our water resources – and water automatically will have an impact on your economy, your agriculture and your irrigation,” Muzammil Hussain, chairman of the Pakistani government’s Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA), told Reuters.

India was using its position

upstream to wage “fifth-generation warfare” on the country, said Hussain.

India’s federal water resources ministry told Reuters late on Monday that under the treaty advance information needs to be given in a situation when “extraordinary discharges of water from reservoirs and flood flows” could harm the other party.

Until today no such extraordinary discharges had been observed on the Indian side in the current flood season. At 1900 IST (1330 GMT), the flow of Sutlej river reached the threshold level of high flood and the same was conveyed to Pakistan, the ministry said in a statement, adding that it is committed to the treaty.

Pakistani emergency authorities were preparing for minor flooding in several areas in Punjab state on Monday as a result of the unexpected rise in water flow, though it was not clear if any had occurred.

“India did not communicate the release of water to Pakistan,” Khurram Shahzed, director general of Punjab Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), told Reuters.

India and Pakistan have long



REUTERS/Sayna Bashir

Lt. Gen. (Retd) Muzammil Hussain, Chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) gestures during an interview with Reuters at his office in Islamabad, Pakistan on August 19, 2019.

Pakistan to take Kashmir dispute with India to World Court

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan said on Tuesday it would take its dispute with India over Kashmir to the International Court of Justice, after New Delhi revoked the special status of its part of the region earlier this month.

Islamabad reacted with fury to that decision, cutting trade and transport links and expelling India’s ambassador.

“We have decided to take the Kashmir case to the International

Court of Justice,” Pakistan’s foreign minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, told ARY News TV on Tuesday. “The decision was taken after considering all legal aspects.”

The case would centre on alleged human rights violations by India in Muslim-majority Kashmir, which both countries claim in full but rule in part, Qureshi said. India denies committing human rights violations.

argued over water resources.

A World Bank-mediated arrangement known as the Indus Water Treaty splits the Indus River and its tributaries - which 80 percent of Pakistan’s irrigated agriculture depends on - between the countries.

India, which lies upstream, threatened in February to stop sharing excess water with Pakistan after a suicide bomb attack by a Pakistan-based militant group in Kashmir that killed 40 Indian paramilitary police.

Hussain said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had “threatened very clearly that he could stop water to Pakistan. He couldn’t care less (for) the treaties”.

In 2016, after suspending a meeting on the Indus Water Treaty, Modi told government officials that “blood and water cannot flow together”.

India says a program of maximizing its water usage by building hydroelectric plants is in line with the treaty.



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Trump urges India and Pakistan to reduce tensions in call with leaders



FILE PHOTO: U.S. President Donald Trump attends a bilateral meeting with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the G20 leaders summit in Osaka, Japan on June 28, 2019.

NEW DELHI - U.S. President Donald Trump spoke with the leaders of India and Pakistan on Monday, discussing prospects for improved trade ties with Washington and stressing the need to reduce tensions over Kashmir between the nuclear-armed neighbours.

"Spoke to my two good friends, Prime Minister Modi of India, and Prime Minister Khan of Pakistan, regarding Trade, Strategic Partnerships and, most importantly, for India and Pakistan to work towards reducing

tensions in Kashmir. A tough situation, but good conversations!" Trump said in a Twitter post.

Relations between Islamabad and New Delhi, already hostile, have been further strained over India's decision this month to revoke the special status of its portion of the Kashmir region that both countries claim. Pakistan reacted with fury, cutting transport and trade links and expelling India's ambassador in retaliation.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi told Trump he was hopeful that India's commerce minister and the U.S. trade representative would meet again to discuss bilateral trade, the Indian government said in a statement.

Washington confirmed that Trump and Modi had spoken about trade.

"The two leaders further discussed how they will continue to strengthen United States-India economic ties through increased trade, and they look forward to meeting again soon," the White House said. Trump also stressed

during the call the need to lower tensions between India and Pakistan, it said.

U.S. and Indian trade negotiators ended talks in July without making major progress on a range of disputes over tariffs and other protectionist measures imposed by both sides that are straining bilateral ties, officials have told Reuters.

The two sides had resumed trade talks after Trump and Modi met on the sidelines of the G20 summit in June and agreed to seek to deepen the two countries'

relationship.

The White House said in a statement that Trump also had spoken with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan to "discuss the need to reduce tensions and moderate rhetoric" with India over the situation in Kashmir.

"The president reaffirmed the need to avoid escalation of the situation and urged restraint on both sides," the White House said in a statement, adding that Trump and Khan also agreed to work together to strengthen trade and economic ties.

Indian man dumps brand new BMW into river because he wanted a Jaguar for his birthday

YAMUNA NAGAR - India - An angry 22-year-old man dumped a brand new BMW into a river after his father refused to buy him a Jaguar.

Akash, a resident of Yamuna Nagar in Haryana in northern India, drove his BMW 3 Series car into the swollen Soma river on August 9. He got out just as the powerful currents started dragging the car along with them till it hit an island in the middle of the river.

Akash even took a video of

the stricken car and sent it to his father. Realizing his folly after a while, he assembled a local team of divers and tried to retrieve the vehicle. It took over five hours to get the vehicle back against the strong current.

Akash's father, a rich local farmer, had bought the Rs 45 lakh BMW just two months ago for his son. But Akash wanted a Jaguar and was unhappy with his new vehicle, according to local media.

Senior police officer Desraj

Singh said Akash wanted a bigger car and pestered his father for a Jaguar. "He is stubborn by nature and will face legal action," said Singh. Officials sent an ambulance and a team of rescuers fearing people may have been trapped in the mishap. "It is not clear what provoked him to drown his new car," said another officer.

"He said the vehicle was too small but we thought he will be okay. We never imagined he would do anything like this."

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BOLLYWOOD Insider™

Bollywood Beat

PC to star in Netflix superhero movie, *We Can Be Heroes*



Priyanka Chopra Jonas has joined the Netflix's superhero fantasy feature *We Can Be Heroes*, written, directed and produced by Robert Rodriguez. Robert last directed *Alita: Battle Angel*. The story revolves around alien invaders who kidnap Earth's superheroes, their children must team up and learn to work together if they want to save their parents and the world.

Besides Priyanka Chopra, the cast of the superhero movie includes Christian Slater, YaYa Gosselin, Akira Akbar, Andrew Diaz, Andy Walken, Boyd Holbrook, Hala Finley, Isaiah Russell-Bailey, Lotus Blossom, Lyon Daniels, Nathan Blair, Sung Kang, Vivien Lyra Blair, Adriana Barraza, Christopher McDonald and Pedro Pascal.

Veteran music composer Khayyam passes away

One of the legendary music directors of all time, Mohammed Zahur Khayyam Hashmi, popularly known as Khayyam, passed away at a Mumbai hospital at the age of 92. The legendary music composer died after suffering from a lung ailment at Sujay Hospital. He was admitted to the hospital owing to breathing issues and other age-related problems.

Bollywood celebrities, as well as politicians such as Prime Minister Narendra Modi, mourned the demise of the legendary music director who left behind a grand legacy.

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September 13, 2019

Dream Girl is an upcoming Indian Hindi-language romantic comedy drama film starring Ayushmann Khurrana and Nushrat Bharucha. The film is directed by Raaj Shaandilyaa and is co-produced by Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor under their banner Balaji Motion Pictures. The principal photography began in December 2018 and is slated to release theatrically on September 13, 2019.

At least once in our lifetime, we have come across a social media profile with the name of Angel Priya. Angel Priya is the most common pseudo name used by men to lure other men to trick them into giving money or just to play a prank on them. Ayushmann

Khurrana's upcoming film *Dream Girl* is based on such fake profiles. Raaj Shaandilyaa, director of the film, revealed that *Dream Girl* is inspired by fake profiles like Angel Priya.

