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Vol-3, No.13, June 24, 2019 / NEW YORK | BiWeekly Edition - FREE



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India's Iran policy needs an intricate balancing act; New Delhi has Chabahar port, US ties at stake and China waiting on sidelines



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External Affairs Minister S JAISHANKAR formally joins BJP



Bernie Sanders rolls out bill to eliminate all U.S. student debt days before first Democratic 2020 debate

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and a couple of like-minded House colleagues rolled out legislation Monday that would effectively eliminate all U.S. student debt — a bold move that comes days before the first Democratic presidential debate. Sanders, who's one of the front-

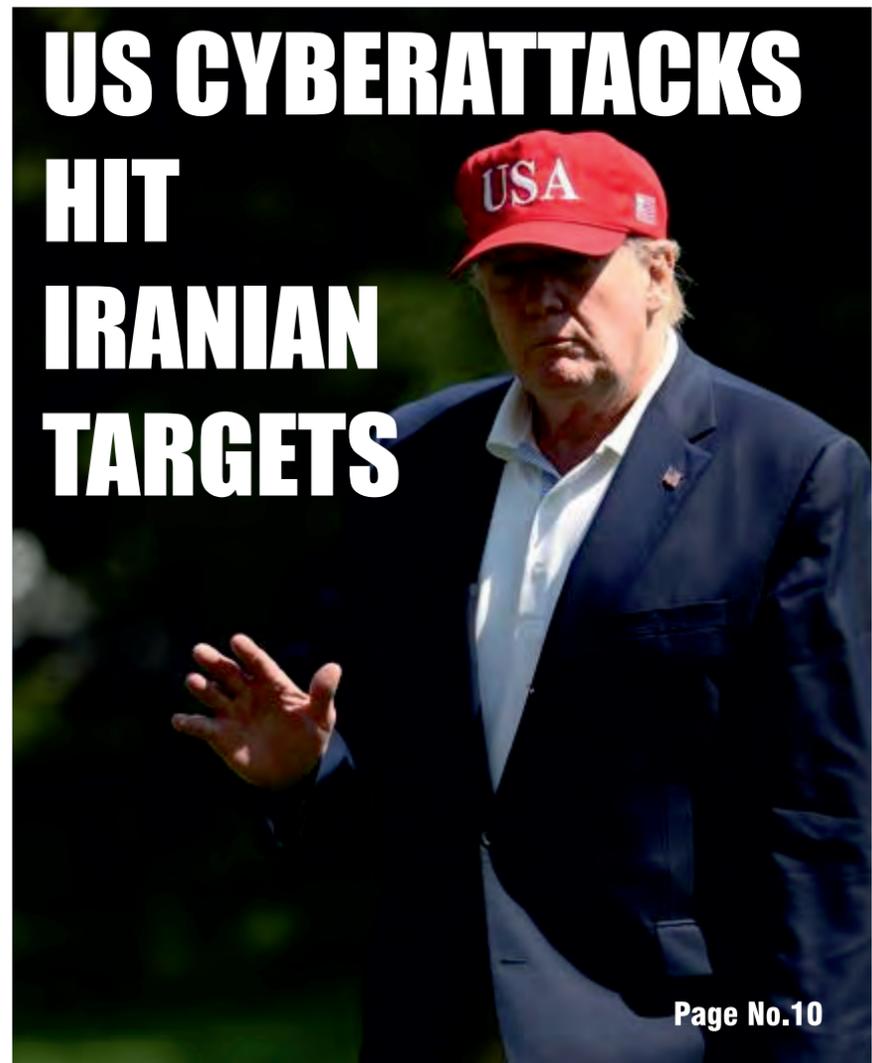
runners in the packed 2020 primary field, said his bill will lift financial burdens put on 45 millions Americans by cancelling the \$1.6 trillion of U.S. student debt.

The self-described democratic socialist senator is thereby taking it one step further than fellow 2020 candidate, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who has introduced a bill that would consider the income of the borrowers and thereby only affect about 42 million people in debt.

"In a generation hard hit by the Wall Street crash of 2008, it forgives all student debt and ends the absurdity of sentencing an entire generation to a lifetime of debt for the 'crime' of getting a college education," Sanders during a press conference with the bill's House sponsors, Reps. Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) and Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.).

Source : nydailynews.com

US CYBERATTACKS HIT IRANIAN TARGETS



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Chairman & Founder and Managing Director - Raj Dhingra
 Published BiWeekly by Topline Group, LLC, ISSN 2575-6567,
 2022 Hillside Ave, New Hyde Park, NY 11040 P. 516-216-4900

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Population Control Law must implement in India. Family of two children pay taxes while family of eight children get subsidies. This Must Stop. All Families, All Religions should get equal subsidies.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN NYC AREA

Monday 24 June, 2019 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM		Monday Meditation at the Rockaway Summer House Rockaway Summer House, 504 Beach 68th Street, Arverne, NY
Friday 28 June, 2019 7:00 PM		Gujarati Samaj of New York & Shemaroo The Well, 272 Meserole Street, Brooklyn, NY 11206
Sunday 30 June, 2019 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM		Freshkills Park Open Hours Freshkills Park, 350 Wild Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314
Monday 1 July, 2019 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM		Ocean Cube - Immersive Pop-up Exhibit 60 Grand Street, New York, NY 10013
Tuesday 2 July, 2019 7:00 PM – 11:00 PM		PUNDERDOME®: NYC's Most Puntastic Compuntition - 100th Show! littlefield, 635 Sackett Street, Brooklyn, NY 11217
Thursday 4 July, 2019 2:00 PM		Elsewhere's 4th of July Rooftop Party Elsewhere (Rooftop), 599 Johnson Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11237
Thursday 4 July, 2019 5:00 PM – 10:00 PM		4th of July Fireworks Cruise Pier 36 New York, 299 South Street, New York, NY 10002
Saturday 6 July, 2019 8:00 AM – 9:15 AM		High Line Wildlife Tour On the High Line at Gansevoort Street, New York, NY 10014
Sunday 7 July, 2019 2:00 PM		Chicken & Beer Party Elsewhere (Rooftop), 599 Johnson Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11237
Thursday 11 July, 2019 10:00 PM		Dirty Thursday: 90s Night House of Yes, 2 Wyckoff Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11237
Thursday 11 July, 2019 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM		Jazz at Pier 84 Pier 84 at Hudson River Park, 555 12th Avenue, NY 10036
Friday 12 July, 2019 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM		Sunset on the Hudson Pier 45 at Hudson River Park, Hudson River Greenway, NY
Saturday 13 July, 2019 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM		Make Pizza and Drink Bubbly Beebe's, 38-28 27th Street, Queens, NY 11101

To announce your Events here, Email event details at Editorial@IndiaRepublicNews.com

India's Iran policy needs an intricate balancing act; New Delhi has Chabahar port, US ties at stake and China waiting on sidelines

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second win in the Lok Sabha elections and the growing unrest in the Persian Gulf call for a careful look at India's foreign policy on Iran. Such an analysis has to taken into consideration various factors and all the countries in the mix, as well as how the Modi government ought to balance often contrary, conflicting interests.

Iran ties essential for India

Having been described as a "strategic game changer", the Chabahar port agreement between India and Iran was a huge step forward in New Delhi's involvement in the Persian Gulf and, through the port, to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The port's position as a gateway to the Indian Ocean as well as its landward geography towards Central Asia makes it an ideal regional transshipment hub, as it offers the shortest route to a deep water port along with Gwadar in Pakistan.

