

India Bulletin

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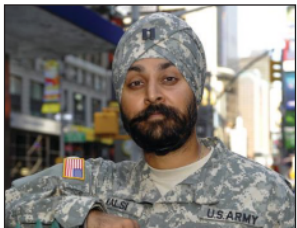
Biweekly Midwest Edition

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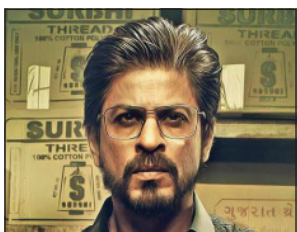
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Elections next month to test Modi



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Top BCCI officials removed



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India's top court throws out case alleging Modi took cash payments

NEW DELHI - India's Supreme Court on Wednesday threw out a case brought by an anti-corruption lawyer that accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of accepting suspicious cash payments, dealing a blow to an opposition leader who had latched on to the case.

A panel of judges found that there was too little evidence to go on, deflating Rahul Gandhi's warnings late last year that he would cause an "earthquake" by unveiling proof that Modi was corrupt.

In the event, it transpired that the heir apparent to the leadership of the opposition Congress party was referring to a case already before India's highest court that relied on evidence recovered in income-tax raids on two corporate houses.

Citing written records, the plaintiff alleged that an individual called "Gujarat CM" had received cash payments from companies totalling at least 400 million rupees (\$5.9 million) in late 2013 and early 2014.

Modi was the chief minister of India's western state of Gujarat at the time and went on to win elec-



FILE PHOTO: Activists of the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) shout slogans as they carry an effigy of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a protest against the government's decision to withdraw 500 and 1000 Indian rupee banknotes from circulation, according to a media release, in Kolkata, India on November 14, 2016.

tion by a landslide in May 2014.

"There is not enough evidence to order an inquiry into the case. We are dismissing it," a Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ruled.

Attorney General Mukul

Rohatgi, the government's top lawyer, told the court that there was no credible evidence to prove that Modi had been paid off.

Prashant Bhushan, the anti-corruption lawyer who brought the case on behalf of a non-govern-

mental organisation called Common Cause, had urged the court to order a probe into the alleged payments made to public officials. "It is sad and unfortunate that the Supreme Court dismissed my plea," Bhushan told Reuters.

Women plan protests in India against mass assault and victim-blaming

MUMBAI - Women's groups in India are planning nationwide rallies on Jan. 21 to protest the alleged mass molestation in the city of Bengaluru on New Year's eve, and subsequent comments by politicians blaming the women for the crime.

The India protests, publicised under the hashtag #IWillGoOut on social media, are meant to coincide with the "Million Women March" in Washington on Jan. 21, the day after Donald Trump's inauguration as president of the United States.

Several women said they were groped and assaulted by a mob on a crowded central street of the technology hub Bengaluru on Dec. 31, despite the presence of a large number of policemen.

The state home minister later told television networks "such incidents do happen", while another politician blamed women for following "western culture", dressing inappropriately and staying out late.

"That something like this could happen in a city like Bengaluru, in a crowded public space, is

shocking. It could have happened to any of us," said ElsaMarie D'Silva, founder of Safe City, an online project that collects reports of harassment and maps areas unsafe for women.

"To see these reactions from authorities who are meant to protect us is even more distressing."

The attacks have shocked women across India, since Bengaluru - home to young technology professionals - is regarded as safer for women than New Delhi, which has among the nation's highest reports of rape

and other crimes.

More than 34,000 rapes were reported in India in 2015, according to the National Crime Record Bureau. More assaults go unreported because women fear being stigmatised.

"We don't talk enough about violence against women in this country, nor are we doing enough to prevent it," said D'Silva.

"We must keep up the pressure on our institutions to ensure our safety, and keep pushing for a change in attitudes and behaviour towards women."

Thought of the Week: "There are two types of people who are failures in life... Those who do not listen to anybody and those who listen to everybody." - Unknown

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INSIGHT

Women students protest dress rules, curfews as Mumbai college bans ripped jeans



Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt



Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha



Bollywood actress Malaika Arora Khan

By Rina Chandran

MUMBAI - One of Mumbai's best known colleges has banned female students from wearing ripped jeans, sparking the latest row against dress codes and curfews imposed on women that students say are discriminatory and sexist.

St. Xavier's College, which

had previously forbidden female students from wearing shorts, sleeveless tops and short dresses, this month added ripped jeans to its list of banned clothing.

The Jesuit institution became the latest to incur the wrath of female students across the country who have been protesting rules that they say are discriminatory and distressing.

Most universities in India have a 6 pm or 8 pm curfew for women, while men have a later timing, or no curfew. Universities also impose dress codes on women, limit or screen their male visitors, and have other rules that men don't.

"In the name of safety, you can't police women and impose these patriarchal, discriminatory

rules," said Devangana Kalita, a former Delhi University student who is part of Pinjra Tod, or break the cage, a Delhi-wide campaign protesting such rules.

"We want universities to recognise that we are adults, and that they should not be curbing our freedom and mobility. Providing a safe environment for women goes beyond just imposing rules," she said.

Calls to staff at St. Xavier's College for a comment on the recent ban were not returned.

The Dean of Student Welfare in Delhi University, J.M. Khurana, said he was not aware of Pinjra Tod and that he did not wish to comment on university rules.

The safety of women in India came under the spotlight after the fatal gang rape of a college student in New Delhi on a bus in December 2012 that sparked global outrage and led to the tightening of laws for crimes against women in India.

Amid a widening debate on women's safety in the country, some politicians, university officials and even the police have asked women to take self-defence training, to "dress decently" and to not loiter outside after dark.

But students have demanded an

end to curfews, and asked officials to focus instead on safer public transport, more female campus security personnel and better lighting in and around campuses.

Kalita said early curfews are keeping women from internships, employment opportunities and campus activities.

"Universities say: 'your parents want the curfew'. But it's an absurd argument," Kalita said.

Elsewhere, particularly in the more conservative southern states, the situation is worse, said Vandana Venkatesh, who surveyed colleges in Tamil Nadu state earlier this year.

Women students reported physical intimidation and threats of violence from college authorities for questioning discriminatory rules, she said.

"Many of them complained about feeling claustrophobic, anxious and belittled," she said.

Earlier this month, women students in a college in the southern state of Kerala protested the hostel's 4 pm curfew and a rule banning mobile phones.

"There is a sense of collective strength and power now. The more women there are out on the streets, in public places, the safer we will be," Kalita said.

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Police release photos of “person of interest” in murder of Northbrook lawyer Jigar K. Patel



Northbrook police released the above photos of a “person of interest” in the December strangling death of attorney Jigar K. Patel, 36, at his office in downtown Northbrook.

NORTHBROOK, IL - Northbrook police have released photos of a “person of interest” in the December strangling death of an attorney at his office in downtown Northbrook.

Police found Jigar K. Patel, 36, deceased in his office at 1363 Shermer Road around 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 7 after responding to a well-being check. The Cook County Medical Examiner ruled the death of Patel as a homicide.

Police continue to investigate the incident, which they believe is isolated and was the result of a targeted attack against Patel.

Northbrook Police Commander Mike O'Malley said the person of interest was

identified through surveillance photographs taken at the building near the front door on the day of the murder.

“We are unable to identify who the person is from the photo,” O'Malley said. He also said no one interviewed could identify the person.

The man is wearing a hat, carrying a bag over his shoulder and walking with a cane. Police consider him a person of interest because of when the photographs were recorded, according to O'Malley.

Police, some tenants said, have suggested that the man was wearing a surgical mask.

Police have been showing surveillance videos to some tenants of the building, according to a January 3 Chicago Tribune

story. One of the people interviewed in the story, Ralph Cram of Envoy Leasing Partners, gave a description in the story similar to the photograph released by the police.

“It’s a man, but he was covered up, wearing a trench coat and a hat,” said Cram in the Tribune story. “He definitely knew what he was doing. The guy knew where the video cameras were. He knew how to approach the elevator and the stairs without turning his head up to the camera.”

Cram said several Metra and freight trains pass the building close to the 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. time frame when police estimate the homicide took place, and the sound could have covered up noise of an attack.

Police first went to Patel’s office December 7 to perform a well-being check

around 7:30 p.m. after getting a call from Prospect Heights police, according to Northbrook Police Chief Charles Wernick. Wernick said Patel’s wife called Prospect Heights police.

When officers arrived, they found Patel dead. The cause of death was asphyxia due to ligature strangulation, according to Becky Schlikerman of the Cook County Bureau of Administration.

Patel was last seen alive at approximately 4 p.m. December 7 by his secretary just before she left the office, according to Wernick.

Patel lived in Prospect Heights with his wife and two very young daughters.

Anyone with information is asked to please contact the Northbrook Investigations Unit at 847-664-4181.

Rockefeller Foundation names new president

NEW YORK (AP) - The Rockefeller Foundation, which doles out nearly \$200 million to various charitable causes each year, has picked its new president.

The New York Times reports that Rajiv J. Shah, a trustee of the organization, will succeed Judith Rodin, who has been president for 12 years.

The 43-year-old Shah is the youngest

person and the first Indian-American to lead the philanthropic organization founded in 1913 by oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller.

Shah recently ran the United States Agency for International Development. He also worked at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for nearly 10 years.

Woman sentenced to life in Oklahoma State homecoming crash

STILLWATER, OK (AP) - A woman charged with killing four people and injuring dozens more by driving her car into spectators at Oklahoma State University’s 2015 homecoming parade was sentenced Tuesday to life in prison after accepting a plea deal.

Adacia Chambers, 26, was sentenced in Payne County District Court after pleading no contest to four counts of second-degree murder and 39 counts of assault and battery.

Chambers was due to stand trial Tuesday and prosecutors had estimated it could have lasted a month due to the extensive list of potential witnesses, including victims, first-responders and detectives.

Chambers was apologetic to victims of the crash.

“If only I could change the past. My prayers are always with the victims,” Chambers said in court. “I was suffering from psychosis that day.”

Chambers’ attorney, Tony Coleman, said his client took the plea agreement because she didn’t want to put the victims’ families through such a long trial.

Taken with an additional 10-year sentence added to her life term for the assault and battery charges, Chambers figures to still be in prison when she’s a senior citizen.

Prosecutors alleged that Chambers purposely steered her car around a police barricade and sped up before she plowed into the crowd watching the parade before Oklahoma State’s game against the University of Kansas.

Killed in the crash were Nikita Nakal, a 23-year-old MBA student from India at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, a married couple, Bonnie Jean Stone and Marvin Lyle Stone, both 65, and 2-year-old Nash Lucas. Dozens more were injured, many of them children.

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U.S. Army eases rules on beards, turbans for Muslim, Sikh troops

By David Alexander

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Army has taken new steps to make it easier for Sikhs, Muslims and other religious minorities to obtain approval to dress and groom themselves according to their religious customs while serving in the military, a spokesman said last Thursday.

Army Secretary Eric Fanning, in a memorandum signed this week, revised the uniform policy to set appearance standards for people seeking religious accommodations to wear beards, turbans and head scarfs.

The new rules also enable brigade-level commanders to approve the religious accommodations, an authority that previously rested with the Army secretary. Denial of a religious accommodation may be appealed as high as the Army secretary.

An approved religious accommodation will continue throughout the soldier's career and may not be revoked or modified without approval of the Army secretary, the memo says. The accommodation will not affect job specialties or duty locations, except in a few limited cases, the memo says.

"Our goal is to balance soldier readiness and safety with the accommodation of our soldiers' faith practices, and this latest directive allows us to do that," Lieutenant Colonel Randy Taylor said in a statement.

The new rules were welcomed by the Sikh Coalition.

"We are pleased with the progress that this new policy represents for religious tolerance and diversity," said coalition Legal Director Harsimran Kaur.

Sikhs have a long tradition of military service in India and elsewhere and have served in the United States as far back as World



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NFL quarterback aims to bring more Dunkin' Donuts to Louisiana

NEW ORLEANS (AP) Doughnuts, anyone? New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees is adding to his list of local food and beverage businesses, this time partnering with Dunkin' Donuts franchisee Vik Patel to open new locations across Louisiana.

The partnership has agreed to open as many as 69 stores in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Monroe and Alexandria

over coming years, according to a news release.

Patel is chief executive of Tampa, Fla.-based Purple Square Management, which operates nearly 46 Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin Robbins locations in the Southeast as well as The Brass Tap and Popeyes franchises.

The local Dunkin' Donuts partnership is the latest in a list of food investments for Brees. The star quarterback also co-owns

local Jimmy John's sandwich franchises. In 2015, Brees and his wife, Brittany, became partners in Walk-On's Enterprises, which operates nine restaurants in Louisiana and has locations planned in Alabama, Florida, Texas, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Dunkin' Donuts, started in Quincy, Mass. in 1950, has more than 12,000 restaurants worldwide, including 12 franchises located in Louisiana.

War One. But uniform reforms after the Vietnam War made it difficult for them to serve without violating the tenets of their faith.

The new rules permit religious accommodations for beards, but they may not be longer than 2 inches unless rolled or tied up. Soldiers with a religious accommodation may wear a turban or under-turban known as a patka.

Soldiers with religious accommodations still must be able to wear combat helmets and other

protective headgear and must modify their hairstyles to achieve a proper fit.

The new rules allow head scarfs, or hijabs, for Muslim women. They must be of a similar color to the uniform and be free of designs or markings, unless they are camouflage and worn with a camouflage uniform.

Hair grooming rules have been amended to allow for braids, cornrows, twists or locks, the memo said.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Indian state elections to begin next month will test PM Modi



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the delegation at the Vibrant Gujarat investor summit in Gandhinagar, India on January 10, 2017.