In an interview, the director opened up about the idea behind his film. He said, "When co-writer Nirmaan D Singh and I started working on the film, our motive was only to entertain the audience. We thought of many ideas and took many real-life incidents into consideration. As writer of the sketch comedy show, *Comedy Circus*, we often scripted gender-bender characters. So, it was on my mind."

Talking about how Angel Priya inspired *Dream Girl*, Raaj said, "We all have received a friend request from someone called Angel Priya once in our lifetime. We all know how some men used Angel Priya as a name to register fake profiles and flirt with guys online to extract money from them. We took all these incidents into our mind while writing this film. So it's a fun film with many real-life elements."

After winning National Award for his performance in *Andhadhun*, *Dream Girl* is Ayushmann Khurrana's latest film. In the film, Ayushmann will be seen as a small-town guy who can modulate his voice to sound like a woman.

The trailer of the film was recently launched and is being appreciated from all quarters. At the trailer launch event, the *Badhaai Ho* actor was seen wearing a sari. Going by the trailer, the film is



going to be a hilarious ride. The hit pair of Ayushmann Khurrana and Annu Kapoor, who were last seen together in *Vicky Donor*, guarantees a number of laughter moments.

In an earlier interview Ayushmann revealed how he prepared for his role of a man who can speak in woman's voice. He said, "I had

to deliver 25 percent of my dialogues in a woman's voice. Since I come from a radio background, it's easier for me to modulate my voice. I have spent years behind the mic, mimicking different people. Raaj had given me the references of a few men, who prank people by talking like a woman. I studied those videos extensively."

UNKNOWN FACTS ABOUT BOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES



Sonakshi Sinha started her career as a costume designer for the movie, *Mera Dil Leke Dekho* in the year 2005.



Before entering the showbiz world, Vidya Balan attended St. Xavier's College for a bachelor's degree in sociology and later completed a master's degree from the University of Mumbai.

Top 3 Bollywood Films

- 1) **Mission Mangal** - Directed by Jagan Shakti
Starring: Akshay Kumar, Vidya Balan, Sonakshi Sinha, Taapsee Pannu, Nithya Menen and Sharman Joshi
- 2) **Batla House** - Directed by Nikhil Advani
Starring: John Abraham and Mrunal Thakur
- 3) **Super 30** - Directed by Vikas Bahl
Starring: Hrithik Roshan, Mrunal Thakur, Virendra Saxena, Pankaj Tripathi and Aditya Shrivastava

Top 10 Bollywood Film Songs

- 10) "O Saki Saki" - *Batla House*
- 9) "Enni Soni" - *Saaho*
- 8) "Dil Mein Mars Hai" - *Mission Mangal*
- 7) "Fikar Not" - *Chhichhore*
- 6) "Sachiya Mohabbatan" - *Arjun Patiala*
- 5) "Psycho Saiyyan" - *Saaho*
- 4) "Bad Boy" - *Saaho*
- 3) "Radhe Radhe" - *Dream Girl*
- 2) "Cutie Pie" - *Happy Hardy and Heer*
- 1) "Dil Ka Telephone" - *Dream Girl*

Bollywood Trivia

Which was Akshay Kumar's first movie?

- 1) Saugandh
- 2) Aaj
- 3) Khiladi
- 4) Khiladi 786

Answer: 2

When is Sonakshi Sinha's birthday?

- 1) December 12
- 2) June 2
- 3) March 12
- 4) October 14

Answer: 2

BOLLYWOOD Insider™

MOVIE REVIEW

Mission Mangal

Banner:
Cape of Good Films
Hope Productions
Fox Star Studios

Producer:
Rana Rakesh Prithm
Prakash Bali
Vinod Kumar Arora
R. Balki
Aruna Bhatia
Anil Naidu

Director:
Jagan Shakti

Starring:
Akshay Kumar
Vidya Balan
Sonakshi Sinha
Taapsee Pannu
Nithya Menen
Sharman Joshi
Kirti Kulhari

Music By:
Amit Trivedi

Released Date:
August 15, 2019

Just like how Eid is synonymous with a Salman Khan release, the Independence Day holiday isn't complete without an Akshay Kumar starrer. From 2013 to 2018, he has had a release during this beneficial weekend, barring 2014. 2019 is no exception and this time, he is out with *Mission Mangal*, based on an important chapter of India's history. The mood of the film is also apt, considering that just last month, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched Chandrayaan-2 towards the moon. *Mission Mangal* has all the trappings of a blockbuster. So does it turn out to be as exciting and entertaining as expected? Or does the content fail to entice? Let's analyse.

Mission Mangal is the incredible true story behind India's mission to Mars. The film begins in 2010. At the Indian Space

Research Organisation (ISRO), a space mission under Rakesh Dhawan (Akshay Kumar) fails after Tara Shinde (Vidya Balan) in his team makes an error in judgement. As a punishment posting, he's asked to handle India's Mars program, which is not expected to take off anytime soon. A few days later, Tara while cooking puris in her home has a Eureka moment. She realises that through innovative methods, they can try to get our satellite reach Mars in just two years. She tells Rakesh about the plan and he realises it's a golden opportunity. Rakesh approaches his senior (Vikram Gokhale) for approval who finds the idea unfeasible. Also Rupert Desai (Dalip Tahil) who has come from NASA to join ISRO feels that Rakesh's idea is ridiculous. Rakesh however manages to persuade and begins work. He asks for the best of the men from ISRO for this project. However he's given inexperienced colleagues like Kritika Aggarwal (Taapsee Pannu), Eka Gandhi (Sonakshi Sinha), Varsha Gowda (Nithya Menen), Neha Siddiqui (Kirti Kulhari) and Parmeshwar Naidu (Sharman Joshi) and a very senior employee Ananth Iyer (H G Dattatreya). What happens next forms the rest of the film.

Jagan Shakti's story is superb and also very challenging. It's not easy to pen down a mainstream film with such a plot. Also many are not aware of what transpired behind the making of India's Mars mission. Hence it'll be exciting for them to witness the whole journey. Also there are so many twists and turns in the plot that one might not believe that some of the plot points are actually true incidents. R Balki, Jagan Shakti, Nidhi Singh Dharma and Saketh Kondipathi's screenplay not only simplifies the proceedings but also make it massy. The screenplay blends science and entertainment seamlessly. The film's goings on are



extremely easy to comprehend. R Balki, Jagan Shakti, Nidhi Singh Dharma and Saketh Kondipathi's dialogues are effective and funny.

Mission Mangal is embellished with some fine performances. Akshay Kumar is in top form. He gets to play such a splendid role and gets into the skin of his character. And he's very much there throughout the film! The way his character rarely gets serious and makes even serious discussions light and funny is seen to be believed. One of the greatest sequences of the film is when he makes an imaginary call to none other than APJ Abdul Kalam. Vidya Balan dominates most of the first half and suits her character to the T. It's also admirable that she has no qualms playing mother to teenagers. Sonakshi Sinha is lovely and gets to shine. It's great to see how she makes an impact in a supporting role. Taapsee Pannu is also quite efficient and gives her best in the climax. Nithya Menen has a smaller role but it serves as a great debut. Kirti Kulhari manages to score and many would

be able to relate to her character's struggles. Sharman Joshi is funny and would surely make viewers smile. H G Dattatreya is adorable and the scene where he teaches Kirti's ex hubby a lesson is too good! Dalip Tahil is appropriate as the pessimist. Sanjay Kapoor (Sunil Shinde) is the surprise of the film. He delivers a fine performance and post interval he goes in another mode that would be greeted with whistles in cinemas! Purab Kohli (Vivek) and Mohd. Zeeshan Ayyub (Rishi) lend able support. Rohan Joshi (Dilip Shinde) is hilarious and even heartening as Vidya Balan's son. Kashmiri Pardeshi (Anya Shinde) gets no scope. Vikram Gokhale is decent. Others are also good in their respective parts.