The much-delayed, ambitious International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) is expected to make use of this very port. The Chabahar port's access to



Afghanistan and Central Asia makes Iran crucial to India's interests abroad, and the bilateral ties between the two nations is more than just a transactional relationship of buying and selling oil. India's growing interest in Central Asia is evinced most recently by its induction to the Ashgabat Agreement in 2018 (a transport and transit agreement for Central Asia and the Persian Gulf) and the India-Central Asia Dialogue, which began in January.

Although this article discusses India's policy on Iran, the

Afghanistan and Central Asian dynamic is inseparable from the cost-benefit analysis in terms of the trade, connectivity and strategic gains a foothold in Iran gives India. The current Indian investment to connect Afghanistan with Chabahar is the first step in weaning Kabul off the Pakistani dependence forced on it, as well as the perceived importance of Pakistan vis-à-vis Afghanistan for Western countries. As far as Central Asia is concerned, India's policy on the region centres around two objectives — natural resources and, more importantly, connectivity to and through the region.

A brief look at a map makes it clear that only Iran has the ability and wherewithal to assist India in this endeavour, and if not for Iran, India can expect to remain disconnected from affairs in Central Asia for the foreseeable future, as well as relegate the INSTC to the records room.

The promise of cheap and fast connectivity to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Russia and Europe ensures that India has to fight to keep this bilateral relationship alive.

Source : firstpost.com

JP NADDA urges Opposition to cooperate in running Rajya Sabha smoothly, says BJP government wants 'sabka vishwas'

New Delhi: BJP working president JP Nadda on Monday sought the cooperation of the Opposition to run the house smoothly, saying disruptions affect them the most. Initiating a debate on the motion of thanks to the President's address in Rajya Sabha, Nadda said the government wants not just 'sabka saath sabka vikas' (development and cooperation of all) but also 'sabka vishwas' (everybody's trust or faith).

Nadda said, "We should agree to disagree in the House but we should not disagree just for the sake of disagreement. I appeal. I need all of your support. There were many disruptions in the house in the past. This (disruption affects) the opposition the most." Outlining the direction of newly formed Modi 2.0, he

told the house that this government would work towards improving ease of living in the next five years to further reach out to the commoners in the country.

During his address, Nadda said, while in Opposition he had got the award of the best parliamentarian. He said the government's focus would be on poor, women and youth in the next five years. On Prime Minister Narendra Modi getting several international awards, he said: "These are all awards for India. Now India is not just a spectator but also a player in the international scene."

Seconding the motion, BJP member Sampatiya Ukey lauded the NDA government for working for women's



progress and improving their lives through various social sector schemes and policies during the past five years.

Source : firstpost.com

INDIAN-AMERICAN MEDICAL GRADUATES OF KERALA HOLD KICKOFF FOR JULY CONVENTION

The Association of Kerala Medical Graduates, AKMG, possibly the oldest Indian-American physicians' organization, is holding its 'Ruby Convention' this July end. As a precursor to that and to reach out to the community, AKMG held a kickoff event at the Indian Consulate in New York May 21.

Kickoff for the Association of Kerala Medical Graduates, AKMG, Convention which takes place in July. It was attended by close to 100 members, supporters, Eminent Guest Including Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Former Deputy Comptroller of Nassau County Dilip Chauhan, George Abraham, as well as representatives from the Consulate and the media, according to Dr. Alex Mathew, chair of the July 25-28 convention which will be held in New York City at the Sheraton at Times Square.

"We wanted to make it known to the public through the media that we are a 40 year-old organization with a lot of charitable and other activities under our belt and we want all the support we can get for this convention," Dr. Alex Mathew.

Citation being presented to Dr. C.S. Pitchumoni at the May 21 kickoff event for the July Convention of the Association of Kerala Medical Graduates. Also seen in photo are India's Consul for Community Affairs in NY Devadason Nair, 2nd from left, Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, 3rd from left, Dr. C.S. Pitchumoni, Dilip Chauhan, Former Deputy Comptroller of Nassau County New York Dr. Sridevi Menon

Speakers at the kick-off included, among others, National AKMG President Thomas Mathew; India's New York Consul for Community Affairs Devadason Nair. Citation being presented to Dr. Sridevi Menon, an internal medicine specialist of 45 years standing and graduate of Calicut University Medical College, at the May 21 kickoff event of AKMG, held at the Indian Consulate in New York. Also seen in photo are, from left, Indian Consul for Community Affairs in NY Devadason Nair, Padma Shri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Dr. Menon, Dilip Chauhan, President of the New York South Asian Chamber of Commerce, and Dr. Thomas Mathew, president of AKMG. Also recognized were Dr. C.S. Pitchumoni, chief of gastroenterology at St. Peter's University Hospital, and formerly chairman of the

Department of Medicine at Lady of Mercy Medical Center, as well as Dr. Sridevi Menon, an internal medicine specialist of 45 years standing and graduate of Calicut University Medical College.

Dr. Thomas Mathew welcomed those present and gave a brief history of AKMG. He also acknowledged the presence of senior members of the organization, Dr. Pitchumoni and Dr. Menon. Nair, in his speech, thanked Indian-American physicians for services they render to the community and their charitable work. He also asked for them to consider discussions on including India's traditional Ayurvedic medicine on their agenda. Citations were presented to Dr. Pitchumoni and Dr. Menon by Dilip Chauhan, former deputy comptroller for minority affairs in Nassau County.

Dr. Alex Mathew outlined the program in the July 25-28 Convention, and focused on the highlights: Different from earlier conventions, this year the AKMG is making a special effort to encourage young doctors to come forward and take leadership, he said. That includes giving free entry for medical and dental students; reduced rates for resident physicians; special Young AKMG sessions; entertainment tailored to the liking of the younger generation. Also, for the first time a 'Women in Medicine' seminar is on the program, to recognize the increasingly important role women are playing in society. That seminar will be led by Dean of Stony Brook Medical School Dr. Lata Chandran, and Dr. Nisha Pillai, cardiologist with Northwell Group. An afternoon would be devoted to the subject of Health Innovations & Global Health Care, he informed those present. Registration for the Convention is flexible – allowing attendees to come for just one day or one session, and for special events such as cruises. According to the organization, it now has more than three thousand member physicians. The three jam packed days of the Convention have their own themes to represent each night. The TEMPEST night on Thursday July 25, will feature a cruise around N.Y city with music, dance, entertainment and dinner served on one of New York's prestigious cruise ships, Cornucopia. The EUPHORIA day on Friday July 26, will feature



Continuing Medical Education talks, poster presentations from Young AKMG (medical residents and medical students); and the Women's seminar, a Literary Seminar or Sahithya Samelenam; Friday evening entertainment will conclude with AKMG's Got Talent, a night of music, dance and singing. The final day of the convention on Saturday July 27 will continue with world renowned C.M. E presentations. The afternoon seminar on Health Innovation which will focus on integrating all the major health systems in the U.S and India and talks from Anthony Sathydas details of which will be announced on a later date.

Friday evening will be Gala Night — themed as Dhvani Tharangam, that will include performances from Malayalam film industry's lead choreographer and Kerala State Award Nominee Biju Dhvani Tharang. Playback singers like Swetha Mohan and Vidhu Pratap will be featured,

The AKMG has also provided a platform for business vendors to connect with the physician clientele on Friday and Saturday, a press release from AKMG detailed.

Bronx deli owner sentenced to 5 years for setting fire to rival bodega

A sizzling Bronx bodega beef resulted in a five-year sentence Thursday for a deli owner who hired goons to set fire to a rival business.

Redhwan Saleh, 38, was found guilty of arson and conspiracy at trial last year.

After learning a new deli was opening near his bodega at 242 St. and Broadway in Riverdale, Saleh hit up a regular customer, Richard Sanchez, for help finding someone who would put a match to the competition.

