

# India Bulletin

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## Mumbai dance group V Unbeatable wins America's Got Talent: The Champions

HOLLYWOOD - It's a proud moment for India and for dance group V Unbeatable, who won the second season of *America's Got Talent: The Champions* on Monday. V Unbeatable, who trended for days after appearing for the first time on *America's Got Talent* last year and securing the fourth place in the finale, featured in headlines once again - this time for winning season 15 of the reality show.

Upon winning the competition, judges Simon Cowell, Heidi Klum, Alesha Dixon and Howie Mandel, as well as the audience gave V Unbeatable a standing ovation. V Unbeatable delivered a mind-blowing performance by dancing to Ranveer Singh's song 'Tattad Tattad' from Bollywood film *Ram-Leela*. The dance group's exhilarating stunts and musician Travis Barker's solo drum performance behind them made the whole act mesmerising.

V Unbeatable comprises of 29 dancers from Mumbai. The group was originally named Unbeatable. However, when one of their team members (Vikas) died following a horrible accident during practice, the group changed its name to V Unbeatable in his honour. Before *America's Got Talent*, the group was also featured in Indian dance reality shows like *Dance Plus 4* and *India Banega Manch*.

Before the finale, actor Ran-



veer Singh boosted the spirit of V Unbeatable and gave a massive shout-out to the dance group. For those who don't know, V Unbeatable got the golden buzzer last year by performing to the track *Tattad Tattad* from Ranveer's 2013 film. Judges Simon Cowell, Julianne Hough, Howie Mandel, Gabrielle Union and guest judge former NBA basketball player Dwayne Wade (married to Gabrielle Union) were floored by their incredible performance in one of the episodes of season 14.

In a video message (shared by V Unbeatable on their Instagram page), Ranveer said: "I am very happy that V Unbeatable have made it to the finals of America's Got Talent. This is unprecedented. I'd like to give my best wishes to the troupe. I just want to say that whatever you have achieved on the world stage is unprecedented. To do what you guys have done on the world stage in such a spectacular fashion, you have won the hearts of the entire nation."

"We are so proud of you. We

love you for your dedication, commitment and honesty. Keep it going till the finals. Put in all your energy and perform with your hearts and bring it home. C'mon V Unbeatable," he added.

V Unbeatable was crowned the Season 2 champion after six weeks of competing against the 40 "greatest acts in the world," as judge Simon Cowell said. The other performers competing with V Unbeatable in the finale were dance groups Boogie Storm, The Silhouettes, Sandou Trio Russian Bar, violinist Tyler Butler-Figueroa, Alexa Lauenburger, singer Marcelito Pomoy, rollerskaters Duo Transcend, singer-dancer Hans and singer Angelina Jordan.

This is not the first time an Indian dance team has won an international dance reality show. Before V Unbeatable, Mumbai's dance team The Kings, comprising 14 members, won NBC's *World Of Dance* in 2019 and took home the prize money of \$1 million.



**Thought of the Week:** "Keep your face always toward the sunshine - and shadows will fall behind you." - Walt Whitman

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# India's use of facial recognition tech during protests causes stir



Police officials sitting atop a bus take videos of demonstrators during a protest against a citizenship law, in New Delhi on February 10, 2020.

By Alexandra Ulmer  
and Zeba Siddiqui

MUMBAI - When artist Rachita Taneja heads out to protest in New Delhi, she covers her face with a pollution mask, a hoodie or a scarf to reduce the risk of being identified by police facial recognition software.

Police in the Indian capital and the northern state of Uttar Pradesh - both hotbeds of dissent - have used the technology during protests that have raged since mid-December against a new citizenship law that critics say

marginalises Muslims.

Activists are worried about insufficient regulation around the new technology, amid what they say is a crackdown on dissent under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose Hindu nationalist agenda has gathered pace since his re-election in May.

"I do not know what they are going to do with my data," said Taneja, 28, who created a popular online cartoon about cheap ways for protesters to hide their faces. "We need to protect ourselves, given how this government cracks down."

Critics also accuse authorities of secrecy - highlighting, for instance, that the software's use during Delhi protests was first revealed by the Indian Express newspaper.

India's home ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment on facial recognition technology.

Modi's government has rejected accusations of abuse during demonstrations, and accused some protesters of stoking violence.

A spokesman for his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party had no immediate comment on concerns over the use of the technology and referred questions to the government.

But police said worries about facial recognition were unwarranted.

"I'm only catching targeted people," said Rajan Bhagat, a deputy commissioner of police at Delhi's Crime Records Office. "We don't have any protesters' data, nor do we plan to store it."

He declined to give details of potential arrests, however.

When it comes to surveillance, India trails far behind neighbouring China. New Delhi, for example, has about 0.9 CCTV

cameras for every 100 people, versus about 11.3 per 100 in China's commercial hub of Shanghai, a 2019 report by PreciseSecurity.com showed.

The Delhi police use Indian startup Innefu Labs' facial recognition software AI Vision, which also includes gait and body analysis.

"If somebody is throwing stones at a police officer, doesn't he have a right to take a video and identify him?" said Innefu co-founder Tarun Wig, 36.

Police in about 10 Indian states use Innefu products, Wig said.

Financial fraud analytics are among the services provided by Innefu, which published a social media analysis in January that concluded much criticism of the new citizenship law came from archenemy Pakistan to "destabilize the harmony" of India.

The company is representative of homegrown artificial intelligence startups tapping into booming demand for facial biometrics in India, in part thanks to their testing on Indian faces and more affordable prices.

A few established foreign firms, such as Japanese telecommunications and IT giant NEC Corp, also operate in India, where

the market is expected to grow from about \$700 million in 2018 to more than \$4 billion by 2024, TechSci Research said in a report.

## UTTAR PRADESH ARRESTS

Facial recognition helped police in Uttar Pradesh, home to 220 million people, detain a "handful" of the more than 1,100 people arrested for alleged links to violence during protests, said O P Singh, its police chief who retired last month.

Singh gave no details but said the technology helped cut the numbers of wrongful arrests and highlighted the state's extensive database of more than 550,000 "criminals".

Rights groups have decried what they call excessive force in Uttar Pradesh, which has the largest number of representatives in parliament and is governed by hardline Hindu priest and Modi ally Yogi Adityanath.

The state says tough policies have restored order.

Startup Staqu is supplying its product, the Police Artificial Intelligence System, to police in eight states, including Uttar Pradesh, says the firm's co-founder, Atul Rai.

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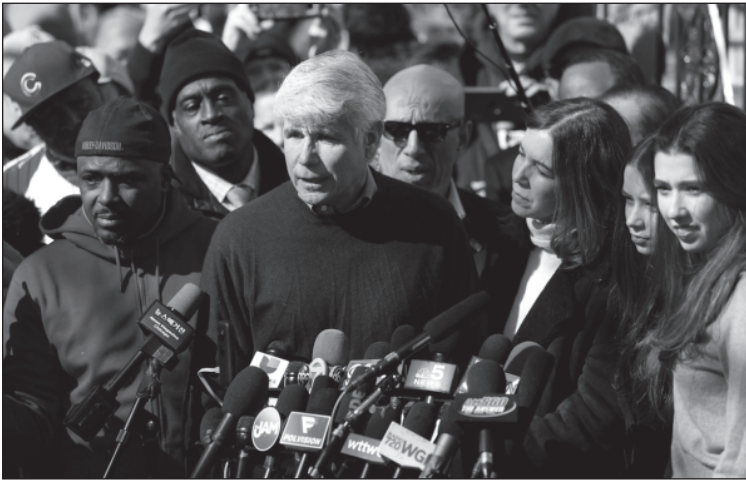
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# Trump commutes Ex-Illinois Gov. Blagojevich's sentence



Rod Blagojevich, the ex-Illinois governor convicted of trying to peddle Barack Obama's vacated U.S. Senate seat, speaks outside his home after U.S. President Donald Trump commuted his prison sentence, in Chicago, Illinois, U.S. on February 19, 2020.

By Michael Tarm  
and Kathleen Foody

CHICAGO (AP) - Former Illinois Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich gushed about Donald Trump a day after the Republican president set him free from a federal prison, delivering a 20-minute monologue Wednesday outside his Chicago home that sounded like an extended campaign commercial.

Standing before a crowd of more than 100 reporters and well-wishers at the steps of his house, the governor-turned-convicted felon even offered an endorsement of Trump's bid for a second term.

"I'm a Trumpocrat," said the one-time contestant on Trump's reality TV show, "Celebrity Apprentice." "If I had the ability to vote, I would vote for him."

Felons in Illinois can vote once they leave prison, though they have to register again, according to the state Board of Elections.

The carnival feel of his first scheduled press event since going free included a giant photo of Blagojevich's head, which the two-term governor signed for the person holding it. A banner draped over a stoop behind Blagojevich read, "Thanks Mr. President." One man in the crowd wore a rubber Blagojevich mask and hoisted the former governor's 2006 campaign sign.

Blagojevich, flanked by his wife and two daughters, effusively praised Trump after he commuted his 14-year sentence after serving eight years. He cast the president as a reformer of a flawed criminal justice system. Trump did sign a sweeping criminal justice bill in 2018 that was praised by lawmakers and advocates of all political stripes. But critics have said Trump has undermined the justice system, including most recently by weighing in on the sentencing of his longtime confidant Roger Stone.

Blagojevich, 63, once was regarded as a rising political star for his Bill Clinton-like ability to connect with voters, but he has been radioactive in Illinois political circles for years. Political analysts in the state sounded doubtful that candidates would get much of a boost from the disgraced ex-governor hitting the campaign trail for them.

"Maybe Trump might," said Dick Simpson, a former Chicago alderman and a respected political analyst. "But every other candidate in Illinois will run as fast as they can away from Blagojevich. ... Most candidates don't want to be endorsed by the poster child of corruption."

Although there was no indication Trump would recruit him, Blagojevich as governor was comparatively popular in black communities - a constituency Trump recently has been

courting.

Simpson, the political analyst, said some minorities might be open to political messages from Blagojevich, who helped expand health care coverage to more children. "But it's a very small group," he said.

Now that Blagojevich is out of prison, there was little sign of change in him other than his trademark jet-black hair turning white behind bars. Outside his home, the poetry-quoting Blagojevich demonstrated not even a hint of remorse for the multiple counts of political corruption jurors convicted him on.

Blagojevich took no questions after his remarks on Wednesday, in which he echoed Trump by portraying himself as a victim of a federal justice system run amok.

"From the beginning," he said about his case, "this was persecution masquerading as prosecution."

Prosecutors and federal judges who have reviewed Blagojevich's case have balked at those suggestions, which Blagojevich began making almost immediately after his arrest. They say there was overwhelming

evidence that Blagojevich broke the law, including trying to squeeze a children's hospital for campaign donations.

In a tweet he fired off while Blagojevich was still speaking in Chicago on Wednesday, Trump hit on the same themes. As he has done before, Trump compared efforts to investigate his own conduct to federal prosecutors who took down Blagojevich.

Trump's tweet described Blagojevich's case as, "Another (James) Comey and gang deal!"

"It was a prosecution by the same people — Comey, Fitzpatrick, the same group," Trump also said earlier in the week. He was referring to Patrick Fitzgerald, the former U.S. attorney who prosecuted Blagojevich and now represents former FBI Director James Comey, whom Trump fired from the agency in May 2017. Comey was not at the FBI or anywhere in the Department of Justice during the investigation and indictment of Blagojevich.

Trump's tweet also alluded to Blagojevich's convictions for seeking to exchange an appointment to the U.S. Senate seat

vacated by then President-elect Barack Obama for campaign contributions.

"Rod Blagojevich did not sell the Senate seat," Trump tweeted.

Prosecutors have said, however, that they decided to arrest then-Gov. Blagojevich at his home on the morning of Dec. 9, 2008, so they could stop him before he could actually commit that crime.

A political science professor at Northwestern University in Evanston, Jaime Dominguez, agreed that if Blagojevich could help Trump's reelection bid any such help would be minimal.

"Blagojevich's complaints could possibly resonate with Trump's base about there being a deep state out to get ... Blagojevich and Trump, that (federal prosecutors) go after people who speak their minds," he said.

During the press event, Blagojevich continually dabbed a cut on his chin with a handkerchief as he spoke, apologizing for bleeding and explaining it was a consequence of living behind bars.

"It is a long time since I shaved with a normal razor," Blagojevich said.

## Doctor settles civil fraud allegations in adult homes investigation

NEW YORK - Dr. Rajendra Bhayani, an otolaryngologist, has agreed to pay the United States \$1,109,000 to resolve civil allegations that he and his practice - New York Otolaryngology & Aesthetic Surgery, P.C. in Brooklyn and Queens - paid kickbacks and submitted false claims to federal healthcare programs for services provided to residents in adult homes in violation of the False Claims Act.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and William F. Sweeney Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), announced the settlement.

"The disabled and elderly residents of adult homes are among the most vulnerable members of our society, and doctors who treat these residents as commodities by paying kickbacks so they can administer medically unnecessary services at taxpayer expense will be held accountable by this Office," stated United States Attorney Donoghue. Donoghue expressed his grateful appreciation to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), for their assistance with the case.

Adult homes are privately owned residential facilities licensed by the State of New York to provide long-term care and supervision to adults with dis-

abilities or mental illnesses. An investigation by the FBI revealed that from 2012 through 2016, Bhayani allegedly paid cash tips, excessive rent and other improper remuneration to medical management companies in adult homes in the Eastern District of New York to obtain exclusive access to bill for allergy testing and other medical services to residents in violation of the Anti-Kickback Statute. Bhayani then obtained payment for these services from Medicare and the Federal Employees' Health Benefits Program, although the services were actually performed by his nurse practitioner, and some of the services performed were medically unnecessary.

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## Former California doctor sentenced to 2 years for defrauding Medicare and illegally prescribing opioids

LOS ANGELES - A former doctor was sentenced last month to 24 months in federal prison for engaging in a multi-faceted Medicare fraud scheme, and also for illegal prescribing thousands of opioid painkillers and muscle relaxants.