On the whole, *Mission Mangal* is engaging and entertaining while being patriotic in its feel. At the box office, it will be accepted whole heartedly by the audiences and has the potential to emerge as Akshay Kumar's highest grosser ever!

Rating: ★★★★★

Bollywood Beat

Karan responds to allegations of drugs at his house party



Filmmaker Karan Johar has reacted to the accusations made by the Shiromani Akali Dal leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa. The leader had claimed that Bollywood celebrities "Were proudly flaunting their drugged state" after the video shared by Karan Johar from his house party got viral.

In the video were seen some of the prominent faces of Bollywood including Ranbir Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, and Varun Dhawan. Responding to the allegations, Karan Johar said that they are "baseless" and "ridiculous".

Few people had said that they had seen traces of drug powder near the couch in the video. Talking about it, the director said that the shadow of light is perceived to be kind of powder. He also said that in his house there were people from the industry who were having an easy night out after a hard week at work. Karan also asked why he would be putting a video if at all anything was happening.

Calling the allegations baseless, the *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil* director said that it is ridiculous that somebody can just start spotting things like this.

Meanwhile, after the allegations made by Sirsa, Milind Deora tweeted, "Nobody was in a 'drugged state' so stop spreading lies & defaming people you don't know!" He also said that his wife was at the party and can also be seen in the video.

Celebrity Birthdays

August 25th Vijeta Pandit (1967)	August 29th Richa Sharma (1974)	September 3rd Vivek Oberoi (1976)
August 26th Madhur Bhandarkar (1968)	August 30th Richa Pallod (1980)	September 4th Rishi Kapoor (1952)
August 27th Neha Dhupia (1980) Jim Sarbh (1987)	August 31st Rajkumar Rao (1984)	September 6th Rakesh Roshan (1949)
August 28th Deepak Tijori (1961)	September 1st Ram Kapoor (1973) Deepak Dobriyal (1975)	

Upcoming Films

Street Dancer Varun Dhawan, Shraddha Kapoor and Prabhu Deva	The Zoya Factor Dulquer Salmaan, Sonam Kapoor and Sanjay Kapoor	Laal Kaptaan Saif Ali Khan and Zoya Hussain
Sooryavanshi Akshay Kumar and Katrina Kaif	Housefull 4 Akshay Kumar, Kriti Sanon and Kriti Kharbanda	Commando 3 Vidyut Jammwal and Adah Sharma
Dream Girl Ayushmann Khurrana, Nushrat Bharucha and Manjot Singh	Dabangg 3 Arbaaz Khan, Salman Khan, and Sonakshi Sinha	Chhichhore Shraddha Kapoor, Sushant Singh Rajput and Varun Sharma



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India's 73rd Independence Day Celebration in Naperville showcases rich culture and spirit of Indian Americans in the Midwest

NAPERVILLE, IL - The fifth India Day Parade & Celebration on the occasion of India's 73rd Independence Day organized by Indian Community Outreach (ICO) in Naperville, Illinois on Aug 11, turned out to be an extraordinary event. It was attended by an astounding over thirty-five thousand Indian Americans from all over the U.S. along with local Americans to showcase their love for India along with several thousand local residents supporting this event.

A feature-rich event, the event proved to be a magnificent platform for the India-Americans to display their talents in the domains of art, dance, music, and culture. This year it was very special with a colorful parade with over 70 entries including 35 intricately and beautifully decorated floats, sponsored by various community organizations, businesses, armed forces, and restaurants captured the imagination of one and all.

Over 100 booths presenting their products, health fair, an international food court with scrumptious menu from various vendors coming from local and out of state, a children's park, and

ethnic Indian bazaar with lots fashion, clothing, jewelry and furniture attracted the attention of the spectators.

Krishna Bansal, Chairman/President of the ICO, said that the celebrations and the parade were aimed at engaging Indian Americans into the mainstream fabric of America. He stated, with a sense of pride that this event has not only created huge awareness and respect for India while it has re-instigated the love and pride for India amongst first and x-generation of adults and youths here from India. Bansal specially recognized the dignitaries, partners, sponsors, media, and volunteers and everyone who contributed to the stupendous success of the event.

The talent show included unique and vibrant performances by the best and most brilliant dance groups of Chicagoland. The spectacular display of flair by Indian youth in music and dance left everyone awe-struck. Chicago Parai Team won second place followed by UC Bhangra & SSR Dance School. The winner of the talent show, Soorya Dance School performed at the

main stage in the evening.

Evening kicked off with remarks from elected officials and community leaders while recognizing sponsors, who helped make this event free for all. The event concluded with a magnificent concert and fireworks. The electrifying concert featuring the Bollywood singing sensations Salim-Suleiman, Sukhbir Singh, Rex Dsouza and Shilpi Paul rocked the stage. The spectators were enthralled by the dazzling display of musical talent, non-stop singing for over 2.5 hours. It was a musical treat to many music enthusiasts!

Naperville Mayor Steve Chirico said that he was pleasantly overwhelmed to see the response of Indian Americans to the celebrations and parade. He added that Indians are respected across the globe for their right attitude and positive work ethics.

Consul General of India, Hon. Shri Sudhakar Dalela, was the Guest of Honor at the event. He congratulated ICO and wished everyone Happy Independence Day of India.

Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthy, Rep. Grant Wehrli



with many other elected officials, and prominent leaders of Chicago and Naperville also graced the occasion.


Viral Shah, ICO Treasurer, stated that the event was free for the public. This was made possible with the help of our sponsors, including grand sponsor Patel Brothers, event sponsor Mall of India and many corporate and local organizations.

Vasavi Chakka, ICO Board Member, said that the parade has surpassed expectations in both magnitude and participation. "We are constantly working to raise the bar to prove to the world that the Indian-Americans are the


best, both as human beings and professionals," she added.

Dinkar Karumuri, ICO Board Member, thanked technology companies of Chicagoland for stepping up in supporting the event while providing local jobs to area residents.


Krishna Bansal thanked sponsors, media, partners, dignitaries, volunteers and everyone who attended the event. He announced to be back next year with a bang in 2020 and urged everyone to join the outreach efforts and encouraged to visit www.indiancommunityoutreach.org by call 630-300-0345 for more details.



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BIZ BRIEFS

FB hikes pay for Indian content reviewers

Facebook contractor Genpact has raised minimum wages for the content moderation teams it runs for the Silicon Valley firm in India, the latest sign of improvement for workers after reports of stressful conditions at the social network's sites globally.

Facebook Inc has unveiled several initiatives in the past six months to support wellbeing in teams doing the sometimes grueling and repetitive work of wading through billions of potentially harmful or violent posts on its platforms.

Reuters reported in February on a group of workers at Genpact's offices in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad, who described the work they did as underpaid, stressful and sometimes traumatic.

Facebook at that time rejected the Hyderabad employees' assertions about low pay, saying it paid competitive wages for the Indian market.

Apple says it supports 2.4 million U.S. jobs

Apple Inc said last Wednesday it was either directly or indirectly responsible for 2.4 million U.S. jobs, up 20% from the 2 million the technology company estimated in 2017.

The iPhone maker said its direct workforce grew from 80,000 to 90,000 in the 2-1/2 years since its last U.S. job estimate. But most of the estimated growth came from companies such as Broadcom Inc which make parts in the United States for Apple products and from third-party software developers making apps for Apple devices.