Enter Antoine Bostick, who climbed onto the new deli's roof and poured gasoline down a vent, lighting the joint on fire on Sept. 11, 2016.

"Today, New York City deli owner Redhwan Saleh learned that his attempt to burn down his competition — literally — comes at a steep price:

more than five years in prison," Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman said.

Saleh paid between \$2,500 and \$3,000 for the arson, prosecutors said.

The new deli and a neighboring store were extensively damaged, prosecutors said. The deli's opening was substantially delayed.

While being held at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, Saleh is "doing what he does best, serving food to others," according to court papers filed by his lawyer. "He works diligently in the kitchen, pleasant to others, with a smile on his face," the documents said.

Saleh was also ordered to pay \$50,000 in restitution Bostick, 32, has already been sentenced to four years and two months in



prison. Sanchez and another man, Arthur Cherry, acted as lookouts while Bostick set the fire. Sanchez was slapped with two years and four months behind bars while Cherry was sentenced to time-served.

Source : nydailynews.com

Congratulations!

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It is my great pleasure to congratulate the Rotary Club of Hicksville South on their 10th anniversary, providing valuable services to the community and the world.

I would like to congratulate Mukesh Modi, as he begins his year as President of Rotary Club of Hicksville South. I wish him much success in being the Inspiration to his club and reinforcing this year's theme "Rotary Connect the world" by continuing to provide this exemplary service for many years to come.

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New York lawmakers abandon solitary confinement reforms, scrap automatic voter registration as they barrel to end of legislative session

ALBANY — State lawmakers on Thursday scrapped plans for automatic voter registration and abandoned proposals to reform solitary confinement in prisons as they tried to wrap up this year’s legislative session.

Working well past Wednesday’s scheduled end of session in the state capital, Democratic leaders were forced to tamp down expectations and scale back several ambitious measures as they scrambled to reach deals on unresolved issues and return to their districts before the end of the week.

A typo in a bill implementing an automatic voter registration system would have inadvertently made it easy for undocumented immigrants, granted access to driver’s licenses days earlier, to register to vote, according to Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Yonkers) and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie (D-Bronx).

“We will pass this updated bill at the next available opportunity when we are in

legislative session,” the pair said. “This action will not impact the implementation of this corrected legislation because, like the original legislation, it does not go into effect until 2021.”

Advocates calling for an end to solitary confinement in state prisons, some of whom spent the past week on a hunger strike, were dejected after lawmakers decided to leave reforms up to Gov. Cuomo rather than pass a long-sought bill scaling back the use of the practice.

“As a result of this appalling act of cowardice people will continue to be tortured and will die,” the #HALTsolitary Campaign said in a statement. “We are devastated.”

There were wins as Democrats wrapped up a historically progressive session with a bill allowing adoptees the right to review their original birth certificate once they turn 18 passed both houses — overturning a 1935 state law that kept the records sealed.

Assemblywoman Pam Hunter (D-



Syracuse), who was adopted as a child and does not know her birth parents, received a standing ovation as she explained that the measure would enable her to tell her son about their family’s medical history and other concerns.

“This truly is historic,” she said. “It’s righting an historic wrong. It’s getting us up to the 21st Century because we are behind.”

Lawmakers also established a commission to oversee the Gateway development project and passed pay equity legislation.

An omnibus bill introduced after 10 p.m. contained an exemption for state Budget Director Robert Mujica to serve on the MTA Board as well as billions in capital funding, new regulations for the hemp industry, tweaks to recently passed rent laws and an expansion of bus lane cameras.

Source : nydailynews.com

Tractor-trailer fatally strikes NYC bicyclist, keeps going



The truck slammed into the victim, believed to be in her 20s, in front of a Citibank at Sixth Ave. and W. 24th St. about 9:25 a.m. , officials said. (Theodore Parisienne/for New York Daily News)

A tractor-trailer fatally struck a bicyclist in Chelsea Monday morning and kept going, police said.

The truck, headed uptown on Sixth Ave., slammed into the 33-year-old victim, who was also headed north, in front of a Citibank at W. 24th St. about 9:25 a.m., officials said.

She was rushed to Bellevue Hospital with severe head trauma and died there.

The truck kept going, possibly because the driver didn’t notice he had hit anyone, sources said.

Cops were trying to track down the truck and its driver.

Source : nydailynews.com

Gurdwara Kirtan



June 20, 2019 Sant Anoop Singh Ji Kirtan in Hicksville gurdwara by LILC.. Sant Ji is very well known and respected in the Sikh Kirtan world. We got his blessings..LILC arranged everything thanks to lilc presidents jyoti gupta & pinki jaggi & ladies for helping in langar sewa with tan and dhan and man..Lots of sangat came and it was spiritual atmosphere.

NIPSEY HUSSLE

memorialized at 2019 BET Awards

Slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was memorialized at the 2019 BET Awards in Los Angeles Sunday night when he was given the Humanitarian Award.

“His life may have been cut short, but his legacy will permeate around neighborhoods for years,” fellow rapper Tip “T.I.” Harris said as he introduced video about Hussle’s philanthropy and work to reduce gang violence.

“This brother left behind seeds that will blossom,” director Ava DuVernay said in the video.

“He taught a generation of people to hustle for their neighborhoods,” Snoop Dog said of the activist and entrepreneur.

Angelique Smith, Hussle’s mother, accepted the award and, recounted being at the scene of her son’s murder and consoling one of Hussle’s friends.

“Thank you for your prayers and support,” she said.

“I just want to thank you guys for all the love and support, and the marathon continues again,” said Hussle’s fiancée, actress Lauren London, during the ceremony at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles.

“The Marathon Continues” was one the title of one of Hussle’s mix tapes, as well as one of his catchphrases.

Dawit Asghedom, Hussle’s father, thanked the crowd and BET.

“I wish he was here to accept this,” said Hussle’s father, Dawit Asghedom.

Marsha Ambrosius, YG, DJ Khaled and John Legend participated in a tribute performance to the late rapper, featuring several songs, including “Higher.” “The marathon continues!” Khaled shouted after their performance.

Later, Hussle was also given the



award for Best Male Hip-Hop Artist. Also during the show, Rihanna presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to singer and actress Mary J. Blige, who performed several of her hits.

Taraji P. Henson presented Tyler Perry with the Ultimate Icon Award, Cardi B won the album of the year award, and Spike Lee’s “BlacKkKlansman” was named best movie.

Hussle, born Ermias Asghedom, was shot and killed outside his Los Angeles clothing store March 31.

“Nipsey Hussle was zealous about driving change for the betterment of his community, empowering and employing those in need, and being an influential and highly respected leader,” BET exec Connie Orlando said in a statement this month.

“His passing was a tremendous loss to the entertainment industry and to the culture. We will continue to remember his advocacy and be inspired by the groundwork he set forth and his dire commitment to social change.”

Source : nydailynews.com



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TRUMP ON 9/11 VICTIM FUND: 'WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS'

The president was asked about efforts to renew the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund during a wide-ranging interview with NBC's "Meet the Press."



WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump, in a wide ranging sit-down interview with NBC’s “Meet the Press,” said “we’ll see what happens,” when asked about efforts to renew the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund.

Trump was responding to a question from host Chuck Todd about whether he would ask Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to support passage of a House-panel approved measure to permanently fund the \$4.6 billion federal program for first responders sickened from their rescue and recovery work in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks.

“You know it’s a very complicated subject for a lot of reasons,” Trump said of the fund that was last renewed by lawmakers in 2015 and is set to expire in 2020.

