



Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya to Harshad Mehta

Flashy LifeStyles, Multi-Crore Frauds, Fall From Grace

(SAI Bureau) : Nirav Modi, the billionaire jeweller who was feted by celebrities till a few days ago, is now at the centre of a multi-agency probe in connection with Rs 13,400-crore PNB fraud.

In the last 24 hours, Enforcement Directorate (ED) has raided various Nirav Modi showrooms and seized precious stones and diamonds worth more than Rs 5,000 crore while the Ministry of External Affairs has suspended the jeweller's passport. As allegations continue to surface against Nirav Modi, this is the start of the fall of his diamond empire. Before Nirav Modi, the likes of Vijay Mallya, Ramalinga Raju, Harshad Mehta and Abdul

(Contd on page 22)



Nirav Modi in New York City?



(By Our Staff Reporter) New York : Nirav Modi, a diamond broker and luxury jeweller to celebrities, who is being investigated for a bank fraud in India, is believed to be holed up in a hotel suite close to New York City's Central Park. With his cell phone switched off and receiving no calls, Nirav Modi

(Contd on page 22)

Modi Still BJP's Trump Card

After the tough Gujarat polls and Rajasthan drubbing, in the duo's last mile dash, Modicare, MSP, even DeMo will all be ammunition to snipe at the Congress's scam skeletons. But BJP insiders agree it is not an easy task.



(SAI Bureau) : The first grim tidings came from the state to its south, with the bar graph of success dipping in height conspicuously. But the party pulled through in Gujarat, and it was left to Rajasthan to wear the taint of outright defeat, even if only in three bypolls. Chief minister

Vasundhararaje, as she emerged to describe the drubbing as a "wake-up call" for the BJP, had an uncharacteristic air about her: sedate, shorn of that usual sense of pomp, deep in thought. With caveats, that perhaps describes the mood in the party nationally too, as it nears the home stretch

to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It was to be an unquestioned mandate, drawing on the limitless Modi cheque for the second time. But with just a year shy of Lok Sabha campaign time, the BJP finds itself a trifle apprehensive, in a way they had not anticipated.

(Contd on page 23)

Florida Shooting

Suspect Began Shooting Students 'in the Hallways'



(SAI Bureau) : Parkland, Fla. — The suspect in one of the deadliest school shootings in modern American history confessed to the police that he "began shooting students that he saw in the hallways and on school grounds," according to a police arrest report released Thursday. The suspect, Nikolas Cruz, 19, carried a black duffel bag and backpack, where he hid loaded magazines, the report said. He arrived at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland in an Uber at 2:19 p.m. on Wednesday

(Contd on page 23)

(By Our Staff Reporter) Ahmad Khan Rahimi, aka, Ahmad Rahami, 30, of Elizabeth, New Jersey, was sentenced to life in prison for his execution and attempted execution of bombings in New York City on Sept. 17, 2016.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Edward C. O'Callaghan, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman for the Southern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney Jr. of the FBI's New York Field Office and Commissioner James P. O'Neill of the NYPD made the announcement.

"Today our legal system delivered on its promise to provide swift and resolute justice to those who would target innocent victims by perpetrating terrorist attacks against our homeland," said Acting Assistant Attorney General O'Callaghan. "I commend all of the agents, analysts and prosecutors whose commitment and dedication made this result possible."

"Inspired by ISIS and al Qaeda, Ahmad Khan Rahimi planted and detonated bombs on the streets of Chelsea, and in New Jersey, intending to kill and maim as many innocent people as possible," said U.S. Attorney Berman. "Less than a year-and-a-half after his attacks, Rahimi has now been tried, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison. Rahimi's conviction and sentencing are victories for New York City and our nation in the fight against terror."

"Today's sentencing assures us that Ahmad Khan Rahimi will spend the rest of his life behind

bars. Once again, the lesson learned is clear: if you plot to cause catastrophic damage against this city and our citizens, you will be held accountable," said Assistant Director Sweeney. "I would like to thank the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces here in New York and New Jersey, along with many other law enforcement partners, who moved with speed in this investigation and who work every day to protect Americans from acts of terror. I would also like to express my gratitude to the public who remained engaged throughout this investigation. That partnership and the public's continued cooperation are crucial to ensuring we stay ahead of threats, and enhance law enforcement's response following attacks like this."

"Rahimi attempted to wreak havoc in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City. He failed," said Commissioner O'Neill. "Committing terrorism may seem, from the darkest places of the internet and espoused in propaganda, as a higher calling. It is not. Today's sentencing — of life in prison — should be the strongest deterrent to future acts of terror. My thanks to the police officers from the 13th precinct, NYPD detectives, investigators on the Joint Terrorism Task Force, and prosecutors here in Manhattan for making today's sentencing possible."

Rahimi was convicted on Oct. 16, 2017, following a two-week jury trial before U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman, who also imposed today's sentence.

Chelsea Bomber Ahmad Khan Rahimi Sentenced to Life in Prison for Executing September 2016 Bombing and Attempted Bombing in New York City



According to the Complaint, the Indictment, other filings in Manhattan federal court, evidence at trial, and statements made in court proceedings:

On Sept. 17, 2016, Rahimi transported two improvised explosive devices from New Jersey to New York, New York. Rahimi placed one of the devices in the vicinity of 135 West 23rd Street in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York, New York (the 23rd Street Bomb) and the other in the vicinity of 131 West 27th Street in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York, New York (the 27th Street Bomb).

At approximately 8:30 p.m., the 23rd Street Bomb — containing a high explosive main charge and thousands of ball bearings — detonated, causing injuries to over 30 people and hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage across a 650-foot crime scene. The injuries included, among other things, lacerations to

the face, abdomen, legs, and arms caused by flying glass; metal shrapnel and fragmentation embedded in skin and bone; and various head injuries. The explosive components appear to have been placed inside a pressure cooker and left near a dumpster. The explosion propelled a more-than-100-pound dumpster — which was introduced as an exhibit at trial — more than 120 feet. The blast shattered windows as far as approximately 400 feet from the blast site and, vertically, more than three stories high. Shortly after the 23rd Street Bomb detonated, a civilian identified the 27th Street Bomb and promptly called 911, which recorded call was introduced in evidence and played at trial. The 27th Street Bomb, which was rendered safe prior to detonation, consisted of, among other things, a pressure cooker connected with wires to a cellular telephone (likely to function as a timer) and packaged with

an explosive main charge, ball bearings, and steel nuts. Earlier that day, at approximately 9:35 a.m. on Sept. 17, 2016, another improvised explosive device, which had been planted by Rahimi in the early morning hours, detonated in the vicinity of Seaside Park, New Jersey, along the route for the Seaside Semper Five Marine Corps Charity 5K race. The start of the race — which was scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. — was delayed. Had the race started on time, the bomb would have detonated as runners were passing by where Rahimi had planted it. On Sept. 18, 2016, at approximately 8:40 p.m., six additional improvised explosive devices that Rahimi also planted were found inside a backpack located at the entrance to the New Jersey Transit station in Elizabeth, New Jersey. One of these devices detonated as law enforcement used a robot to defuse it.

Detroit Doctor Sentenced to Six Years in Prison for Role in \$10.4 Million Health Care Fraud Scheme

(By Our Staff Reporter) A Detroit, Michigan-area doctor was sentenced to 72 months in prison today for his role in a \$10.4 million conspiracy to defraud the Medicare program. Acting Assistant Attorney General John P. Cronan of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider of the Eastern District of Michigan, Acting Special Agent in Charge Timothy Waters of the FBI's Detroit Division and Special Agent in Charge Lamont Pugh III of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General's (HHS-OIG) Chicago Regional Office made the announcement.

Mahmoud Rahim, M.D., 65, of West Bloomfield, Michigan, was

sentenced by U.S. District Judge Nancy G. Edmonds of the Eastern District of Michigan. Judge Edmonds also ordered the defendant to forfeit \$1,679,505. The restitution amount will be determined at a later hearing.

After a one-week trial in September 2017, Rahim was convicted of one count of conspiracy to commit health care fraud and wire fraud, one count of wire fraud, one count of conspiracy to receive health care kickbacks and two counts of receiving healthcare kickbacks. According to the evidence presented at trial, Rahim accepted kickbacks from his co-conspirators in exchange for referring Medicare patients for electromyogram tests

(EMGs), some of which were unnecessary, and physical therapy performed by unlicensed individuals. Rahim disguised these payments as "rent" and set up a shell company to hide this illegal scheme.

Rahim was charged along with office manager Janet Nakhle, 58, of Dearborn, Michigan, in an indictment returned in June 2016. Nakhle pleaded guilty to conspiracy to receive health care kickbacks in December 2016 and was sentenced to serve 18 months in prison.

The FBI and HHS-OIG investigated the case, which was brought as part of the Medicare Fraud Strike Force under the supervision of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and the

U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. Fraud Section Trial Attorneys Jessica Collins and Amy Markopoulos prosecuted the case.

The Fraud Section leads the Medicare Fraud Strike Force, which is part of a joint initiative between the Department of Justice and HHS to focus their efforts to prevent and deter fraud and enforce current anti-fraud laws around the country. The Medicare Fraud Strike Force operates in nine locations nationwide. Since its inception in March 2007, the Medicare Fraud Strike Force has charged over 3,500 defendants who collectively have falsely billed the Medicare program for over \$12.5 billion.

Outcome Health CEO Rishi Shah stepping down as part of settlement with investors

(By Our Staff Reporter) Outcome Health struck a deal with its investors to settle allegations of fraud and end a monthslong and very public legal battle. CEO Rishi Shah and President Shradha Agarwal have stepped down from day-to-day management of the company to become chairman and vice chair of the board of directors, which will search for a new CEO, according to a news release from the company. The newly expanded board will also include three new independent directors and two investor representatives.

The agreement settles all litigation between the company and its investors, according to the news release. Shah and Agarwal also plan

to join investors and lenders in investing another \$159 million into the business, \$77 million of which will be used to pay down debt, according to the news release. "Shradha and I look forward to inviting in an operating leader who has the experience and skills required for the future success of Outcome Health," Shah said in a statement. "We're enthusiastic to move into this new chapter of growth with our customers and partners to transform the health care industry and fulfill our mission to activate the best health outcomes possible for every person in the world."

Founded in 2006 as ContextMedia, the company places screens in doctor's offices that run educational

content about health topics and advertisements from drug companies. It had not raised outside money until last year, when it secured \$487.5 million in funding from big-name investors and rose to a valuation of about \$5.5 billion.

In November, those investors — including units of Goldman Sachs and Google, and a fund co-founded by Illinois gubernatorial candidate J.B. Pritzker — sued the company, Shah and Agarwal, alleging Outcome Health misled advertisers and investors about the company's performance.

The investors filed court documents indicating they received subpoenas from the Justice Department.

In recent months, pharmaceutical



advertisers have pulled tens of millions of dollars in ads from the fast-growing company, and hospitals have backed away. More than one-third of Outcome Health's 535 employees took a voluntary buyout, and it called off a headquarters move.

Earlier this month, Illinois suspended two tax credit agreements with the company.

Thirty-six Defendants Indicted for Alleged Roles in Transnational Criminal Organization Responsible for More than \$530 Million in Losses from Cybercrimes

(News Agencies) A federal indictment was unsealed today charging 36 individuals for their alleged roles in the Infraud Organization, an Internet-based cybercriminal enterprise engaged in the large-scale acquisition, sale, and dissemination of stolen identities, compromised debit and credit cards, personally identifiable information, financial and banking information, computer malware, and other contraband.

Following the return of a nine-count superseding indictment by a Las Vegas, Nevada, grand jury alleging racketeering conspiracy and other crimes, federal, state, local, and international law enforcement authorities arrested 13 defendants from the United States and six countries: Australia, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Kosovo and Serbia.

Acting Assistant Attorney General John P. Cronan of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Dayle Elieson of the District of Nevada, and Acting Executive Associate Director Derek N. Benner of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) made the announcement.

"Today's indictment and arrests mark one of the largest cyberfraud enterprise prosecutions ever undertaken by the Department of Justice," said Acting Assistant Attor-

ney General Cronan. "As alleged in the indictment, Infraud operated like a business to facilitate cyberfraud on a global scale. Its members allegedly caused more than \$530 million in actual losses to consumers, businesses, and financial institutions alike—and it is alleged that the losses they intended to cause amounted to more than \$2.2 billion. The Department of Justice refuses to allow these cybercriminals to use the perceived anonymity of the Internet as a shield for their crimes. We are committed to working closely with our international counterparts to identify, investigate, and bring to justice the perpetrators of these crimes, wherever in the world they operate."

"The U.S. Attorney's Office is steadfastly committed to protecting America's national and economic security," said U.S. Attorney Elieson. "Criminals cannot hide behind their computer screens. We are working vigilantly with American and international law enforcement partners to identify and disrupt transnational cybercrime organizations, such as the Infraud Organization."

"Criminal cyber organizations like Infraud threaten not just U.S. citizens but people in every corner of the globe," said HSI Acting Executive Associate

Director Benner. "The actions of computer hackers and identity thieves not only harm countless innocent Americans, but the threat they pose to our financial system and global commerce cannot be overstated. The criminals involved in such schemes may think they can escape detection by hiding behind their computer screens here and overseas, but as this case shows, cyberspace is not a refuge from justice. HSI will continue working with our law enforcement partners in this country and around the world to aggressively target cyber thieves to ensure the perpetrators face the full weight of the law."

According to the indictment, the Infraud Organization was created in October 2010 by Svyatoslav Bondarenko aka "Obnon," aka "Rector," aka "Helkern," 34, of Ukraine, to promote and grow interest in the Infraud Organization as the premier destination for carding—purchasing retail items with counterfeit or stolen credit card information—on the Internet. Under the slogan, "In Fraud We Trust," the organization directed traffic and potential purchasers to the automated vending sites of its members, which served as online conduits to traffic in stolen means of identification, stolen financial and banking information, malware, and other illicit goods.

Two Men Sentenced To Prison In International \$200 Million Credit Card Fraud Conspiracy Last of 22 Defendants Convicted and Sentenced

(News Agencies) TRENTON, N.J. — A New York man and a Middlesex County, New Jersey, man were sentenced to today to federal prison terms for their respective roles in one of the largest credit card fraud schemes ever charged by the Justice, U.S. Attorney Craig Carpenito announced. Qaiser Khan, 53, of Valley Stream, New York, previously pleaded guilty to an information charging him with one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud. He was sentenced today to six months in prison. Sat Verma, 65, of Iselin, New Jersey, previously pleaded guilty to an information charging him with one count of access device fraud. He was sentenced to one year in prison. U.S. District Judge Anne E. Thompson imposed both sentences today in Trenton federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Khan and Verma were originally charged in February 2013 as part of a conspiracy to fabricate more than 7,000 false identities to obtain tens of thousands of credit cards. They are the last of 22 defendants to be sentenced in this scheme.

The scheme involved a three-step process in which the defendants would make up a false identity by creating fraudulent identification documents and a phony credit profile with the major credit

bureaus; pump up the credit of the false identity by providing bogus information about that identity's creditworthiness; then borrow or spend as much as they could without repaying the debts. The scheme caused more than \$200 million in confirmed losses to businesses and financial institutions.

The scope of the criminal fraud enterprise required the conspirators to construct an elaborate network of false identities. Across the country, the conspirators maintained more than 1,800 "drop addresses," including houses, apartments and post office boxes, which they used as the mailing addresses for the false identities.

Khan admitted he helped obtain credit cards in the name of third parties — many of which were fictional — then directed the credit cards to be mailed to addresses controlled by members of the conspiracy. He also admitted they knew the cards would be used fraudulently at businesses. Verma admitted he effected transactions with access devices issued to another person.

In addition to the prison terms, Judge Thompson sentenced Qaiser to five years of supervised release and fined him \$10,000. Verma was sentenced to three years of supervised release, ordered to forfeit \$270,000 and fined \$1,000.

Seizing the property of NRIs who desert their wives is a welcome move

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) has written to the home ministry proposing changes to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) that will allow summons on the website of the MEA to be considered as legally tenable

There are too many instances of marriages between an NRI man and an Indian woman turning abusive and violent, and numerous cases in which the man has, shortly after the wedding, abandoned his wife. Stories of NRIs who abandon their wives but don't give up custody of children and husbands who seize the passports of their wives to prevent them from travelling to India are familiar to all of us. Once the woman is away from her familiar surrounding in a new country, it is often difficult for her to break the cycle of abuse. Also, owing to lack of awareness about legal options, fighting in the courts against unscrupulous men becomes tough for the families of the women. It comes as no surprise then that the government is considering

changes in the criminal law that will allow confiscation of the property of NRI men for deserting their wives and not responding to notices issued to them, women and child development minister Maneka Gandhi said on Monday. The ministry of external affairs (MEA) has written to the home ministry, proposing changes to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) that will allow summons posted on the website of the MEA to be considered legally tenable. At present, a woman has to file a complaint with the police who, in turn, get in touch with the embassies concerned. The mission then serves the summons to the accused. If three such notices have been served on the website and the offender doesn't respond, he'll be treated as an absconder. Enforcement agencies will then

have sanction to attach the property of such persons and their families.

