

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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पिछले महीने 19 करोड़ से ज्यादा लोगों ने देखा!

आज आपने ZEE NEWS देखा क्या?



Source: BARC | All 2+ yrs | All India | 24 May - 23 June 17 | Coverage

US lifts ban on e-gadgets on Etihad flights

Abu Dhabi-based Etihad on Sunday evening said US-bound flyers can now take gadgets like laptops on board its aircraft as the US has "fully lifted" the March 25 ban on electronic devices on its flights from Abu Dhabi to the country. **P14**

6 techies killed in Pune mishap

Six software engineers from Pune were killed when a speeding tanker crashed into their minibus near Wagholi on the Pune-Ahmednagar highway on Sunday. The group of 15 techies were returning from Ahmednagar. **P7**

India beat Pak by 95 runs



Ekta Bisht took 5 wickets for 18 runs as the Indian women's cricket team dismissed Pakistan for 74 to record a thumping 95-run win in the World Cup. The team now has an unbeaten 10-0 record against Pakistan. **P17**

Pranab a father figure: Modi

Describing President Pranab Mukherjee as a "father figure" who helped him find his feet in Delhi, an emotional PM lavished praise on Mukherjee at an event for the release of a book on the outgoing President on Sunday. **P7**

30-yr-old drowns in Gorai pool

A 30-year-old man drowned in a swimming pool at a Gorai bungalow where he had gone on picnic with a group on Sunday. Kunal Lohiya was found dead in the pool around 6pm. Police have filed a case of accidental death. **P3**

Spurt in H1N1 group infections

With the monsoon setting in, doctors are witnessing a sharp increase in the instances of H1N1 cluster infections in families. It has raised serious concerns about whether people are following isolation protocols. **P3**

*PLUS 6 PAGES BOMBAY TIMES

*The TOI Combo offer and Bombay Times Supplement are available in Mumbai, Thane and Raigad districts while Education Times will be circulated in Mumbai Metro Region only.

Times Interact | P 4, 8 & 10

Won't use 'hammer', let market forces bring down prices: Govt

Takes to Social Media To Bust 'Myths On GST'

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New Delhi: The government does not intend to use the "hammer" immediately to pull down prices, leaving it to market forces to guide companies to pass on the benefits of goods and services tax (GST) to consumers.

FULL COVERAGE: P 2, 5, 10, 15

"Competition will force them to fall in line. You don't have to use the hammer immediately," a high-ranking officer told TOI, adding that companies and small businesses were themselves passing on the gains to consumers. Several car companies, consumer go-

REVENUE SECY ADDRESSES DOUBTS ON TWITTER

1 Myth: All invoices need to be generated on computer only
Reality: They can be generated manually too

2 Internet needed all the time for business
Reality: It is needed only to file monthly return

3 I have a provisional ID but am awaiting final ID to do business
Reality: Provisional ID will be your final GSTIN number, start business

4 My item of trade was earlier exempt, so I will need new registration before starting business now
Reality: You can continue doing business and register within 30 days

5 There are three monthly returns to be filed
Reality: There is only one return with three parts, of which the first part is filed by dealer and the other two are auto-populated by

the computer

6 Even small dealers will have to file invoice-wise details in the return
Reality: Those in retail business (B2C) need to file only summary of total sales

7 New GST rate is higher compared to earlier VAT
Reality: It only appears higher. Excise and other taxes, which were invisible earlier, are now subsumed in GST and so visible

Source: Tweets by revenue secy Hasmukh Adhia

▶ **Border checkpoints gone, expect smoother ride, P 15**

▶ **LPG to cost up to ₹32 more per cylinder, P 10**

▶ **Execs' tickets: Cos must give airlines GST info, P 15**

ods manufacturers and white goods and mobile players have announced price changes, with many more expected to follow once they resume busi-

ness and invoicing after updating their software.

The statement comes amid fears that the government may use an anti-profiteering clause

against those who do not pass on the benefits to consumers, or raise rates disproportionately.