Source : newsday.com

Add Queens mom to Dominican death list: 38-year-old mother of four died during holiday getaway, family says

A Queens mother of four on a Dominican Republic getaway last year danced, dined — and died.

Donnette Edge Cannon, 38, traveled with her sister, brother-in-law and their niece in May 2018 for a Mother's Day getaway that ended in tragedy with her shocking death, family members said Friday.

"You go on vacation and you think everything is going to be good," sister Candace Edge Johnson told the Daily News. "And you check out, and everything just goes awry. We were in shock from then until we saw other cases and we thought, 'Something is not right.'"

Reports indicate at least seven Americans have died in the Dominican Republic in 2019 alone.

The family members arrived at the Sunscape Bavaro Beach Punta Cana on May 14. For their last night on vacation, they all went on a dune buggy ride,



enjoyed the beach and went out to eat.

"We danced and laughed all the way back to the room," recalled Johnson, 35. "That was the last time we saw her well, until she woke up (in the middle of the night) and stated throwing up."

Johnson and her husband visited with the ailing Cannon before heading to the airport to catch their flight — only to learn her sister's condition had worsened. Before the trip, Cannon, who had diabetes, underwent dialysis treatments and her sister claims Cannon's condition was under control.

The couple rushed back to the resort, but Cannon died at a local clinic.

"It took us a month to get her (body) to the states," said Johnson. "They did the autopsy, they said it was renal failure. We were OK with that until we started to see these stories come up, And we were kind of thinking, 'What made her sick?'"

Adding insult to tragedy, Johnson griped that the hotel charged her \$200 for an extra night's stay after her sister's shocking death. And they were forced to pay more than \$1,000 to get Donnette's body shipped back home.

"Sunscape takes the safety and security of every guest seriously," the resort's former parent company said in a statement Friday. The company notes that statistics show no increase in tourists' deaths in the Dominican Republic — and that Americans' deaths in the country have declined in the last three years.

The company says it sold the Bavaro Beach Punta Cana in January.

Source : nydailynews.com

Nassau County officials running more tests for E. Coli in Long Beach drinking water

A boil-water alert remained in place for the City of Long Beach on Saturday while Nassau County ran more tests on the water supply after it was found to contain E.coli bacteria.

Samples taken from a private residence earlier this week tested positive for E.coli, officials said on Friday. Another 10 water samples were planned for Saturday morning, Newsday reported.

Long Beach officials said Nassau County was providing another load of bottled water for residents and businesses forced to turn away from the tap. It will be distributed at Kennedy Plaza in front of City Hall.

The water alert came as local businesses and residents were preparing for the big start of the summer, with lots of visitors expected this weekend. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, washing dishes, brushing teeth and food preparation, officials said.

They said water should be boiled for one minute and allowed to cool before using. City officials are still working to determine the source of the bacteria and said in a statement that the Nassau County Department of Health will likely provide an update on Sunday. They said all water should be boiled until officials give the all-clear.

E. Coli typically comes from human or animal waste. Infants, young children, the elderly and people with compromised immune systems are particularly at risk. Symptoms include diarrhea, cramps, nausea, and headaches.

Nassau County Executive Laura Curran said the City of Long Beach immediately raised Chlorine levels when the E. Coli was discovered and that it will flush



out the entire water system to ensure the bacteria is eliminated. It is unclear how long that process will take.

Source : nydailynews.com



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Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari gets death threat; in Hindi SMS, sender says will eliminate prime minister 'if need be'

New Delhi: Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari has received a death threat through an SMS on his personal phone number, in which the sender said he is under "extreme compulsion" to eliminate the leader.

The unidentified person also threatened to eliminate the prime minister "if need be", Tiwari said.

"I have informed the police about the threat," Tiwari told PTI.

The sender of the SMS also said in his Hindi message that he was "sorry" for deciding to eliminate Tiwari under "extreme compulsion".

A formal complaint about the threat will be lodged soon, said Delhi BJP's media relations head Neelkant Bakshi. The SMS was received on Tiwari's mobile phone at 12.52 pm on Friday which he saw on Saturday evening and immediately informed the police, he added.

Your guide to the latest cricket World Cup stories, analysis, reports, opinions, live updates and scores on <https://www.firstpost.com/firstcricket/series/icc-cricket-world-cup-2019.html>. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram or like our Facebook page for updates throughout the ongoing event in England and Wales.



Source : firstpost.com

India and the Indian: New nationalism has put inclusive Hindutva on offer, writes Makarand Paranjape

The question that is often asked following the Bharatiya Janata Party's stunning and spectacular victory in the 2019 General Elections is "Does BJP 303 and Modi 2.0 signify a new nationalism or altered idea of India?" The answer to such a categorical, not to mention complex, question is hard to provide in a simple "yes" or "no." No doubt, notions of a new kind of nationalism or idea of India are very much in the air. Who can deny that? But they are far from what they appear to be when taken at face value.

For instance, the BJP's second crossing of the halfway mark of 272 on its own in the Lok Sabha definitely signifies the end of the Nehruvian socialist, secularist consensus that prevailed almost as a state religion in the country, for some six decades of independent India. National Democratic Alliance 1.0 and 2.0, (2009-2004) — the Atal Bihari Vajpayee led coalition that lasted approximately thirteen months and four and a half years respectively — offered a tentative substitution of soft Hindutva in place of the by-then already enfeebled Nehruvian paradigm.

However, this face off resulted in somewhat of a stalemate rather than a decisive worsting of the old by the new. Two terms of the United Progressive Alliance, with prime minister Manmohan Singh at the helm of affairs, succeeded the NDA from 2004-2014. Narendra Modi's counter was not Vajpayee's soft Hindutva. Instead, he offered an assertive, although not aggressive, Hindu cultural nationalism coupled with good governance and a

strong developmental agenda. Prior to Modi's second victory, RSS Sarsanghachalak (Chief) Mohan Bhagwat offered his vision of a new India in a three-lecture series in September 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. I have called this new vision, "inclusive Hindutva". It was this combination of developmental nationalism and inclusive Hindutva which proved to be the winning ideology that swept Modi and the BJP to power a second time.

Now that Narendra Modi and the BJP have won so convincingly, what is to be done? Should minority appeasement and reverse discrimination, the cornerstones of the Congress consensus, be replaced by triumphant and belligerent majoritarianism? Not at all. Rather all communities and stakeholders ought to be treated fairly and equally. The State must not dole out favours or special inducements to any group with a view to securing their support. What



then of the demands of the majority, who voted Modi back to power? Again, the answer has to be in the negative. The government should treat all stakeholders alike; the majority, of course, is bound to benefit by its overwhelming strength in numbers.

That is how popular, though not necessarily populist, democracies operate. To offer special favours or rewards to the majority would not only prove unnecessary but possibly jeopardise the stability of a diverse and plural society such as India. It might even lead to oppression of or discrimination against minorities and weaker sections of society. Modi 2.0, deeply conscious of this danger, has resisted kowtowing to majoritarian demands as compensation for votes or support received at the hustings. Instead, it has tried to shift the focus to development and prosperity. Its attempts to win the trust of all sections of society

is indicated in adding to its catch phrase and popular slogan "sabka saath sabka vikas", the additional component of trust in "sabka vishwas." In addition, the government has already rolled out benefits aimed at specific sections of society such as minority girls' scholarships covering up to 50 percent of the eligible population. Should we then conclude that the more things change the more they remain the same?