NEW DELHI - India's election commission last Wednesday scheduled five state polls for the next two months that will test support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's gamble to abolish high-denomination banknotes.

Voting in Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state that is home to 200 million people, will begin on Feb. 11 and finish on March 8, chief election commissioner Nasim Zaidi told reporters.

Polls will also be conducted in the states of Goa, Manipur, Punjab and Uttarakhand in February and March, with votes in all five

elections tallied on March 11, Zaidi said.

Modi has invested huge political capital in winning Uttar Pradesh, holding a series of rallies in the state and turning his demonetisation drive into the centrepiece of the election.

On Nov. 8, Modi made the radical move to withdraw all 500 and 1,000 rupee bills, accounting for 86 percent of currency in circulation, to unearth untaxed or illicit cash held in the "shadow economy" and away from the taxman.

The move has brought India's cash economy to a virtual

standstill and impacted the lives of millions of people. But many Indians remain supportive of the policy framed as a fight against corruption and tax evaders.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or its allies rule in 14 of India's 29 states after expanding their power base since Modi's

election victory in 2014. The opposition Congress and regional parties control the remaining states.

State elections, held every five years, are vital for the BJP to be able to gain control of the upper house of parliament, where members are indirectly elected by

state legislatures and opposition parties have held up the passage of some bills.

More than 160 million people are eligible to vote in the five states headed to the polls, with Goa and Punjab currently ruled by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) or its allies.

India launches organ donation awareness drive to check black market trade

By Roli Srivastava

MUMBAI - Doctors in India will now get text alerts reminding them to ask families to donate organs of their deceased loved ones as part of a nationwide campaign to solve the country's organ shortage that has fuelled a black market trade in organs.

The drive, "Poochna Mat Bhoolo" - which means "don't forget to ask" in Hindi - will target 300,000 doctors and is the latest in a string of awareness campaigns in the country after a kidney racket involving a poor woman was busted in a top Mumbai hospital last year.

According to government data, 200,000 people are waitlisted for kidneys in India and 30,000

currently await a liver. Legal donations meet about 3 to 5 percent of the demand.

"Families don't remember to donate organs when a loved one dies, or it's too late by the time they do. So we are reminding doctors to speak to them immediately after a death," said Krishan Kumar Aggarwal, president of the Indian Medical Association, which launched the drive.

"Human trafficking for organs will stop if cadaver organ donations pick up."

Commercial trade in organs is illegal in India. Donations to a patient by a close relative are allowed but are few in number.

Some waitlisted patients, in desperation, seek the services of middlemen to arrange organs

for money.

The middlemen scout villages for potential donors, whom they sometimes lure with money and false promises of a job in the city.

"Organ failures are commonly caused by lifestyle diseases and most often affect the rich, which leads to the possibility of exploitation of the poor," Anil Kumar, who heads India's organ transplant programme, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Kumar's department has been alerted to various forms of organ trade - from people posting advertisements on websites offering money to donors, to kidnappings for organs, as well as people from Nepal trying to sell organs in India to rebuild their homes after the earthquake.



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At Hindu temple, Pakistan PM reaches out to minorities

By Drazen Jorgic

KATAS - Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday inaugurated the restoration of an ancient Hindu temple complex in Punjab, a symbolic gesture that may appeal to the Muslim nation's minority communities and soften the country's image abroad.

However, the visit and other recent overtures to minority faiths and women, including the passing of pro-women legislation, could also alienate powerful religious hardliners opposed to social change.

Sharif's visit to the 900-year-old Katas Raj temples, one of the holiest sites in South Asia for Hindus, comes at a time when relations with Pakistan's Hindu-majority neighbour India are at a low ebb and show few signs of improving.

"In my personal view, we are all equal - Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians - and people belonging to other religions; we are all one," Sharif told Reuters after a Hindu ritual was performed at the temples, located in the village of Katas some 110 km (70 miles) south of the capital Islamabad.

At the ceremony, attended by senior Christian, Sikh and Hindu leaders, Sharif chastised hardline Muslim scholars who use "strange interpretations" of Islam to preach hate against other religions.

"I believe this is not lawful. No one should try to teach this sort of lesson, nor should anyone heed such lessons," Sharif said.

Critics say Sharif's government has not done enough to tackle hardline religious groups inside Pakistan, including some with militant links, and accuse members of the ruling PML-N party of maintaining links with sectarian hardliners.

Pakistani officials want to improve the country's image, marred by religious violence and the persecution of minorities, in a bid to lure Western investors who are reluctant to come despite healthy economic growth and improving security.

"Pakistan's image, economy, foreign investment, security - they are all interlinked," said an aide to the prime minister.

ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR

Political analysts say Sharif's visit to the Katas Raj temples was part of an effort to reach

out to minority groups ahead of a general election scheduled for 2018, and would also appeal to more liberal, urban voters in Pakistan.

Non-Muslims make up only about three percent of the 190 million population, but they are clustered and their votes could swing some seats in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh.

Last month, Sharif re-named a university in honour of Abdus Salam, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist who was shunned for decades as he hailed from the small Ahmadiyya community.

A mob of about 1,000 people attacked and burned an Ahmadiyya mosque a few days after the renaming, although it is not clear whether the two events were related.

Sharif's attempt to burnish progressive credentials comes at a time when his party is confident it can retain power next year, boosted by the economic benefits from China's \$57 billion investment in road, rail and energy infrastructure.

The government has in the past year passed a bill that removed a loophole in existing law that allowed people convicted of so-called "honour killings" to walk



Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (L) attends a ceremony at 900-year-old Katas Raj temples, one of the holiest sites for Hindus, in district Chakwal, Katas Raj, Pakistan on January 11, 2017.

free if they were pardoned by family members.

The provincial government of Punjab, which is run by Sharif's brother Shehbaz, also enacted the Women's Protection Act, giving women legal protection from domestic, psychological and sexual violence.

"Only a person who is secure about his vote bank can do that," said Nadeem Paracha, a columnist for the English-language

Dawn newspaper.

Huma Yusuf, an analyst for London-based Control Risks, said Sharif was "testing the boundaries" by pushing a more progressive agenda on issues that appeal to young urban voters, but added this would not herald drastic changes.

"PML-N knows Pakistan very well, so they are unlikely to push the boundaries too much," she said.



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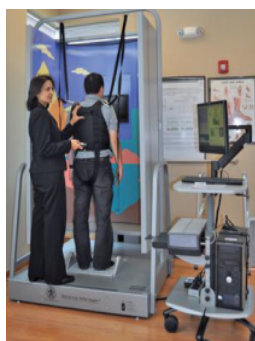
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India arrests four over New Year attack on woman in tech hub



Two men on a scooter assault a woman, attempting to take off her clothes and pushing her to the ground before leaving, in Bengaluru, India, in this still image taken from January 1, 2017 CCTV footage.

By Aby Jose Koilparambil
and Brijesh Patel

BENGALURU - Indian police have arrested four men accused of attacking a woman in the technology hub city of Bengaluru on New Year's Day, a case that has sparked a national debate about women's safety.

Police made the arrests after examining closed-circuit camera footage of the attack as the woman walked down a secluded lane in a residential area in the early hours of Jan. 1, police commissioner Praveen Sood told reporters last Thursday.

He said the attack by two men

as bystanders watched had been planned by six men including the four arrested, aged between 19 and 24, who face charges including sexual harassment and assault.

"It was a clear case of molestation and groping," Sood said, adding that the men had been "stalking ... the victim for a few days". Police are in contact with the woman, he said.

The video footage, which has been greeted with outrage in India, shows a man dismounting from a scooter to grab the woman and drag her towards the vehicle as she struggles. The other man on the scooter briefly joins the scuffle as bystanders watch.

The woman is then thrown to the ground before the men ride off.

News of the attack came after a Reuters witness and media said several women revellers were groped and assaulted by a mob in a separate incident in the city's central business district on New Year's Eve.

Regarding that incident, Sood said police had examined recordings from 45-60 closed-circuit cameras in the area but had found no evidence to support molestation

charges, although cases have still been opened based on media reports.

Bengaluru, in India's southern state of Karnataka, is home to many well-educated professionals, and has widely been viewed as safer for women than New Delhi, which is often labelled the country's rape capital for the many sex crimes reported there.

Sex crimes are common in India, with more than 34,000 rapes reported in 2015, figures

from the National Crime Record Bureau show.

Authorities often face criticism for not doing enough to address a weak system of law enforcement and policing that leaves women vulnerable.

In a bid to improve safety, the Karnataka state government also announced plans to install nearly 550 more closed-circuit cameras within two months, increase police call-centre facilities and deploy more women police officers.

India's top court orders audit of over 3 million charities

By Suchitra Mohanty

NEW DELHI - India's Supreme Court has directed the government to conduct an audit of over three million charities in the country, many of which have received millions of dollars of state funds, but have failed to show where the money was spent.

The top court on Tuesday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for not having a regulatory mechanism in place to monitor grants to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and directed authorities to recover misspent funds and take criminal action against any

fraudulent charities.

"It is unfortunate that most of the NGOs do not carry out the exercise of auditing," said the order given by a bench headed by Chief Justice of India Jagdish Singh Khehar.

"Those NGOs who did not file their balance sheets and misused the public funds would have to face action, including civil and criminal prosecution."

The court, which was hearing a petition by lawyer Manohar Lal Sharma to seek proper monitoring of funds to charities, ordered the government to complete the auditing of all non-profit groups and submit its report by March 31.

Less than 10 percent of the 3.3 million charities operating in the country have submitted their financial accounts as per government requirements, according to 2015 data presented to the court by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

These include NGOs which receive government funds for rural development as well as those who receive foreign donations.

Civil society organisations in India have increasingly come under government scrutiny in recent years, particularly since Modi's right-wing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party swept to power almost three years ago.

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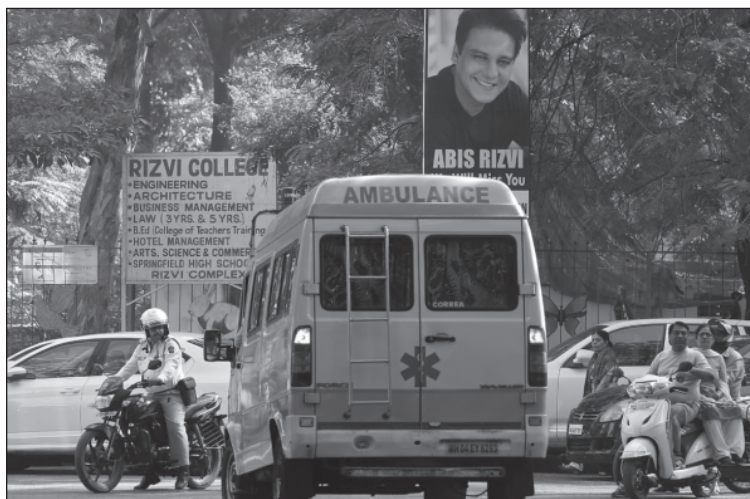
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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bollywood film producer killed in Istanbul terror attack



An ambulance carries the body of Abis Rizvi, one of the victims of Istanbul's New Year nightclub attack, before his funeral in Mumbai, India, January 4, 2017.

MUMBAI - The terror attack at the waterside Reina nightclub in Istanbul, Turkey on January 1, 2017 killed at least 39 people and injured 70 others. Among the dead were two Indians, real estate tycoon and film producer Abis Rizvi and fashion designer Khushi Shah. The alleged attacker dressed up as Santa Claus reportedly opened fired at the New Year revelers. The city's Governor Vasip Sahin termed the incident a "terror attack". The nightclub is popular with locals and tourists alike. Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for the

attack on the nightclub.

Rizvi, born in 1967, was the son of Dr. Akhtar Hassan Rizvi, former member of Rajya Sabha in Bandra, West Mumbai, Maharashtra. Rizvi was married and left behind a son. The family of Rizvi lived in Mumbai. A real estate tycoon, Rizvi was the director of the Rizvi Group and CEO of his father's real estate company Rizvi Builders. He founded the film company ARF Films (Abis Rizvi Films). The films produced by him were, 'Roar: Tigers of the Sundarbans' (2014) and 'He-Man' (2016). In

2016, Rizvi began working on his next film 'T for Taj Mahal' which was scheduled for release in 2017.

A prayer meeting in his memory was held in Bandra where many Bollywood celebrities marked their presence including Salim Khan, Sohail Khan, Tabu, Sanjay Kapoor, Raveena Tandon and husband Anil Thadani, Arshad Warsi, Amole Gupte, Sajid Nadiadwala, Puneet Issar, Jay Bhanushali, Chunky Pandey, Javed Jaffrey, Ali Quli Mirza, and Ravi Bahl among others. Politicians Baba Siddiqui and Sanjay Nirupam too were present.



Relatives and friends of Abis Rizvi, one of the victims of Istanbul's New Year nightclub attack, carry his body during his funeral in Mumbai, India, January 4, 2017.

Nearly 200 children freed from south India brick kiln in one of biggest rescues

CHENNAI - Indian police rescued nearly 200 children, most of them under the age of 14, who had been found working in a brick kiln in the southern state of Telangana in one of the biggest operations in the region, officials said last Wednesday.

The children were rescued from a brick kiln in Yadadiri district, 40 kilometres (25 miles) from state capital Hyderabad, as part of "Operation Smile", a national campaign to tackle child

labour and missing children.

The rescued children had moved from the eastern state of Odisha and were living and working with adults presumed to be their parents in the brick kiln, police said.

"We are not sure if the parents are genuine and there is a possibility that some of the children were trafficked," Mahesh Bhagwat, a police commissioner, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"The rescue teams spotted girls

as young as seven and eight carrying bricks on their head. Some of the children were as young as four."