▶ **'Small firms eager', P 10**

IL deregistered companies face more action

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New Delhi: The government is launching a multi-pronged offensive against the one lakh companies that have been deregistered, including action against those for violating taxation and money-laundering laws as well as choking their access to banking.

A day after Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's announcement that the ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) had struck off names of these companies, sources told TOI that all directors on the boards of these companies would be barred from similar positions on other corporate boards for five years, which is in line with the provisions of the Companies Act.

While the MCA has acted

against them for not filing returns, it is now going to approach banks with the list of companies where action has been taken to ensure that they are unable to operate their bank accounts or access loans.

"In the past, we noticed that some of the deregistered companies continued to enjoy access to banking services due to lack of information flow. We

want to prevent that, otherwise the whole purpose will be defeated," said a source, who did not wish to be identified.

Similarly, the ministry is writing to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) to scan for any violation of provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

▶ **Benami property law, P 10**

Landmark Sky Chef near Sahar airport gets eviction notice

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Mumbai: Hotel Ambassador's Sky Chef, a well-known landmark located close to the international terminal of the Mumbai airport, has been served an eviction notice by the airport operator as it plans to use the land for operational purposes. The Mumbai unit of Sky Chef has been handling inflight dining contracts for a number of airlines since the eighties.

"On May 20, the 30-year old land lease agreement between the hotel and Airports Authority of India (AAI), the land owner expired and the latter decided not to renew the agreement," said a source. Mumbai International Airport Pvt Ltd (MIAL), the private company appointed to run the Mumbai airport, served the notice as it plans to extend the operations at the land-starved airport onto the 15,000 sq m plot leased out to the hotel. "It is located close to the airport and so is a prime plot for extending airport operati-

EXPANSION PLAN



▶ With a built-up area of 2.5 lakh sq ft, Ambassador Sky Chef produces over 30,000 inflight meals a day

▶ 30-year lease agreement between the hotel and AAI expired in May

▶ MIAL now wants to use the 15,000 sq m space at Sahar for airport expansion

▶ It is the second hotel after Leela Venture to get an eviction order

ns. It's not yet finalised what the land would be used for," the source added.

In the last week of May, Narang International Hotels Pvt Ltd (NIHPL), the company that owns Hotel Ambassador, moved the Bombay high court seeking a stay on eviction proceedings initiated by MIAL.

▶ **2nd hotel to get notice, P 5**

Law dept says no to min's bid to save illegal SRA tenants

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Mumbai: The state's law and judiciary department has strongly opposed housing minister Prakash Mehta's attempt to change the law to help regularise illegal occupants of SRA buildings.

Last year, Mehta had tried to stay the eviction of illegal residents in SRA buildings until the completion of a survey by giving an assurance in the assembly. However, officials in both the law and judiciary and housing departments had opposed it, saying it would violate a court ruling.

In November, Mehta had suggested issuing an ordinance and amending the law to allow for regularization. "Given the large number of people affected, the government should issue an ordinance allowing for regularization after a penalty," he wrote to the housing department.

▶ **'Don't overreach', P 5**

Niche US visas for 'extraordinary' individuals grow in popularity

Applicants Must Prove Distinction In Their Field

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Mumbai: Despite the growing restrictions on H-1B work visas, fashion designer Shalini (name changed) is living her American dream. The fabric print expert who hails from Mumbai obtained an O-1B visa (a non-immigration visa) a few months ago. Elsewhere, a renowned instrumental musician, who is actively involved in a music school in the US, has obtained an immigration visa (also known as the green card) under the

GO AMERICA: NO H-1B? GET O-1A OR O-1B

PARTICULARS	O1 VISA	EB-1A VISA
Eligibility for applicants	O-1A: Individuals with an extraordinary ability in the sciences, education, business, or athletics O-1B: Individuals with an extraordinary ability in the arts or extraordinary achievement in cinema or television	▶ Individuals with an extraordinary ability in the sciences, arts, education, business, or athletics through sustained national or international acclaim (Nobel prize winners don't require any further evidence)
NATURE OF VISA	NON-IMMIGRATION WORK VISA	IMMIGRATION WORK VISA (GREEN CARD)
VISA TENURE	▶ Three years, with a one-year extension at a time for an indefinite period	▶ Permanent residence and work eligibility in US (not citizenship)
TIME TAKEN FOR ISSUE#	▶ 2-6 weeks	▶ 3 months to a few years

EB-1A category.