Not quite. The new nationalism of the Modi era, however much its critics would like to characterise it as a quasi-theocratic and dangerous form of Hindu nationalism, is actually quite far from trying to foist the idea of a Hindu Rashtra upon an uncompromisingly and explicitly defined secular by the Constitution. Instead inclusive Hindutva, despite some rather ugly and unruly fringe elements, is what is on offer. Of course, the deluded and distorting "Lutyens media" refuses to see this. If they did care to peer beyond the smoke screen of their own projected fears and hatred, they would see a rising tide of a young and aspirational India fueled by billions of hopeful hearts and hard-working pairs of hands.

This India does not wish to be identified merely by caste, creed, community, region, language, or even religion. They want to be first and foremost plain Indians, each of whom has a right to own the new idea of India and reap the fruits of prosperity and development. This unprecedented shift from identitarian to aspirational politics is the great transformation that we are in the midst of.

Source : firstpost.com

US CYBERATTACKS HIT IRANIAN TARGETS

The US president had himself confirmed reports of abruptly calling off military strikes on Iranian targets, saying he was told that close to 150 Iranians could die as a result.

The US on Thursday carried out cyberattacks on Iranian computer systems that controlled missile batteries and an intelligence unit linked to the oil tanker bombings even as American President Donald Trump called off a military strike shortly before it was underway in retaliation to the downing of a US drone.

On Saturday, the US president struck a note of optimism, as he offered Iran a chance to “start all over”, thanked it for not shooting down a spy plane with 38 American personnel on board, and held out the prospect of working together to “Make Iran Great Again”.

The US, meanwhile, disputed reports that Trump had offered to hold discussions with Iran through Oman just ahead of the strikes that the US president eventually called off. Trump also said that additional sanctions on Iran would be announced on Monday.

The US president had himself confirmed reports of abruptly calling off military strikes on Iranian targets, saying he was told that close to 150 Iranians could die as a result.

There was no word yet from him about the cyberattacks, though. There was no official statement or acknowledgement of it, as could be expected given the sensitivity of such operations. The cyberstrikes,



which were first reported by Yahoo News, were carried out on Thursday night by US Cyber Command

after weeks of preparations, according to multiple reports. The Pentagon had first proposed to carry them out after the first wave of attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman earlier this month.

The targets chosen were Iranian missile launch systems and an intelligence agency unit.

Reports indicate that Iranian military command and control systems were crippled as a result. It was pointed out that it was difficult to assess the exact extent of the damage.

There was no reported loss of human life because of these clandestine attacks that were described as similar to the strikes conducted by the US around the 2018 midterm election that temporarily crashed Russia’s Internet Research Agency, which the US had charged with interfering in the 2016 presidential election.

The US was also geared up for cyberattacks from Iran.

On Saturday, Christopher C Krebs, the director of the department of homeland security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, said in a statement that there has been a “recent rise in malicious cyber-activity” directed at the US by “Iranian regime actors and proxies”.

Source : hindustantimes.com

WILLIAM JAMES LEAHY DIES; Port Authority officer who aided in 9/11 recovery was 49

William James Leahy, a longtime Port Authority officer involved in the rescue and recovery efforts after the 9/11 attacks, was a straight-up, “John Wayne type of guy” who was also caring, funny and loyal, family and friends said.

“He was a straight shooter. You never had to guess whether he liked you or not,” said Dante Castro-Recio, 57 of Massapequa, a fellow police officer who worked with Leahy for more than two decades at the Port Authority Police Department. “If he liked you, you’d know it. If he got a problem with you, he wouldn’t hide it.”

Leahy, of Levittown, died Thursday of cancer, his family said. He was 49.

Leahy worked for a year with the NYPD, then joined the Port Authority in 1993 and worked in the agency’s marine, cargo and heavy weapons units and the plainclothes unit at Kennedy Airport, according to Lenis Rodrigues, a Port Authority spokeswoman.

He took his work seriously but also did it with a sense of humor, Castro-Recio said.

“He would say a lot of funny things without



New York Port Authority Police Officer William James Leahy. Photo Credit: New York Port Authority

smiling. He’s that type of guy, you know,” he said. “If I had to describe him to anybody, you can describe him as a John Wayne type of guy. ... Although he came off a little rough, there was definitely a soft side of him.”

During his 26-year career at the Port Authority, Leahy participated in the efforts after 9/11. Castro-Recio, who was also part of the rescue and recovery team, said they spent days going through the rubble, looking for survivors and trying to recover any human remains.

“He didn’t view himself as a hero in any way,” Castro-Recio said. “He was a very modest person.”

Source : newsday.com

Modi's biggest test is improving the condition of India's poorest



Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi met a range of corporate leaders and economists on Saturday for a conversation convened by the Niti Aayog. With the first budget scheduled for July, this is a part of the larger consultation process the government is having with stakeholders and experts across spheres. The participants gave suggestions to the PM on five distinct, important themes — macro economy and employment; agriculture and water resources; exports; education; and health.

The conversation was a step in the right direction. The government has secured a spectacular political mandate. But this cannot take away from the fact that the economy is in trouble. There is a debate on the methodology used to measure the growth rate — and irrespective of who is right — there is little doubt that

gross domestic product (GDP) has dipped. There is pressure on the fiscal numbers. Consumption is down across the board; corporate profits are hit; the banking crisis shows no signs of abating; private investment is low; manufacturing — the only sector capable of generating jobs on a large scale — has not picked up according to the demands of the times. The structural crisis in agriculture persists, with low farmer incomes and a mismatch between the (high) share of population engaged in farming and its (shrinking) contribution to the GDP. India is also fast running out of time to take advantage of its demographic dividend — and the prospect of millions of young people, without productive jobs, should worry policy makers. The government also has to ensure smoother transitions in multiple spheres — from rural to urban, agriculture to industry, and

unorganised to organised economy.

There is no easy solution. But Narendra Modi has shown that he has the ability to focus and achieve when he puts his mind to something. The improvement of welfare delivery systems — which enabled the provision of rural housing, toilets, gas cylinders — in his first term is an example of this focus. In the second term though, Mr Modi must invest far more deeply in getting the economy in order. His mandate allows him to pursue a reform agenda without constraints; it also allows him to collaborate more deeply with the private sector, while ensuring that there is no crony capitalism, to push growth; and it allows him to focus on improving the economic condition of the poorest Indians. That is Mr Modi's biggest test in his second term.

Source : hindustantimes.com

TRUMP SAYS RE-ELECTION 'EASIER' IF HE IS IMPEACHED

US President Donald Trump said in an interview broadcast Sunday his chances of retaining the White House in 2020 would be strengthened if Democratic lawmakers start impeachment proceedings against him.

Asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" whether he thought impeachment was good politics for him, Trump replied, "I think I win the election easier." The president repeated his longstanding allegation that the FBI's counterintelligence investigation into his 2016 campaign was illegal. "I was spied on. What they did to me was illegal. It was illegal on the



other side. I did nothing wrong," he said in the previously recorded interview.

"So impeachment's a very unfair thing because nothing that I did was wrong. And if you look at the Mueller report, there was no collusion. This was all about collusion." The Democrats are split over whether Trump should be impeached after the Mueller Report into Russian interference in the 2016 election outlined numerous contacts between his campaign and Russians, as well as evidence that the president tried on several occasions to stymie the investigation.

Source : hindustantimes.com

Monsoon Session of Parliament: Bill to ensure quotas for people living along International Border in J&K introduced in LS

New Delhi: People living along the International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir will get benefits of reservation in direct recruitment, promotion and admission in professional courses on par with those living along the Actual Line of Control (ALoC), according to a bill introduced in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2019 will replace an ordinance issued by the previous government.

The Bill was introduced by Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy on behalf of Home Minister Amit Shah who was present in the House.