In 2015, the International Labour Organization (ILO) put the number of Indian child workers aged between five and 17 at 5.7 million, out of 168 million globally.

More than half work in agriculture and over a quarter work in the manufacturing sector, the ILO said.



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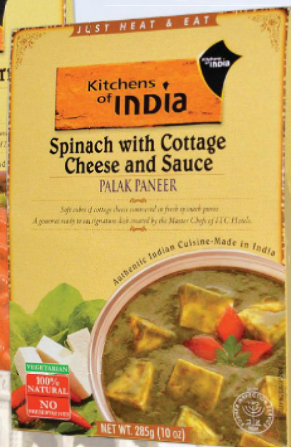
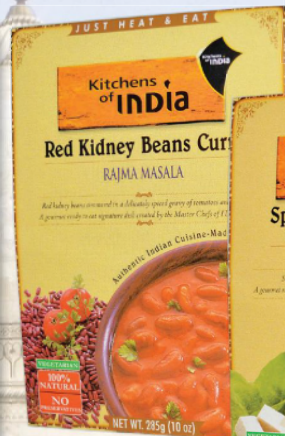


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Amazon halts sales of Indian flag doormat after visa threat

By Sankalp Phartiyal

MUMBAI - Amazon.com removed doormats resembling the Indian tri-colour flag from its Canadian website on Wednesday, after an Indian government threat

to rescind visas of the U.S. company's employees if they did not stop selling the product.

"Amazon must tender unconditional apology," India's external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj said on Twitter. "They must

withdraw all products insulting our national flag immediately."

"If this is not done forthwith, we will not grant Indian Visa to any Amazon official," she added. "We will also rescind the Visas issued earlier."

Six die in India bakery fire, spurs calls for enforcement of labour laws

By Roli Srivastava

MUMBAI - Six migrant workers who had been locked inside a bakery by their employer in western India suffocated to death in a fire, triggering calls for decades-old labour laws to be implemented to crack down on worker exploitation and abuse.

A short circuit caused a fire in a bakery in Pune in western Maharashtra state last Friday when the workers were asleep on the mezzanine floor where they also baked cakes and cookies.

They were unable to escape as the bakery owner had locked the shutter door from outside to prevent theft. When firemen broke into the bakery, they found the workers' bodies on the mezzanine floor.

The workers died of suffocation

and burns, officials said.

"When such cases occur, the law enforcement agencies look at the more obvious crime and ignore other sections" of the law, said Chandan Kumar, a core group member on bonded labour with the National Human Rights Commission.

The employer was arrested and charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder, keeping the workers locked up, constructing an illegal mezzanine where the workers lived and worked, and operating the bakery without government approval.

Activists say the employer should also have been charged with violating labour laws.

More than 90% of India's workforce - an estimated 400 million people - are in informal

employment. This includes labourers on farms and construction sites, as well as in shops, hotels and restaurants.

Many work in conditions that violate Indian laws enacted decades ago to protect labour rights.

One law that is not enforced requires migrant workers' data to be recorded in their home state and their destination of employment, said Umi Daniel, South Asia regional head of the non-governmental organisation Aide et Action International.

"It is important to record this data as it would not only enumerate migrant workers from each state, but also identify where they are working and help in better regulation of their work conditions," Daniel told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.



Amazon.com removed doormats resembling the Indian tri-colour flag from its Canadian website on Wednesday, after an Indian government threat to rescind visas of the U.S. company's employees if they did not stop selling the product.

The doormat, sold by a third-party on Amazon's Canadian portal, was taken down late on Wednesday.

"The item is no longer available for sale on the site," a spokeswoman for Amazon said in an email.

Amazon's portal in Canada sells doormats fashioned around other national flags, but under Indian law any desecration of its flag is punishable with fines and imprisonment.

Amazon's official support account on Twitter had earlier responded to angry user comments on Twitter by saying the mats were not being sold on their Indian portal and the concerns had been escalated.

Swaraj tweeted that she had

asked the Indian High Commission in Canada to take up the issue with Amazon, after it was brought to her attention by a Twitter user from India's financial capital of Mumbai.

Swaraj is a prolific user of the social media website and often responds to tweets directed at her.

Amazon is making a huge bet on India and has vowed to invest more than \$5 billion as it takes on home-grown Flipkart and Snapdeal for a bigger share of the world's fastest growing internet services market.

In an event attended by Indian premier Narendra Modi in Washington last year, Amazon Chief Executive Jeff Bezos said India was the company's fastest growing region.

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China blocks India's request for UN to blacklist militant chief

NEW DELHI - China has blocked India's request to add the head of the Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad to a U.N. Security Council blacklist of groups linked to al Qaeda, India said last month.

India has accused Jaish-e-Mohammad and its top leader, Maulana Masood Azhar, of masterminding several attacks, including a deadly assault on an Indian air base in January.

Pakistani security officials interrogated Azhar and his

associates after the attack, and said they found no evidence linking him to it.

Jaish-e-Mohammad has already been blacklisted by the 15-nation Security Council, but not Azhar, an Islamist hardliner and long-time foe of India.

Foreign ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said that India had requested that Azhar be added to the list nine months ago and had received strong backing from all other members of the council.

But China, which put a hold

on the move in April, had now blocked it, he said.

"We had expected China would have been more understanding of the danger posed to all by terrorism," he said in a statement.

Swarup added that the inability of the international community to take the step showed the "prevalence of double standards in the fight against terrorism".

China's foreign ministry said there were different views about the case, so China had put



REUTERS/Mian Kurshed/FILE PHOTO

FILE PHOTO: Maulana Masood Azhar, head of Pakistan's militant Jaish-e-Mohammad party, attends a pro-Taliban conference organised by the Afghan Defence Council in Islamabad on August 26, 2001.

forward a "technical shelving" to give more time for consultation, but that regretfully no consensus had been reached.

China's aim is to maintain the authority and effectiveness of name listing by the committee discussing the case, which accords with Security Council resolutions and is the responsible thing to do, it said in a statement sent to Reuters.

China will continue to maintain communication with all parties, it added.

India has long accused its neighbour and rival Pakistan of using Jaish-e-Mohammad as a proxy to mount attacks on Indian soil, including in the disputed Kashmir region, and earlier gave what it called "actionable intelligence" to Pakistan, including telephone intercepts.

Pakistan denies giving any aid to Kashmir-based militants.

If Azhar was blacklisted by the U.N. Security Council, he would face a global travel ban and asset freeze.

Pakistan fires "first submarine-launched nuclear-capable missile"

ISLAMABAD - Pakistan fired its first submarine-launched cruise missile on Monday, the military said, a show of force for a country that sees its missile development as a deterrent against arch-foe India.

The launch of the nuclear-capable Babur-3 missile, which has a range of 450 km (280 miles) and was fired from an undisclosed location in the Indian Ocean, is likely to heighten long-running tension between India and Pakistan.

The nuclear-armed neighbours

have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947. Both nations have been developing missiles of varying ranges since they conducted nuclear tests in May 1998.

"Pakistan eyes this hallmark development as a step towards reinforcing the policy of credible minimum deterrence," the military's media wing said in a statement.

A spokesman at the Indian defence ministry was not immediately available to comment on the Pakistani missile test.

India successfully test-fired a nuclear-capable, submarine-launched missile in 2008 and tested a submarine-launched cruise missile in 2013.

The Pakistani military said the Babur-3 missile was "capable of delivering various types of payloads and will provide Pakistan with a Credible Second Strike Capability, augmenting deterrence".

An army spokesman later confirmed the language meant the missile was equipped to carry nuclear warheads.

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Pakistan to release 218 Indian fishermen



Fishermen from India who were held captive for crossing territorial waters wave from the windows of a train after their release, at Cantonment railway station in Karachi, Pakistan on January 5, 2017.

KARACHI - Pakistan began releasing 218 Indian fishermen last Thursday, police said, the second such gesture in a month that could begin to ease tension between the neighbours.

The men were arrested more than a year ago, accused of entering Pakistani waters in an area of the Arabian Sea where the border is disputed.

India is also holding Pakistani fishermen for the same reason, and Pakistan hopes its release will be reciprocated.

"They are being released by the

orders of the federal government," said Ali Hassan Setho, a superintendent of police in the port city of Karachi, where the men are being held.

"They will go via Lahore," he said, referring to the Pakistani city near the main border crossing into India.

Relations between nuclear-armed neighbours have been more fraught than usual since a crackdown by Indian security forces on dissent in Indian-controlled Kashmir began in July.

Both countries claim the

Muslim-majority region in full and rule it in part. India accuses Pakistan of supporting an insurgency against Indian rule in its part of Kashmir. Pakistan denies that.

In September, militants killed 18 soldiers at an Indian army base in an attack India blamed on Pakistan. Pakistan denied involvement.

Intermittent talks between them on a range of issues, including their disputed maritime border, have stalled.

In the past, gestures such as fishermen releases have helped to improve the atmosphere for a resumption of talks.

Pakistan last released a batch of Indian fishermen on Dec. 25.

One of the men being released

said it was good to be going home after a year.

"I'm very happy that I'll be reunited with my mother, brothers, sisters and my children," the man who goes by the single name Kamlesh, from India's western state of Gujarat, told reporters.

"I'm excited to think that very soon I'll reach there and see their faces."

Abused housemaid's death in Indian capital raises trafficking concerns

CHENNAI - The death of a housemaid who said she was abused by her New Delhi employers after being lured to the city with the promise of a job has raised new concerns over those trapped in domestic servitude in India.

Campaigners are demanding a renewed crackdown on unregulated employment agencies that profit from workers from impoverished states attracted to cities hoping to earn money to support their families back home.

The 24-year-old housemaid died in hospital on Wednesday, two weeks after she was admitted with multiple fractures and injuries, police said.

She had been trafficked from the eastern Indian state of West Bengal three years ago.

The woman's cousin, who also works as a housemaid in the city, called a helpline asking for help on Dec. 19.

Swati Maliwal, head of the Delhi Commission for Women, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation: "When I reached the hospital, what I saw was horrifying.

"She looked starved and could barely move. In her statement to the police she said that she had been beaten with iron rods by her employer for complaining about excess work."

There are an estimated 50 mil-

lion domestic workers in India, most of them women, who are regularly exploited in the absence of any legal protection with a nationwide policy to support domestic workers awaiting cabinet approval, activists say.

Traffickers zero in on poor villages in states such as West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, convincing vulnerable families to send their daughters away for employment.

But the children and young women are often passed onto unregulated placement agencies and transported in groups to cities where a growing middle class is looking for cheap live-in labour.

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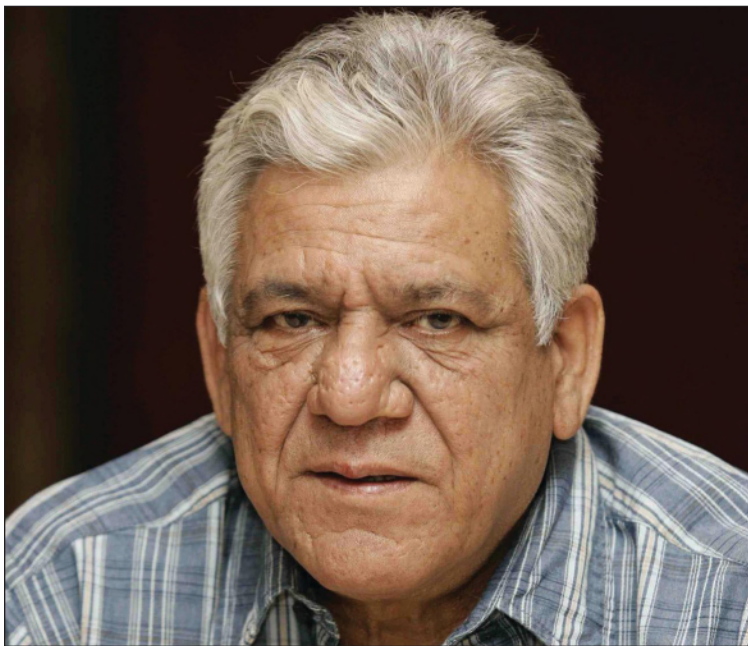
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D5080

Indian actor Om Puri, star in Bollywood and the West, dies at 66



By Muneeza Naqvi

NEW DELHI (AP) - Noted Indian character actor Om Puri, who worked in films at home and abroad, has died in the western city of Mumbai. Puri, 66, suffered cardiac arrest, his friend and actor Anupam Kher told reporters.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and a host of leading movie stars tweeted condolence messages

shortly after Puri's death was announced last Friday morning.

"Who dare say Om Puri is no more? He lives through his work," actor Kamal Hassan tweeted.

"He showed that you didn't have to be 'fair' and 'good-looking' to be a protagonist," said Saeed Akhtar Mirza, who directed Puri in one of his earliest films, "Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Aata Hai" (Why does Albert Pinto get



Amitabh Bachchan, Om Puri's son, his wife Nandita and Om Puri himself at the unveiling ceremony of his biography 'Unlikely Hero: The Story of Om Puri'.

Angry?)."

"It was just the force of his personality and his performance."

Puri's broad-nosed face - marked by a childhood case of smallpox - was not the stuff of Bollywood heroes. When he auditioned for the prestigious Film and Television Institute of India in the 1970s, the committee debated where he might fit in the industry, remarking that he had the face

'neither of a hero, nor a villain, nor a comedian,' his wife, a journalist, wrote in 'Unlikely Hero' (2009), a biography of Puri.

His breakthrough film was the 1983 gritty drama "Ardh Satya," or "Half Truth," about a young policeman's crisis of conscience as he deals with the nexus of crime and politics in India.

Puri had won a slew of national awards and international fame

for his work in several critically acclaimed films.

