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Glittering royal wedding captivates the world

London: With a smile that lit up TV screens around the world, Kate Middleton swept down the aisle to marry Prince William in a union expected to revitalize the British monarchy. Hundreds of thousands then cheered as the royal couple rode an open carriage to Buckingham Palace.



Prince William and Kate Middleton exchange marriage vows

More than 180 countries picked up the BBC feed of the royal nuptials in what is expected to be the biggest TV event in history.

Even with millions of people tuning in to watch, the couple managed to appear at times in their own private world Friday, both at Westminster Abbey and on the balcony of Buckingham Palace. William whispered to Kate, who radiated contentment and joy, as they pledged their lives to one another at the church with the simple words "I will."

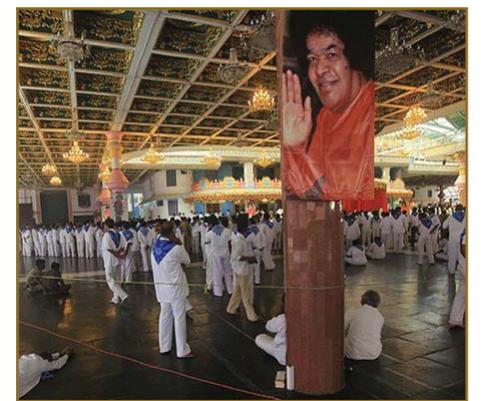
The biggest secret of the day — Middleton's wedding gown — prompted swoons of admiration as she stepped out of a Rolls-Royce with her father at the abbey.

Her ivory-and-white satin dress — with its plunging neckline, long lacy shoulders and sleeves and a train over 2-meters long — was designed by Sarah Burton at Alexander McQueen. Middleton's hair was half-up, half-down, decorated with dramatic veil and a tiara on loan from Queen Elizabeth II.

William, second-in-line to the throne after his father, Prince Charles, wore the scarlet tunic of an Irish Guards officer, reinforcing his new image as a dedicated military man.

With Sai Baba gone, Puttaparthi faces uncertainty

Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh: A sense of uncertainty looms large among people over the future of this town following the demise of Sathya Sai Baba, who transformed this once remote and faceless village into a thriving pilgrim centre.



See more Sathya Sai stories on pages 10-11.

From petty traders and hotel owners to real estate developers, everyone seems apprehensive. They are not sure if the town will continue to attract the number of pilgrims it used to when Sai Baba was alive.

Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all over the country and even abroad used to flock for Sai Baba's 'darshan' every year. The number would swell on occasions like the godman's birthday and festivals.

As thousands of devotees left this town after having their last 'darshan' of Sai Baba, the locals are not sure if they will ever come again.

"We don't know what will happen now. The business may not be the same as it used to be earlier," said M. Raj Kumar, who runs a grocery shop.

Small traders, who sold pictures of Sai

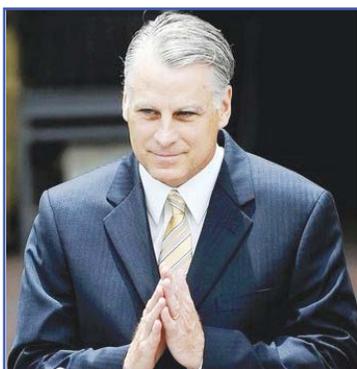
Baba, flowers and other items, are also a worried lot.

They recall that every day 2,000 to 3,000 people used to visit the town, in Anantapur district, for Sai Baba's darshan. This figure used to go up to 20,000 on Thursdays. The more auspicious days would attract 300,000 to 500,000 men, women and children.

Sai Baba, who was born here in 1926 and
Continued on page 4....

Roemer quits after failed aircraft deal

Calcutta : US Ambassador to India Timothy Roemer is to quit his post in June for "personal reasons" and "family considerations", the announcement coming one day after India ended negotiations with American companies in a \$10 billion contract to supply 126 fighter jets for the Indian Air Force.



The outgoing US ambassador to India, Timothy Roemer

Speculation on relating the two events may not be apt, sources close to Roemer say he has been mulling his step for a couple of months now, notes the Economic Times.

"When I accepted this job two years ago, I told President Obama

that I would serve for two years but
Continued on page 4....

Pak. nudges Afghans closer to China

Kabul: With Afghan discussions under way about the future involvement of the US in the ravaged country and the prospect of long-term military bases, the Pakistani government has urged Kabul to distance itself from the West and tie its future more tightly to that of China and Pakistan, according to the New York Times.

During a landmark April 16 meeting between the leaders of Afghanistan and Pakistan here, for which the most powerful figures in
Continued on page 4....



Naveen Jain, founder and CEO of Intelius, was conferred People's Choice Award in Business Leadership category at the Light of India Awards ceremony in New York on April 22. The awards recognize exemplary achievements by NRIs in corporate leadership, political leadership, science and technology, journalism and literature, and arts and entertainment.

See story on page 5.

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By Swathi AK

He held the breath of an entire nation and conquered the hearts of many with his first pop song "Breathless". Shankar Mahadevan has crooned numerous hit numbers ever since and lent his voice as a playback singer to a string of dashing heroes serenading their heroines on screen. As the "Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy" trio continue to enthrall their audience with their rocking music, this national-award winning playback singer and music composer has reached yet another milestone with the launch of his online music academy in North America. The Academy is a joint venture between Mahadevan and Cloud On, a provider of virtual learning software founded by executives from Yahoo and Dell. The SATimes had a quick chat with the singer during his recent trip to the US on various topics like why he opted for an online academy and not a brick and mortar setup.

Q: When did you first come up with the idea of launching Shankar Mahadevan Music Academy in this part of world?

Shankar Mahadevan: Well, US and Canada has always been a part of the thought process and I thought US is a better place to start since people here are more accustomed to this type of medium and payment through internet and education through internet is a known taste here. First we thought of starting it here and later open up in the rest of the world.

Q: Why an Online academy and not a real music academy? As in, why didn't you think of starting a music academy first and then have virtual courses as well, in that way people would have had a wider choice?

SM: I understand in a "brick and mortar setup", the mental frame of a person will be different but restricting the course to a geographical location, say if I open a music academy in New York or New Jersey, I do not want people in Detroit and other parts of the US or for that matter in Canada also to be deprived of this opportunity. By making use of this virtual medium, we can cater to more people, even eliminating the concept of time and space. The student can learn as in a real class and get the feedback and assessment from teachers in this audio-visual medium of teaching. The only thing they will lose in return is feel and touch of a person, but I promise they will gain ten times more.



Shankar Mahadevan

Q: How much time you will be spending in the US on this project?

SM: I've been here for 10-12 days now. In fact I'm on my way back to India now.

Q: The academy website says, the virtual classes and courses are flexible and is different from other regular courses because of the fun element, but how flexible is the academy for rescheduling the course if a student cannot make it regularly and how you'll work on grouping people from different time zones in the same class?

SM: If a student for some reason has missed out on a class, the classes are recorded for their convenience and they can always go back and refer to their notes and do self learning. In regards to the time zones, people sign up for the course at a time comfortable for them. So it does not matter where they live or difference in time zones.

Q: In general, what if a person has discontinued learning music because of prior commitments and at certain stage in life, they decide to pursue it again, can they potentially be good singers, even after that gap of many years?

SM: Of course, once a singer you are always a singer. Singing is like learning how to cycle. You might get rusty if you have been out of touch but if you brush up those skills you can always become good at it again. In this course there are different levels to choose from, if a person has discontinued at a level and does not want to start from scratch, there are certain requisites to be met and after that they'll be assessed and put at the right level.

Q: Who was your inspiration as a singer? Who is your all time favorite singer?

SM: My inspiration will always be my guru Mrs. Balamani but singing-wise I will be mistaken if I mention just one name because I've looked up to and learnt from hundreds of them, be it singers or music composers. As each one brings his own

'Breathless' man's next act -- Online music academy

Shankar Mahadevan, who attained fame overnight with his 'Breathless' number and is one-third of the 'Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy' Midas touch music makers, has reached yet another milestone with the launch of his online music academy in North America.



Shankar Mahadevan enjoys teaching music to students

style and there is so much music in front of you and everything and every form teaches you something new.

Q: You've sung songs in different languages too, apart from Hindi and Tamil. How difficult is it to sing in a language you are unfamiliar with? Is language been a barrier in any way?

SM: It's definitely not been a barrier, I've sung songs in 10 different languages and I'm very comfortable. It's a matter of getting used to it and it's all in the mind, once you pay more attention to it you can sing not only in different languages but also different dialects of the same language.

Q: Do you insist on knowing the meaning of the lyrics before you

sing that song in a different language?

SM: Of course, once you understand the overall mood of the song, whether it's happy or sad, stress of certain words which you will be helped by language supervisors, it's easy to adapt yourself to the language and it's also personal talent

Q: Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy represent the first trio of music composers to entertain "Bollywood audience" with "chart-topping music". Though you'll contribute your own talents and experience to the group, as a group have you all had any insecurities creep up or ego clashes among yourselves?

SM: We never have ego clashes but we have creative clashes, as a

group we have fights and discussions. Without difference of opinion you cannot come out with a certain product. In a group creative clashes will exist.

Q: How popular is the trio in US?

SM: I don't know how popular we are but one thing I know for sure, our music is very popular here and we did a stage show in the US last year.

Q: Any projects in the pipeline this year?

SM: We have lots of films in the kitty, we are doing both Bollywood and non-film music, launching private albums, record labels of our own and I'm also into music education now. We are pretty much booked unto next year.



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A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Violence at Sikh Center in Queens, eight arraigned

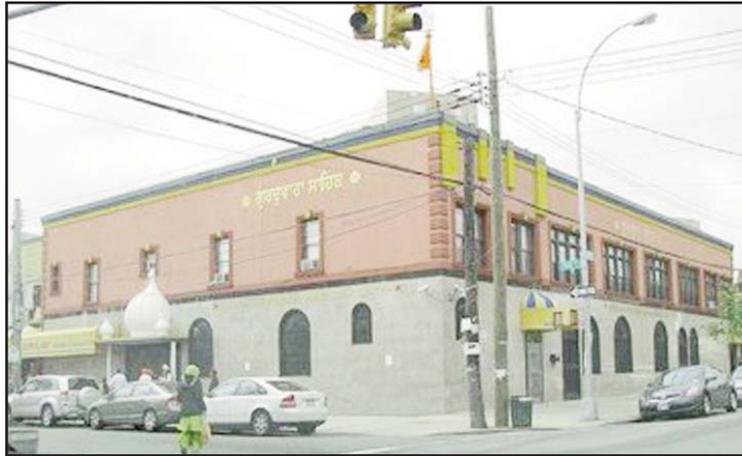
New York: Eight people were arraigned on riot and assault charges Monday for their roles in a vicious turf battle at the Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Sikh Center in Richmond Hill, Queens.

Assailants wielding cricket bats and small swords disrupted prayer services Sunday morning police and witnesses said.

Several of the defendants were charged with disrupting a religious service.

Temple President Jarnail Singh said the melee was caused by a dissident group of followers who don't want to see membership rolls opened at the 101st Ave. temple.

"We tried to open membership, and a group didn't want it," he said. "They want to fight it."



The Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Sikh Center

The dispute is at the center of a pending lawsuit in Queens Supreme Court. The temple president said he hopes the warring factions will let a

judge mete out justice instead of resorting to violence.

The incident clearly shook the city's Sikh population, which is

concentrated in Queens.

The Baba Makhan Shah Lubana Sikh Center was born out of conflict. It was founded by a splinter group in 1998, amid a power struggle marked by fights at another Sikh gurdwara in Richmond Hill.

The founders agreed to take turns serving as president in two-year terms, told Mohinder Singh, the organization's first president to The New York Times. In 2007, the leadership decided to shorten the terms to one year, and for about three years the organization appeared to run smoothly.

But last December, as the 2010 presidential term was coming to an end, the sitting president and others filed a lawsuit in State Supreme Court in Queens against other mem-

bers of the center. The suit sought to change the center's governing structure and allow more worshippers a role in electing officers, said the president, Jarnail Singh.

Justice Augustus C. Agate issued a temporary restraining order that kept Jarnail Singh and other executive officers in power while the case was reviewed.

In the ensuing weeks, Sunday prayer services were often interrupted by arguments that sometimes devolved into pushing and shoving, several worshippers said.

Mohinder Singh said he was recently ambushed on the doorstep of his house in Ozone Park, Queens, by two unidentified men who hit him in the face with a baseball bat and fled.

New York Indian Film Fest to partner with film schools

New York: The oldest festival for Indian cinema in the United States will partner with three prestigious film schools in New York and India to help directors to have their stories reach a wider platform.

The partnerships aimed at helping foster a new generation of filmmakers are with award-winning filmmaker Subhash Ghai's Whistling Woods International (WWD) in Mumbai, The Department of Cinema Studies at Tisch, New York University, and the New York Film Academy.

Organized by the Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC), the 11th annual New York Indian Film Festival will run from May 4 to May 8 in Manhattan.

WWI, an institute for film, television, animation, and media arts, awards the top short films from its film students each year.

These award-winning shorts will now travel to New York and screen at NYIFF each year allowing emerging filmmakers to reach audiences and industry professionals in the US.

This year's line-up includes "Incerto", "Flip", "Punha", "Daily Soap", "Kalapaani", and "Uss Paar". "These graduates will be part of India's next generation of filmmakers and have commenced their filmmaking journey with these films. I am extremely happy

to see the quality of their work," says Subhash Ghai, founder and chairman of Whistling Woods.

For the last two years, NYIFF has teamed up with the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University with students of Professor Karl Bardosh creating one-minute cell phone films on themes at the film festival.

This program will continue for a third year and Richard Allen, Professor of Cinema Studies at Tisch School of the Arts, will once again host post-screening discussions with key filmmakers during the five-day festival.

"The Department of Cinema Studies at Tisch, NYU, again looks forward to collaborating with the NYIFF in its cutting edge program of screenings and events which brings the best of the New Indian Cinema to New York City by staging a series of in-depth discussions with key directors and actors in the industry," Allen said.

In addition, the New York Film Academy has offered a one-week scholarship valued at \$1,575 for film study to an emerging filmmaker whose work will be screened at the film festival.

"The New York Film Academy is proud to associate with the New York Indian Film Festival; we share a deep passion for film," said NYFA's Jack Newman.

OFBJP-USA pays homage to Satya Sai Baba

New Jersey: Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) USA has conveyed profound condolences on death of Sadguru Shri Satya Baba. This marks the end of an era as we know it in the spiritual world of India and the world. Baba has enlightened the world with four principles of Hindu philosophy - "Satya", "Dharma", "Shanti" and "Prem" and propagated the gospel of ancient India, Vasudaiva Kutum-

bakam to the world, it said in a press release.

True to that spirit, the disciples and volunteers of Baba has rendered humanitarian services in more than 160 countries and provided drinking water to the entire district of Ananthapur including Puttaparthi. The Satya Sai trust has built world class hospitals, universities, and schools for free of cost. It is indeed a great loss to Bharat Mata.

NJCU to host 25 Mumbai students as part of 11 day Global Village Program

New Jersey: Twenty-five students from H.R. College of Commerce and Economics in Mumbai will participate in a unique immersion program co-sponsored by New Jersey City University as part of its Gateway to the Global Village Program and Friends of India in collaboration with H.R. College.

The 11-day program which will be held Wednesday, May 11 through Saturday, May 21, will expose students to the dynamic business, educational, scientific, cultural, and entrepreneurial environment of the New Jersey metropolitan area.

Accompanied by Dr. Indu Shahani, principal of H.R. College, and two faculty members from the Indian institution, the students will live on the NJCU campus, where they will interact with NJCU students; attend an orientation, receptions, lectures by NJCU faculty on such topics as the impact of the world wide web on investigative journalism, cyber security, social media and marketing, the impact of outsourcing to India on the U.S. economy, and ethical issues in U.S. business; and a debriefing session. They will also tour NJCU facil-



The students from HR College of Commerce and Economics will live on NJCU campus

ities, including the University's Business Development Incubator.

Off campus, the H.R. College students will visit Jersey City's waterfront financial district, Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty, Newark Museum, Liberty Science Center, Liberty Harbor, Jersey City Medical Center, Newport Mall, and Jersey City's Indian Business District, where they will also attend lectures on such topics as operating a museum, running an entertainment complex, women in publishing, and fundraising; attend meetings and receptions with the mayors of Jersey City and Englewood, the Jersey City Asian Merchants Association, Hudson County Chamber of Commerce,

Rising Tide Capital, and Dress for Success; and participate in a historical tour of Jersey City.

Dr. Carlos Hernández, NJCU president, commented, "As president of one of this nation's most diverse institutions of higher education as well as one which is located in Jersey City, home of a vibrant Indian community, I am delighted to welcome this student delegation from H.R. College of Commerce and Economics. This will be a tremendous opportunity for intellectual and cultural interaction between NJCU and HRCCE students, faculty, and staff."

"This exchange is also part of the University's ongoing commitment to the internationalization of its curriculum, which broadens students' understanding of the world and prepares them to be competent in the global marketplace," Dr. Hernández added.

The project is an outgrowth of Friends of India, a group founded in 2004 that aims to build linkages between women entrepreneurs in the United States and India, explore avenues of higher education in India, facilitate already-established linkages, and demonstrate support for India.

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Sai Baba story
from page 1

claimed at age 14 that he was an avatar of god, put Puttaparthi on the pilgrim map by building his ashram Prashanti Nilayam.

As he became famous, pilgrims from India and abroad started flocking to the town for his discourses. The town's economy witnessed an upswing, with hotels, lodges, restaurants and shops coming up in a big way.

The Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, formed by Sai Baba in 1972, ran schools, a university, a super speciality hospital and other institutions, providing free education and medical treatment.

Some residents are optimistic that Puttaparthi will continue to attract pilgrims in the same manner as Shirdi in Maharashtra does - for Shirdi Sai Baba. Sathya Sai Baba had claimed to be a reincarnation of the celebrated saint of 19th century.

Roemer story
from page 1

that family considerations would be front and centre after that," said Roemer in a statement released by the US Embassy. "The US-India relationship -- what my friend President Obama calls the defining partnership of the 21st century -- has progressed to the global stage."

The US Embassy in India was officially notified Wednesday that Lockheed Martin's F-16 and Boeing's 18 Super Hornet were rejected. Though not official, Indian officials have stated in private conversation that they prefer France's Dassault Aviation and a four-nation European consortium, the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS) in the final round of discussions.

Some who know Roemer believe that the six-term Indiana Congressman wanted to get back into mainstream politics by assisting in Obama's 2012 reelection campaign.

Pak Nudges story
from page 1

the Pakistani government flew to Kabul, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani suggested that Afghanistan needed to look to China, a power in ascendance, rather than hew closely to the US. "There was a mention of China

in the meeting, China as a country, as an emerging economic power, and that maybe we should reach out to a new global economic power," said an Afghan official knowledgeable about the meeting. "And there was the suggestion that Afghanistan and Pakistan should strengthen relations."

Though Pakistan has denied moving away from its alliance with Washington, the focus on China makes sense because it is a great power that would be acceptable to Afghanistan as an ally in ways that Russia never could be because of its history as a hated occupier of Afghanistan during the 1980s. And, from the Pakistani point of view, China provides a counterbalance to India, its archenemy.

The effort to draw Afghanistan away from the United States and toward China was first reported in The Wall Street Journal, and it was one of several proposals floated by Pakistan at the meeting, according to the Afghan news media. subject.

On Tuesday, the Pakistani government released a statement saying that it rejected the "baseless assertions" made in the Wall Street Journal article and that "it fully supports an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned process for peace and reconciliation," as well as "the key role of the United States in promoting stability, peace and harmony in Afghanistan."

The statement noted that a trilateral meeting of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the United States was scheduled to be held in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, early next month, with the purpose of having "strategic coherence and clarity."

HAF alleges bias in US putting India on religious freedom watch list

Washington, D.C.: The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) has criticized the listing of India, the world's largest secular democracy, with the likes of Russia, Afghanistan, and Cuba, on a US State Department advisory group's "watch list" of violators of religious freedom. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) announced its censure of India for the third consecutive year at the National Press Club Thursday.

India's inclusion came despite spirited testimony by HAF in support of India's track record on religious freedom. Although USCIRF reported that measures to improve religious freedom are ongoing in India, it argued India should be kept on the watch list "because justice for past communal violence continues to be slow and ineffective and because of concerns about the state 'Freedom of Religion Act(s).'"

The USCIRF decision, however, was not unanimous. Commissioners Felice Gaer and William Shaw dissented, describing the listing of India on the watch list as "ill-advised" and "inappropriate."

HAF was the only organization invited to testify by USCIRF that demanded India's removal from the watch list, and its arguments were echoed by the two commissioners in their public dissent. Prof. Ramesh Rao, the author of HAF's annual Hindu human rights report, and Suhag Shukla, Esq., HAF's Managing Director and Legal Counsel, testified before the USCIRF Commissioners in Washington, D.C. last month, arguing that India did not belong on the watch list due to its robust human rights mechanisms and independent judiciary that comprehensively probed incidents of inter-religious violence. They insisted that the "predatory proselytizing" supported by many American churches vitiates inter-religious harmony in India as well as other countries and must be considered in any comprehensive analysis of international religious freedom.

The Hindu American Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan organization promoting the Hindu and American ideals of understanding, tolerance and pluralism.

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Prominent NRIs conferred Light of India Awards



Salman Rushdie and
Vinod Dham

New York: To recognize exemplary achievements by NRIs in the fields of business leadership, corporate leadership, political leadership, science and technology, journalism and literature, and arts and entertainment, the Times Group has instituted Light of India awards and held the first awards ceremony at New York's iconic Waldorf Astoria Hotel on April 22. Over 200 of the South Asian community's who's who in New York, as well as special dignitaries and performers from India, packed the event.

Chief guest Meera Shankar, India's Ambassador to the US, was honored by legendary Indian film and stage actor Shabana Azmi at the event. Musician and singer,



Actor Shabana Azmi
felicitates Meera Shankar,
Indian Ambassador
to the U.S.
(L to R) Avijit Nanda,
Meera Shankar,
Shabana Azmi,
Etihad Airways flight
attendant,
Nina Manuel,
Jitin Hingorani

(Photos : Nan Melville.)



Etihad Airways VP Geert Boven
and Ajay Banga

Raghav Sachar, wowed the audience with his patriotic tunes, and actor and comedian Aasif Mandvi, of The Daily Show with Jon Stewart fame, entertained the crowd with his anecdotes of being a first-generation American. The show was co-hosted by TV presenter and model Nina Manuel and TV personality Jitin Hingorani.

The event marked Times Group service, Remit2India's ten years in the money transfer business. The event will be broadcast at a later date on Sony Entertainment Television, Asia, in more than 150 countries around the world.