Kain Kumar, 56, of Encino, was sentenced by United States District Judge Philip S. Gutierrez. Kumar was also ordered to pay financial penalties totaling more than \$1 million, consisting of \$509,365 in restitution, \$494,900 in asset forfeiture, and a \$72,000 fine.

Kumar pleaded guilty in April

2019 to one count of health care fraud and one count of distribution of hydrocodone. He practiced internal medicine, maintained medical offices in Palmdale, Rosamond, and Ridgecrest and surrendered his medical license last year.

From February 2011 until May 2016, Kumar defrauded the Medicare health care benefit program by prescribing unnecessary home health services in exchange for the payment of illegal kickbacks to him from a La Verne-based home health agency called Star Home Health Resources, Inc. According to the

indictment in this case, Medicare paid \$4,398,599 to Star based on the illegal kickback-tainted referrals from Kumar.

In furtherance of this scheme, Kumar caused false and fraudulent claims for reimbursement to be submitted to Medicare for Medicare beneficiaries that he did not personally examine or for patients he only briefly examined. Kumar also prescribed drugs that were not medically necessary and which were paid for by the Medicare Part D program.

Additionally, Kumar admitted in his plea agreement that



A former doctor was sentenced last month to 24 months in federal prison for engaging in a multi-faceted Medicare fraud scheme, and also for illegal prescribing thousands of opioid painkillers and muscle relaxants.

### California couple faked robbery of store where man worked, authorities say

RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CA - Two Fontana residents were arrested last month, after San Bernardino County sheriff's investigators said the man and his girlfriend staged a robbery where one of them works in Rancho Cucamonga.

Nichole King, 33, and Simranjit "Steven" Singh, 25, were booked

into West Valley Detention Center on suspicion of conspiracy to commit robbery. King was being held in lieu of \$25,000; Singh was being held without bail.

About 9:45 p.m. on Jan. 12, the Sheriff's Department said, Singh called 911 from the 7-Eleven at 7900 Haven Ave. to report that he had been robbed at gunpoint.

Investigators eventually found inconsistencies in Singh's statements, a news release said, and they identified King and Singh as suspects in a scheme to steal from Singh's employer. A search of Singh's home found evidence linking the couple to the planning and execution of the crime, the release said.

between February 2013 and January 2016, Kumar – without a legitimate medical purpose – prescribed 23,826 pills of the opioid drug hydrocodone (commonly sold under the brand name Vicodin or Norco) and 38,459 pills of the muscle-relaxer carisoprodol (sold under the brand name Soma).

Kumar directed his office staff – who were not medical professionals – to issue prescriptions for these drugs to patients even though Kumar had not examined the patients. Kumar directed his

office staff to sign his name on prescriptions for opioid drugs and also provided his staff with pre-signed prescriptions.

In one instance, although Kumar examined a patient only once on the patient's very first visit, and thereafter he caused prescriptions to be issued to the patient for hydrocodone and carisoprodol on a monthly basis for approximately a year and a half even though Kumar did not actually see the patient for any subsequent physician examination.

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## Ashik Desai settles SEC fraud allegations



Ashik Desai

CHICAGO - Ashik Desai, 26, former chief growth officer of healthcare technology startup Outcome Health, settled a law-

suit filed by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission alleging he had joined several former coworkers in defrauding clients to the tune of \$487 million, the Chicago Tribune reported.

The lawsuit, filed in November, alleged Desai was not only aware of but also participated in the fraudulent activities, and demanded he repay the illegally obtained funds, along with interest and other penalties.

The settlement was filed in Chicago federal court on Feb. 4, the Tribune reports, with monetary relief and penalties to be decided at a later date.

The SEC lawsuit still stands against the other three former executives named alongside Desai.

Additionally, all four executives are currently facing criminal charges for their alleged participation in the fraudulent activity; the company's new leadership has admitted to the illegal activity and pledged to reimburse victims. Desai reportedly pled guilty to the criminal charges in December, while former CEO Rishi Shah, former

president Shradha Agarwal and former CFO and COO Brad Purdy have all pled not guilty.

Outcome Health was once celebrated among Chicago tech companies, but the company has faced turmoil in recent years as it dealt with the fallout of the alleged fraud scheme.

The company installs screens and tablets in doctor's offices and waiting rooms that run pharmaceutical ads and educational content. It gained widespread attention in 2017 when it

secured funding from big-name investors and rose to a valuation of about \$5.5 billion, a number unmatched among Chicago tech companies.

"Unfortunately, the narrative Outcome spun for prospective investors was a sham," the SEC lawsuit states. "In reality, Outcome's success was built largely on a simple and pervasive fraud: Outcome was routinely billing clients - and recognizing revenue - for ads it never ran."

## Sexual misconduct charges filed against 2 Michigan priests

LANSING, MI (AP) - Criminal sexual conduct charges have been filed against two priests who worked in the Upper Peninsula's Catholic diocese of Marquette, Michigan prosecutors announced.

The charges against Gary Allen Jacobs of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Roy Joseph were announced by Attorney General Dana Nessel office's Clergy Abuse Investigation Team.

Jacobs, 74, faces seven counts of criminal sexual conduct involving the alleged abuse of a child between the ages of 13 and

16 in Ontonagon County. The alleged conduct occurred between Jan. 1, 1981, and Dec. 31, 1984. The alleged misconduct in Dickinson County that took place between March 1, 1984, and April 30, 1984, involved a person under 13 years old.

According to prosecutors, Jacobs was arrested in New Mexico and will face a hearing for extradition to Michigan to face the charges. It wasn't immediately known if Jacobs has obtained legal representation.

The 52-year-old Joseph, who

currently lives in India, is charged in connection with an incident which occurred on or about Feb. 21, 2006 while he served as a priest in Marquette County.

A telephone call to the Marquette Diocese for comment on the charges wasn't immediately returned.

In a statement, Nessel said the Clergy Abuse Investigation Team continues its investigation into abuse by priests to ensure justice for victims "who courageously come forward to identify their abusers."

## Body of missing Notre Dame student recovered from lake

SOUTH BEND, IN (AP) - The body of a missing University of Notre Dame student was pulled late last month from a lake on the South Bend campus, authorities said.

The body of senior Annrose Jerry, 21, was found in St. Mary's Lake. The body had no signs of external trauma, the St. Joseph County Coroner's Office

said.

The recovery came one day after Notre Dame police issued a statewide Sliver Alert for Jerry. She lived on campus and had not been seen since 8:45 p.m. January 21.

"We're deeply saddened by the passing of Annrose," university President Rev. John Jenkins said in a statement.



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# Glitch in brakes delays Air India flight from Washington for 57 hours

MUMBAI - An Air India flight from Washington to Delhi, which was scheduled to leave the U.S. capital last month, left after a 57-hour delay. The flight landed at Delhi at around 7:40 pm on a Wednesday.

Flight AI-104, a non-stop service with 133 passengers on-board, was preparing for take-off when the aircraft developed issues with the braking system and returned from the tarmac to the parking bay.

“The engineers and technicians were called for inspection when they learnt that the flight will have to be cancelled as the aircraft could not be operational for the day,” said a Delhi-based official from the airline.



FILE PHOTO: An Air India Boeing 747-400 aircraft is seen parked on the tarmac at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai, India on January 30, 2020.

## Former partners in firm say founder’s son misspent money

RALEIGH, NC (AP) - The son of the founder of a North Carolina accounting firm spent \$500,000 of the company’s money on travel, limousines, alimony and at a strip club, according to a lawsuit filed by two of the firm’s former partners.



The lawsuit, which was filed Feb. 5, argues that Leon Little Rives II damaged the reputation of Rives and Associates, and says he used a credit card for \$200,000 in personal expenses and withdrew \$300,000 in cash from bank accounts, The News & Observer of Raleigh reported.

In an email, Rives said the lawsuit was filed by Jay Sharpe, former head of the Raleigh office, and Aaron Patel, once in charge of the Charlotte office “in an attempt to get out of partnership obliga-

tions to the Firm.”

Rives said terms of a settlement have been reached and documents will be signed soon. He said though Sharpe and Patel have sued the firm, they will end up owing the firm “a significant amount

of money.”

Rives frequently called clients while intoxicated and triggered an investigation by the state Board of CPA Examiners, and he caused an employee to complain of both sexual harassment and a derogatory comment about religion, the lawsuit says.

Rives father, William Leon Rives, was repeatedly told about his son’s behavior but failed to act, the lawsuit says. Sharpe and Patel cite 13 claims including breach of contract, fraud and conspiracy. Also, Patel and Sharpe argue that multiple employees and partners have left R&A because of the Rives family, and that their professional lives have suffered through their employment there.

The plaintiffs are seeking damages in excess of \$25,000.

Air India spokesperson Dhananjay Kumar confirmed the delay and said, “The flight was scheduled to depart for Delhi on Sunday but it had to be cancelled due to technical reasons and took off after a delay of 57 hours from Washington.”

Sources said that the airline had earlier assured passengers that the flight would take off on Monday but a spare part that the aircraft needed did not arrive from India on time, further delaying the flight till Tuesday. “When few of the passengers did not agree to wait for one more

day at Washington, more than half of the total passengers were taken to Newark by road and accommodated in Air India’s flight from Newark airport,” airline sources said.

The remaining passengers stayed back and departed for Delhi on Wednesday after the spare part, which was later called from Newark, arrived on Tuesday.

Airline sources said that the flight took off from Washington at 9:40 am (IST) with six business class and 66 economy class passengers.



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## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

# Indian girl, 5, allegedly raped at U.S. embassy in New Delhi



The U.S. embassy in New Delhi, India.

NEW DELHI - A 5-year-old Indian girl was allegedly raped on the grounds of a U.S. embassy in the capital city of New Delhi, officials said.

The child, whose father is a housekeeper employed at the embassy, was alone playing outside in the morning when her neighbor, the 25-year-old son of another embassy employee, allegedly lured her inside his family's living quarters and raped her, local police told PTI news agency.

Both families live inside the heavily guarded, 28-acre U.S.

embassy compound located in Chanakyapuri, a diplomatic enclave located in the city center, BBC reported. The girl's mother reported the alleged assault at the Chanakyapuri police station. The child was taken to the hospital for a medical evaluation. Doctors confirmed she had been raped, police said.

"We were deeply disturbed by the alleged misconduct," the U.S. embassy said in a statement. "We promptly took action when we were informed of the allegation, and brought this matter to the attention of the police.

We are cooperating fully with them."

The suspect was not employed by the U.S. embassy, according to BBC, but his father is an embassy employee. He was living with his parents on embassy grounds and worked locally as a driver. The unidentified 25-year-old was arrested and is being held before trial.

The case is being investigated under India's stringent child protection laws, police said.

The 2012 brutal gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old university student aboard a public bus in New Delhi sparked nationwide protests and shed light on the country's persistent violence against women. Following international attention about the

case, India amended the law to lengthen the sentences for those convicted of sexual assault, introducing the death penalty for those convicted of sexually assaulting children under 12.

A 2018 Thomas Reuters Foundation poll ranked India as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for women.

## Trump says Modi expects massive crowds during India visit on Feb. 24-25

By Kevin Freking

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Donald Trump says that India PM Modi is expecting to turn out massive crowds for the president when he visits next week.

Trump will be in the city of Ahmedabad in Gujarat to attend an event called "Namaste Trump," which translates to "Greetings, Trump," at a cricket stadium.

Trump pivoted on a question about trade with India to say how much he likes Modi, adding that the PM expects some 7 million people to turn out for him between the airport and the cricket stadium.

"The stadium I understand is sort of semi under construction,

but it's going to be the largest stadium in the world, so it's going to be very exciting," Trump told reporters.

In preparation for Trump's visit, a half-kilometer (1,640-foot) brick wall has been hastily erected, with critics saying it was built to block the view of a slum area inhabited by more than 2,000 people.

Senior government official Bijal Patel said the wall was built "for security reasons" and not to conceal the slum.

As for trade, Trump played down expectations for any major breakthroughs next week, saying, "I'm really saving the big deal for later on. I don't know if it will be done before the election, but we'll

have a very big deal with India."

Trade tensions between the two countries have escalated since the Trump administration levied tariffs on steel and aluminum from India.

India responded with higher tariffs on agricultural goods and restrictions on U.S. medical devices, prompting the U.S. to retaliate by removing India from a decades-old preferential trade program.

The U.S. runs a trade deficit with India of about \$25 billion, according to the U.S. Trade Representative. India has relatively high tariff rates, especially in agriculture, and the Trump administration has been critical of that deficit, accusing India of unfair trading practices.

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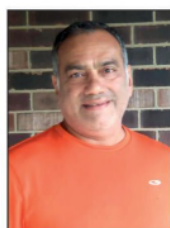
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# India refuses entry to British lawmaker critical of Kashmir policy

By Andrew MacAskill

LONDON - A British lawmaker, who chairs an all-party group on Kashmir, has been denied entry to India after she criticised the government's decision to strip the disputed Himalayan region of its constitutional autonomy.

Debbie Abrahams, a member of parliament for the opposition Labour party, landed at New Delhi's international airport on Monday but claims she was unable to clear customs after her Indian visa was rejected.

Abrahams said she had no plans to visit Kashmir during what she called a "private visit" to India to see relatives, although she had been planning to journey on to Pakistani capital Islamabad to discuss the issue.

She has been critical of the Indian government for revoking Kashmir's special status last August, which allowed the region to make its own laws, in an attempt to integrate the country's only Muslim-majority region more fully.

Abrahams said she was "treated like a criminal" and told to

leave India before being marched on to a plane bound for Dubai.

"The immigration officer looked at his screen and started shaking his head and saying 'no, no, no'," she told Sky News.

"Then he said the visa had been rejected, took my passport, went off to consult with others, kept us waiting for about ten minutes and then said: 'No, you are being denied entry'."

There was no immediate comment from the Indian government.

Kashmir is claimed by India and arch-rival Pakistan and has



FILE PHOTO: Britain's shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Debbie Abrahams, speaks during the second day of the Labour Party conference in Liverpool, Britain.

## Extradited 'Hansiegate' bookmaker

### Sanjeev Chawla in custody, say Delhi police

NEW DELHI - Delhi police have said London-based Indian bookmaker Sanjeev Chawla, who has been accused of involvement in a 2000 match-fixing scandal involving former South Africa captain Hansie Cronje, is in custody following his extradition from Britain.