In the 1999 British comedy "East is East," he played a Pakistani immigrant in England who bumbles about as he tries to wrap his head around the clash of cultures that arises from his relationship with his children from a marriage to a British Catholic woman. He also had a small role in Richard Attenborough's film "Gandhi," based on the life of the Indian freedom leader Mohandas Gandhi. He also acted in several Hollywood films, including "City of Joy," "Wolf" and "Charlie Wilson's War."

In 2014, Puri starred with British actress Helen Mirren in the comedy "The Hundred-Foot Journey."

His distinctive baritone, and ability to switch seamlessly between art house, Bollywood, Hollywood and British film, made him an international star, one of the few Indian actors to cross over to the West before the likes Irrfan Khan and Priyanka Chopra made the jump.

His body was cremated last Friday.

Om Puri's postmortem reports head injury, driver says actor had consumed alcohol

MUMBAI - Om Puri, 66, was found dead in the kitchen of his Andheri home, on the morning of January 6, 2017 in Mumbai.

It was suspected that the actor had suffered a heart attack. He had also sustained a one-and-a-half inch deep and four centimetres long cut on his head as a result of his fall. The cause of the injury is not known yet. Since the actor was alone at home at the time of his death and was injured, the police had to file an Accidental Death Report as part of their routine procedure. Close friends of the actor speculate on the night before his death Om had a drinking binge, he stumbled and fell in the kitchen and died.

Puri's driver Ram Mishra was the one who found the actor last Friday morning. He told the police that he had dropped Puri home late last Thursday night. However, when he reported to duty last Friday morning at 7 am, Puri didn't answer the doorbell. An alarmed Mishra asked Puri's neighbours for help, and the door was eventually opened with the help of the police.

The post-mortem results are expected in another two weeks.

Meanwhile, producer Khalid Kidwai - who was reportedly with Puri until a few hours before his death - told the police that the actor had consumed alcohol last Thursday night, and had wanted to meet his son Ishaan.

"Om Puri wanted to meet his son Ishaan last Thursday evening. So we went to Trishul building where his ex-wife Nandita lives with Ishaan but were unable to meet them as both Nandita and Ishaan had gone for a party. Om Puri then had an argument over the phone with Nandita and asked them to come soon as he wanted to meet his son," Kidwai said in his statement to the cops, as per a report in Mumbai Mirror.

"He poured a drink in his glass and waited for almost 45 minutes at Nandita's flat. But when they did not turn up, he took the glass and liquor bottle and started drinking in the car. After finishing the drink, we left," the statement concluded.

Ishaan, 16, is a special child and the Mirror report states that Puri was hoping to move to the U.S. where he could get better medical care for his son.

In 2009, Nandita wrote a biography of her husband titled 'Unlikely Hero: The Story Of Om Puri.' The inclusion of explicit details of Puri's previous relationships in the book made him very upset. The main reason for Puri's anger, as revealed by Nandita, was her revelation that he had sex with his maid Shanti at the age of 14. Nandita had also exposed Puri's longstanding liaison with a woman named Laxmi with whom Puri was sexually and emotionally involved.



Om Puri with actor Naseeruddin Shah

Puri had even spoken about this in an interview at that time. He said, "My wife has reduced a very important and sacred part of my life to cheap and lurid gossip. I had shared these dark secrets with my wife as all husbands do. If she chose to make them public, at least she should've made sure to maintain a dignity about experiences that are a valuable part of my life. Has she forgotten that I have a standing in society and I've worked hard to achieve all that I have today? I won't allow her to throw it all away for the sake of sensationalism."

Nandita filed an allegation of domestic violence against him, and the two opted for a judicial separation after 26 years of marriage, as things turned ugly between them following the biography.

In a recent interview with DNA, Puri's close friend and colleague Naseeruddin Shah admitted that



Om Puri with actor Tom Hanks in the film 'Charlie Wilson's War'.

personal problems had taken a toll on the actor, mentally and physically. "I know for a fact that Om was really suffering during the last few years," Shah said. "And there was no way out of it. Though his death was sudden, I can't say it was totally unexpected. In a way, death has relieved him of all the stress, and that includes the bad films he took on, I presume for financial reasons. Om took all the criticism on his chin."

British Nandy, a writer and politician in Mumbai, posted on Twitter that Puri had "spent the best years of his life disappointed, waiting for roles he deserved but never got."

His friend and fellow actor Anupam Kher said in a remembrance published in the newsmagazine India Today that Puri had died a "lonely death."

His troubled marriage to Nandita and his first wife Seema Kapoor who was back in his life

made murky headlines in the last years of Puri's life.

It won't be wrong to say the stress of managing two relationships killed Puri said a friend of the late actor.

"He drank himself to death. He would have constant fights with Seemaji about the drinking. Just some months ago Om landed up with a hand injury after he stumbled and fell on the way to his apartment. Seemaji made it very clear to him that he was destroying himself and she couldn't watch him do this to himself," says the friend.

Puri was philosophical about his disappointments.

"I, frankly, don't dream, because I want to remain happy," he told The Times. "When you dream too much and the dream doesn't come true, you hurt yourself. And I don't want to hurt myself. So I don't dream. I take things as they are."

BOLLYWOOD Insider™

Bollywood Beat

Akshay condemns Bengaluru mass molestation



While the world brought in New Year amidst fun and frolic, the state of Karnataka woke up to horrendous news of mass molestation at a prime locality in their capital, Bengaluru. As women complained of being sexually harassed, eve teased and groped, the incident sparked a nationwide outrage on social media as Bollywood stars condemned the act and came out in support of the victims.

One amongst them was Akshay Kumar. The superstar has time and again spoken about self-defence and martial arts and even started teaching the same to women in collaboration with famous youth politician Aditya Thackeray. Angered and appalled by the Bengaluru incident, Akshay Kumar took to social media to firmly condemn the act and encourage women to stand up against the cruelty. He continued to inspire women to learn martial arts and self-defence in order to combat such situations.

Talking about how he came across the news whilst returning with his family from Cape Town amidst all the New Year celebrations, Akshay Kumar shared a video on his Twitter handle, with a post that read, "The Bangalore incident makes me feel we're evolving backwards, from humans to animals, rather beasts coz even animals are better! Truly shameful"

To see his video visit: <http://tinyurl.com/j9xprrs>

FORTHCOMING MOVIE

Raees

Banner:
Excel Entertainment
Red Chillies Entertainment

Producer:
Farhan Akhtar
Ritesh Sidhwani
Gauri Khan

Director:
Rahul Dholakia

Starring:
Shah Rukh Khan
Mahira Khan
Nawazuddin Siddiqui
Sunny Leone
Sheeba Chaddha

Music By:
Ram Sampath

Release Date:
January 25, 2017

Raees is an upcoming Indian crime-thriller film directed by Rahul Dholakia and produced by Farhan Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani and Gauri Khan. Pakistani actress Mahira Khan will share screen with King Khan.

Raees is the fictitious story of a clever bootlegger named Raees Alam (played by Shah Rukh Khan), set in early 1980's to 1990's Gujarat, India.

The film explores how Raees' relationships and meteoric rise helped him build an entire empire from scratch, to make him the single most powerful man in the state. Less of a gangster but more of an impresario, Raees gains popularity, a cult following and most importantly the public's trust by demonstrating entrepreneurial flair, unfettered determination to achieving his goals and ironically a heart of gold.

His layered character traits encapsulate an inimitable blend of personas, making him revered, loved and feared. Always thinking ahead of the curve and using revolutionary ideas of management which were unheard of during his time, but are now doctrines for students, Raees

eliminates every opposition that comes his way.

However, his downfall will be crossing paths with the no-nonsense police officer (played by Nawazuddin Siddiqui), whose sole reason for existence is the elimination of crime.

What ensues next is a tumultuous battle between the two, which forms a key defining element of the film's narrative.

ABDUL LATIF, THE REAL RAEES?

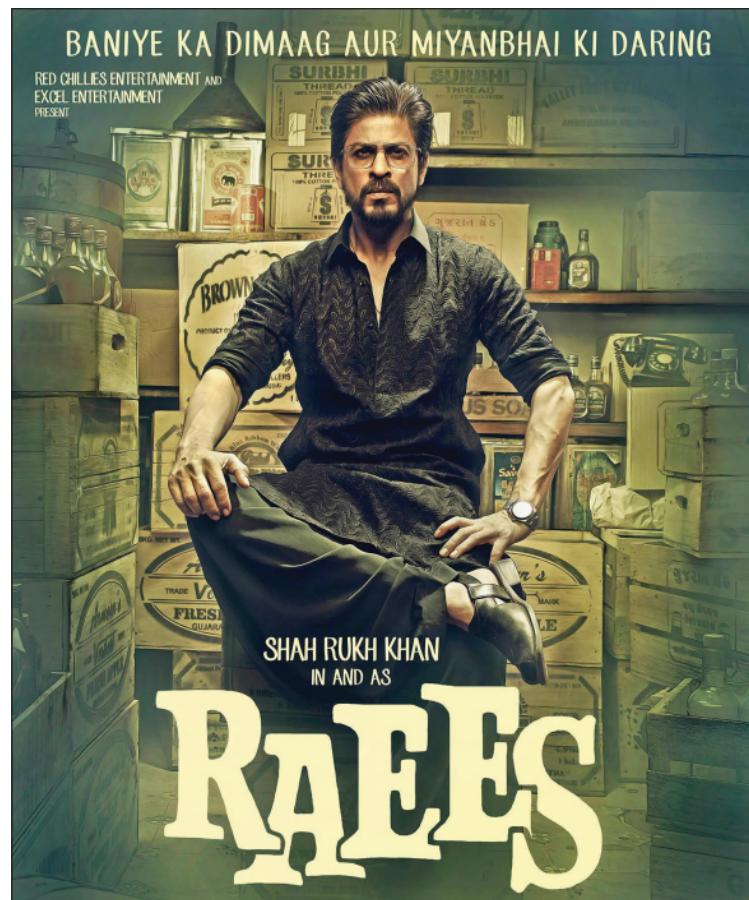
One of the aspects that is getting attention is the real life character, upon whose life the movie is based. And that character is underworld don Abdul Latif, who was as ferocious and dangerous as Dawood Ibrahim, though not as popular in common knowledge.

And the story of Latif is very interesting as it plays an important role in the decline of Congress and growth of BJP in Gujarat, the state from where the don hailed.

Abdul Latif was born in Kalupur area of Ahmedabad in 1951 in a poor Muslim family. One of seven children of his father, he couldn't get a decent upbringing and struggled to finish school. He was soon employed by his father at his shop, where he sold tobacco, but he started fighting with his father for more money. After getting into his 20s, he decided to go his own way.

To make quick money, he entered the world of illicit businesses and became a bootlegger, and that's where his journey into the world of crime, politics, and terrorism started. As a bootlegger, he established contacts and relationships with smugglers, criminals, policemen and politicians who helped and allowed this illegal business to flourish.

In the process of growing his clout and illicit business, Latif became involved in other crimes like extortion, kidnapping and even murders. He developed contacts in Pakistan too. He



formed his own gang, and at one point of time in the early 80s, he was indulged in a gang-war against Dawood Ibrahim.

Seeing the growing clout of Latif, even Dawood Ibrahim decided to make peace with him in the late 80s. In November 1989, Latif is reported to have received a message from Dawood for a meeting in Dubai. There, a maulana made both Dawood and Latif swear on the Holy Quran not to fight against each other and work as a team. And that was the beginning of Latif's entry into the world of terrorism.

In the following years, Latif became synonymous with crime and Islamic terrorism in Gujarat as he joined hands with Dawood, who by then had started planning the Mumbai blasts of 1993. Latif was also seen as the product of the policy of Muslim appeasement by the Congress party, which allowed such criminals to grow for petty political gains.

BJP made the arrest and downfall of Latif an election

issue and it is said that it played a very vital role in the growth of the party in the state, especially in Ahmedabad.

In 1995, BJP formed its own government in Gujarat and the same year later Latif was arrested in Delhi following a two month long operation led by the Anti Terrorism Squad of Gujarat Police. Latif was lodged in Sabarmati Jail of Ahmedabad subsequently, and two years later, he was killed in an encounter when he tried to flee from the police custody.

The arrest and end of Latif's terror was seen as a promise kept by the BJP and is seen as a major factor why BJP's popularity and political power kept growing and Congress could never come back to power in Gujarat.

Now it is to be seen how Shah Rukh Khan's upcoming movie *Raees* portrays Abdul Latif. Will he be portrayed as the communal gangster turned terrorist that he was, or will there be some whitewashing of his deeds?

Top 3 Bollywood Films

- 1) **Dangal** - Directed by Nitesh Tiwari
Starring: Aamir Khan, Sanya Malhotra, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Sakshi Tanwar, Suhani Bhatnagar, Zaira Wasim
- 2) **Kahaani 2** - Directed by Sujoy Ghosh
Starring: Vidya Balan, Arjun Rampal, Tunisha Sharma, Manini Chadha, Jugal Hansraj and Amba Sanyal
- 3) **Befikre** - Directed by Aditya Chopra
Starring: Ranveer Singh, Vaani Kapoor, Armaan Ralhan, Julie Ordon and Aysha Raza

Top 10 Bollywood Film Songs

- 10) "Wajah Tum Ho" - *Wajah Tum Ho*
- 9) "Love You Zindagi" - *Dear Zindagi*
- 8) "Nashe Si Chadh Gayi" - *Befikre*
- 7) "Bloody Hell" - *Rangoon*
- 6) "Zaalima" - *Raees*
- 5) "Go Pagal" - *Jolly LLB 2*
- 4) "Kaabil Hoon" - *Kaabil*
- 3) "The Humma Song" - *OK Jaanu*
- 2) "Laila Main Laila" - *Raees*
- 1) "Dangal" - *Dangal*

Bollywood Trivia

Name the first TV show hosted by Shah Rukh?