Shalini is among the growing tribe that is turning to the O-1B category—which neither has a cap on the number of visas issued each year nor is fettered by any protectionist measures. Others, like the

musician, who wish to reside permanently in US are availing of the EB-1A.

What do Shalini and the musician have in common? The answer is 'distinction' or 'extraordinary ability', which needs to be proven to the

US authorities. As such visas are relatively challenging to obtain, immigration attorneys work closely with their clients to help them build up their case.

▶ **93k O-1 visas in 2016, P 5**

Sikkim row is now longest faceoff with China since '62

More Indian Troops After 2 Bunkers Razed

New Delhi: India has pushed in more troops in a "non-combative mode" to strengthen its position in an area near Sikkim, where its soldiers have been locked in a stand-off with Chinese troops for almost a month now in what has been the longest such impasse between the two armies since 1962.

India brought in more troops after the destruction of two of its bunkers and "aggressive tactics" adopted by the Chinese People's Liberat-

Bid to limit India's strategic space

China's attempts to lay claim over areas south of the India-China-Bhutan tri-junction could worsen the impasse, indicating a fresh bid by China to erode Bhutan's sovereignty and cramp India's strategic space, reports Sachin Parashar. **P9**

ion Army (PLA), sources said. In a "non-combative mode", the nozzle of a gun is placed downwards.

Giving details for the first time about the events that preceded the face-off between the two armies, the sources said the PLA on June 1 as-

Standoff to press India on OBOR?

China's official news agency sent signals on Sunday that the standoff was caused, at least partly, by Beijing's desperate need to force an unwilling India to accept its One Belt One Road (OBOR) programme, reports Saibal Dasgupta. **P9**

ked the Indian Army to remove the two bunkers set up in 2012 at Lalten in Doka La, which falls in the vicinity of Chumbi Valley at the corner of India-Bhutan-Tibet tri-junction. AGENCIES

▶ **Requests denied, P 9**

Pak denies India access to Jadhav again

Pakistan has once again turned down India's request seeking consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav, with its foreign office saying he is no ordinary prisoner and that India is attempting to deny the fact that he is a spy, reports Omer Farooq Khan. The rejection comes after India and Pakistan exchanged lists of prisoners in each other's jails under the 2008 Agreement on Consular Access. **P7**

60% in 18-19 age group not enrolled as voters

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New Delhi: Barely 40% of the country's newly eligible voters in the 18-19 age group are currently enrolled as voters. In fact, in big states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, 75 lakh and 46 lakh young people have turned 18 but are yet to enlist themselves as voters.

As per statistics compiled by the Election Commission as part of its special enrolment drive focused on you-

ng voters, 3.36 crore people in the 18-19 age group in the country have not registered themselves in the voters' list. The difference between electors and projected population in the age group is most prominent in states like UP, Bihar, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, even as Kerala, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh and many smaller states are better off.

▶ **UP has largest chunk, P 9**

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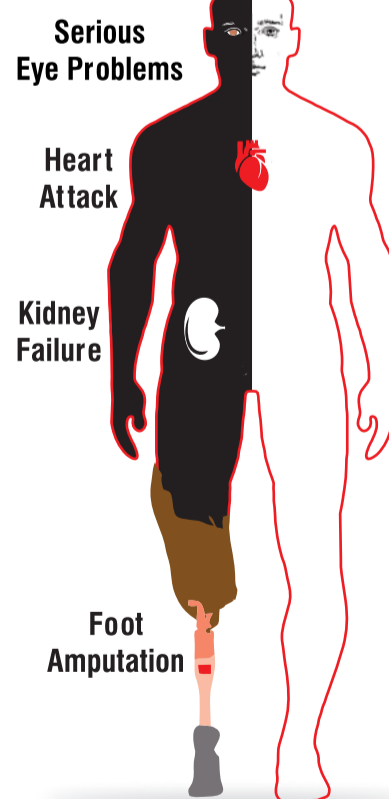
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Long-distance trains to Guj hit due to heavy rain