The frequency of complaints from Indian women abandoned by their NRI husbands has reached alarming levels. A 2007 study estimated that 25,000 wives of NRIs had been deserted in Punjab alone. A paper published by the New Jersey based NGO, Manavi, said there were 12,000 abandoned women living in Gujarat in 2004. Although there is no consolidated data available with the government on the number of women who marry NRIs every year, on December 21, 2017, minister of state for external affairs minister, VK Singh, told the Rajya Sabha that Indian missions abroad had received 3,328 complaints from Indian women about marital disputes



with their NRI spouses since 2015. Of these, 3,268 were addressed by providing counselling to the women, and giving information about procedures, including on how to serve judicial summons to NRI husbands.

In an attempt to curb incidents of desertion of wives in a foreign country, the government is thinking of creating a nodal agency to look into problems faced in such marriages. Last year, an inter-ministerial panel formed under the chairmanship of retired Justice Arvind Goel, former chief of the NRI Commission of Punjab,

recommended that Aadhaar be made mandatory for registration of NRI marriages in India and the marriages be registered within a week of the ceremony. Modifications in the CrPC that provide a legal framework to ensure that such NRIs appear before law enforcement agencies are welcome. The State must back this up with other forms of legal and financial support for deserted wives. Bringing the men to book is one part of the solution. But families also ought to exercise greater diligence when arranging the wedding with an NRI groom.

Kejriwal's AAP must rise above its confrontationist image and deliver on its historic mandate

A certain ad-hocism, often bordering on recklessness, has frequently marred the AAP government's decision-making over the past three years



The Aam Aadmi Party, which rode to power on a landslide victory in Delhi, has completed three years in government. The new party had set a high benchmark for itself by promising a different brand of politics and governance. In government, AAP did think out-of-the-box in addressing the issues of public health and education

and delivered on the pro-poor promises of introducing consumption-based water and power tariffs. However, the much-vaunted governance has been mired in endless controversy over these three years. A certain ad-hocism, often bordering on recklessness, frequently marred the AAP government's decision making.

While the disqualification of 20 MLAs on the ground of holding an office of profit has been the most recent — and perhaps the biggest — setback, a typical lack of foresight has hampered government initiatives such as physical expansion of the mohalla clinic chain or procurement of public buses for the Delhi Transport

Corporation (DTC). The AAP's flagship mohalla clinic project, for instance, could have resurrected the ragtag primary healthcare machinery in Delhi and served as a template of reform for other Indian states.

The government had promised to open 1,000 such clinics in five years. Three years on, not more than 160 neighbourhood clinics are functional. A fleet of 5,000 buses, as promised in the party's 70-point election manifesto, could have gone a long way in solving the national capital's public transport woes. Increasing mass transit options is not a choice but a compulsion in a city whose people breathe the world's foulest air. Three years down, not a single bus has been added to the DTC fleet simply because the government could not float suitable tenders. And when the pollution levels peaked in November, the city administration responded with a high-decibel blame game.

Other key promises — opening canteens to sell subsidised food and making the toxic water of the Yamuna fit for bathing in three years — are now forgotten.

The never-ending face-offs with the lieutenant governor's office, the Centre and its own bureaucracy have not helped the AAP government's administrative efficiency or the delivery system. The government's image has also taken a hit for failing to find a way around predictable deadlocks. For many stakeholders, the nature, scale and background of the AAP's electoral triumph in 2015 heralded a potential watershed moment in India's politics. The party has only two more years to rise above its confrontationist, populist image and make the most of that historic mandate.

America is drowning in debt - maybe we should change our name from USA to ATM

In "Hamlet," Shakespeare pens one of the most familiar lines — and best advice — ever written. Before Laertes leaves for Paris, his father, Polonius, tells him: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be..."

We have ignored that advice for far too long, which is why the U.S. national debt is \$20 trillion with more to come, thanks to the Republican Congress, which has passed a two-year spending bill that calls for \$300 billion in new spending and removes caps applied by the Budget Control Act of 2011.

It's being sold to the public with the highest and purist motives. We need to support our "brave" men and women in uniform and repair our roads and bridges.

As Politico first reported, an audit revealed a Defense Department agency can't account for \$800 million targeted for building projects. Worse, if that's possible, the Defense Logistics Agency has no paper trail and can't tell auditors where the money went. And Congress is going to give them more.

As for infrastructure, wasn't the Obama "stimulus," otherwise known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, supposed to have fixed roads and bridges? It was more like a down payment because government never has enough of our money.

Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., spoke the truth when he held up passage of the budget bill. As reported by the New York Times, Paul said: "I want people to feel uncomfortable. I want them to have to answer people at home who said, 'How come you were against President Obama's deficits and then how come you're for Republican deficits?'"

Paul was the only Republican senator to vote against the measure which is expected to increase the debt to \$30 trillion over the next decade, when probably all of those in the Senate will be dead or gone and won't have to take responsibility for it.

In addition to providing more money for the military, some Republicans are claiming with a straight face that this massive new spending is needed to finish repeal of ObamaCare. No one can seriously believe that, especially with all of the additional pork that is undoubtedly added on to this bill in order to gain "bipartisan" support. So if it's bipartisan, it must be good, right? Spending may be the last bipartisan act in Washington.

President Trump says if there were more Republicans in Congress the new spending and increased debt would not have happened. Maybe.

It's helpful to remind these free-spending Republicans what our Founders warned about the dangers of debt.

James Madison said: "Debts and taxes are the known instrument for bringing the many under the domination of the few" and "I go on the principle that a public debt is a public curse."

Thomas Jefferson spoke to the dangers of a government drunk on out-of-control spending that leads to increasing debt: "To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must make our election between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude." Among the reasons empires and great nations have collapsed is public debt. Seeking to pacify the masses by never saying "no" to anything, politicians mortgage the future while preserving their current careers. Maybe America should change its initials from USA to ATM. To invoke singer/songwriter Don McLean in a different context and applying it to modern politicians: "They would not listen they're not listening still; perhaps they never will."

By Cal Thomas:

India should tread lightly in the Maldives

The Maldives crisis could be perfect opportunity for India, the US and other players to use the much vaunted Indo-Pacific strategy to find a solution to a regional problem.

President Abdulla Yameen of the Maldives has shown little regard for the world community's calls to roll back the emergency he imposed last week to cling on to power. The "China factor" seems to be a key reason for his bravado at a time when his opponents have been urging India to step in, militarily if required, to shore up the island nation's floundering democratic set-up. China, which has sizeable investments in the Maldives and accounts for more than 70% of the country's foreign debt, has repeatedly warned against any outside intervention and described the political crisis as an internal affair that should be resolved by the stakeholders. Beijing did, however, somewhat modify its stance on Friday by saying it is in the "common interest" of India and China to maintain stability in the Maldives — a tacit acknowledgement of New Delhi's role and influence in the region.

As things stand, the opposition in the Maldives is in no position to take on Mr Yameen, backed as he is by the military and the police force, and it is natural for leaders such as former president Mohamed Nasheed to turn to traditional ally, India. China may have poured millions of dollars into the Maldives, but there is a growing realisation among the polity that its presence isn't exactly benign. Some have even raised India's military intervention in the Maldives in 1988 while seeking action from New Delhi. But the situations are different. Thirty years ago, India had intervened to stop a coup by mercenaries, but the ongoing turmoil has Mr Yameen pitted against other Maldivian politicians and institutions. Therefore, a military operation may not be the ideal way to resolve the crisis and also ensure that democracy, however weak it may currently be, takes deeper roots in the Maldives.

There are some voices suggesting India hasn't done enough, or that it hasn't acted with alacrity. It would be better for India not to act in haste. Things have started moving in New Delhi, as was evident when Mr Yameen's special envoy was informed he needn't bother coming to India till the Maldivian president has addressed the world community's concerns about the undermining of democratic institutions and the judiciary. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump, in their latest phone conversation, made a pointed reference to concerns about the crisis. As the pieces fall into place, the Maldives crisis could be perfect opportunity for India, the US and other players to use the much vaunted Indo-Pacific strategy to find a solution to a regional problem.



ISSN No. 1554 06X

Chairman : Karam Singh Thind

President: Bhupinder Kaur Thind

Editor in Chief & Publisher : Sharanjit Singh Thind

Editor (Political Affairs-India) : Aruna Singh

Deputy Managing Editor : Max Thind

Contributing Writers: Navjot Kaur Thind, Sonia Gaba

Chief Photographer : Vijay Shah

Special Correspondent :

Photographers: Ruth Alvarez/Hamad

Gagandeep Singh (INDIA)

Editorial Intern: Roubin Singh Thind

Web Coordinator : Jatinder Kumar

A Publication of Media Partners Capital, Inc.

REGD & MAILING OFFICE :

P.O Box 7005 Hicksville New York 11801

Phone: 917 612 3158 TelFax : 516 342 1076

editor@thesouthasianinsider.com, thesouthasianinsider@gmail.com

www.thesouthasianinsider.com

Disclaimer The South Asian Insider is a weekly newspaper published every week by The South Asian Insider. It's available in community & religious centers, ethnic grocery stores and also available by mail, email & online to subscribers. The opinions, beliefs and viewpoints expressed by the various writers, authors and forum participants in The South Asian Insider do not necessarily reflect the opinions, beliefs and viewpoints of the Editor. All advertisers advertising in The South Asian Insider assume responsibility for accuracy of their advertisements. The South Asian Insider and/or people associated with it are not responsible for any claims made by the advertisers and don't endorse any product or services advertised in The South Asian Insider. We strongly urge consulting your lawyer before buying/contracting /hiring through the ads published in the newspaper. We are in the business of selling space and claims made by the advertisers are not authenticated or confirmed by an independent source

By reversing attractive policies, Trump is eroding America's soft power

In an information age, success depends not only on whose army wins, but also on whose story wins.

By Joseph S Nye

The evidence is clear. Donald Trump's presidency has eroded America's soft power. Only 30% of people recently polled by Gallup in 134 countries held a favourable view of the US under Trump's leadership, a drop of almost 20 points since Barack Obama's presidency. The Pew Research Center found that China, with 30% approval ratings, had reached near-parity with the US. And a British index, The Soft Power 30, showed America slipping from first place in 2016 to third place last year.

Trump's defenders reply that soft power does not matter. Trump's budget director, Mick Mulvaney, proclaimed a "hard power budget" as he slashed funds for the State Department and the US Agency for International Development by 30%. For promoters of "America First," what the rest of the world thinks ranks second. Are they right?

Soft power rests on attraction rather than coercion or payment. It co-opts people rather than coerces them. At the personal level, wise parents know that their power will be greater and will last longer if they model sound ethical values for their children, rather than relying only on spankings, allowances, or taking

away the car keys. Similarly, political leaders have long understood the power that comes from being able to set the agenda and determine the framework of a debate. If I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to force you to do what you do not want. If the US represents values that others want to follow, it can economise on sticks and carrots. Added to hard power, attraction can be a force multiplier. A country's soft power comes primarily from three sources: its culture (when it is attractive to others), its political values such as democracy and human rights (when it lives up to them), and its policies (when they are seen as legitimate because they are framed with some humility and awareness of others' interests.) How a government behaves at home (for example, protecting a free press), in international institutions (consulting others and multilateralism), and in foreign policy (promoting development and human rights) can affect others by the influence of its example. In all of these areas, Trump has reversed attractive American policies.

Fortunately, America is more than either Trump or the government. Unlike hard power

assets (such as armed forces), many soft-power resources are separate from the government and are only partly responsive to its purposes. In a liberal society, government cannot control the culture. Indeed, the absence of official cultural policies can itself be a source of attraction. Hollywood movies such as "The Post," which showcase independent women and Press freedom, can attract others. So, too, can the charitable work of US foundations or the benefits of freedom of enquiry at American universities. It is true that firms, universities, foundations, churches, and other non-governmental groups develop soft power of their own which may reinforce or be at odds with official foreign policy goals. And all of these private sources of soft power are likely to become increasingly important in the global information age. That is all the more reason for governments to make sure that their own actions and policies create and reinforce rather than undercut and squander their soft power. Domestic or foreign policies that appear hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to others' views, or based on a narrow conception of national interests can undermine soft power. For example, the



steep decline in the attractiveness of the US in opinion polls conducted after the invasion of Iraq in 2003 were a reaction to the Bush administration and its policies, rather than to the US generally. The Iraq War was not the first government policy that made the US unpopular. In the 1970s, many people around the world objected to the US war in Vietnam, and America's global standing reflected the unpopularity of that policy. When the policy changed and the memories of the war receded, the US recovered much of its lost soft power. Similarly, in the aftermath of the Iraq war, the US managed to recover much of its soft power in most regions of the world (though less so in the Middle East).

Skeptics might still argue that the rise and fall of American soft power does not matter much, because countries cooperate out of self-interest. But this

argument misses a crucial point: cooperation is a matter of degree, and the degree is affected by attraction or repulsion. Moreover, the effects of a country's soft power extend to non-State actors – for example, by aiding or impeding recruitment by terrorist organisations. In an information age, success depends not only on whose army wins, but also on whose story wins. One of the greatest sources of America's soft power is the openness of its democratic processes. Even when mistaken policies reduce its attractiveness, America's ability to criticise and correct its mistakes makes it attractive to others at a deeper level. When protesters overseas were marching against the Vietnam War, they often sang "We Shall Overcome," the anthem of the US civil rights movement. America, too, will almost certainly overcome. Given past experience, there is every hope that the US will recover its soft power after Trump.

The Centre's clampdown on cryptocurrencies betrays lack of understanding of the technology

The government's antagonistic approach towards this technology even as the US, Japan, and Russia contemplate the creation of state-backed cryptocurrencies could mean that we miss out on what has the potential to be the biggest wave of innovation since the internet became popular in 1980s

The income-tax department recently clamped down on cryptocurrency exchanges and investors due to fears that these currencies may be used to launder money. This is understandable: Cryptocurrency transactions are high-risk investments and their prices are volatile. Due to a lack of regulation, insider trading is widespread. Bitcoin crashed from an all-time high of \$20,000 in November to \$9,000 by mid-January.

However, this clampdown and the ministry equating digital currency investments to "ponzi schemes" shows a lack of understanding of digital currencies and blockchain, the technology behind it.

While it's an oversimplification, blockchain can be described as a way for people to share the extra space and computational power in their computers to create a global supercomputer that is accessible to everyone. In layman terms, blockchain does for computers what Uber and Airbnb do for drivers and homeowners respectively.

Bitcoin is the first successful application of blockchain technology. Every computer connected to the Bitcoin network is referred to as a node, and maintains an up-to-date copy of all transactions in the network. This is different from a bank, where only a trusted authority maintains

records. Mining of data, however, consumes massive amounts of energy to record transactions on to blockchain. The Bitcoin network is limited to less than 10 transactions per second. Visa in comparison can support 40,000 transactions per second. This raises questions around how big the platform can be. Companies like Rchain are building blockchain technologies that could support more than 50,000 transactions per second and solve this problem. Moreover, the near-zero transaction cost due to the removal of intermediaries could amount to trillions of dollars in

savings. The overall value of the global cryptocurrency market surpassed \$700 billion earlier this year. The trust verification technology of blockchain can further revolutionise multiple industries such as insurance, real estate and art. Tron, a startup working on a blockchain project, will let digital content creators have control and ownership of the data they create, including how it is distributed, cutting out intermediaries. With these impending innovations, it is not hard to envision a more evenly distributed economy in the future, in which every Internet user could receive micropayments for any

original data they share in the digital space such as ratings, reviews and blog posts. During his budget speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, indicated government interest in exploring possible blockchain applications. This is a positive. However, with several countries including the US, Japan, Russia, UAE and Saudi Arabia reportedly contemplating the creation of state-backed cryptocurrencies, and with Silicon Valley having already made significant investments into blockchain startups, India risks lagging behind on what has the potential to be the biggest wave of innovation since the Internet became popular in 1980s.

Friction between the US and China is likely to last through 2018

Here's the problem: Each side believes the other is more vulnerable. Trump officials believe that China needs continuous access to US markets to avoid a sharp economic slowdown that might provoke a political crisis. Chinese officials believe their president is much less vulnerable to pressure than Trump, who must listen to continuous complaints from US business leaders and face voters again soon enough



Ian Bremmer

In Davos and during his recent State of the Union address to Congress, Donald Trump made clear that he means to get tough with China. This US president has an “outdated cold war mentality,” responded China’s foreign ministry. Trade and investment relations between the world’s two largest economies are headed for trouble. Trump doesn’t want a full-scale trade war. Neither does Beijing. But even short of that, there is much damage that can be done.

Since announcing his presidential candidacy in 2015, President Trump has presented himself to US voters as the consummate maker of deals, a tougher, shrewder and a better defender of the American people than any past president, Democrat or Republican. He knows that his popularity, odds of re-election, and presidential legacy depend on his ability to promote the interests of voters who believe that trade competition has undermined their lives and livelihoods. In that arena, fast-rising China and its state-dominated economy have emerged as the ultimate adversaries.

Trump has begun to argue that economic security is national security. That’s his

warning to Beijing that righting the wrongs in US-Chinese trade and investment relations is his highest priority. His first moves will include announcements of trade enforcement actions and restrictions on Chinese investment in coming weeks. There will be continued discussion between Congress and the White House of how best to reform the process by which the US government approves proposals for foreign investment. Trump will also push Beijing to change rules that force US firms to transfer intellectual property (IP) to gain access to Chinese markets and to end IP theft. With these changes, Trump hopes to impose enough pain on China and Chinese companies to force Beijing to take US commercial complaints more seriously. He’ll begin with announcements of new tariffs and other restrictions on Chinese products entering the US. Only if these moves fail to win concessions will he threaten to make it more difficult for Chinese companies to operate and invest in the United States. These carefully calibrated measures are designed less to punish China than to push its negotiators to the bargaining table. China will respond first with criticism and defiance, but both will be limited to avoid unnecessary

provocation. President Xi will cast his government as a global leader in cross-border trade and investment and warn that Washington is headed down a dangerous protectionist path. China will certainly challenge US actions at the World Trade Organization.