And the winners are: Recognition in Corporate Leadership: Jury Award - Ajay

Banga, President and Chief Operating Officer - MasterCard, People's Choice Award - Vikram Pandit, Chief Executive Officer - Citigroup; Recognition in Business Leadership: Jury Award - Vinod Khosla, Chief Executive Officer - Khosla Ventures, People's Choice Award - Naveen Jain, Founder of InfoSpace and Intelius; Recognition in Political Leadership: Jury Award - Dr. Ruby Dhalla, Member of Canadian House of Commons, People's Choice Award - Swati Dandekar, IOWA State Senator; Recognition in Science & Technology: Jury Award & People's Choice Award - Vinod Dham, Chief Executive Officer of Silicon Spice Inc.;

Power of Influence Award - Narasimha Chari, Chief Technology Officer & Founder of Tropos Networks; Extraordinary Contribution in Research & Innovation in Medical Sciences - Shiladitya Sengupta, Assistant Professor of Medicine and Health Sciences at Harvard Medical School; Recognition in Journalism & Literature: Jury Award - Chitra Bannerjee Divakaruni, Writer & Novelist, People's Choice Award - Vikram Seth, Poet, Novelist, Travel Writer, & Biographer; Power of Influence Award - Salman Rushdie, Writer & Novelist; Recognition in Arts & Entertainment: Jury Award & People's Choice Award - Mira Nair, Film Director & Producer

Bridgewater Township sued for not allowing establishment of mosque

Alleges township broke law, stifled religious freedom

New York, NY: The Al Falah Center brought suit against Bridgewater Township (NJ), seeking to compel the town to allow Al Falah to move forward with plans to renovate an existing building so it could be used as a mosque and community center. These plans were derailed recently when the Township suddenly altered its zoning laws, transforming the applicable zoning for the proposed mosque property to prohibit rather than permit development of a house of worship.

The complaint, which was filed in federal district court in New Jersey, alleges that the new zoning ordinance prevents members of the Muslim community from freely exercising their religion and discriminates against them on the basis of religion. After a year-long search to find a suitable location to establish a mosque and Islamic community center, Muslims from Bridgewater and surrounding communities finally identified an ideal location — a former banquet hall in Bridgewater. For months the Al

Falah Center worked with township officials to develop a suitable plan to renovate the building, which was located in a zone permitting houses of worship, into a mosque to serve the surrounding area as a house of worship, day care, religious school, and community center.

But then — following an anti-Muslim internet campaign — hundreds of people showed up to protest the mosque project at a Planning Board meeting to consider the proposal, and the Township suddenly changed course. The complaint alleges that in changing the law to exclude the mosque Bridgewater violated the Al Falah Center's federal constitutional rights under the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as well as the corresponding protections of New Jersey's Constitution. A number of federal and state statutory claims are also alleged in the complaint, including multiple violations of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000.

Camden County lad makes it to nationals of Scripps Spelling Bee

New Jersey: Preet Raval, the winner of the Scripps National Spelling Bee for Camden County NJ, will be participating in the nationals held in Washington D.C., on June 1, 2011. Preet is a 13-year-old boy who goes to Glen Landing Middle School in NJ. He was determined to win the Camden County Spelling Bee in March 2011 after he came in, surprisingly, fourth in his school bee, and studying every night up to the day of the bee, he finally got a chance to prove himself.

On the day of the bee, Preet had



to fight 38 other contestants, for the first place prize which was the only way he could make it to the nationals. However, Preet's determination to win did not falter. He beat his competition by spelling the word bobbejaan and championship word wedel correctly. Preet likes to hang out with his friends and play hockey as a hobby. He is hoping to become an actor when he grows up, or look for his career in finance, like his dad, Saumil Raval, who is his role model.

Preet Raval

Domestic Harmony Foundation hosts 3rd annual fundraiser

New York: On Saturday April 9, 2011, the Swan Club in Roslyn, NY was alit with beautifully attired ladies and gentlemen, all supporting the dire cause of domestic violence victims. The Domestic Harmony Foundation (DHF) successfully hosted its 3rd Annual Fundraiser Dinner with the backdrop of the charming gardens of the country club.

There were approximately 190 guests in attendance that night.

The evening's program began with an introduction by DHF Executive Director Shaida Khan. Ms. Khan spoke of DHF's inception and events that brought to light the need for organizations such as DHF to exist. She highlighted the activities of the organization and stressed upon the importance of community involvement in eradicating domestic violence.

Two of the evening's speakers, Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice and Dr. Sujata Warriar, Director of the NYC Program of the Office for the Prevention of Domestic Abuse, were unable to attend. The District Attorney's place was taken by Madeline Singas, Chief of the Special Victims Bureau at the Nassau County DA's office, who illustrated the types of crimes the Bureau is faced with on a regular basis. The audience was given a glimpse into life at the Special Victims Bureau and the responsibilities Ms. Singas and her colleagues face each day in their battle against

violence.

Following Ms. Singas, the celebrated Salman Ahmad took the stage and the audience's hearts. Mr. Ahmad is the founder of the Pakistani rock band Junoon and the non-profit organization, the Salman and Samina Global Wellness Initiative (SSGWI), which works on interfaith dialogue, wellness awareness and music education, to name a few. The musical part of the evening was followed by a brave woman who related to the audience her story and experiences dealing with domestic abuse. The survivor's story brought home this issue for the awestruck audience.

DHF member Yasmin Wasti shared an inspirational poem reflecting the emotions of a domestic violence victim. Long-time DHF member and counselor Dr. Kushalata Jayakar Ahmed skillfully sang a few songs during dinner to depict the feelings of uncertainty and strength survivors of domestic violence can encounter. Later, two young ladies representing the organization Khadijah's Caravan, a spiritually based activist group, presented poems and pieces written by members of a young generation working to raise awareness on women's issues. Individual donors and organizations such as The South Asian Times, Weekly Pakistan Voice, and TVOne Global, as well as Habib American Bank, the Islamic Center of Long Island, and the Mukhopadhyay Foundation, support DHF.

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TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Rajaratnam jury replays wiretaps of Indian Americans

New York: As they weigh the evidence against hedge fund tycoon Raj Rajaratnam in the biggest insider trading case in the US, jurors again listened to nine secret wiretaps, including conversations with two Indian Americans.

Prosecutors have submitted more than 40 wiretaps into evidence against Sri Lankan born Rajaratnam, claiming they prove the Galleon hedge fund co-founder gave and received inside tips about major technology companies and banks.

Defence attorneys have contended that the recordings only show "snippets" of "out-of-context" conversations between Rajaratnam and his friends or associates.

Among the conversations replayed Tuesday, one shows Anil Kumar, a former Indian American executive for the McKinsey & Co. consulting firm, talking to Rajaratnam about "confidential work."

They also capture the men speaking at length about unrelated business and personal matters.

At one point, Rajaratnam speaks sympathetically about a "lost soul," but that soul's identity is unclear before the conversation gets minimized.

The unedited tapes also show details of the hefty Rajaratnam ordering a Diet Coke, and the world-travelling Kumar complaining about a lost taxi driver in Japan.

At one point, Kumar states: "[Y]ou've got to have the right insights. I mean, that's all that really matters in the end."

Jurors also requested to hear a tape in which Rengan Rajaratnam tells his brother Raj, "Scumbag, everyone's a scumbag," regarding Kumar and another McKinsey employee whom they are plying for information.

In another call, recorded March 24, 2008, Kumar discussed a possible transaction between Fujitsu Ltd. and Lenovo Group Ltd.

"They are very, very far in discussion," Kumar could be heard saying as jurors sat in silence in the jury box in Manhattan federal court.

Defence attorney John Dowd repeatedly called Kumar who has testified that Rajaratnam paid him more than \$1 million to provide tips about his high-profile clients, a "liar" and said Rajaratnam hired the executive for legitimate consulting services.

In yet another call replayed Tuesday, Rajaratnam is heard chatting with his friend Rajiv Goel, who was an executive at Intel before he pleaded guilty and testified for prosecutors.

Jurors also reheard a recording of Rajaratnam talking to Krish Panu, a director of PeopleSupport Inc.

Goel gave 'bizarre' testimony: Rajaratnam's lawyer

New York: Lawyers of Raj Rajaratnam have dubbed the testimony of former Intel treasury official Rajiv Goel, who pleaded guilty to passing tips to the hedge fund tycoon, as "bizarre".

Closing arguments in the biggest insider trading trial in US history Thursday defence attorney John Dowd accused the government of using "worthless" testimony from witnesses to railroad Sri Lankan-born Galleon Group founder Rajaratnam.

Turning to Goel's testimony that he gave inside information to Rajaratnam about his company's quarterly earnings and a \$1 billion investment, he said:

"Mr Goel 'pointed the finger at Raj so he could get a free pass on crimes that had nothing to do with Raj.'"

"Mr Goel testified he didn't pay taxes on money he kept in offshore bank accounts," Dowd said. "If you gave Rajiv Goel \$5, would you trust him to pay it back? If the answer is no, you cannot convict Raj."

Accusing the prosecution of mischaracterizing witnesses' testimony to mislead the jury by giving it "a snippet" of the full story, he said the prosecution had failed to prove Rajaratnam had broken insider-trading laws.

Asserting that the alleged insider tips Rajaratnam got were common knowledge, Dowd, presented the court with dozens of e-mails, trading records and excerpts from trial testimony to argue that his client had made trades based on public reports, not on insider tip-offs.

Desi filmmaker's 'Patang' premieres in Tribeca

New York: New York based Indian-American filmmaker Prashant Bhargava is having the North American premiere of his new film "The Kite (Patang)" at the 2011 Tribeca Film Festival here this week.

The film is one of 12 feature films in the world narrative competition. The 2011 Tribeca Film Festival slate was chosen from a total of 5,624 submissions, a record number for the festival. "Patang" is the sole narrative feature film representing India in the festival.

"Patang" recently celebrated its world premiere at the Berlin Film Festival in their Forum program.

"Patang" features award winning actress Seema Biswas (Water, Bandit



Prashant Bhargava

Queen) alongside actors Nawazuddin Siddiqui (Peepli Live, Dev D. Firaq) and Sugandha Garg (Tere Bin Laden, My Name is Khan, Janne Tu Ya Janne Na), Mukund Shukla, Aakash Maherya and Hamid Shaikh.

In 2005, director Prashant Bhargava traveled from Brooklyn to Ahmedabad to

experience the annual kite festival, the largest in India.

"When I first witnessed the entire city on their rooftops, staring up at the sky, their kites dueling ferociously, dancing without inhibition, I knew I had to make this film," Bhargava said. "I would sit on a street corner for hours at a stretch and just observe. Over time, I connected with shopkeepers and street kids, gangsters and grandmothers. This process formed the foundation for the characters, story and my approach to shooting the film," he said.

Six years in the making, "Patang" is Bhargava's first feature film. His short film "Sangam" premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, garnering several awards.

New Santhigram Wellness Center inaugurated in White Plains

New York: On Sunday April 10, over 100 friends, family, community members and customers celebrated the grand opening of the new Santhigram Wellness Center in White Plains.

This is the sixth center opened by Santhigram Kerala Ayurvedic Co of USA and the first currently open in New York.

The center offers traditional Kerala Ayurvedic therapies for a variety of ailments and is open seven days a week. A formal blessing was conducted by Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios, Metropolitan of the Kochi Diocese in India who was visiting from Kerala. Dr. Gopinathan Nair, the



Dr. Yakob Mar Irenaios, Dr Gopinathan Nair and Alex Koshy were present at the occasion

President of Santhigram USA, and Mr. Alex Koshy of the World Malayalee

Association also lent their voices in support of the new venture.



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Community on 36-hour fast to protest Indian embassy rules

Washington, DC: Indian-Americans across the United States are protesting recent Indian embassy rules. Many will participate in a 36-hour silent fast on April 30. Protesters will carry banners, get signatures on a petition for the Prime Minister of India, and send letters to their US representatives. The community seeks respect, accountability, and transparency from the Indian government with regard to processes dealing with the diaspora. In a press statement, the representatives of the Indian diaspora has urged the Indian government to

repeal the retroactive 2010 surrender certificate rule, investigate the fee charges and where possible, return monies unfairly collected. Furthermore, Indian-Americans are uncomfortable with the Indian government sequestering their passports for 6-months in order to issue an OCI-visa.

On March 15, 2011, the Indian government ruled that US citizens applying for an Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) lifetime visa must deposit their US passport with the Indian consulate for the 6-month duration of the visa-processing. This rule prohibits

free travel and creates overall security risks.

Several months prior, on May 30, 2010, the Government of India had imposed a bureaucratic rule retroactively requiring a Surrender or Renunciation Certificate for naturalized US citizens to demonstrate that they are no longer citizens of India. The Indian government has collected millions of dollars in fees to cancel invalid Indian passports for naturalized US citizens. Even those naturalized US citizens whose Indian passports expired 20+ years ago had to pay a fee to "cancel" their old Indian

passports.

The surrender certificate rule has created chaos in the Indian embassy workings. Indian-Americans have stood in endless lines and missed multiple work-days simply to get a certificate indicating they have canceled their old (often expired) Indian passports. Since the surrender certificate is a prerequisite for any visas to India, many who were unable to navigate the Indian bureaucracy missed family events and business opportunities.

April 30 protest locations include VPSS Haveli, Houston,

TX; Sardar Patel Bhavan, Atlanta, GA; Hindu Temple, Tampa, FL; Mangal Mandir, Silver Spring, MD; Devon St. Chicago, IL, XXX, Columbia, SC; XXXX, Dallas, TX;. See attachment for specific list of locations. People are asked to support the protest by joining the fast for a few hours, signing the online petition to the Prime Minister of India, and writing to their US representatives for support.

For more information, contact P V Patel, dukeofnuke@mail.com; Mobile 832-754-7596 or send email to piounity1@gmail.com.

Salil Mehta appointed to key position at NBC Universal

California: The recent appointment of Salil Mehta as the COO of NBC Universal's Entertainment and Digital Networks is another sign of the growing clout of South Asians in the US media and entertainment industry.

Mehta will now oversee day-to-day operations including business affairs, business development and strategic planning for the division's extensive entertainment business portfolio, including Bravo Media, Telemundo, mun2, Oxygen Media and digital properties iVillage, DailyCandy, Swirl and Fandango. Prior, Salil served as President of Business Operations and Strategy at NBCU, and led the company's high profile Comcast integration.

This announcement comes on the heels of NBC Universal hiring Reena Singh away from Disney Channel to serve as VP or program development and programming for Universal Cable Productions (UCP) which creates shows for hugely successful



Salil Mehta was named COO of NBC Universal's Entertainment and Digital Networks

channels such as Syfy and USA. UCP's programs include Law & Order/Criminal Intent, Psych, and summer hits such as Royal Pains. Her prior roles include serving as a producer at ABC Network News and work with Conde Nast's Bon Appetit before attending the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

Nan Melville's documentary on Nrityagram to show at the Newport Beach Film Festival



New York: Dance photojournalist Nan Melville, a freelance photographer for several arts institutions including The Julliard School, Carnegie Hall, and The New York Times, specializes in photographing and filming the performing arts, primarily dance. Her short documentary film Nrityagram: For the Love of Dance will be screened at the prestigious Newport Beach Film Festival on May 3, 2011, in Newport Beach, California.

Melville first met the Nrityagram Dance Ensemble in 1996, when she was assigned by The New York Times to photograph their U.S. debut performance in New York. After visiting the Nrityagram dance village (www.nrityagram.org) in Bangalore, India, at the invitation of the late Protima Bedi, she began working on her documentary.

She subsequently returned to India to film life in the dance village, and research archival materials. "I've become a great friend of the members of Nrityagram, photographing many of their New York performanc-

es," says Melville. "I've even put up dancers on my sofa when hotels were overflowed."

Nrityagram: For the Love of Dance debuted in January 2010 as an official selection of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Dance Films Association, Dance on Camera Festival in New York City. The New York Times' chief dance critic Alistair Macaulay said, "Many intelligent points are made, and much of the dance footage, not least during the closing credits, is spellbinding. I wanted the film to be twice as long."

"Alastair echoes my intent to expand the film into a feature length documentary," says Melville. My mission is to capture the story of the dance village and the dancers and how they promote and develop the Odissi dance form for posterity."

Appeal

Vote for Akshaya Patra in Chase Community Giving challenge on Facebook

New York: In a Facebook challenge, Chase will donate \$25,000 to the top 100 charities who receive the most votes and enter them into a final round for a chance to receive up to \$500,000. The Akshaya Patra Foundation is competing as well and your vote can help feed more number of children daily meals so that their education doesn't suffer. To vote click www.vote4TAPF.org. If you are not connected to Chase Community Giving, you will have to "Like" them to view the page.



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IIFA announces the 2011 Technical Award winners

Band Baaja Baaraat, Dabangg and Robot lead the tally bagging three awards each

Mumbai: The International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) today announced the winners of the technical awards categories for the IIFA Awards 2011. The trophies will be presented to the winners during the Videocon IIFA Weekend in Toronto, Canada. Band Baaja Baaraat, Dabangg and Robot led the technical winners tally with three awards each.

Cinematographer	Sudeep Chatterjee	Guzaarish
Editing	Namrata Rao	Band Baaja Baaraat
Art Director	Sabu Cyril	Robot
Choreography	Farah Khan - Mummi Badnam	Dabangg
Action	S. Vijayan	Dabangg
Sound Recording	Pritam Das	Love, Sex Aur Dhokha
Song Recording	Vijay Dayal - Ainvayi Ainvayi	Band Baaja Baaraat
Sound Re-recording	Leslie Fernandes	Dabangg
Special Effects	Indian Artists	Robot
Background Score	Shankar, Ehsaan, Loy	My Name Is Khan
Costume Designing	Niharika Khan	Band Baaja Baaraat
Make-up	Banu (For Rajnikant)	Robot

The nominations for the popular categories of the IIFA Awards 2011 will open for public voting on the 10th of May. Indian Cinema fans worldwide can vast their votes for those they consider deserving. The votes from the online polling will be tallied by PWC and will only be announced on the night of the IIFA Awards 2011 at the Rogers Centre, Toronto. In its twelfth year, IIFA will make its North American debut in Ontario, Canada from the 23rd to the 25th of June, 2011.

Chicago's young Christians enact 'Good Friday' play

Michigan: The Indo-American Christian Children of Chicago presented a large scale 'Good Friday' play at the Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan on Saturday, April 16, 2011 attracting the attendance of families from several states including New Jersey, Ohio, Philadelphia, Florida, Illinois and Michigan.



The passion-play dramatically showcased the baptism and crucifixion of Lord Jesus Christ

This 25th milestone passion-play presentation dramatically showcased the baptism and crucifixion of Lord Jesus Christ with a large cast of young members presenting a dramatic account of one of the most significantly central events in the Christian history which culminates in the Resurrection of Christ on the Easter day.

The play's huge cast lineup was headed by Dheeraj Charles who portrayed the main character displaying solemnity and the intensity of Christ in playing the central role; while Rohit Paul showed amazing flair as Pontius Pilate. Nikhil Charles played the character of Caiphaz with zestful conviction; while Rev. Paul Gorre, Arun Polepaka, Karun Charles, Josh Thomas, Jenica Doma, Rachel Kadamandla, Adriana Gorre, Melanie

Gorre, T. Cherril, Jothsna Seesala, Jerusha Seesala and a host of other young children whose stellar performances manifested the depth of the characters each portrayed. The play production team was led Mrs. Rita Paul, Executive Producer with a team of coordinators including Dr. Reena Paul-Polepaka, Rachel Dwaram, Josthna Charles, Dr. P. Thomas, Vijendra Doma, Jeeva Gorre, Jyothi Bhasker and Smitha Mathews.

The original 'live' music for Passion Play was provided by music director Pravin Charles and digital effects for each scene was designed by Technical Directors James Mitra and Arun

Polepaka. Earlier, Mr. Vijay Kodi and Mr. Jeeva Ratnam Pakerla Chairperson and Co-Chair of Christian Community in state of Michigan praised the India Christian Children of Chicago for their faith and commitment in serving through drama ministry at such a young age. Mr. Sam Reddi Pogu of Michigan Christian Fellowships served as Masters of Ceremony.

In closing remarks, Regi Paul praised the outstanding hospitality of Michigan's Christian community and for providing the platform to showcase this outstanding passion play.

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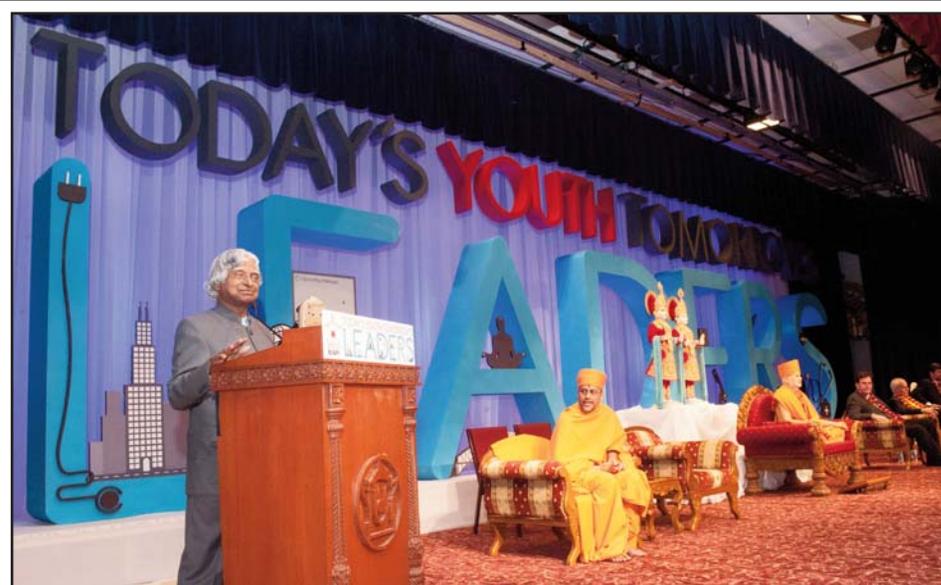
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Former President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam was the keynote speaker at BAPS conference "Today's Youth, Tomorrow's Leaders" held at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Bartlett, Illinois on April 24.

ASF Dance Co to celebrate Tagore's 150th birthday

Illinois: Anil Sinha Foundation has organized an event titled 'Prakriti-O-Nayika' – Kathak choreography based on Rabindranath Tagore's poems in celebration of his 150th birthday along with Kathak solo and Jugalbandi. The presenting

artists are Madhumita Roy from Kolkata, India and Kiran Chouhan with the artists of ASF Dance Company. The event is on May 20th at 7 pm at Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago, Lemont, IL.

UNGA should set global agenda: India

United Nations: India wants the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to take the lead in setting the global agenda and restore the centrality of the UN in formulating multilateral approaches to resolving transnational issues. Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri, Deputy Permanent Representative of India at the UN, reiterated India's consistent view that the General Assembly can be revitalized only when its position as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the UN is respected both in letter and in spirit.

Amb. Puri was speaking at the Meeting of the Adhoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly April 28. He cited the role intended for the Assembly in Article 10 of the UN Charter, namely that it discuss any questions or matters within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the Charter, i.e. the Security Council, the ECOSOC, Trusteeship Council, ICJ as well as the Secretariat.

Regarding visibility and enhanced public awareness of the work of the



General Assembly, Puri said, "First, we, the member-states need to make the Assembly and its work more relevant to the evolving international system, in other words, the presence of political will to take concrete measures to reinforce the role and authority of the Assembly. We need to properly appreciate and then correctly situate the Assembly within the plurality of multilateral mechanisms that deal with global issues.

"Second, there are a number of best practices available in this regard in various international organizations, albeit on a smaller scale. Such best practices could be used as a guide to promote visibility and enhanced public awareness of the work of the General Assembly."