In letter, U.S. assures support to American tech firms in India

By Aditya Kalra

NEW DELHI - The United States ambassador to India has written to top American technology firms assuring them of support for a level playing field in India, a letter seen by Reuters showed, amid Washington's concerns over New Delhi's protectionist policies.

Kenneth Juster last month wrote to the heads of leading U.S. technology companies in India, urging

them to "participate personally" in discussions with government officials in New Delhi on data localization and e-commerce, issues that have soured trade ties between the two nations.

Industry executives with direct knowledge said it wasn't common to receive such letters from the U.S. administration, but described the communication as the latest sign of Washington's determination to deter India from measures

Auto companies in India cut more jobs, halt production to tackle slowdown

By Sudarshan Varadhan and Aditi Shah

NEW DELHI - With India's auto sales declining for the ninth straight month in July, more automotive manufacturers are laying off workers and temporarily halting production to keep costs in check, according to sources and documents seen by Reuters.

Japanese carmaker Toyota Motor and South Korea's Hyundai Motor are the latest in a string of companies to halt production at plants to combat slumping sales, according to company memos to employees, reviewed by Reuters.

Passenger vehicle sales in July fell at the fastest pace in nearly two decades. The sales declines have triggered major job cuts in India's auto sector, with many companies forced to shut down factories for days and axe shifts.

Sources have told Reuters that even more companies have now begun to lay off temporary workers as the slowdown worsens.

Denso Corp's India unit, which makes powertrain and air-conditioning systems for cars, has laid off about 350 temporary workers at its Manesar plant in north India, a source familiar

with the matter told Reuters.

Bellsonica, which is part-owned by India's biggest carmaker Maruti Suzuki and makes fuel tanks and brake pads, has also let more than 350 workers go in Manesar, two sources said.

Reuters earlier this month reported automakers, component manufacturers and dealers had already cut 350,000 jobs.

In a meeting with India's finance ministry on Aug. 7, industry executives asked for tax cuts, and easier access to finance for dealers and buyers, in an effort to revive sales.

Toyota, in a notice dated Aug. 13, told its workers the company would halt production at its plants in Bengaluru in southern India on Aug. 16 and 17 "due to low market demand of vehicles" and high stock of about 7,000 vehicles.

Hyundai, in a memo on Aug. 9, also said it would halt production for several days in August across various departments including the body shop and paint shop as well as its engine and transmission plants.

A Hyundai Motor India spokesman said the company expected sales to pick up in the festive season starting next month.



A man holds the flags of India and the U.S. while people take part in the 35th India Day Parade in New York on August 16, 2015.

that hurt its firms.

"Our Embassy will continue working with you to ensure that U.S. firms compete on a level playing field. My team at the Embassy stands by ready to help," Juster said in his letter, a copy of which was seen by Reuters.

"We look forward to your continued success in India."

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi did not comment on the letter, but said U.S. companies were the biggest source of foreign direct investment in India. "We hope that the Indian Government will pursue policies that create a welcoming and predictable environment for U.S. investors," a spokesperson said in a statement.

The United States and big technology companies say India has taken a series of protectionist measures by imposing stricter foreign investment rules for the online retail sector and outlining plans to force companies to store more of their data locally.

The decisions have already dealt a blow to companies such as Amazon.com Inc, Walmart Inc, Mastercard and Visa, and the proposed data rules will also impact firms such as Facebook, Twitter and Alphabet Inc's Google.

Such proposals, critics say, create entry barriers for foreign

firms and favour domestic Indian corporations, leading to an unfair competitive landscape between the two. Indian officials have said the rules were aimed at protecting interests of its small traders and citizens' privacy.

Despite talks to resolve some of the trade disputes, there has been no major breakthrough: India said last month the countries had agreed to continue discussions "addressing mutual trade concerns".

In his letter, Juster also said he had met Indian Trade Minister Piyush Goyal who told him the government was adopting a "consultative approach" to the proposed regulations.

There is some level of concern among U.S. officials that while Goyal has met industry officials in recent weeks, some top American company executives have not been forthright about expressing their policy concerns to the Indian government, two other sources aware of the communication said.

"The Government of India is seeking stakeholder input, and, given the importance of these issues, we strongly encourage you to participate personally in future meetings with the Minister and other senior officials," Juster said in his letter.

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India needs to reduce ecommerce restrictions: Amazon executive

By Euan Rocha

HYDERABAD - India needs to encourage ecommerce and reduce red tape to help small businesses sell online and export goods to help revive sagging domestic economic growth, a senior Amazon.com executive said on Wednesday.

“There is so much opportunity to just let ecommerce thrive versus trying to define every single guard rail under which it should operate,” Amazon’s India head Amit Agarwal told Reuters, ahead of the launch of Amazon’s biggest campus in the world in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad, on Wednesday.

India revised its ecommerce

rules in early 2019, creating hurdles for Amazon and rival Walmart Inc’s (WMT.N) ecommerce subsidiary, Flipkart.

“I feel ecommerce can actually accelerate India’s economy in a big way, if it’s just allowed to thrive,” said Agarwal, whose comments come at a time when India’s economic growth has slumped to near five-year lows.

Agarwal said Amazon works with some 500,000 sellers, and has created over 200,000 jobs in India since launching its ecommerce operations in 2013.

He said Amazon’s push to get small and medium businesses in India to export has resulted in more than \$1 billion in exports and it expects this to exceed \$5

billion in the next three years, but red tape is holding some businesses back.

“Even a seller, who wants to sell out of their state, has to get a tax registration in the new state. How many small business owners would go through the onerous job of doing that?” he said.

“The number of basic paper cut opportunities out there are so many,” he said. “I feel we’re getting lost in the high level debate around ecommerce and data localization.”

India’s revised ecommerce regulations, along with its push to compel multinationals to store data locally, have irked the U.S. government and heightened trade tensions between the two countries. India has argued the rules are aimed at protecting interests of its small traders and also its citizens’ privacy.

INDIA EXPANSION

Amazon’s launch of a new campus in India comes just months after the Seattle-based company scrapped its plans to build a major outpost in New York, blaming opposition from local leaders. It has since picked Arlington, Virginia as the site of its upcoming second headquarters.



REUTERS/Pascal Rossignol/File Photo

FILE PHOTO: The Amazon logo seen at the company logistics centre in Boves, France on August 8, 2018.

India is considered the last major growth market for the ecommerce giant and founder Jeff Bezos has committed investments of more than \$5 billion toward Amazon’s expansion in India.

Amazon said the new campus in India, spread over 9.5 acres, cost hundreds of millions of dollars and could house more than 15,000 employees. Amazon has 62,000 employees in India, roughly a third of whom are based in Hyderabad.

Despite weaker economic conditions Amazon has no plans to slow down its expansion in India, said Agarwal, adding that in tougher times “customers want even more value, convenience and selection.”

While declining to give any specific numbers, Agarwal said membership in Amazon’s Prime loyalty program has doubled in the last 18 months in India and the market remains Amazon’s fastest growing for Prime worldwide.

Indian spacecraft launched last month is now orbiting moon

NEW DELHI (AP) - An unmanned spacecraft India launched last month began orbiting the moon Tuesday as it approaches the lunar south pole to study previously discovered water deposits.

The Indian Space Research Organization said it successfully maneuvered Chandrayaan-2 into lunar orbit.

Chandrayaan will continue cir-

cling the moon in a tighter orbit until reaching a distance of about 100 kilometers from the moon’s surface. The lander will then separate from the orbiter and use rocket fuel to brake as it attempts India’s first moon landing on a relatively flat surface between two craters in the south polar region on Sept. 7 - an area where no moon landing has been attempted before.