He will also test the US pain threshold. US companies in many sectors will face new formal restrictions, but also audits, inspections, and other forms of bureaucratic assault that might move the US business community to pressure Trump to tread more lightly. In particular, each government will target the other side’s tech companies. Both sides have good reason to compromise. Xi Jinping will resist changes that prevent China’s government from providing subsidies for Chinese firms that can help build a modern, technologically dynamic Chinese economy. But nor will he try to weaken the Chinese currency for tactical advantage or order a sharp slowdown in the purchase of US Treasury bonds to up the ante. Both actions would be self-defeating. Instead, Xi will probably appeal to Trump directly with pledges to give US companies expanded access to Chinese markets without forcing them to share IP

and technology. Trump too has reason to compromise. He wants to win enough concessions from China to declare victory without jeopardising the strong economic numbers that he believes can bolster his popularity.

Here’s the problem: Each side believes the other is more vulnerable. Trump officials believe that China needs continuous access to US markets to avoid a sharp economic slowdown that might provoke a political crisis. Chinese officials believe their president is much less vulnerable to pressure than Trump, who must listen to continuous complaints from US business leaders and face voters again soon enough. The risk of conflict rises when each side believes it holds the stronger hand.

Don’t expect a quick resolution. Neither side wants to look weak, at home or abroad. US-China frictions will likely last through 2018. Given the importance of relations between the world’s most important rising and established powers—for China, the US, and the entire global economy—let’s hope that Donald Trump and Xi Jinping can find common ground with enough space for both to stand proudly.

In the 1970s, when I was growing up as a teenager in South India, earning for one’s livelihood was not a goal for girls and women of the middle class, not as much as it was for boys and men. While women were expected to get educated, the final objective was to get married, raise children, and be an amenable member of the husband’s family. Based on the affordability, women were also taught some form of fine arts – music, dance, painting, etc. but the education and arts were for the pride and joy of the family. If at all a woman earned outside of home, it was usually considered a hobby or a pastime, until she got married, at which point the husband and his family decided if it should continue or not. Women who were into professions were not many.

Today, we see and read about some of us Indian women shining as political leaders, reaching the highest rungs of the corporate ladder, and serving the world via our chosen professions. There are so many more choices open to us. And yet, the unspoken and implicit societal expectations of us are still that earning is a nice choice to have for women and not a primary goal or standard. Parents usually worry that their daughters are not married

Five Reasons for Women to Earn

or don’t have children. But they seldom fret that their girls are not financially independent adults. Parents are frequently concerned that their daughters want to study more, because finding equally matched spouses would be so much more difficult then. But they are often not bothered if the daughters show no interest in finding jobs and continue to live on their parents’ funds. Many husbands expect, accept and prefer that their wives stay at home as homemakers rather than carry on with their jobs outside of home.

Having been a single mom since my early thirties and now as a life coach to women in my sixties, my belief is that girls and women should have the aim of earning for themselves, for the following reasons:

1. Exercising our choices: Earning and financial independence gives us the choice of running our lives and our families in the manner we think fit. When we have to look at others for finance, it can constrain us to options that have to meet with the financiers’ approval, in small or larger things.

2. Assuming leadership during crises: The habit and practice of earning also gives us the confidence of facing crises. E.g. when parents or partners are unavailable due to death, disability, divorce, etc., we are able to take over the role of financial provider with greater mental comfort. We don’t need to succumb to becoming dependents. If we had to start earning late in life, with no previous experience of being the breadwinner, it could be traumatic.
3. Serving and connecting with the world: When earning comes in the form of a career or profession, we can serve the world not just for our own family but also the world. Many of us today choose to study and get qualified in specialized knowledge and skills that gives us an income by serving our clients and field of expertise.

4. Living as an adult in every way: Becoming an adult is about being physically independent, emotionally mature and financially self-sufficient. As normal adults we are required to be able to physically take care of ourselves. We are expected to make decisions, deal with our emotions

when things don’t go the way we want, and learn from our experiences. So why is earning enough to take care of our needs not considered necessary for us? Financial freedom is an important qualification for functioning as an adult. And this is not for men alone. It is for every human being, male or female. Earning is every adult man and woman’s fundamental right and responsibility.

5. Creating a self-identity: Last, but not the least, contributing financially to our own selves and to the family gives us a strong self-image as well as an identity that goes beyond being daughters, sisters, wives and mothers. We are entitled to this as much as men assume theirs. In spite of the above important reasons to earn and live financially independent, our familial systems are not always kind to women being employed external to the home. Even for the earners among us, earning on a continuous basis is not easy. When we get married, more often than not, it is we who have to give up on our jobs to move to a new city where the husband lives and



find another one. Since we are blessed with the responsibility of bearing children, we need the time and break to achieve that with comfort. Frequently the mother does the caring for children, so the earning aspect may have to be deprioritized for a period till the children are away at school or for our children’s physical and emotional well-being. These are just a couple of examples of the interruptions we face as earners.

How can we change this situation for our girls and ourselves? How can we normalize earning and yet be there for our families? Watch out for my next blogs for more on the challenges we face and how we can get them addressed.

By Janaki Chakravarthy

Nirav Modi: The billionaire jewellery designer was allegedly involved in the other Rs 280-crore fraud at PNB

(News Agencies) The Punjab National Bank (PNB) which is among country's top state-run banks was named as one of the beneficiary lenders under government's recapitalisation plan. The bank had got Rs 5,473 crore funds to support its weak balance sheet in the backdrop of high stressed assets.

On Wednesday, the bank through a filing informed the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) that it has discovered a huge scam at its Mumbai branch that has lost more than Rs 11,000 crore or \$1.77 billion roughly. As a result the shares of the banking company crashed as much as 10 percent on bourses that caused investors losing Rs 4,000 crore at the market close.

Earlier this month, the bank took up a bank fraud case involving Nirav Modi with the CBI which had booked the accused persons for cheating the PNB

in 2017. It is still not clear whether Wednesday's finding was in any way related to the discovery made in early February.

Here is a time line leading up to the Wednesday's developments in which Nirav Modi has emerged as the top accused.

One, earlier this month the Central Bureau of investigation had booked diamond merchant Nirav Modi, his brother, wife and a business partner for allegedly cheating the PNB of over Rs 280.70 crore in a case related to 2017

At that time, the CBI had conducted searches at as many as 21 places connected to Modi that included his residence, his brother Nishal, wife Ami and Mehul Chinubhai Choksi. All the persons are partners of Diamond R US, Solar Exports and Stellar Diamonds. Apart from these people, two bank

officials Gokulnath Shetty (now retired) and Manoj Kharat, were also made accused in the first information report (FIR), PTI had reported.

Two, the bank alleged a fraudulent issuance of Letters of Undertakings (LOU) took place on 16 January, 2018 for and on behalf of the accused firms. According to the complaint, the company had approached the bank and presented a set of import documents with a request to allow buyers' credit for making payment to overseas suppliers

Three, PNB claimed that its deputy manager (now retired), Gokul Nath Shetty, and Manoj Kharat had fraudulently issued the LoUs without following the prescribed procedure of obtaining request applications, documents and approval of authorities and without making any entries in the bank's systems. Fourth, the banks said



they fraudulently issued eight LOUs totalling \$4.42 crore, equivalent to Rs 280.70 crore, for Hong Kong-based branches of the Allahabad Bank and the Axis Bank. Fifth, the bank alleged that it was making an "in depth" inquiry to find out outstanding LOUs which were not detected in its system. "While tracing old entries, it transpired that buyer's credit based on fake LOUs might also have been paid through NOSTRO A/C," it alleged.

PNB 'fraudulent' transactions and role of Nirav Modi

All you need to know about the billionaire diamond jeweller



(News Agencies) The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday has received two complaints from Punjab National Bank (PNB) against billionaire jewellery designer Nirav Modi and a jewellery company regarding fraudulent transactions worth Rs 10,000 crore. Last week CBI booked Modi, his wife Ami, brothers and partners for cheating PNB of Rs 280.7 crore, a PTI report said.

The shares of the bank tumbled more than 8 percent after the fraud came to light, a PTI report said. In afternoon trade, PNB shares were trading at Rs 148, down by 14 points or 8.5 percent.

Here's all you need to know about the billionaire diamond jeweller:

What is the case about?
The CBI has acted on a complaint from the Punjab National Bank, which alleged that Modi, his brother Nishal, wife Ami and Mehul Chinubhai



Choksi - his uncle, all partners of Diamond R US, Solar Exports, Stellar Diamonds, were in conspiracy with officials of the bank and cheated it causing "wrongful loss", the officials said. The Indian Express had reported that the income tax department had raided over 50 offices and residential premises of Modi. The I-T department seized cash, jewellery and several documents that allegedly revealed tax evasion by his firms. Besides, the agency found bogus purchases and cash sales that were not recorded in the books of the firms, the IE report said.

Who is Nirav Modi
Nirav Modi is a 48-year-old

jewellery designer, who was often in the past described as India's billionaire diamond king in the media. In 2017, he was ranked 84 on the Forbes Richest List. Forbes magazine described him as the founder of the \$2.3 billion (in revenues) of Firestar Diamond. His current net worth is \$1.73 billion.

What did he want to do for a career

Though Modi hails from a family of diamond brokers in Antwerp, Belgium, the third generation scion was keen on a career in music. In an interview with Business World, Modi said he toyed with the idea of becoming a music conductor. His reasoning,

according to the interview, was music has the ability to move people and influence their thinking.

How he became a jeweller
In an interview with Business World, Modi said that his interest in jewellery designing was kindled when a friend requested him to design her a pair of earrings. Though he was reluctant initially to take up the request, he soon got down to doing it. His search for high-quality diamonds for the task ended up in Russia. "The utter delight and the happiness my friend expressed upon seeing the jewel was the impetus that I needed to get into this field," he said in the interview.

Following that Modi went to Wharton but dropped out and headed for India to get trained from his uncle in the diamond trade, Forbes said.

Nirav Modi jewellery outlets
In 2010, he established his internationally diamond jewellery house using his name for the brand. Modi has launched 16 stores in diverse locations such as Delhi, Mumbai, New York, Hong Kong, London and Macau, the Forbes magazine said.

The brand Nirav Modi is the only Indian brand to be featured on Christie's catalogue cover, according to MillionaireAsia which is featured on his website. His brand is worn by the likes of Hollywood celebrity Kate Winslett to Dakota Johnson and celebrity chef Massimo Bottura, to Aishwarya Rai and millionaire wives of corporates among others in India and abroad. Priyanka Chopra was signed as the brand ambassador since January 2017.

What he said about entrepreneurship

'Think outside the box - don't be afraid to take risks and be different', he said to Businessworld. Evidently, the 'risks' have not worked for him now as his role in the alleged fraudulent transactions in the Punjab National Bank shows

Indian Mujahideen terrorist Ariz Khan, accused of killing 165 people in various blasts, nabbed



immediately moved to the area near Banbasa Indo-Nepal border and laid a trap. Accused Ariz Khan was apprehended on February 13, at about 05.20 pm near Sharda Inter College, Banbasa, Nepal Road.

Junaid was the mastermind of deadly terror strikes in which about 165 people were killed and over 535 were injured. According to Pramod Kushwaha, DCP of Special Cell, a team was working on the leads gathered from the interrogation of the earlier arrested terrorist Abdul Subhan Qureshi, an Indian Mujahideen operative and other terrorist outfits; as well as the inputs provided by several secret sources deployed across the country.

During the past few months, inputs were received through different sources that absconded terrorists of IM/SIMI have set up their base in Nepal and are frequently visiting India to

indoctrinate unemployed youth among their community to fill the void left after the arrest of top leaders of Indian Mujahideen/SIMI. They have been planning the revival of the weak and scattered network of Indian Mujahideen. On November 17, 2007, some lawyers of Session Court, Lucknow, beat up three terrorists of Jaish-e-Mohammad while the terrorists were in police custody and prior to this incident, lawyers of UP courts had also refused to represent some persons who were arrested on terrorist charges. In order to teach lawyers of UP courts a lesson, they planted IED bombs at different places in the court. Subsequently, on 23 November, 2007, he along with his associates planted three IEDs at Varanasi court, two IEDs at Faizabad court and two IEDs at Lucknow court. IEDs at the Lucknow court were planted by him with his associate. They also

sent an e-mail to news channels five minutes prior to the blasts to claim responsibility for the attack by Indian Mujahideen. It was the first time that the Indian media came to know of the terrorist group. Prior to the Jaipur blasts, he along with Atif Ameen went to Udupi for collecting the explosives. At Udupi, Riyaz Bhatkal and Yasin Bhatkal met them at a hotel and gave them C-shape/boat shape structure and a large number of detonators. Mirza Shadab Baig went to Udupi for handing over ball bearings to Yasin Bhatkal for using the same for preparation of IEDs. Subsequently, he along with Atif Ameen and his other associates reached Jaipur some 10 days prior to the blasts. They reached Jaipur in three separate teams by Volvo buses which they boarded from Jodhpur House, Delhi. After conducting recce of their prospective targets, they returned to Delhi.

(News Agencies) On Wednesday, Delhi Police's Special Cell arrested an Indian Mujahideen (IM) terrorist Ariz Khan alias Junaid.

One of the most-wanted Indian Mujahideen terrorist Ariz Khan had a reward of Rs 15 lakh on him, the most for any Indian Mujahideen member. He has been involved in all major blasts carried out by the terrorist organisation.

Ariz aka Junaid had a reward

on his head of Rs 10 lakh by the National Investigative Agency (NIA) and Rs 5 lakh by the Delhi Police. Junaid is suspected chief executioner of serial blasts in Delhi, Jaipur and Ahmedabad in the year 2008 and UP Court blasts.

According to Special Cell, a specific information was received that Ariz Khan alias Junaid will be coming to UP from Banbasa Indo-Nepal border to meet an associate. A team of Special Cell

Steamy posters of Sunny Leone, Kim Kardashian put up by Andhra farmer to ward off evil



(News Agencies) It's a rather unusual way to ward off the evil eye. In a farm in Andhra Pradesh, sprouting up from a sea of green are not scarecrows that one would expect but instead are posters of Sunny Leone and Kim Kardashian.

Sunny Leone and Kim Kardashian? In Andhra Pradesh? On a piece of farm? You read correctly.

Forty-five-year-old Chenchu Reddy, a farmer from Banda Kindi Palle village in Andhra Pradesh's Nellore district, has taken a unique way to save his crops from

the evil eyes of both men and birds. Reddy has erected around half a dozen flexi posters of Leone and Kardashian in his 10-acre plot growing cabbage and cauliflower.

He hopes that these bikini-clad pictures of the stars would help divert the attention of villagers and passers-by from his bumper crop.

Accompanying the sultry photographs are cheesy lines such as "Don't look there [fields] but look here" and "Don't cry, look at me". Reddy's unique 'scarecrows' have taken social

media by storm. He's become an internet sensation overnight with many sharing the pictures of bikini-clad stars in the fields. In Andhra Pradesh, like in most parts of India, there is a tradition of putting the devil's face commonly called ara ghosha or disthi yantramu or disti bomma in farms, fields and even in under-construction houses. But Reddy seems to trust more on Leone and Kardashian's oomph factor rather than some vague diabolical effects of djinns and devils to ward off avaricious eyes of co-villagers.

Illegal registration of properties is a way of life in Delhi: HC

Delhi high court made the remark when the issue of illegal registration of commercial properties as residential ones was raised before it in the plea.



(News Agencies) Illegal registration of commercial properties as residential was a "way of life" in the national capital, the Delhi high court has observed while hearing a PIL alleging rampant corruption in the offices where properties are registered.

"Is it not a way of life here," a bench of acting chief justice Gita Mittal and justice C Hari Shankar asked when the issue of illegal registration of commercial properties as residential ones was raised before it in the plea, which also sought a CBI or SIT probe into the matter.

The court issued notice to the Delhi government, its Revenue, Service and Vigilance departments, the Anti-Corruption Branch, the CBI and the Controller of Accounts seeking their stand on the allegations made in the petition by a lawyer.

The petitioner has referred to a specific sub-registrar office at Asaf Ali Road in Old Delhi and alleged that the official there was accepting bribes to register commercial properties as residential ones, leading to a "huge loss of revenue" to the state exchequer. Petitioner RP Gupta has also alleged that such practices are probably prevalent in all the sub-registrar offices in Delhi.

He has claimed that despite several representations and complaints made against the alleged illegal activity in this, no action has been taken.



Thinking of Buying/Selling ?

Looking for Short Sale,
Bank Foreclosure Properties ?



We sell your home fast and for top dollar

(Serving Buyers/Sellers Since 2008)



Sharanjit Singh Thind

Associate Real Estate Broker/Notary Public

Give us a Call at 917-612-3158

India must continue to support Hasina, but should not write off Khaleda Zia

In Bangladesh, there is a growing perception of misrule by the AL government even though Hasina has done a lot for the economic and infrastructural development of the nation.

(News Agencies) On February 8, a special court in Bangladesh sentenced former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia to jail over the embezzlement of \$252,000 meant for an orphanage. Her son, Tarique Rahman, the acting head of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and four others — a former BNP MP, an ex-principal secretary to the PM, a nephew of Zia and a businessman — have also been convicted in the case.