Entrepreneurs returning to China, India find better opportunity

New York: There has long been anecdotal evidence that highly educated Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs are choosing to leave tech hubs like Silicon Valley to launch startups in their home countries. A new report by scholars tracking those entrepreneurs says the returnees have found that economic opportunity truly is better in India and China.

"I was surprised at how overwhelmingly positive people were about being back home. The numbers were just astonishing," said Vivek Wadhwa, a visiting scholar at the University of California Berkeley, who co-authored the study along with AnnaLee Saxenian, dean of the school of information at Berkeley, and scholars from Duke and Harvard. "The numbers are like a slap in the face for these politicians who are downplaying the rise of a new India and China."

The survey found that 72 percent of Indian and 81 percent of Chinese returnees found the opportunities to start their own businesses were better in their home countries. Just 14 percent of Indians and 5 percent of Chinese who had returned felt the opportunities had been better in the

US. The scholars used the professional social network LinkedIn to track down highly educated natives of those countries who returned home after living in the U.S. for several years.

Wadhwa's research several years ago had found that 52 percent of Silicon Valley startups were launched by immigrants, many of them highly educated products of Stanford, Berkeley and other schools. The fact that large numbers of those Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs who are returning home are pleased about their decision several years later, and are broadcasting those feelings back to other Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs who remain here, is bad news for the valley's economic future, Wadhwa said in an interview.

"It means we're going to have that many fewer startups in Silicon Valley, less vitality, less energy, because they are all going back," Wadhwa said. Because of that "reverse brain drain," he believes less than half of the valley's startups are being launched by immigrants now.

When President Barack Obama visited Facebook last week for a

town hall event about the country's budget debate, Obama said he backed reforms that would make it easier for highly educated immigrants to remain in the U.S. and start companies here. To an approving audience at Facebook, Obama said it was important that the U.S. find a way to make sure people like former Intel CEO Andy Grove, a native of Hungary, build their companies here rather than returning to their home countries.

"We want more Andy Groves here in the United States," Obama said. "We don't want them starting companies -- we don't want them starting Intel in China or starting it in France. We want them starting it here."

But Wadhwa said Obama's call to do that as part of comprehensive immigration reform is ducking the problem.

"His words were not backed by any action," Wadhwa said. "This comprehensive immigration reform is an excuse not to do anything, because that's not going to pass. There is no way in the world. We couldn't agree on health care, how can we agree on amnesty for illegals? It ain't going to happen."

Call to prosecute Congress leaders for anti-Sikh riots

New York: Human Rights Watch (HRW) has sought the prosecution of leaders of India's Congress party who allegedly organized attacks on Sikhs after Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984.

Sikhs were attacked and killed 'with the complicity of senior members of (then prime minister) Gandhi's Congress party,' said HRW South Asia director Meenakshi Ganguly.

'Although there is evidence that at least some of the attacks were orchestrated by

senior political figures, none have yet been convicted for the 1984 killings,' she said.

'The discovery of more Sikh massacre victims after nearly three decades shows the reluctance of successive Indian governments, despite numerous commissions of inquiry, to get to the truth and prosecute those responsible for the anti-Sikh violence,' Ganguly said.

Referring to the recent discovery of mass graves in Hondh-Chillar in Haryana, she said: 'The Haryana massacre is a reminder that India

needs a law that will provide maximum protection against orchestrated attacks on minorities.

'The government should listen to all suggestions that could strengthen the communal violence bill so that these outrages never happen again.'

A case against Congress party has been filed in a New York court by the US based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) along with several Sikh individuals from different states and cities of India who witnessed and survived attacks in 1984.

Deepa Iyer to get community leadership award

New York: The Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS) will honor SAALT's Executive Director, Deepa Iyer with the Community Leadership Award

on May 4 in Washington, DC. The Community Leadership Award recognizes leaders within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, who have served as role models and mentors, and have worked to enhance community empowerment and engagement.

Deepa has guided SAALT's (South Asian



SAALT's Executive Director

Americans Leading Together) direction since 2004 when it became a staffed organization. Since then, SAALT has been actively engaged in advocacy around civil and immigrant rights issues, including the impact of the September 11th backlash, working with partners and allies in building strong coalitions, producing important reports and resources to strengthen the South Asian community's infrastructure, and helping to develop stronger leaders for the future.

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Sathya Sai Baba passes away

HYDERABAD: Iconic spiritual leader Sri Sathya Sai Baba passed away at Puttaparthi in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh on April 24, leaving behind millions of mourning devotees in India and abroad, and a sprawling system of educational, medical and philanthropic services that has huge resources at its command. He was 85.

He had bravely battled complications of the heart, lung and kidney for four weeks.

The end came at 7.40 a.m., after 28 days of intense anxiety among his followers and frenetic activity by doctors of the Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences (SSIHMS).

The formal announcement was made by SSIHMS Director Dr. A.N. Safaya.

He declared in a statement that the spiritual leader "is no more



Devotees paying their last respect to the Body of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at the Ashram in Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh.

with us physically. He left his earthly body due to cardio-respiratory failure."

A few hours later, the body was shifted in an ambulance from the hospital to the Sai Kulwant Hall in Prashanthi Nilayam, about 7

km away. The mortal remains were kept in this huge and ornately decorated hall, regularly used for congregations and for Sai Baba's elaborate birthday celebrations.

The body was interred in the

The future

After the passing of Sai Baba, a vast empire spread across Puttaparthi, Bangalore, Kodaikanal, Hyderabad, Chennai and Mumbai, and overseas centers, needs to be administered as effectively as before. The spiritual guru was the Chairman of the Sathya Sai Central Trust that manages funds pouring in from devotees across the globe, as well as the affairs of a string of service and spiritual organizations.

The Trust, which has as its members well-known persons

such as the former Chief Justice of India, P.N. Bhagwati; the former Central Vigilance Commissioner, S.V. Giri; former IAS officer K. Chakravarthi, who is the Trust Secretary since 1994; and the former CII president, V. Srinivasan, has now to select an eminent person acceptable to the devotees to chair the Trust.

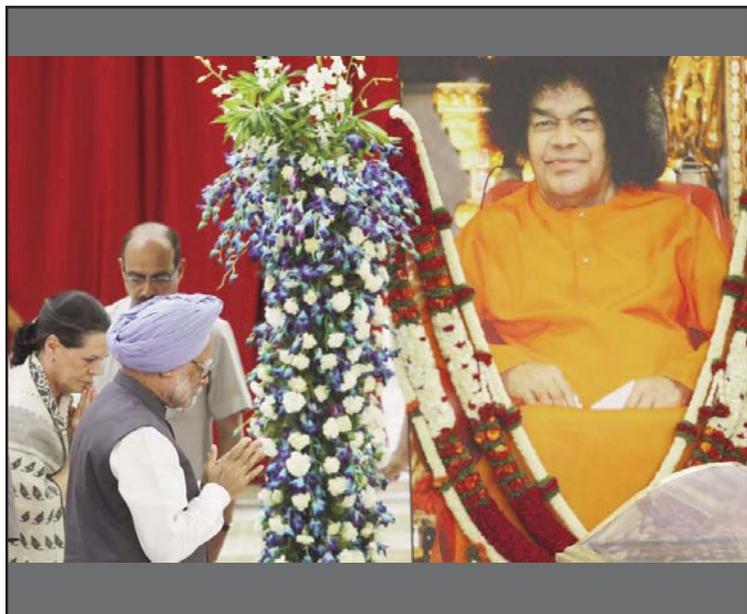
This is no mean task, considering numerous reports of internal differences between Sai Baba's relatives, particularly his nephew R.J. Ratnakar, a member of the Trust, and some other Trustees.

hall on April 27 around 8 a.m.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, who flew into Puttaparthi along with Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan,

declared State mourning for four days and a holiday in Anantapur district on April 27. He said Sai Baba would be given State honors at the funeral.

"A leader who inspired millions"



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress president Sonia Gandhi at Sathya Sai Baba's funeral.

NEW DELHI: The Vice-President, the Lok Sabha Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Congress president were among those who condoled the death of Sri Sathya Sai Baba at Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh on April 24.

In his message, Vice-President Hamid Ansari said the Baba's message of love should be the guiding light in this trying hour.

Expressing "deep and profound sadness" over the death of the 86-year-old Baba, the Prime Minister said he was a spiritual leader who inspired millions to lead a moral and meaningful life even as they followed the religion of their choice.

"Sri Sathya Sai Baba, as a preacher of the highest human

values, was an iconic figure for over five decades. He endeared himself to the people through various institutions, with headquarters at Prashanthi Nilayam, that promoted egalitarian values, education and public health," Dr. Singh said.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi said the news greatly pained her. "He was a spiritual person in whom lakhs of people had faith. In his lifetime, he inspired the people of this country and those abroad towards spiritualism and religion," she said in her condolence message.

Bharatiya Janata Party leader L.K. Advani and Nitin Gadkari, in separate messages, expressed their grief and sorrow at the passing away of the Baba.

Tearful adieu to Baba

Puttaparthi (Andhra Pradesh): Hundreds of thousands bid a tearful farewell to Sathya Sai Baba on April 27 as the spiritual leader was laid to rest with state honors at his Prashanti Nilayam ashram, his base from where he presided over a mass global following.

The coffin of the 85-year-old was lowered into a grave during the nearly two-hour ceremony at Sai Kulwant Hall, where the godman gave "darshan" to his devotees and delivered discourses for decades.

The burial was in keeping with the practice for Hindu spiritual gurus.

Amid chanting of Vedic hymns and Sai mantras, a team of 18 priests led by Kandukoori Kondavadhani performed the rituals.

While nearly half the ceremony was open to those present in the hall, including a litany of politicians and bureaucrats, the burial was performed by only a handful of relatives and disciples besides priests.

Outside Prashanti Nilayam and across the town, despite the searing weather, hundreds of thousands of men, women and children watched the last rites on giant screens. Many broke down, knowing they would never again see in flesh and blood a man they viewed as god.

Sai Baba's nephew R.J. Ratnakar sprinkled holy water brought from seven rivers on the mortal remains. He also performed 'dasha danam' or donation of 10 items including cow, land and clothes as per the Hindu customs.

Ratnakar, son of Sai Baba's brother, became emotional while



Police place India's national flag on a glass coffin containing the body of Sathya Sai Baba during his funeral on April 27.



Devotees wail as they watch the funeral of Sathya Sai Baba on a big screen outside the guru's ashram in Puttaparthi.

performing the last rites. Sai Baba's caregiver Satyajit was seated near the coffin.

Later, the godman was laid to rest in a 3 by 6 by 4.5 ft deep pit at a private ceremony behind curtains. The pit was filled with Kurukshetra soil, salt, silver, gold and navaratnas, symbolizing nine planets.

The event was bristling with VIPs.

These included Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) star and former deputy prime minister L.K. Advani, Punjab Governor Shivraj Patil, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa, Andhra Pradesh Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan, Chief Minister N. Kiran Kumar Reddy, former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and several ministers from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

Succession war hots up for Sai Trust

Puttaparthi (Andhra Pradesh):

Even as spiritual leader Sathya Sai Baba, 85, died on April 24, a fresh round of intense speculation began over his potential successor. At the moment, his personal assistant, Satyajit, and nephew, RJ Ratnakar, are being viewed as the leading contenders to head the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust (SSSCT), chaired by Sai Baba.

The trust, which runs a railway station and an airport in this pilgrim town, is believed to have assets worth Rs 40,000 crore.

A relative of Sai Baba said, "Satyajit and Ratnakar are the two candidates who could head the trust. The trustees are also not averse to this." Satyajit, 33, a post-graduate in business administration, is associated with Sai Baba since the age of five and had exclusive access to him at the hospital where he was being treated since March 28.

Sai Baba indicated last year that Satyajit should be part of the trust.

Ratnakar, 39, a cable network operator and a petrol pump dealer, found place in the trust in 2005 after his father, Janakiramaiah's death.

Sai Baba is known to have earlier thwarted attempts by his relatives to participate in the trust's activities.

The state government has steered



RJ Ratnakar, Swami's nephew and trustee of Sri Sathya Sai Baba Central Trust, performing the last rites of Baba.



Leaders of various religions prepare to pray ahead of the final rituals.

clear of the succession row.

"After all, the trustees have to take a decision (on the successor).

However, Satyajit is chosen by Baba to serve him," LV Subrahmanyam, principal secretary, finance, told HT.

No govt interference in trust: Andhra CM



Security personnel try to control followers as they throng to the ashram to pay their last respects to Baba.

HYDERABAD: Even as there are question marks over the future of Sathya Sai Central Trust, Andhra Pradesh chief minister Kiran Kumar Reddy announced that his government will not interfere in the working of the trust.

"The trust will run as it is," Reddy said at a press conference at Puttaparthi hours after Baba passed away on April 24.

Speculation in recent days have been that the government would take over the trust after Sai Baba's death.

Reddy's statement came amid reports of a rift among trust mem-

bers and the allegations of diversion of funds. The minister also refused to answer any queries.

The trust, which runs several hospitals, educational institutions, drinking water projects and undertake other charitable works in India and abroad, is estimated to have movable and immovable assets of Rs.40,000 crore.

The trust members include former chief justice P.N. Bhagwati, former IAS officers K. Chakravarthi and S.V. Giri, chartered accountant turned entrepreneur Indulal Shah, Venu Srinivasan of TVS Motors and the Baba's nephew R.J. Ratnakar.

Bollywood bereaved at Baba's passing

Mumbai: Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan has mourned the death of spiritual leader Sathya Sai Baba who blessed him with "vibhuti" after his "Coolie" accident, Shilpa Shetty's mother is devastated, and Sonu Sood says Baba will continue to be an integral part of his life.

Sathya Sai Baba died Sunday at age of 85 at a hospital in his home town of Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh after a prolonged illness. Here is what Bollywood celebrities had to say on his passing:

Amitabh Bachchan posted messages on both Twitter and his blog remembering the time when he visited Baba after recovering from his "Coolie" accident.

"Very sad to hear of the passing of Sathya Sai baba...sent me 'vibhuti' at the time of 'Coolie' accident...on getting well visited him," Amitabh Bachchan posted on Twitter.

"Satya Sai Baba passed away. A saint, a generous soul, a builder of society. I had opportunity to be with him on an occasion.

He had graciously sent me some of his famed 'vibhuti'



Hundreds of devotees gather to attend the funeral ceremony of Sathya Sai Baba in Puttaparthi.

to be put on my tongue during the time I was struggling for my life after the Coolie accident. When I recovered, I went across to his ashram near Chennai. He met me in a side small chamber and blessed me by procuring more 'vibhuti' virtually from the air," Big B posted on his blog.

Aishwarya Rai: Shri Satya Sai Baba...deep sadness on his demise...He remains with us...Prayers...Aum Sai Ra.

Hema Malini: I met him once. It was an encounter etched in my mind and heart forever.

It was my ardent wish to dance in his presence. He loved the fine arts including

dancing. I've heard so much about his good work. He was a great soul. He has done so much for the needy! The faith that people had in him was unbelievable. I am sure he will come back in some avatar.

Shilpa Shetty: My mother is a huge bhakt of Sai Baba. She is in New York right now. She is devastated by the news. Unfortunately I never met him.

Raveena Tandon: I didn't follow him. But I learnt a lot from him. He funded many schools, hospitals and charitable causes. He enriched lives with his spiritual guidance. It was a life well lived."



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Chaos in PAC meet

New Delhi: Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) descended into chaos on April 28 after the UPA managed to secure the support of BSP and SP to obtain a surprising majority which "rejected" the draft report on the 2G scam that was sharply critical of Prime Minister, his office and others.

Seven Congress MPs, supported by two from DMK, attacked the Chairman of the 21-member committee and veteran BJP leader M M Joshi over leakage of the report prepared by him which had made headlines.

The draft report had criticized Prime Minister Manmohan Singh personally for his "desire" to keep the PMO at "arm's length" on the issue of 2G allocation that allowed the then telecom minister A Raja to execute his "dubious designs" and was also critical of the then Finance Minister P Chidambaram and officials of the PMO with regard to handling the scam.

For over three hours, these MPs sought to put the Chairman on the mat, accusing him of presenting a "one-sided" report with "malafide" intention and demanded his resignation.

These nine MPs found surprise support in one member each of SP and BSP who were expected to go along with rest of the Opposition comprising 6 of BJP excluding Joshi and one each from BJD, JD(U) and AIADMK.

The UPA members alleged that Joshi had "outsourced" the drafting of the report.

The ruling MPs, who had come with a strategy, insisted in writing that the report be rejected and a vote be taken.

In identical written request, the 11 MPs, including SP and BSP, said "I vote to reject the draft report circulated by the Chairman, PAC, on recent developments on allo-



Public Accounts Committee Chairman Murl Manohar Joshi.

cation of 2G and 3G spectrum."

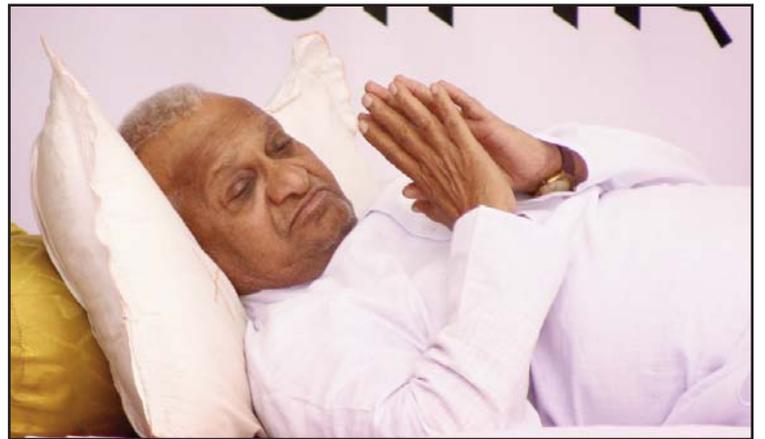
Finding the going tough, Joshi adjourned the meeting for lunch at around 2 PM and fixed the next session at 4 PM.

As soon as the meeting re-convened, senior Congress leader Saifuddin Soz moved a resolution demanding that the Chairman's draft be rejected. He pressed for a vote on it and was supported by other MPs from Congress and DMK as also from the SP and BSP.

While Joshi claimed that he had "adjourned" the meeting as there was "no order", UPA members said the Chairman had "walked out" and "run away". Along with him, Opposition members also left the hall.

In unprecedented dramatic scenes, 11 members of the UPA and BSP and SP held their own meeting and "elected" Soz as their "Chairman for the sitting". They also "unanimously" passed the "resolution" rejecting the draft report.

Hazare to address UP rallies



Anna Hazare will address a people's rally in Lucknow on May 1 via phone.

Lucknow: Activists of the non-governmental organization 'India Against Corruption', which is headed by veteran social activist Anna Hazare, has said all anti-corruption meetings and rallies would be held as scheduled, even if the Uttar Pradesh Government does not grant them permission.

"The rally will be organized. Whether the government permits it or not, the meeting will be held. All the meetings that are planned will be held. If they want to arrest us then they are welcome, whatever they want to do they are most welcome,"

said Rajiv Aggarwal, who heads the NGO's Lucknow chapter

The Uttar Pradesh Government has put a curb on public functions and demonstrations, making it mandatory to take prior permission from the district administration.

According to reports, Hazare will not be able to attend the Uttar Pradesh leg of the nation-wide 'India Against Corruption' (IAC) rallies on health grounds, but will address them over the phone.

The anti-corruption rallies would be organised in Varanasi, Sultanpur and Lucknow on May 1.

Two SC judges withdraw from Dinakaran case

New Delhi: The hearing on a petition by Sikkim High Court Chief Justice P.D. Dinakaran, facing an impeachment motion, was deferred on April 28 as two Supreme Court judges withdrew themselves from the matter.

Justice D.K. Jain and Justice H.L. Dattu of the two-member apex court bench withdrew from the hearing on Justice Dinakaran's plea seeking a stay on the inquiry proceedings against him under the impeachment motion and removal of counsel P.P. Rao from a committee probing charges of misconduct against him.

Justice Dinakaran has sought the removal of Rao on the grounds that he was prejudiced against him as he (Rao) was one of the several



Justice Dinakaran is facing charges of corruption, land-grab and abuse of judicial office.

people who had pleaded with the then chief justice of India K.G. Balakrishnan against his elevation to the apex court.

Left Front questions UPA on Purulia arms drop

Kolkata: West Bengal's ruling Left Front on April 28 asked the Central government to explain why it remained inactive despite having advance information about the massive arms drop in Purulia in 1995.

"The latest revelations on the arms drop are further confirmation of the fact that there was a well planned conspiracy to use violence to destabilize the Left Front at that time," LF chairman Biman Bose told mediapersons. He was reacting to an interview given by arms drop case prime accused Kim Davy who claimed the arms were dropped to "destabilize" the state government and the then central government had played the role of a facilitator.

Bose described the arms drop as



Left Front chairman Biman Bose.

a "serious assault on India's sovereignty" and a "diabolical plot against the then Left front government".

Kalmadi arrested, Kanimozhi chargesheeted

New Delhi: Suresh Kalmadi, who oversaw the graft-tainted and disastrously managed Commonwealth Games held in Delhi last fall, was remanded in police custody Tuesday on charges of cheating, conspiracy and corruption related to tenders for time-keeping equipment worth millions of dollars. He was detained Monday night and then suspended by the ruling Indian National Congress party, of which he was a senior member.

The same day, another high-flying politician was charged with corruption: member of Parliament Kanimozhi Karunanidhi. Kanimozhi, who goes by one name, is the daughter of the chief minister of the state of Tamil Nadu and a member of one of the



most influential political families in a country where dynasties still play a critical role. Her DMK party is a key partner in the governing coalition.

She is charged for her role in the ongoing drama of India's mobile phone licence sale scandal, which cost the country an estimated \$39-billion, not including millions of dollars in bribes that Kanimozhi is alleged to have helped funnel to private companies through her close relationship with the then-telecommunications minister, Andimuthu Raja.

Mr. Raja is now in jail, and last week five

Kanimozhi, Karunanidhi's daughter, is implicated in 2G scam

men who head large private corporations were also locked up after being charged in the second-generation (2G) mobile license scam. Pictures of white-shirt-wearing, smartphone-toting business and political leaders being led into courtrooms or jailhouses are becoming a staple of the Indian front pages.

All of these criminal charges might appear to indicate that Mr. Singh's government is cracking down on corrupt officials without regard for their level of power or prestige. But in fact it's the Central Bureau of Investigation, acting on orders from the Supreme Court – which has given itself control over the 2G scam investigation – that is running the show.

Air India: Pilots strike, fliers strive

New Delhi: Despite contempt notices by the Delhi High Court, the strike by some 600 Air India pilots entered the third day on April 29, forcing at least 95 flights to be canceled, even as grounded fliers faced steep fare hikes by other airlines.

With both the management and the agitating union members hardening their positions, the airline has suspended bookings on domestic and regional international destinations till May 1. "Fresh bookings will only start from May 4," an Air India spokesperson said.

The Delhi High Court had asked the pilots to immediately end their agitation, while initiating contempt proceedings and threatening to attach the properties of the their union if they failed to do.

But passengers, who were stranded after their Air India flights were canceled, started facing another dilemma -- that of shelling out between 50 percent and 75 percent more money on bookings with other airlines.



Passengers queue up outside Air India counters at the Indira Gandhi International airport as members of the Indian Commercial Pilots Association went on strike in the Capital on April 27.