- 1) Kaun Banega Crorepati Season 3
- 2) Kya Aap Paanchvi Pass Se Tez Hain?
- 3) Zor Ka Jhatka: Total Wipeout
- 4) India Poochega Sabse Shaana Kaun?

BOLLYWOOD Insider™

MOVIE REVIEW

Ok Jaanu

Banner:
Madras Talkies
Fox Star Studios
Dharma Productions

Producer:
Mani Ratnam
Karan Johar

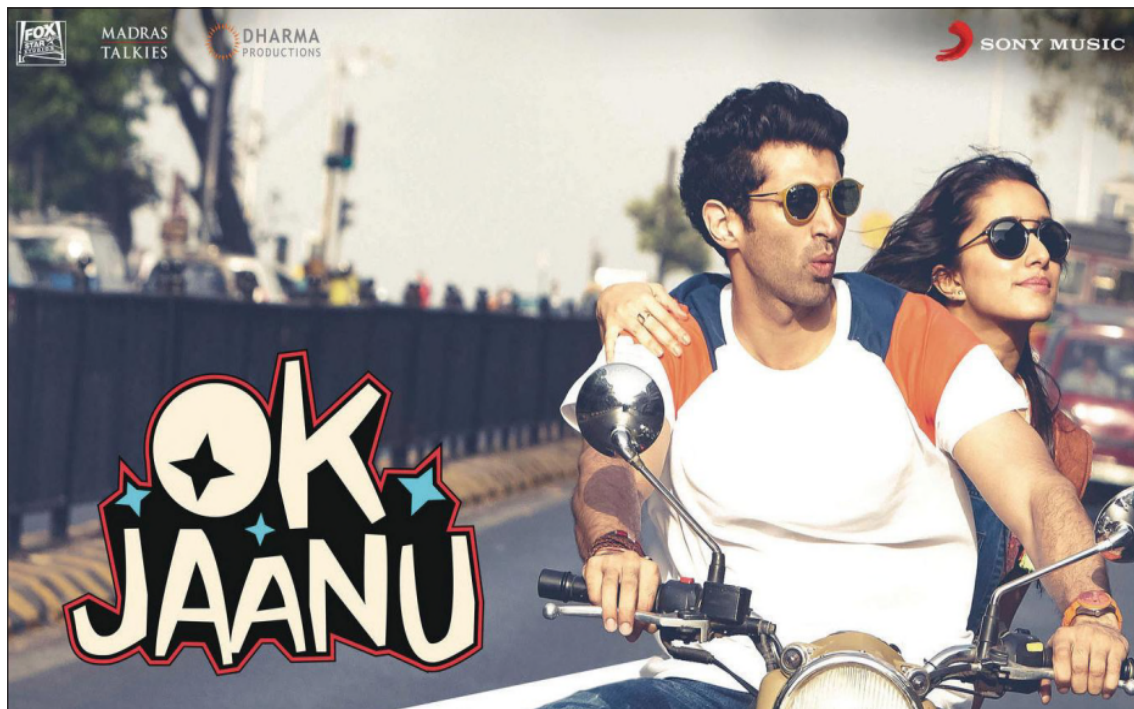
Director:
Shaad Ali

Starring:
Aditya Roy Kapur
Shradha Kapoor

Music By:
A.R. Rahman

Ameer ladka, gareeb ladki, love triangles, horrible parents, different backgrounds, different religions, different people, we have exhausted most possibilities, plots and premises for a decent love story. Hence film-makers these days explore the challenges millennials face, one of them being the tough choice between career and love.

Ok Jaanu is an easy breezy watch without any major crisis. The characters have depth... that of my morning masala chai. The story has layers...that of



my lachcha paratha. There's hardly any dilemma, any major cross roads that lead to any soul stirring, damn-I-can't-decide moment!

Happy boy meets happy girl in a cute well written scene at the church. They exchange numbers and before we know they are already doing "Humma Humma" in a rather shady hotel in Ahmedabad.

Adi (Aditya Roy Kapur) and Tara (Shradha Kapoor) are ambitious people. They have American-French plans and mind you, they work very hard towards them, like take a random unplanned vacation sometimes or have multiple coffee dates every day. I like this world. There are no deadlines, no bosses to report to, no targets to meet. Aha, what a life!!

And sometimes the film gives us insights into Tara's profession equating architecture with life and universe; architecture is like magic, it's like passion, it's like romance....yawwwwwnnn!!

One hopes for some real crisis to crop up in the second half but hope can take a walk in Safa Park because we are shown sequences that have hardly any meaning or relevance to the movie.

However there are a few things that work for the movie. Nasserudin Shah and Leela Samson's love track does offer an interesting foil to the young love story. The dialogues by Gulzar are fun as well. "Bachcho ko hum padha padha kar gadhe se ghoda banate hain...aur phir bade hokar unhe ghodi pe bithate hain..." Sadly they are few and far in between.

Both Shradha and Aditya do

full justice to their lazily written characters. Their chemistry is palpable and their efforts are earnest!

The film seems to have a huge *Saathiya* hangover; from the local train conversations to the way Ravi K Chandran captures Mumbai on his lens. And oh how beautifully it's done. So delicious!

The climax also blends all elements from rains, confusion, chaos and crowd to create the required tension in the scene. But what's with the forced "Ok Jaanu" every five minutes in the film. These two words are as pointlessly used as 'A' and 'Y' in Okay! Was it an attempt to remind us the title of the film? Imagine if the makers of *Andheri Raat Mein Diya Tere Haath Mein* took a cue from *Ok Jaanu*!

Ok Jaanu doesn't convince you with the couple's fear against marriage. Neither does it showcase real career problems. The parents and family are also such boring cardboard characters. You can see the climax well in advance but can hardly see any logic or reasoning in their change of hearts.

Rating: ★★☆☆

Bollywood Beat

SRK and Salman to come together again in 'Tubelight'



The last time we saw Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan together in a movie, it was in *Om Shanti Om*'s title song eight years ago, in which Salman shook a leg along with other stars. Now, Shah Rukh will have a cameo in Salman's upcoming film, *Tubelight*.

Film trade analyst Komal Nahta confirmed the news in a tweet. "Confirmed news, guys. Absolutely great news. Shah Rukh Khan will play an important cameo in... hold your breath... Salman Khan's *Tubelight*!" he wrote.

Salman and Shah Rukh first came together in hit 1995 movie *Karan Arjun* and again in *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* in 1998.

Shah Rukh to appear with Salman on 'Bigg Boss' again

Putting an end to all speculations about rivalry and cold war, Shah Rukh Khan and Salman Khan's reunion has created lots of buzz in media.

The *Karan Arjun* pair will be a part of the finale episode of the controversial reality show 'Bigg Boss'. SRK will be promoting his forthcoming film *Raees* on the show. Further, he will not only make an appearance in one but both episodes during the weekend. Along with performance on *Raees* songs, the episode will also include fun and games. He will start shooting for the same on Friday, Jan. 20 along with Salman.



Celebrity Birthdays

January 13th Imran Khan (1983)	January 18th Vinod Kambli (1972)	January 24th Subhash Ghai (1945)
January 15th Neil Nitin Mukesh (1982)	January 21st Sushant Singh Rajput (1986)	January 27th Bobby Deol (1967)
January 16th Sidharth Malhotra (1985)	January 22nd Namrata Shirodkar (1972)	
January 17th Javed Akhtar (1945)		



Upcoming Films

Rangoon Saif Ali Khan Kangana Ranaut Shahid Kapoor	Begum Jaan Vidya Balan Gauhar Khan	Jolly LLB 2 Akshay Kumar Huma Qureshi, Annu Kapoor
Jagga Jasoos Ranbir Kapoor Katrina Kaif	Badrinath Ki Dulhania Varun Dhawan Alia Bhatt	Sarkar 3 Amitabh Bachchan, Manoj Bajpayee, Yami Gautam, Amit Sadh and Ronit Roy
Raees Shah Rukh Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Mahira Khan	Kaabil Hrithik Roshan Yami Gautam	Phillauri Anushka Sharma Diljit Dosanjh

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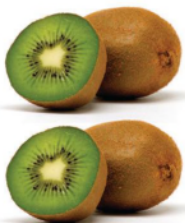
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Mercedes-Benz overtakes BMW to become largest premium carmaker



Daimler chairman Dieter Zetsche poses with the new 2018 Mercedes-Benz E-Class Coupe during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan, U.S. on January 9, 2017.

By Edward Taylor and Ilona Wissenbach

STUTTGART - Mercedes-Benz sales overtook BMW last year for the first time in more than a decade, a feat achieved, ironically, only after parent company Daimler stopped chasing market share and focused on making stylish high-tech cars.

On Monday, Bavaria-based BMW said it sold 2,003,359 cars in 2016, less than the 2,083,888 by Stuttgart-based Mercedes. BMW had outsold Mercedes every year since 2005.

The achievement is a coup for Daimler Chief Executive Dieter Zetsche, who struggled to

revive the company following a messy divorce from mass-market brand Chrysler in 2007. Less than four years ago, Zetsche faced restive shareholders, worried Daimler was lagging BMW and Volkswagen's Audi brand.

"We had some deficits, cost and quality problems. Design was not top-notch. And with Chrysler we were no longer a pure premium carmaker," Zetsche told Reuters in an interview late in 2016 in his office at Daimler's headquarters.

Zetsche has presided over a renaissance in the design and technology of Mercedes vehicles, refocused the company on technological excellence and autonomous driving instead of

short-term sales goals, and adapted the entrepreneurial mindset of Silicon Valley to the traditionally risk averse culture of Stuttgart.

Daimler is also preparing for a new era when the auto industry's business model moves beyond manufacturing and selling cars to luring customers interested in pay-per-minute transport solutions provided by self-driving cars.

At the company's 125th anniversary in 2011 - a year when Audi sales overtook those of Mercedes, pushing it into third place - Zetsche forecast his improvements would make Mercedes the best-selling luxury carmaker by 2020.

"Since then we worked hard and today we are leading or among the leaders when it comes to innovation, quality, design and security," Zetsche said.

Daimler traditionalists were shocked by the volume forecast, fearing that selling too many vehicles could dilute the exclusivity of their cars and reduce the appeal of the Mercedes brand in the long run.

But consumer electronics companies such as Apple had already proven the pull of their brands did not suffer with

increased sales volumes.

Daniel Binns a managing director at branding agency Interbrand, said advances in technology have made a product's scarcity less of a selling point.

"I've got it and you haven't, is what used to make premium. Now it is much more about having a better quality experience. So much of what defines an experience to the current generation is about what the technology delivers. The autonomous vehicle is the pinnacle of that," he said.

The overhaul of Mercedes began in earnest in May 2013 with the launch of a new flagship S-class. To burnish its credentials as a technology leader, Mercedes developed a prototype version which drove around 100 kilometres (62 miles) autonomously the same year.

Rather than designing a limousine which appealed mainly to rear seat passengers, the new S-Class featured large digital display screens on the dashboard, a deliberate attempt to appeal to a younger, driver-focused audience.

The same youthful design approach was used for the new C-Class and E-class designs, which are now the company's big sellers.

BIZ BRIEFS

India to present 2017/18 federal budget on Feb. 1

NEW DELHI - The Indian government will present on Feb. 1 its budget for the 2017/18 financial year starting on April 1, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

The first part of the budget session of parliament will start on Jan. 31 when the government is expected to present the Economic Survey, which sets the scene for Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's fourth annual budget, the official who did not wish to be named, said.

Indian auto sales see biggest drop in 16 years

MUMBAI India's automobile sales saw their biggest monthly fall in 16 years in December after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ban on high-value banknotes sparked a severe cash shortage that dented demand for big-ticket items such as cars.

Automobile sales fell 18.66% in December to 1.2 million units, the biggest monthly drop since the same month in 2000, data from the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers showed on Wednesday.

Auto sales have seen an especially big drop in rural areas and regions where cash transactions are typically prevalent. Large two wheeler manufacturers have also seen a big impact due to their high exposure to rural markets, the data showed.

Two-wheeler sales fell 22% in December from the previous month, one of the biggest falls on record, to 910,235 units, while domestic passenger car sales saw a 8.14% drop to 158,617 units.

India's economic growth projected to slow to 7.1%

NEW DELHI (AP) - India's economic growth was projected to slow to 7.1% this fiscal year in the first indicator of the impact of the government's recent currency move.

The estimate released last Friday by the Indian Central Statistics Office for the fiscal year ending March 31 compared to 7.6% last year. The estimate is mostly based on data available through October, so likely

it does not show the full impact of demonetization, which was announced on Nov. 8.

The GDP growth estimates will be key to India's preparations to unveil the budget for the next fiscal year on Feb. 1.

Normally full-year GDP estimates are released in February and factor in data until the end of December and the budget is announced at the end of February.

India reluctant to give special tax incentives to Apple

India is resisting tech giant Apple Inc's demand for tax incentives to make iPhones in the country, with the trade minister saying last Thursday that the government may not make exceptions for the U.S. company.

Apple wants to open its own stores in India, but has been asked by the government to locally source at least some of the components, as part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bid to boost

manufacturing in the country.

Apple has sought tax concessions, including lower import and manufacturing duties, to make iPhones locally, according to a government official familiar with the situation.

Trade Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said if India were to agree to any concessions, they would likely apply to all smartphone manufacturers, and not just Apple.

Apple declined to comment.

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India central bank chief urges government to cut borrowing



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel attends a seminar during the Vibrant Gujarat investor summit in Gandhinagar, India, January 11, 2017.