The BNP has alleged that the corruption cases against Khaleda Zia are a political conspiracy by the ruling PM Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League (AL) government. While BNP's supporters may agree with this view, there's little doubt

that the Khaleda-Tarique combine headed a corrupt and extortionist government (2002-2006). Tarique and his younger brother (the late Arafat Rahman 'Koko') ran an extortion racket and a parallel government during Khaleda Zia's prime ministership. His business partner was also convicted of extortion and is in jail. Zia's home minister is in jail for arranging arms and ammunition from Pakistan for the Ulfa. Even Saudi Arabia has stated that Zia and her sons have invested billions of dollars in real estate in that country.

During Khaleda Zia's premiership, Bangladesh and Pakistan joined hands to subvert India's interests. Apart from

providing support to Indian insurgent groups in the Northeast, several Islamic extremist groups came into prominence, with the support of the Tarique clique and Pakistan. Tarique wanted to use these extremists to target the AL leadership and workers, while Pakistan wanted to use them against India.

In 2004, PM Hasina escaped a grenade attack at a rally in which several AL leaders and workers were killed, including the wife of the former president. Several BNP leaders were convicted for this attack. Tarique is an accused in this case too. Alleging that the conspiracy was hatched in Tarique's house, the prosecution is demanding death



penalty.

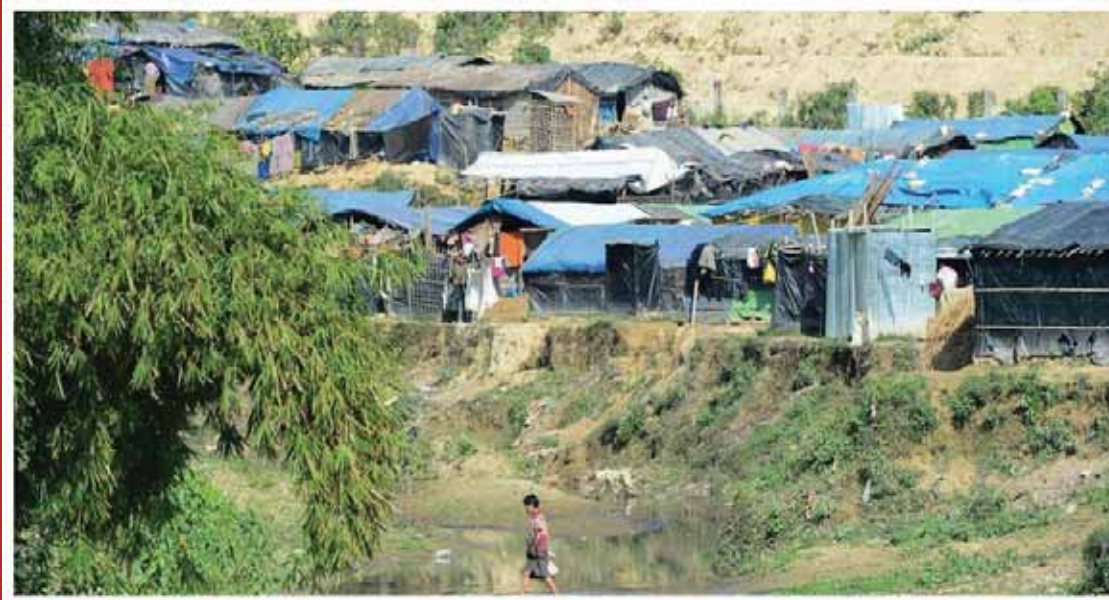
The BNP boycotted the last election but will not make the same mistake this time even though Khaleda Zia may be debarred from contesting. With Tarique unable to return to lead the party and its electoral ally Jamaat's top leadership executed for war crimes, a weakened BNP may not be able to put up much of a fight in the elections.

India has backed Sheikh Hasina

and must continue to do so, given the track record of the Khaleda-Tarique regime. But in Bangladesh, there is a growing perception of misrule by the AL government even though Hasina has done a lot for the economic and infrastructure development of the nation. So India must be prepared to deal with a BNP-Jamaat government in future and hope they would not commit the same mistakes vis-à-vis India once again.

(News Agencies) Myanmar has handed over to Dhaka a list of 508 Hindus and 750 Muslims, verified as its residents in the first batch of refugees to be repatriated from Bangladesh under the recent deal between the two governments, a top Myanmar diplomat has informed the UN Security Council.

This is part of the recent agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh to repatriate Rohingya refugees from the latter. More than 680,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh after Rohingya



November 23, 2017.

According to the Physical Arrangement, the repatriation process will commence on January 23, 2018, he said, adding that the returnees will be received at two reception centres, i.e Taung Pyo Letwe and Nga Khu Ya.

After one or two nights, the returnees will be temporarily accommodated at Hla Phoe Kaung transit camp before permanent settlement.

As initial step, Myanmar will receive 300 returnees (150 returnees per centre) a day to ensure smooth and safe return. The number shall be increased based on the progress of the return and shall be reviewed in three months. The number of transit camps and reception centres may be increased based on requirement as the repatriation process progresses, Suan said.

Refugee repatriation: Myanmar hands over list of 508 Hindus, 750 Muslims to Bangladesh

This is part of the recent agreement between Myanmar and Bangladesh to repatriate Rohingya refugees from the latter.

insurgents staged a series of attacks August 25 on the military.

Myanmar does not recognise the Rohingya as an ethnic group. The government says they are Bengali migrants from Bangladesh living illegally in the Buddhist-majority country. "In an effort to expedite implementation of the repatriation, Myanmar has provided to Bangladesh a list of 508 Hindus and 750

Muslims who have been verified as Myanmar residents, to be included in the first batch of repatriation," the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations Hau Do Suan told members of the UN Security Council during an open hearing on Rohingya refugees on Tuesday.

In addition, on January 30, Myanmar ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided Bangladesh side with information relating to

resettlement plan, provision of livelihood assistance, access to basic services, and safety arrangement for verified returnees, he said.

Suan said Myanmar and Bangladesh have made significant progress in their bilateral efforts for repatriation of displaced persons. Myanmar and Bangladesh had signed the MoU on the "Arrangement on Return of displaced Persons from Rakhine State" on







**Most Trusted
News Media Company
Serving South Asian Americans**

*The Only South
Asian American
Media Group that
Gives you Maximum Cost
Effective Reach*



*3 Million + Views on
YouTube & Half Million
fan like on Facebook*

**Email: sst@nuwaygroup.com
www.nuwaygroup.com
Phone: 917 612 3158**

Maldives crisis poses a security dilemma for India akin to Doka La, but with a devilish twist



7, Little, Brown publication).

There's no reason to think that China has stopped being the focal point of American interest following Bannon's ouster. Here's what US Senator Marco Rubio had to say before a Senate Select Committee on Intelligence hearing on Tuesday:

"The biggest issue of our time in my view, and I think in the view of most of the members of this Committee... is China and the risk they pose. I'm not sure in the 240-something-odd-year history of this nation we have ever faced a competitor and potential adversary of this scale, scope and capacity... They are carrying out a well-orchestrated, well-executed, very patient long-term strategy to replace the United States as the most powerful and influential nation on earth."

Senator Rubio also raised these concerns with the Director of National

Intelligence and Federal Bureau of Investigation, according to a media release.

This is not a measure of US paranoia but a check on a fast-dawning reality. The 19th Communist Party Congress gave us a ringside view of Xi Jinping's leadership, ideology and vision. In his speech, the Chinese president laid out granular details about how he wants to make China a "fully modern economy" by 2035 and a "great power" by mid-century. He wasn't bluffing.

These two perspectives, therefore, are necessary to contextualise the magnitude of the threat that China's assertive rise poses for India. To be clear, China considers India too insignificant to be perceived as a competitor but its philosophy of aggression driven by Xi's overarching ambition jeopardises India's strategic interests, undermines its regional

influence and poses a threat to its national security.

Nowhere has this tension played out more accurately than in Doka La and now in the Maldives.

In Doka La, China moved in to lay claim over a barren patch of land in the Himalayan tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan, ignoring bilateral and trilateral treaties and the tiny kingdom's sovereign claims. The move exposed India's strategic vulnerability in the Siliguri Corridor and New Delhi was forced to step in.

In the Maldives, military aggression has been replaced by economic coercion but the playbook is similar. In plain terms, through a combination of chequebook diplomacy and predatory economics, Beijing is doing an aggressive takeover of yet another South Asian nation to consolidate its hold on the Indian Ocean Region and strategically encircle India.

(News Agencies) In his book *Fire and Fury*, Inside the Trump White House, journalist and author Michael Wolff gives an interesting account of a private dinner which he attended on 3 January, 2017, around two weeks before Donald Trump was sworn in as president. The "small dinner arranged by mutual friends", as the author put it, was also attended by Steve Bannon, then among the most influential figures in United States' politics.

Trump and domestic

politics were obviously on the menu but Bannon focused on China, calling it "the real enemy" and the "first front in a new Cold War". The then executive chairman of Breitbart and soon-to-be chief strategist of Trump, Bannon apparently said: "China's everything. Nothing else matters. We don't get China right, we don't get anything right."

He went on to call Chinese the most "rational people" and compared Xi Jinping's China with Imperial Germany. (Page

Amid US pressure, Iran President Rouhani to seek investment during India visit

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani will arrive in India for a three-day visit on Thursday. He will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

(News Agencies) Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will be seeking billions of dollars of Indian investment during a visit to New Delhi, diplomats said, a trip that comes amid US pressure to review a 2015 international nuclear deal and re-impose sanctions on Iran.

India is trying to develop the port of Chabahar on Iran's east coast as a way to gain access the markets of central Asia as well as Afghanistan by by-passing arch-rival Pakistan.

But progress is slow because of concern that President Donald Trump's administration may eventually scrap the Iran nuclear deal.

Soon after the sanctions were lifted, India said its firms could spend as much as \$20 billion on not just the port but also

petrochemical plants, railway lines and other industries in the areas. But progress has only been made on the port.

Iranian officials say the slowdown is largely because India has become hesitant following Trump's attempts to undermine the Iran nuclear deal and that Rouhani would be urging India to make good on its commitments.

"There are a number of projects for expansion of ties in the pipeline that not only will be in the interests of both nations but also in the interest of the region," Iran's ambassador to India, Gholamreza Ansari, said in a national day speech last week.

Rouhani, who arrives in Hyderabad on Thursday, where he will address a Muslim congregation, will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on

Saturday.

The two sides are expected to sign an agreement allowing India to run operations in the first phase of the Chabahar port project.

The port is about 72 km from the Pakistani port of Gwadar, which China is developing.

The plan is for India to equip and operate two berths in the port with a capital investment of \$85.21 million on a 10-year lease.

Modi has said the government could spend up to \$500 million on the port, India's first major overseas port venture, as it tries to offer alternatives to China's One Belt One Road initiative to build trade and transport links across Asia.

But the uncertainty over US policies has cast a shadow over the project,



officials say.

India is struggling to get equipment such as cranes for the port because Western banks were not ready to facilitate transactions.

"They don't want to antagonise the US," said an Indian source involved in the port's development but who is not authorised to speak to the media.

"The banks' American interests are more important ... the moment you mention that THE destination is Iran they don't come forward."

Iran had hoped for swift reintegration into global trade after the easing of sanctions

in 2016 but its failure to persuade Western banks to accept Iranian business has been the main roadblock to rehabilitation.

Indian officials said the two sides were also trying to narrow differences over a giant gas field that an Indian consortium led by state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corp discovered a decade ago.

India wants to develop the Farzad B gas field but Iran says the terms it has offered are not profitable. A delegation from Iran's Pars Oil and Gas Company is holding talks.

Six Individuals Charged in \$7 Million International Investment Scam

(News Agencies) Charges were unsealed today in Houston, Texas, against six individuals for their alleged participation in an elaborate international advance fee and money laundering scheme. The scheme allegedly involved the impersonation of Branch Banking & Trust (BB&T) and JPMorgan Chase (Chase) executives, the fabrication of U.S. government documents, the creation of fraudulent investment agreements in the name of BB&T and Chase, and the purchase of luxury vehicles to launder the proceeds of the scheme.

Acting Assistant Attorney General John P. Cronan of the Justice Department's Criminal Division, U.S. Attorney Ryan Patrick of the Southern District of Texas, Special Agent in Charge Perrye K. Turner of the FBI's Houston Field Office and Inspector General Steve A. Linick for the U.S. Department of State made the announcement.

Uju Okigbo, 48, of Richmond, Texas; Chioma Okafor, 28, of Houston, Texas; Marita Rananan Underwood, 61, of Manila,

Philippines; John Christian Rutledge, 64, of Yaphank, New York; and Osa May Martin, 68, of Carthage, Missouri, were charged in an indictment unsealed today in the Southern District of Texas. All five defendants were charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud. Okigbo and Okafor were also charged with one count of conspiracy to launder monetary instruments, as well as two counts each of wire fraud and two counts each of concealment money laundering. Okigbo is also charged with three counts of engaging in transactions with proceeds of specified unlawful activity, and one count of aggravated identity theft for impersonating a U.S. banking executive. Underwood, Rutledge and Martin are also charged with one count of conspiracy to wrongfully use government seals. Okigbo was already in custody as of today. Martin made her initial appearance this afternoon in front of a U.S. magistrate judge in Springfield, Missouri, and Rutledge is scheduled to make his initial appearance.

A sixth individual, Tiffany Sourjohn, 47, of Miami, Oklahoma, was charged by an information with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and wrongful use of government seals, which was also unsealed today. Sourjohn made her initial appearance this morning and entered a guilty plea to the information in front of Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ewing Werlein Jr. of the Southern District of Texas.

According to the charging documents, the scheme involved fraudulent offers of investment funding by perpetrators primarily living in Nigeria who impersonated U.S. bank officials and financial consultants over the Internet and over the phone. Victims in various countries were deceived into believing they would receive millions of dollars of investment funding as part of joint ventures with U.S. banks, usually BB&T or Chase. The perpetrators utilized false domain names to make it appear that senders of emails were actually affiliated with BB&T or Chase. To convince

victims that the opportunities were authentic, the perpetrators recruited U.S. citizens to pose as bank "representatives" at in-person meetings with victims around the world, and, if occurring abroad, utilized sham visits to the local U.S. embassy or consulate and fabricated U.S. government documents to make the victims believe the U.S. government was sponsoring the investment agreements. The victims were then allegedly induced to pay tens of thousands, and often hundreds of thousands, of dollars to U.S.-based bank accounts on the belief that such payments were necessary to effectuate their investment agreements.

According to the charging documents, to ensure the proceeds made it back to Nigeria, after victims wired in funds, money movers who controlled the U.S. bank accounts liquidated the proceeds through outgoing wire transfers to exporters, cash withdrawals and purchases of vehicles, including luxury brands such as Land Rover and Mercedes Benz, which were then

shipped to Nigeria. According to the charging documents, Okigbo and Okafor were primarily money movers in the scheme, while Underwood, Rutledge, Martin and Sourjohn were representatives.

The scheme allegedly resulted in losses of more than \$7 million from victims in more than 20 countries. To date, a house in Richmond, a 2014 Land Rover Range Rover, and approximately \$200,000 in cash, all directly traceable to victims' payments, have been seized. The charges in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. The case was investigated by the FBI and Department of State Office of Inspector General. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney William E. Johnston of the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Suzanne Elmilady of the Southern District of Texas. Forfeiture is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Kristine Rollinson of the Southern District of Texas.

Former President and CEO of Pennsylvania Health Services Company Indicted for Conspiring to Defraud the IRS and Filing False Tax Returns Allegedly Deducted Cost of Building Home as Business Expense



(News Agencies) The former President and CEO of a Pennsylvania health services management company was indicted by a federal grand jury in Pittsburgh yesterday for conspiring to defraud the United States and filing fraudulent income tax returns, announced Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Richard E. Zuckerman and U.S.

Attorney Scott W. Brady for the Western District of Pennsylvania. According to the indictment, Joseph W. Nocito was CEO and President of Automated Health Systems Inc. (AHS), a Pittsburgh-based company that administered public health programs for state and local governments. The indictment alleges that Nocito conspired with others to defraud the

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) by fraudulently claiming millions of dollars of personal expenses as corporate business expenses – including the construction of his 39,000 square-foot home in Sewickley, which Nocito referred to as "Villa Noci," payments on a Jaguar, Maserati, and Rolls Royce, a personal butler and cook, and country club memberships. Nocito is also charged with

understating his income on his personal tax returns by not reporting the income he diverted for personal expenses.

The indictment further alleges that Nocito concealed millions in taxable profits of AHS by shuffling millions in payments between AHS and other companies Nocito owned, such as Northland Properties, Golden Triangle Leasing, Management Financial Services, in order to fraudulently deduct the payments as business expenses and reduce the tax liability of AHS. Nocito is accused of falsely characterizing these payments as management, administrative and consulting expenses, and in turn fraudulently deducting the payments on corporate tax returns filed with the IRS.

Nocito faces a statutory maximum sentence of five years in prison on the

conspiracy charge and three years in prison on each count of filing a fraudulent tax return. He also faces a period of supervised release, restitution and monetary penalties. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed is based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the criminal history, if any, of the defendant. An indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Zuckerman and U.S. Attorney Brady praised special agents of IRS Criminal Investigation, who conducted the investigation, and Assistant U. S. Attorneys Gregory C. Melucci, Mary M. Houghton and Nelson P. Cohen and Trial Attorney Jeffrey B. Bender of the Tax Division, who are prosecuting the case.