The police have been seeking Chawla's extradition since naming him in their 2013 charge-sheet along with four others.

A local court has ordered Chaw-

la, who arrived in India, to remain in police custody for 12 days, a senior crime branch officer of the Delhi Police said in a statement.

The 2000 scandal, dubbed 'Hansiegate', opened the cricket world's eyes to the dangers of match-fixing, former joint commissioner KK Paul, who led the probe in 2000, told the Hindustan Times newspaper.

"This case was important for many reasons," he said after Chawla's arrival in India.

"It exposed the extent of match-fixing. Many had refused to believe such a thing could happen."

Delhi Police had been probing an unrelated extortion case when they stumbled upon a tape that eventually led to the unearthing of a scandal that rocked the game.

After initially denying fixing charges, Cronje confessed his role to an inquiry commission in South Africa. He was subsequently banned for life but died in a plane crash in 2002.

been in turmoil since New Delhi removed its autonomy and enforced the changes by deploying thousands of additional troops and imposing a communication blackout.

India has since restored limited internet connectivity, ending one of the world's longest such shutdowns in a democracy.

But many political leaders, including three former chief ministers of Jammu & Kashmir

state, are still in detention without charge six months after the crackdown, and foreign journalists have been denied permission to visit the region.

Shortly after the changes to Kashmir's status were passed by India's parliament, Abrahams wrote a letter to India's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, saying the action "betrays the trust of the people" of Kashmir.

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# Another wall goes up for Trump, this time in India



Construction workers build a wall along a slum area as part of a beautification drive along a route that U.S. President Donald Trump and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be taking during Trump's visit later this month, in Ahmedabad, India on February 13, 2020.

By Amit Dave

AHMEDABAD - U.S. President Donald Trump will be shielded from the sight of slums by a newly built wall when he visits the city of Ahmedabad during a visit to India this month.

A senior government official said the wall was being built for security reasons, not to conceal the slum district.

But the contractor building it told Reuters the government "did not want the slum to be

seen" when Trump passes by on the ride in from Ahmedabad's airport.

"I've been ordered to build a wall as soon as possible, over 150 masons are working round-the-clock to finish the project," the contractor said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The government official conceded that the wall was part of a "beautification and cleanliness" drive.

Whatever the reason, the 400-meter-long and seven-foot-

high wall will prevent the U.S. leader from getting a glimpse of a slum district that houses an estimated 800 families.

Trump, who has made his pledge to build a wall along the United States' border with Mexico a feature of his presidency, will visit India on Feb. 24-25 to reaffirm strategic ties that have been buffeted by trade disputes.

He is expected to attend an event dubbed "Kem Chho Trump" ("How are you, Trump") at a stadium in Ahmedabad along

the lines of the "Howdy Modi" extravaganza he hosted for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Houston last September.

Speaking at the White House last Tuesday, Trump quoted Modi as saying "millions and millions of people" would attend the rally.

The event provides Trump, who was impeached in December, with the opportunity to woo the support of hundreds of thousands of Indian-American voters ahead of the U.S. presidential

election in November.

But some slum dwellers whose homes will be cordoned off by the wall in Ahmedabad - the largest city in Modi's home state of Gujarat - said the government was wasting tax-payer money to hide the poor.

"Poverty and slums are the reality of our life, but Modi's government wants to hide the poor," said Parvatbhai Mafabhai, a day worker who has lived there with his family for more than three decades.

## Pakistan jails Hafiz Saaed - wanted by U.S. and India for Mumbai attacks

By Zaheer Babar

LAHORE (AP) - A Pakistani court last Wednesday handed down a five-year prison term to a radical cleric for terrorism financing.

Hafiz Saaed is wanted by Washington and New Delhi for his alleged role in the bloody 2008 Mumbai attacks that killed 166 people in neighboring India. The U.S. put a \$10 million bounty out for his arrest.

The Pakistani court was not trying the cleric in connection with

that attack, but on charges that his charity organizations, Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Falah-e-Insaniyat, are fronts for funding the militant group that he founded, Lashkar-e-Taiba. India blames that group for the deadly attacks in Mumbai.

Saaed and the four other suspects were present in the courtroom in the eastern city of Lahore when the judge announced the much-awaited verdict. Saaed was given a five-year prison term on terrorism financing charges in one case, plus six months in jail in another case registered

against him in the eastern Punjab province.

The sentences can be appealed. All five men pleaded not guilty during the trial, a government lawyer Abdul Rauf said.

Both India and the U.S. praised Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's government when it arrested the cleric last July on the charges of terror financing.

Khan's government has stepped up its efforts to get Pakistan off the Financial Action Task Force's grey list, which denotes its status as a haven for money laundering.



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# India cracks down on VPNs in Kashmir to get around social media ban

By Fayaz Bukhari

SRINAGAR - Authorities in Indian Kashmir are cracking down on virtual private network (VPN) apps used to circumvent a months-long ban on social media, police said, as part of a broader effort to quell unrest over the withdrawal of the region's autonomy.

Social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram are still blocked, even after the government restored limited mobile data service and the internet in Kashmir, so residents use VPNs or proxy servers to bypass the restrictions.

Police said many VPN users were trying to stir trouble in Kashmir and were liable to face action.

"We have identified 100 social media users and are in the process of identifying more users for misuse of social media, for disseminating fake and false secessionist, anti-India propaganda," said Kashmir cyber police chief Tahir Ashraf.

Police have filed a case against social media users who are using proxy servers to access messaging networks and stir up anti-India propaganda, a spokesman said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government revoked special privileges from Muslim-majority Kashmir in August in a bid to draw the region closer to India and end a 30-year revolt.

It detained hundreds of people and imposed a communications blackout, saying the actions were

needed to prevent people from organising street protests. On Wednesday, security forces killed three militants in the Tral area of Kashmir.

Through VPNs, users can route the data connection of a smartphone or a laptop through a private server instead of the local internet service provider's network. That allows the user to access sites that are locally blocked.

Adil Altaf, 37, a businessman in Kashmir's main city, Srinagar, said he had downloaded a dozen VPN apps on his cellphone.

"They go on blocking, I will go on shifting to other VPNs," he said.

Saleema Jan, who lives in Kashmir, said she had used a proxy server for a video chat with to her son, who is in



FILE PHOTO: Indian security forces stand guard at the site of a grenade explosion in Srinagar on February 6, 2020.

REUTERS/Danish Siddiqui

## Pakistan probes link between soybean dust and 14 deaths in port city of Karachi

By Syed Raza Hassan

KARACHI - Authorities in Pakistan are investigating if exposure to soybean dust, which can cause severe allergic reactions, is responsible for at least 14 deaths and dozens of illnesses in the southern

port city of Karachi.

More than 200 people have been hospitalised or treated for breathing problems since Sunday as authorities try to determine if a leak of toxic gas was to blame, after many patients complained of an unfamiliar odour.

"While we are working on this complex bioanalytical problem, we think this may be due to overexposure to soybean dust," Pakistan's International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences told authorities in a letter on Tuesday.

college in the northern Indian city of Chandigarh.

Modi's government has frequently curbed access to the internet in Kashmir and other parts of the country, including briefly in the capital, New Delhi, amid growing protests against a new citizenship law.

As of 2018, India led the world in internet shutdowns, according to a report by internet advocacy group Access Now, accounting

for 67% of the total recorded worldwide.

A Jammu and Kashmir telecom official said teams of software engineers were working to disrupt VPNs use in Kashmir.

"It is an ongoing process. We block some and they come up with more. It is like a cat-and-mouse game," he added, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

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# Hero worship: India's Trump superfans gear up for his arrival



Bussa Krishna, a fan of U.S. President Donald Trump, offers prayers to a statue of Trump at his house in Konney village in Telangana on February 14, 2020.

By Vinod Babu and Sunil Kataria

KONNEY - Bussa Krishna first began worshipping Donald Trump four years ago when the U.S. president appeared to him a dream.

Since then, after a run of good fortune, the Indian real estate broker has transformed his modest home into a shrine to the U.S. leader, who is due in India on Monday for a two-day visit.

"My love for him has trans-

formed into reverence. That has given me immense happiness. Hence instead of praying to other gods, I started praying to him," Krishna told Reuters.

Krishna, who lives alone in a village in the southern state of Telangana, has erected a life-size statue to Trump in his yard, while his walls are scrawled with the leader's name - to the annoyance of his extended family.

"I am facing difficulties because of my relatives," Krishna said. "They tell me that I am

disgracing them in society. I told them that just like you believe and worship Shiva, I believe and worship Trump. Neither of us can stop the other from doing so."

Krishna is not the only Indian who reveres Trump.

In New Delhi, members of the Hindu Sena, a right-wing fringe group, have begun rehearsing a welcome song in his honour.

Its members say Trump shares their hatred of Islamic extrem-

ism, and it has drawn attention for boisterous celebrations of his birthday, including pretending to feed cake to photos of his face.

"We like Donald Trump because he openly spoke about India's feelings," Hindu Sena leader Vishnu Gupta told Reuters. "...He openly said that he would eliminate Islamic terrorism from its roots, that is why I am his fan."

Trump, who like Indian Prime

Minister Narendra Modi has a reputation as an unabashed populist who shows his enemies no mercy, is making his first visit to India.

Trump's itinerary starts on Feb. 24 in the western city of Ahmedabad, where he will visit the former home of independence hero Mahatma and address an estimated 125,000 people at a rally. He is due in the capital the following day.

## Ahead of Trump's visit, Indian city cleans the swamp

By Saurabh Sharma

LUCKNOW - U.S. President Donald Trump vowed to "drain the swamp" of lobbyists and elites in Washington D.C. Now, one Indian city is racing to clean up a stagnant river as he prepares to visit.

Trump arrives in India on Feb. 24 on a maiden two-day trip that aims to repair bilateral relations hurt by a trade spat.

He plans to visit the western city of Ahmedabad and India's capital New Delhi, as well as Agra, where he will view the famed monument to love, the

Taj Mahal, at sunset.

In the city, authorities are on a clean-up drive, including the polluted waters of the Yamuna river, that backs on to the monument complex.

Jal Singh Meena, an officer with the Agra Ganga Nahar, the government body that manages the canal network that feeds into the Yamuna in Agra, said on Thursday an additional 17 million litres of water are being released from three locks in the week preceding Trump's visit on Monday - more than double the usual amount.

The extra flow had been or-

dered "to keep it clean and remove the foul smell," he told Reuters.

On Thursday, workers scrubbed walls and fountains at the monument, commissioned in 1632 by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his late wife Mumtaz, TV channels showed.

Along with polluted water, authorities are battling some of the world's filthiest air that stains the white marble of the monument, and increasingly aggressive troops of monkeys that have been known to attack visitors.

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# Burned India denim factory had single door reached by ladder

NEW DELHI (AP) - Shouting and crying, workers in an Indian denim factory struggled to claw their way up a ladder to a door, their only exit as a fire blazed through fabric and machinery, officials said. Seven people died in the weekend blaze, and families were still waiting to recover their relatives' bodies.

"Smoke kept billowing from the building as workers trapped inside screamed for help," said a witness who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was worried he'd lose his job.

The factory where the fire occurred, Nandan Denim, has ties to major U.S. retailers, according to its website. Nandan says it supplies jeans, denim and other garments to more than 20 global brands including U.S. companies such as Target, Ann Taylor, Mango and Wrangler, and its sister company supplies Walmart and H&M.

Some of the U.S. and multinational companies listed on the website said they were not actually customers, and many issued statements that strongly condemned dangerous work sites. Nandan Denim is one of the largest denim suppliers in the world.

The fire broke out in its two-

story factory on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, a fast-growing city of 8.6 million in western Gujarat state. The city's industrial area, once covered with mountains of garbage, has slowly shifted into a hub for factories that make clothes sold to brands across the world.

### MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS

Rajesh Bhatt, a senior fire official at the scene, said the factory had just one door that could only be reached by climbing a steep ladder. The workers, Bhatt said, were resting after long shifts when the fire started.

"There were hardly any means of escape from the blaze," he said.

Police investigators said the factory had violated multiple regulations and the owner, a manager and a fire safety officer have been arrested.

Local safety and health authorities asked the company to close until further notice. Its licenses have been suspended, and Nandan Denim has agreed to pay the families of those killed a reported \$14,000 each.

Purvee, a factory spokeswoman who goes by only one name, did not explain how it started but called the fire "unfortunate." Factory officials would not comment

on whether they had undergone required audits and reviews.

### WORKING CONDITIONS

Surviving workers, who are paid about 35 cents per hour, said conditions had been dangerous.

"We work almost 14 hours a day. But do we have an option?" said Vimalbhai, a textile worker who goes by one name. "Every once a while there is a fire in some factory or the other. Nobody cares and we keep on working."

Some workers said they were given impossible assignments, stitching more than 400 pieces of garments a day. This forced many of them, mostly women, to work at a frantic pace, often forgoing meal breaks or using the toilet, survivors said.

One victim, Dayabhai Makwana, made it out alive, but went back in to rescue co-workers and perished.

"I wish he hadn't gone back to save his colleagues," said his grieving brother, Dhanabai Makwana. He said more than 30 workers were in the factory at the time of the blaze.

Sobbing families were still waiting outside one of the city's hospital mortuaries to identify bodies charred beyond recogni-



Damage is seen after a fire broke out at Nandan Denim, one of the largest denim suppliers in the world, in Ahmedabad, India on Feb. 8, 2020.

tion. They were told DNA confirmation would not come before last Friday.

"We can't even mourn our dead because we don't know which one is ours," said Mahesh Patel, whose nephew lost his life in the blaze.

Amar Barot of the Textile Labour Association said working conditions in the textile factories across the city are grim, with rare inspections and few safety norms.

"These incidents are irreversible and only strict monitoring by the government and its agencies can help prevent such disasters," Barot said.

He also said labor unions across the region have been declining over the last few decades, making it difficult for the voices of workers to be heard.

investigating. Target and others did not respond to queries about whether their authorized suppliers may have purchased denim from Nandan.