Railways Gives Breakfast To Those Stranded

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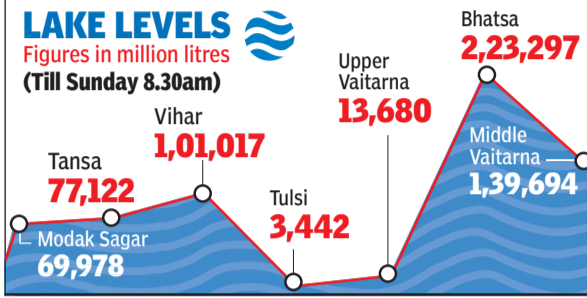
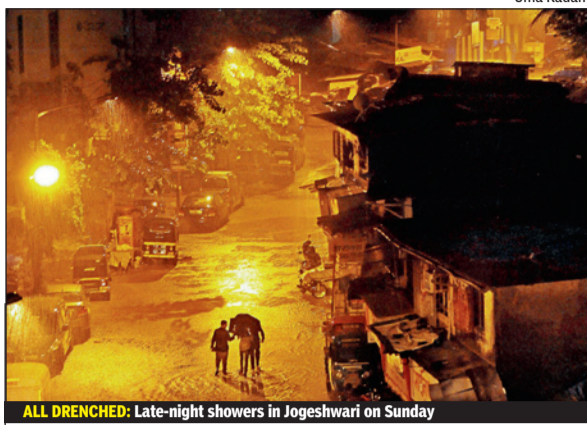
Mumbai: Scores of passengers were inconvenienced on Sunday as many long-distance trains towards Gujarat on Western Railway were delayed, regulated or diverted due to heavy rain in the Mehana-Palanpur section since Saturday night.

Bandra Terminus and Dadar stations saw huge crowds as passengers waited for trains rescheduled on Sunday.

WR chief public relations officer Ravinder Bhakar said, "Fifteen trains were stopped and detained on the section as restoration work was in progress. The heavy rainfall resulted in soil cut and a major problem at four locations (level-crossings) en route. Staff sent for restoration work also faced difficulties due to continuous and heavy rainfall in the area."

It had a cascading effect and trains leaving Mumbai on Sunday were delayed. Some trains from Ahmedabad to Ajmer and Abu Road were cancelled. "The incessant rain was a big challenge for our staff to carry out restoration work," said Bhakar. The affected sections were, however, cleared at the earliest and services resumed. "We delivered breakfast, water and other essential commodities to passengers of stranded trains, especially to passengers of 12915 Ashram Exp and 14707 Bikaner-Bandra (T) Ranakpur Exp," he said.

It is learnt that more than 1,000 food packets, 850 biscuit packets and 500 pouches of drinking water were supplied to the stranded passengers. The trains regulated and diverted were 12480 Bandra (T)-Jodhpur Exp (terminated at Mehana); 14708 Bandra (T)-Bikaner-Ranakpur Exp (regulated at Ahmedabad); 19707 Bandra (T)-Jaipur Aravali



City lakes get 40% of year's water supply

Mumbai: The level of seven lakes and reservoirs that supply water to the city reached 5.37 lakh million litres (ML) on Sunday morning, which is around 40% of the water the city requires for the entire year. An official said catchment areas were receiving satisfactory rainfall and good rainfall was expected in July.

The lakes/reservoir need 14.37 lakh million litres by September 30 to ensure that the city does not face any water cut till the next monsoon. The city consumes 3,750 million litres every day.

Parts of the city continued to receive heavy showers on Sunday. The suburbs received more rainfall compared to the island city. In the 24 hours ending Sunday morning

(8.30am), the Colaba and Santacruz weather stations received 5.2mm and 49.2mm rain respectively. During the day (8.30am-8.30pm), the city experienced only 1.2mm and 8.4mm rainfall in Colaba and Santacruz respectively. The weather bureau has predicted few spells or rain in the city and suburbs over the next 48 hours. The season's total rainfall at Colaba (571.2mm) is 48.7mm below normal, while Santacruz's season total of 665.6mm is above normal by 66.9mm.