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Parle may cut up to 10,000 jobs as slowdown bites



A girl walks past the logo of Parle Products painted on a gate of company's office in Mumbai, India on August 21, 2019.

By Sachin Ravikummar

BENGALURU - Parle Products Pvt Ltd, a leading Indian biscuit maker, might lay off up to 10,000 workers as slowing economic growth and falling demand in the rural heartland could cause production cuts, a company executive said on Wednesday.

A downturn in Asia's third-largest economy is denting sales of everything from cars to clothing, forcing companies to curtail production and raising hopes that the India government will unveil

an economic stimulus to revive growth.

A sharp drop in Parle's biscuit sales means the company may have to slash production, which may result in layoffs of 8,000-10,000 people, Mayank Shah, category head at Parle, said in a telephone interview from Mumbai.

"The situation is so bad, that if the government doesn't intervene immediately ... we may be forced to eliminate these positions," he said.

Parle, founded in 1929, employs about 100,000 people,

including direct and contract workers across 10 company-owned facilities and 125 contract manufacturing plants.

Shah said demand for popular Parle biscuit brands such as Parle-G had been worsening since India rolled out a nationwide goods and services tax (GST) in 2017, which imposed a higher levy on biscuits costing as low as 5 rupees, or 7 cents a pack.

The higher taxes have forced Parle to offer fewer biscuits in each pack, hitting demand from lower-income consumers in rural India, which contributes more than half of Parle's revenue and where two-thirds of Indians live.

"Consumers here are extremely price-sensitive. They're extremely conscious of how many biscuits they are getting for a particular price," Shah said.

Parle, which has an annual revenue of above \$1.4 billion, held talks over the past year with the government's GST council as well as former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, asking them to review tax rates, Shah added.

Once known as Parle Gluco, the Mumbai-headquartered company's flagship biscuit brand was renamed as Parle-G, and became a household name in India

through the 1980s and 1990s. In 2003, Parle-G was considered the world's largest selling biscuit brand.

The slowdown in India's economic growth, which has already led to thousands of job losses in its crucial automotive industry, was accelerating the drop in demand, Shah said.

Market research firm Nielsen said last month India's consumer goods industry was losing steam

as spending in the rural heartland cools and small manufacturers lose competitive advantages in a slowing economy.

Parle is not the only food product company to have flagged slowing demand.

Varun Berry, managing director of Britannia Industries Ltd, Parle's main competitor, said earlier this month that consumers were "thinking twice" about buying products worth just 5 rupees.

Visa critical of India's move toward no-fee debit card transactions

MUMBAI - Global card payments group Visa is critical of the Indian government's decision to boost adoption of electronic payments by requiring banks and card payment networks to offer no-fee debit card transactions, a senior Visa executive said.

Last month, India's Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that businesses with annual turnover of 500 million rupees will not have to pay a merchant discount rate on debit card and other digital modes of transactions, excluding credit cards.

The discount rate is paid by the merchant to banks, card payment networks, and other financial intermediaries for handling a digital transaction. For debit cards, the fees are on average between 0.40% and 0.80% of the transaction amount, according to industry officials.

"I find the logic a bit fallacious because the cost is not free ... I am a firm believer in low economics, but no economics student can believe in no economics," T.R. Ramachandran, Visa's India and South Asia head, said on Monday, speaking on a panel at an industry conference.

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Shastri wins 'close race' to continue as head coach of men's cricket team

MUMBAI - Ravi Shastri will continue as head coach of the Indian senior men's cricket team up to 2021 after pipping New Zealand's Mike Hesson and Australia's Tom Moody, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said last Friday.

The BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising cricket great Kapil Dev, former India coach Anshuman Gaekwad and ex-women's captain Shanta Rangaswamy, conducted interviews for the post last Friday and unanimously agreed to retain faith in Shastri until the T20 World Cup in India starting Oct. 2021.

As well as incumbent Shastri, former India players Lalchand Rajput and Robin Singh were also short-listed candidates.

"Shastri's presentation was about what he did in the last two years and the way forward for the

Indian team," Dev told reporters at a hotel overlooking the Arabian Sea.

"The system was simple. After a meeting of almost six hours, all three of us had our markings. We unanimously decided after accounting for all the numbers... number one is Ravi Shastri.

"We didn't discuss who is giving whom how many marks. When we calculated it was a close race, the difference was small and we were amazed."

Shastri's next assignment will be the home series against South Africa, who will play three T20 internationals and three tests starting next month.

The contracts of Shastri and his team were set to expire after the 50-overs World Cup but they were handed an extension until the ongoing tour of the West Indies, where Virat Kohli's men still have

to play two tests.

Before departing for the tour of West Indies, Kohli openly backed Shastri to continue but the CAC said they had arrived at their decision without consulting the skipper.

"Being the current coach, knowing the boys well, the problems in the current team, he (Shastri) is well versed with the entire system," Gaekwad said.

"For somebody who knows the system, who knows the players, can communicate well, he had the advantage."

Former test all-rounder Shastri was appointed head coach in 2017, succeeding former captain Anil Kumble who stepped down after falling out with Kohli despite a successful run in charge.

Under Shastri, who also had a previous stint as India's team director, India won a maiden test



India coach Ravi Shastri during nets action.

REUTERS/Jason Calmiff

series in Australia earlier this year and are ranked number one in the world in the format.

They reached the semi-finals of the World Cup where they were beaten by runners-up New Zealand last month.

Moody previously coached Sri Lanka and also had stints in franchise cricket with Indian Premier League sides Kings XI Punjab and Sunrisers Hyderabad, while Hesson served as head coach for the Black Caps for six years.

Former West Indies opener Simmons, who was the head coach of Afghanistan till the World Cup and also coached the Caribbean side and Ireland, dropped out of last Friday's interview process.

The BCCI has also invited applications for the positions of batting coach, bowling coach, fielding coach, physiotherapist, strength and conditioning coach as well as an administrative manager - with the appointments to be made soon.

Sreesanth's ban reduced to 7 years, to end in Sept. 2020

MUMBAI - Indian fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth's ban for alleged spot-fixing has been reduced to seven years, with the sanction period coming to an end on Sep. 13, 2020, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has said.

The decision comes after the Supreme Court of India set aside the life ban imposed on Sreesanth by the BCCI and asked the board to reconsider the length of any fresh ban.

Spot-fixing involves the manipulation of individual incidents

within a match which may not affect the outcome of the contest.

Sreesanth along with his Rajasthan Royals team mates Ajit Chandra and Ankeet Chavan were arrested by Delhi police on suspicion of spot-fixing during the sixth edition of the IPL in May 2013.

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Air pollution, especially ozone, tied to worsening lung damage



The more exposure people have to air pollution, especially ozone, the more lung damage they develop over time, a U.S. study suggests.

By Lisa Rapaport

The more exposure people have to air pollution, especially ozone, the more lung damage they develop over time, a U.S. study suggests.

Researchers already knew that heavy air pollution makes lung disease worse in people who already have lung disease. The new study shows that even among people without lung disease, long-term exposure to air pollution even in relatively

'clean' areas can lead to signs of chronic lung disease, said Dr. Joel Kaufman, a co-author of the study and an environmental health researcher at the University of Washington in Seattle.

The current study focused on four major pollutants - ozone, an unstable form of oxygen produced when traffic and industrial fumes react with sunlight; nitrogen oxide, a byproduct of fossil fuel combustion that contributes to smog; black carbon, or soot,

from coal-powered factories and traffic; and so-called PM 2.5, a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter that can include dust, dirt, soot and smoke.