Some members from the Opposition wanted to oppose introduction of the bill but speaker Om Birla rejected their demand, saying they had not followed the procedure for doing so.

The bill seeks to provide relief to people living in areas adjoining the International Border in Jammu and Kashmir. They can

now avail benefits of reservation in direct recruitment, promotion and admission in different professional courses.

The bill once passed by Parliament will amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004 to bring persons residing in areas adjoining the IB within the ambit of reservation, on par with those living in areas adjoining the ALoC.

The rules provided for reservation in direct recruitment, promotions and admission in different professional courses to various categories, including residents of areas adjoining ALoC.

Those living in areas adjoining the IB in Jammu and Kashmir were not included in the ambit of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004 and Rules, 2005 and were deprived of benefits.

Due to continuous cross-border tensions, people living along the IB suffer from socio-economic and educational backwardness.



Shelling from across the border often compels residents to move to safer places, which adversely impacts their education as schools and colleges remain closed for long periods.

Source : firstpost.com

External Affairs Minister S JAISHANKAR formally joins BJP

Jaishankar was appointed as the External Affairs Minister in the new Narendra Modi cabinet. He replaced veteran leader Sushma Swaraj, who decided not to contest this time.



External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar formally joined the BJP on Monday in the presence of party's working president JP Nadda at the Parliament House.

Jaishankar was appointed as the External Affairs Minister in the new Narendra Modi cabinet. He replaced veteran leader Sushma Swaraj, who decided not to contest this time.

Jaishankar, the son of one of India's foremost strategic thinkers, K Subrahmanyam, is considered to be very close to the prime minister and was part of a troika with Modi and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval that played a major role in shaping foreign policy in the early years of the last NDA government.

Experts say Jaishankar's attitude was a good fit with Modi's unorthodox and risk-taking approach to foreign policy issues.

Jaishankar's work as the Indian envoy to the US catapulted him to the position of foreign secretary then.

An IFS officer of the 1977 batch, he has widespread expertise in nuclear diplomacy and relations with the US and China. He played an important role in negotiating the 2008 India-US civil nuclear deal.

Jaishankar is a graduate of St Stephen's College and has a master's degree in political science and an MPhil and PhD in international relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Source : hindustantimes.com

AN-32 crash in Arunachal Pradesh should wake authorities up to dangers of retaining obsolete aircraft



Usually after an air crash, it is advisable not to jump to conclusions or hazard guesses on what happened. It would vitiate the official investigation. No expert or professional takes that sensational route.

But in the case of the AN-32 that crashed in a mountainous region of Arunachal Pradesh, killing 13 air force personnel, the cause may not lie in the badly damaged flight data recorder. The fact is that the flight data recorder is often a "go" item on the minimum equipment list, meaning that one can take off with it unserviceable.

However, it needs to be asked as to why

the flight data recorder, which is relatively indestructible, was so wrecked. Was it metal fatigue or sheer obsolescence? This would be one more indicator that the AN-32s in the Indian Air Force are largely obsolete. Of the 118 jets pressed into service, a large number are superannuated, and have gone past their "sell-by" date.

Over ten years ago, another AN-32, which also had 13 people on board, crashed into a mountain in the same region after the pilots reportedly were disoriented by cloud cover. This was the conclusion arrived at officially, and the claim of a "pilot error" was used as a cop-out. At that time, the aircraft was

reaching superannuation, and in the aftermath of the incident, it was decided to upgrade such planes and extend their life. This would be done by improving the aircrafts' avionics, strengthening their airframe and upgrading their radars. Unfortunately, none of these steps addressed metal fatigue, which is intrinsic to the ageing of an aircraft. While about half the fleet was upgraded in this manner just to keep the planes flying and ferrying military cargo and personnel, many aircrafts are now more than ten years above the age of retirement.

The fact is that however hard maintenance command tries to perform

miracles, band aids and rubber bands to keep obsolete aircraft in the sky are just that. In any court of inquiry, the state of the aircraft, its performance record, its snag sheet, its history, and whether it was upgraded or not are all germane to the issue.

In the present case, there is little evidence available to the authorities from the damaged flight data recorder, and there are no indications about the final communication between the cockpit and ground control. However, a tentative possibility is that the cause may have been the fragility of aircraft that have outlived their time span.

Source : firstpost.com

Smriti Irani to build her own house in Amethi's Gauriganj, says it will make her more accessible to local residents

A month after her victory in the Lok Sabha elections from Amethi in Uttar Pradesh, Union Minister for Women and Child Development and BJP MP Smriti Irani announced that she will build her own house in the constituency. She said she has identified a plot in Gauriganj for her house, according to News18.

Irani emerged victorious in the traditional Congress bastion and visited the constituency on Saturday for the first time since the results of the Lok Sabha election were declared on 23 May. She assured the people that having a home in the parliamentary constituency will make her more accessible to them.

2014, and Sonia Gandhi had won from the seat in 1999. The Gandhi family, however, stayed at guest houses during their visits to Amethi the last two decades. Irani sharply criticised her



rivals, saying, "No one had imagined that a woman from a simple family will be given the opportunity to be your representative in a region that was the stronghold of a 'naamdaar', where it was believed that even if the MP doesn't

return for five years, people will still accept him."

In the elections held in April-May this year, Irani defeated Rahul in his home turf by a margin of over 55,000 votes.

The Union minister announced that she was going to build a home in Amethi at the inauguration of a Rs 30-crore roadways project, where Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya was also present. At the programme, she distributed the keys of houses built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) among local residents.

While announcing developmental and welfare projects in Amethi, Irani assured those who voted for Congress chief Rahul Gandhi that they will not be deprived of the benefits of various schemes.

"I understand that there are some four lakh people who voted for the Congress. They must not worry about benefiting from welfare schemes like Ujjwala, PMAY and toilets built under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan," The Times of India quoted her as saying.

Source : firstpost.com

श्रीमद् भगवद् गीता

1. Whenever dharma declines and the purpose of life is forgotten, I manifest myself on earth. I am born in every age to protect the good, to destroy evil, and to reestablish dharma.

2. As they approach me, so I receive them. All paths, Arjuna, lead to me.

3. I am the beginning, middle, and end of creation.

4. Among animals I am the lion; among birds, the eagle Garuda. I am Prahlada, born among the demons, and of all that measures, I am time.

5. I am death, which overcomes all, and the source of all beings still to be born.

6. Just remember that I am, and that I support the entire cosmos with only a fragment of my being.

7. Behold, Arjuna, a million divine forms, with an infinite variety of color and shape. Behold the gods of the natural world, and many more wonders never revealed before. Behold the entire cosmos turning within my body, and the other things you desire to see.

8. I am time, the destroyer of all; I have come to consume the world.

9. That one is dear to me who runs not after the pleasant or away from the painful, grieves not, lusts not, but lets things come and go as they happen.

10. Just as a reservoir is of little use when the whole countryside is flooded, scriptures are of little use to the illumined man or woman, who sees the Lord everywhere.

11. They alone see truly who see the Lord the same in every creature, who see the deathless in the hearts of all that die. Seeing the same Lord everywhere, they do not harm themselves or others. Thus they attain the supreme goal.

12. With a drop of my energy I enter the earth and support all creatures. Through the moon, the vessel of life-giving fluid, I nourish all plants. I enter breathing creatures and dwell within as the life-giving breath. I am the fire in the stomach which digests all food.

13. There are three gates to this self-destructive hell: lust, anger, and greed. Renounce these three.

14. Pleasure from the senses seems like nectar at



first, but it is bitter as poison in the end.

15. That which seems like poison at first, but tastes like nectar in the end - this is the joy of sattva, born of a mind at peace with itself.