Nandan Denim reported revenues of \$218 million last year, and says it exports to more than 20 countries and has more than 4,500 employees. Shares of the company were tumbling after news of the fire.



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# India's top court grants equal rights to women in army



National Cadet Corps women practice during a rehearsal for Republic Day in January in Kolkata.

NEW DELHI (AP) - India's top court on Monday ordered the federal government to grant permanent commission and command positions to female officers in the army on par with men, asserting that the government's arguments against the policy were based on gender stereotypes.

The court's decision, seen as a watershed moment for the Indian military, would mean that women can extend their short service roles in noncombat support units such as education, law and logistics until they want to retire and rise to the rank of colonel, based

on merit.

Currently, female officers can serve for only 10 to 14 years in the army.

"This is a historic decision and a significant day for not only those who are serving in the army but for also those who are desirers of joining forces," said Lt. Col. Anjali Bisht.

The Supreme Court's decision, however, does not mean that female officers will serve in army combat units such as the infantry, artillery or armored corps.

Monday's decision comes days after the government told

the court that women were not suitable for commanding posts in the army, saying male troops were not prepared yet to accept female officers. It also said that male and female officers could not be treated equally when it came to postings because the "physical capacity of women officers remains a challenge for command of units."

The court said in its order that such arguments were against the concept of equality.

Previously, former army Chief of Staff and current Chief of Defense Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat raked up a controversy when he said in an interview with a news channel that women were not ready for combat roles because they were responsible for raising

children and would accuse male officers of peeping into their quarters.

"She will say somebody is peeping, so we will have to give a sheet around her," Rawat had told CNN-News18.

The petitioners in the case demanding equal rights for female officers welcomed the court's decision.

## RK Pachauri, who led Nobel-winning climate panel, dies at 79

NEW DELHI (AP) - Indian environmentalist Rajendra Kumar Pachauri, under whose leadership a U.N. climate change panel shared the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, has died after recent heart surgery. He was 79.

Pachauri's death was announced by The Energy and Resources Institute, or TERI, a research group he headed until 2016 in New Delhi.

He chaired the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change panel from 2002 until he resigned in 2015 after an employee at his research firm accused him of sexual harassment.

The IPCC and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore were



RK Pachauri

awarded the 2007 peace prize for their efforts to expand knowledge about man-made climate change and lay the foundations for counteracting it, the Nobel committee said in its award.

Pachauri had undergone sur-

gery in a New Delhi hospital earlier this week. He died at his home, the Press Trust of India reported.

Pachauri won civilian awards from India's government in 2001 and 2008.

The allegations against Pachauri included claims that he sent suggestive text messages, e-mails and WhatsApp messages harassing a 29-year-old female employee in his organization.

Pachauri had denied the charges and his attorneys claimed that his messages were hacked in an attempt to malign him. New Delhi police filed a complaint in court, but the trial could not be completed.

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# BOLLYWOOD Insider™

## Bollywood Beat

### FIR filed against choreographer Ganesh Acharya



An FIR has been filed against celebrity choreographer Ganesh Acharya by woman assistant choreographer Divya Kotian for “forcing” her to “watch porn videos.”

A copy of the document obtained claimed that after Acharya became the general secretary of Indian Films and Television Choreographer Association, he would frequently call Kotian at the IFTCA office at Veera Desai, Andheri (West) and Mukti Rehearsal Hall.

Kotian has further told the National Commission for Women unit in Maharashtra that Acharya has been “depriving” her of work in the film industry and “demanding commissions” from income.

According to the legal document, Acharya said that whenever a coordination of any song was done, she was asked to pay Rs 500 per dancer to Acharya, else she was not allowed to do any coordination in the industry.

As she could not pay, he later asked her to be his assistant which she denied as Kotian wanted to work independently.

The complainant also claimed that whenever Kotian reached Acharya’s office she would find him watching porn videos.

“Whenever I used to reach his office for any work I always found him watching porn videos and he even asked me to watch the porn videos. He also stated that even I will enjoy watching porn videos.”

## FORTHCOMING MOVIE

### Baaghi 3

**Banner:**  
Nadiadwala Grandson  
Entertainment  
Fox Star Studios

**Producer:**  
Nadiadwala Grandson  
Entertainment  
Fox Star Studios

**Director:**  
Ahmed Khan

**Starring:**  
Tiger Shroff  
Ritesh Deshmukh  
Shraddha Kapoor

**Music By:**  
Vishal-Shekhar  
Bappi Lahiri  
Tanishk Bagchi  
Sachet-Parampara  
Rochak Kohli  
Pranaay

**Release Date:**  
March 6, 2020

*Baaghi 3* is an upcoming Indian action thriller film directed by Ahmed Khan. Produced by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment and Fox Star Studios, it is a spiritual sequel to *Baaghi* (2016) and *Baaghi 2* (2018). *Baaghi 3* stars Tiger Shroff, Ritesh Deshmukh and Shraddha Kapoor. It is an official remake of 2012 Tamil film *Vettai*. Shraddha Kapoor is playing the role of an air hostess in the movie.

Ronnie and Vikram are brothers who share an unbreakable bond. Since childhood, Ronnie

always comes to the rescue whenever Vikram falls in any trouble. Their journey begins when a certain turn in events, leads Vikram to travel in Syria to complete some work. On this trip, Vikram gets kidnapped by people who are not to be messed with but as Ronnie witnesses his brother getting beaten and kidnapped by ISIS, he knows that he will do whatever it takes to destroy anyone and anything that stands in the way of Vikram’s safety. Ronnie goes on a rampage of destruction to see his brother safe again, even if it means that he independently has to take on an entire country.

The film was announced on December 19, 2018 with Tiger Shroff by Nadiadwala Grandson Entertainment on their Twitter account by releasing a teaser poster. On February 12, 2019 Shraddha Kapoor was signed to play lead opposite Tiger Shroff. In June it was announced that Ritesh Deshmukh has joined the cast of the film. In August 2019, it was announced that shooting of the film will take place in Morocco, Egypt, Serbia and Turkey.

*Baaghi 3* has been an ambitious project not only for Tiger Shroff but for director Ahmed Khan as well. It seems that their efforts are paying off with the massive response the film’s trailer has received.

Celebrating the response to the trailer, the film’s cast and crew even celebrated the win. An inside source revealed to Mid-Day that Ahmed Khan and his wife



Shaira held an intimate party celebrating the success of the trailer. Guests at the party included Tiger Shroff with his mother Ayesha, Disha Patani, Shraddha Kapoor, Ritesh Deshmukh with his wife Genelia and others including the film’s producers. The source added that the party was an unusual one as both the hosts were not alcohol drinkers.

Trailer of Tiger Shroff, Shraddha Kapoor and Ritesh Deshmukh starrer *Baaghi 3* recently hit the internet sending

netizens into a frenzy. Users were swift to react on the third installment of the 2016 hit.

Netizens also discovered that there were similarities between the movie and Hollywood action film *Rambo* given all the bandanas that Shroff wore. Kartik Kumar, a YouTuber posted a video that highlighted stark similarities between DC comic’s *Wonder Woman* and the movie. Soon, many took to social media to spot similarities in the two movies.

## UNKNOWN FACTS ABOUT BOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES



Getting into films was not what Irrfan Khan had planned for. He was interested in a career in cricket, however, his parents were not too keen on it. It was after he earned a scholarship in NSD that he took to making a career in acting.



Katrina Kaif is the first ever Bollywood actor to have a Barbie doll modelled on her, joining the likes of Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor.

### Top 3 Bollywood Films

- 1) **Love Aaj Kal** - Directed by Imtiaz Ali  
Starring: Kartik Aryan and Sara Ali Khan
- 2) **Malang** - Directed by Mohit Suri  
Starring: Aditya Roy Kapur, Disha Patani, Anil Kapoor and Kunal Khemu
- 3) **Street Dancer 3D** - Directed by Remo D’Souza  
Starring: Varun Dhawan, Shraddha Kapoor, Prabhu Deva and Noora Fatehi

### Top 10 Bollywood Film Songs

- 10) “Panga” - *Panga*
- 9) “Lagdi Lahore Di” - *Street Dancer 3D*
- 8) “Gabru” - *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*
- 7) “Shayad” - *Love Aaj Kal*
- 6) “Haan Main Galat” - *Love Aaj Kal*
- 5) “Gallan Kardi” - *Jawaani Jaaneman*
- 4) “Ole Ole 2.0” - *Jawaani Jaaneman*
- 3) “Arey Pyaar Kar Le” - *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*
- 2) “Phir Na Milen Kabhi” - *Malang*
- 1) “Dus Bahane 2.0” - *Baaghi 3*

### Bollywood Trivia

**Who played the female lead in the movie ‘Baaghi 2’?**

- 1) Disha Patani
- 2) Shraddha Kapoor
- 3) Vani Kapoor
- 4) Anushka Sharma

**Who is the director of the movie ‘Love Aaj Kal’?**

- 1) Anurag Kashyap
- 2) Imtiaz Ali
- 3) Farhan Akhtar
- 4) Kabir Khan



# BOLLYWOOD Insider™

## MOVIE REVIEW

### Love Aaj Kal

**Banner:**  
Maddock Films  
Window Seat Films  
Reliance Entertainment  
Jio Studios

**Producer:**  
Dinesh Vijan  
Imtiaz Ali

**Director:**  
Imtiaz Ali

**Starring:**  
Kartik Aaryan  
Sara Ali Khan

**Music By:**  
Pritam

**Released Date:**  
February 14, 2020

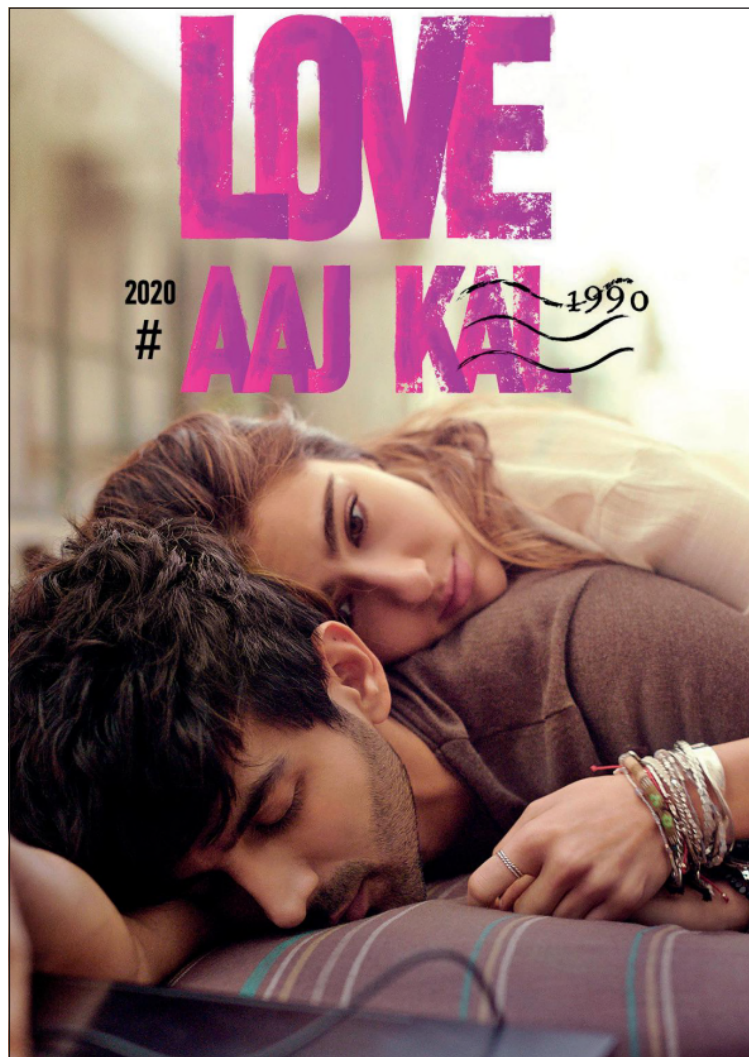
11 years ago, Imtiaz Ali, fresh out of the super-success of *Jab We Met* [2007], presented his next, *Love Aaj Kal* [2009]. It was a unique film for that time as it focused on not one, but two love stories, set in different eras. Also, lead actor Saif Ali Khan played the lover boy in both the tracks and that also ensured the film stood out. Director Imtiaz Ali now uses this idea once again in a film, which is also titled *Love Aaj Kal*. It features Kartik Aaryan and Sara Ali Khan and their chemistry has already become a talking point. So does *Love Aaj Kal* manage to be as excellent as its predecessor? Or does it fail? Let's analyse.

*Love Aaj Kal* is the story that tackles the ever-changing dynamic of being in and finding love. Veer (Kartik Aaryan) and Zoe (Sara Ali Khan) are based in Delhi and they meet one night at a nightclub. Both attempt to get intimate but Veer backs off at the last minute. Veer however realises Zoe is special to him. He finds out that she works from a co-working space. He also lands up there. Zoe is at first irritated with him but she's interested in him. Meanwhile, Raj (Randeep Hooda), the owner of the co-working

space, witnesses their love blossoming in front of his eyes. Zoe shares her views with Raj that she wants to have a casual relationship and doesn't want to get into a serious relationship so soon. At this, Raj begins to narrate his own story. This is a time when he was Raghu (Kartik Aaryan) and was a school kid in Udaipur. He is crazily in love with Leena (Arushi Sharma). She too falls for him and one day, both get caught. Her family asks her to move to Delhi. Raghu, madly in love, follows her to the capital city. He starts to work as a waiter. Zoe is enchanted to hear about Raj's story. She decides to give love a chance. She gets a job offer from Dubai and she deletes the mail as she doesn't want to be away from Veer. However, this is when Raj drops the bomb. He reveals to Zoe that Raghu breaks up with Leena as he turns into a playboy. This and her mother's (Simone Singh) constant reminder that she shouldn't sacrifice career for love gives her a jolt. What happens next forms the rest of the film.

Imtiaz Ali's story is decent. The basic plot makes an interesting comment and if handled well, it could have made for a great romantic film. Imtiaz Ali's screenplay however doesn't do complete justice. A few scenes are very relatable as it talks about the complexities of today's times. But on the flipside, it's also quite unconvincing. Dialogues are a bit philosophical and could have been simpler yet meaningful.