PHOTOS: AGENCIES AND VIDEO GRABS



Students rush out of the school in panic. (Right) Police and emergency services at the site of the incident.



THE WORST SHOOTINGS IN U.S. SCHOOLS

- Benton, Kentucky, Jan 23, 2018: **2 killed**
- Aztec, New Mexico, Dec 7, 2017: **2 killed**
- Roseburg, Oregon, Oct 1, 2015: **9 dead**
- Newtown, Connecticut, Dec 14, 2012: **26 killed**
- Oakland, California, Apr 2, 2012: **7 killed**
- Chardon, Ohio, Feb 27, 2012: **3 killed**
- Huntsville, Alabama, Feb 12, 2010: **3 killed**
- Dekalb, Illinois, Feb 14, 2008: **5 killed**

THE teen, who shot dead 17 people at a Florida high school is believed to have set off fire alarms to draw people out into the halls before he opened fire — and then managed to evade police by pretending to be one of the terrified students running for cover.

Nikolas Cruz, 19, stormed Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland on Wednesday afternoon armed with an

FLORIDA MASSACRE

Expelled teen set off fire alarm so he could draw students out before opening fire, killing 17 in school

assault rifle. He was taken into custody off the school campus about an hour after the shooting broke out. Broward Sheriff Scott Israel said Cruz was a former student at the school but had been expelled for unknown 'disciplinary reasons' last year.

Cruz was armed with at least one AR-15 rifle, had 'multiple magazines' and smoke grenades when he stormed the school wearing a gas mask and killed 17 students and staff. The first of the 17 victims have now been identified as 46-year-old athletic director Chris Hixon and student Jaime Guttenberg. According to Local 10 News, her parents Fred and Jennifer Guttenberg said she died in the shooting, while their son, Jesse, made it home.

'Mental state deteriorated after mother died of flu'

Investigators are now looking into whether Cruz may have pulled the fire alarm to draw people into halls so he could get a higher death toll. A number of students have said they thought they heard the fire alarm right before the first shots were fired and many were in the process of evacuating. The school had already had a fire drill earlier that day, leaving many of the students confused.

"People were halfway down the stairwell, it just stopped, the alarm stopped. We heard gunshots coming from the first floor... and people were running upstairs. We all got upstairs and into our classroom. As my teacher was closing the door, he was actually shot and killed right there," a student named Alex said.

Daily Mail



Jaime (above) was one of those killed after Nikolas (top) went on a shooting spree.



SCHOOLMATES RECALL KILLER'S VIOLENT NATURE



STUDENTS have described the 'violent' past of Nikolas Cruz amid an outcry over how he was able to go on the rampage at a Florida school. Cruz, 19, is suspected of murdering 17 in the horrific Valentine's Day attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

It emerged the teenager was banned from carrying a backpack on campus prior to being expelled and had already been identified as a potential threat long before the rampage. One pupil revealed they 'knew it was going to be him' and others said he had 'always been very violent' and had become 'progressively more weird'.

As a high school freshman, Cruz was part of the US military-sponsored Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corp program at the school. Sources told CNN that the gunman pur-



Nikolas used to post disturbing images on social media.

chased the rifle in the past year and passed a required background check to obtain it. Dakota Mutchler, a 17-year-old junior, said he used to be close friends with Cruz but hadn't seen him in more than a year following his expulsion.

Daily Mail

FOLLOWING the Florida school shootout by an ex-student who was crazy about guns, senior American journalist Jeff Greenfield wrote on Twitter: In the rest of the world, there have been 18 school shootings in the last 20 years. In the US, there have been 18 school shootings since January 1 — 45 days.

Little over four months ago, the US wit-

nessed its deadliest mass shooting at Las Vegas at a concert. At least 58 were killed. Records show about 12,000 Americans were killed by guns in 2017. The October 3 Las Vegas shooting was recorded as the 273rd mass shooting of the year — one incident a day till date.

On an average, more than 90 Americans are killed in gun violence every day.

India Today



As we complete 15 Years

“Words cannot express the monumental journey that each and every person reading this has crossed through. The South Asian Insider has completed fifteen year journey, that has brought a wave of information and has amassed everyone together in this community. Few people can claim to have been a part of a tireless effort to soar through the top of the skies of the newspaper industries and be able to remark on it, 15 years later. We believe an order of gratitude is granted to all of you. To everyone who has stayed with The South Asian Insider through our path, thank you.

If it was not for each and every one of you today who have supported our endeavours to become a reliable source of information, we would not have been able to voice our appreciation today. We as a family will continue to move forward with every article printed, with every word typed and with every voice incorporated into the publication that has stood to uphold the value of information and knowledge. Because with each idea shared, we as a community continue to move forward. And to all, thank you for sharing this achievement with all of us here today, working towards a new tomorrow.”

**-Sharanjit Singh Thind
Editor In Chief & Publisher**



The **ONLY** temple in the world outside India
dedicated to Shri Shani Maharaj

Shri SHANI DEV Mandir, New York

Sarvamangala Shri SANEESWARA Temple, New York

Regular Poojas' and Homas' are conducted on daily basis:

Special Poojas:

- + Sri Saneeswara homam
- + Sri Saneeswara - parikara pooja
- + Sri Saneeswara harati
- + Sri Navagraha Homa
- + Poornima: vrata Pooja
- + Pradosham Pooja
- + Sri Sankatahara chaturthi Pooja
- + Sri Satyanarayana Vratha
- + Birthdays / Weddings / Upanayanam & More... ..



**1616 Hillside Avenue, Temple Suits
New Hyde Park NY 11040**
Ph: 718 740 9400 / 516 358 9400
Email: temple.navagraha@gmail.com

Temple Hours: 8.00 am to 9.00 pm

The Temple entrance is in the western side parking lot behind Hot Breads & Maharajas in New Hyde Park NY

Functions of the space:

*Temple / Community Events / Senior Social Day Care Center /
Art & Music School / Library / Spiritual Lounge / Gift Shop*

www.NavagrahaUSA.com

(News Agencies) Chinese spies are infiltrating US universities as part of the country's bid to become the dominant global superpower and undermine America's military, economic and cultural power, FBI Director Chris Wray has warned. Wray's comments came during the Senate intelligence committee's annual open hearing on the greatest threats to the country. The hearing was told China is trying to gain access to sensitive U.S. technologies and intellectual properties



called China's 'all of society' approach toward gaining access to technology and intellectual property. Republican Senator Richard Burr, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he worried about the spread in the United States of what he called 'counterintelligence and information security risks that come prepackaged with the goods and services of certain overseas vendors.' 'The focus of my concern today is China, and specifically Chinese telecoms (companies) like Huawei (Technologies Co Ltd) and ZTE Corp, that are widely understood to have extraordinary ties to the Chinese government,' Burr said. Chinese firms have come under greater scrutiny in the United States in recent years over fears they may be conduits for spying, something they have consistently denied. A Huawei spokesman said the company is aware of 'U.S. government activities seemingly aimed at inhibiting Huawei's business in the U.S. market.' He also said the firm is trusted by governments and customers in 170 countries and poses no greater cyber security risk than other vendors. ZTE officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China is using its students and professors at US colleges to SPY on America

FBI Director warns, as it bids to become the world's dominant superpower

through telecommunications companies, academia and joint business ventures. The last decade has seen a huge increase in the number of young Chinese seeking a college education in the West; 329,000 now study in the United States, more than five times the number recorded in 2007. Wray was asked by Florida Senator Marco Rubio about 'the counterintelligence risk posed to U.S. national security from Chinese students, particularly those in advanced programs in science and mathematics.' 'The reality is that the Chinese have turned more and more to more creative avenues using non-traditional collectors (of information),' Wray said. 'The use of non-traditional collectors, especially in the academic setting—whether it's professors, scientists, students—we see in almost every field office that the FBI

has around the country, 'They're exploiting the very open research-and-development environment that we have, which we all revere, but they're taking advantage of it.' International students are welcomed with open arms by most cash-strapped colleges, since they usually pay full tuition and they can provide a healthy dose of international diversity. And Director Wray said this only added to the problem. 'It's not just in major cities. It's in small ones as well, it's across basically every discipline. And I think the level of naivete on the part of the academic sector about this creates its own issues,' he said. Wray insisted the United States needed a more 'strategic perspective on China's efforts to use acquisitions and other types of business ventures.' One of the things we're trying to do is view the China threat

as not just a whole of government threat, but a whole of society threat on their end... And I think it's going to take a whole-of-society response by us', he said. Dan Coats, the Director of National Intelligence, said he had no doubts China was trying to usurp the US as the world's most dominant superpower. 'There is no question (that) is what's happening with China,' he said. 'They're doing it in a very smart way. They're doing it in a very effective way. They are looking beyond their own region.' The damning assessment of the two security chiefs adds weight to President Trump's view in December that China and Russia are the biggest 'rival powers' to the United States. Despite enjoying a successful visit to meet President Xi Jinping in Beijing in November, Trump's release of the administration's national security blueprint referred to China as a 'strategic

competitor' as well as a 'revisionist power' in the document in an acknowledgement that it is a political, economic, military and informational powerhouse. The document made the case that the U.S. 'is under threat by the serious intellectual property theft that's going on by the Chinese and other actors.' Several of the U.S. spy agency chiefs testified at yesterday's committee hearing cited concerns raised by what they



Nirav Modi, man at the centre of PNB fraud, left India with family in first week of January

(News Agencies) Billionaire jewellery designer Nirav Modi had left the country on January 1 much before the CBI received a complaint from Punjab National Bank on January 29 about a Rs 280-crore fraud, officials said. His brother Nishal, a Belgian citizen, also left the country on January 1, while wife Ami, a US citizen, and business partner Mehul Choksi, the Indian promoter of Gitanjali jewellery chain, departed on January 6, the officials said. The agency issued a look

out circular against all the four after registering the first FIR against them, they said. A look out circular is issued by enforcement agencies to all exit and entry ports to inform them about the movement of an accused. Modi, who is believed to be in Switzerland, was also present in a group photo of Indian CEOs with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, issued by the Press Information Bureau, in World Economic Forum on January 23, six days before the bank sent its first complaint against him to the

CBI, according to the officials. The diamantaire is an India citizen but his brother Nishal and wife Ami are not Indian nationals, the officials said. Nirav Modi, a regular feature on the lists of rich and famous Indians since 2013, was booked by the CBI, along with wife, brother and business partner Choksi on January 31, for allegedly cheating the state-run Punjab National Bank to the tune of Rs 280 crore. The bank has sent two more complaints to the CBI on Tuesday, saying the scam was worth more than Rs 11,400 crore.



What's the truth behind the Aexact case?

On the surface it appears to be a perfectly innocuous matter. A company that claims to be a software exporter is accused of being in the business of selling fake degrees online and making more money than anyone else from legitimate software exports. The company argues that it is the victim of a malicious campaign by its competitors and pleads not guilty to charges against it.

One by one, all the cases it faces start to stall, evidence is not presented, prosecutors refuse to try the case and judges refuse to hear it. Then the acquittals come, in all but one case. The company claims that it stands vindicated and aggressively pursues the last remaining case, arguing that since it is based on the same charges, with the same complainant as those in which the acquittals have come, continuing to try the case amounts to trying someone twice for the same charge.

Just then, one of the company's executives is arrested in the United States on charges of being part of a large conspiracy to commit wire fraud through misrepresentation online, and of being a key member of an organised ring that sells fake degrees from Pakistan. The executive initially decides to fight the case and some of the best legal help is provided to him through parties unknown. Then suddenly he changes his mind and pleads guilty, accepts a lower sentence and is sent to jail.

The company in question is Aexact and the state's attempt to prosecute it on charges of selling fake degrees has turned into a giant mystery. Dig a little deeper and strange things are seen happening. Two prosecutors resign abruptly, leaving behind cryptic statements as the reason. Multiple judges recuse themselves from hearing the case.

One of the investigators from the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) tells the media that he was abducted from his car, taken to an unknown location, badly roughed up and told to abandon his efforts at digging deeper into the data on Aexact's servers, which had been seized by his agency during initial raids on the company's headquarters. A grenade is thrown into the house of one of the prosecutors precisely when he is involved in discussions with the Ministry of Interior regarding the filing of appeals against the acquittals. A few prosecution witnesses, who recorded their testimony in court, disappear. Media reports from Canada and the United Kingdom emerge saying that many people have been found working in all professions, including highly sensitive ones like pediatric care, who have obtained their degrees from fake online universities that, they claim, are ultimately controlled from Aexact's

offices.

And the list goes on. Beneath the surface of the case, there is a bubbling cauldron of strange happenings: whoever gets too close to the case can land in trouble. The interior ministry has twice tried to conduct an inquiry to discern what exactly is happening, and both times the inquiry has gone silent. The last special public prosecutor did not last on the case for more than a few months, and it is now in the hands of a low level, in-house lawyer from the FIA.

Meanwhile, the stacks of material gleaned from the company's servers lie gathering dust in the FIA's offices, and reports from abroad mount, claiming that years after the first raids on its offices the company has resumed its business all over again. The truth, whatever it may be, needs to be told on this matter. The only question is, who will do the telling?

All about the Guptas, a family at the heart of South Africa's Zuma crisis



Guptas, known to be friends of president Jacob Zuma, have been accused of wielding influence in South Africa by bagging business deals to promote their interests. As pressure mounts on the Gupta family, they reportedly plan to move their base to Dubai.

A politically-connected business dynasty that moved to South Africa from India, the Gupta family finds itself at the centre of many of the scandals that have dogged President Jacob Zuma's administration.

A day after the ruling ANC ordered Zuma out of office, the Guptas' prominent role in his presidency was highlighted on Wednesday as elite crime-busters raided the family's mansion in Johannesburg.

Who are the Guptas?

The family is headed by Ajay, Atul and Rajesh ("Tony") Gupta, three brothers from the Uttar Pradesh.

Led by Atul, they arrived in

South Africa in 1993 as white-minority apartheid rule crumbled, a year before Nelson Mandela won the country's first democratic elections.

As the country opened up to foreign investment, the Guptas — previously small-scale businessmen in India — built a sprawling empire involved in computers, mining, media, technology and engineering.

The New Age, an ardently pro-Zuma newspaper, was launched in 2010, and the 24-hour news channel ANN7 took to the airwaves in 2013 with a similar editorial slant. They had developed close links with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party focussing particularly on Zuma, well before he became president in 2009. What ties the Guptas to Zuma?

Zuma's son Duduzane was a director of the Gupta-owned Sahara Computers, named after their hometown of

Saharanpur, and has been involved with several of the family's other companies.

Zuma's third wife Bongie Ngema and one of his daughters have also been in the employ of the Guptas.

Former deputy finance minister Mcebisi Jonas claimed in March 2015 that the Guptas had offered him the post of finance minister, in return for obeying the family's instructions — for which he would allegedly be paid 600 million rand (\$50 million).

Backbench ANC lawmaker David van Rooyen was then revealed to have visited the Guptas' home the night before his brief appointment as finance minister on December 9, 2015.

Both the Guptas and Zuma, who has described the brothers as friends, deny any wrongdoing.

ied in knots

Perhaps one of the most colourful Gupta-linked incidents related to a family

wedding in 2013.

Public anger erupted after it was revealed that a jet carrying 217 foreign guests to a Gupta wedding landed at Waterkloof Air Force base, outside Pretoria.

The airport is a military facility normally used for receiving heads of state.

It appeared that Zuma, who was the guest of honour, had tacitly approved the decision, which breached air force and customs and immigration rules.

There were also allegations that the law was broken when the guests were given a police "blue light" escort. What about their businesses?

The Gupta business empire has been repeatedly accused of securing deals with South Africa's giant state-owned companies on wildly favourable terms.

South Africa's ethics watchdog, the Public Protector, published a damning report in October 2016, finding that the state-owned electricity monopoly had awarded a massive coal order to a then-Gupta linked business at well above market prices.

The report also alleged that former mining minister Mosebenzi Zwane "travelled to Switzerland with the Guptas to help them seal the deal" to buy a struggling coal mine.

The family is mentioned 232

times in the report, entitled "State of Capture" because of the influence that the Guptas are alleged to have exerted on some branches of the state.

What now?

In recent years, major banks have withdrawn their facilities to the Gupta family, complicating the payment of salaries to staff and the day-to-day running of a complex, cash-intensive business empire.

Thought to be the last major bank to continue its relationship with the Guptas in South Africa, Bank of Baroda recently announced it would withdraw from the country, effectively ending its association with the controversial family.

They also face the prospect of a judge-led inquiry into their business dealings, as recommended by the public protector's report.

Life after South Africa?

One of the biggest scandals in South Africa is over a scheme that allegedly siphoned millions of dollars from a black-empowerment agriculture project.

Further arrests in this case could spell the end for the family's foothold in South Africa, commentators predict. Since pressure began to mount on the Guptas, they have been reported to be moving their base to Dubai.

Indian cities can learn from New York City's BIDs

Business Improvement Districts or BIDs have been successful because of hyper-local action, led primarily by small businesses and supported by the residents



At the first meeting of the Special Purpose Vehicle for Bengaluru's Smart City Plan held last month, the mayor raised a pertinent query – 'What is the purpose of the Area Based Development (ABD) boundary requirement in the Smart City scheme?' Across the Smart City plans, the size and location parameters for ABD vary vastly, and seem quite random.

Contrast this with another boundary that is evolving for urban redevelopment - the Business Improvement District, or BID.