There were 77 tree falling incidents in the city from Saturday morning till 8.30am on Sunday. There were also some cases of wall collapse and short circuit on Sunday but no one sustained injuries, civic officials said.

The trains rescheduled were 12216 Bandra (T)-Delhi Sarai Rohilla GaribRath Exp; 12480 Bandra (T)-Jodhpur Exp; 14708 Bandra (T)-Bikaner-Ranakpur Exp; 12490 Dadar-Bikaner Exp.

Attempt to overreach court orders: Law dept

From P 1

It is necessary to make a law so that no action is taken against tenement dwellers till the ordinance is issued," says a note written by Mehta to the housing department.

According to the existing rules, tenements allotted under the SRA scheme cannot be transferred for a period of 10 years. After that period, the permission of the SRA is needed before the transfer.

After Mehta's stand, the housing department proposed amending the Maharashtra Slum Areas (Improvement Clearance and Redevelopment) Act 1971. It proposed that the CEO of SRA be allowed to permit allottees to sell or lease their tenements before the 10-year period. It also proposed that this amendment be allowed with retrospective effect.

The state's law and judiciary department has given a strong rebuttal to the proposed amendment. "It also betrays an attempt to overreach judicial orders passed to achieve the object of the Slum Act," says a note from principal secretary (law and judiciary) N L Jamadar on the proposal. TOI has a copy of the document.

Other law department officials also opposed the amendment. "The object of the Act is to make better provision for the improvement and clearance of slum areas and for their redevelopment. Therefore it may not be legally feasible to make such provisions as it may defeat the objects of the Act," says a note from the law and judiciary department.

The department also opposed allowing the amendment with retrospective effect. It pointed out that after HC orders in 2015, the state had been directed to initiate criminal proceedings against unauthorized occupants of SRA buildings.

Mehta was unavailable for comment. Currently a cabinet sub-committee headed by him is examining the policy on the sale and purchase of SRA flats and unauthorized occupants of transit camps.

Longer trips by autos, cabs could get cheaper

Panel May Hike Min Distance For Fares To 2Km

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Mumbai: The government-appointed Khatua committee will recommend new fares for autos and taxis this month.

The panel is considering increasing the minimum distance for fares to 2km, giving discounted fares for passengers travelling long distances or during peak hours (11am-4pm), and encouraging digital payments for commuters, sources said.

Transport department sources said the recommendations will ensure Kaali Peeli taxis and aggregator cabs like Ola, Uber have a "level-playing" field. An official said, "The panel will finalise minimum fares for all taxis/cabs and cap surge pricing in Mumbai. It will ensure drivers earn a decent income and end refusals for short trips. In some cities, the minimum fare is for 2km, which encourages drivers to accept short trips."

The sources said the department will consider discounted fares for long-distance routes. A telescopic fare

A LOOK AT THE ON-ROAD FIGURES

- There are 38,000 registered kaali-peeli taxis, of which 22,000 actually ply on the road
- There are 1.04 lakh autorickshaws plying in suburbs
- The city has around 30,000 aggregator cabs, with an average daily ridership of 2.5 lakh
- There are close to 5,000 fleetcabs, such as Meru Cabs and TabCab

PRESENT FARES

Minimum auto fare	₹18	Night charge	25% extra
Fare for subsequent km	₹12.19/km	Waiting charges	₹1.20 per minute (autos)
Minimum taxi fare	₹22	Fare for subsequent km	₹14.84/km
Fare for subsequent km	₹18.55 per km	Minimum CoolCab fare	₹28
		Fare for subsequent km	₹18.55 per km



chart, where the amount decreases as distance increases, had been suggested by some commuter rights groups, including Mumbai Grahak Panchayat. "The panel is also checking the possibility of Happy Hours travel in Kaali Peelis, that is discounted fares for non-peak (afternoon) hours," said an official.

Many commuters had suggested fares hikes every three years, or only if service is good.