Imtiaz Ali's direction is not upto the mark. He gets a few things right. The use of graffiti on the walls and parallels being drawn between the two stories does impress. A few scenes are very well handled and bear his stamp. But there are times when one does wonder where the film is going. Some scenes don't have the desired impact and even end up being unintentionally funny. He also leaves loose ends and a few subplots don't get the logical conclusion. Imtiaz also doesn't



focus on backstories of his characters. This was something seen even with Shah Rukh Khan's character in *JAB Harry Met Sejal* [2017]. In the case of *Love Aaj Kal*, Veer seems socially awkward and one doesn't understand why that's so.

Talking of performances, both Kartik Aaryan and Sara Ali Khan give their best shot. Kartik gets to do something different and excels. In a few scenes, he ups the humour quotient as well. His intense look is watchable. Sara too follows her director's instructions to the T and in a few scenes, you do see her brilliance. However, her character is so weird that despite her best efforts, it comes across as a caricature. Randeep Hooda is dependable. But few of his scenes get repetitive after a point. Arushi Sharma is sweet and has a fine screen presence. Simone Singh is

fair. Others do well.

Amit Roy's cinematography is quite great in some sequences. But in some close up shots, it is not upto the mark. Suman Roy Mahapatra's production design is quite stylish, especially in present day portions. Aki Narula's costumes are quite appealing, especially the ones worn by Sara and by Kartik in present day track. Aarti Bajaj's editing is sans complaints.

On the whole, *Love Aaj Kal* is strictly for the youth and romantic at heart. At the box office, it will start on a positive note on the account of its novel cast and the festive (Valentine's Day) period. The business will be decent across urban multiplexes while business at single screens may remain average.

**Rating:** ★★☆☆

### Bollywood Beat

#### Big Boss: Sidharth takes the winner's trophy home




And, the wait is over! Sidharth Shukla, probably the most-talked-about the participant of *Bigg Boss 13*, was announced as the winner at the grand finale. After weeks of an extremely eventful journey, the show has come to an end. All the finalists i.e. Sidharth, Rashami Desai, and Asim Riaz had their fans rooting for them and the social media was literally flooded since morning, with Twitterati cheering for their favourite contestants. However, Sidharth had the last laugh.

Ahead of the announcement, Sidharth Shukla and Asim Riaz walked out of the Bigg Boss 13 house and switched off the lights for one last time. They joined Salman Khan on stage as the superstar announced Sidharth as the winner.

Asim, who we know to be a dedicated admirer of ex-housemate Himanshi Khurana, is a winner of *Splitsvilla 5*. Recently, he was all over the news after legendary WWE wrestler John Cena rooted for him on Instagram. While he has had a couple of ugly spats especially with Sidharth, he is known for his cordiality.

The grand finale night was a spectacular one, as host Salman Khan himself took to the stage and danced to a number of his popular tracks. Sidharth and Asim put up a performance on a song from *Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior* while Sidharth and Rashami were also seen creating an intensely romantic ambience as they danced to 'Ang Laga De' from *Ram Leela*.

### Celebrity Birthdays

February 22nd Sooraj Barjatya (1964)	February 26th Veena Malik (1984)	March 3rd Shraddha Kapoor (1987)
February 23rd Purab Kohli (1979)	February 27th Prakash Jha (1952)	March 6th Janhvi Kapoor (1997)
February 24th Sameer (1958)	February 28th Hazel Keech (1987)	
Pooja Bhatt (1972)	Jayamala (1959)	
February 25th Shahid Kapoor (1981)	March 2nd Tiger Shroff (1990)	

### Upcoming Films

<b>Gulabo Sitabo</b> Ayushmann Khurrana, Amitabh Bachchan and Nalneesh Neel	<b>Chhalaang</b> Nusrat Bharucha, Rajkumar Rao and Jatin Sarna	<b>Thalaivi</b> Kangana Ranaut and Vijay Deverakonda
<b>Angrezi Medium</b> Kareena Kapoor, Irrfan Khan, and Deepak Dobriyal	<b>Shamshera</b> Ranbir Kapoor	<b>Sooryavanshi</b> Akshay Kumar, Katrina Kaif, Ranveer Singh and Ajay Devgn
<b>Gunjan Saxena</b> Janhvi Kapoor and Angad Bedi	<b>Brahmastra</b> Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt and Amitabh Bachchan	<b>83</b> Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone



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# Bharatiya Janata Party defeated in Delhi election

By Alasdair Pal and Devjyot Ghoshal

NEW DELHI - India's ruling party was projected to lose a key state election, the vote count showed, in its first electoral test since deadly anti-government protests erupted nearly two months ago.

The Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi won a bigger majority in a general election in May, but it has lost a string of state elections

since then.

The protests, in which at least 25 people have been killed, erupted across the country in mid-December, after the BJP passed a new citizenship law critics say violates India's secular constitution and discriminates against minority Muslims.

In counting for state polls held in India's capital New Delhi, data from India's Election Commission showed the liberal Aam Aadmi Party, led by the city's chief minister, Arvind Kejriwal, leading 57 out of 70 seats.

The BJP ran a campaign accusing protesters of supporting India's arch-rival Pakistan and was projected to win 13 seats, up from three in 2015 but far below its own expectations. The party's local chief Manoj Tiwari had predicted it would win a majority.

AAP activists in distinctive white boat-shaped caps danced outside party headquarters in New Delhi as the result became clear, TV channels showed.

Neelanjana Sircar, an assistant professor at Ashoka University near New Delhi, said that local



Supporters of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) celebrate after learning of the initial poll results outside its party headquarters in New Delhi, India.

REUTERS/Anushree Fadnis

## India buys drones, specialist equipment to avert new locust attack

By Mayank Bhardwaj and Rajendra Jadhav

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI - India is buying drones and specialist equipment to monitor the movement of locusts and spray insecticides to ward off a new outbreak that could ravage crops, government officials said.

Earlier this year, Indian authorities were able to bring swarms of desert locusts under control, but an outbreak in neighbouring Pakistan has again raised concerns

about the safety of crops such as wheat and oilseeds in India.

"Other than ensuring the availability of large quantities of insecticides, we're buying drones and sprayers to beef up our readiness to deal with the attack," one of the sources said.

Locust swarms can fly up to 150 km (90 miles) a day with the wind, and adult insects can consume roughly their own weight in fresh food per day. A small swarm eats as much in one day as about 35,000 people.

The plague has already caused extensive damage to pastures and crops and threatened food security in several countries over the Indian Ocean.

Pakistan, which is facing the worst locust infestation in two decades, has declared a national emergency.

New Delhi is also sending civil servants to some of the most vulnerable areas in western and northern India to assess how prepared local authorities are to deal with any likely invasion.

issues, including delivery of basic services like education and health, appeared to sway voters towards the AAP, even as the BJP ran a polarising campaign on the back of Modi's image.

"Modi is a larger than life character at the national level, which obviously gives the BJP a huge advantage in national politics," Sircar said.

"But it doesn't translate to state level politics, where the BJP often doesn't have a charismatic face."

Bespectacled former bureaucrat Kejriwal, 51, formed AAP in 2012 amid an anti-corruption movement that swept India.

The party won a stunning victory in 2015 state elections in the capital, wiping out the BJP and Congress, the party that has ruled India for half its post-independence history.

The Congress - the main opposition at national level - was projected to win no seats in Delhi, data showed, reflecting the deep decline in its fortunes.

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## BUSINESS

## BIZ BRIEFS

## India's car sales fall in January as economy slows

Car sales in India fell for the 15th consecutive month in January, as slowing economic growth and rising cost of car ownership made consumers reluctant to spend, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) said.

Passenger vehicle sales fell 6.2% in January to 262,714 units from 280,091 units in 2019. But sales of sport-utility vehicles (SUVs) rose 2.6%, helped by the launch of new models, data released by SIAM showed.

Sales of motorbikes and scooters, widely seen as an indicator of the health of the rural economy, fell 16% in January, while sales of trucks, a barometer of overall economic growth, dropped 14%.

## Reliance to merge businesses into TV unit

Reliance Industries Ltd said it would merge its media and distribution businesses into its TV business, Network18 Media & Investments Ltd.

Under the plan, the Indian conglomerate's TV18 Broadcast Ltd, Hathway Cable and Datacom Ltd and Den Networks Ltd businesses will consolidate into Network18, the company said.

The company's news broadcasting business of TV18 will be housed in Network18 and the cable and broadband businesses of Den and Hathway will be two separate wholly owned subsidiaries of Network18, Reliance said.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani, controls Network18 through various subsidiaries of his oil-to-telecoms conglomerate Reliance Industries.

## Going to India: Trump set to open world's biggest cricket stadium

By Sumit Khanna

AHMEDABAD - U.S. President Donald Trump will inaugurate the world's largest cricket stadium when he arrives in Ahmedabad, the home base of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Monday at the start of a two-day visit aimed at smoothing ties strained by trade disputes.

Making his first official trip to the world's largest democracy, Trump is also expected to visit the humble abode of India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi in Ahmedabad.

The leaders of China, Japan and Israel have all visited Ahmedabad since Modi became prime minister. It is the biggest city in Gujarat, the western state where Modi made his mark as chief minister before his Hindu nationalist party swept to power in 2014.

If his Indian hosts can help it, Trump probably won't see a slum as they've ordered for a 400-metre wall to be built along his route to block the view of where poor people live.

Authorities in Ahmedabad expect to spend around 800 million to 850 million Indian rupees (\$11-12 million) on preparations for the visit by the American president that is likely to last around three hours, two government officials with direct knowledge of the plans told Reuters.

The sum is equivalent to equivalent to about 1.5% of the annual budget for the home ministry in Gujarat.

Security-related costs, with more than 12,000 police officers expected to be deployed, will account for almost half the expense, said the officials, who declined to be named as they are not authorised to speak publicly about



FILE PHOTO: A worker paints footpath in front of Sardar Patel Gujarat Stadium, where U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to visit during his upcoming trip to India, in Ahmedabad, India on February 14, 2020.

the visit.

Ahmedabad municipal commissioner Vijay Nehra, the city's top civic official, told Reuters that authorities had already spent around 300 million rupees

(\$4.2 million) on widening roads and improving infrastructure around the new cricket stadium.

With capacity for 110,000 spectators, the Motera Stadium will dislodge the Melbourne Cricket Ground as the world's largest cricket stadium.

"Eighteen roads of about 20 kilometers (12 miles) in length from Ahmedabad Airport to Motera Stadium have been widened or re-laid," Nehra said, adding that the improvements had been planned before Trump's visit was confirmed.

A further 60 million Indian rupees (\$840,000) will go on "beautification" of the city, said Nehra, including erecting the wall to spare Trump's view.

Ashok Brahmabhatt, secretary of Gujarat Cricket Association, which owns the Motera Stadium set to be opened by Trump, said it would also spend tens of millions of rupees during the event.

Nehra tweeted on Sunday that more than 100,000 participants had registered so far to greet Trump as he heads from the airport to the city centre. Trump said last week Modi had promised "millions and millions" of people would line his route.

## Trump to woo Indian executives during New Delhi visit

NEW DELHI - U.S. President Donald Trump will meet executives of large Indian companies with interests in the United States as he looks to drum up investments during his visit to New Delhi this month.

Executives of some of the companies expected to attend the meeting include Indian oil & gas company Reliance Industries, diversified group Tata Sons and auto sector companies such as Bharat Forge, Mahindra and Mahindra and Motherson, industry and business sources told Reuters.

Trump is scheduled to make his first visit as president to India on Feb. 24-25 during which he will travel to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state of Gujarat followed by talks in New Delhi. The two countries are try-

ing to sign a trade deal during his visit.

On Feb. 25, a meeting is being planned between Trump and Indian executives, especially those focussing on job creation and manufacturing in the United States, the sources said.

The meeting, which will be held in New Delhi, was unlikely to include executives of U.S. companies, they said.

Creating new jobs and boosting manufacturing is critical for Trump in his re-election bid later this year. U.S. factory activity rebounded in January but only after it contracted for five straight months.

"President (Trump) is keen on acknowledging Indian companies which are focussing on manufacturing in the United States," said a Washington-based source

aware of the plans.

United States is a key market for several Indian firms.

Mahindra last year said it will invest another \$1 billion in the United States and was committed to creating American jobs, while Bharat Forge has announced plans to invest \$56 million to set up a new plant in North Carolina.

The \$100-billion Tata Group says it is one of the largest Indian-headquartered multinationals in North America, with 13 companies and more than 35,000 employees.

The Confederation of Indian Industries and U.S.-India trade groups have suggested several Indian executives for the Trump meeting and the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi was reviewing that, one source said, adding the final list was yet to be finalised.

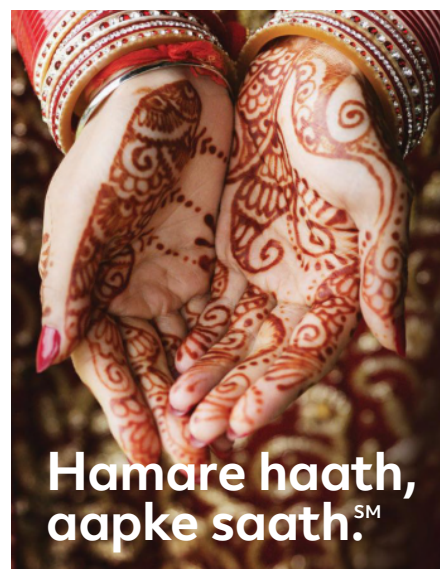
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# Amazon, Flipkart seek rollback of new Indian tax on online sellers

By Manoj Kumar and Sankalp Phartiyal

NEW DELHI - Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart are among online retailers demanding that India scale back a proposed tax on third-party sellers on their platforms, saying the burden of compliance will hurt the fledgling industry, according to documents seen by Reuters.

The online retail industry is braced for a possible 1% tax on each sale made by sellers on their platforms from April if the proposal is approved by parliament next month.

The move is part of a broader plan by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to increase tax revenues and counter a sharp economic slowdown due to weakening consumer demand.