By Aditi Shah
and Suvashree Choudhury

GANDHINAGAR/MUMBAI Reserve Bank of India Governor Urjit Patel urged the government on Wednesday to show some progress in cutting high federal and state government borrowing, just weeks before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration is due to unveil its annual budget.

Patel, in a speech at the Vibrant Gujarat summit, said the government debt to gross domestic product ratio was also taking its toll on the country's sovereign ratings.

India's total fiscal deficit, combining the levels of the federal and state governments, was among the highest in G20 countries, Patel said, citing International Monetary Fund data.

India's current fiscal deficit is targeted at 6.4 percent of GDP at the combined state and federal level for the year ending in March. Modi's government will announce its new federal deficit target on Feb. 1, when it unveils its annual fiscal plan.

"We have to take cognisance of these comparisons and facts as we go forward to make progress. Specifically this will help us to

better manage risks for ourselves and thereby mitigate financial volatility," Patel said.

The RBI Governor also said the government needed to be mindful of subsidising credit or providing credit guarantees, saying such schemes can add to government debt.

Modi unveiled a series of incentives to provide cheaper credit to the poor, farmers, women and small businesses at a speech on Dec. 31.

"While some government guarantees and limited subventions can help, steep interest rate subventions and large credit guarantees also impede optimal allocation of financial resources and increases moral hazard," Patel said.

Patel added that India needed to ensure its medium-term consumer-prices based inflation target of 4 percent was "secured on a durable basis" while touting the importance of "low and stable

inflation", sticking to his previous comments on the subject.

The RBI Governor noted as well that the central bank would continue to press ahead with a "fluid transmission" of monetary policy, while urging the government to infuse "adequate provision of capital" to the domestic banking system.

The comments came less than two weeks after lenders announced steep cuts in their lending rates.

Mistry asks Indian tribunal to block his removal from Tata Sons board

MUMBAI - Cyrus Mistry, the ousted chairman of India's Tata Sons, sought to block the company from removing him from its board in a petition filed with a national tribunal on Wednesday.

Tata Sons has called an extraordinary general meeting on Feb. 6 to remove Mistry from its board.

The \$100 billion conglomerate ousted Mistry as chairman in October, sparking a bitter public spat, but he remains a director.

Tata Sons is the holding company of listed Tata group companies in a business empire ranging from Jaguar Land Rover and steel mills

to aviation and salt pans.

Mistry contested his removal from the board in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), a quasi-judicial body that deals with corporate grievances in India.

In a filing seen by Reuters, Mistry said that, by moving to remove him from the board, Tata Sons was violating an NCLT order asking both sides not to take any action until a preliminary ruling on Feb. 1.

In the document, Mistry also seeks the imprisonment of his fellow Tata Sons board members, including interim Chairman Ratan

Tata, over his allegation that they violated the tribunal's order.

Tata Sons denied being in contempt of the NCLT order and said it would give its response to the tribunal.

Ratan Tata, patriarch of one of India's most influential families, took over as interim chairman of Tata Sons after the ousting of Mistry, who had sought to shake up the firm's management.

While the board gave no detailed reason for the change of chairman, some media reports said there has been discontent with some of Mistry's actions, including asset sales.

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WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

(January 22 - 28, 2017)

Aries (March 21 - April 19)

You may be swiftly moving towards certain goals you have set. You resolve to keep your head high and nurture hope. There may be definite lifestyle changes during this period. There may be travel. Busy time prevails, especially for sportspersons and academicians.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

You may be contemplating radical decisions in your professional life. There may be ambitious plans about travel and expansion of work to new territories. Some of you may also begin the new year with a religious ceremony. There are efforts made to improve public image and reach out to more people.

Gemini (May 21 - June 21)

There is suddenly a lot of focus on the work area. You may be expected to deliver exceptional results on a very challenging project. But you may find it hard to focus with all the social commitments and domestic responsibilities. The week may end with significant expenses. Physical exhaustion can affect your health.

Cancer (June 22 - July 22)

There are monetary gains, possibly a raise or a promotion. While there is some good news in the offing professionally, your emotions may be too scattered to register the good happening around you.

Leo (July 23 - August 22)

The week you contemplate several deep questions. You may even embrace a peculiar spiritual regimen in a bid to find balance. Later half of the week may see some embarking on long-distance travel. A father figure leads the way.

Virgo (August 23 - September 22)

The week could bring mixed results. There could be difficult conversations about inheritances and shared property rights. You will need to be careful about handling fragile egos and inflexible views. It will help to remain objective in tricky situations.

Libra (September 23 - October 22)

You are likely to begin the week by addressing some issues in personal relationships. It may be time to sit down and talk about real reasons for the differences. Business partnerships should be handled carefully.

Scorpio (October 23 - November 21)

The week may begin with your mind being plagued about ill health and a debt situation. You will need to be extremely cautious at the place of work and avoid office gossip at all costs. In personal relationships, you could get rigid about your point of view and this may cause problems.

Sagittarius (November 22 - December 21)

You may be preoccupied with self-advancement and academic achievements. There could be comparison in your mind regarding where you stand vis-a-vis your peers. There may be certain worries about children and their education. Beware of rivals trying to malign your reputation at workplace. Avoid taking shortcuts.

Capricorn (December 22 - January 19)

You are likely to begin the week in domestic issues. There may be quite a bit of running around to get repairs going. There are several chores to be handled and formalities to be completed. Don't let routine worries like rising expenses take the wind out of your sails.

Aquarius (January 20 - February 18)

You might focus on introspection and resolving inner conflicts. There could be long heart-to-heart chats with someone close. Some of you may consider an expert's help also. Those of you living away from home may consider a short visit to your family home. Purchase of a new property can be considered.

Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

Money matters will be at the centre of things. There could be a promotion or a raise. You may have to undertake quite a few short-distance travels. You may be required to contribute towards organizing a family function.

Vin Diesel gets traditional Indian welcome for 'XXX'

MUMBAI - Women dressed in red saris and yellow turbans gave a traditional Indian welcome to action star Vin Diesel on Thursday as the American arrived at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport ahead of the India premiere of his new movie "XXX: Return of Xander Cage."

Diesel was accompanied by Bollywood superstar Deepika Padukone, who is making her Hollywood debut in the film which began its international rollout on Friday and releases in North American theaters next week on January 20.

Dozens of women applied red vermilion dots - regarded as an auspicious symbol in India - to the foreheads of Diesel, Padukone and director D.J. Caruso

The film sees Diesel's return to the Xander Cage film franchise after starring in the first movie in 2002 but missing the sequel in 2005.

Although thought to be long-dead, the athlete turned government operative in "XXX: Return of Xander Cage" comes out of exile and races to recover a sinister weapon.



Vin Diesel, Deepika Padukone and D.J. Caruso arrives in Mumbai at Chhatrapati Shivaji Intl Airport for the Paramount Pictures Title 'XXX: Return of Xander Cage' on January 12, 2017 in Mumbai, India.



Vin Diesel and Deepika Padukone attends the Press Conference of the Paramount Pictures Title 'XXX: Return of Xander Cage' on January 12, 2017 at St. Regis Hotel, Lower Parel in Mumbai, India.

Bollywood films to watch out for in 2017



MUMBAI - Sequels, biopics, history lessons, fantasies and a prequel - that is what Bollywood has lined up for movie buffs in 2017, a year in which the Indian film industry will hope to produce better content and stand up to the increasing presence of Hollywood blockbusters in the country's movie calendar.

Shah Rukh Khan's "Raees" (Rich) and Hrithik Roshan's "Kaabil" (Able) are two big-ticket films that will kick off 2017.

SEASON OF SEQUELS

Akshay Kumar plays a struggling lawyer who stumbles upon a big case in the second edition of "Jolly LLB", replacing Arshad Warsi in the main role. Taapsee Pannu plays the lead in "Naam Shabana", a prequel to the 2014 "Baby", and Ram Gopal Varma



makes his umpteenth attempt at a comeback with political thriller "Sarkar 3", which has Amitabh Bachchan in the lead.

But the two sequels that will have everyone's attention are Ali Abbas Zafar's "Tiger Zinda Hai", with Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif reprising their roles from 2014's "Ek Tha Tiger", and S S Rajamouli's "Baahubali: The Conclusion". The sequel is expected to release in April.

WHEN REEL IMITATES REAL LIFE

Shraddha Kapoor and her brother Siddhanth Kapoor will star in a biopic of Haseena Parkar, the sister of India's most wanted man, mafia boss Dawood Ibrahim. Titled "Haseena: The Queen of Mumbai", the film is directed by Apoorva Lakhia and expected

to hit the big screen in the latter half of the year. But the underworld biopic to watch out for is Ashim Ahluwalia's "Daddy", based on the life of Mumbai underworld gangster Arun Gawli.

Rajkumar Hirani directs Ranbir Kapoor in the much anticipated biopic of troubled actor Sanjay Dutt.

There's also a history lesson or two for audiences in theatres. Vishal Bhardwaj's espionage thriller "Rangoon", set towards the end of World War II, comes out in February. The story of 14th century Delhi ruler Alauddin Khilji and Hindu queen Padmavati comes to life on screen in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's "Padmavati".

Bollywood hasn't stopped producing its staple content though. David Dhawan's "Judwaa 2", a sequel (sort of) to a film he made 20 years ago, releases this year, as does Rohit Shetty's "Golmaal Again", the fourth edition in a series of what feels like the same film each time with different names.

The big Eid release this year is Kabir Khan's "Tubelight", starring Salman Khan and Chinese actress Zhu Zhu. Imtiaz Ali's film with Shah Rukh Khan and Anushka Sharma, tentatively titled "The Ring", also comes out in the latter half of the year.



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SPORTS

■ Cricket

Smith hails Australia turnaround, next stop India



Australia's captain Steve Smith holds the trophy as he poses with teammates on the Sydney Cricket Ground on January 7, 2017 in Sydney, Australia.

By Nick Mulvenney

SYDNEY - Australia captain Steve Smith was delighted with the way his side rebounded from a series defeat to South Africa to sweep Pakistan 3-0 last Saturday but warned their next test campaign in India would present a challenge on a whole different level.

Back-to-back home defeats

at the hands of South Africa in November took their test losing streak to five matches, leaving Smith "humiliated" and triggering something of a crisis in Australian cricket.

The result was the axing of half the team and a consolation victory over the Proteas in Adelaide before wins over Pakistan in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney restored a semblance of normality

to the home summer.

"It wasn't great times but I'm really proud of the way the guys have come in and turned it around since then," Smith told reporters after their 220-run victory in the third test at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"I think we've played some very good cricket and that's the kind of cricket that I want us to play.

"We've scored big runs in every game, every first innings. We've been able to build pressure with the ball, hit good areas and we've caught well this series, which has been a big focus of ours. It's been a pretty good series for us."

Although Smith has led by example with the bat, clinching Player of the Series honours after scoring 441 runs at an average of 110.25 with two centuries, he said he did not think he had changed

much as a captain in the last two months.

"It's always easier to say someone's doing a good job when you're winning games of cricket," he said.

"We've obviously turned the results around and we've been able to get some values into the group and things for the guys to sort of live by and everyone's done that since they've come in and it's been great."

His vice captain, David Warner, proved his fine form with a century in the opening session and a 23-ball half century, the second fastest ever, in the second innings in Sydney.

There were also maiden centuries for newcomers Matt Renshaw and Peter Handscomb in the series, while Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc confirmed their

status as world class pacemen, albeit without setting the house on fire.

Those performances augur well for the home Ashes series at the end of the year but first comes a four-test tour of India, where Australia have not won a series since 2004.

"It's going to be a very difficult series going over there," Smith added.

"We're under no illusions it's going to be tough. It's going to be a great challenge and learning curve for this group.

"I think the core of this group will take part in India. A few of us have been there before and we know it's difficult play in their own backyard. They're a very good team.

"We're going to have to play incredibly well over there if we're going to compete with India."

■ Cricket

Top Indian officials removed for stalling reforms



FILE PHOTO: Anurag Thakur, newly-elected president of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), gestures during a news conference in Mumbai, India on May 22, 2016.

NEW DELHI - Indian cricket board (BCCI) president Anurag Thakur and secretary Ajay Shirke were removed by the country's top court last Monday for failing to implement administrative reforms within the body.

In July, the court accepted most of the recommendations of a three-member panel it had set up to look into the operations of the world's richest cricket board following a fixing scandal during the 2013 Indian Premier League Twenty20 competition.

The BCCI rejected a few of the recommendations made by the panel headed by former chief justice R.M. Lodha, which included age and tenure restrictions for top officials, as well as banning them from serving successive terms.

"One should understand that once the order of the Supreme Court, the highest court of the land, has come it has to be obeyed by all... nobody can escape it," Lodha told reporters after the verdict.

"Being at the helm of affairs,

if they were not able to implement the Supreme Court order, these consequences were bound to follow and that's what has happened.

"Administrators come and administrators go but ultimately it's for the benefit of the game and the game will flourish, I'm very sure."

A senior vice president of the board will take over as the interim chief, the court added.

Shirke said he was yet to read the order but was ready to step down.

"If the highest court of the land wants me to leave, I'd leave happily, I have no issues," he told CNN News18 channel from London.

"We have to see that the BCCI, in its new form, continues to do well, cricket flourishes and India is able to maintain its position in global cricket."

India consolidated their position as the world's top-ranked test team with a 4-0 home series victory against England last month and will host them for three one-dayers and as many Twenty20 Internationals from Jan. 15.

■ Cricket

Kohli succeeds Dhoni as India's limited-overs captain



India's Virat Kohli celebrates the wicket of England's Jos Buttler at M A Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, India on December 17, 2016.

MUMBAI - Virat Kohli has taken over from Mahendra Singh Dhoni as India's limited-overs captain, becoming his country's skipper in all three formats of the game, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) said last Friday.