Researchers assessed levels of these pollutants near the homes of 7,071 people in six U.S. cities: Baltimore; Chicago; Los Angeles; St. Paul, Minnesota; New York, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Each participant got CT scans to look for the proportion of cells in the lung that are damaged - described as the percentage of emphysema. They also underwent lung function tests known as spirometry at the start of the study and again around 10 years later.

About 46% of the study group were lifelong nonsmokers, and 22% of participants had some airflow obstruction at the beginning of the study period. Over 10 years, the average decline in lung function for the entire group was a little over 300 milliliters of volume on inhalation and exhalation tests.

People exposed to higher levels of each of the four pollutants at the start of the study were more likely to develop

emphysema damage by the end, researchers report in JAMA.

Levels of most of the pollutants declined during the study, but concentrations of ozone rose. Each 3 parts per billion (ppb) of ozone in the air was associated with a lung function decline of 18 ml on a test of forced exhalation, and 40 ml on an inhalation test.

Over the 10-year period, each 3 ppb in average daily exposure to ozone was linked to lung damage equivalent to smoking a pack of cigarettes a day for 29 years or to an additional three years of aging, researchers found.

Ever-smokers and people with lung damage at the start of the study experienced the greatest increases in percentage emphysema and declines in lung function.

The results suggest that air pollution exposure may help explain why so many people without any history of smoking still develop chronic emphysema, the study team concludes.

One limitation of the study is that researchers only examined air pollution around people's home addresses, and it's unclear how much time people spent at work or other places away from

home or how much pollution levels might differ at these other locations.

"People don't spend all their time sitting on their front steps, so while we have a very good idea about their air pollution exposures, the exposures are a bit different indoors and when they travel to other places," Kaufman said.

Even so, the results underscore how important it is for people with chronic lung diseases to take precautions to limit exposure to air pollution, Kaufman advised.

"Staying indoors on high air pollution days and having a good air filter at home can be helpful in highly polluted environments," Kaufman said.

The results also highlight the importance of public health efforts to curb pollution.

"Great progress has been made in reducing air pollution concentrations due to health-based air quality protections and these need to continue to be strengthened," Kaufman said. "Ozone concentrations in particular still need attention and reducing use of fossil fuels and slowing climate change will help reduce these exposures too."

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Liver disease related to obesity and diabetes rising in U.S.

By Lisa Rapaport

The only liver disease becoming more widespread in the U.S. is one driven by obesity and diabetes, even as other types of liver disorders linked to drinking or hepatitis are becoming less common, researchers say.

For the study, researchers examined nationwide health survey data collected in five cycles between 1988 and 2016. Over this period, the proportion of adults with what's known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) rose from 20% to 28.3%, mirroring increases in rates of obesity and diabetes over the same period.

"Liver disease in the United

States is experiencing a shift away from viral hepatitis to NAFLD," said Dr. Zobair Younossi MD, lead author of the study and chair of the department of medicine at Enova Fairfax Hospital in Falls Church, Virginia.

"This is primarily driven by the epidemic of obesity and diabetes," Younossi said by email. "This is important to patients because NAFLD can be a silent disease for decades."

During the study period, the proportion of the population with obesity rose from 22.2% to 38.9% while the proportion with diabetes climbed from 7.2% to 13.5%, researchers report in Gut.

Alcoholic liver disease rates were little changed during the

study period, affecting about 0.8% to 1% of the population.

The proportion of people with chronic viral hepatitis infections that can be spread through contact with blood became less common or remained stable.

Hepatitis B - spread through blood, semen and other bodily fluids - held steady, affecting about 0.3% to 0.4% of people throughout the study period.

And the prevalence of hepatitis C - which often spreads when injected drug users share needles - dropped from 1.6% to 0.9% over the study period.

It's possible that hepatitis infections may have increased more recently with the rise in opioid abuse, but the study



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period didn't capture this shift, the researchers note.

Many people may not realize they have NAFLD because they can live symptom-free for years, the study team writes. Researchers identified NAFLD cases based on ultrasound results showing liver damage in participants.

People in the study with NAFLD were more likely to be male, older and Hispanic.

Most people have a little bit of fat in their liver, but in fatty liver disease, more than 5% of the liver by weight is made up of fat. If the condition isn't linked to liver

damage from heavy drinking, it's known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) and is most often associated with obesity, diabetes and certain eating habits.

In the study population, being obese raised the odds of having NAFLD more than 10-fold, and having diabetes raised the likelihood nearly four-fold, the analysis found.

Roughly four in five people with both obesity and type 2 diabetes had NAFLD.

The study wasn't designed, however, to determine whether or how any individual characteristics might cause NAFLD.

Healthy plant-based diet tied to lowered heart risk

People who eat a healthy, mostly plant-based diet may be less likely to develop heart disease and to die from it than those who consume lots of meat and refined carbohydrates, a U.S. study suggests.

Researchers followed 12,168 middle-aged adults over three decades, assessing their eating habits at several points. During the study, 5,436 participants died, including 1,565 who died from

cardiovascular disease.

Compared to people who most closely followed a plant-based or vegetarian diet, those with diets heavier in animal products and refined carbs were 31% to 32% more likely to die of heart disease and 18% to 25% more likely to die of all causes during the study.

People who didn't eat a lot of plant-based meals were also 16% more likely to develop heart fail-

ure or have non-fatal heart attacks or strokes than the participants who ate the most plants.

"Plant-based diets seem to be rising in popularity, and our study provides more evidence suggesting that consuming a plant-based diet can be good for your heart health," said Casey Rebholz, senior author of the study and a researcher at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore.

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Nordic walking may benefit breast cancer patients



Nordic walking, an aerobic activity performed with walking poles similar to ski poles, may benefit patients with breast cancer, according to a review of existing research.

By Carolyn Crist

Nordic walking, an aerobic activity performed with walking poles similar to ski poles, may benefit patients with breast cancer, according to a review of existing research.

The low-impact exercise improved swelling, physical fitness, disability and quality of life, the study authors conclude in the European Journal of Cancer Care.

"The main strategy in rehabilitation for women with breast cancer is a change of habits, where physical exercise is a fundamental tool," said study co-author Jorge Torres of the Faculty of Educational Sciences and Sports at the University of Vigo in Pontevedra, Spain.

"It's not easy to turn a sedentary person into an amateur athlete, so sports such as Nordic walking are accepted more easily," Torres told Reuters Health by email, particularly since the activity doesn't require expensive equipment, can be done in a group with others, and is easy to learn.

Introduced in the 1980s as a summer training exercise that was similar to cross-country, or Nordic, skiing, Nordic walking became more widespread in the 2000s. It's now part of some exercise-based rehabilitation programs, especially in Northern Europe where it is more common, Torres noted.

He also owns a personal training company, Vigo Entrena, that creates physical activity programs

for people with specific needs, including injuries, obesity, pregnancy, postpartum and women with breast cancer, and he specializes in Nordic walking training.

To see if this form of exercise helps women treated for breast cancer to reduce side effects like arm swelling, and offers other benefits of exercise, Torres and his colleagues analyzed nine studies. Four studies were randomized controlled trials comparing Nordic walking to other activities; the other studies focused on specific effects of Nordic walking.

Periods of exercise in the studies ranged from 30 to 80 minutes and were performed on one to five days a week for up to 12 weeks.

In eight of the nine studies, Nordic walking had a positive effect on a number of breast cancer symptoms, including lymphedema, fitness, upper-body strength, disability and perceptions of pain and swelling.

A handful of studies also showed improvements in depression, self-efficacy for managing pain and improvements in physical activity levels. They didn't find any adverse effects, and the study participants seemed to stick with the programs.