But the tax will hurt the country's fledgling e-commerce sector, according to a presentation prepared by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for the government and seen by Reuters.

"(It) would cause irreparable loss to the entire industry with increased compliance burden," the lobby group said on behalf of e-commerce companies. "This

will also lead to reduced trading activity."

Another influential lobby group, the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), is asking the government to give e-commerce firms more time to comply with the tax proposal.

It wants the implementation of the new tax to be deferred to April 1, 2021, or later, according to a copy of its proposal reviewed by Reuters.

Amazon declined to comment. A spokesman for Bengaluru-based Flipkart said it was working with industry chambers to voice sellers' concerns and highlight the increased cost of compliance.

The Finance Ministry also declined to comment.

In an interview with TV channel ET Now this month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the measure was not an "additional burden" as taxpayers would have an option to offset it later.

"Eventually, if you're a taxpayer, that's going to be offset," she said. "Why should every TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) be seen as additional tax?"

Retail industry executives have asked the government

not to levy the new tax on the amount they contribute to a nationwide goods and services tax. They have also expressed concerns about how long refunds could take.

### 'EXTREMELY DETRIMENTAL'

Some third-party sellers are also pushing back against the tax, arguing it would negatively impact their working capital, adding that they already contribute to the nationwide sales tax.

This tax will be "extremely detrimental to the growth and sustenance" of small online sellers and make the model "unviable", Unexo Life Sciences, a seller of healthcare products on Amazon's India website, said in an email to the Central Board of Direct Taxes that was reviewed by Reuters.

Online vendors, or sellers with revenue of less than half a million rupees in the previous year, as well as bricks-and-mortar retailers, will be exempted from the new tax, although they are subject to the nationwide sales tax.

India's e-commerce sector is expected to reach \$200 billion by 2026 as rising smartphone



REUTERS/Katherine Taylor/File Photo

FILE PHOTO: Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon and Blue Origin speaks during the JFK Space Summit, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the moon landing, at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S. on June 19, 2019.

use and cheap data help hundreds of millions to shop online for everything from groceries to furniture. But companies such as Amazon and Flipkart have also had to face tighter regulations and an antitrust probe.

The tax would apply to the income of drivers on ride-hailing firms such as Uber and Ola as well as sales on restaurant aggregators including Zomato and Swiggy.

Ola and Uber declined to comment, while Swiggy and Zomato did not respond to requests for comment.


Modi is pushing to expand India's tax base to hundreds of thousands of manufacturers, food sellers and cab drivers who currently do not pay income tax, a senior Finance Ministry official said. Modi has said just about 15 million of India's 1.3 billion people pay income tax.

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# Trump says working on a very big trade deal with India, but will take time



U.S. President Donald Trump talks to reporters prior to boarding Air Force One as he departs Washington for campaign travel to California from Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, U.S. on February 18, 2020.

By Sanjeev Miglani

NEW DELHI - President Donald Trump said the United States and India were working on a major trade deal, but he was not sure if it would be completed before the U.S. presidential election in November.

As Trump heads to India on his first official trip, negotiators have been trying for weeks to put together a limited accord giving

the U.S. greater access to India's dairy and poultry markets and lowering tariffs on other products.

But no breakthrough has yet been announced and a planned trip by United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer was cancelled, underlining the difficulties the two sides face in narrowing differences ahead of Trump's visit.

"We can have a trade deal with India, but I'm really saving the

big deal for later on," Trump told reporters on Tuesday, outside Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland.

"We're doing a very big trade deal with India. We'll have it. I don't know if it'll be done before the election, but we'll have a very big deal with India," he said, in a transcript of remarks released by the White House.

The United States is India's second largest trade partner after China, with their goods and services trade hitting a record \$142.6 billion in 2018.

Last year, the United States had a \$23.2 billion goods trade deficit in 2019 with India, its 9th largest trading partner in goods.

Since Trump took office in 2017, long-standing trade differences between the world's biggest democracies have come to the fore, with Trump calling India the tariff king.

The two have warred over everything from tariffs on farm goods to Harley Davidson motorbikes and price caps on medical devices and India's new rules on local data storage.

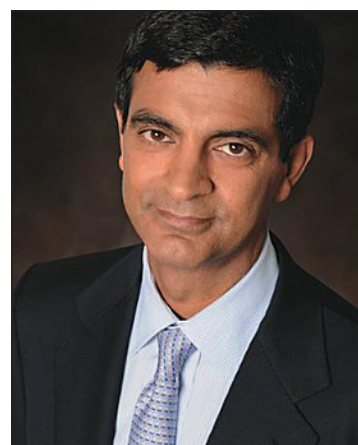
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has tried to build a personal rapport with Trump, is pulling out all the stops for his visit, hosting him next week in Gujarat for a reception in a cricket stadium.

"We're not treated very well by India, but I happen to like Prime Minister Modi a lot. And he told me we'll have 7 million people between the airport and the event," Trump said, referring to a roadshow ahead of a "Hello Trump" rally in Ahmedabad, the main city in Gujarat where he will begin the trip.

## WeWork appoints Indian-origin real estate veteran Sandeep Mathrani as CEO

Office space provider WeWork on Sunday announced that Indian-origin executive Sandeep Mathrani will join the Company as Chief Executive Officer and a member of the Board of Directors, effective February 18, 2020.

This follows just a week after Indian-origin Arvind Krishna was appointed IBM CEO, further extending the presence of the Indian diaspora in top positions of major companies across the world. Mathrani joins a growing



Sandeep Mathrani

list which includes Sundar Pichai of Alphabet, Satya Nadella of Microsoft, and Indra Nooyi, former CEO of PepsiCo.

"I am honoured to be joining WeWork at this pivotal time in its history. The Company has redefined how people and companies approach work with an innovative platform, exceptionally talented team and significant potential if we stick to our shared values and maintain our members-first focus," Mathrani said.

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## Rahul repays Kohli's faith with superb limited overs form

WELLINGTON - KL Rahul's strong run of form in New Zealand, capped last Tuesday with his fourth one-day international century, has not only repaid the faith of captain Virat Kohli but will also likely ensure him a much longer run in India's limited overs team.

Rahul rounded off his superb contribution during the limited overs portion of the tour with

his century, which he brought up from 104 deliveries, in the third and final match at Bay Oval in Mt. Maunganui.

The 27-year-old wicketkeeper/batsman was dismissed for 112 in India's innings of 296-7 as they looked for a morale-boosting victory in the series, having already lost the first two games.

Rahul was the second top-

scorer for India in the three-match series with 88 not out, four and 112 to bring up 204 runs at an average of 102. Shreyas Iyer scored 217 runs at 72.33.

Rahul also topped the run scoring for India in the five-match Twenty20 series, which the visitors swept 5-0, with 224 runs at 56 and his form kept exciting young wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant out of the team for



India's KL Rahul in action during ICC Cricket World Cup.

## Women's Twenty20: India's top four must bat deeper to support middle order - Smriti Mandhana



India's Smriti Mandhana in action during Women's Cricket World Cup.

SYDNEY - Indian's explosive top order needs to bat longer to support their wobbly middle order in the Women's Twenty20 World Cup in Australia, opener Smriti Mandhana said last Saturday.

Mandhana, teenaged duo of Shafali Verma and Jemima Rodrigues and captain Harmanpreet Kaur headline what Australia coach Matthew Mott described

as the most feared batting line-up in the tournament.

Their middle order, however, looked vulnerable in Wednesday's tri-series final against Australia in Melbourne.

Chasing 156 for victory, India looked very much on the course before their spectacular collapse when they lost seven wickets for only 29 runs as the hosts triumphed by 11 runs.

"The middle order could definitely improve," Mandhana said.

"There are some things we still have to figure out with our batting and we are trying hard to do that.

"The best way to support the middle order is for the top order to bat 20 overs. I think we need to try and bat long as top four.

"We must try not to get out in the 16th or 17th over and the problem will be sorted if we can stay until the 20th over."

India will take on defending champions Australia in the Feb. 21 tournament opener in Sydney and Mandhana expects the top order to fire them deep into the tournament.

"We have some great batters and our order is very balanced. The top four or five are quite settled," said the 23-year-old southpaw.

"We've had the same top five for the last year and that's been a good thing for us."

both formats.

His versatility - he opened in the Twenty20 matches and batted at number five in the 50-over format - allowed India to play an extra batsmen during both series.

Kohli has said they would use the white ball part of their tour to experiment with the Twenty20 World Cup on the horizon in Australia later this year.

Rahul, who replaced Pant in last month's one-day home series against Australia when the 22-year-old suffered a concussion, was key to those plans, the skipper said before they arrived in New Zealand.

"Him doing well with the gloves has really opened up a scenario for us where it gives us a lot more balance in playing

an extra batsman," Kohli told reporters last month.

"I know there will be a lot said about that ... but the most important thing is what the team requires and the best balance we can create for the side."

While he was able to count on Rahul and Iyer for the bulk of India's runs throughout both limited overs series, Kohli, the world's top-ranked test and ODI batsman, scored just 75 runs at 25 in the one-dayers and 105 runs at 26.25 in the Twenty20 matches.

He normally averages 59.58 in one-dayers and 50.80 in Twenty20s.

The first match of the two-test series starts on Feb. 21 in Wellington. Both Rahul and Iyer will return home before it starts.

## India to play day-night test in Australia, says Ganguly

NEW DELHI - India have agreed to play a day-night test in Australia during the team's 2020-21 tour, board president Sourav Ganguly has said.

India declined Australia's offer to play a day-night test during their most recent tour Down Under in 2018/19 and were the last major cricket-playing country to play a pink-ball match when they hosted Bangladesh in Kolkata in November.

"A formal announcement will come soon but we have decided to play a day-night test in Australia," former captain Ganguly

told in edition of the Times of India newspaper.

"We will also play one against England at home next February. Day-night tests will be a regular feature from now on."

Ganguly and Cricket Australia (CA) were not immediately available for comment.

CA had originally suggested playing two day-night tests during the tour but Ganguly had rejected that idea in December.

Ganguly, who took the reins of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) last October, has said he wanted India to play

at least one day-night test in every series.

Officials view day-night tests as having the potential to reverse the dwindling attendances seen in some venues as Twenty20 cricket continues to grow in popularity around the world.

CA is expected to announce the series schedule next month but media reports both in India and Australia point to Brisbane or Adelaide, which hosted the first pink-ball test in 2015, as being the venue for the day-night test against India.

## No more Saturday double-headers, IPL begins on March

NEW DELHI - Defending Indian Premier League (IPL) champions Mumbai Indians will host three-time winners Chennai Super Kings in the first match of this year's edition on March 29, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) said.

The IPL will run six days

longer than last year, it added, with the extra days necessitated by the decision to do away with double-headers on Saturdays, limiting them to only Sundays.

While the BCCI revealed the league fixtures it did not disclose the venue of the May 24 final for the eight-team tournament, which

begins 11 days after India's home ODI series against South Africa.

The Steve Smith-led Rajasthan Royals begin their campaign at Chennai on April 2 with Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler expected to join the side after England wrap up a two-test series in Sri Lanka in late March.

## Latham, De Grandhomme lead NZ to series sweep of India

WELLINGTON - Tom Latham and Colin de Grandhomme ensured New Zealand did not waste a solid foundation from their top order to beat India by five wickets in the third one-day international at Bay Oval in Mt. Maunganui and seal a 3-0 series sweep.

Latham scored a composed 32 not out while de Grandhomme's aggressive 21-ball half century took New Zealand to 300-5 in 47.1 overs after KL Rahul's fourth ODI hundred had guided India to 296-7.

New Zealand had wrapped up the three-match series after a four-wicket win in Hamilton and 22-run victory in Auckland, making some amends for India's 5-0 sweep of the Twenty20 series.

Martin Guptill (66) and Henry Nicholls had given New Zealand a perfect platform with a 106-run opening stand to put their side on course for an easy victory.

Yuzvendra Chahal, however, produced a sumptuous leg break

that pitched on leg and turned to hit the off stump to dismiss Guptill when it looked as if he was set to score his 17th ODI century.

Chahal also dismissed captain Kane Williamson for 22 and India dragged themselves back into the match when they dismissed Ross Taylor (12) and Nicholls (80) within the space of six balls and reduced the hosts to 189-4 in the 33rd over.

Latham and De Grandhomme (58 not out), however, complemented each other perfectly to put on 80 runs in 46 deliveries and take New Zealand to a comfortable win in the end.

Earlier, Rahul continued his superb run of form in white ball cricket in New Zealand.

Rahul scored 112 from 113 balls and combined with Shreyas Iyer (62) in a 100-run partnership and then added 107 with Manish Pandey, who scored 42, to give India a competitive total.

The first match of the two-test series starts at Wellington's Basin Reserve on Feb. 21.



# Getting lots of exercise tied to lower risk of kidney disease



People who get plenty of physical activity may be less likely than their more sedentary counterparts to develop chronic kidney disease, a recent study suggests.

By Lisa Rapaport

People who get plenty of physical activity may be less likely than their more sedentary counterparts to develop chronic kidney disease, a recent study suggests.

Researchers followed almost 200,000 Taiwanese adults without kidney disease for up to 18 years. Compared to people who

were least active, those who got the most exercise were 9% less likely to develop kidney disease over the study period.

“Our results show that regular exercise may mitigate age-related deterioration in kidney function and the risk of chronic kidney disease,” said study co-author Xiang Qian Lao of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Kidney disease is a leading cause of death and disability worldwide, in part because people with the condition tend to have poor circulation and an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes, researchers note in the British Journal of Sports Medicine.

While prior studies have shown that exercise can reduce the risk of heart disease, it hasn't been clear if regular workouts might also help prevent kidney damage.

During the study, about 11,000 people, or 5.6%, developed chronic kidney disease. Researchers followed most participants for four years or more.

After adjusting for other kidney risk factors, the study team found that even people with low levels of physical activity were 7% less likely than those who were sedentary to develop kidney dysfunction. People with moderate physical activity levels had a 6% lower risk.

While the study wasn't designed to prove whether or how exercise might reduce the risk of kidney disease, it's possible that some of the same things that are good for heart health may also be good for kidney health, Lao

said by email.