Bryant Park is a 10-acre quintessential city park located in the heart of New York City, right across from the New York Public Library. Like the more famous Central Park, it, too, is considered a Manhattan landmark. But this was not always the case. During the 1970s, ridden by incidents of crime, rape, and drug dealings, Bryant Park was notorious. It was popularly known as "Needle Park".

In fact, several attempts to close down Bryant Park failed, until finally a revival of the park was undertaken, led by stakeholders outside

government. With initial funding from the Rockefeller Brothers, the design and transformation of the park was nothing short of spectacular. Today, Bryant Park is the jewel in the neighbourhood, a pride of the community and local businesses, boasting vibrant economic activity and land values.

Bryant Park is now managed by a private not-for-profit company called the Bryant Park Corporation (BPC), financed entirely by private funds — largely from local merchants, property owners, and philanthropists. The project demonstrates the direct link between the revival of public space, community benefits, and economic interest. At the heart of this transformation is a new kind of public-private partnership called 'Business Improvement Districts' or BIDs.

A BID is a defined area where local business and property owners pay an additional tax or fee to fund projects within the BID boundary. BIDs identify highly localised goals and shared priorities of the BID area, without disturbing the larger municipal planning and delivery

framework. While the city continues to provide regular services, the BID community may allocate their funds towards their own priorities — capital improvement priorities such as waterfronts, public spaces, parks, and public toilets, or towards improvement in civic services such as traffic management, more frequent garbage removal, parking systems, and public safety. Currently there are over 1000 BIDs across America's cities. New York itself has over 75 BIDs, including more than 30% of all retail business, and 50% of all office space in the city. Mayor Bloomberg had this to say about the impact of BIDs, "Business Improvement Districts represent public-private partnerships at their very best. Time and again, they have proven effective in revitalising neighbourhoods and improving business conditions in commercial districts — injecting vitality into the community." The idea has gained significant traction in other countries like the UK, Canada and South Africa. And the list is growing.

The success of BIDs is because it is a hyper-local

action, led primarily by small businesses and supported by the residents. The compact boundary of BIDs helps in finding consensus around local priorities, as well as the best means to achieve these priorities within a reliable timeframe. BIDs create a unique opportunity for leadership and collaboration across the polity — government, business, and citizens — born of enlightened self-interest. Most importantly, they tap into much needed money, skill and management capacities to address civic challenges.

Can BIDs work in India? India's cities don't have a hundred thousand problems; they have a hundred problems repeated a thousand times. However, each solution must be situation-specific needing local adaptation. What works in Mumbai will not work in Meerut (indeed, what works in Chandni Chowk is unlikely to work in Lajpat Nagar). Solutions will only be effective when they are locally defined, designed, and implemented. Cities today are the wastelands of unkept government promises. With most municipalities starved of

funds and all bereft of qualified resources, it is clear that municipal authorities by themselves cannot solve our problems. Instead of just talking about issues at a 100,000 feet, BIDs offer credible on-the-ground action for at least some of our pressing challenges.

BIDs don't work in every location. Clearly, there must be substantial economic presence of retail and commercial owners to engage in action. But such engagement can release government resources for other deserving areas. From an operational standpoint, the success of BIDs is dependent on well-defined institutional structures, representation and procedures, functioning with the utmost transparency. It is also dependent upon the buy-in from a majority of residents and local businesses in the defined area.

BID is neither an idea we can rush to embrace, nor the panacea for all the challenges that our cities face. But it provides cities a much-needed hyperlocal spatial focus and the ability to revitalise neighbourhoods. Hopefully, some smart states will pilot BIDs within the ABD plans of their smart cities.



Netanyahu says govt 'stable' after police recommend his indictment for corruption

Netanyahu is facing the biggest challenge to his long tenure in office after police recommended on Tuesday that he be indicted for bribery

(News Agencies) Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday his government was "stable" and criticised the police investigation against him after detectives recommended his indictment for corruption, prompting calls for him to resign. "I can reassure you that the coalition is stable," Netanyahu said at an event in Tel Aviv, again making clear he had no intention of resigning. "Neither me nor anyone else has plans for elections. We're going to continue to work together for the good of Israeli citizens until the end of the term." Netanyahu, prime minister for a total of nearly 12 years, denounced the police recommendations against him as "full of holes, like Swiss cheese." He said the police report "misleads" and is "contrary to the truth and logic." Netanyahu is facing the biggest challenge to his long tenure in office after police recommended on Tuesday that he be indicted for bribery, fraud and breach of public trust. The attorney general must now decide how to move forward with the case, a process that could take months. A prime minister facing such police recommendations or who has been formally charged is not obliged to resign.

India overtakes UK in defence spending, China remains a major challenger: Report

India has the fifth largest defence budget in the world, at \$52.5 billion in 2017 (\$51.1 billion in 2016), overtaking the UK whose defence budget fell from \$52.5 billion in 2016 to \$50.7 billion in 2017.



overtaking the UK in defence spending, Roy-Chaudhury said: "This indicates a shift in the India-UK military power balance in the transition towards Brexit, whereby India is focusing more on developing military resources regionally than the UK is globally."

(News Agencies) India has overtaken the United Kingdom in defence spending and broken into the top five, but faces considerable lag in comparison to China, which is increasingly challenging Western dominance, a new report on military balance said on Wednesday. The annual report by the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) sees China and Russia challenging the global dominance of the United States and its allies. IISS director-general John Chipman said while great-power war is not inevitable, the three leading military powers are "systematically preparing for the possibility of conflict".

2018, the IISS report details China's growing military prowess, particularly at sea, adding that Beijing was on track to begin operating the Chengdu J-20 low-observable combat aircraft in frontline squadrons by 2020. "If this happens, the US would lose its monopoly on operational stealthy combat aircraft," the report said.

Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, senior fellow for South Asia at IISS, said: "India's defence budget is still only a third of its neighbour, China. Post-Doklam, China continues to develop advanced airborne and land capabilities." He was referring to last year's standoff between Indian and Chinese border troops at Doklam near the Sikkim border that lasted more than 70 days.

"These technologies do not simply seek to catch up with the West, but to challenge traditional Western military dominance. India's traditional influence over the Indian Ocean is also being challenged by China's shipbuilding. Since 2000, China has built more submarines, destroyers, frigates and corvettes than India, Japan and South Korea combined," Roy-Chaudhury said. On India

India has the fifth largest defence budget in the world, at \$52.5 billion in 2017 (\$51.1 billion in 2016), overtaking the UK whose defence budget fell from \$52.5 billion in 2016 to \$50.7 billion in 2017. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which compiles authoritative reports on annual military spending, India's expenditure on defence was greater than that of the UK in 2016. Titled Military Balance

For Sale in Wantagh, Long Island



- Cape
- 1 Family, Att
- Bedrooms: 4 Rms: 9
- Baths Full: 2 Half: 0
- Master BR 1st Floor: N
- Wood Floors:
- New Construction: N
- Approx Year Built: 1948
- Eat In Kitchen: Y #Kit: 1
- Fireplaces: 0
- Waterfront: N
- Waterview: N
- Lot Size: 60X100
- Sect:
- Adult Comm: N
- Handicap Access:
- Basement: None Fin: N
- Garage: Drive: Pvt
- Taxes: \$10,170.91
- Villages Taxes:
- Total Taxes: \$10,170.91
- Taxes w/Basic STAR: \$8,547.00
- Schools: 5 Levittown

Bsmt/Subfl:
1st Floor: Lr/Eik/Den/Br/Bth
2nd Floor: Br/Br/Br/Bth
3rd Floor:

Beautifully Maintained Mid Block Property. 4 Bedrooms, 2 Baths With Updated Appliances. Lots Of Natural Light, Closets, 4 Bedrooms, 2 Bath, Eat In Kitchen, Living Room And A Den To Entertain Guests And Family. This House Will Not Last !!

ML#: 2989437

Sharanjit Thind
realtorsst@gmail.com



Property Professional USA LLC



Prepared by: Sharanjit Thind Property Professional USA LLC (516) 605-2700
realtorsst@gmail.com 12/15/2017 11:34 PM
Information supplied by third parties and not by Multiple Listing Service of Long Island, Inc.
Information Copyright 2017, Multiple Listing Service of Long Island, Inc.

Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya to Harshad Mehta

Karim Telgi reached dizzying heights only to fall from grace.

VIJAY MALLYA

Vijay Mallya, who is currently in the UK, is wanted in India on charges of fraud and money laundering to the tune of Rs 9,000 crore. Born with a silver spoon, Vijay Mallya inherited his father Vittal Mallya's business empire. Mallya's fall came with his decision to venture into the aviation industry. He gifted his son Siddharth an airline on his 18th birthday. Kingfisher Airlines first flew on May 9, 2005. Over the next few years, Kingfisher Airlines bled with the airline defaulting on loans worth Rs 9,000 crore. On a complaint filed by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), a special court in January this year directed issuance of arrest warrant against Vijay Mallya and 18 others in the Kingfisher Airlines case.

B RAMALINGA RAJU

For those not synonymous with the name, B Ramalinga Raju is the man behind the more than Rs 7,000-crore Satyam scam.

A commerce graduate, Raju catapulted Satyam Computers into the big league of software companies. In an eerie similarity to Nirav Modi, Ramalinga Raju too was a Davos regular and was seen as an articulate yet soft-spoken tech czar.

In 2009, Raju, then chairman of Satyam Computers, resigned from the post and confessed that he manipulated (inflated) the company's accounts.

Within weeks of being convicted and sentenced to seven years' rigorous imprisonment by a trial court, a metropolitan sessions court granted Raju and nine others bail in May 2015. In January this year, SEBI found

Pricewaterhouse guilty in the Satyam case and barred the firm from issuing audit certificates to any listed company in India for two years.

HARSHAD MEHTA

Once known as the Amitabh Bachchan of the stock market, Harshad Mehta was at the centre of the Rs 8,000-crore 1992 stock market scam. Mehta was accused of stock market manipulation financed by worthless bank receipts. Harshad Mehta was known for his flamboyant lifestyle who owned a fleet of foreign cars and sea-facing house in Mumbai's posh Worli. He once paid Rs 26 crore as advance tax to the government.

As soon as the scam was exposed, Harshad Mehta was arrested and charged with bribery, cheating and criminal conspiracy. The stockbroker died on December 31, 2001.

In January 2003, the Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Harshad Mehta by a Mumbai special court which had sentenced him to five years in jail.

ABDUL KARIM TELGI

Abdul Karim Telgi was the son of a railway employee and used to sell vegetable and fruits on trains.

In 1994, Telgi acquired stamp paper license and opened an office at Mint Road in Mumbai. In 2003, a multi-billion fake stamp paper scandal came to the fore and Abdul Karim Telgi was at the centre of it. According to intelligence agencies, the size of the fake stamp paper scam was an estimated Rs 20,000 crore. In 2006, Telgi and several of his associates were sentenced to 30 years rigorous imprisonment and a fined Rs 202 crore by a court. He died of multiple organ failure at a government hospital in Bengaluru on October 26, 2017.

Branded by PNB scandal, Nirav Modi lies low in New York City

could well be contemplating the rise and fall of India's first globally branded diamond business. He has a boutique store at 734 Madison Avenue in New York City. To the right of the Nirav Modi store is Kwiat, a family owned house of diamond jewellery design going back to 1907. To the left is the luxury Swiss watch manufacture Vacheron Constantin, founded in 1755. Across the street is Chanel, Givenchy. Roberto Cavalli and other pricey brands that form the core and lore of the world of high fashion.

The Nirav Modi store in New York City is open and employees politely decline to answer any questions in person or over phone about ongoing fraud allegations or investigations or if Mr. Modi is in New York.

Nirav, Mumbai-born, Antwerp-raised Indian diamantaire opened his first stores in New York City and Hong Kong. Stores in Beijing, Macau, Mumbai, New Delhi, Hawaii, and Las Vegas followed, in keeping with Modi's ambitious vision to open down a staggering 100 stores worldwide by 2025, a feat that would have eclipsed even the legendary Harry

Winston.

Even allowing for spectacular success stories in modern entrepreneurship, Modi's rise even at current form is dizzying in what is considered a legacy business. Brands such as Tiffany, Chopard, Harry Winston, Cartier, Bvlgari and others have taken decades to build and burnish a brand, and here was a young upstart going toe-to-toe, neck-and-neck with them (at least in terms of visibility if not revenue) less than a decade after he dipped his toes in the retail, branded business. In fairness, it might be uncharitable to call him a neophyte. Modi belongs to a third-generation diamond trading family in Antwerp, Belgium, whose diamantaires largely trace their origins to Palanpur and whose scions are mostly interlinked by marriage. Although many of them, including Modi's family, have made fortunes in the business by selling diamonds to American retailers such as JC Penney and Zales, few have dared to take a stab at the high-profile global branded business dominated by the likes of Cartier, Tiffany, Bvlgari, Piaget etc.

Suspect Confessed to Police That He Began Shooting Students 'in the Hallways'

and pulled out a semiautomatic AR-15 rifle, according to details described by the authorities at a news conference on Thursday.

Mr. Cruz also shot people inside five classrooms on the first and second floors of the freshman building. He eventually discarded the rifle, a vest and ammunition in a stairwell, blended in with fleeing students and got away, the authorities said.

After leaving the school, Mr. Cruz walked to a Walmart, and bought a drink at a Subway. He also stopped at a McDonald's. He was arrested by the police without incident as he walked down a residential street at 3:41 p.m.

"He looked like a typical high school student, and for a quick moment I thought, could this be the person who I need to stop?" said Officer Michael Leonard.

Here are the takeaways:

- Mr. Cruz faces 17 counts of premeditated murder — one for each of the people he is accused of killing on Wednesday in a shooting that was captured on cellphone video by terrified students. He is being held without bond at the main Broward County jail, where he has been placed on suicide watch, according to Gordon Weekes, the county's chief assistant public defender.

- The AR-15 rifle used in the attack was purchased legally, at Sunrise Tactical Supply in Florida, according to a federal law enforcement official. The arrest report said Mr. Cruz purchased it in February 2017. "No laws were violated in the procurement of this weapon," said Peter J.

Forcelli, the special agent in charge for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in Miami.

- The F.B.I. said on Thursday it received information last year about a comment made on a YouTube channel which has been attributed to the gunman, but was unable to identify the person.

- In Florida, an AR-15 is easier to buy than a handgun. Read more on how the AR-15 became one of the weapons of choice for mass killers, and the research that tries to explain the high rate of mass shootings in the United States.

- With this shooting, three of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in modern United States history have come in the last five months. Here is a graphic that records the grim toll of school shootings across the nation.

- A huge crowd gathered at Pine Trails Park in Parkland for an emotional vigil to commemorate the victims, 14 of whom were students. Read more about the victims here. The football team gathered separately nearby, forming a circle and locking hands before praying for a coach and an athletic director who were killed. The victims — 14 students and three faculty — ranged from 14 years old to 49.

mong them was a popular football coach and a geography teacher credited with saving a boy's life when he stood in front of a classroom door.

The coach, Aaron Feis, was seen as someone who looked out for students who got in trouble, those who were struggling, those without fathers at home. "He'd go out of his way to help anybody," said Mr.

Feis's grandfather, Raymond.

Mr. Cruz made his first court appearance, clad in an orange jail jumpsuit.

Shackled around his hands, feet and waist, Mr. Cruz was asked if he understood the circumstances. "Yes, ma'am," he whispered.

"He's sad. He's mournful," his public defender, Melisa McNeill, said afterward. "He is fully aware of what is going on, and he's just a broken human being."

Mr. Weekes, the chief assistant public defender, said the lawyers were still trying to piece together the details of Mr. Cruz's life. Mr. Cruz has a "significant" history of mental illness, according to Mr. Weekes, and is possibly autistic or has a learning disability.

But Mr. Weekes was not yet ready to say whether he would pursue a mental health defense. Howard Finkelstein, the chief public defender in Broward County, said the case will present a difficult question: Should society execute mentally ill people?

"There's no question of whether he will be convicted of capital murder 17 times," he said. "When we let one of our children fall off grid, when they are screaming for help in every way, do we have the right to kill them when we could have stopped it?"

The family that took him in, the Sneads, had seen signs of depression in Mr. Cruz, but nothing indicated that he was capable of this kind of violence, Jim Lewis, the family's attorney, said.

Modi Still BJP's Trump Card

With good reason. If the trend of diminishing returns seen in Gujarat/Rajasthan persists in the assembly polls later this year, it would not just be a marker of receding popularity but could itself create a negative momentum. The key problem for the BJP is this: the party is already at its peak in 12 big states (see graphic), with a whopping 284 out of a total 332 seats in its kitty or that of its NDA allies. It cannot climb further—if anything, the graph can only go south in most of the states. And if the erosion in its core zones is steep, making up for it in the potential buffer zones will be tough.

It's clear that the BJP, having read the signals, is mindful of a certain disillusionment with governance issues that Modi's personal charisma and appeal are barely balancing. That's why it's enlarging its strategic options, if not exactly rewriting its blueprint. So Modi's clean image is still a key propaganda item—especially since the Indian public still hasn't recovered from the UPA-era scam exhaustion. DeMo will still be marketed as a move towards probity—and GST, and now the elite bugbear LTCG, as essential reforms. Hindutva will be there, unflinchingly, with Yogi Adityanath billed as a star campaigner. But beyond that usual script, there is now a new welfarist vocabulary—things like Modicare, being spoken of as a “game-changer”, and the Ujjwala scheme that's already reached LPG connections to 3.2 crore women and is targeting 8 crore.