Passengers were complaining that the base fare on a Delhi-Mumbai flight, which goes up to Rs.2,400-Rs.3,000 for last-minute bookings had gone up to as much as Rs.7,500 on some

airlines -- resulting in a total one-way cost of Rs.11,500 including various levies.

Members of the Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA), once on the rolls of the

erstwhile Indian Airlines, had struck work since April 27, demanding parity in pay with their counterparts in Air India and other issues related to work conditions.

Meanwhile, the Railway ministry has said it would run special trains to clear the rush of passengers following the strike by Air India pilots.

Northern Railway planned two

pairs of special trains -- New Delhi to Kolkata and New Delhi to Mumbai -- on April 28 while a pair was planned from Mumbai to Hyderabad by Central Railway on April 29.

"These trains are Rajdhani-type fully air-conditioned super special trains and will have first, second and third air-conditioned coaches," the ministry said in a statement.

A 'disappointed' US to keep up defence ties with India

Washington: Though disappointed at India's rejection of Washington's bid to supply a new generation of fighter jets, the US has said it would continue to grow and develop its defence partnership with India. The New York Times described the decision as a "blow" for President Obama. "We are deeply disappointed by this news but we look forward to continuing to grow and develop our defence partnership with India," Pentagon spokesperson Col Dave

Lapan said after New Delhi informed US of its decision. The US, he said, "remain convinced that the United States offers our defence partners around the globe the world's most advanced and reliable technology." India earlier informed manufacturers of US Lockheed Martin F 16 IN and Boeing F/A 18 In that they have not made it in the technical evaluation trials for a Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MRCA) for the Indian Air Force.



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Saturday July 30	Holiday Inn 3050 Woodbridge Ave Edison, NJ 08337	11:00 AM
Saturday August 6	Dallas Marriot Suites Market Ctr. 2493 North Stemmons Freeway Dallas, TX 75207	12:00 AM
Sunday August 7	Houston Marriot Medical Center 6580 fannin Street Houston, TX 77030	11:00 AM
Saturday August 13	Westyn Tysons Corner 7807 Leesburg Pike Falls Church, VA 92831	11:30 AM
Sunday August 14	Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel 300 South Charles Street Baltimore, MD 21021	11:00 AM

Mamata promises her own 'global' Nandigram

Nandigram: The wheel seemed to have turned a full circle as Mamata Banerjee addressing her first election rally in Nandigram on April 29— it goes to the polls on May 3 — unfolded her blueprint for the region that was remarkably similar, in objective, to what her rival Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee had said once upon a time. With a distinctive Mamata twist, of course.

Promising to transform Nandigram into an “industrial park and international market” to create thousands of jobs, Mamata offered residents a comprehensive industrial “package” that would ensure the development of what she called the “land of freedom.”

Three years ago, Bhattacharjee had talked of his proposal to turn this poor, backward region into a



Mamata Banerjee.

Special Economic Zone with a “petrochemical hub” at its core considering its proximity to Haldia where several petrochemical factories are already in operation including the Haldia refinery complex, Mitsubishi Chemicals and Tata Chemicals. Jobs for locals was also his rallying cry.

Aware of this, Mamata underlined that her industrial blueprint for Nandigram was such that “agricultural land will not be forcibly taken away and both industry and agriculture will flourish simultaneously.” How she planned to do this was, of course, too complicated to explain in an election rally.

She mentioned plans of a coach factory in Haldia, a Burn Standard Railway factory in

Jellingham in Nandigram and a rail link to Nandigram, too. Her “international market” would be one that would showcase “the zari and jewellery works” of hundreds of local, skilled artisans who are “forced to migrate to other states like Maharashtra and Gujarat.”

Nayachar, a river island — that was earmarked by the Left Front government as the alternative venue for the chemical hub — will be an eco-friendly industrial zone revolving round fishermen and tourism, she said.

“Your sons and family members will no more have to travel out of your homes,” said Mamata. “In fact, I am going to give employment to 10 lakh youths across West Bengal when I come to power,” she said, to thunderous applause.

J&K seeks more security forces for Amarnath

Jammu: Amid fears of another summer of riots and violence, the Jammu and Kashmir government has requisitioned additional forces from New Delhi to provide security during the upcoming Amarnath pilgrimage.

The state has asked for nearly 70 companies, or an estimated 7,000 personnel, for security of the pilgrims, official sources said on April 29.

This would be in addition to the forces that the state has spared for the pilgrimage that starts June 29.

The forces would have to be deployed from the first week of June. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the state government was doing everything for the security and facility of the pilgrims.



The annual Amarnath Yatra is an important part of the Hindu pilgrimage calendar.

“We are making all arrangements for the pilgrimage,” he had told reporters Thursday.

The annual Amarnath Yatra is an important part of the Hindu pilgrimage calendar. Thousands take part in the trek, organised by the state government, to the 14,000 ft high Amarnath Cave dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Anti-endosulfan hartal hits Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: The dawn-to-dusk hartal called by the CPI(M)-led LDF in Kerala demanding countrywide ban on pesticide endosulfan disrupted normal life across the state on April 29.

Early reports from across the state said public modes of transport like buses, taxis and autorickshaws were off the road, crippling the mobility of the people.

Pro-Left unions in the transport sector have extended their support to the hartal.

The hartal did not affect the train services but people who arrived at major stations by long-distance trains faced difficulty due to the absence of city buses, taxis and autos.

The protest coincided with the last day of the current round of meeting of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in Geneva, where the question of global ban on endosulfan has figured prominently.



Children from coastal belt in Thiruvananthapuram stage a demonstration demanding a ban on Endosulfan.

The Left parties want India to join the nations pressing for the global ban of the pesticide.

For quite some time, Kerala has been pressing for a nationwide ban on the deadly pesticide, whose use over the years left scores dead and forced several hundreds to live in

chronic health problems in parts of Kasargode district.

Though Congress in Kerala supported the demand, the party has criticized the LDF’s hartal call dubbing it as a political move to cast the UPA Government in poor light.

Godhra commission to hear Bhatt in-camera

AHMEDABAD: There will be no public hearing before the Nanavati-Mehta commission on May 16, when IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt is scheduled to depose. The proceeding will be in-camera, as it was during the questioning of former state home minister Gordhan Zadaphia.

Commission’s secretary CG Patel said that the police officer has been called by the probe panel for the purpose of some clarification by the members and whatever questioning takes place will happen in the judges’ chamber only. “It will not be a public hearing,” he said adding that the summons does not mention under which provision he has been summoned.



Gujarat CM Narendra Modi.

Bhatt has made statement on oath before the Supreme Court that he was present in the meeting that was held on February 27, 2002 evening, wherein chief minister Narendra Modi ordered the higher ups to allow the Hindus to express their anger against the Muslims.

He has also accused the SC-appointed special investigation team (SIT) of shielding the Modi-government.

Following this revelation, civil rights organisation - Jan Sangharsh Manch filed an application before the commission seeking his cross-examination so that material evidence could come on record, on the basis of which

the commission can summon Modi for questioning.

The hearing of this plea is kept on May 2.

Meanwhile, the Gujarat government on April 28 withdrew the security cover of Bhatt. Bhatt had been recommended Y-category security, which comprises a security team of 11 personnel.

Reacting to this withdrawal Bhatt said, “The DG yesterday issued an order in which he asked all the people, who were in my security ring, to report back to Junagarh. I have replied to the order requesting for the security cover. The DG will be the best person to tell you why the order was passed.”

Affectionately called Guruji, Mahendra Trivedi is making waves in the US since he shifted here from India in 2009. There is demand among people for his 'blessings', in which he does energy transmission. He talks of experiments showing the same energy works for improving crop production and to kill cancerous cells in this interview with The SATimes where he recounts his fantastic journey from a village boy in Madhya Pradesh and his ambitious mission to usher in a new science.

A Guru for the scientific age

By Parveen Chopra

SATimes: Tell us about your early life.

Mahendra Kumar Trivedi: I was born in 1963 in Betul district in Madhya Pradesh, India. My father was a teacher. In my childhood, every year I used to stay for months at my maternal grandparents' farm near Kanpur. There I had the opportunity to see the creation—farmers sow the seed and soon the seed loses its existence and transforms into plant. I started enjoying the beauty of the universe, would watch stars at night till sleep came. I was also comfortable with much older people. I started thinking why people come to this planet, what is the purpose, why they struggle and suffer a lot, why they have disorders, physical, emotional disorders? Some people who are gifted in every other way, they still have a problem—boredom—because they are disconnected from the Source.

Born with a photographic memory, I never needed to study much and still always topped in my class. I earned my mechanical engineering degree from government college in Ujjain. I held many jobs in good companies like Birla White, but on the very first day at work I would get the feeling: "This job is not for me." I would also get inner guidance that my purpose in life was something else though I had to wait to find what that was.

Backtracking, ever since the age of six, I started enjoying trance. I started sleeping in a trance like state. Trance (samadhi) is a gift of Divine, it comes but you cannot induce it. The primary stage of trance is meditation—thoughtlessness. But stopping thoughts is impossible. Those who claim so are liars, because as long as your CSF (cerebro-spinal fluid) is moving, brain is functioning, thoughts are produced. Samadhi is a billion times higher than thoughtlessness. And you are connected to Divine, Soul.

SATimes: When did the turning point come?

Trivedi: One night in November 1995, in trance my brain started processing that this was the time of calling, of action. A message came that I should quit my job and not have sentiments for my family (I was married at that time and in a 14-year celibacy period). Being sentimental is to have feeling only for family and friends. After Samadhi you should have same kind of feelings for known and unknown people—that is Oneness.

Anyway, next morning I quit my job, but was to wait for instructions on course of action. Anyway, for the first time in my life at age 32 I became happy because I now had a communication with Divine.

SATimes: What exactly happened that night of transformation?

Trivedi: Very important. The story common in West is: I was in kind of coma, then I heard the message, 'the world needs this and you do this or that'. In the East the story is: my bedroom filled with light, which con-

densed as a male or female deity, which gave me the message 'I am going on vacation, you take charge!' (I a u g h s). Unfortunately, for me, in the super-consciousness, no deity or angel appeared. For me, it was a process, not an event. The process had started at birth.

SATimes: So your mission started in 1995....

Trivedi: Next morning I started blessing people—seeing the effect

of this energy on humans. In 1996, the film industry people heard about me and I went to Bombay, where I met people from film stars to technicians. I changed my appearance—looked like a swami with long hair and robes. I met thousands of swamis and babas and visited many temples in the four corners of the country. In 2000, I started thinking, so many other babas and swamis also claimed the same thing, that through their blessing they are able to affect change in people. I asked myself: 'What am I doing, what are my credentials, who will decide? No, not people, they will give testimony, and they come up with legal-illegal expectations, and all the time it is not possible to fulfill those, then they get angry. So your credibility depends on people. So who will decide that I am different from these people.

If this energy is real, why is it limited to humans, why this blessing is limited to humans while Hindu scriptures proclaim: "Kan kan mein bhagwan" (God exists everywhere, even in the smallest possible particle in this universe)? Why God is working just on humans? If something is working in just humans, it is placebo effect. Then I would not like to stay in this line. I am educated, I will go back to my career, and not live this fake life. It was very important for me to understand limitations of this energy which was transforming the lives of people at every level.

Then, in 2000, a group of people approached me, they had a dairy farm in Satara district in Maharashtra with 350 cows and it was making losses: mortality rate 10-15%, milk production low, cows not conceiving on time and 80 per cent calves male. I was first disinclined, but then a Surdas poem read in childhood came to me: it is about Lord Krishna, his brother Balram is going from Vrindavan to Dwarka, and gopis corner him to convey their message to Lord Krishna: "Since the day you left this



Mahendra Kumar Trivedi

and got the reply that yes, I can use the same energy. I went to that dairy, saw the cows, did not touch, just from the computer screen, getting them together, blessed all 350 of them. We observed for two years. Mortality rate fell to zero, milk production improved by 30%, conceiving rate 100% and female-male calves ratio altered to 60-40. This was a miracle, very promising for me. In 2002 the same group of people came and said they have purchased 106 acres of land on Goa-Maharashtra border and were planning cashew plantation. I visited there and blessed the empty land, where they later planted 9000 cashew saplings. After two years, when I was in Canada, I got the news that those cashew trees' growth was five times higher, they did not need pesticide nor chemical fertilizer. The mortality rate was almost negligible.

SATimes: So this is the Trivedi effect...

Trivedi: Next, in 2005, I visited this farm, and went to the university, Dapoli, and met the Vice Chancellor there and showed him pictures of plants I had blessed. He was thrilled and he sent two scientists—heads of department of botany and of plant pathology to this orchard, and after 30 seconds, they said this is the biggest miracle we have ever seen in our career. On analysis they



Trivedi has been having trance experiences since childhood, but had a transformative experience in 1995.

place, nothing is pleasant, as if drained of life: fruits and crops are poor, cows are sad, they are not giving milk, not conceiving on time. Everything is the same otherwise, but something is missing—that is your presence."

I started thinking, this is the situation in the absence of Krishna consciousness, that energy. So I communicated to my Divine,

found that chlorophyll B and A in these cashew trees was 100 and 32 percent higher. Increasing chlorophyll B is an impossible phenomenon because B decides the absorption of the sun energy. I was able to increase this quantity up to 100 percent.

Then we did lots of experiments with Dapoli university—on alphonso mangoes, and then at Banaras Hindu University and several other places. This energy has the ability to change the soil, it can increase the useful bacteria in the soil nine times, and decrease harmful bacteria. In many crops, after energy transmission, there is up to 500 percent more production—organic, higher nutrition, and more shelf life. The mango trees I blessed one time in 2005, till today the same kind of results are there every year: Vitamin C in mango pulp is 40% higher, sugar 40% less. So this is not a temporary effect.

Then, inspired, I wanted to know the limits of this energy. We chose one of the three best laboratories in India—Hindujas, which has accreditation from the American Pathologists Association. We did hundreds of experiments on microbes, to see the effect of this energy on viruses like HIV, Hepatitis B, Herpes virus, and on pathogenic bacteria, even on superbugs (like multidrug resistant TB bacteria). Next, the scientists gave me cancer cells in a petri dish. I blessed them and converted them into non-cancerous cells within 10 days.

Next I went to Bombay IIT, and I was told, "Guruji, the atomic bond in living beings is weaker but in non-living things like metals, ceramics, polymers, and chemicals, it is very strong, you cannot twist that." I said let us try. So we did many experiments at different temperatures from -170 degree C to 1000 degrees C. Successfully.

SATimes: So how do you bless people?

Trivedi: There is no ritual or dogma. I tell people to close their eyes and start their prayer to the God of their understanding. During the prayer you have to request your God to give you what you want that will make you happy. And it works, for every person, for human cells, in labs on metals and ceramics. It takes three minutes, one person or one million, long distance also. People come on a conference call from 35-40 countries, and they receive the blessing. They enjoy transformation of their lives—in terms of physical, emotional, sexual and finally the connection to Divine—spiritual consciousness. This energy improves the finances, relationships, everything. For humans, one time is enough, but for them sky is the limit, they need more and more, they are more greedy.

SATimes: Don't you teach any technique which people can practice on their own?

Trivedi: We do not have any technique, but we raise the consciousness of people through this blessing and in time people reach the state of superconsciousness.

Continued on page 28....

'Dum Maaro Dum', an edgy thriller

By the end of it all, only one love story comes to a happy ending in "Dum Maro Dum". Maybe one is not allowed to say which. What one can safely say without the risk of sounding like a spoilsport is that love is not a popular emotion in the world that Rohan Sippy's edgy thriller encompasses.

This film is certainly not a ride for the squeamish. Violence dominates the proceedings. Ladies and Gentleman, welcome to the Other Goa. The one that we don't see in Hindi cinema.

In DMD the characters in Goa are constantly up to something self-destructive. You really can't afford to take your eyes off the screen as the lives of three unlikely 'heroes' -- one a redemptive cop, the other a student who



A still from 'Dum Maaro Dum'.

sells his soul for a scholarship and the third a musician trapped in discordant notes -- converge in most unexpected ways. But then the 'unexpected' is only expected in a film that addresses the

uneasy nexus between crime and conscience in hedonistic Goa, without taking sides.

Abhishek Bachchan's cop's role as ACP Kamath acquires an interesting moral ambivalence. Yup,

Sippy displays a tremendous partiality for restless visuals. The characters are always on the move though their destination is a mystery even to themselves. Maybe their aspirations are over-run by their greed.

Some of the characters sneak in a warm regard for their individual space in unguarded moments of vulnerability. To the cop Kamath's role Abhishek infuses a kind of supple laconism that makes this suffering cop remarkably free of self-guilt, not to mention the khaki uniform.

Has the film been edited (by Aarif Shaikh) too tightly, sacrificing the need to let the characters space for emotional growth for the sake of getting on with the process of cracking the case?

Very often we want to enter the

pain-lashed soul of the characters, the underage boy played by Pratik Babbar (vulnerable, again!) who gets caught in the airport while trying to smuggle out drugs.

The musician Rana Daggubati (striking debut, this) who loses love to crime. The crime-lord's mistress, Bipasha Basu (fetching in her trauma), who in a haze of numbing alcohol and drugs, wonders when she lost her innocence. That is a question that runs through the plot. And runs too fast.

On some deeply ironic level "Dum Maaro Dum" celebrates that loss of innocence which haunts the beaches of many touristic paradise. And yet we see glimmers of stark humanity in Rohan Sippy's characters.

No superhero role for Salman

Bollywood star Salman Khan has clarified that he is not playing a superhero in Kabir Khan's next.

"I am not doing any superhero film. I don't want to be bit by a spider and become Spiderman. I don't want to wear red underwear outside and become Superman. I just want to be Sal-man," the 46-year-old wittily said.

The news that was doing the rounds was that Salman will be doing an espionage thriller on the lines of "X-Men" where he



Salman Khan.

will play a spy who also has super abilities that are hidden from others. But the star has labeled this as false.

Anurag, Kalki to tie the knot

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap will wed his live-in girlfriend of two years Kalki Koechlin on April 30 at the latter's home in Ooty.

"They have invited just 40 of their close friends for their marriage. They will throw a big party once they return to Mumbai where the whole Bollywood will be invited," said a source close to the couple.

Kalki, 28, confirmed the news that she is marrying Kashyap, 38, this year, but she had refused to reveal the wedding date as she wanted to keep it a private affair.

"Yes, we are getting married this year.

I am not going to tell anyone the date, but I am getting married soon," said Kalki, who made her Bollywood debut with Kashyap's 'Dev D'.



Anurag Kashyap and Kalki Koechlin.

This is second marriage for Kashyap who was earlier married to his college sweetheart Aarti and has daughter Aaliya with her.

Obama is the bomb: Mallika

How does she do it! After getting up close and personal with most of Hollywood A listers like Johnny Depp, Salma Hayek, Halle Berry to name a few, Mallika Sherawat met the US President Barack Obama himself!

The actress was invited for tea with Barack Obama during his campaign stop in Los Angeles recently. Post the meeting, the actress described it as, "It was electric! Obama is the bomb."

Mallika is said to have discussed her stay in LA and spoken about her upcoming film 'Politics of Love, Barack' with the President. Surprisingly, Obama even told Mallika to ensure she invites him for the premiere of her film.



Mallika Sherawat with Barack Obama.

Preity to play a gangster!

No, it's not Sanjay Dutt or Emraan Hashmi playing the underworld goon. It is, in fact, the bubbly-faced Preity Zinta who will be seen essaying the role of a gangster! The actress has reportedly said 'yes' to Jai Ramji, to be directed by filmmaker Tigmanshu Dhulia.

"Preity Zinta liked the script and has agreed to work in the film. However, I have not yet formally signed her, as she is busy with IPL and is not in Mumbai. The formalities should be completed once she is back in the city," Dhulia told Mumbai Mirror.

Other stars in the film include Arjun Rampal, Irrfan Khan and Randeep Hooda. The film is reportedly going on floors in July and should be complete by December-January.



Preity Zinta.

Juhi's not insecure

She competed with other "really pretty" girls for the best roles, songs and the maximum box office hits in her prime, but 43-year-old Juhi Chawla says she has long crossed the stage of insecurity and is not in the rat race.

In fact, Juhi says she gelled well with her one-time rival, Manisha Koirala, who co-stars with her in the new film "I AM". In so many years, this is the first time they are working together.

"Manisha is a very sweet and chilled out person; so it was great working with her. Also, we are not in any kind of rat race now. We have crossed that stage when there were comparisons and you yourself felt a little insecure because there was this other really pretty



Juhi Chawla in 'I AM'.

girl vying for the same roles," Juhi said.

"At that time, you used to com-

pare who has got better songs, who has got better and more successful films, but all that stage we

have crossed. That time I didn't know her. I had met her very briefly. But now, when I worked with her, we were very much at ease with each other," she added.

After being in commercial cinema for 15 years and giving hits like "Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak", "Darr" and "Ishq", in 2003, the former beauty queen moved to art house movies with "3 Deewarein".

"I AM" is slated to hit the screens on April 29 and also stars Sanjay Suri, Purab Kohli, Rahul Bose, Nandita Das and others.

This is the first time Juhi is working with Manisha who had debuted in Bollywood just five years after the former in 1991. In Onir's fourth directorial debut, Juhi is playing a Kashmiri Pandit, while Manisha essays a Muslim

girl.

Juhi is also the co-owner of the Indian Premier League team Kolkata Knight Riders and runs production company Red Chillies Entertainment with Shah Rukh Khan.

Out of Onir's three films, Juhi has played important roles in two - "My Brother Nikhil" and "Bas Ek Pal". His "I AM" is a collection of four stories running parallel to each other.

"I was quite happy with my role because the casting for this film is very right. For instance, no one will be able to imagine me in Afia's role (Nandita Das's character) because Nandita is perfect for it," said Juhi, who is married to businessman Jai Mehta and has two children with him.

Saif-Bebo to get hitched?

It's the wedding season... After Lara Dutta and Mahesh Bhupathi, Anurag Kashyap and Kalki are all set to tie the knot on April 30. That leaves us asking the question, when are the much-in-love Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor going to tie the knot.

Speculations are rife that an announcement will be made post the release of 'Agent Vinod', a project that is very close to Saif's heart. However, we also hear that Saif has already popped the marriage question to Kareena. We are told, "Saif is ready. Saif is waiting for Kareena to get ready. She has to revert to him with the date and time!" Apparently, Kareena has managed to get close to Saif's family. And while love is in the air, all are only waiting for the announcement to be made.



Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor.

I'm obsessed with Madhuri: Bhansali

Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali confesses that he is "obsessed" with Bollywood diva Madhuri Dixit.

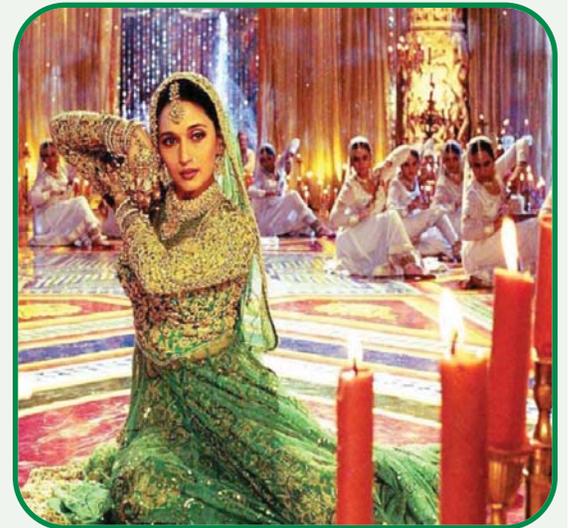
"In my every film, right from Khamoshi, I wanted to direct Madhuri. I am obsessed with her. No other director is as obsessed as me about Madhuri," said Bhansali.