“Chronic kidney disease, shares many common risk factors with diabetes and cardiovascular disease,” Lao said. “Exercise may reduce the risk of chronic kidney disease through decreasing the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.”

While kidney function can decrease gradually over time as people age, many people with healthy lifestyle habits maintain good kidney function throughout their lives. People who smoke, are obese, have a family history of kidney problems, or who have heart disease all are more likely to develop chronic kidney disease.

One limitation of the study is that researchers assessed exercise habits by surveying participants, not by using activity trackers to objectively measure how much or how intensely people exercised.

Also, researchers identified people with chronic kidney disease based on the results of a single lab test. Clinicians typically diagnose the condition based on two or more tests.

Still, the results build on earlier research suggesting that exercise might help avoid

kidney disease, said Dr. Michal Melamed of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Medical Center in New York City.

“This is important for patients because physical activity is easily modifiable,” Melamed, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. “So, if people are concerned about their kidney function, if they have a family or personal history of kidney disease, it is probably a good idea to not lead a very sedentary lifestyle.”

Doctors typically recommend that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week.

While these guidelines don't directly address the risk of kidney disease, they are not a bad goal.

“It seems to be important to exercise regularly, every week and probably several times every week,” Melamed said. “The people in this study, in the highest group of physical activity, either walked a little more than an hour every day or ran at least 2 hours a week, while the people in the lowest group walked less than 15 minutes a day.”

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# Inactive teens may be more prone to depression

By Lisa Rapaport

Sedentary teens may be more likely than their active peers to be depressed, and a new study suggests even light exercise like walking might help reduce this risk.

Following more than 4,000 young people from age 12 to age 18, researchers found physical activity levels declined as kids got older. But those who were the most sedentary at ages 12 through 16 were the most likely to have symptoms of depression at 18.

Conversely, kids who maintained or increased light physical activity across the years had the lowest depression risk at 18.

“Our results suggest young people should aim to reduce their sedentary behavior and increase their light activity during adolescence, a time when the opposite tends to occur,” said lead study author Aaron Kandola of University College London in the UK. “This could reduce the risk of depression in the future.”

“Most children should have no trouble finding 60 minutes a day for activity, whatever form it takes,” Kandola said.

The structure of the school

day is a major source of inactivity and sedentary behavior, Kandola said by email.

“Simple changes could be tried to address this, such as active/interactive classes, active homework, activity breaks in the middle of lessons, increasing the walking distance between classes, implementing standing desks for some lessons,” Kandola said.

While previous studies have linked exercise to improved physical and mental health, much of this research has focused on adults and failed to objectively measure exercise levels, Kandola and his colleagues note in *The Lancet Psychiatry*.

For the study, the researchers analyzed data on 4,257 young people who wore accelerometers for a week when they were 12, 14 and 16 years old. Participants also completed questionnaires designed to identify any symptoms of depression or other mental health disorders at age 18.

Accelerometers objectively measured when participants engaged in light activity like walking or more intense exercise like running or cycling. The devices also recorded periods when teens were sedentary, doing things like homework or playing

video games.

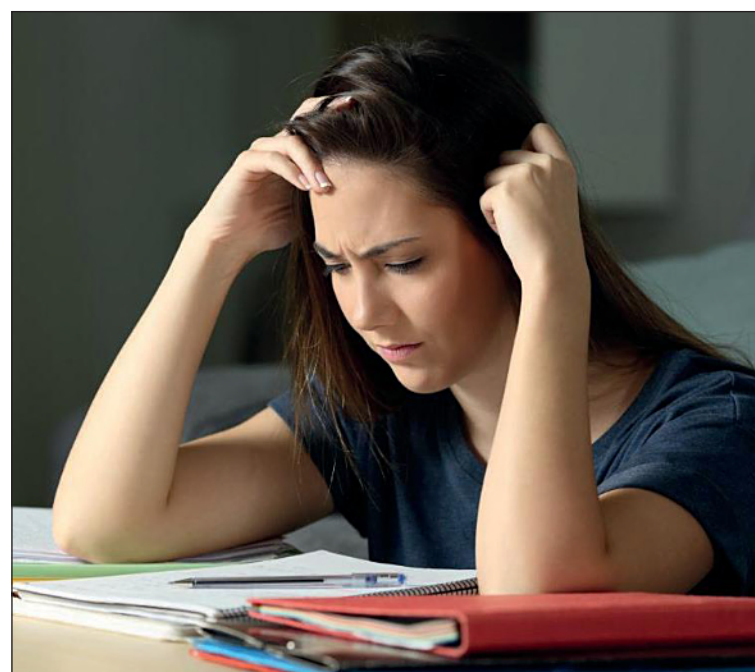
Between ages 12 and 16, participants’ average daily sedentary time increased from about seven hours to almost nine hours. Over this same period, their average daily time devoted to light activity like walking or doing chores dropped from about five hours to around two hours.

Each additional hour of sedentary time at ages 12 and 14 was associated with an 8% to 11% higher risk of depression symptoms by age 18, the study found. The reverse was also true, with each additional 60 minutes per day of light physical activity lowering the odds of depression at age 18 by 8% to 11%.

Even though the study wasn’t designed to prove whether or how sedentary time might compromise mood, or how activity might make mental health problems less likely, the findings are in line with past research in adults, the authors note.

It’s possible activity improves self-esteem, reduces inflammation or stimulates the growth of new neurons in the brain, they write.

“Exercise has been linked to neurogenesis (the forming of new brain cells) and neuroplas-



Sedentary teens may be more likely than their active peers to be depressed, and a new study suggests even light exercise like walking might help reduce this risk.

ticity (ability for the brain to rewire and make new connections), which can be protective for mental health,” said Karmel Choi, a researcher at Massachusetts General Hospital and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in Boston who

coauthored a commentary accompanying the study.

“When people are getting more physical activity, their bodies also tend to be less reactive to stress and show lower levels of inflammation, a risk factor for depression,” Choi said by email.

## Virtual reality may help relieve pain during childbirth

By Rob Goodier

Immersion in virtual reality may relieve some of the pain of contractions before childbirth, a small study suggests.

In a half-hour test among 40 hospitalized women in labor, those who used VR headsets that provided relaxing scenes and messages reported pain reductions compared with those who didn’t get headsets, researchers said in a presentation at the annual meeting of the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine in Grapevine, Texas.

The next step is to test the technology for longer periods in laboring women.

“Because that’s what the real goal is, right?” said study leader Dr. Melissa Wong, an obstetrician-gynecologist at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, in a phone interview. “If we’re going to say that people should have them in the hospital, it’s not to get them through 30 minutes of contractions, it’s to help them in labor,” Wong said.

To test the VR headsets, Wong and her colleagues recruited women who were in the hospital to have their first child and who hadn’t yet taken any pain relief drugs.

All of the participants were having contractions at least every five minutes and all of them scored their pain level at between 4 and 7 on a 10-point scale, with 10 being the worst pain. Those who used VR headsets for up to 30 minutes during contractions reported an average reduction in pain level of 0.52 at the end of that period, while the control group that didn’t get the headsets reported an average increase in pain of 0.58.

Patients in the control group also had a significantly higher heart rate after the test period, which was one of the secondary outcomes Wong’s team looked at. There were no statistically meaningful differences between the groups in blood pressure or delivery outcomes.

“We believe it has a significant amount of credibility,” said Dr. Michael Foley, chair of the department of obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Arizona in Phoenix, who wasn’t involved in the study but who has also studied VR as a pain relief method during labor.

“I think it’s another alternative for patients other than having to take narcotics, epidurals, nitrous oxide or anything in terms of medication, if they want to go

more natural, this is something that can truly augment that experience,” Foley told Reuters Health.

Future research will include upgraded headsets and possibly new software, as well, Wong said. The study group used a Samsung Gear VR headset paired with a Samsung smart phone, but the researchers plan to test patients with a fully integrated unit called Pico VR. It’s more advanced and more comfortable for longer periods of use, Wong said.

The visualization used in the test is called Labor Bliss, by the software developer Applied VR. Future research should test different visualizations and levels of user interaction, Wong noted. “I do feel pretty passionately that the labor visualization matters,” she said.

An ideal technology, in her view, could integrate an immersive virtual experience with signals from the woman’s body as she undergoes contractions and labor.

“Anything that’s an electric signal could trigger this. I think it would be super cool to see if we could use the electric signals of their contractions to change the scenes,” Wong said.

## Air pollution crossing U.S. state lines, causing premature deaths

A study 11 years in the making has found that half of premature deaths related to air pollution in U.S. states are caused by pollution that originated from another state, U.S. researchers reported last Wednesday.

The study, published in *Nature*, is the first to calculate how pollution crossing state lines impacts early deaths in each state, said co-author Steven Barrett, an associate professor of aeronautics and astronautics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.

Globally, an estimated 4.2 million premature deaths are linked to outdoor air pollution, mainly from heart disease, stroke, lung disease, and acute respiratory infections in children, according to the World Health Organization.

Efforts to address outdoor air pollution have largely focused on relationships between local sources of pollution and local air quality. What Barrett and colleagues found is that cross-state pollution accounts for about half of all premature, pollution-related deaths.

“Pollution is even less local than we thought,” Barrett said in comments emailed to Reuters Health.

The computer model his team developed for the study took weather patterns and atmospheric chemistry processes into account and tied those to data on human exposures and health risks. They used this to track how each state in the contiguous U.S. affects pollu-

tion and health outcomes in every other state.

The model included data from 2005, 2011 and 2018 on different sources and types of pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide, ozone and fine particulates, from seven emissions sectors, including electric power generation, road transportation, marine, rail, aviation, and commercial and residential sources.

The team found that electric power plants - which emit sulfur dioxide from smokestacks - were the biggest contributor to deaths related to pollution from other states. In 2005, sulfur dioxide from power plants was involved in 75% of cases of premature deaths from out-of-state pollutants.

One bright note is that regulatory changes to curb emissions since 2005 have reduced the number of early deaths related to air pollution by 30%.

The team also found the proportion of premature deaths from out-of-state emissions is dropping - falling from 53% in 2005 to 41% in 2018.

Not all states contribute to the problem equally, the study showed. Many states in the northern midwest, such as Wyoming and North Dakota, are “net exporters” of pollution-related health impacts, in part because of their low populations relative to the amount of emissions they generate.



## Sleep difficulties are perfectly normal for babies, study confirms



New parents who struggle to get babies to sleep through the night may not be doing anything wrong, according to new research suggesting that many apparent sleep problems are really part of normal infant development.

By Lisa Rapaport

New parents who struggle to get babies to sleep through the night may not be doing anything wrong, according to new research suggesting that many apparent sleep problems are really part of normal infant development.

For example, the study found that 6-month-old babies still take 20 minutes, on average, to fall asleep. And by age 2, toddlers still wake up an average of once each night.

The study also found that a lot of variation is normal, said lead author Dr. Juulia Paavonen, of Helsinki University Hospital in Finland.

“Now we know that the individual differences are very large, and that patterns relating to falling asleep, waking up, staying awake at night, and sleeping rhythms often develop at

different rates,” Paavonen said by email.

Parents often fret about how well infants sleep because constant nighttime awakenings can disrupt everyone in the home and fuel concerns that babies are not developing normally. For first-time parents in particular, irregular sleep can seem like a sure sign that babies are sick, or hurting or hungry.

For the study, researchers surveyed parents of nearly 5,700 children about how well babies slept during their first two years of life to get a sense of what types of sleep issues worried parents - and what might be cause for concern versus simply an exhausting part of normal infant development.

Overall, about 40% of parents were concerned about babies’ sleep when kids were 8 months old, the study found.

Children’s sleep gradually

became more stable and consistent over time, the researchers report in *Sleep Medicine*. Babies and toddlers generally slept between nine and 10 hours at night, but the amount of daytime sleeping declined from about five hours total for infants to about two hours for toddlers.

As daytime naps decreased from two to one, on average, and kids slept for fewer total hours during the day, they also reduced their total sleep time to about 12 hours by the time they reached their second birthday.

It’s not as common, however, for babies to take more than 40 minutes to fall asleep or to have nighttime awakenings of an hour or longer by age 8 months, the study found.

It’s also unusual for babies to be awake for more than 45 minutes at a time during the night by 12 months, or for more than a half-hour by 18 months.

These might be circumstances when it makes sense for parents

to check with a pediatrician to see if there’s anything unusual making it harder for babies to sleep, the study team concludes.

“It is important to follow a baby’s growth to know if they are healthy,” said Dr. Joanna MacLean, a sleep specialist at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, who wasn’t involved in the study.

“Given a baby’s job is to eat, sleep, and grow, growth is a useful indicator of health problems,” MacLean said by email. If growth is normal, patterns that seem like sleep problems to parents might also be normal, MacLean said.

Parents should also avoid waking a sleeping baby, because that’s when a lot of brain development happens, said Gina Poe, a researcher at the University of California, Los Angeles who wasn’t involved in the study.

“There is important work ongoing in the sleeping brain,” Poe said by email.

Setting consistent sleep routines can help babies get the rest and development time that they need, advised Valerie Crabtree of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

This works best when parents start in early infancy, Crabtree, who wasn’t involved in the study, said by email.

“Even for newborns, parents can begin to have dim lighting and less interaction at night and brighter, even natural light during the daytime with more activity and interaction,” Crabtree advised.

Putting newborns in pajamas at a consistent bedtime also helps.

“As early as is possible, try placing the baby in the crib drowsy but not fully asleep,” Crabtree added. “This helps babies learn to put themselves to sleep and helps them return themselves to sleep after normal awakenings.”

## Some elderly with illnesses cut back on driving, but others don’t

By Lisa Rapaport

Some older drivers with chronic health problems may cut back on driving but still be at increased risk of crashes, a recent study suggests.

Meanwhile, other drivers with medical issues may also be at higher risk yet not cut back on how often they drive or how far, the study also found.

“We already know that driving abilities are affected by the aging process,” said Junaid Bhatti, a Toronto-based scientist specializing in injury prevention research who wasn’t involved in the study.

“Specific chronic conditions could hasten the manifestation of driving inabilities, especially in challenging circumstances (e.g., dark, rainy, or heavy traffic conditions),” Bhatti said by email.