Party leaders are not letting slip any sign of nervousness but admit they may have to depend on allies for the final numbers. “Even if we lose some seats in the next elections, we will still form the government. The benchmark the BJP set in 2014 is very high. It's possible that we may not get majority single-handedly,” concedes a party leader involved in number-crunching. The BJP had won 282 seats on its own in the 543-seat house, attaining a majority on its own. With allies, it stands at a formidable 336. On one thing there's no ambiguity. Modi rem-ains the

trumpcard, as was seen in the Gujarat campaign: he batted single-handedly and almost non-stop on a very dicey pitch and ensured a BJP victory against all odds. The Modi magic evidently endures, and seen against less solid assets, the overwhelming reliance on it is both visible and understandable. “The PM will remain our mascot; his clean image and work will win us a second term. He's seen as a bold, decisive leader who enhanced India's prestige in the world. Nobody can stop Modi from coming back in 2019,” predicts party general secretary Muralidhar Rao. If the incantatory tones are still heard, it's because they still work like a charm. The BJP has another asset: the Opposition. It's fragmented, directionless and without a strong, salient focal point to gather all anti-Modi feelings. Rao pooh-poohs the possibility of a united Opposition fighting the BJP in 2019. “When India's Opposition couldn't unite to fight the British, it definitely won't be able to take on a respected leader of the country like Modi,” he laughs. But it will still take lots of seats—states that can be alternate catchment areas. What about the two states under Rao's charge—Karnataka and Tamil Nadu? The party will win the Karnataka assembly polls and definitely improve its tally of 17 out of 28 Lok Sabha seats there in 2019, he insists. On Tamil Nadu, he promises only a “respectable presence” on its own. To be sure, it's a fluid picture—with even superstar Rajnikanth in the mix—but whichever way it turns, the BJP can always go there shopping for allies.

Party vice-president and Rajya Sabha MP Vinay Sahasrabudhe finds himself in one of the unenviable ‘maximum states’: he's in-charge of Madhya Pradesh, where the BJP already has 26 of 29 Lok Sabha seats. No room to improve, plenty of room to fall. “If the party loses some seats, it's bound to gain in other places. Whether the losses and gains match or not remains to be seen. Both government and party are working hard,” he says, almost

philosophical in tone. Soon after the BJP came to power in 2014, it started working on breaking new ground. Sahasrabudhe was entrusted with a membership drive aimed at making the BJP the world's largest party—the base now stands at over 13 crore. At that time, the aim was expansionist: to take the BJP's footprint to non-traditional areas like the Northeast and what it calls the ‘Coromandel states’ i.e. the South plus Orissa and West Bengal. But now it's working out differently, like an extra bank account it can draw from in crisis.

“The BJP's tally in West Bengal is two out of 42. And Orissa is represented by a solitary BJP MP, in a total of 21. The party will gain in both states, which send 63 MPs to the Lok Sabha,” says a BJP general secretary. “In Bengal, the BJP is second, though a distant second, while the Left and Congress are nowhere in the picture. In Orissa too, we've gone to number two. Any vote against the ruling BJD will come to us. Adhyakshji (party chief Amit Shah) had the foresight to extend the party footprint. That's how Assam

was won and we took power in Manipur for the first time.” The BJP sees the often neglected Northeast as a fertile area. A party leader active there cites the region's 25 Lok Sabha seats, of which at present the NDA has only 10.

But the real struggle will come in its old fortresses: holding on against a tide is always tougher than riding the crest of a wave. And there are a multiplicity of factors to manage, a combination of the local and the national. Take Rajasthan. Vasundhara had not allowed the BJP to name a sangathan mantri—or general secretary (organisation)—for the state for the major part of her tenure. It's only five months ago that Shah finally installed his trusted lieutenant, Chandra Sekhar, there (he had worked closely with Shah during the UP assembly polls as in-charge of its western regions). “The cadre here are quite demotivated. Chandra Sekhar didn't have enough time to invigorate them before the bypolls,” admits a party senior. “But positive results should be visible in time for the assembly polls.” The not-so-veiled message to Raje has been to change

her ways or make way for a change. “She has responded positively and is working on her style of functioning,” the leader adds. Avinash Rai Khanna, party vice-president and Rajasthan in-charge, has no time for despondency either. “Why are we forgetting BJP's record win Dholpur last year? It wasn't even our traditional seat. There's no need to be pessimistic,” he says. The first focus is the assembly polls. “We have 160 out of 200 seats. It's a challenge to retain the seats and we will,” says a determined Khanna.

Finally, there's the infantry—the Hindutva footsoldiers of the larger parivar, the BJP's biggest strength. A UP-based BJP leader, veteran of many wars, has this to say: “Our workers along with those of the RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal and other sister organisations are spread all over the country, ears to the ground. They have the voters' pulse. Our critics can call them the fringe element or whatever. They are the ones who know what's happening, what people want. We know from them the wind is still blowing for what the BJP stands for.”



The Association of Indians in America, NY Chapter (AIA-NY) held a Free Seminar on Tax Reform at Mint Restaurant recently. This Tax Seminar was attended by a large number of respected and eminent individuals, past presidents of AIA, Community Leaders and dignitaries including members of the Media. India's Consul General Sandeep Chakravorty graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

Unattractive women and people who have a satisfying sex life are more likely to cheat, says study

A person's own attractiveness was negatively associated with infidelity among women but not men - meaning less attractive women were more likely to have an affair. A partner's attractiveness was negatively associated with infidelity among men but not women - meaning men were more likely to be unfaithful when their partners were less attractive.

(News Agencies) Women who are perceived as unattractive are more likely to cheat on their partners, while the opposite is true for men, according to a study that identifies predictors for whether your Valentine will be faithful in a long-term relationship.

The study by researchers from Florida State University in the US identified some of the strongest predictors of infidelity, including age, marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, attractiveness and history of short-term relationships.

Researchers found younger people and those less satisfied with their relationships were more likely to be unfaithful. People satisfied with sex in their relationship were more likely to engage in infidelity, perhaps suggesting they felt more positive about sex in general and would seek it out regardless of how they felt about their main relationship. Another predictor of infidelity was attractiveness. A person's own attractiveness was negatively associated with infidelity among women but not men - meaning less attractive women were more likely to have

an affair. A partner's attractiveness was negatively associated with infidelity among men but not women - meaning men were more likely to be unfaithful when their partners were less attractive.

A person's history of sex was a predictor of infidelity, too. Men who reported having more short-term sexual partners prior to marriage were more likely to have an affair, while the opposite was true for women. The research, published in the journal *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, is the first to find evidence of psychological responses that help a person avoid infidelity and stay in a long-term relationship. The team followed 233 newly married couples for up to three and half years and documented intimate details about their relationships, including marital satisfaction, long-term commitment, and whether they had engaged in infidelity and if they were still together.

Researchers tested two psychological processes that everyone shares in varying degrees: Attentional



Disengagement and Evaluative Devaluation of potential romantic partners. Disengagement from possible partners is the ability to direct attention away from an attractive person who could be considered a romantic option.

Devaluation of possible partners is a tendency to mentally downgrade the attractiveness of another person, even if he or she is especially good looking. The team tested newlyweds on those

processes by showing them photographs of highly attractive men and women, as well as average-looking men and women.

Researchers discovered that participants who quickly disengaged their attention from an attractive person were less likely to engage in infidelity. Individuals who looked away in as little as a few hundred milliseconds faster than average were nearly 50% less likely to have sex outside

marriage. Conversely, partners who took significantly longer to look away from romantic alternatives had a higher risk of infidelity, and their marriages were more likely to fail. The tendency to devalue, or downgrade, the attractiveness of potential romantic partners also lowered the risk of infidelity and raised the likelihood of maintaining the relationship. Faithful people evaluated romantic alternatives much more negatively.

Don't want to diet? You can still lose weight by following this simple trick

New research has found an easy way to bring down your Body Mass Index (BMI). Here's what it is.

(News Agencies) People who wolf down their food could lose weight simply by chewing longer and pausing between bites, study results suggested Tuesday. Research involving nearly 60,000 Japanese people showed a link between eating slower or faster, and losing or gaining weight. "Changes in eating speed can affect changes in obesity, BMI and waist circumference," a research duo from Japan's Kyushu University wrote in the journal *BMJ Open*. "Interventions aimed at reducing eating speed may be effective in preventing obesity and lowering the associated health risks."

BMI stands for Body Mass Index, a ratio of weight-to-height used to determine whether a person falls within a healthy range. The WHO considers someone with a BMI of 25 overweight, and 30 or higher obese. In line with recommendations by the Japanese Society for the Study of Obesity, however, a BMI of 25 was taken as obese for Japanese populations for the purposes of the study. The researchers analysed health insurance data from 59,717 individuals diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes — a form of the disease that generally hits in adulthood as a result of being overweight.

The participants had regular

check-ups from 2008 to 2013. Data captured included their age and gender, BMI, waist circumference, blood pressure, eating habits, alcohol consumption, and tobacco use. From the outset, the slow-eating group of 4,192 had a smaller average waist circumference, a mean BMI of 22.3, and fewer obese individuals — 21.5 percent of the total. By comparison, more than 44 percent of the fast-eating group of 22,070 people, was obese, with a mean BMI of 25.

The team also noted changes in eating speed over the six years, with more than half the trial group reporting an adjustment in one direction or the other. "The main results indicated

that decreases in eating speeds can lead to reductions in obesity and BMI," they found. Other factors that could help people lose weight, according to the data, included to stop snacking after dinner, and not to eat within two hours of going to bed. Skipping breakfast did not seem to have any effect.

Limitations of the study included that eating speed and other behaviours were self-reported. There was also no data on how much participants ate, or whether they exercised or not. Commenting on the research, Simon Cork of

Imperial College London said it "confirms what we already believe, that eating slowly is associated with less weight gain than eating quickly." This may be due to the fact that the satiety signal takes some time to travel from the stomach to the brain, and may arrive only after the fast eater has already consumed more than enough.

But he said that relying on the participants themselves to score whether they eat slowly, or fast, was "considerably subjective" and may skew the data.



WHY SINGLE FATHERS RISK EARLY DEATH



SINGLE fathers are more likely to die young than single mothers or couples with children, according to a new study. Researchers tracked more than 40,000 parents in Canada for 11 years for the study published in *The Lancet Public Health* journal.

They found men who raise children alone are twice as likely to die early than other parents.

The most likely explanation, they said, was that solitary men were more likely to lead unhealthier lifestyles. Single-parent families are becoming increasingly common due to growing rates of divorce, separations, and couples having children outside of marriage.

Estimates from 2016 suggest that 10 percent of the three million single-parent families in Britain were headed by single fathers.

But previous research on single parents has largely focused on mothers, and no study to date has compared single fathers and mothers.

One similar study in Sweden, which only compared single and partnered fathers, found that single dads had a 30 percent greater risk of dying than partnered fathers.

Lead author of the Canadian study Dr Maria Chiu, of the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences and the University of Toronto, said: 'Our research highlights that single fathers have higher mortality, and demonstrates a need for public health policies to help identify and support these men.'

'While our study does not identify the exact cause of this, we did find that single fathers also tend to have unhealthier lifestyles, which could be an important area to address to improve health in this high-risk group.'

FOR the study, single parents included people who were living at home with one or more biological or adopted children under the age of 25, and who were divorced, separated, widowed, single, never married, and not living with a partner.

The participants completed questionnaires to give details of their lifestyle and socio-demographic status, including their fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity, and binge drinking.

Solitary men were more likely than partnered fathers to have had an emergency medical visit.

That was linked to their administrative health records to identify medical conditions, how often they used health services, whether they died, and cause of death.

After an average of 11 years follow-up, 693 people had died. Single fathers were more likely to die over the period (5.8 deaths per 1,000 person years), compared to partnered fathers (1.9 deaths per 1,000 person years) and single mums (1.7 deaths per 1,000 person year).

Partnered mothers were least likely to die over the follow-up period (1.2 deaths per 1,000 person years).

They tend to have unhealthier lifestyles

At the outset, single fathers were older, had a higher prevalence of cancer than single mothers and partnered parents, and were more likely to have cardiovascular disease than single and partnered mothers.

Single fathers were also more likely than partnered fathers to have had an emergency medical visit or hospital admission in the past year.

While the leading cause of death for single fathers remained unclear, the findings showed that they ate fewer fruit and vegetables, and were more likely to binge drink than single mums and partnered parents.

Short children can suffer stroke later



Short children are at greater risk of suffering a stroke later in life, according to new research.

Being two to three inches shorter growing up raised the likelihood of the disease in both men and women. The discovery follows research by British scientists showing the vertically challenged are at increased risk of a heart attack.

The latest findings were based on more than 300,000 Danish schoolchildren born between 1930 and 1989. Those who were two inches shorter than average at seven, 10 and 13 were 11 per cent more likely to have an ischaemic stroke as adults than their taller peers. This is the most common form of the disease where a clot

blocks blood and oxygen flow to the brain. Most cases were diagnosed between the ages of 55 and 75.

Men, who were short as children were also 11 percent more likely to suffer a stroke triggered by bleeding on the brain, called an intracerebral haemorrhage. This did not apply to women.

Strokes, which occur when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, are the third most common cause of premature death and a leading cause of disability in the UK. They affect 57,000 people a year in England, alone.

The average height of a 13-year-old child is five feet three with a seven year old measuring around four feet.



The spike in heart rate was almost the same as doing skydiving.

SECRET BEHIND SERIAL DATING

SOME people are addicted to dating and never settling down- and now scientists say they know why.

The thrill of a first date may induce just as much adrenaline as jumping out of a plane, new research has found.

The study found that the average heart rate of a person doing indoor skydiving was 111 beats per minute, very close to that of a person during a blind date — 106 beats per minute. The research, conducted by the University of Wolverhampton's cardiology department, involved putting participants through a number of thrilling experiences including indoor skydiving, a zip wire course, and a first date while wearing heart rate monitors to measure pulse fluctuations.

In addition to the study, a supporting survey of 2,000 adults found that more than half (54 per cent) of consider going

on a first date a thrilling experience, and 1 in 6 confessed to enjoying the rush of the initial encounter. The survey also found that a third of Brits had considered leaving or not turning up to a date due to nerves.

However, those nerves may be nothing to worry about, as 78 per cent of those surveyed said they found first date nerves endearing in a partner.

Women claimed to be more awkward than men when dating, with two thirds admitting that nerves get the better of them before a first date.

Dr Martin Khechera, Senior Lecturer in Biomedical Science at the University of Wolverhampton, said: 'It's no surprise to see heart rates spike before undertaking thrilling experiences and extreme sports, however it is a surprise to see dating, among the top thrills.'

The researchers note that social differences could also play a role in the increased risk for single fathers, potentially leading to increased stress and fewer coping mechanisms.

Single fathers were more likely to be separated, divorced, or widowed than single mothers.

After adjusting the findings to consider differences in age, lifestyle, health and socio-demographic characteristics, single fathers' mortality risk over the 11 years of the study was more than two times higher than other parents'.

Dr Chiu added: 'Doctors' appointments could be an opportunity for doctors to engage with single fathers to help them to improve their health.'

For the open-minded

Are you curious about the expanding spectrum of alternative therapies? We get experts to decode some of them for you.



(News Agencies) Recently, a wellness festival titled Quantum Energy Conclave 2018 was held in Bangalore. It focused on energy-based healing, and threw light on other forms of alternative healing such as sound therapy and crystal therapy. These days, there are quite a few takers for alternative healing, despite many of its positive effects being tagged as being placebo effects. Several celebrities such as Bella Hadid and Kate Hudson endorse alternative healing, which has stirred curiosity about such practices. Herein, experts expound on sound, neurofeedback and crystal therapy.

What is energy-based medicine?

According to a study published in the medical journal Acta Neurochirurgica in 2005, energy-based therapies "expand the healing spectrum of individuals". It goes on to state, "Not only do they have the capability to help a variety of secondary conditions, they have the ability in some people, for certain injuries, to restore function, sometimes dramatically."

SOUND THERAPY

Aurelio, a sound therapist and founder of sound research institute Svaram in Pondicherry, says, "There is vibration in all materials. Even during early gestation, we grow up listening to our mother's heartbeats. But somewhere, we lose our inner and sacred approach to music, and it becomes a purely entertaining product. Parents turn learning music into something competitive."

Aurelio has been learning about sound and its effects since 1981, when he encountered aborigines who used healing rituals, as they were miles and weeks away from any medical help. "If you live in a place where you hear the noise of traffic or construction

and anxiety may be lowered." Beasley constantly, it will affect you. Every 'dis'ease is a disharmony. When we reharmonise our system with the help of balancing vibrations, physiological effects follow. It generates the will and capacity to self-heal in a person," he explains.

The therapist says that many people come to him expecting miracle cures or quick fixes, but that's not how it works. "A disease has to be dealt with at its root," he says. "Once, a child was brought to me for his learning disability. But the root of the problem was that there were problems among the parents. All he needed was unconditional love and emotional support. How one considers the disease has changed here."

Aurelio firmly believes that every treatment has its place. "Vaccinations are necessary. Even though the future of medicine is energy-based, the ideal healthcare system will have an integrated therapeutic approach. It will be a centre where allopaths, ayurveds, homeopaths, unani medicine practitioners, reiki healers, craniosacral therapists, chiropractors and other specialists all come together to diagnose and then give the best, tailor-made solution for the patient's illness and recovery process."