Dhoni has been named as wicketkeeper in the squads for three one-dayers and three Twenty20 Internationals against England beginning on Jan. 15.

The 35-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman relinquished the limited-overs captaincy on Wednesday after nine trophy-laden years, which included two World Cups and a Champions Trophy.

Having taken over the test captaincy from Dhoni in late 2014 and led the team to top the top of the ICC rankings, the 28-year-old Kohli was a natural choice to skipper the limited-overs squads.

"Virat was on Skype with us...

and we chose the best possible squad (for the England series)," chief selector MSK Prasad told reporters.

Kohli took to social media to join the outpouring of tributes to Dhoni's captaincy.

"Thanks for always being the leader a youngster wants to have around him. You'll always be my captain @msdhoni Bhai (brother)," Kohli tweeted.

India's limited-overs stalwart Yuvraj Singh returned to both the one-day and Twenty20 squads after his impressive form in domestic cricket.

Uncapped wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant was named in the Twenty20 squad which also includes 37-year-old fast bowler Ashish Nehra.

India ODI squad: Virat Kohli (captain), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wicketkeeper), Lokesh Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Manish Pandey, Kedar Jadhav, Yuvraj Singh, Ajinkya Rahane, Hardik Pandya, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Amit Mishra, Jaspreet Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Umesh Yadav.

India Twenty20 squad: Virat Kohli (captain), Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wicketkeeper), Mandeep Singh, Lokesh Rahul, Yuvraj Singh, Suresh Raina, Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Yuzvendra Chahal, Manish Pandey, Jaspreet Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ashish Nehra.

■ Olympics

India halts funding of NOC for honouring administrators

NEW DELHI - The Indian Olympic Association's (IOA) move to honour two controversial administrators has infuriated the government with the sports ministry cutting off funding and the use of other facilities extended to the body.

The IOA named its former presidents Suresh Kalmadi and Abhay Singh Chautala as life presidents on Tuesday, a decision that has been heavily criticised after both

are facing allegations of corruption.

Kalmadi spent nine months in jail after the allegations, stemming from the 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi. He was released pending an appeal to Delhi High Court and has steadfastly denied any wrongdoing.

Chautala is also facing unrelated corruption charges in an ongoing court case. He has also denied the allegations.

"IOA will cease to enjoy the

privileges and prerogatives bestowed on it by the Government as the National Olympic Committee (NOC)," the sports ministry said in a statement.

"All Government assistance, financial or otherwise, to IOA will also be stopped."

Kalmadi has declined the post until his case has been heard, while Chautala, who was initially adamant to stay on in the patron's role, has hinted at stepping down.

'Weekend warrior' workouts tied to longer life

By Lisa Rapaport

LONDON - When it comes to workouts, exercising only on the weekends is still better than doing nothing at all, a study suggests.

Compared with inactive adults, people who get any amount of exercise may live longer, according to the study of middle-aged adults in the UK and Scotland.

With some activity, but less than the minimum weekly recommended 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of intense workouts, people were 34 percent less likely to die during the study period compared to people who didn't exercise at all.

Weekend warriors who crammed the minimum amount of weekly exercise into one or two workouts were 30 percent less likely to die during the study.

"The weekend warriors in our study undertook a large proportion of vigorous-intensity exercise, and quality may be more important than quantity," said lead study author Gary O'Donovan of Loughborough University in the UK.

"Vigorous-intensity exercise improves aerobic fitness more than the same amount of moderate-intensity exercise," O'Donovan added by email. "And, two bouts of vigorous-intensity exercise per week are sufficient to maintain aerobic fitness."

Plenty of research has shown the benefits of physical activity, and the potential health hazards of an extremely sedentary lifestyle. O'Donovan and colleagues designed the current study to see how waiting for the weekends to exercise might influence longevity.

For the current study, researchers analyzed survey data collected on 63,591 people from 1994 to 2012 to see how different exercise patterns influence the risk of death from all causes, heart disease and cancer.

Participants were 59 years old on average, and they were typically followed for almost nine years.

During the study period, there were 8,802 deaths from all causes, 2,780 deaths from cardiovascular disease and 2,526 from cancer.

Regular exercisers who got several workouts a week and got the minimum recommended amount of activity, were 35 percent less likely to die during the study period than people who got no exercise at all, researchers report in JAMA Internal Medicine.

Compared with inactive people, participants who got a little exercise were 37 percent less likely to die of cardiovascular causes during the study, weekend warriors were 40 percent less likely to die, and routine exercisers were 41 percent less likely to die.

For cancer, the odds of dying were 14 percent lower among slightly active people, 18 percent lower for weekend warriors, and 21 percent lower for routine exercisers.

The study is observational and doesn't prove exercise reduces the odds of death or that a weekend workout routine can cause fewer deaths than other patterns of exercise, the authors note. Exercise habits were also self-reported, and most participants were white, which may limit how much the results would apply to the general population.

Current exercise recommendations suggest spreading activity throughout the week because this can help with health outcomes like blood pressure, mood, and the ability to process sugars, noted Hannah Arem, a public health researcher at George Washington University and author of an accompanying editorial.

"The ideal exercise routine will depend on the individual's health status and goals," Arem said by email.

Meeting the minimum recommended amount of weekly exercise might mean walking a 20-minute mile each day, taking a leisurely 45-minute bike ride twice a week, swimming at a moderate pace

for 35 minutes twice a week, or running a 10-minute mile for 45 minutes over the course of a week, Arem added.

"These guidelines focus on total amount of activity after accounting for intensity, rather than specifying prescriptions for when exercise should be performed," Arem said. "For people who have to condense exercise into 1-2 sessions per week but meet the guideline minimum, they will still reap a big health benefit - a 30 percent lower risk of death compared to those who do not exercise."



When it comes to workouts, exercising only on the weekends is still better than doing nothing at all, a study suggests. Compared with inactive adults, people who get any amount of exercise may live longer, according to the study of middle-aged adults in the UK and Scotland.

Fish oil during pregnancy reduces baby's asthma risk

A Danish study of 695 pregnant women is raising the possibility that fish oil supplements begun in the final three months of pregnancy may reduce the risk of asthma or persistent wheezing in offspring.

The supplements brought the risk from 23.7 percent among mothers in the placebo group who took 2.4 grams of olive oil daily down to 16.9 percent in the women who got the fish oil capsules. That's a 30.7 percent reduction during the first three years of life.

The real benefit seemed to be exclusively among the children whose mothers started out with low levels of the two key ingredients in fish oil - eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). That may make them more vulnerable to the inflammation and heightened immune system response that is a factor in asthma and related conditions.

"If it weren't for the effects in that subgroup, then the results would have not been statistically significant," said Kathleen Melanson, a professor of nutrition sciences at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, who was not involved in the research.

Among the Danish women with low EPA and DHA levels, the rate of asthma and wheezing in their children was 17.5 percent when the women took fish oil during preg-

nancy versus 34.1 percent when they took the placebo oil.

One in five young children are affected by asthma and wheezing disorders. In recent decades, the rate has more than doubled in Western countries. Previous research has shown that those conditions are more prevalent among babies whose mothers have low levels of fish oil in their bodies. The new large-scale test, reported in The New England Journal of Medicine, is the first to see if supplements can actually lower the risk.

Women can eat fish to get the same benefit but "you really need to be very fond of fish to get sufficient amounts through your diet" to have the effect seen in the study, chief author Dr. Hans Bisgaard of the University of Copenhagen told Reuters Health in an email.

The findings must be tested in other parts of the world, where fish oil consumption is lower.

That concern is echoed in an editorial in the journal by Dr. Christopher Ramsden of the National Institute on Aging, who said the 2.4 gram dose "was approximately 15 to 20 times as high as the average U.S. intake from foods."

"Before these findings can be applied to clinical practice, it is therefore imperative to ensure that this dose had no adverse effects on

behavior, cognition, or other long-term outcomes," he said. "Future work is also needed to determine whether lower doses are effective and whether these results can be replicated in other populations."

Melanson told Reuters Health by phone that the dose used in the study was very high. The World Health Organization recommends no more than 3 grams per day, in part because excessive amounts can increase the risk of bleeding, lower blood pressure, and interact with medicines or vitamins A, D and E.

"Too much of a good thing is never a good thing," she said.

"It is possible that a lower dose would have sufficed," the Bisgaard team said.

Fish oil supplementation also lowered babies' risk of lower respiratory tract infections, with the rate going from 39.1 percent with olive oil placebo to 31.7 percent with fish oil.

But the supplements didn't seem to affect the odds of a baby or toddler developing the skin condition eczema, or an allergy such as a reaction to milk or egg products, or a severe asthma attack.

The women began taking the fish oil and olive oil capsules at the 24th week of pregnancy and continued until one week after delivery.



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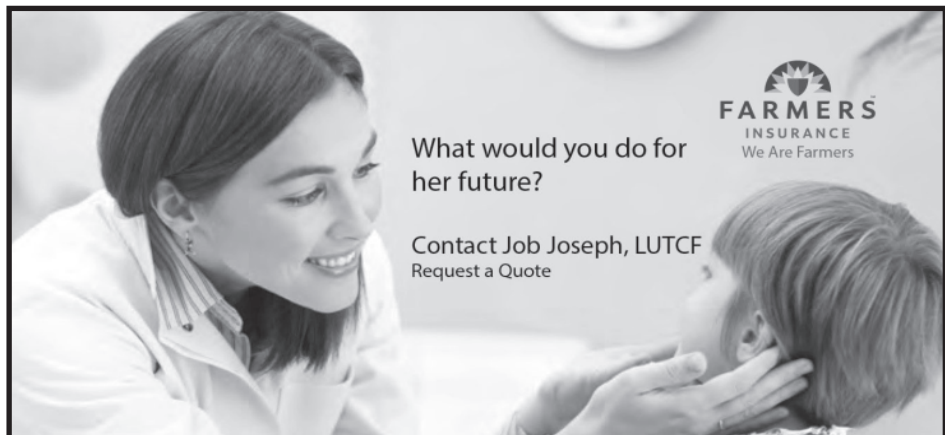
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Smoking costs \$1 trillion, soon to kill 8 million a year

By Tom Miles

GENEVA - Smoking costs the global economy more than \$1 trillion a year, and will kill one third more people by 2030 than it does now, according to a study by the World Health

Organization and the U.S. National Cancer Institute published on Tuesday.

That cost far outweighs global revenues from tobacco taxes, which the WHO estimated at about \$269 billion in 2013-2014.

"The number of tobacco-

related deaths is projected to increase from about 6 million deaths annually to about 8 million annually by 2030, with more than 80 percent of these occurring in LMICs (low- and middle-income countries)," the study said.

Around 80 percent of smokers

Mammograms tied to overdiagnosis of breast cancer

By Lisa Rapaport

COPENHAGEN - Widespread breast cancer screening may catch more small, slow-growing tumors that are unlikely to be fatal without curbing the diagnosis of advanced cancer cases, a Danish study suggests.

Diagnosis rates for early-stage tumors and pre-invasive malignancies known as ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) have surged in recent years as more women get screening mammograms.

The current study offers fresh evidence linking routine screening to over-diagnosis of non-aggressive tumors because it compares outcomes over a single time period in two regions of Denmark - one that offered biennial mammography for women aged 50 to 69 and one that didn't.

"Overdiagnosis means that healthy women get unnecessary breast cancer diagnoses," said lead study author Dr. Karsten Juhl Jorgensen, of the Nordic Cochrane Center and Rigshospitalet in Copenhagen.

"A breast cancer diagnosis is a life-changing event for the woman and her family, with substantial implications for their quality of life," Jorgensen added by email. "It also leads to overtreatment with surgery, radiotherapy and sometimes chemotherapy - we know these treatments have serious, sometimes lethal, consequences."

The goal of mammograms is to detect tumors before they can be felt in a physical breast exam,

catching cancer sooner when it's easier to treat. Ideally, this should mean fewer women are diagnosed when tumors are bigger, rapidly growing, and harder to attack.

To see how well mammograms achieve this ideal, researchers examined data on more than 1.4 million Danish women aged 35 to 84 from 1980 to 2010.

Organized breast cancer screening programs began in Copenhagen in 1991, Funen in 1993 and Frederiksberg in 1994 - altogether covering about 20 percent of the population. Other regions gradually introduced screening starting in 2007.

Screening wasn't associated with a lower incidence of advanced tumors, researchers report in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

This raises doubts about whether mammography reduces breast cancer deaths, the researchers conclude.

In addition, researchers estimate that as many as one in three breast tumors diagnosed in women who got mammograms would never have caused a noticeable health problem or led to death - and are therefore examples of overdiagnosis.

One limitation of the study is that because mammography has improved since this study began in 1980, women might get different results today, the authors note.

While the study adds compelling evidence that routine mammograms carry a risk of overdiagnosis, that doesn't mean it's time for screening guidelines

to change, Dr. Otis Brawley, chief medical officer of the American Cancer Society, said in a phone interview.

Under current U.S. guidelines, mammograms should be optional for women aged 40 to 44, then done annually from 45 to 54. Women 55 and older should switch to mammograms every two years, continuing as long as they are in good health with a life expectancy of at least a decade.

"This isn't about saying don't get a mammogram, this is about using it most effectively to save the most lives," said Brawley, who wrote an editorial accompanying the study.

Beyond screening, there are other preventive measures women shouldn't overlook like eating well, getting plenty of exercise, and maintaining a healthy weight.

In the future, it may be possible to use screening results to pinpoint women who might be candidates for "watchful waiting," the close follow-up without treatment that's common for many men with early-stage prostate cancer, Brawley said.

"We aren't ready for that because we don't know what watchful waiting looks like for breast cancer yet," Brawley said.