Those conditions include hearing problems, joint and muscle disorders, and depression, anxiety and stress, the study authors found.

These results matter because the number of elderly drivers on the roads has been rising and is expected to continue growing, as baby boomers age and live longer than people did a generation ago, researchers note in *Injury Prevention*.

As elderly adults remain mobile despite chronic health problems, it increasingly falls to individual drivers and their families or physicians to determine when

they might have limitations that make it unsafe for them to drive.

The researchers also found that several potentially risky conditions that led older adults to reduce driving distances or times - like heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and glaucoma - actually did not appear to make crashes more likely.

The study team examined data on 12,460 drivers to see who got in crashes, what common health problems they had, and whether they cut back on driving or stopped driving altogether for medical reasons. Drivers ranged in age from about mid-50s to 70 at the start of the study. The researchers tracked them from 2007 to 2014.

During that period, the proportion of drivers who reported at least one crash in the previous year climbed from 2.8% to 3.2%.

The most common health problems included back and neck pain, afflicting about one-third of the participants, followed by joint and muscle disorders at about 31%, high blood pressure at 20%, hearing disorders at 19% and sleep difficulties at 11%.

Several medical conditions became more common during the study period, including Parkinson’s disease, cataracts, diabetes, glaucoma, gout, stroke, high blood pressure and hearing impairment.

People with impaired hearing were 19% more likely to get in a crash than people without this

problem, the study found. The increased crash risk associated with joint and muscle disorders was 17%, while the increased risk associated with depression, anxiety or stress was 23%.

The study wasn’t designed to prove whether or how specific health problems might directly affect driving ability or the risk of crashes.

Researchers also didn’t know whether drivers reduced the distances or amount of time they spent behind the wheel because of medical conditions or because of other reasons, said study leader Juan Naredo Turrado of the INSERM Bordeaux Population Health Research Center in France.

“The main take-home message is that we identified a small number of conditions for which adaptations in driving behavior proved insufficient to compensate the increased risk of crash,” Naredo Turrado said by email. “This is the case for hearing impairment, joint disorders, and depression, anxiety and stress.”

Family members of elderly drivers may need to keep an eye out for any signs of unsafe driving, including an inability to share the road, an increase in near misses that could have been collisions, and any unexplained dents or scratches on the car, said Ediriweera Desapriya, a researcher at the University of British Columbia in Canada who wasn’t involved in the study.

## Hundreds of Americans flown home from cruise ship, 14 with coronavirus

GENEVA - More than 300 American cruise liner passengers, including 14 who tested positive for coronavirus, were flown home to military bases in the United States after two weeks under quarantine off Japan.

The cruise ship *Diamond Princess*, which with more than 400 cases has by far the largest cluster outside China, has become the biggest test so far of other countries’ ability to contain an outbreak that has killed 1,772 people in China and five elsewhere.

A ground crew in anti-contamination suits met the chartered jet that touched down at Joint Base San Antonio in Texas, and passengers could be seen climbing down the stairs wearing face masks in the pre-dawn mist. Another flight landed at Travis Air

Force Base in California hours earlier.

All the passengers were taken into a two-week quarantine.

Although U.S. officials had said passengers with coronavirus symptoms would not be repatriated, 14 passengers found at the last minute to have tested positive were permitted to board the planes. The U.S. State Department said the infected passengers were exposed to other passengers for about 40 minutes before they were isolated.

Across mainland China, the total number of coronavirus cases rose by 2,051 to 70,635, according to the World Health Organization. That was slightly more new cases than were reported on Sunday, but hundreds fewer than reported on Saturday.



# Air pollution may aggravate nasal suffering with colds, seasonal allergies

People who get rhinitis - an inflamed or congested nose - from colds or allergies may feel much worse if they're exposed to high levels of air pollution, a recent study suggests.

Rhinitis usually involves some combination of congestion, sneezing, nasal irritation and sometimes a reduced sense of smell, and it affects up to half of the world's population, the study team writes in *Journal of Allergy & Clinical Immunology*.

"Breathing polluted air will cause inflammation and oxidative stress on the respiratory tract," said lead study author Emilie Burte of INSERM in Villejuif, France.

"That probably will increase the

frequency or severity of rhinitis symptoms," Burte said by email.

Even though rhinitis is especially common among people with asthma - a condition that's aggravated by air pollution - research to date hasn't offered a clear picture of how air quality impacts the severity of rhinitis.

For the current study, researchers examined data on air pollution exposure and symptom severity for about 1,400 people with rhinitis in 17 European cities.

Two types of pollutants in particular were associated with worse rhinitis symptoms: nitrogen oxide, a byproduct of fossil fuel combustion that contributes to smog; 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.

People in cities with the highest levels of PM 2.5, or fine particulate matter, reported the most severe rhinitis symptoms.

Each increase of 5 micrograms per cubic meter of air (mcg/m3) in concentrations of fine particulate matter was associated with a 17% higher chance that people with rhinitis would experience severe symptoms, the study found.

Fine particulate matter was associated with worse congestion, nasal irritation and sneezing.

Nitrogen dioxide was also tied to more severe rhinitis, particularly for symptoms like nasal discharge and congestion.



People who get rhinitis - an inflamed or congested nose - from colds or allergies may feel much worse if they're exposed to high levels of air pollution, a recent study suggests.

The pollutants exacerbating rhinitis in the study have long been linked to traffic fumes, with worse air quality around major roadways in cities around the world.

While the study wasn't designed to prove whether air pollution causes rhinitis or makes symptoms worse, it's possible that each kind of contaminant in the air does its own type of damage in the respiratory system, Burte said.

People prone to colds and allergies can't do much to prevent pollution from making rhinitis worse, aside from staying indoors, said Yaguang Wei, an environmental health researcher at Harvard

University in Boston who wasn't involved in the study.

People can pay attention to air quality alerts for their city or community and plan to stay indoors or at least avoid vigorous activity outside during peak pollution times.

"For indoor air pollution, air purifiers can clean indoor air and protect your family, especially for children and the elderly," Wei said by email.

People can also do their part to reduce traffic fumes.

"Using public transportation can help reduce air pollution emissions," Wei said.

## More sleep at night might reduce daytime injury risk

Healthy adults who get at least eight hours of sleep a night may be less likely to experience common exercise-related injuries like fractures, sprains and muscle strains, a study of U.S. soldiers suggests.

Based on survey data for 7,576 men and women in the Army's Special Operations Forces, soldiers who got no more than four or five hours of sleep a night were more than twice as likely to report

a musculoskeletal injury in the past 12 months as those who slept eight hours or longer.

"Adequate amounts of sleep, especially among active athletes, have not only been shown to improve physical performance and health but may also now have a positive impact on musculoskeletal injury prevention," said study coauthor Tyson Grier of the U.S. Army Public Health Center

at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

Musculoskeletal conditions can include everything from a sprained ankle to a torn rotator cuff or herniated disc in the spine.

"It's possible that too little sleep leads to decreased alertness and attention that makes people more likely to get hurt," said Dr. Hohui Wang of the University of California, San Francisco.

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**Illinois Motel For Sale**

Super 8 Motel for sale in Bloomington area, Illinois.

40 Rooms, renovated located on I-55 halfway between Chicago and St Louis. 2 BR managers ( Owner ) Apt. Asking price \$1,050,000  
Serious buyers only.

Please call:  
**Manu @ 630-677-3635**

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42 room Budget Inn Motel  
Located on I-70, Exit 188  
Asking price: \$551,000

Call Saroj at  
**1-636-456-7272**



**WEEKLY HOROSCOPE**

(March 1 - 7, 2020)

**Aries (March 21 to April 20)**

You are likely to continue your efforts towards material goals and pursuits. There will be greater interest in finding new business opportunities and means to increase your profits. You may spend time to find better investment options and in some cases even study trading quite seriously.

**Taurus (April 21 to May 21)**

The individuals born under this sign of the zodiac are likely to receive a boost in their confidence and get motivated to put your best foot forward. You may purchase insurance or look at long term investments - additional measures to ensure financial security for loved ones.

**Gemini (May 22 to June 21)**

The Gemini born individual may need to become tough and mentally more accepting of reality- circumstances causes you to seek comfort in the spiritual realm. You may seek out the company of a master/ guru or may visit a holy shrine.

**Cancer (June 22 to July 22)**

Your outlook to life undergoes a change in this phase and you are drawn towards higher learning. You are willing, despite the hardships it will involve. It is good time to mend fences with people you have been on a wrong footing with.

**Leo (July 23 to August 22)**

It's a blessed time for individuals born under this sign. You will almost have the ideal life. Money can be good and bring great sense of ease and security. Travel is likely and you could well achieve the objectives you are aiming for.

**Virgo (August 23 to September 23)**

Your hard work and your amazing consistency at work beget you a great reputation at work. There is also appreciation from very unlikely quarters that gladdens your heart. This a good phase that you are more likely to capitalise on, by making a good investment.

**Libra (September 24 to October 23)**

There is much good happening this week, but there is also a cautionary note alongside. You need to watch out against being bullied or manipulated into agreeing to an unethical act/ venture. You may have a tough time saying no.

**Scorpio (October 24 to November 22)**

There is much work that you need to finish in this phase. You need to allocate money towards purchase of some important but expensive items. In this time, you are likely to appreciate the power of money and what all it can accomplish!

**Sagittarius (November 23 to December 21)**

The coming week could be a little unsettling- you may run some money calculations. There is fear regarding future outcomes - you strive to optimise your resources but increased expenses keep spoiling your best laid plans.

**Capricorn (December 22 to January 20)**

The coming week sees you scouting for people who could back you up in a time of need - whether it is professional or emotional support. You are looking for comfort. There are some plans afoot in your head about a new business but you want to make sure that you have secured the sides carefully.

**Aquarius (January 21 to February 19)**

The coming week promises to be good where you make the right moves and do well in your professional life. The only thing is that you may be given additional work in your current position and this may require you to put in more hours and efforts.

**Pisces (February 20 to March 20)**

There are a lot of misconceptions that are vanishing from your horizons. There may be still areas to work out in your mind, but the step forward is making you feel much better already.

**Double Trouble: Man arrested twice in same day, suspected of DUI**

STOCKTON, CA - A Sacramento County man is accused of driving drunk twice in the same day.

CHP officers arrested 53-year-old Sanjeev Grover for DUI twice on the same day late last month. First in Solano County, then again in Sacramento County hours later.

Grover's first arrest happened in Solano County where CHP officers arrested him for DUI around 3 in the morning. He was later arrested a second time for DUI near Greenback Lane and Interstate 80 around 2:30 in the afternoon in Sacramento County.



Sanjeev Grover

According to CHP officials, after being released from the Solano County Jail, Grover picked up his car from a tow yard and on his way home, picked up

more alcohol and got behind the wheel again.

Local CBS station reporters went to Grover's Antelope home to hear his side of what happened but a relative told us he wasn't home and wasn't available to talk.

Attorney Mark Reichel says it is rather uncommon but can happen.

"If you've been arrested and you can either post bail, or you're qualified for your own recognizance, which is really the normal situation, you are usually out of there about five, six hours," Reichel said.

**One of Canada's most wanted fugitives arrested in U.S.**

NEWARK, NJ - One of Quebec, Canada's, 10 most wanted fugitives was arrested last month after nearly two decades on the run.

CNN reports that Parthasarathi Kapoor, 47, has been avoiding law enforcement since 2003 when he was facing charges including sexual assault and the possession of child pornography, said the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM).

Kapoor was arrested at Newark-Liberty International Airport in New Jersey.

Canadian authorities allege that Kapoor assaulted five victims between 1998 and 2003 in Montréal. Police say he would lure young boys, between the ages of 7 and 14, to his home to sexually assault them.

SPVM said Kapoor, who is a permanent resident of Canada, learned he was the subject of

a police investigation and fled the country in 2003. Authorities then issued both Canada-wide and international arrest warrants against Kapoor, believing he was in the United States.

Police say Kapoor was attempting to board a flight to his home country, India, when he was apprehended. He remains in U.S. custody while extradition proceedings are pending.

**71-year-old driver charged with hitting, killing Kansas girl**

OLATHE, KS (AP) - A 71-year-old man has been charged with striking and killing a 14-year-old girl as she walked home from her suburban Kansas City school last year.

Sudhir Gandhi, of Lenexa, Kansas, is jailed on \$50,000 bond after he was charged with reckless second-degree murder in the death of Alexandra

Rumple.

No attorney is listed for him in online court records.

Gandhi initially told investigators that his brakes failed in April before his car careened onto an Overland Park, Kansas, sidewalk, where it struck Rumple and narrowly missed three other children.

Rumple was an eighth-grader

at a nearby middle school.

Police say the car then hit a traffic light, knocking it off its base, struck a speed limit sign and destroyed about 80 feet of a wood fence. A police report said he showed no evidence of impairment.

Prosecutors provided no additional details about what happened in a news release.

**American Airlines selects Seattle for first direct U.S. flight to Bangalore**

CHICAGO - American Airlines Group Inc said on Thursday it would launch its first direct U.S. flight to Bangalore from Seattle, a new route meant to meet corporate customers' demand for travel to the center of India's high-tech industry.

As part of the launch targeted for October, American is expanding its codeshare with Seattle-based Alaska Airlines, which is expected to help feed passengers on American's international routes out of the city.

Alaska Airlines is one of the

biggest operators of flights along the West Coast, where businesses from Seattle to San Diego have bases of operation in Bangalore, and American is one of the largest U.S. long-haul carriers.

"Bangalore is one of our highest demand destinations for our corporate accounts, really all over the country," Vasu Raja, American's senior vice president of network strategy, told Reuters.

The partnership with Alaska will provide connections through Seattle to Bangalore from 100 U.S. cities, he said, citing de-

mand from markets as vast as Boston, Raleigh, Austin, Chicago and the West Coast.

The new Bangalore route, which American plans to service with a Boeing 787-9, will be the carrier's only U.S. flight to India since it stopped flying to Delhi in 2012.

There is more demand for business class seats to India than the last time American flew there - partially due to improved premium cabins with lay flat seats - making flights more viable, Raja said.



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