Drivers, in recent feedback to the department, demanded higher fares as they have not got a hike for several months. A senior official from the transport commissioner office said, "We plan a win-win situation, where interests of passengers and drivers are served." Sources said the panel is looking at digital payments, real-time tracking and providing fare estimates before trips for Kaali Peelis.

Panel to study impact of GST on industries

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Mumbai: The state industries department will form a committee to study the impact of goods and services tax (GST) on industries in Maharashtra.

The current policy envisages encouraging industrialists to set up manufacturing plants in the state. "The policy is aimed at generating more revenue through various taxes. However, as far as GST is concerned, the tax slabs are the same across the country, which may not help a particular state to gain tax benefits from manufacturing," said an official from the department. "Thus, now its time to make changes in the policy. We need to give incentives to woo industries, like agro-products, gems and jewellery or electronic items, that will manufacture and sell products within the state, instead of selling them in other part of the country, to generate revenue."

Industry minister Subhash Desai told TOI that the committee will be headed by the department secretary. "During the VAT regime, we used to give incentives to industries in the form of refund; GST has changed the scenario. We have no clue about the impact. So, the department secretary will study GST and submit a report suggesting changes in the policy," he said.

Sky Chef second hotel near airport to be issued eviction notice this year

From P 1

After the licence agreement between NIHPL and AAI expired, NIHPL no longer has a right over the airport premises, but they argued that the discussions between MIAL and NIHPL amounted to further extension of the licence period in the absence of a registered formal agreement," said the source, adding that upon preliminary hearing the court hasn't granted any relief to NIHPL. The matter is expected to come up on July 11.

The MIAL spokesperson refused to comment on the matter.

TOI wrote to the CEO of the Ambassador group requesting for a comment, but received no response.

Ambassador's Sky Chef launched its inflight catering business way back in 1942, but the Mumbai unit was set up only in the late eighties. Till then, inflight catering was handled from its hotel in South Mumbai. Around 1981, AAI had built a new terminal building in Sahar to exclusively cater to international flights as the one in Vile Parle was saturated with growth in air traffic in the seventies. In 1987, AAI leased 15,000 sq m plot of land to

NIHPL and in the following years, the strategically located new unit of Sky Chef (it's barely 1 km from the international terminal and about 3km from the domestic terminal) grew to handle catering contracts from a large number of domestic and international airlines. With a built-up area of 2,50,000 sq ft, the unit produces over 30,000 inflight dining meals per day.

Sky Chef is now the second establishment located near the land-starved Mumbai airport to receive an eviction order from AAI. Early this year, the AAI served an eviction notice to Hotel Leela Venture, after the lease

agreement, signed in 1986 for the 18,000 sq m land on which it stands expired. The government organisation alleged that the hotel had violated the terms of agreement as it had defaulted on payment of dues to AAI.

After prolonged litigations, AAI board decided to terminate the contract with Leela and notices were issued for payment of pending dues and handling over the possession of the property by October 31, 2016. After the deadline elapsed, AAI issued an eviction notice in February, which was contested by the hotel, which moved the court against AAI's eviction notice.

O-1 visas grew by 200% in 10 yrs

From P 1

Statistics given by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) show that allotment of O-1 visas (O1-A and O1-B) has grown significantly over the years, from just 31,969 in 2006 to 93,086 a decade later. Awareness of this category is slowly building up in India and experts say their popularity will soon shoot up.

Such visas issued to Indians numbered 1,137 in 2015. A similar break-up for EB-1A is not available.

"For O-1A, it is important to demonstrate 'extraordinary ability', it is a high legal standard requiring evidence that the individual has risen to the top in his or her field. Awards (internationally recognized or lesser awards such as those on national level), publications, recognition in the media, patents, trademarks, academic contributions and all help substantiate it," explains David H Nachman, managing attorney, NPZ law group.

"O-1B's requirement is 'distinction'—it is comparatively a less rigorous legal standard. It can be shown by recognition in media or among peers in the field. Both the O category visa applications call for at least 10 peer reference letters. Often, we ensure that half the letters are from India and the rest from other countries—this helps demonstrate international recognition," he says.

LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM

Nachman adds that O-1B is referred to as the artists' visa. "We help our clients understand how to 'package' the evidence for review by the DHS officials, as we did in Shalini's case. Arts includes not just performing arts, but also covers graphic designers, fashion designers, etc."

ment from a business school in Paris, plus prior years of work experience in the New York fashion industry (under an H-1B visa), she seemed the right candidate to apply for O-1B. Her network was willing to give her some great recommendatory reference letters.

Shalini explains the process behind her success: "I handed my portfolio in a wooden box, not just with my portfolio book, but actual swatches of fabrics that I had designed. The application also required that my work had to be published in notable publications—I was lucky to have been featured in a prominent fashion magazine. I also made my website and archived all my work."

Green card for excellence: Turning to green cards, under the EB-1A category Rajiv S Khanna, managing attorney at Immigration.com, says "Many of these cases are relatively easy to establish. The US government has listed ten categories of

evidentiary requirements, out of which we need to meet three. To illustrate, it could be evidence of international or national awards, published material in recognised periodicals, or commercial success in performing arts. In addition, the law also permits us to provide evidence beyond these categories, if needed. The quickest we have obtained a green card for a client was in three months."

Khanna's most challenging case was that of a renowned instrumental musician—the green card took two years. In the first attempt the case was denied, as was the subsequent appeal. In the third try, when the case was filed again, it sailed through.

"The difficulty is always in providing evidence that is acceptable to the official assigned to the case. Finally, after a long struggle in providing more and more details as sought for, what won the day for us was that our client had been nominated for a major international award," explains Khanna.

No capital gains: Lack of Maha babus in Delhi hurting interests of state

Maharashtra has a strong presence in the Union cabinet, but there is only one secretary-rank officer in the central bureaucracy.

Sanjeevani Kutty, a 1983-batch IAS officer, is one of the secretaries in the Union home ministry headed by Rajnath Singh. Maharashtra leaders—Nitin Gadkari, Suresh Prabhu, Anant Gite, Prakash Jawdekar, Piyush Goyal and Hansraj Ahir—hold key posts in Delhi.

Recently, when there was a huge reshuffle in the bureaucracy, it was expected that some senior bureaucrats, who have been empanelled, will get an opportunity to serve at the Centre, but it appears that they have missed the bus. Some decades ago, veteran bureaucrats from Maharashtra held posts of cabinet secretary and headed the home, finance, energy and food production ministries. When the NDA government redrafted the norms for empannellment, many IAS officers were in the



Mahesh Benkar
PUBLIC EYE
PRAFULLA MARPAKWAR

zone of consideration, but only four, including civic chief Ajoy Mehta and Aadhaar chief executive officer Ajay Bhushan Pandey were empanelled for appointment as secretary. A former chief secretary said that due to lack of state bureaucrats in Delhi, Maharashtra does not benefit in the decision-making process.

task force for cultivators' welfare Kishore Tiwari feared that the debt waiver may not succeed due to the "hostile approach" of bureaucrats. Tiwari said from a cursory glance over the government resolution, it appeared that many farmers have been excluded from the scheme. Tiwari said that at a juncture when the cabinet was in favour of the loan waiver, cooperation and finance departments' bureaucrats inserted many conditions to defeat the purpose of the scheme. The CM declared that 36 lakh farmers will become debt-free, but the rider is that they will have to clear the interest and only then they will be eligible for a fresh loan.

Many farmers are not in a position to pay interest as a result, they will not be eligible for fresh credit. While a uniform loan waiver scheme has been drafted for the entire state, the condition of farmers in Vidarbha, Marathwada and Pundarba in Ahmednagar, from where

the agitation began, is different.

Disappearing act

It has more than six months now, the ACB is yet to restore a crucial page on its website. After Praveen Dixit took over the reins from Sanjeev Dayal, he brought about drastic changes in the ACB's functioning. Dixit ensured that cases in which personnel had been trapped were put up on the website on the same day. One of the most important information that was available on the website was the present status of the open inquiry against public servants.