Madhuri essayed the role of Chandramukhi in Bhansali's film Devdas (2002).

"During Khamoshi, I waited for two-and-half years at her door, to ask her to read the script; but I couldn't get through to her. So I made the film without her. During Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, I tried to rope in Madhuri, but it did not happen. Then I ensured that in Devdas, she was there," the 48-year-old director said.

"When we were doing the film, Madhuri called in to say she was getting married and asked if I (still) wanted her in the film. I told her, even if you are married or have a child, I want you to play Chandramukhi," he said.

But Bhansali had to wait for four years to get Madhuri in Devdas. While the star was in India for the TV show Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa, Bhansali couldn't meet her. He says, "We couldn't meet up due to our



Sanjay Leela Bhansali had to wait for four years to get Madhuri Dixit to play Chandramukhi in Devdas.

busy schedules. But we did speak on the phone. She watched Guzaarish and called me, saying she loved it. It meant a lot to me," he said.

Katrina to outdo Sheila Ki Jawani

Yes, you read it right. Katrina Kaif, who's all set to sizzle in another item number for Mere Brother Ki Dulhan, is leaving no stone unturned to go beyond her Sheila number.

Katrina told Mid Day, "Yes, I am shooting a full-on tapori number. It's earthy and sensuous not suggestive. I'm supposed to be dancing at a roadside dhaba."

Will she try to break her Sheila image? Katrina shrugs, "That's become the new benchmark for all my dance numbers. I was told to better Sheila Ki Jawani. And I'm trying my best."

According to onlookers, the actress is sporting a hot new look for the song.

Aditya Chopra reportedly asked Kat to "keep it original and go beyond Sheila".

The source tells the tabloid, "It



Katrina Kaif in Sheila Ki Jawani.

isn't so much about one-upmanship over Kat's last calling card as much as it is to living up to (if not

exceeding) the expectations audiences would have from an item number featuring the actress."

Hero worshipping not in vogue : Abhishek

Abhishek Bachchan tries to don different avatars in all his films since he feels audiences will get bored if he keeps doing just one thing because now people don't hero worship actors.

"You have to do something different. It will be terribly boring if you have to do the same thing every day. Today's generation will get really bored if they see actors doing the same thing again and again.

"They want to see their actors doing new things. I think the time of hero worshipping actors and being content with just one image of theirs has



Abhishek Bachchan.

gone.

Today, audiences want to see variety," the actor said.

Teenager coronated Jaipur Maharaja

By Prakash Bhandari/
SATimes

The 13-year-old prince is the king now. Maharaj Kumar Padmanabh Singh, a student of sixth standard, has emerged as the heir apparent of the Jaipur royal family following the death of Maharaja Brig. Bhawani Singh at the age of 80. Brig. Singh had adopted Padmanabh, son of his daughter Diya Kumari, as the heir to the Kachwaha Rajput dynasty in 2002. On Wednesday, after the end of the mandatory 12-day mourning, Padmanabh's coronation (Raj Tilak) ceremony took place at the City Palace. He is now the new His Highness, the titular king of Jaipur.

As per the tradition of the royal family, the Raj Tilak was held at the City Palace and the regal ceremony was attended by members of the erstwhile princely states, former Nobles and landlords, businessmen, prominent citizens of Jaipur and well wishers of the family. The solemn but elegant and graceful ceremony took place in the packed Darbar Hall of the palace. The dress code specified for the select invitees was all white and the invitees turned up in white turbans.

The young Maharaj Kumar, clad in white achkan and traditional safa, walked in a procession from the Chandra Mahal and went to the Darbar Hall for the Raj Tilak ceremony. The former royal families of Kashmir, Patiala, Jodhpur, Karauli,



The Raj Purohit performing the Raj Tilak of Maharaj Kumar Padmanabh Singh..

Dholpur, Alwar, Kishangarh, Jaisalmer, Sonpur, Santrampur, Sirohi, Loharu and Nahan were present at the ceremony. As were the Rajasthan's Health Minister, A A Khan; Speaker of Rajasthan Assembly, Dipendra Singh Shekhawat; former cine star and former Union Minister Vinod Khanna. During the day the Union Minister of State for Telecommunication Sachin Pilot, Rajasthan Tourism Minister Bina Kak, former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and the former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Digvijay Singh also visited the palace.

The Raj Tilak ceremony was performed by Rajpurohit Shri Brijraj Kishan ji and Acharya Shri Dilip Sharma amid the chanting of Vedic

mantras. Holy men of Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity and Jainism then blessed HH Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh ji. The flag on the Chandra Mahal which was on half mast was fully hoisted again on the Palace. Drums beating at the Nakkarkhana resumed again. The members of royal families, former nobles and invitees paid their respect to the new Maharaja as Nazarana (gift).

After the Raj Tilak, the young Maharaja came out in the courtyard to acknowledge greetings of the public. He also inspected the Guard of Honor and went inside the Zanana to seek the blessings of the ladies of the royal family. Later, he went to the Govind Devji temple and the family deities to seek their blessings.



Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singhji of Jaipur.



A view of the elegant Darbar Hall during the Raj Tilak ceremony.

The rang ka dastoor (the ceremony marking an end of the mourning period) took place at the courtyard of Chandra Mahal later in the evening. In this ceremony, the

invitees changed their turbans from white to more colourful ones. After this the invitees joined in feasting on the lawns of the City Palace.

Japanese stoicism and love for nature

By Geetika Jain

As I watch the cherry trees bloom in London, my enjoyment is tinged with sadness. The gardens of Tokyo, canals of Kyoto and in the countryside everywhere, the Japanese hearts would have been stirring, for it is time to sit under the blooms and enjoy their picnics. This spring, however, they are weighed down by the recent tragedies. What is most apparent while visiting Japan is the people's deep appreciation for nature. They enjoy not just the beautiful light and painted sunsets, but even the dark clouds, autumn's storms and winter's snow. It was in Tokyo that I first noted the beauty of uneven, handmade pottery and admired the character in the cracked glaze. The Japanese call it wabi sabi -- finding beauty in imperfection.

While reeling from the recent tsunami, earthquake and toxic fumes, the Japanese have been admirably strong. Ben Macintyre in The Times talks about gaman, a Japanese trait, "the unflappable sto-

icism that helps this nation survive whatever nature throws at it."

Rich culture

There is so much from the Japanese culture that has permeated our lives. As a child, I learned origami, folding paper into interesting shapes. In Japan, when someone is unwell, friends send paper cranes, symbolic of good health and longevity. Over the years we've read Haiku poetry by Basho and other poets, plunged ourselves into Haruki Murakami's novels and watched Akira Kurosawa's movies. We've admired ikebana flower arrangements and the art of bonsai, where trees are trimmed to miniature size.

People all over the world have developed a taste for Yakatori, Tempura and Sushi, and it was in Tokyo that I discovered the flavorful, spicy powder, shichimi, which has me addicted. The delicious and nutritious silken tofu is now a regular at our table. Karaoke and Sumo wrestling are two things that have become more popular even outside

Japan. My friend and I were invited to lunch with Akebono, a six foot, eight inches tall, five-hundred pound sumo wrestler. He had been the yokozuna or grand champion for three years. "Sumo has become even more popular outside Japan, particularly in Mongolia," Akebono said over lunch. I was curious to see what all he would order for lunch, but he had already eaten. He sat next to me so the table was pushed so far out to make room for him that I could barely reach my chopsticks.

Kyoto

Over the next few days, we took the Shinkansen bullet train to Kyoto, where we stayed at a traditional ryokan with sliding, rice paper room dividers. Our meals were served by demure ladies in Kimonos, who taught us to drink macha, their special green tea, in exactly three and a half sips. There was so much to absorb and appreciate that the words Arigato Gozaimasu, thank you very much, remained on our lips and minds for a very long while.



This is the cherry blossom season in Japan when parties to view the overflowing cherry blossom are traditionally held.

Obama releases birth details, critics rake Ivy League issue

President Obama's birth certificate from a Honolulu hospital

Washington: President Obama may have released his birth certificate on Wednesday, but Donald Trump and others on the far right have already moved on to a new conspiracy: how he got into the Ivy League. Trump accused him of being a "terrible student" who shouldn't have gotten into Columbia University or Harvard Law School. "I'm thinking about it, I'm certainly looking into it. Let him show his records." He continued darkly, "There are a lot of

questions that are unanswered about our president."

Like everything Trump says about Obama lately, his comments got lots of media play. But conspiracy theories about Obama's education have been around the far right since his presidential campaign. In September 2008, The Wall Street Journal said in an editorial, "Some think his transcript, if released, would reveal Mr. Obama as a mediocre student who benefited from racial preference."

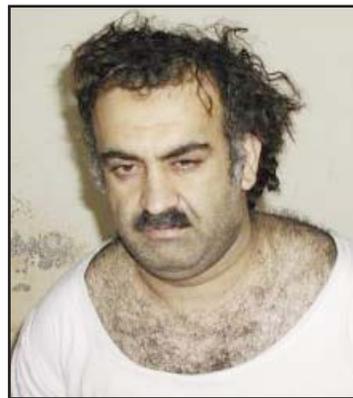
Shocking details from Guantanamo leaks

Washington: "Impotence-promoting" drugs. The threat of a "nuclear hellstorm." Prisoners leashed like dogs and forced to urinate on themselves.

These are just a few of the shocking revelations found among the cache of over 700 classified military documents detailing the 779 people who have been detained at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba.

Provided by WikiLeaks, the documents reveal that most of the 172 remaining detainees at the controversial facility have been rated as a "high risk" of posing a threat to the US and its allies if released without adequate rehabilitation and supervision. The documents also offer some glimpses into the top-secret operations of Osama bin Laden and other Al Qaeda officials.

* Mohammed Qahtani -- a Saudi believed to have been an intended participant in 9/11 -- was subject to coercive questioning and other abuses during his interrogation. The cables describe Qahtani as being leashed like a dog, sexually humiliated and forced to urinate on himself. His file says, "Although publicly released records allege detainee was subject to harsh inter-



Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in his early days in Gitmo prison.

rogation techniques in the early stages of detention," his confessions "appear to be true and are corroborated in reporting from other sources."

* The documents describe a major gathering of some of Al Qaeda's most senior operatives in early December 2001. They included Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the self-described mastermind of the Sept 11 attacks; Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, the alleged planner of the USS Cole attack; and Abu Faraj al-Libbi, a key facilitator for bin Laden. After returning to Karachi, Mohammed "put together a training program for assassinations and kid-

nappings as well as pistol and computer training." Khalid Sheikh Mohammed told his interrogators that Al Qaeda had hidden a nuclear bomb in Europe which will unleash a "nuclear hellstorm" if Osama bin Laden is captured or killed. The terror group also planned to make a 9/11 style attack on London's Heathrow airport by crashing a hijacked airliner into one of the terminals, the files showed.

* Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, the alleged planner of the USS Cole attack, "received injections to promote impotence" to avoid being distracted by women, and "recommended the injections to others so more time could be spent on the jihad."

* Gitmo authorities named Pakistan's ISI a "terrorist organization" along with Hamas and other international militant networks, according to leaked documents. ISI is part of a list that includes more than 60 international militant networks, as well as Iran's intelligence services, that are "terrorist" entities or associations and say detainees linked to them "may have provided support to Al Qaeda and the Taliban, or engaged in hostilities against U.S. and coalition forces."

Reshuffle at top in Pentagon

Washington: President Obama is expected to reshuffle his national security team on Thursday, naming Leon E. Panetta, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency, as defense secretary and Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top American commander in Afghanistan, as the C.I.A. director, administration officials said Wednesday.

The appointments, set in motion by the impending

retirement of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, are the most significant realignment yet in Mr. Obama's war council. They could have far-reaching implications for the American strategy in Afghanistan, as well as for its troubled relations with Pakistan.

General Petraeus is a leading advocate of the ambitious counterinsurgency strategy in

Afghanistan, which seeks to build up that country's political and administrative institutions.

Mr. Panetta is viewed as favoring a more limited approach, focused on counterterrorism operations. At the C.I.A., he has overseen clandestine drone strikes in Pakistan, which have been a recurring source of tension between the US and Islamabad.

Real estate remains in distress as home prices slide

New York: Housing prices slid back in February to their lowest level of the downturn, fresh proof that real estate remains one of the most troubled sectors of the economy.

The Standard & Poor's Case-Shiller Home Price Index for 20 metropolitan areas dropped 1.1 percent from January, S.& P. said Tuesday.

By the barest of margins, the index failed to plumb new depths. It is now at 139.27, essentially the same as the low of 139.26 that it reached in April 2009.

Housing prices are falling even though banks have been pulling back on foreclosures, which generally drive neighborhood prices down. They are falling despite low interest rates, which make houses more affordable. And they are falling even though they have already dropped by a third from their heady peaks in mid-decade.

Washington was the only city where prices went up over the last year. But even it dropped slightly in February. Ten of the



cities in the index, including Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, New York and Seattle, hit a low for the cycle during the month. That was one fewer than January.

For the 20 cities, prices are down 3.3 percent in the last 12 months.

That is not much compared to the precipitous drops of 2008 and 2009 but some see the declines accelerating.

Obama Campaign II: back to grassroots

By Swathi AK

President Barack Obama and his campaign office is gearing up in his bid to return to the White House in November 2012 election. His campaign manager Jim Messina has shared on the campaign website their strategic framework and overall approach to the campaign. They have chalked

out how the race will shape up and the kind of challenges that may be encountered during the campaign. "We have certain beliefs and sheer values that bind us together and we need to build an unprecedented grassroots campaign to win", he wrote.

To propel Obama for another thumping victory, his strategic plan entails 'Expanding the Electorate'. For this Messina advises that people build something new and sleeker, using new technologies to run a new campaign and persuade others to come on their side and get more new voters and first time voters and inspire them to join the cause.

As any political campaign is only as strong as the grassroots, Messina emphasizes the importance of building the grassroots by reconnecting with long time supporters, calling your neighbors and emphasizing the importance of the campaign and what President means and having one on



A campaign button

one conversations with friends, colleagues and using Twitter feedbacks and harnessing Facebook to spread the message. People could also build teams by organizing local house meetings and planning local sessions and have discussions with them and recruiting and training volunteer teams to educate others.

The campaign manager also says, they need to measure their progress by holding each and everyone accountable and keep the campaign metrics-driven. It is necessary to set certain goals and adapt ourselves to learn together and grow and track our progress, he says.

Working for every vote is also vital as the campaign could be won or lost by single vote. It is essential to value every vote and keep in mind what is at stake if we fail to organize. At this stage it is important not to act like an incumbent but as an insurgent and scratch and claw for that vote—according to Messina.

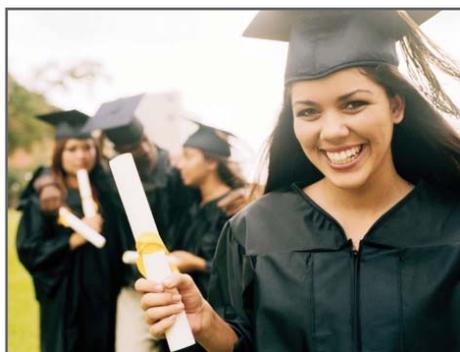
As the election draws closer it is time, Messina wants people to get involved by signing up to be in on the campaign on Facebook and taking the conversation offline by having 'door to door' and 'person to person' discussions in a bid to win the elections for Obama and be a part of the biggest grassroots campaign in American History.

Canada promises faster immigration, more student visas

Toronto: Just days before Canadian parliamentary elections on May 2, political leaders are wooing Indo-Canadians by promising less waiting time for immigration and more students visas from India.

Speaking at a roundtable organized by the Canada-India Foundation (CIF) here, top leaders of the opposition Liberal Party promised a comprehensive relationship with India. They said their party government will take the bilateral ties beyond trade to increase immigration and tourism from India and foster deeper education and research cooperation.

Top Liberal Party leader and Toronto MP Bob Rae reminded Indo-Canadians the role played by his party leader and former prime minister Paul Martin in ushering in G20 to include India and other developing economies for wider consultation on global economic issues. He said Canada should focus on its core competencies in engaging with India and leverage its expertise to con-



Canada currently gets about 3,500 Indian students compared to over 40,000 going to Australia each year

tinue to push for stronger nuclear ties with India.

Suggesting more visas for Indian students to study in Canada, John McCallum, MP from the Toronto suburb of Markham-Unionville, said Australia was 'eating Canada's lunch' in attracting Indian students and the federal government must usher in

friendlier policies on visa and work. Canada currently gets about 3,500 Indian students compared to over 40,000 going to Australia each year.

Rob Oliphant, MP from the Toronto constituency of Don Valley West, said his party had identified Gujarat as a great business destination 20 years ago. He said he was happy that the current Canadian government has recognized the importance of Gujarat by being a partner country at this year's Vibrant Gujarat Summit.

Since Canada still doesn't have any official presence in Gujarat, he favoured a full consular office in the state.

Oliphant promised that his party government would reduce wait times for the family class immigration category from 11-13 years now to five to six years. He also said his party government would be more careful in addresses sensitive issues like the visit of union minister Kamal Nath here last year which led to protests by Sikh groups for his

alleged involvement in the 1984 riots. Bengali-origin Rana Sarkar, who is contesting for parliament for the first time from the Toronto constituency of Scarborough Rouge River, said that based on past history, his Liberal Party has 'the DNA for dealing with India and now there is need for India 2.0 engagement strategy.'

Maria Minna, MP from the Toronto constituency of Beaches-East York, emphasized the need for serious engagement of the Indian diaspora for deepening Canada-India relations.

Canada-India Foundation leaders Aditya Jha and Ramesh Chotai, said the Indian diaspora was pleased that the Liberal Party recognizes its role in shaping Canadian policies.

Representatives of the Indo-Canada Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, IIT Alumni of Canada and the Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization also quizzed Canadian politicians about India.

Malaysian-Indian hockey star conferred higher royal title

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's Sultan of Perak has conferred a higher royal title on N. S. r i Shanmuganathan, an ethnic Indian who captained the country's World Cup hockey team in 1975.

Earlier made a Datuk, akin to the British knighthood, Shanmuganathan was awarded the Darjah Datuk Paduka Mahkota Perak (DPMP) title Tuesday by the Sultan, who is both the royal and constitutional head.

He was Thursday feted by his 1975 teammate K. Balasingam, who recalled Shanmuganathan's 'tremendous contributions to the game, as a player, manager and coach'.

'I am proud that his contribution has been finally recognized,' Balasingam wrote in the New Straits Times.

'As the captain, especially in the 1975 World Cup, he led the team exceptionally well. And who can forget the winning goal he scored against Holland, the reigning World Cup champion at the time, on



(2nd from left) N Sri Shanmuganathan

March 14, 1975 at Kilat Club,' Balasingam wrote.

India won the World Cup that year, defeating Pakistan. It was the only time India won, while Pakistan, which conceived the idea of the Hockey World Cup has won four times.

'I am very honored to have been in that team and we played really well under Shan's guidance and that of our late coach Datuk Ho Koh Chye. The latter would have been very proud of Shan (as Shanmuganathan was popularly known).

'We were the best assembled team and we delivered the results.

Anyone who talks about hockey refers to the 1975 World Cup team with pride,' Balasingam, also an ethnic Indian, wrote.

Britain to allow those who know Indian languages to be jury

LONDON: The inability to understand, read or write English language would no longer be a hindrance to serve as a British jury member deciding immigration cases. People who only know Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu or Gujarati are equally welcome.

The Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service has confirmed that jurors who cannot read English are now being invited to decide the outcome of immigration trials.

Around 200,000 people are summoned every year for jury duty.

Now, they would be called with letters printed in seven languages as well as English to "encourage" non-English speakers, the Daily Mail reported.

The languages are Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati, Polish, Cantonese, and



Arabic. In Wales, jurors are also sent information in Welsh.

Even those who cannot understand spoken English "could be asked" to sit in trials of those accused of crime, it said.

The tribunal, part of the ministry of justice, said the language addendum "is aimed at people who cannot read English very well but can speak English so would be able to serve on a

jury".

Criminologists and MPs, however, said they were worried about inclusion of those with poor English in juries. Douglas Carswell, Tory MP, said: "The jury system is founded on the idea that we are all tried by our peers. If your peers cannot speak English, or read or write it properly, how can you have confidence you will get justice?"

David Green, of the Civitas think-tank, said: "If you can't even read the letter summoning you for jury service, you are not fit to be a juror."

The tribunal said multi-language summonses were introduced to allow those who do not read English avoid the risk of being prosecuted for failing to reply. Ignoring a summons can bring on a 1,000 pound fine.

Trinidad and Tobago mourns Sai Baba's death

Port-of-Spain: Thousands in Trinidad and Tobago have mourned the death of Sathya Sai Baba.

Acting Prime Minister Winston Dookeran said that Sai Baba's work in the spiritual, social, healthcare and humanitarian fields were well documented and worthy of emulation.

'His message of peace, concord, harmony, truthfulness, spirituality and benevolence might well remain unmatched for generations to come,' he said in a statement.

'Sai Baba's message is much needed in today's social, political and moral environment. Indeed, his life was his message as he strove to set new standards which politicians should emulate. He was a deeply spiritual person.'

Since Sai Baba's death Sunday, there have been nightly satsangs at several Sai Baba Centres scattered across the country. The five East Indian radio stations have hosted special programs in tribute to him.

The chairman of the San Fernando Sai Centre, Anand Chatoorgoon, said Sai Baba had been 'a saga of love and sacrifice, and he has touched the hearts of people everywhere.'

Minister of Foreign Affairs Surujattan Rambachan has been instructed to send condolences to the government of India. Hundreds of temples and other places of worship organised Sai Baba bhajans. Several prominent members of the Sai Baba leadership here are now in India to attend his funeral. Sai Baba has been firmly entrenched in the religious landscape here for more than 40 years. A few years ago, attempts were made to have him visit Trinidad and Tobago but it did not materialize.

Trinidad and Tobago Indians account for 44 percent of the country's 1.3 million people, with about 24 percent being Hindus. People of all ethnic, social and financial standings form part of the Sai Baba movement here.

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Tibetan exiles get new PM in Dalai Lama's old role

Dharmasala: Harvard legal scholar Lobsang Sangay will be the next prime minister of the Tibetan government-in-exile, officials announced Wednesday, a role that will see him take over political leadership from the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama had said he would give up politics but remain the spiritual leader for Tibetan Buddhists. The change, yet to be written into the community's constitution, reverses 300 years of tradition in which the top monk guided the Tibetan government.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner has said, however, that in the 21st century it is correct for leaders to be elected and representative.



Harvard legal scholar Lobsang Sangay is Tibet's new PM

He also has suggested that negotiations with Beijing — which has vilified the Dalai Lama

for his vocal resistance to China's heavy-handed rule over Tibet — would be less complicated under another Tibetan figurehead.

Sangay, a senior fellow at Harvard Law School with extensive experience in international law and conflict resolution, won the election with 55 percent of the votes cast by tens of thousands of Tibetans around the world, chief election commissioner Jampel Choesang said in Dharmasala in India, where the exile government is based.