So for now, that means accepting that overdiagnosis and screening go hand in hand, along with the potential for some women to get unnecessary treatment.

"If it's small and slow-growing, I think all breast cancers ought to be treated," Brawley added.

Heavy drinking tied to higher risk of heart attacks

SAN FRANCISCO - Alcohol abuse may increase the risk of heart attacks and other cardiac problems even in people who don't have a family history of heart disease or other known risk factors, a study suggests.

After accounting for established risk factors for heart disease such as smoking, obesity and diabetes, alcohol abuse was associated with a 40 percent higher risk of heart attack, the study found.

Excessive drinking was also tied to a two-fold greater risk of atrial fibrillation, or an irregular

rapid heartbeat, and a 2.3-fold increased risk of congestive heart failure, a chronic pumping disorder.

Even though some previous research has linked an occasional or even daily drink to better heart health, these findings should put to rest any notion that drinking more is better for our health, said senior study author Dr. Gregory Marcus of the University of California, San Francisco.

"Excessive drinking might be ostensibly 'justified' by some individuals because of the purported heart benefits," Marcus

said by email.

"We have shown here that not only does excessive alcohol substantially increase the risk for atrial fibrillation and heart failure, but also heart attack, the one phenomenon that previous data has suggested might be mitigated by moderate alcohol consumption," Marcus added.

To assess the connection between alcohol abuse and heart problems, Marcus and colleagues analyzed data on more than 14.7 million California adults who had surgery, emergency or inpatient hospital care from 2005 to 2009.



Smoking costs the global economy more than \$1 trillion a year, and will kill one third more people by 2030 than it does now, according to a study by the World Health Organization and the U.S. National Cancer Institute published on Tuesday. That cost far outweighs global revenues from tobacco taxes, which the WHO estimated at about \$269 billion in 2013-2014.

live in such countries, and although smoking prevalence was falling among the global population, the total number of smokers worldwide is rising, it said.

Health experts say tobacco use is the single biggest preventable cause of death globally.

"It is responsible for... likely over \$1 trillion in health care costs and lost productivity each year," said the study, peer-reviewed by more than 70 scientific experts.

The economic costs are expected to continue to rise, and although governments have the tools to reduce tobacco use and associated deaths, most have fallen far short of using those tools effectively, said the 688-page report.

"Government fears that tobacco control will have an adverse economic impact are not justified by the evidence. The science is clear; the time for action is now."

HOW TO QUIT

Cheap and effective policies included hiking tobacco taxes and prices, comprehensive smoke-free policies, complete bans on

tobacco company marketing, and prominent pictorial warning labels.

Tobacco taxes could also be used to fund more expensive interventions such as anti-tobacco mass media campaigns and support for cessation services and treatments, it said.

Governments spent less than \$1 billion on tobacco control in 2013-2014, according to a WHO estimate.

Tobacco regulation meanwhile is reaching a crunch point because of a trade dispute brought by Cuba, Indonesia, Honduras and Dominican Republic against Australia's stringent "plain packaging" laws, which enforce standardized designs on tobacco products and ban distinctive logos and colorful branding.

The World Trade Organization is expected to rule on the complaint this year. Australia's policy is being closely watched by other countries that are considering similar policies, including Norway, Slovenia, Canada, Singapore, Belgium and South Africa, the study said.

U.S. melanoma rates keep rising

NEW YORK - The number of diagnosed melanoma cases and related deaths in the U.S. has been steadily climbing for at least two decades despite widespread prevention efforts, a recent study suggests.

Researchers now estimate that one in 54 Americans will develop invasive melanoma - the rarest and deadliest type of skin cancer - in their lifetime. That's up from a 2009 estimate of one in 58.

"Physicians have improved their ability to identify melanomas in the past 30 years ... but this alone likely does not explain the increased number of melanomas," said study coauthor Dr. Alex Glazer, a physician based in New York City who is affiliated with the National Society for

Cutaneous Medicine.

"Despite public health measures and warnings people still get a high level of UV exposure from the sun and tanning beds which is likely contributing to the increased incidence," Glazer added by email.

The steady rise in melanoma diagnoses and deaths in the U.S. over the past few decades mirrors trends seen worldwide, researchers note in *JAMA Dermatology*.

For the current study, Glazer, along with coauthor Dr. Aaron Farberg of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City and their colleagues, examined melanoma trends in the U.S. since 2009, when they last reported on incidence and mortality rates.

Grandparents who help care for grandchildren live longer than other seniors

By Madeline Kennedy

BERLIN - Grandparents who help out occasionally with childcare or provide support to others in their community tend to live longer than seniors who do not care for other people, according to a study from Berlin, Germany.

Having full-time custody of grandchildren can have a negative effect on health, but occasional helping can be beneficial for seniors, the researchers write in the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior*.

"Having no contact with grandchildren at all can negatively impact the health of grandparents," said lead author Sonja Hilbrand, doctoral student in the department of psychology at the University of Basel in Switzerland.

"This link could be a mechanism deeply rooted in our evolutionary past when help with childcare was crucial for the survival of the human species," Hilbrand told Reuters Health by email.

The findings are drawn from

data on more than 500 people over age 70 in the Berlin Aging Study.

The participants completed interviews and medical tests every two years between 1990 and 2009.

The researchers did not include any grandparents who were the primary caregivers for their grandchildren, only those who cared for grandchildren occasionally.

The study team compared this group with seniors who provided support for non-family members, such as friends or neighbors, and seniors who did not provide any care to other people.

Overall, after accounting for grandparents' age and general state of health, the risk of dying over a 20-year period was one-third lower for grandparents who cared for their grandchildren, compared with grandparents who did not provide any childcare.

Half of the grandparents who cared for grandchildren were still alive ten years after the initial interview. The same was true for participants who did not have

grandchildren but supported their adult children in some way, such as helping with housework.

In contrast, about half of the participants who did not help others died within five years of the start of the study.

Caregiving was linked with longer life even when the care recipient wasn't a relative. Half of all childless seniors who provided support to friends or neighbors lived for seven years after the study began, whereas non-helpers lived for four years on average.

"Caregiving may give caregivers a purpose of life because caregivers may feel useful for the others and for the society," said Bruno Arpino, an associate professor at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, Spain who was not involved in the study.

"Caregiving may be thought also as an activity that (keeps) caregivers physically and mentally active," Arpino said by email, adding that previous studies suggest that caregiving may improve cognitive functioning, mental and physical health.



Grandparents who help out occasionally with childcare or provide support to others in their community tend to live longer than seniors who do not care for other people, according to a study from Berlin, Germany.

Arpino noted, however, that caregiving is not the only activity that can improve health, and too many caring responsibilities can take away from other beneficial activities like working, being in social clubs, or volunteering.

"Children should take into (consideration) their parents' needs, willingness and desires and agree with them on the

timing and amount of childcare," Arpino suggested.

"It is very important that every individual decides for him/herself, what 'moderate amounts of help' means," Hilbrand said, adding, "As long as you do not feel stressed about the intensity of help you provide you may be doing something good for others as well as for yourself."

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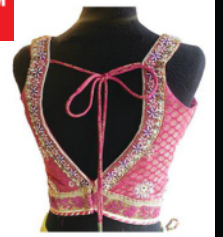


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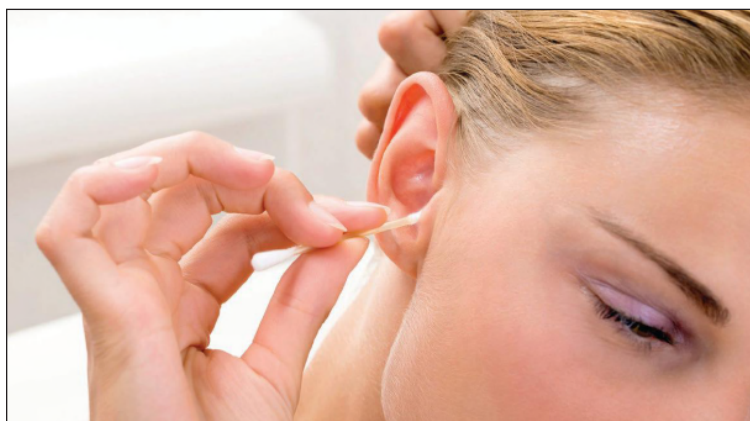
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Why you shouldn't treat earwax without seeing a doctor



It may be tempting to clean your ears with Q-tips or try ear candling to clear away any clogs, but it's best to check with a professional before taking matters into your own hands, doctors advise.

By Lisa Rapaport

SEATTLE - It may be tempting to clean your ears with Q-tips or try ear candling to clear away any clogs, but it's best to check with a professional before taking matters into your own hands, doctors advise.

"Patients may try to blindly instrument their ears with cotton ear buds, bobby pins, or other tools," said Dr. Seth Schwartz, chair of a committee that drafted new guidelines for diagnosing and treating earwax for the American Academy of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

"These are generally ineffective and potentially dangerous," Schwartz, director of the Listen For Life Center at Virginia Mason in Seattle, said by email.

"Scratching of the ear canal skin can lead to pain and infection," Schwartz added. "Sometimes they just push the wax in further, and there also is the potential for damage to the ear drum."

The body makes earwax, or cerumen, to keep ears clean and trap substances like dust and dirt, preventing debris from getting further into the ear where it can cause damage. As new skin grows in the ear canal, it pushes old earwax from the inside of the ears closer to the opening where it naturally flakes off or washes away during bathing.

Often, there's nothing wrong with having a little earwax near the opening, doctors stress in guidelines published in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

But when the ear's self-cleaning process doesn't work well, too much earwax may accumulate and partially or fully block the ear canal. This can cause problems including pain, itching, discharge from the ear, ringing in the ear or hearing loss.

Roughly one in 10 children and one in 20 adults suffer from excessive earwax buildup, as do more than one third of elderly people, according to the guidelines.

Excessive cleaning can irritate the ear canal, cause infection, and even increase the chances of excessive buildup, or what's known as cerumen impaction, the guidelines note.

There's no evidence that using ear candles, a process that relies on heat to remove buildup, actually works at clearing impaction, and this can cause serious damage to the ear canal and eardrum, the guidelines also emphasize.

Patients should see a doctor if they experience hearing loss, pain or feel fullness in their ears or aren't certain whether the amount of wax is normal.

People should also get a check-up if they have ear drainage or bleeding because these symptoms aren't tied to impaction and

may be an indication of other problems.

"The mantra from previous generations of 'don't stick anything in your ear that is smaller than your elbow' still applies," said Dr. Duane Taylor, chief executive officer and medical director of Le Visage ENT and Facial Plastic Surgery in Bethesda, Maryland.

"Generally people still erroneously believe that the cotton-tipped applicator or Q-tip is the primary weapon of choice

to get rid of earwax," Taylor, who wasn't involved in the guidelines, said by email.

In most cases, though, wax that's naturally found near the outer part of the ear can be wiped away with a damp cloth, Taylor added. Cotton-tipped applicators can compact the wax and push it deeper into the ear, making it harder to remove.

Certain hearing aids, or wearing earbuds instead of over-the-ear headphones, can also inadvertently push wax deeper into the

ear, Taylor said.

At home, people may be able to use wax removal drops, baby oil or a few drops of hydrogen peroxide to prevent buildup, but it's best to consult a doctor first.

"In most cases, primary care clinicians are the first line of evaluation for this condition and are adequately equipped to manage it," Taylor said. "When it is noted to be more complicated or there is a risk of injury there should be a referral to an Ear, Nose and Throat physician for removal."

Risks are serious when parents don't cut small fruits for children

By Carolyn Crist

Children under age 5 could choke on grapes and similarly-shaped foods, and parents should cut them in half or quarters to reduce the risk, Scottish doctors say.

Although some parents may know to cut food such as grapes, cherry tomatoes and hot dogs into smaller pieces, not all do. Public health officials should spread the message more, they wrote in the Archives of Disease in Childhood.

"This message continually appears but doesn't seem to take hold," said Jamie Cooper, study author and emergency medicine consultant at the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary in Scotland. "We've overseen a number of cases over the years where children have choked and died, and it's such a traumatic experience for the families."

In the United States, more than 2,100 children died from choking between 1999 and 2013, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, and grapes were the third most common cause following hot dogs and candy.

"People don't realize that some common and popular foods have a particular choking hazard for small kids because they're the



Children under age 5 could choke on grapes and similarly-shaped foods, and parents should cut them in half or quarters to reduce the risk, Scottish doctors say. Although some parents may know to cut food such as grapes, cherry tomatoes and hot dogs into smaller pieces, not all do. Public health officials should spread the message more, they wrote in the Archives of Disease in Childhood.

ideal size, shape and texture to firmly lodge at the top of the airway," said Stephen Feltbower, an emergency medicine consultant at Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Scotland. Feltbower, who wasn't involved with the study, has previously highlighted the danger of grapes as a choking hazard.

Cooper and Feltbower have suggested labeling foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes and other smooth, spongy produce as choking hazards.

"We want to send a clear message that these foods are healthy

and a great snack for children," Feltbower told Reuters Health. "However, they can pose a particular danger different from other snack foods, and parents should know that."

The U.S. and European Union have regulations that prevent choking on toys and other children's products, but that's tougher to enforce with food, said Bob Altkorn, senior technical advisor of Intertek in Oak Brook, Illinois. Altkorn, who was not involved with this study, reported on fatal and non-fatal food injuries among children under age 14 in 2008.

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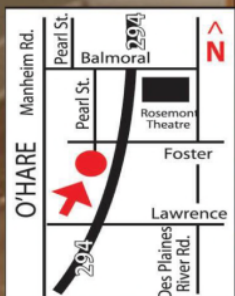
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