16. The Lord dwells in the hearts of all creatures and whirls them round upon the wheel of maya. Run to him for refuge with all your strength, and peace profound will be yours through his grace.

17. Whatever you do, make it an offering to me - the food you eat, the sacrifices you make, the help you give, even your suffering.

18. I am heat; I give and withhold the rain. I am immortality and I am death; I am what is and what is not.

19. Those who worship other gods with faith and devotion also worship me, Arjuna, even if they do not observe the usual forms. I am the object of all worship, its enjoyer and Lord.

20. Those who remember me at the time of death will come to me. Do not doubt this. Whatever occupies the mind at the time of death determines the destination of the dying; always they will tend toward that state of being.

21. When meditation is mastered, the mind is unwavering like the flame of a lamp in a windless place.

22. They are forever free who renounce all selfish desires and break away from the egocage of 'I', 'me', and 'mine' to be united with the Lord. This is

the supreme state. Attain to this, and pass from death to immortality.

23. They live in wisdom who see themselves in all and all in them, who have renounced every selfish desire and sense-craving tormenting the heart.

24. The meaning of Karma is in the intention. The intention behind action is what matters. Those who are motivated only by desire for the fruits of action are miserable, for they are constantly anxious about the results of what they do.

25. You have the right to work, but never to the fruit of work. You should never engage in action for the sake of reward, nor should you long for inaction.

26. Perform work in this world, Arjuna, as a man established within himself - without selfish attachments, and alike in success and defeat. For yoga is perfect evenness of mind.

27. At the beginning of time I declared two paths for the pure heart: jnana yoga, the contemplative path of spiritual wisdom, and karma yoga, the active path of selfless service. There are the fundamental different types of yoga.

28. Do your work with the welfare of others always in mind. It was by such work that Janaka attained perfection; others too have followed this path.

29. There is nothing in the three worlds for me to gain, Arjuna, nor is there anything I do not have; I continue to act, but I am not driven by any need of my own.

30. The ignorant work for their own profit, Arjuna; the wise work for the welfare of the world, without thought for themselves.

31. It is better to strive in one's own dharma than to succeed in the dharma of another. Nothing is ever lost in following one's own dharma, but competition in another's dharma breeds fear and insecurity.

32. The senses are higher than the body, the mind higher than the senses; above the mind is the intellect, and above the intellect is the Atman. Thus, knowing that which is supreme, let the Atman rule the ego. Use your mighty arms to slay the fierce enemy that is selfish desire.

Actor Janhvi Kapoor was spotted in Mumbai on Sunday as she shot for a film. Spotted standing alone, Janhvi was seen in a green kurta-pyjama and grey sweatshirt.

JANHVI KAPOOR

spotted on shoot in Mumbai. Is this her look from Rajkummar Rao's RoohiAfza?

The pictures and Janhvi's look could be from her upcoming horror comedy film *RoohiAfza*, co-starring Rajkummar Rao. The shooting for the film began two weeks ago.

A post shared on June 14 from the official Twitter account of Maddock Films read: "Karne aa rahe hai attention ko kabza, aaj se shuru hoti hai Rooh-Afza! (Coming to grab all the attention. Rooh Afza begins today)".

Rajkummar shared a photograph of the film's clapboard and wrote the same caption. This will be the first time Rajkummar will be seen sharing screen space with Janhvi.

The film, produced by Dinesh Vijan and Mrighdeep Singh Lamba, and directed by debutant Hardik Mehta, also stars Varun Sharma. It is slated to release on March 20, 2020. This will



be Rajkummar's third collaboration with Dinesh Vijan after *Stree* and *Made in China*.

At the first edition of the Grazia Millennial Awards on Wednesday, Janhvi said, "The shooting of the film has been going on really well. Whether you call me superstitious or old-fashioned, I feel if you talk more about your film, it will catch the evil's eye. "So, I will not speak much about the film. I feel fortunate to be part of this film and to be working with people who are involved in the film."

Janhvi made her Hindi film debut with *Dhadak* when she was 21. Janhvi, who started working at a young age, says, "I am looking forward to growing old. Actually everyone says I am mentally very young and I am still stuck at 10. So, I think I should grow up now a little bit."

Source : hindustantimes.com

Had to let go of the opportunity to be at Cannes earlier due to films: Diana

Actor Diana Penty made her debut at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival. And she made all the right noises when it came to her fashion choices. Be it her golden tasseled dress, floral trench coat dress, new age ivory sari or off-shoulder faux feather beige gown, the actor brought her A-game to Cannes. She wishes to travel to the film festival with a film next year. Excerpts:

How was your experience walking the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival?

It was a surreal experience. It was just a wow moment for me. I could be myself and it came through very naturally. I was nervous and elated at the same time, it was a bag of mixed feelings. I'm so glad it all went well. I really hope to be able to come back.



I started getting ready three hours before the actual red carpet because I wanted to do everything leisurely instead of rushing into it. It is important to have perfect hair and make up, and make sure the outfit fits correctly. Also, you need to make sure there's enough time to click photographs of the final look. I feel no amount of preparation is enough preparation. You never know unless you are there experiencing it.

Did you get an opportunity to represent India at the festival earlier?

Yes, I have been invited before but my dates were blocked. But as they say,

everything happens at the right time for everyone. This was my time to make a debut and I think I couldn't have asked for a better year.

Did you feel any pressure being part of such a grand festival?

The red carpet of the Cannes Film Festival is one of the most scrutinised red carpets in the world, alongside the Oscars and the Met Gala. Of course, there is a pressure to pick the perfect outfit for the occasion and put your best foot forward. But the beauty of the French Riviera is mesmerising enough to take the pressure off and help indulge

in the amazing events at Cannes.

This year, only one film from India got screened at Cannes. Do you think Indian filmmakers don't consider film festivals good for business?

I don't think any filmmaker makes a film with the thought of showcasing it at film festivals. They cater to the audience, which is divided into masses and classes. It is obviously a matter of great honour for our films to reach international audiences through film festivals, but that isn't necessarily a benchmark of brilliance. Films that have been a part of these festivals



sometimes go on to make money at the box office nationally as well, so I think it really depends on the content of the film.

How can we have more cinema presence at Cannes from India?

I think forming an association or board can encourage filmmakers to work towards global cinema and take those films to various film festivals. This can help Indian cinema reach the global audience. A lot of our films, which are mass entertainers, have great content that can be enjoyed by international audiences as well.

Source : hindustantimes.com

Alia Bhatt wishes 'nazar na lage' to her relationship with Ranbir Kapoor: 'He's not difficult. He's a gem'

Actor Alia Bhatt is head-over-heels in love with her boyfriend and actor Ranbir Kapoor and it shows every time she talks about him. In a recent interview to The Times of India, Alia talked about the positive advice he has given her and how they are in a great space right now.

Calling their relationship a friendship, Alia said that it was beautiful. "No. It's not a relationship. It's a friendship. I'm saying this with all genuineness and honesty. It's beautiful. I'm walking on stars and clouds right now. The best part is that we're two individuals who are living our own professional lives in its full form right now. He's shooting continuously. So am I. It's not a situation where you'll see us constantly together. That's the true mark of a comfortable relationship. Nazar na lage," she said. Alia added that against what is commonly thought of Ranbir, he is not a difficult person. "He's not difficult. He's a gem. But he's had a troubled past... How does it matter? It's part of someone's life. Aur main thodi na kam hoon," she said.