Sangay has said he would move to Dharmasala from Boston if he won the election. It was not immediately clear when Sangay would take office.

"On one side we'll have the Dalai Lama, who has historical legitimacy and global popularity," he told The Associated Press in an interview in March.

"And on the second, we have a democratic government functioning in exile. We are showing China that, if Tibetans are allowed to choose, they are capable of forming a stable democratic government."

The exiled Tibetan community in Dharmasala said it would not celebrate Wednesday's election results as it was protesting a Chinese crackdown on a Tibetan Buddhist monastery high in the Himalayan foothills of China's western Sichuan province.

'Bilawal to take up political responsibility in Sept'

Islamabad: Pakistan Peoples Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto will "take up some political responsibility in September", said his father and President Asif Ali Zardari.

Zardari made the announcement of Bilawal taking up political responsibility at a meeting with party lawmakers Wednesday. Farhatullah Khan Babar, the president's spokesperson, did not elaborate on what "political responsibility" would be given to Bilawal.

Bilawal was made the PPP chair-



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, 3rd generation Bhutto to rise in power

man after his mother Benazir Bhutto was killed in 2007. It was also decided then that till completion of

Bilawal's education, Zardari would run the party affairs as a co-chairman.

Benazir was assassinated Dec 27, 2007, as she was leaving Liaquat Bagh in a motorcade after addressing an election rally in Rawalpindi, the twin city of Islamabad.

"We have had no smooth sailing... (but) we have not only survived but waded through gigantic challenges successfully and achieved significant achievements on all fronts," Zardari was quoted as saying.

US indictment of four Pakistanis in Mumbai attack significant

Washington: The indictment of four alleged Pakistani masterminds of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, including two men linked to Islamabad's security forces, is seen by US media as a "major development" in the case.

The indictment filed Monday never mentions the Pakistani security forces or their alleged role in the attacks, New York based investigative journalism group, noted ProPublica in an article in the Washington Post Tuesday.

"But it represents a major development in a secretive and diplomatically sensitive prosecution set for trial next month, because Pakistan is considered a close US ally in the fight against terrorism," it said

Prosecutors charged the four Pakistanis with playing lead roles in the attacks, suspected to have been organized by the Pakistan based Lashkar-i-Taiba (LeT) terrorist group.

The indictment identifies a man known only as Major Iqbal as one of the masterminds, who allegedly directed and funded months of reconnaissance in Mumbai by Pakistani American David Coleman Headley, who has pleaded guilty.

The indictment describes Iqbal as "a resident of Pakistan who participated in planning and funding attacks by Lashkar."

But ProPublica noted US and

Indian anti-terrorism officials and Indian court documents allege that Iqbal was a serving officer in Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency.

He allegedly acted as Headley's main handler, one of at least three ISI officers suspected of involvement in recruiting, training and directing Headley in terrorist activities, according to US and Indian investigators and Indian court documents, it said.

The other significant figure indicted Monday is a longtime Lashkar chief named Sajid Mir, who also is accused of serving as Headley's handler, ProPublica said.

Mir, who remains at large, according to investigators, was a key plotter of the Mumbai attacks. His voice was caught on tape directing the slaughter by telephone from a safe house in Pakistan, according to officials and documents.

Also charged Monday was Abu Qahafa, who is accused of overseeing the training of the attack team. Suspect Mazhar Iqbal, alias Abu al-Qama, is the only one of the four known to be in custody in Pakistan.

The fifth accused, Chicago-based Pakistani-Canadian Tahawwur Rana, who allegedly assisted Headley's reconnaissance efforts in India and Denmark, is set to go on trial in Chicago on May 16.

Hasina wants Islam as Bangladesh state religion

Dhaka: Bangladesh's ruling Awami League would like to retain Islam as the state religion but wants all religions to enjoy equal rights, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said.

In a reversal of a policy laid down by her late father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led Bangladesh to freedom, Hasina said she favored retaining "Bismillah-Ar-Rahman-Ar-Rahim" above the preamble of the constitution.

The 1972 constitution had secularism as one of its pillars. This was removed after Mujibur Rahman was assassinated in 1975. Bangladesh is now an Islamic republic, with 90 percent of its people being Muslims.

Hindus constitute about nine percent and indigenous tribals follow Buddhism.



Sheikh Hasina

There is a sprinkling of Christians.

Hasina told the media after a two-hour meeting with the parliamentary committee that her party "is not against having Islam as state religion".

She suggested that the constitution should have "provision for ensuring equal rights to people of other religions."

Hasina also said her party was against banning religion-based political parties but it wanted some restrictions on them.

Mukhtaran Mai gang rape: 13 released after acquittal

Islamabad: Thirteen men who were acquitted by Pakistan's Supreme Court in the Mukhtaran Mai gang rape case

have been released from the Multan central jail, a media report said. The men were released Tuesday. Dawn said that the men raised slogans against Mukhtaran Mai after they were released.

Mukhtaran Mai became a symbol of the country's oppressed women after her gang rape on the orders of a village council in 2002.

An Anti-Terrorism Court, while acquitting eight of the 14 accused in the case, had awarded death sentence to the remaining six -- of whom five were acquitted by the Lahore High Court which also reduced the death sentence of the sixth accused, Abdul Khaliq, to life imprisonment. A three-judge bench of the Supreme Court confirmed the Lahore court order.



Mukhtaran Mai



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TheSouthAsianTimes.info

Tornadoes devastate America's south, killing 300

Pleasant Grove, Ala.: Firefighters searched one splintered pile after another for survivors Thursday, combing the remains of houses and neighborhoods pulverized by the nation's deadliest tornado outbreak in almost four decades. At least 297 people were killed across six states — more than two-thirds of them in Alabama, where large cities bore the half-mile-wide scars the twisters left behind.

The death toll from Wednesday's storms seems out of a bygone era, before Doppler radar and pinpoint satellite forecasts were around to warn communities of severe weather.



Residents were told the tornadoes were coming up to 24 minutes ahead of time, but they were just too wide, too powerful and too locked onto populated areas to avoid a horrifying body count.

"These were the most intense supercell thunderstorms that I think anybody who was out there

forecasting has ever seen," said meteorologist Greg Carbin at the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Okla.

"If you experienced a direct hit from one of these, you'd have to be in a reinforced room, storm shelter or underground" to survive, Carbin said.

The storms seemed to hug the interstate highways as they barreled along like runaway trucks, obliterating neighborhoods or even entire towns from Tuscaloosa to Bristol, Va. One family rode out the disaster in the basement of a funeral home, another by huddling in a tanning bed.

Syria: EU push for UN condemnation fails

United Nations: The UN Security Council has failed to agree on a statement condemning Syria's violent crackdown against protesters.

A draft proposed by France, Britain, Germany and Portugal was opposed by several within the 15-member council, with Russia insisting events in Syria were not a threat to global peace.

In southern Syria, 200 members of the ruling Baath party are reported to have resigned after violence around Deraa.

Some 450 Syrians have allegedly been killed during six weeks of protests.

At the UN, China and India called for political dialogue and peaceful resolution of the crisis, but stopped short of condemning the violence.

Alexander Pankin, Russia's Ambassador to the UN, warned that a "real threat to regional security could arise from outside interference in Syria's domestic situation".

Moscow has increasingly opposed military action in Libya, arguing that operations against Col Gaddafi's forces have been exceeded the scope of a Security Council resolution.

Syria's ambassador to the UN, Bashar

Jaafari, said his government would resist external intervention in his country's affairs.

"As a government, we cannot accept that some claim to value the lives of our sons more than we do. The policies of interfering in affairs of other states through various justifications and pretexts have always proven to be erroneous," he said.

On Wednesday, five EU nations - France, Britain, Germany, Italy and Spain - jointly summoned Syrian ambassadors to condemn Damascus' crackdown.

There were reports of further shooting in the southern city of Deraa where the rallies first erupted last month and more tanks were said to be headed towards the city, where army troops have attacked protesters.

President Assad's government disputes the Western view that the demonstrations have been non-violent.

In a statement carried by the official news agency, it said it had sent troops to several cities on the request of citizens who were worried about "armed extremists". Opposition leaders say the protests are peaceful.

Thailand and Cambodia ceasefire after clashes



A Cambodian soldier prepares to launch a mortar shell near the Cambodia-Thailand border in Samrong, Oddar Meanchey province on April 27.

Samrong, Cambodia: Thailand and Cambodia have reached a ceasefire after a week of fighting along a disputed border, officials say.

Both countries said the truce was struck following talks between the two militaries.

Fifteen people - including one civilian - have been killed in the battles, mainly around two ancient temples in jungle areas claimed by

both countries.

Each side has accused the other of starting the violence, which has displaced thousands of villagers.

The deal came after a seventh day of fighting around the temples of Ta Krabey and Ta Moan left a Thai soldier dead.

It was announced first by Cambodia and then confirmed by Thailand.

"After discussions by the military on both sides this

morning, there is a ceasefire agreement... border checkpoints will be re-opened and villagers will start to return home," said Thai government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn.

The fighting erupted on 22 April and spread briefly to a third location - the flashpoint hill-top temple of Preah Vihear - on Tuesday.

Both sides are reported to have used heavy weapons, including artillery fire.

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India's growth offers huge opportunities: US

Washington: With 80 percent of India of 2030 yet to be built, there are huge business opportunities for American and Indian companies in varied areas, including defence, according to a top US official.

Despite some of the shortcomings like corruption and infrastructure, the tremendous growth that is taking place now in India present some quite significant opportunities, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robert Blake said in an interview with Knowledge@Wharton in Philadelphia.

As he pointed out at the Wharton India Economic Forum as "80 percent of the India of 2030 is yet to be built, so there are going to be vast opportunities in areas such as the development of airports, regional airports, of railway networks, of fiberoptic networks," he



US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robert Blake.

said Things are now possible in sensitive areas like defense also, Blake said noting that as India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has come off the IS Department of Commerce's entities list, "for

the first time we're going to be able to work with them." "So there are tremendous sort of synergies that can be exploited from that," Blake said adding, "I think when you add in the private sector, which is already very well developed both in India and the United States, the synergies are magnified."

As American companies compete and hopefully win big contracts like the medium multi-role combat aircraft contract, he said, "there will be many many opportunities for them to start to invest" to meet quite significant offset requirements.

"And I think there will be some quite interesting co-development and co-production opportunities that will result from those," Blake said. Asked about some of the risks that could undermine the opportunities, he said:

"one of the principal risks that a lot of people worry about is simply that the momentum that has been established now in our relations will not be sustained."

Referring to "political divisions that exist, particularly in the Indian parliament" Blake said: "I think that the vast attention that has been given to the corruption controversy has really crowded out a lot of the opportunities that could have taken place."

"So I think both of our countries need to just keep our eye on the ball and remind our leaders of the importance of this relationship and to continue to make progress."

Noting "now the private sector has eclipsed what the government is doing, and that's a good thing," he said: That's exactly what we'd like to see happen."

Nokia to cut 300 jobs in India

New Delhi: World's largest cell phone maker Nokia today said up to 300 jobs would be cut in India by end of 2012, as the company embarks on restructuring that would affect 7,000 employees worldwide. As part of the latest revamp, the Finnish entity would be laying off 4,000 people globally, while 3,000 jobs would be moved to US major Accenture that would take care of Nokia's Symbian software activities.



As part of the latest revamp, the Finnish entity would be laying off 4,000 people globally.

"With the restructuring, up to 300 jobs in the R&D segment will be cut in India by the end of 2012. The layoffs will be minimal," a Nokia spokesperson told PTI. Without disclosing finer details, the official said that most of the people working on Symbian would be transferred to Accenture.

Sources said about 800-900 jobs are likely to be affected in India in the R&D (Research and Development) segment. Nokia's India operations has a total workforce of about 10,000.

Out of them, around 1,500 employees are in the R&D section. The Finnish major in a statement today announced plans to align its global workforce and consolidate site operations, which would result in cost reductions 1 billion euro. Nokia plans to enter into a strategic collaboration with Accenture, whereby it would

transfer its Symbian software activities as well as about 3,000 employees to that firm.

"Transitioning employees, located in China, Finland, India, United Kingdom and the United States, will initially work on Symbian software activities for Nokia," it said. Over time, Accenture and Nokia would seek opportunities to retrain and redeploy transitioned employees.

"In addition, Nokia also plans to reduce its global workforce by about 4,000 employees by the end of 2012, with the majority of reductions in Denmark, Finland and the UK," the statement said. All the employees affected by the reduction plans would remain on Nokia payroll till 2011-end. Workforce reduction are expected to happen in phases till the end of 2012, linked to roll-out of Nokia's planned product and services portfolio.

Reliance to be penalized for gas shortfall?

New Delhi: India is considering a penalty for Reliance Industries for falling short of targeted gas production at its D6 block, an oil ministry source said.

The gas from the block, India's second-biggest producer after the Mumbai High field, is sold to buyers prioritised by the government at an agreed pricing formula.

Reliance has just agreed a partnership with multinational operator BP on field development.

"It is under examination ... (the upstream regulator) is looking into it," the source said when asked if the government would penalise Reliance for not adhering to its committed work programme.



Reliance is pumping 28 percent less gas than it should from the key D6 block.

He did not give any indication what the penalty might be. Reliance declined to comment.

The source, who spoke on condi-

tion of anonymity, said Reliance had been told to cut gas supply to non-priority sectors in order to meet demand from fertilizer and power users.

Reliance is pumping 28 percent less gas than it should from the key block, India's upstream regulator said earlier this month and added it would meet with the company.

The upstream regulator said Reliance had not given a satisfactory reason for lower output and had not drilled as many wells as planned.

Shares in the company were down 1.6 percent by 0913 GMT as leading shares edged 0.33 percent lower.

Court stays Air India pilot strike

New Delhi: The Delhi high court has stayed the flash strike by 600 pilots of Air India, who were co-opted from erstwhile Indian Airlines, but not before slamming the management for not addressing their demands for some two decades.

The court's decision came even as nearly 50 flights, mainly out of the national capital and Mumbai, had to be cancelled and an equal number rescheduled due to the strike since Tuesday midnight, causing inconvenience to thousands of air travellers in the country.

The striking pilots of the Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA) of the former Indian Airlines that merged with Air India later



Air India employees on strike.

have struck work demanding parity in pay with their counterparts in Air

India and other issues related to work conditions.

India, Pak open trade talks

Islamabad: India and Pakistan have begun their first trade talks since the 2008 Mumbai attacks, opening a two-day session designed to boost business between the nuclear-armed rivals.

India blamed the attack -- in which gunmen killed 166 people -- on the banned Pakistan-based Islamist group Lashkar-e-Taiba and Pakistan has acknowledged that the plot was hatched at least partly on its soil.

Pakistan commerce and trade secretary Zafar Mahmood and his Indian counterpart Rahul Khullar led the talks at a five-star hotel in Islamabad.

"I believe that this meeting will take the dialogue process forward and by the end of the meeting all issues relating to facilitation and promotion of bilateral trade could be addressed with consensus," Mahmood said.

Mahmood said the talks had an

"open agenda" and the two sides would discuss "all the issues" of interest to both countries.

He said improving trade would economically benefit both countries and the region. Pakistan's economy languishes far behind that of India.

"Pakistan understands that there is a great potential to further increase the bilateral trade," Mahmood said.

Khullar called for a quick turnaround of trade after four previous rounds of commerce talks ground to

a halt in the wake of the Mumbai attacks.

"This is a process that was interrupted and that must resume and go on. It must acquire significantly fast momentum if only to catch up for the time that we have lost," Khullar said. "We are ready and willing to move forward and our only perspective here is one of constructive engagement to move the bilateral trade agenda and commercial agenda ahead and fast."

Trade between Pakistan and India is around \$2 billion.

Acrimonious ties between the neighbours eased last month when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Yousuf Raza Gilani watched the India-Pakistan World Cup cricket semi final in northern India.

The nuclear-armed nations have fought three wars since attaining independence in 1947, two over the disputed territory of Kashmir.

April 30-May 6, 2011

TheSouthAsianTimes.info

KKR outclass Daredevils

New Delhi: Manoj Tiwary made a resilient unbeaten 61 off 47 balls as Kolkata Knight Riders outclassed Delhi Daredevils by 17 runs at their Ferozeshah Kotla home ground in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match here on April 28.

It was the Daredevils second successive defeat at home and they continue to languish at the bottom of the table with two wins from seven matches. In contrast, Knight Riders have climbed to the second place with four wins from their seven matches.

Choosing to field, the Daredevils' much criticized bowling attack finally got their act together and restricted Knight

Riders to 148/7 in 20 overs. But the hosts' chase was stopped at 131/9 thanks to some reckless strokeplay by their batsmen. Iqbal Abdullah emerged the best bowler of the Knight Riders with 3-25, while Lakshminath Balaji took 2-38. Skipper Virender Sehwag, after winning the toss, had spoken of their capability of chasing any score if he and David Warner got going.

But Warner was bowled by Balaji in the second over while attempting to cut and after that, things never looked up for Daredevils.

Sehwag, with James Hopes (25), did give flight to Daredevils hopes during their 29-run partnership for

the second wicket. Sehwag, particularly, looked dangerous during his 23-ball innings, smacking five fours and a six before Jaidev Unadkat struck.

The Delhi dasher looked bewildered by Unadkat's bouncer and mistimed a pull and Balaji made no mistake in taking the catch.

The rest of the Daredevils batsmen simply crumbled under the pressure.

Pathan, whose inclusion in the Daredevils' side for \$1.9 million was invariably questioned, finally came good, conceding only 16 runs in his four overs and also giving the hosts the breakthrough in the form of the dangerous Jacques Kallis.



Once Jaidev Unadkat dismissed Virender Sehwag, Delhi's chase started losing momentum.

Judges differ on BCCI amendment



Former BCCI president A.C. Muthiah.

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on April 28 referred to a larger bench a petition by former Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president A.C. Muthiah challenging the amendment to its rules to permit its office bearers to own Indian Premier League (IPL) and Championship League Twenty20 franchises.

A bench of Justice J.M. Panchal and Justice Gyan Sudha Misra took the decision following dissenting views on the issue.

Justice Panchal said: "Since there is a difference of opinion, let the papers of these matters be placed before the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India for being assigned to the appropriate bench."

While he dismissed the petition challenging the amendment, which permitted BCCI secretary N. Srinivasan to own Chennai Super Kings, Justice Misra allowed the appeal saying if Srinivasan wanted to continue to hold the franchise, he would have to give up his position in BCCI.

BCCI rules prohibited its office-bearers from engaging in activities that conflict with the commercial interest of the cricketing body. However, this provision was amended to facilitate its office

bearers from having stake in IPL T20 teams.

While dismissing Muthiah's appeal, Justice Panchal said that being the past president of the BCCI does not automatically makes him the administrator of the cricketing body and entitles him initiate legal proceedings. He said that a past president of the BCCI gains the status of an administrator of the BCCI only if he is nominated to one of its committees or sub-committees.

Justice Gyan Sudha Misra, in her dissenting judgment allowing the appeal, said that if "Srinivasan opts to continue owning and operating IPL team Chennai Super Kings, he shall be at liberty to do so but in that event he shall be restrained from holding any office in the BCCI in any capacity whatsoever".

She said the BCCI follows the doctrine of "fairness" and "good faith" in all its activities, and has incorporated a regulation that: "No administrator shall have directly or indirectly any commercial interest in any events of the BCCI."

"Whether any exception diluting its effect could be carved out of that without any just cause by introducing an amendment into the same," she asked.

Deccan Chargers beat Kochi Tuskers

Kochi: Riding on fast bowler Ishant Sharma's fiery spell of five for 12, Deccan Chargers thrashed Kochi Tuskers Kerala by 55 runs in the Indian Premier League (IPL) at the Nehru Stadium here on April 27.

Man of the Match Sharma, who registered the third best IPL figures, wrecked the Kochi Tuskers batting and reduced them to 11 for six in four overs. Ravindra Jadeja (23), Thisara Pereira (22) and R Vinay Kumar (18) were the only Kochi batsmen who could get to double figures before their innings wrapped up in 16.3 overs while chasing Deccan Chargers 129 for seven.

Dale Steyn struck in the first over to remove



Ishant Sharma scythed through Kochi's top-order to finish with dream figures of 5 for 12.

opener Brendan McCullum, who edged to wicketkeeper and skipper Kumar Sangakkara. In the next over, Sharma struck thrice in four balls to get rid of Parthiv Patel, Raiphi Gomez and Brad Hodge to leave the home team at two for four wickets.

Patel was caught behind by the skipper while Gomez and Hodge were castled by Sharma's in-swinging deliveries. All the four batsmen went back to the dugout without opening their accounts.

Earlier in the day, Vinay Kumar took three wickets while Rudra Pratap Singh scalped two as Kochi Tuskers Kerala restricted Deccan Chargers to 129 for seven.

Indian Open: Saina out, Sourabh, Sai shine

New Delhi: Qualifier Sourabh Verma pulled off another stunner at the Indian Open Super Series badminton here on April 28, and he is joined in the quarterfinals by Guru Sai Dutt with an impressive victory at the Siri Fort Sports Complex here.

India's top women's doubles pair Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa, however, was beaten in the first match after getting a bye into the second round. Also bowing out was Parupalli Kashyap, ranked 24th in the world.

Continuing his giant-killing spree, the little-known Madhya Pradesh youngster Sourabh upset seventh-seeded Tago of Japan 21-19, 18-21, 21-11.

Dutt showed the door to Yuhan Tan of Belgium with 21-13, 14-21, 21-13 victory.

Kashyap went down to second-seeded Indonesian Taufiq Hidayat 17-21, 19-21.

After the shock exit of Saina Nehwal, much was expected from Commonwealth Games gold medallists Gutta and Ponnappa, but the eighth-seeded

Indian pair lost 20-22, 18-21 against Eei Hui Chin and Pei Tty Wong of Malaysia.

Sourabh quietly made his way up when fancied Indians, including favorite Saina Nehwal, fell by the wayside.

The Pullela Gopichand Academy trainee, came through tough qualifiers, beating a Malaysian, on the way.

The winner of an All-India Senior Ranking tournament before coming here, Sourabh said he came into the tournament thinking of putting up his best.

The Thar desert in western Rajasthan is emerging as the next energy hub of India. The region has rich deposits of oil, gas, lignite coal, coal bed methane...

Rajasthan thrives on oil, gas and hydrocarbon discovery

By Prakash Bhandari/SATimes

Jaipur: Rajasthan has been put on the oil map of the world with crude oil and natural gas. Out of the four petroliferous basins of Rajasthan, the first three basins have been upgraded as Category-1 as basin of proven commercial productivity

Rajasthan forms the eastern flank of Indus geosynclines and comprises the sedimentary tract to the west and northwest of Aravallis up to the Indo-Pakistan border. This pericratonic basin also forms a part of the great Thar desert. Rajasthan Basin comes under the Category – I basin (on land) with established commercial production. Of oil, gas and hydrocarbon, Cambrian sediments have generated both oil and gas. Oil is discovered in Cambrian dolomites. Heavy oil is present in multiple zones within Cambrian sediments. Presence of light oil has been reported in an exploratory well drilled.