The biomechanical gesture of Nordic walking, compared to just walking, seemed to counteract some of the side effects that can come from cancer treatment, such as shoulder-arm mobility and postural problems, the study team writes.

"(Many) health professionals

and therapists do not realize that there are contraindicated exercises during breast cancer rehabilitation and that alternatives such as Nordic walking can be very effective," Torres said.

"Nordic walking is a structured form of physical activity which nowadays has been shown to be 'more complete' than basic walking," said Marco Bergamin of the University of Padova in Italy, who wasn't involved in the research review.

"Another important point that is less stressed by these authors: quality of life," Bergamin said in an email. "Nordic walking gives huge benefits because breast cancer patients are survivors, and from a socio-psychological point of view, that really impacts their life."

Future studies should also investigate the intensity, frequency, duration, and length of exercise needed to help breast cancer patients, said Lucia Cugusi of the

University of Cagliari in Italy, who also wasn't involved in the review.

"What is most evident is the growing interest of the scientific community in tracking the needs, interests and preferences of patients," Cugusi said by email. "Offering them novel forms of physical activity that are both effective and engaging has become one of the new and stimulating research fields in cancer therapy and management."

Middle-age hearing loss linked to dementia

By Carolyn Crist

Hearing loss in middle age is associated with higher odds of cognitive decline and dementia in later years, suggests a large study in Taiwan.

Researchers tracked more than 16,000 men and women and found that a new diagnosis of hearing loss between ages 45 and 65 more than doubled the odds of a dementia diagnosis in the next dozen years.

Even mild levels of hearing loss could be a risk factor, so hearing protection, screening and hearing aids may be important means of reducing cognitive risk as well, the study team writes in JAMA Network Open.

"Hearing loss is a potential reversible risk factor for dementia, including Alzheimer's disease," said senior study author Charles Tzu-Chi Lee of National Taiwan Normal University in Taipei.

Past research suggests that about two thirds of the risk for dementia is hereditary or genetic, which means about one third of the risk is from things that are modifiable, Lee noted. Among modifiable risk factors, hearing loss accounts for about 9% of dementia risk, a greater proportion than factors like hypertension, obesity, depression, diabetes and smoking.

"The early identification of hearing loss ... and successful hearing rehabilitation can mitigate the negative effects of hearing loss," Lee told Reuters Health by email. "However, the ideal time to perform hearing loss screening to reduce the risk of dementia remains unclear."

Lee and colleague Chin-Mei Liu of the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control analyzed data on people aged 45 and older from the National Health Insurance Research Database of Taiwan. They matched 8,135 patients newly diagnosed with hearing loss between 2000 and 2011 to 8,135 similar individuals without hearing loss and followed them all through 2013.

All were free of dementia at the start, but over time, 1,868 people developed dementia - and 59% of them came from the hearing loss group.

Among people with hearing loss, new dementia cases were identified at a rate of 19 per 10,000 people, compared with 14 per 10,000 without hearing loss. Overall, hearing loss was associated with a 17% risk increase for dementia, the researchers calculated.

But when they looked at subsets of people, almost all the increased risk was concentrated in the youngest age group. Among those 45-65, dementia risk was 2.21-fold higher with hearing loss.

"The present study suggests that screening for hearing loss should be performed when people are middle aged," Lee said.

The results factored in variables such as sex, age and insurance type, as well as other known risks for cognitive decline and dementia. Among these, six other conditions were associated with an increased risk of dementia: cerebrovascular disease, diabetes, anxiety, depression, alcohol-related illnesses and head injury.

The study was not designed to

determine how hearing loss might contribute to dementia, or if the two conditions share the same cause. One limitation of insurance data, the researchers note, is lack of precision in the dementia diagnoses.

"In an aging population, dementia will present one of the greatest challenges to society in this century," said David Loughrey of the Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience in Dublin, who wasn't involved in the study.

"There are now more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 5 for the first time in human history," he told Reuters Health by email. "Pharmacological treatments for the most common cause of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, only offer symptom-modifying effects. This has led to suggestions that a change in approach to prevention rather than treatment after diagnosis may be more beneficial."

Future studies will investigate whether treating hearing loss can decrease the risk of dementia, the study team writes.

"Hearing health is critically important to the human experience," said Dr. Richard Gurgel of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, who wasn't involved in the study.

"There is more to hearing loss than just hearing. Hearing loss affects the way we fundamentally communicate and connect with one another," he said in an email. "Hearing loss impacts the overall health of older adults, including their emotional well-being and social isolation, as well as cognition."

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Diabetes risk tied to common chemicals, curbed by healthy habits

By Lisa Rapaport

Chemicals in everything from food wrappers to clothing and furniture are associated with an increased risk of diabetes, but much of this added risk is reduced with good eating and exercise habits, a study suggests.

Researchers tested blood samples from 957 diabetes-free people for chemicals known as PFAS (polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances), which are used to make consumer products stain-resistant, water-repellant

and nonstick. Participants were then randomly assigned to an intensive lifestyle modification program designed to help them lose 7% of their body weight, or to take a placebo pill and stick with their usual eating and exercise habits.

After two years, researchers did another round of blood tests for PFAS. When the tests showed levels of one type of PFA known as PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) had risen, people in the placebo group were more likely to develop diabetes

in subsequent years. But the risk of diabetes didn't go up for people who had made dramatic changes to their eating and exercise habits.

"Our results indicate that some PFAS contribute to diabetes development and (diabetes complications)," said Andres Cardenas of the University of California, Berkeley, who led the study.

"However, an initial intervention of exercise and diet attenuated the association with diabetes," Cardenas said by email. "Exercise and a balanced diet confer



Chemicals in everything from food wrappers to clothing and furniture are associated with an increased risk of diabetes, but much of this added risk is reduced with good eating and exercise habits, a study suggests.

Moving during early pregnancy may increase preterm birth risk

Moving to a new home during the first three months of pregnancy may add stresses that increase a woman's risk of having a premature birth, low birth weight and a baby that's small for its gestational age, suggests a U.S. study.

Women who are considering moving while pregnant could work with their healthcare providers to make plans to move and ensure the proper support is in place, the report's authors advise in the Journal of Epidemiology &

Community Health.

"Moving is pretty common during pregnancy, and it makes sense because it's a time in people's lives to think about expanding to a larger house or finding a new place to raise a child," said Julia Bond of the University of Washington School of Public Health in Seattle, who led the new research.

Previous studies estimate that up to a quarter of pregnant women in the U.S. move, she added.

"Don't panic and think you

can't move," Bond told Reuters Health by phone. "It's simply worth talking about potential stressors with your doctor."

Overall, moving may affect pregnancy due to the physical strain, disruptions to social support, inability to obtain regular healthcare, or the psychosocial stress of moving itself, the authors write.

Other stressors before a child's birth, such as job loss or a death in the family, could also affect childhood health and outcomes.

ample benefits; our results indicate that another benefit could be the attenuation of adverse metabolic effects from PFAS exposure."

Overall, 507 people developed diabetes during a median follow-up time of 8.9 years.

More than 90% of the study participants were overweight or obese. The majority were also white, female, married, college educated and nonsmokers.

People in the lifestyle modification group had case managers coaching them on how to reduce fat intake and cut calories to achieve steady weight loss of

one to two pounds a week. These participants were also asked to get a minimum of 150 minutes a week of moderate to vigorous exercise.

With this eating and exercise program, people were 28% less likely to develop diabetes than the participants on placebo, researchers report in Diabetes Care.

Over the first two years of the study, PFOA concentrations also rose less for the diet and exercise group than in the placebo group: 0.31 nanograms per milliliter of blood compared with 0.96 ng/ml.