The disclosure included information on the date on which a proposal for open inquiry was submitted and the date on which the ACB was granted permission, the records included specific case details. Through the site, protests against Chhagan Bhujbal, Ajit Pawar and Sunil Tatkar became public. Now the webpage has been removed inexplicably.

GITYLIGHTS

Down Melody Lane

Hindi film songs of the golden era never stop tugging at your heartstrings, say connoisseurs. The songs, which poignantly celebrate love and longing, separation and serenity, have remained unharmed by time, they point out. Concerts raising a toast to legendary composers such as Naushad, O P Nayyar, Shankar-Jaikishan, Roshanlal and the Burman duo (SD-RD) almost always draw packed houses in the city. The magical melodies of Lata-Asha, Geeta Dutt, Shamshad Begum, Mohammad Rafi, Talat Mahmud, Manna Dey, Mukesh and Kishore Kumar leave the audience, which has a sprinkling of GenNow listeners too, asking for more. At a recent concert in the suburbs, a team comprising both greenhorns and seniors belted out Madan Mohan numbers for a full three hours. The songs were peppered with anecdotes from the life of the great composer. For instance, few know that way back in the 1940s Madan Mohan had recorded a duet with Lata Mangeshkar for a film which never saw the light of the day. Also, Raj Khosla, a close friend of Madan Mohan, was keen on setting out in filmdom as a playback singer. He got his first break as a crooner in Madansaab's debut film, 'Aankhein'. Khosla soon stopped dabbling in music, though, and instead turned to filmmaking, while Madan

Mohan, who was briefly interested in pursuing acting as a career, carved a niche for himself as a composer with great numbers as 'Unko yeh shikayat hai ke hum kuchh nahin kahte', 'Baiyyan naa dharo', 'Ek hasen sham ko dil mera kho gaya', 'Lag jaa gale' and 'Dil dhoondta hai phir wohi fursat ke raat din', to name a few.

A Parsi Wedding

Dadabhai Naoroji, the grand old man of the country whose 100th death anniversary was commemorated the previous week, was also a professor of Gujarati at the University of London. On March 13, 1861, at the Liverpool Philomathic Society, the political and social leader presented a paper titled 'The Manners and Customs of The Parsees'. It gives a fascinating glimpse into Parsi life in Mumbai in the nineteenth century. Here, he describes a traditional Parsi wedding: "...the sister of the bride, under the pretext of washing the foot of the bridegroom with milk, steals away one of his shoes, and does not return it till a rupee is presented to her. The bride and the bridegroom are afterwards made to partake of a sweet dish, the bride giving a morsel to the bridegroom, and the bridegroom giving it to her, each instructed beforehand to eat only a little, or not at all... the couple, by turn, is made to find out a ring concealed in the morsel by the other. They are also made to gamble a little, and by these several tests the comparative merits of each are ascertained, I dare say, to the great satisfaction of all, especially of the ladies. The ceremony being over, the procession, with rows of lamps to light it, returns to the bridegroom's

house. The bride, however, does not accompany him then. Feasting follows... eight days after the day of the wedding another feast takes place. There are no tables and chairs. A long strip of cloth about 18 inches wide is spread upon the ground, and the guests take their places in a row on it. Each is then furnished with a piece of the plantain leaf, which he serves before him; after each dish is served, a toast is raised from 'Glory of God' down to 'Happiness to the Couple'. As soon as one toast is drunk, a number of servants and friends of the host, with bottles in their hands, immediately apply themselves to replenish the emptied cups for the next toast..."

Rain on a Train

With rains finally here, weathermen say they have begun to receive umpteen calls from journalists seeking information on the season's progress. Recently, a senior officer from the Indian Meteorological Department who was travelling by a local train got one such call. "The minute I began to tell the person when the next big rainfall is likely to hit Mumbai with technical details such as the wind speed and depression in the Arabian Sea, I got stunned looks from those seated in my compartment. They must have wondered who was I to predict the arrival of the season in the city with such authority. I, of course, immediately lowered my voice and quickly ended the conversation," said the officer with a smile.

(Contributed by Ambarish Mishra, Nauzer Bharucha & Richa Pinto. Compiled by Rucha Bijju Chitrotdia)