After the commencement of commercial production of oil by Cairn India in Barmer-Sanchore basin and discovery of 25 oil fields, the field development plans (FDP) of Mangala, Aishwarya, Saraswati, Rageshwari and Rageshwari deep gas approved by the Union ministry of petroleum and natural gas and field development plans of 20 other fields would change the profile of the desert state as a leader for producing oil, gas and hydrocarbons.

Efforts are being made to develop heavy oil sources in the state and trial production of heavy oil has begun in the Nagaur basin. Oil India has entered into an agreement with Venezuelan Company PDVSA for the exploitation of proved in place heavy oil resources of 25 million tonnes and bitumen reserve of 53 million tonnes.

"An area of 1691.75 sq m has been reserved in Barmer-Sanchore basin for undertaking underground coal gasification operations. Various companies have already shown their interest to tie up with Rajasthan government," said Dr Govind Sharma, principal petroleum secretary of Rajasthan.

Cairn Energy, which has decided to sell its majority share to Vedanta recently, completed one year of successful production from the Mangala field and sold more than 16 million barrels (mmbbls) to domestic refiners to date

Cairn India Ltd and its subsidiary companies's more than three-fold increase in net profit at Rs 1,585.1



India is developing three oil fields in Rajasthan-- Mangala, Bhagyam and Aishwariya.

crore in the second quarter of the current financial year was mainly driven by Rajasthan oil fields. Rahul Dhir, MD and CEO, Cairn India, said, "The first full quarter of sales through the pipeline to refineries has generated significant revenues from the Mangala field in Rajasthan."

Rajasthan fields' gross revenue crossed \$1 billion in the second quarter.

Dhir said Mangala reservoir performance supports higher plateau levels, surface facilities and mid-stream infrastructure ready to support production of 150,000 bopd from Mangala, subject to Joint Venture (JV) and Government of India (GoI) approval

Cairn is looking at an incremental output of 300 million barrels from its oil fields in Barmer. At the production level of 1,75,000 bopd, the Barmer fields will account for more than 20 per cent of India's current total crude production.

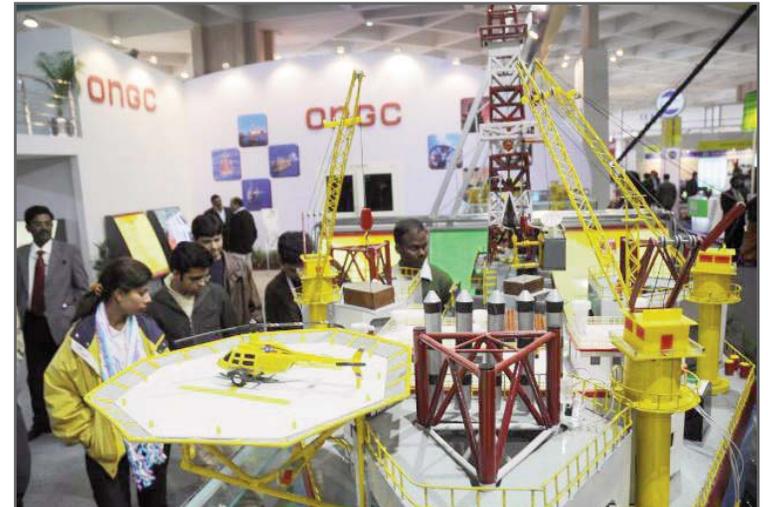
At the rate of \$75 a barrel in the coming year at the current level (1,25,000 bopd) of production, the Rajasthan field will reduce India's import bill by about \$3.4 billion.

Since the production has started,

Cairn has paid a cess of Rs 450 crore to the Government and its partner ONGC — a 30 per cent stakeholder and licensee of the block — has paid a cumulative royalty of Rs 518 crore up to September 2010 to the Rajasthan government.

Cairn already has sales arrangements for 1,43,000 bopd with public and private sector refiners such as MRPL, Indian Oil Corporation, Reliance Industries Ltd, and Essar Oil. With the production expected to touch 1,75,000 bopd shortly, "access has been sought to more refining capacity by allowing sales to Special Economic Zones and to overseas refineries," Dhir said.

Gas in Rajasthan, currently 7 to 7.8 MMSCMD natural gas is being produced from Jaisalmer Basin by Oil India & ONGC. However, optimum production of lean gas reserves is anticipated by blending with high calorific gas from Jaisalmer Basin. Lean gas reserves could be utilized by blending with high gas from 4 PML areas by ONGCL namely Manhera Tibba, Bakriwala, Ghotaru (LG) & Chinnewala Tibba (HG) and its use for genera-



All set to kick off formal crude oil production from its fields in Rajasthan, Cairn India announced that along with its partner ONGC, it will invest nearly \$1.5-1.8 billion more in the prolific oil fields over the next two years.

tion of power. Recently, ONGCL had a tie-up with M/s Deep Industries Ltd. (DIL) to develop Ghotaru & Bakriwala area.

Additional production of high quality gas from Shahgarh would help in setting up a 160 MW gas based power plant in the desert.

Oil India has discovered huge deposits of oil in Baghewala in Jaisalmer. The exploratory discovery was first made in 1988 in Tanot area. Subsequently, two more gas fields were discovered at Dandewala and Bagittiba by Oil India.

However with the Venezuelan company as a consultant, Oil India made fresh efforts to discover the oil using the steam technology and after the successful attempt several wells were identified and the yield from these wells is likely to be good.

According to Ram Lal Jat, Rajasthan's minister for petrole-

um, gas discovery has been made at Ramgarh, Jalalwala, Gannewala and Gulabwala in the desert. Oil India is trying to know the commercial viability of the deposits.

The discovery of gas in the Rajasthan desert is first major stratigraphic discovery on the Indian side of Indus basin and it is on the same stratigraphic trend of multi-trillion cubic feet (tcfs) producing fields in Pakistan. The exact amount of gas is yet to be fully ascertained.

Speaking on the development, Anurag Bissa, an official of the Focus Energy said "One of the most interesting parts of this development is that it is onshore gas discovery.

The project has less gestation period in comparison with offshore projects. It is also easily transportable for commercial use."

World's biggest insulated heated pipeline

The coarse sand of Rajasthan is a potential resource that was estimated to be 6.5 billion barrels of oil equivalent is in place after recent discoveries by Cairn India could go up to 2,40,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd). Currently 2.5 billion boe is being done and with the increase in resource base that would last for at least 10 years, the company would be able to produce about 35 percent of the country's total domestic produce from Rajasthan only.

Rajasthan's potential resource after a comprehensive review of the resource potential in the block is estimated to be 6.5 billion boe. The resource in Mangala, Bhagyam, Aishwarya (MBA) and other fields has increased from 3.7

billion to four billion boe.

"The resource base figures were arrived after a comprehensive review of the area through the application of innovative technologies and advanced geo-science to arrive at these estimates which would give a big fillip to domestic oil production in future," Rahul Dhir, MD and CEO of Cairn India told Oil India.

The Thar desert is poised to become the next energy hub of the country with the commencement of world's longest heated and insulated crude pipeline from Barmer. The 670 km long insulated pipeline to the coast in Gujarat at an investment of Rs. 4000 crore is set to become the lifeline of the oilfields discovered in Rajasthan. The insulated and heated pipeline

is the first of its kind in India and the longest in the world.

Cairn India and ONGC, the joint venture (JV) partners in the Rajasthan block, have been selling through the Barmer-Salaya pipeline. Oil supplies are being made to Essar and Reliance refineries from the delivery points in Gujarat. Production is currently more than 50,000 barrels of oil per day (bopd). The 670 km, 24 inch diameter continuously heated and insulated pipeline for exporting crude oil, runs from Barmer in Rajasthan to the coastal location in Gujarat.

Dhir said: "We are delighted that crude oil sales from Mangala through the pipeline has begun and this enabled us to link this key piece of infrastructure from

Rajasthan to the refineries which will allow for significant production growth."

Due to the unique nature of the Rajasthan crude, it requires a heated pipeline for its continuous flow. Skin Effect Heat Management System is installed all along the periphery of the pipeline.

PUF Insulation system with HDPE jacket is installed along the periphery of the crude oil pipeline to prevent the heat loss from the pipeline to the surrounding environment. Thus, a total of 36 heating stations cumulating to 32 MW electricity capacities are installed along the length of the pipeline. The heating stations consisting of maximum 1.0 MW power generating units are installed at every 18 km interval.

Rethinking education to build better learners



By Naveen Jain

My generation was the last one to learn to use a slide rule in school. Today that skill is totally obsolete. So is the ability to identify the Soviet Socialist Republics on a map, the ability to write an operation in FORTRAN, or how to drive a car with a standard transmission.

We live in a world of instant access to information and where technology is making exponential advances in synthetic biology, nanotechnology, Genetics, Robotics, neuroscience and artificial intelligence. In this world, we should not be focused on

improving the classrooms but should be devoting resources to improving the brains that the students bring to that classroom.

To prepare students for this high-velocity, high-technology world the most valuable skill we can teach them is to be better learners so they can leap from one technological wave to the next. That means education should not be about modifying the core curricula of our schools but should be about building better learners by enhancing each student's neural capacities and motivation for life-long learning.

Less than two decades ago this concept would have been inconceivable. We used to think that brain anatomy (and hence learning capacity) was fixed at birth. But recent breakthroughs in the neuroscience of learning have demonstrated that this view is fundamentally wrong.

In the past few decades, neuroscience research has demonstrated that, contrary to popular belief, the brain is not static. Rather, it is highly modifiable ("plastic") throughout life, and this remarkable "neuroplasticity" is primarily experience-dependent. Neuroplasticity research shows that the brain changes its very structure with each different activity it performs, perfecting its circuits so it is better suited to the task at hand. Neurological capacities and competencies are both measurable and significantly consequential to educational outcomes.

This means that the neural capacities that form the building blocks for learning –

attention & focus, memory, prediction & modeling, processing speed, spatial skills, and executive functioning – can be improved throughout life through training. Just as physical exercise is a well-known and well-accepted means to improve health for anyone, regardless of age or background, so too can the brain be put "into shape" for optimal learning.

If any of these neural capacities are enhanced, you would see significant improvements in a person's ability to understand and master new situations.

While these basic neural capacities are well known by scientists and clinicians today, they are rarely used to develop students into better learners by schools, teachers or parents. There is too little awareness and too few tools available for enhancing a student's capacity and ability to learn. The failure to focus on optimizing each student's neural capacities for learning is resulting in widespread failure of the educational systems, particularly for the underprivileged.

Gone are the days when you could equip students with slide rules and a core of knowledge and skills and expect them to achieve greatness. Our children already inhabit a world where new game platforms and killer apps appear and are surpassed in dizzying profusion and speed. They are already adapting to the dynamics of the 21st century. But we can help them adapt more methodically and systematically by focusing our attention on improving their

capacity to learn throughout their lives.

This far-reaching and potentially revolutionary conclusion is based on recent research breakthroughs and thus may be contrary to the past beliefs of many teachers, administrators, parents and students, who have historically emphasized classroom size and curriculum as the key to improved learning.

Just as new knowledge and understanding is revolutionizing the way we communicate, trade, or practice medicine so too must it transform the way we learn. For students, that revolution is already well under way but it's happening outside of their schools. We owe it to them to equip them with all the capabilities they'll need to thrive in the limitless world beyond the classroom.

I believe that while it's important to leave better country for our children, it's more important that we leave better children for our country.

(The author of this article, Naveen Jain is the founder and CEO of Intelius. He brings a critical vision of integrating intelligent, predictive information for making important everyday decisions to Intelius. Through Intelius, Naveen Jain has helped to open doors for millions of Americans in background and criminal records search. He was awarded People's Choice Award in Business Leadership category at the recently held Light of India Awards function in NYC)

Book Review

Vivid tale of Guyana and its nostalgic Indians

Book: 'The Sly Company of People Who Care'
Author: Rahul Bhattacharya
Publisher: Picador
Pages: 280

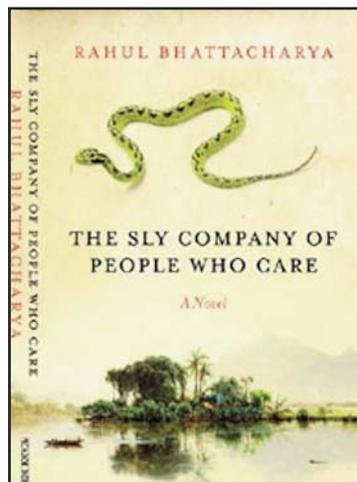
Guyana on the northern coast of South America is an exotic, forgotten land, once termed the poorest country on the continent. Rahul Bhattacharya has written a brilliantly evocative novel about the country through the eyes of a drifter, a young man who goes to Guyana to escape 'the deadness of

life'.

The author draws the unnamed narrator from his own experience as a sports writer who visits Georgetown for a cricket tour and decides to return to explore the country.

It relates a story about migration, displacement, racialism and ethnic rivalries in Guyana. As Uncle Lance, a character, describes it in the book: 'We got Blackman, redman, buck, chinee, coolie, dougla all lashin each other.'

Guyana's colonial history is a



fractured one. It was initially a Dutch and then a British colony. African slaves were brought to work on its plantations, they were replaced by indentured workers after slavery was abolished. The laborers were brought from China, Portugal and mainly from India.

They form an interesting population mix together with the indigenous 'Amerindians' where the Indians form the largest minority. But it is a manufactured society kept divided, whose politics has polarized along race. Years of dictatorship and economic stagnation forced thousands to

leave and it is often said there are more Guyanese living outside Guyana than in it.

The displacement from the village home in India caused a wound that has not healed even in later generations. An Indian explains the nostalgia for motherland: 'We are sad because ever since we left India we have a hole in our hearts. Nothing can fill that hole.'

Yet, he adds, 'we find that Indians do not consider us to be Indians.'

The Indiaman (Indian national) seems strange to the coolie (Guyanese Indian), for he speaks different from the Indian 'flims' that they watch in Guyana.

There are an estimated 325,000 ethnic Indians in Guyana.

The book is about Guyana, its mix of people, its language and its lush countryside. Bhattacharya's prose is vibrantly freewheeling and his liberal use of creole, the local patois with its fair sprinkling of Bhojpuri and Hindi words brings to life the country and its people.

The language is vivid - Mrs. Siddique who doesn't want to go home says 'homeside got too

much 'me say, they say' (a translation of the Hindi 'tu tu, main main'). Dawn is 'dayclean' and it is 'rainfallin' rather than raining in Guyana.

It tells of the texture of life and society; the favorite pastimes of 'gyaffing' (talking) or liming, and listening to raggae or chutney music. Raggae - the music of slavery, based on resistance and confrontation; chutney - the music of indenture based on preservation of the remembered homeland and its ways.

It is people with colorful, even wild characters like Baby, who take the narrator on a 'porkknocking' (diamond mining) trip in the rainforest. Mr. Red, Uncle Lance - who is known as a gyaffman or talkman, Ramotar Seven Curry whose passion is to attend every wedding where the Hindu ceremonial food (seven curry) is served, and Roger Khan, the self-made don.

It takes the reader from the coast to the rain forests and the savannah and the small townships that dot the landscape where the protagonist meets and loses the wild haired, feisty Jan, who hates her given name Jankey.

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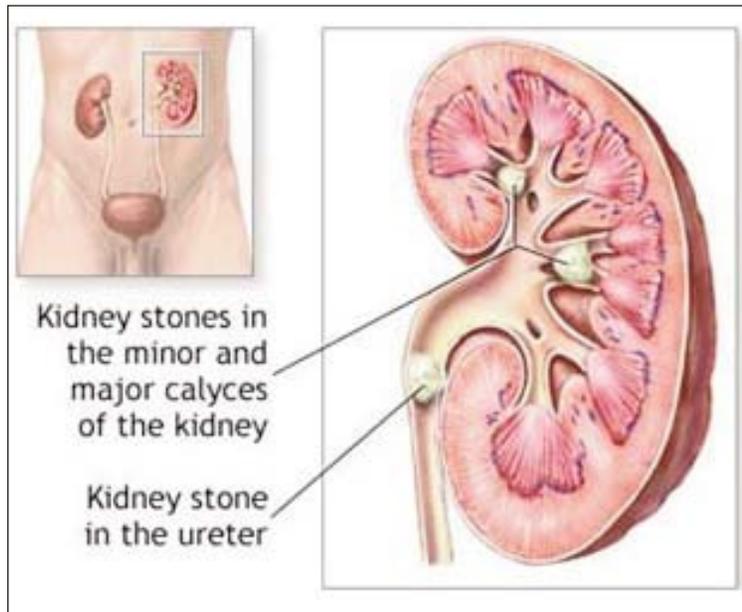
Kidney stones: What you need to know

Kidney stones were once referred to as gravel or gravel disease. This disease is not new to mankind. Kidney stones were detected in the pelvis of Egyptian mummies dating back to 4800 B.C.E. Peter the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, Benjamin Franklin and former President Lyndon Johnson suffered from kidney stones.

Kidney stones form when urine contains too much of calcium, oxalate, uric acid and cystine. In supersaturated state these substances can create small crystals in the urine which aggregate to form stones. People with a family history of kidney stones are more likely to develop stones. Other conditions which lead to kidney stone formation are: urinary tract infections, cystic kidney diseases, hyperactive parathyroid glands, renal tubular acidosis, bowel disease and intestinal bypass surgery. About 5% of U.S. population has kidney stones. Kidney stones are more common in Caucasian men. If untreated, recurrence of stone formation is more likely.

Different kinds of kidney stones can be formed based on the chemical composition of crystals. Calcium oxalate stones are the most common variety followed by calcium phosphate stones. Struvite stones are produced in the presence of urea splitting bacteria in the urine. People who suffer from gout may develop uric acid stones and rarely excessive levels of cystine can cause cystine stones. In some instances the stones may be combination of several varieties of crystals. For example, calcium oxalate may be deposited over uric acid crystal nucleus.

Symptoms due to kidney stones may include pain extending from "loin to groin". Severe colicky pain may start in the low back area and radiate in the front to testicles or groin area. It is described by the patients as the worst pain they have ever experienced in their life. Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, chills, fever, blood in the urine, pus in the urine and burning on urination while passing stone. If you develop any of the above symptoms call your primary care physician or go to the emergency room for relief of pain and further advice. An appointment with a urologist or nephrologist (kidney disease specialist) might be recommended based on the condition. Most kidney stones will pass in urine spontaneously. If the stone gets stuck in the uri-



nary passages, surgical intervention may be necessary. Patients with a history of recurrent kidney stones must be evaluated by a nephrologist. Appropriate follow up with urologist or nephrologist may prevent complications such as loss of function in affected kidney, due to scar formation, recurrence of stones and urinary tract infection.

The diagnosis of kidney stones is based on above clinical symptoms. A visit to the emergency room may be necessary if the pain is very severe. X-ray of the abdomen and ultrasound procedure of the kidneys is usually recommended to confirm the diagnosis of kidney stones. Ultrasound of the kidney will also confirm blockage of ureter by kidney stone.

Blood tests and urine tests to determine the cause of the kidney stones may be ordered by your urologist or nephrologist. A 24 hour collection of the urine may be ordered to check the levels of calcium, oxalate, uric acid and cystine. Your nephrologist may also order citrate (stone inhibitor) test in the urine. Low levels of inhibitors of stone formation may increase the risk of stone formation. These tests can help your nephrologist to individualize the stone prevention therapy uniquely suitable to your condition.

Management of kidney stones includes life style changes, medical therapy and surgical treatment. Surgery is not usually necessary. Most stones less than 10mm pass through the urinary system. You will be advised to drink plenty of liquids, usually 6 to 8 glasses of water in a 24 hour period to help to move the stones along the urinary tract. Often you are advised to stay home drinking fluids and taking pain medications as needed. You

are advised to save the passed stone for stone analysis. You can catch stone in a cup using gauge or a tea strainer. The stone analysis will help your nephrologist find the chemical composition of the stone and prescribe a therapy that is individualized for your needs.

Life style modification to prevent further stone formation may include drinking at least 6 to 8 glasses of water in a 24hour period. Recent data has shown that avoiding foods high in calcium including dairy products may help to prevent calcium stones. If you are a stone former, do not take an extra calcium in the form of supplements. It may increase to risk of developing stones. You should avoid food with added vitamin D and certain types of antacids that have calcium base (like TUMS®). Individuals with uric acid stones should reduce meat, fish and poultry consumption as these food items increase the amount of uric acid in the urine and cause more stone formation. If you are a calcium oxalate stone former your nephrologist may advise to limit or avoid certain foods that contain high oxalate foods such as rhubarb, spinach, beets, Swiss chard, wheat germ, soybean crackers, peanuts, okra, chocolate, black Indian tea and sweet potatoes. Foods high in oxalates such as grits, grapes, celery, green pepper, red raspberries, and fruit cake, strawberries and marmalade should be limited also.

Your nephrologist may prescribe certain medications to help prevent calcium and uric acid stones. You may be prescribed a medication called hydrochlorothiazide (commonly known as "water pill") to treat calcium stones and allopurinol to treat uric acid stones. Thiola and cuprimine are recommended for the treatment of cystine stones and antibiotics to treat struvite stones. If you are passing less than 2 liters

of urine you are advised to drink more liquids. If your urine contains more sodium, you will be advised low sodium diet. If your urine contain less citrate you will be prescribed Bicitra® (potassium citrate) to increase the level of inhibitor of stone formation. People with overactive parathyroid glands sometimes develop calcium stones. Removal of these glands located in the front of your neck surgically may be necessary to prevent the stone formation.

Your best advocate is your nephrologist who will manage you medically. But sometimes surgery may necessary. Urologists may recommend surgical removal of stone if the stone does not pass within a reasonable period of time or you have symptoms that persist. Surgical removal is recommended if the stone is too large to pass on its own, stuck in a difficult place blocking the flow of urine, causing ongoing urinary tract infections, damaging kidney tissue, causing continued bleeding or has grown larger as seen on follow up X-rays.

There are three types of surgical procedures to remove kidney stones. The first one is called Extracorporeal Shock Wave Lithotripsy (ESWL). High frequency sound waves are used to pulverize the stones and debris usually passed normally through urine. This procedure does not

involve any incision and is usually done on an outpatient basis with sedation. You will be able to go home on the same day. Recovery time is relatively short and most people can resume normal activities in few days. Sometimes your urologist will insert a small tube called "stent" through the bladder into the ureter to help the fragment pass. Complications are minor.

If your stones are more than 2cm in diameter or located in a site that doesn't allow the use of ESWL, your urologist might advise you to do a procedure called percutaneous nephrolithotomy. In this procedure the urologist makes a tiny incision in the back and creates a tunnel directly into the kidney.

Using an instrument called a nephroscope, the surgeon locates and removes the stone. Sometimes the stone stuck in the ureter (the tube that connects the kidney to the bladder) can be treated with ESWL. Stones stuck in the middle and lower portion of the ureter may require a procedure called ureteroscopy. No incision is made for this procedure. Instead, the urologist passes a small fiberoptic instrument called an ureteroscope through the urethra and bladder into the ureter. The surgeon then locates the stone and either removes it with a basket like device or shatter it with small instrument. A small tube or "stent" may be left in the ureter for a few days to help urine flow and passing the stone fragments into urine.



The author of this article, Dr. Ankineedu N. Prasad M.D. is certified by the American Boards of Internal Medicine and Nephrology. He has offices in Brooklyn and holds consulting privileges in various hospitals in Brooklyn and Queens.