NEUROFEEDBACK THERAPY

Neurofeedback therapists say that when a frequency is supplied to a person, the brain has the ability to copy that frequency. Using this principle, neurofeedback therapists try to heal their patients.

Michael Beasley, a neurofeedback therapist, says, "Your brain is the centre that registers pain. Painkillers inhibit you from feeling it. So if the brain waves can be programmed to emulate a healthy person's brain with the help of devices, it can be optimised again, and the pain

and anxiety may be lowered." Beasley says that he turned his attention from research in semi-conductors to helping those with chronic pain using pain relief devices when his daughter Julie Nicole Beasley was shot by a gunman in 2001.

Therapists use technologies such as Low Energy Neurofeedback System (LENS) and NeuroField with different functions to treat different ailments. Beasley, a major in chemistry from Western Kentucky University, USA, explains that such devices help calm the brain and bring one to a meditative state. "I have worked with people suffering from anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. My own daughter has had so much relief with her chronic pain and associated traumas with the help of these machines," he says.

Therapists claim that neurofeedback therapy can work really quickly, but that is one of the drawbacks Beasley has had to deal with. "A person who has been suffering from anxiety for several years may be uncomfortable with a sudden change in their mental status within a few minutes. The sudden clarity of thoughts may be too easy or hard to process. They may doublethink their own decision-making process, or may wish to immediately solve a problem, because the path is very clear," he says. Beasley adds that despite no reports of any permanent harm, there are chances of ticks and seizures in this therapy.

CRYSTAL THERAPY

"Crystals have an energy of their own and have the ability to store, absorb, project and focus subtle energies on the subject. Hence, many healing modalities use them to alleviate the healing process," says Shikha Mehta, a crystal

healer at Thrive Art & Soul, Nariman Point.

She adds, "Because crystals have a memory, they must be deprogrammed and reprogrammed carefully before being used. It is very important to set the intention and instruct the crystal about the work it is expected to do and for whom."

Mehta says that it is now easier to bust claims that crystal therapy is a pseudoscience, as it is possible to map the energies of the crystal. One can see the colours of energy projected by the crystal through a machine, which gives proof that the healing is working.

She adds that over her five years of practice, she has seen people lose faith and interest in crystal healing when they learn that it does not work as fast as allopathy. "Any healing works at the pace of the receiver's willingness to receive energy and the ability to release energy. So, if the healing hasn't worked on someone or is working at a slower pace, it could be that the receiver was either unwilling to receive the energies due to disbelief or doubt or had a slight resistance towards releasing old energies or receiving new ones. When one has faith in something, even stones work," she says.



Scientists *REVERSE* Alzheimer's in middle-aged mice and claim the drug could be used like a daily vitamin to prevent the disease

(News Agencies) Scientists have successfully reversed Alzheimer's in a middle-aged lab mouse - using the same method as a major clinical trial in humans which was called off yesterday.

The team at Cleveland Clinic admitted they were 'shocked' when their attempts to reduce amyloid plaque in mice completely eradicated the dangerous build-ups that slowly cripple the brain.

They claim their tests on a 20-month-old mouse - equivalent to a 50-year-old human - show it could be possible to halt the disease if it is caught decades earlier than usual.

Lead author Riqiang Yan envisions a future when these enzymes, known as BACE1 inhibitors, could be available as a vitamin that all humans take preventatively to stave off neurodegenerative disease.

However, just hours before Yan's paper was published today, Merck announced it had pulled the plug on its phase 3 clinical trial in early- and mid-stage Alzheimer's patients using

this same inhibitor after an interim review found more risks than benefits.

Already aware of the Merck failure, Yan told Daily Mail Online last night that he still believes BACE1 is the answer to preventing and treating Alzheimer's.

'We were surprised it worked so well, we saw complete reversal,' Yan, who will start as chair of the department of neuroscience at the University of Connecticut this spring, said.

'To our knowledge, this is the first observation of such a dramatic reversal of amyloid deposition in any study of Alzheimer's disease mouse models.'

BACE1 helps produce beta-amyloid peptide by cleaving amyloid precursor protein.

Drugs that inhibit BACE1 are therefore being developed as potential Alzheimer's disease treatments.

However, because BACE1 controls many important processes by cleaving proteins other than APP, these drugs

could have serious side effects. In many trials, mice completely lacking BACE1 suffer severe neurodevelopmental defects.

To investigate whether inhibiting BACE1 in adults might be less harmful, Yan and colleagues generated mice that gradually lose this enzyme as they grow older. To their surprise, the mice developed normally and appeared to remain perfectly healthy over time.

'If we can show the compound is safe, it would be available for preventative measures.'

'BACE inhibitors can function like a vitamin, you could give it out to people early on and people could take it comfortably for years.'

'Our tests on a 20-month-old mouse found no side effects, now we have to look at a much older mouse to see if this can work in later stages of disease.'

The findings could be a game changer for the pharmaceutical industry, which has had a rough ride with BACE1 inhibitors - although some analysts claim Merck's failure suggests we are



barking up the wrong tree.

On Tuesday, Merck announced in a statement that it has pulled the plug on a trial with patients given either a placebo, or 12mg or 40mg of verubecestat, once a day.

Roche did away with BACE1 inhibitors in 2013.

Eli Lilly also dropped the method in 2013, but a year later joined forces with AstraZeneca to try another version in early-stage patients, a similar age to the mice tested in Yan's new study. That is now in phase 3 clinical trials. Biogen and Eisai are also in advanced clinical trials testing

a similar but subtly different BACE inhibitor - E2609 - in early-stage patients.

Meanwhile, Amgen and Novartis are testing a BACE inhibitor known as CNP520, which they are testing on people at-risk of Alzheimer's, to see if it could work preventatively.

The race has been high-powered and fast-paced for years, but with so many trials in late stages - and Merck's most promising trial now out of the question - there is palpable excitement at who will be the next front-runner to score the jackpot and make a fortune.

Have you ever wondered why we blink?

Blinking is an omnipresent involuntary process that maintains stable and healthy vision



(News Agencies) Humans unconsciously trade off the loss of information during a blink with the physiological urge to blink, a study suggests. Blinking is an omnipresent involuntary process that maintains stable and healthy vision. With 15

blinks per minute on average, it is one of the most frequent human actions, researchers from Technische Universitat Darmstadt in Germany said.

However, during a single blink, our visual perception is interrupted for about a third of a second, they said. Although

our conscious perception suggests a continuous and stable world, about 10% of the time we are missing potentially important visual information from our surroundings.

For this reason it is advantageous, whether for our

ancestors roaming the savanna or the modern human crossing a busy road, to coordinate our blinking intelligently. Previous studies have revealed an intriguing multitude of additional factors influencing human blink rates. Blinking is closely intertwined with cognitive functions connected to dopamine, a neuromodulator involved in reward related behaviour and learning. In particular, blink rates are elevated when we are tired and are related to our activities, as they go up when we are talking and go down when we are reading.

While blinking is clearly related to these cognitive processes, so far it has been unknown, how blinking relates quantitatively to properties of our environment. Researchers led by professor Constantin Rothkopf from Technische Universitat Darmstadt, showed for the first time quantitatively, how blinking is related to environmental task

events. Participants in an experiment were instructed to detect short events presented on a computer monitor. The probability of an event occurring was systematically modified by the researchers to reveal participants' blinking strategies. Participants learned the hidden regularities of the visual events and progressively improved their performance of detecting the events. The analysis of the blinking behaviour showed that participants unconsciously blinked less and less the more probable they believed an event was about to occur. "The computational model we have developed is able to reproduce this behaviour," said PhD student David Hoppe, first author of the study.

"As the model also contains physiological parameters, which differ between individual participants, it is possible to predict the likelihood of times between two successive blinks," Hoppe said.

**We Thank Our Customers for Their Trust & Loyalty
22 Years of Excellent Customer Service**

FOR COMPETITIVE RATES CALL

1-800-870-5845

**PICK-UP & DELIVERY
ANYWHERE IN USA**



INDO US EXPRESS, INC.

World wide Couriers*Freight Forwards

Domestic & Local Delivery

43-50, 11th St., Suite No, 109, LIC, New York, N.Y. 11101

Tel: 212-447-5720. Fax: 516 932 3750

www.indousexpress.com

Email : gsingh9070@aol.com (or) indousexpress@gmail.com

7Days A Week

**CALL ABOUT OUR SPECIAL RATES TO
INDIA**



Manushi Chhillar sizzles in a black swimsuit as she soaks up the sun in China



(News Agencies) Manushi Chhillar has literally been on her toes, ever since she began her Beauty with a Purpose tour along with the Miss World team. The winner of Miss World 2017 was awarded the Beauty with a Purpose title for her passionate efforts towards improving menstrual hygiene condition. Only a while ago, Manushi was seen touring across cities in India, including Hyderabad, Kolkata and Delhi, to promote the cause of menstrual health and hygiene. After a

long journey across the country, Manushi and her team headed to China, to take part in what is known as Spring Festival Gala, a Chinese New Year Special produced by China Central Television. Thankfully, Manushi's trip to the neighbouring nation doesn't only comprise a hectic work schedule. The diva also seems to have taken out some time to explore the beauty of the destination, glimpses of which were shared by her on social media.

Being a homemaker comes first on my list: Shilpa Shetty

(News Agencies) Being a homemaker comes first on my list: Shilpa Shetty. Actress-entrepreneur and author Shilpa Shetty Kundra, who has launched her second book "The Diary of a Domestic Diva", says being a homemaker is her top priority. "People may assume that I have it easy because I have plenty of help. On the contrary, being a homemaker comes first on my list and it's the finer details that make me a domestic diva," Shilpa has said in the introduction to the book, which has 90 "mindful and heartfelt" recipes from her kitchen. Married to businessman Raj Kundra, Shilpa has a five-year-old son.

Being a homemaker comes first on my list: Shilpa Shetty At 42, her fit and svelte frame can give actresses of the younger generation a run for their money. Her book provides a plethora of recipes ranging from juices, teas, soups, salads, starters, mains and desserts, and also mentions the calorie count for each dish. Shilpa says her cook book is for women like her mother "who want to serve fresh, nutritious food to their families every day without spending too much time in the kitchen". "It's a beautiful coincidence that the Marathi word for lamp is 'diva'. Being a homemaker comes first on my list: Shilpa Shetty Each one of us has a diva within us. I hope through this book, I am able to turn all of you into a real-life divas and light the lamp inside you; I hope I can make your life simpler. "Things like preparing for lunch and dinner, pack for your husband and child and serve at parties easier.



Alia jets off to Bulgaria for 'Brahmastra' shoot

(News Agencies) Brahmastra shoot: Actress Alia Bhatt has jetted off to Bulgaria to prep for her upcoming film "Brahmastra". Alia on Sunday took to her Instagram stories, where she shared a photograph of herself and captioned it: "Bulgaria Calling. 'Brahmastra'. Brahmastra shoot" She later shared a view of the snow in Sofia, Bulgaria, from the aircraft and wrote: "Winter is here." The upcoming fantasy adventure trilogy titled "Brahmastra" is directed by Ayan Mukerji. It also stars Amitabh Bachchan and Ranbir Kapoor. This will be the first time that Amitabh, Ranbir and Alia will be joining hands for a project. The trilogy's first part will release on Independence Day, August 15, 2019.



Don't know how to wear a saree?

Get inspired by Deepika Padukone and Kangana Ranaut

Designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee's comments on saree at the Harvard India Conference on 10 February set off a storm, with many criticising him for being chauvinistic and anti-feminist. Without getting into the debate, here's some fashion inspiration for you all. Bollywood's best-dressed celebs in saree.

Designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee may be in the thick of an unseemly row with his comments on the saree at the Harvard India Conference on 10 February, but the fact is, there's something wonderful about this hallmark of feminine Indian style aka the prettiest thing you have in your wardrobe. It is the ultimate crowd-pleaser. Why? Not only is it flattering, it's appropriate for almost any occasion, and can channel a demure or flirtatious vibe when needed. Call us crazy, but spotting a stylish celebrity in a saree is one of our greatest joys in life, which is why we decided to spread the love and round up our favourite looks from ladies like Shilpa Shetty, Priyanka Chopra, and more.





My life has changed, says Oru Adaar Love's Priya Prakash Varrier, the Valentine's Day date everyone wants

The girl who winked her way to becoming an overnight Internet sensation says that she can't stop getting Valentine's Day requests. Priya Prakash Varrier, from the film Oru Adaar Love, tells us how exciting everything is right now.

(News Agencies) Priya Prakash Varrier. Does the name ring a bell? Well, she's the girl from the song Manikyā Malarayā Pooṁi (from the film Oru Adaar Love, directed by Omar Lulu) whose flirtatious wink made her an overnight Internet sensation — and it took just a few seconds of screen time in the song sequence. On screen, Priya's wink completely charms her schoolboy admirer. On the Internet, she's the Valentine's Day date every boy wants. Standing at the threshold of her acting debut, Priya is getting non-stop requests for a date, she tells us. "I am very happy. Don't know how to handle so much love. It's completely surreal,"

Priya says. "I'm falling short of words trying to express myself. Never expected this." Thanks to her fame, the 18-year-old, who was earlier signed on for a small role in the upcoming Malayalam film, will now play the lead in it, opposite Roshan Abdul Raḥoof (the boy who is also seen in the video). Interestingly, her character's name is also Priya. Priya's fan count is increasing by the minute. The thing she does with her eyebrows, ending in a wink and then a shy smile, is perfection. She says, "The director wanted me to play with my eyebrows in a certain way. It's a mappila song (rhythmic songs in the north Kerala tradition) that has been

recreated for the film. And there's a scene where this girl and this boy converse through expressions — and the director wanted a certain mannerism. I just followed his instruction," says Priya, shyly admitting that her mailbox is full of messages from men asking her out for a date on Valentine's Day. Some have even proposed to her. Does she already have a special someone in her life? "There's no one special in my life. My studies and my dream of becoming an actor are the two focal points of my life. On Valentine's Day, I'll have to go to college because attendance is a problem. I'm not thinking much [about getting mobbed] — after all, I go to a girl's college," laughs the first-year Commerce student from Vimala College in Thrissur, Kerala. Several jokes, one-liners, GIFs and memes are all over the Internet, and which are the ones

she likes? "That the Indian government has declared me as a national crush was quite amusing. I remember someone had said that I look ugly without make-up, and reacting to that, this boy had written how people use a variety of filters to look good, so it's time we appreciated natural beauty," she says, adding that Malayalam film star Tovino

Thomas has conveyed his good wishes to her. Priya shares that she has also come to know about many fake accounts in her name on social media. She is on Instagram and Facebook, but not on Twitter. "There are 90-plus Instagram [accounts] and don't know how many fake Twitter accounts," she gasps.



Vinod Mehra went away too early: Rishi Kapoor



(News Agencies) Vinod Mehra acted in over 100 films from the 1970s. He died of a heart attack in 1990 at the age of 45. On actor Vinod Mehra's 73rd birth anniversary, veteran actor Rishi Kapoor remembered his good friend. Rishi on Tuesday took to Twitter, where he shared a photograph of Vinod. "Another friend who went away too early. We were good friends but we never worked together ever. When he turned director, I was one of his heroes but he couldn't complete that film 'Guru Dev'. Happy birthday Vinod. RIP!" Rishi wrote. Vinod Mehra is known for films like The Burning Train, Amar Prem, Ghar, Swarg Narak, Aag Hi Aag, Prem Pratigya and Bemisal.

The big runway beauty debate: What's with all the drama?

Are bold beauty looks adding to collections on the ramp or taking away attention from the clothes? Here's what experts think.

(News Agencies) There was a time when runways were dominated by clear skin and sleek, subtle hairdos. However, while this is still popular across the globe, bold and dramatic looks continue to trend, too. From illusion makeup at Atsushi Nakashima's show and Fendi's glitter lips in the 2017 Women's Spring/Summer collections at Milan Fashion Week to a 'caged' look at Bloni and Anaam's show and face art at Urvashi Kaur's showcase at the recently concluded Lakmé Fashion Week, the looks have been highly innovative. However, the question is, why all the drama, anyway? Designers say the drama is important to put their idea and theme across to the viewers. "The makeup was linked to the collection. The face art on the right side of the female models and left side of



the male models projected that everyone has a feminine and a masculine side. My collection is all about gender neutrality, and to complete the presentation, I needed the makeup to reflect that," says designer Urvashi Kaur. Agreeing with the need for drama, designer Akshat Bansal of Bloni shares, "My collection showcased marine life and how choked they feel. Hence, the pale look. White lips depicted dehydration and the fishnet kind

of hair on the face showed how they are caged and suffering." Wouldn't the drama take the focus away from the garments though? "The clothes are strong enough to compliment the makeup, so it never takes away," says Bansal. Not everyone agrees, though. Some experts believe that it is vital to strike a balance. "Every model looks different and the attention goes to the makeup rather than the clothes.

BOI
BOX OFFICE
INSIDER

www.boxofficeinsider.info

Presents

*Celebrate the
spirit of valentine
with
Mohabbatein Girl*

Shamita Shetty

Bollywood beautiful talented actress

*A night of Fun, Masti,
Dance Performances,
Talent Showcase & much more*



Sunday 6 PM onwards ,
Feb 25, 2018
The Mint , Garden City,
Long Island

BHARAT GORADIA
International Promoter of Global arts and
Culture V International INC
917 355 4247



Event Managed by:
Nishi Bahl
of Panache Entertainment
917 992 0076



Supported by Indian American Victory Forum (IAVF)

DESIGNED BY @ onpunjab GRAPHIX