Alia said what irritates her the most are the rumours around her wedding. "When I met him for the first time in my life. Again, let me tell you he's not difficult. He's a supremely simple person. He's such a nice human being that I wish I was as good as him. As an actor, as a person, as everything. He's way better a person than I am. And about getting married? Well, that's the only thing that's irritating right now. Every morning I wake up to the



news that I'm getting married. I tell him what the hell. I guess he's used to it," she said.

Alia and Ranbir were spotted with his parents Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Singh in New York on Sunday. Pictures from their meet up were shared on social media by their fan pages. Neetu captioned the pics, "Your family is your whole world so so many LOVES in these beautiful moments." Actors Aishwarya Rai, Abhishek Bachchan and their

daughter Aaradhya joined the family get together as well.

Ranbir and Alia will soon be seen together in Ayan Mukerji's Brahmastra. Earlier in June, the two were spotted going to Kashi Viswanath temple in Varanasi. A few weeks before that, pictures of the duo posing at the city's famous Ramnagar Fort and Chet Singh Fort had also gone viral.

Source : hindustantimes.com



SHILPA SHETTY

does the 'most difficult, grandest performance' of her career on Super Dancer finale

Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty recently gave the "most difficult, grandest performance in 25 years" of her career when she was shooting for the finale episode of Super Dancer where she is a judge.

According to a Mumbai Mirror report, Shilpa had a 15-minute-long dance performance where she combined classical and Bollywood styles of dancing. Shilpa told the tabloid, "We started with Indian, Bollywood and then Bharatnatyam, which I had learnt before joining films but this is the first time I was performing on the stage. It was unusual and different. Then, we progressed to Ghoomar, Muqabala and Aithey Aa. We had 64 dancers. I felt like I was performing at an awards function. We shot it like a big budget film."

Talking about Salman, who also came for the finale as a guest, Shilpa said, "The camaraderie and banter with him on sets is something else. That episode was a lot of fun."

Talking about her Bollywood journey, Shilpa had

recently said in a Facebook post, "I was all of 17 when I entered the industry, I hadn't seen the world or even understood life. With all the success came scrutiny. I wasn't ready for it. I reached a point where after a few films my career hit a lull. I tried hard but it always felt like I was lagging behind. It's not easy to be celebrated one moment and ignored the next. I remember there were producers, who without any reason, threw me out of their films."

"I did not feel people were accepting me as an actor. Maybe I wasn't that good actor. Even after doing films like Phir Milenge and Dhadkan, I never got an award. I felt rejected and bad. "But I kept working hard. There was hunger in my belly... I feel if not for those rejections I wouldn't have lasted so long," Shilpa had said at an event in Delhi.

Source : hindustantimes.com

California Home Sales Rise in May, Aided by Lower Interest Rates



May median home prices reach another high in California

According to the California Association of Realtors, California's median home price edged higher to another peak for the second straight month as lower interest rates helped bolster home sales in May 2019.

Closed escrow sales of existing, single-family detached homes in California totaled a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 406,960 units in May 2019, according to information collected by C.A.R. The statewide annualized sales figure represents what would be the total number of homes sold during 2019 if sales maintained the May pace throughout the year. It is adjusted to account for seasonal factors that typically influence home sales.

May's sales figure was up 2.6 percent from the 396,780 level in April 2019 and down 0.6 percent from home sales in May 2018 of 409,270. Sales rose above the 400,000 benchmark for the first time since July 2018 and reached the highest level in 11 months, while the year-to-year sales dip was the smallest in 13 months.

"The lowest interest rates in nearly a year and a half, no doubt, have elevated housing demand as monthly mortgage payments have become more manageable to home buyers in general," said C.A.R. President Jared Martin. "The state's housing market remains soft, however, as home sales continue to lag behind last year's level for more than a year now."

After surpassing its prior price peak in April 2019, the statewide median home price reached another new all-time high in May, hitting \$611,190. May's median price was up 1.4 percent from \$602,920 in April and up 1.7 percent from \$600,860 in May 2018.

"While lower interest rates have spurred buyer demand in recent months, they also have played a role in ongoing price hikes," said C.A.R. Senior Vice President and Chief Economist Leslie Appleton-Young. "Buyers could offer higher prices without hurting their bottom lines and maintain the same level of affordability, as rates remain on a downward trend. With mortgage rates expected to stay low in the upcoming months, home prices may inch up further for another month or two before cooling off."

Other key points from C.A.R.'s May 2019 resale housing report include:

- On a non-seasonally adjusted annual basis at the regional level, only the San Francisco Bay Area recorded a sales gain of 0.8 percent. The Los Angeles Metro region experienced the smallest sales decline (1.1 percent), while the Central Coast recorded the largest decrease (4.2 percent). Sales in the Inland Empire decreased 3.0 percent, and the Central Valley experienced a 2.7 sales decrease.
- Non-seasonally adjusted sales in the San Francisco Bay Area were up 0.8 percent from May 2018. Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties recorded annual sales increases, while San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties saw declines.
- The Los Angeles Metro region posted a non-seasonally adjusted year-over-year sales drop of 1.1 percent, with home sales down in Orange and San Bernardino counties of 2.0 percent and 10.6 percent, respectively. Sales increased in Ventura (6.7 percent) and Riverside (1.5 percent) and were essentially flat in Los Angeles (0.1 percent) and San Diego counties (0.2 percent).
- Active listings, which have been decelerating since December 2018, continued to climb from the prior year, increasing 7.4 percent from a year ago. It was the 14th consecutive year-over-year increase but also the first single-digit gain since last June.

Source : worldpropertyjournal.com

New Residential Construction Prices and Sales Dip in U.S.

First Annual New Construction Price Drop in 7 Years

According to Redfin, sale prices for newly built homes in the U.S. fell 1 percent year over year to a median of \$363,900 in the first quarter of 2019, the first such drop in seven years.

Sales of new homes in the U.S. were also down 3.1 percent year over year in the first quarter of 2019, the third consecutive quarter of declines. Supply of new homes was up 4.2 percent in the first quarter, the fourth consecutive period of increases.

The small declines in new-home sale prices and sales and the rise in supply were expected. Redfin first reported that demand for new homes was cooling in the second half of 2018 as builders started dropping prices and offering incentives to agents and buyers showing interest in new construction, such as free design upgrades.



Connie Durnal, a Redfin agent in Dallas, said builders are now using other methods to lower prices for new homes in her area, such as smaller lot sizes and including fewer upgrades in spec homes (those that are built without a buyer lined up). Lowering prices is part of an effort to sell some of the new-home inventory that's been piling up in Dallas (supply of new homes in the Dallas metro was up 14.7% in the first quarter).

"The market for new homes is shifting. Builders are readjusting their pricing to be more competitive, both in low-end and high-end homes. Some of my clients have been able to buy new homes at prices we never could have negotiated a year ago," Durnal said. "One reason builders are able to offer homes for lower prices is because in some cases, they're building on smaller lots farther away from the city center, like in the northern suburbs. They're also reducing monetary incentives such as design center credits and built-in blinds in favor of offering the home for sale at a lower price. That way, builders end up netting the same amount of money on a sale but homebuyers may feel that they're getting a better price."

New construction is a key ingredient in the affordability of housing markets, but it is limited by the labor supply of construction workers. In a separate analysis, Redfin determined the share of homes affordable on the median personal income for construction workers in some of the nation's largest metros.

St. Louis is the most affordable place for a construction worker to buy a home, with 67.3 percent of homes for sale affordable on the median personal income for construction workers in the area, the highest share of any U.S. metro. It's followed by two Midwestern neighbors, Cleveland (64.7%) and Chicago (62.5%). Those metros are also relatively affordable for the population as a whole: In all three places, more than half of homes for sale are affordable on the area's median household incomes.

Source : worldpropertyjournal.com

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