Atlantic Dialysis Management Services, LLC (ADMS) provides new dialysis site development, day to day administration and management of dialysis services and related business development activities. Its business strategy is to produce economies of scale and maximize individual site results through consolidated activities. Central to the ADMS approach is the long term control of clinical services by nephrologists. In 2010, ADMS affiliates provided over 225,000 dialysis treatments to over 2,500 patients in New York City and Long Island.



Humor with Melvin Durai

Let's move -- to fight childhood obesity

Childhood obesity is a major problem these days, and I'm not just saying that because someone cracked the seesaw in my neighborhood playground. All you have to do is visit any school and you're likely to spot dozens of kids who have to walk sideways to enter the gym. That's the only way they can squeeze past the gym teacher's belly. (If the gym teacher is overweight, you know the kids are in trouble.)

According to the latest statistics, one out of every three American children is overweight -- and the other two refuse to step on the scale. Many of these children are considered "obese," as determined by a mathematical formula in which a child's body weight in kilograms is divided by the square of his or her height in meters, then multiplied by the average number of Kit Kats consumed in a day.

Obesity puts children at risk for a number of health problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and sleep disorders, as well as back and hip pain, which, in most cases, is not related to falling off seesaws.

Thankfully, President Obama recently launched a campaign to fight childhood obesity. The campaign, called "Let's Move," will try



What's in your fridge?

to educate parents about the importance of nutrition and exercise. Obama hopes more parents and children will say "Let's move" to each other, at least half as often as they say "Let's munch."

It's a good campaign and I wouldn't be surprised if most families do find themselves saying "Let's move," especially as part of a longer sentence such as "Let's move to the dining room and munch."

That's not a bad thing, really. As shown by a study published in the journal Pediatrics, three household habits can help fight obesity among pre-school aged children: (1) eating together as a family at least five

evenings a week; (2) making sure children get at least 10.5 hours of sleep during the week; and (3) placing a large photo of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad inside the refrigerator.

If the Iranian president isn't scary enough, you might try a habit actually suggested by Pediatrics: limiting your children's screen-viewing time to a maximum of two hours a day. As any parent knows, this can be a real challenge, because, let's face it, if your children aren't watching TV, using the computer or playing video games, they're lying in bed, staring blankly at the window screen. Yes, if it isn't one screen, it's another. But don't despair. Aside from the three habits suggested by the journal, here are a few other steps you can take to fight childhood obesity:

Get your children into a sport -- and I don't mean the Nathan's Hot-Dog Eating Contest. If you ever watch the National Spelling Bee, you'll see that even those kids are in good shape. Why? Because they're always carrying a dictionary around.

Add some exercise to your children's daily routines. If they're addicted to video games, make sure they get some exercise before they play. This is best accomplished by throwing their video game disc into

your neighbor's yard. It's a great way to increase their heart rate, especially if your neighbor has a dog. Feed your children fresh fruit and vegetables. In case you're wondering, French fries are not vegetables, and grape isn't just a flavor of soda. And believe it or not, you can

actually eat black-eyed peas, not just listen to them.

Keep desserts to a minimum. If your children want a Kit Kat bar, make sure they get some exercise first. But please don't throw the Kit Kat into the neighbor's yard. The neighbor's kid is fat enough as it is.

Laughter is the Best Medicine



We just got the report today. No., our blood group doesn't match! He got Laptop in it., in mine it shows Cordless!

by Mahendra Shah

Mahendra Shah is an architect by education, entrepreneur by profession, artist and humorist, cartoonist and writer by hobby. He has been recording the plight of the immigrant Indians for the past many years in his cartoons. Hailing from Gujarat, he lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Trivedi story continued from page 15

SATimes: When did you move to America?

Trivedi: I came in March 2009 and started Trivedi Foundation. Then after searching for a most skeptical, profound, renowned scientist in America, we came across Dr Rustum Roy, 86, renowned material scientist and showed him what we did in India. He invited us to Penn State laboratory and repeated many experiments we did in India. Then, he gave us the most difficult task to kick out the radioactivity from radioactive water. Fortunately, this energy was able to kick that out. In other experiments, long distance blessing for energy transmission was found to be much more powerful than physical body. Dr Roy introduced me to Deepak Chopra and others. Then in 2010 at the Sages and Scientists conference, Dr Roy invited Nobel prize winning scientists from Europe and other places, and he did launch me to the

world. Einstein worked unsuccessfully on the Unified Field Theory, looking for energy which is unlimited, what I am doing is the same energy. In March that year I went to San Diego and working with a scientist blessed stem cells. In 12 weeks their growth rate was 112 percent in comparison to normal 4-5% growth rate. In another experiment in San Francisco, we worked with cancerous and non cancerous cells and found that this energy has intelligence too.

SATimes: What is your focus and mission now?

Trivedi: To bring this new science to the planet, the science of future. Science started from Galileo. Then Newton's was next level, which in time started hitting against a wall. Then, Einstein brought the next level of science. But even the current level of science has started hitting the last wall. With this science we are not able to produce organic, healthy food for even a fraction of the world

population. But this energy has hope --this energy has the ability to give natural blueprint to feed large countries.

I am sure that in time science and scientists will come forward and they will be able to understand the phenomena I am harnessing. Once science understands the phenomenon, they can establish rules and regulations behind these forces. Then with the help of science, we can develop the technology, and that technology can be very useful for billions of people after my death for thousands of years. That is why I am helping science and scientists. For example, they understand how healthy cells start converting to cancerous cells for some unknown reason. So if A to B is possible, B to A should also be possible, to reverse the journey. But this is not happening in nature. With my help, scientists can see it is reversible, this can be very useful for science.

SATimes: So far, are you satisfied with

what you have been doing and the reception to your work, your mission?

Trivedi: Definitely, slowly, slowing it is coming. Because in the last 40 years, NIH (National Institutes of Health), NASA, Max Planck, and thousands of other institutes have funded billions of dollars for thousands of projects to see the impact of anything like chi gong, tai chi, reiki, prayer, angels, deities, blessings, healing--and nothing happened. So the mindset of scientists has absolutely changed. If you talk to them "consciousness, spiritual", they say, "don't waste my time", because how long can you fool the people. So to change the mindset it will take its own time. It is frustrating to move. The moment I speak to Noble laureates, and they see the data they say it is very difficult to accept but impossible to deny. So I am inviting all the scientists to discover the new phenomenon existing in the universe since billions of years. **Contact:** trivedifoundation.org.

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- ✓ Had questions about incorporating and protecting your business?



By Dr Prem Kumar Sharma

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Stars Foretell: April 30-May 6, 2011

Aries: Although you will be working overtime for the completion of important projects, legal pressures, govt. rules and regulations will pose some problems. Your public image will be at stake with this project so do not leave any stone unturned to achieve your goals. Your spouse loves you and will take care of you like nobody else. Try not to overspend on visitors and guests, although gifts and presents will be plenty.

Taurus: This week you will take things lightly and will be in an easy going mood. You will spend more time on hobbies, join a gym or get busy with self-improvement projects. Be careful not to get involved in easy money making schemes. Gambling certainly is not on your card. You should try to put some extra time and energy into learning additional knowledge and skills that will help you further in your career.

Gemini: It will be necessary that you take special care of your health and take extra rest this week. If hectic work schedule is putting you under stress, it will be essential for you to seek help from colleagues. You might even feel depressed and irritated but it will only be a temporary phase. Take trips that will provide you with entertainment, little adventure and knowledge. Exciting weekend with friends will help you get back your lost spirits.

Cancer: This week you can do wonders to your reputation by helping those who are under extreme mental pressure. Your convincing power will have a deep impact and people will praise for your efforts. Your moneymaking ideas will be highly lucrative. Deals related to land, home, and property will bring favourable results. Recognition and rewards for scholars and artists during this period cannot be ruled out.

Leo: This is not the good phase to initiate change. Depending on others for assistance will not bring expected results. Disagreements with partners will make it difficult for you to carry out your plans. Although you will get substantial time with your beloved but your relationship will suffer due to arguments and silly contradictions. This temporary phase will soon be over till then you need to spend maximum time with friends, go out for a vacation or do things that will keep you relaxed.

Virgo: This week you will have all-important information right at your fingertips. You will have influential and experienced people all around you, but avoid putting too much money into any financial schemes just on the advice of others. Do things that will improve your health since your body will be highly receptive to change. Sudden good news later in the week brings happiness and cheers for the entire family.

Libra: Good surprises will keep you in a delightful mood, mostly concerning the love of your life. Your career and your earning ability will also take an upward climb and your position will strengthen amongst your peers. Your original ideas will win acceptance from others, and people will seek your advice. But you will be overly tired and need extra rest

towards the weekend. Do not ignore your health, and exercise to keep in perfect shape.

Scorpio: Go after challenging jobs. A close friend will join you in completing difficult task. A highly result oriented week when you should not deviate from your goals. Even though your career is progressing nicely and you will find yourself in a higher earnings bracket very shortly, looking for small part-time projects to increase your earning ability will definitely bring good results. Problems in your personal life will

enlarge beyond your expectations, if you are not open about how you feel.

Sagittarius: This week you will have extra energy, therefore you should complete pending jobs and assignments before things become difficult for you to handle. You should focus on career goals and social activities. Businessmen and investors will see past investments reaping profits. Good week to call important people over to your place, as you will gain valuable knowledge and information. Opportunities to travel to a distant place for some.

Capricorn: A little overtime will help you decrease your workload. As your energy will be high and you will achieve more than what you might expect. Although office pressures will increase, you still need to take some time out to listen to the problems that face family members. Little time for meditation and yoga will be important for mental as well as physical gains. Investment needs to be handled with care.

Aquarius: This week you should make appropriate efforts to win confidence of everyone who is with you and handling important jobs. Your seniors will notice your dedication and it will work in your favour. Spouse will be caring and provide you with love and affection. Go for social events that will improve your social circle. Added knowledge that you acquire this week, will give you advantage in your career.

Pisces: This week your personal life will be so exciting that you will have little time for anything else. Your ability to stand out in the crowd will bring you popularity and recognition. Your energy will be high and competitive games will attract you. Your love life will blossom as you receive gifts and presents. Great period to go out for shopping of expensive items and jewelry. You are likely to build new contacts through old one.

Before you consult...

- i) **Accurate Data:** Please make sure Date, Time and Place of birth is accurate.
- ii) **Careful:** Did you check background of the astrologer before disclosing your secrets.
- iii) **Fee:** Discuss the charges before, don't feel shy. It's his business.
- iv) **Expectation:** Expect the best, if the outcome is not as desired, never give up.
- v) **Consult:** Take second opinion before spending thousands on cure/remedies.

Annual Predictions: For those born in this week

April: 30

You are governed by the number 3 and by the planet Jupiter. You are also dominated by the planet Mercury. You are intellectual and ambitious by nature. In the coming year, those of you in the field of education and administration can expect to reach newer heights of excellence. You will also spend a lot of time in doing social service for the needy. You will work selflessly for institutes associated with the handicapped. This will not only give you ultimate satisfaction, but will also bring you fame and recognition. A word of advice in the coming year – you tend to get worried over trivial matters. Try to relax and remain calm and gentle. Getting restless over small matters, will only add to your stress. Most of you are likely to travel a lot in the coming year. Visit to pilgrimages is not ruled out. You will enjoy a hectic social life. The months of July, September and November would prove to be highly significant.

May 1

You are dominated by the number 1 and the Sun. The planet Moon, also has a strong influence on you. Success and prosperity will be yours, in the year ahead of you. You will handle challenging projects, with determination and sincerity. This will bring you fame and recognition, in your professional front. You will be able to save money for the future, which will give you a sense of security and satisfaction. Religious by nature, you will not bend down to tradition or superstitions. Anything beautiful, appeals to you. You will be attracted towards art and will purchase artifacts for your home, which will bring beauty and a sense of well being around you. New ideas, which you put into action, will draw the attention of your seniors. Your work will be appreciated by your colleagues and your loved ones. Happiness, a great social life and pleasures of life will be for you, in the coming year. July, October and January will prove to be highly eventful.

May: 2

You are dominated by the planet Moon. You are also governed by the number 2. Soaring high, is your nature. You are ambitious and always look upwards towards progress and prosperity. In the coming year, you will be able to complete any project that you undertake, to complete satisfaction. You will be able to create opportunities for yourself, which you will be able to fulfill and earn recognition and fame for yourself. But in trying to do so, you may become a little dictatorial at times. You need to control your dominating nature, to keep those around you happy. You are a born leader, and expect your colleagues and friends to follow whatever you order them to. This sometimes, leads to misunderstandings and heart burning. Nature and natural surroundings will draw your attention in the coming year. You will be able to enjoy the seas, flowers and on the whole, nature, which will give you a sense of satisfaction. June, September and December will be eventful.

May: 3

You are governed by the number 3 and by the planet Jupiter. You are also influenced by the Moon. Independent by nature, you do not like others interfering in your personal life. Your ability to express your views and ideas, will take you to the top of hierarchy, in the year ahead of you. Your superiors will notice your sincerity and loyalty, and they will entrust a lot of responsibility on your shoulders. You will be able to fulfill these duties to the utmost. Your jovial nature and your ability to be sympathetic towards those who need your help, will make you popular in your friends' circle. Sports and outdoor activities will keep you in good health. Travel will form an important part

of your life this year. You will travel far and near. Overseas travel is also foreseen. But you are patriotic by nature, and will not like to stay away from your country for too long. The months of June, November, February and April will be highly important.

May: 4

You are governed by the number 4 and the planet Uranus. You are also influenced by the Moon. Your life is marked by unexpected happenings. The coming year, will bring changes, which will be beneficial to you. A change in job is likely, and this will bring you success and recognition. Freedom for those in bondage, will be your aim for the year. You hate anything which is linked with hypocrisy and will not tolerate anything achieved through cheating and mistrust. A word of advice for the coming year – try to take all precautions while signing any legal documents. If you are planning to sign a partnership, you will have to weigh all the pros and cons, before getting into any legal matters. Your methodical approach to life, will help you to overcome obstacles which you may face. But try to keep away from speculation and gambling. May, October, December and March will be eventful.

May: 5

You are governed by the number 5 and the planet Mercury. You are also dominated by the Moon. You are blessed with a pleasant and vivacious personality. Your planning and methodical approach to work, will catch the attention of your seniors. You will be handsomely rewarded for your efficient and honest approach to your professional career. The ability to judge the weaknesses of your opponents, will be an asset to you, and you will be able to use this to your advantage. Travel will bring you both prosperity and pleasure. You will travel to distant lands in the coming year. This will allow you to make the most of newer opportunities and will also be a source of relaxation and enjoyment. Your sensitive and warmth nature, will bring many friends close to you and you will have a large circle of friends. Intellectual people will attract your attention, and you stand to gain in their company. April, August, November and February will be highly significant.

May: 6

You are governed by the planet Venus and dominated by the Moon. You are also influenced by the number 6. You have the ability to inspire those around you. Your mere presence, makes people happy and full of enthusiasm. You have an affinity towards art and music. Those of you, in the profession of dance and poetry, will do exceeding well in your professional career, in the year ahead of you. Your family will be of utmost importance to you, and you will go to any lengths to fulfill all their dreams. You will stay away from social customs and traditions. Your warmth and attractive personality will draw many friends to you. You will always be amongst friends and relatives, who are fond of you. You will earn a lot of money in the coming year, but will also spend it all on buying expensive clothes, jewelry and luxuries of life. July, November and March will prove to be result oriented.

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The spiritual meaning of Thanksgiving



By Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj

Although most people think of Thanksgiving as a secular holiday, if we trace its origin, we find that Thanksgiving was conceived with a deeply spiritual purpose. The governor of Massachusetts (then a colony of England) made the first proclamation to have Thanksgiving Day in 1621, three years after the first pilgrims landed. Besides giving thanks for the harvest and for surviving diseases, the governor proclaimed thankfulness for the freedom to worship God as one pleases and for God's blessings. In 1789, George Washington, one of the founding fathers of the United States, issued a Thanksgiving Day Proclamation. He said that people should acknowledge God, obey God's will, be grateful for God's benefits, and humbly pray to God for protection. For this purpose,

George Washington asked both houses of Congress for a day of public Thanksgiving and prayer to show gratitude to God. He added that the people of this country should be devoted to the service of the glorious Being, whom he termed as the Author of all the good there was, is, and will be. He asked that all people be united in giving God sincere and humble thanks for all the care and protection God has given them.

Indeed, the purpose of our life and the spiritual teachings is to know God. Secondly, to obey God's will means we love God and love our fellow beings. God wants nothing more and nothing less than our love, which expands into love for all creation. Finally, gratitude to God translates into acknowledging with humility that all the good we think we have or are is due to God who created us. Without the Creator we would not exist. By praying for God's protection, we acknowledge that there is a power higher than ourselves who is taking care of us.

Interestingly, the founding fathers had a noble vision in creating a country based on freedom of religion. Unfortunately, Thanksgiving Day was later abolished until a woman named Sarah Hale revived Thanksgiving Day. Through petitions, letters, meetings and speeches, she convinced President Abraham Lincoln to reinstate the holiday, who then proclaimed the fourth Thursday of each November as National Thanksgiving Day. It was made official by Congress in



1941.

No matter how advanced we become in technology and science, there is always a thread weaving its way through time, and this thread is the acknowledgement and gratitude of God by spiritually minded people as well as by civic leaders, philosophers, and even scientists.

If we were to put into practice the true meaning of this day, we would think about all the accomplishments we have made in our lifetime, and give thanks to God for letting us be the instrument of those accomplishments. If we are proud of our physical body, our looks, our strength, or our agility, let us give thanks to the Lord for giving us these attributes. If we are proud of our mental capabilities and our intellect, our school honors and certificates, our high grades, our education, then let us thank the Lord for giving us the gift of mental intelligence. If we are proud of our creativity—whether in painting, sculpture, music, writing, architecture, humor, or any other creative

achievement—let us thank God for this gift. If we have excellent health, a good financial base, a beautiful home, or interesting career, let us thank God. For our families and friends, too, let us also give thanks, because without the grace of the Lord we would not even be here.

George Washington referred to God as the Author. He recognized that the wonderful documents, constitutions, and proclamations that were being written during his time were from a group of people who were receptive to the Author, God, who wrote them. This concept that God is the Creator and we, as human beings, merely bring forth what God wills, forms the essence of two pillars of ethical life—humility and selfless service. Humility means that we recognize that God has created us and that all the good that flows from us belongs, ultimately, to God. Humility means that although we take joy in what we create or invent, we realize that God has used us as a vehicle to bring forth those ideas. Performing selfless service, on the other hand, means opening ourselves up to becoming a vehicle through which God's work can flow. When we allow this to happen, we will experience joy and bliss from knowing that God is using us to do God's work.

Thanksgiving is a time to thank the Lord for our existence, for all the gifts we receive, and for all the good that results in our lives. It is said that Thanksgiving is composed

Gratitude to God translates into acknowledging with humility that all the good we think we have or are is due to God who created us. By praying for God's protection, we acknowledge that there is a power higher than ourselves who is taking care of us.

of two words: first we offer thanks, and then we give. So let us spend this Thanksgiving Day offering thanks to the Lord for our very life. Then, we can show our gratitude by giving our hearts and souls to the Lord who made us, and by giving our hearts and souls to our fellow brothers and sisters who are also children of the One Creator. We can give our body and mind in service of the Lord and all creation, and we can give our soul completely to God, who is its true Owner and Creator.

Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, an international spiritual leader and Master of meditation, affirms the transcendent oneness at the heart of all religions, emphasizing prayer and meditation as building blocks for achieving peace. www.jyotimeditation.org

Spirituality and education

By Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj

In the East, people believe that we have three aspects to be developed: intellectual, physical, and spiritual. Although we have developed our intellect and physical bodies, we have forgotten our spiritual side.

Ethical values were once a part of the educational system in ancient cultures. Students were given a well-rounded training to develop physically, intellectually, and spiritually—which included ethical and moral instruction. In the last century, however, we have witnessed a decline in the teaching of ethical virtues in our schools throughout the world. The emphasis has been on academic development. As a result, we have been witnessing a generation of people who are growing up with a lack of moral and ethical values. Crime in the streets, violence among children and teens, reliance on drugs and alcohol for pleasure, and senseless crimes all point to a lack of ethical training in the moral fiber of our young people. The only way to bring about peace—at the individual and global levels—is to start with educating students from an early age. By helping them discriminate right from wrong, they may grow up to be individuals who make better and safer choices for themselves and for society.

In this regard we need to provide students

with a balanced education. Many of the educational systems around the world spend time developing the students' physical and mental attributes. Physical education includes fitness programs and classes about health, safety, and nutrition. Academic education comprises a large part of the educational programs by training students in science, math, reading, writing, social sciences, language and literature. Students are also enriched aesthetically by learning the arts and music. On the other hand, in many schools throughout the world, spiritual and ethical instruction are missing, and yet it is imperative for the future of our children that we balance our educational programs by providing training in spiritual and ethical values.

Ethical development means learning about being loving, kind, truthful, helpful, caring and humble human beings. Students need exposure to adults who are examples of these traits so that they can imbibe these qualities. For this reason, I have established fifteen schools called "Darshan Academies"—with grades ranging from pre-K through high school—which provide a period each day for spiritual and ethical training. Students also learn about people of various countries and study comparative religions so that they can learn to appreciate the unity in diversity. They also are given time to sit in silent meditation within the stillness of their own selves.

Meditation is a nonsectarian process wherein students learn that no matter to what country or to what religion they belong, they can meditate together. In this silent meditation period, the goal is for students to discover the spiritual wealth they have within themselves. They already are fully aware of their body and mind. However, meditation helps them become aware of their true self within. They also learn the values of nonviolence, truthfulness, humility, purity, compassion for all and performing selfless service. By coming in contact with their own spiritual nature, students find that all people are made of the same Light and love of God. This realization leads to tolerance and love for all people, a recognition that within our diverse outer forms we are all made of the same Light. This understanding helps to develop love for all people. When we have love and respect for others, we will naturally be peaceful and nonviolent. When we consider all people as part of one human family, we will naturally be kind and caring to them. We would never dream of hurting a member of our own family. Thus, students brought up with ethical values would no longer wish to harm a member of the human family.

For anyone practicing meditation—whether students, teachers or anyone else—besides realizing oneself and connecting with the creative power within, meditation provides many other benefits. During meditation, when closing our

eyes and gazing within, we are concentrating our attention. If we can learn to still our mind through concentration, we can use that technique in day-to-day life. The result is that we understand more of what we read and we complete our work faster. Besides improving our intellectual abilities through meditation, we feel better physically because we are relaxed; we do not become overly agitated and are more able to cope with the difficulties and tensions that arise in life. Therefore, if the techniques for meditation and concentration are taught to students at an early age, they will grow up to be fully developed physically, intellectually, and spiritually. They will see the Light of God in every human being and form of creation. They will have love and compassion for humanity.

If we include meditation and a nonsectarian spiritual curriculum in our educational systems throughout the world, then fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years from now, we would turn out human beings who have love and compassion. This would bring about an era in which people help each other rather than spending their time accumulating as much as they can for themselves. We would enter a golden age of concern about the welfare of our neighbors, our society, and all life on a global level. If, along with intellectual and physical qualities, spiritual values are taught to children, this world would become a haven of joy and peace.



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