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WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

(September 1 - 7, 2019)

Aries (March 21 to April 20)

You are likely to have a good period where work life is progressive and rewarding as well. Some may transition to a new place of work or take on a job profile that offers increased remuneration. There is celebration and good times spent with friends and family.

Taurus (April 21 to May 21)

The week begins with a significant focus on work and requires you to direct energy towards analysing work performance in the past in order to draw up targets for the coming time as well as rein in unnecessary expenditure.

Gemini (May 22 to June 21)

This week, you could suddenly find yourself quite introspective, philosophical, and even questioning everything with regard to ethics. There may be delays and snags at work. You may be impatient with people who may not be able to keep up with your pace.

Cancer (June 22 to July 22)

It's a rewarding period. There is monetary gain as well as a feeling of worthiness as your work is recognised on a prestigious platform. There is fame and recognition, but you may have to deal with unnecessary jealousy.

Leo (July 23 to August 22)

This week brings mixed results. It begins on a slightly difficult note as you grapple with fear and insecurity. You may have wished for a change and when it finally comes through, there is apprehension regarding the new changes such as changing the job and moving to a new city.

Virgo (August 23 to September 23)

This is a period of highly intuitive work. You are able to foresee certain outcomes, which helps you choose correctly. You are hardworking and do not mind restarting work in a completely new direction if there is confidence that you are on the right path.

Libra (September 24 to October 23)

You actively consider working with greater information, data and factual evidence. There is a stronger academic bent of mind. You perform well in competitions and exams. There may be a new journey initiated where education is concerned.

Scorpio (October 24 to November 22)

The coming week, you are greatly focused on important paperwork and documentation. There is some expenditure involved. However, you are willing to shell out a premium if it gets your work done. Disagreement between family members should be sorted out amicably.

Sagittarius (November 23 to December 21)

The coming week opens with quite a bit of work already lined up for the Sagittarius-born individuals. There are expectations from your superiors - you may need to travel for work irrespective of your willingness.

Capricorn (December 22 to January 20)

The coming week is a period where Capricorn-born individuals do exceedingly well at work. Those engaged in business activity are able to rake in good profits. Some may be honoured for their contribution as well.

Aquarius (January 21 to February 19)

Aquarius-born individuals finally find themselves in the limelight. There is recognition, praise, and in some cases, a good raise. This period brings professional satisfaction and maybe a new job offer or two.

Pisces (February 20 to March 20)

It is a good week for the Pisces-born individuals. Relationships, however, may not be completely satisfying - people may not turn out to be who you thought they are, especially those who you were banking on in terms of financial help.

Thousands of MD applicants will not obtain a medical residency in 2020

LOS ANGELES, CA - On March 14, 2019 the National Residency Match Program (NRMP) released the list of applicants that applied for a Post Graduate Training slot also known as a medical "Residency." Statistics show there were just over 44,600 applicants that applied for 35,000 residency positions nationwide. This coming mid-September, residency candidates will start submitting their applications to teaching hospitals throughout the US. Come March of 2020, during the NRMP Main Match, these candidates will find out their fate. But if the last 10 years are any indication, the upward trend will continue where most applicants will see their dreams shattered, be stuck with a Medical Degree (MD), and not able to advance their careers.

The disparity between applicants and available training slots has been increasing annually for almost two decades and has been labeled the "Residency Bottleneck." These are applicants that are stuck in limbo and come from around the world.

Whether one graduates from a US medical school or a medical school from across the globe, in order to be a licensed doctor in America an MD holder must complete hands-on training in an ACGME (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education) teaching hospital. The technical term for this training is Graduate Medical Education (GME), and consists of three to seven years of training, and after successfully completing a residency, only then are they qualified to apply for board certification and practice as a licensed physician in their trained medical specialty.

Throughout the years, tens of thousands of applicants in this residency applicant pool have been unable to land a medical residency and have had to give up on their dream of practicing medicine in America. This is going on all the while there is a doctor shortage in America of alarming proportions. The American Medical Association estimates that by the year 2025 there will be a doctor shortage of up to 35,600 primary care physicians and 60,300 non-primary specialists in the United States!

This has been an epidemic long in the making and receives very little attention. Residents Medical, an education, preparatory and resident placement assistance organization based in Los Angeles, has been making headway in making a dent in this systematic institution problem of medical graduates not being able to achieve their career goals, and having to settle for another career path, all the while



there is a medical doctor shortage in America. Dr. Syed, Senior Guidance Counselor Specialist at Residents Medical, explains, "There are areas in California where there is not a General Surgeon in a 50-mile radius. We're not talking about the outskirts of Alaska here; this is just a few hours outside of Sacramento."

The global force at Residents Medical is strengthening its candidates' resumes with proprietary time-tested educational and preparatory tools and the outcomes have been great. Last year many applicants came to RM after receiving rejections from the programs that they applied to. It is inevitable that this will happen again come next Match, so RM is gearing up to help a new flux of disparaged residency candidates. "Many applicants make the same mistakes year after year wasting money, applying to thousands of programs, getting many rejections even after obtaining an interview or two. And every year our candidates ask the same question, 'Why did I not hear of RM before?'" says Dr. Syed. Of RM's candidates who landed residency, 81% were in the Main Match. The other 19% were assisted in securing SOAP and Post-Match positions.

Additionally, RM's alliance partners are also funding residency slots so that RM can create training opportunities for its candidates after they go through the process of strengthening and differentiating their residency application.

In reviewing Residents Medical's website, you'll see they have an integral and nuanced approach in helping this specialized field of medicine. There are other educational groups that help with the board examinations and interview preparation, but what sets Residents Medical apart from the rest is its Residency Placement Assistance Initiative, making RM a one-stop shop with an important distinction that helps at the heart of the problem.

The crux of the Residency Bottleneck is two-fold: not enough residency slots and too many

applicants; the residency programs' infrastructure gets overwhelmed during the application and interview process. Residents Medical works to isolate and address these two problems by creating residency opportunities and distinguishing its residency candidates through a holistic CV-building mechanism.

Researching forums and blogs, there is a big frustration amongst the most educated of individuals ready to dedicate their professional lives and career to the service of the sick, maim and wellness. Many of these doctors who have had to change career paths due to lack of residency are frustrated and carry hefty student loans too. Their diplomas are a constant reminder of a goal not realized.

It's important to recognize this and find a solution so that America can remain a healthcare leader in innovation, research, and post graduate educational training. Organizations like Residents Medical demonstrates care, willingness and innovation for the medical community as a whole.

ABOUT**RESIDENTS MEDICAL**

Residents Medical is an innovative educational organization with its sphere of influence in medical education. It prepares, educates through its proprietary courses, counsels, consults, and has candidate placement services. Its Residency Placement Assistance Initiative is highly sought after and competitive. Only qualified candidates are accepted.

Residents Medical also works with The Everest Foundation and nominates a selected few of its candidates for an Everest Foundation Scholars tenure in research, post-graduate unaccredited training, and other medical residency candidacy CV-building procurements. This proprietary process helps candidates prove themselves to the residency programs where they are given interviews for a coveted ACGME-Accredited residency position.

For more information, visit: ResidentsMedical.com, or call: 310-444-9700.



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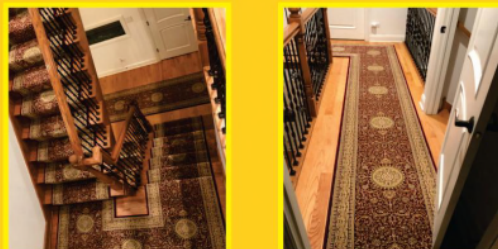
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