



YEAH, I'M PREGNANT WITH #LG6: LADY GAGA RUBBISHES TALKS THAT SHE IS EXPECTING, ANNOUNCES NEXT ALBUM



GWYNETH PALTROW SAYS SHE HASN'T QUIT ACTING, BUT WANTS TO FOCUS ON HER LIFESTYLE BRAND RIGHT NOW

Boeing grounds 737 Max globally after Trump announces ban on jets from US

Ethiopian Airlines Pilot Had Reported 'Flight Control Problems' Before Crash

After nearly every country in the world determined that Boeing's 737 Max airplane should be kept on the ground, Boeing finally relented on Wednesday afternoon and said, in a statement, that it would tell the FAA to ground its entire fleet. It cited no additional findings or data, rather said the planes should be suspended "out of an abundance of caution and in order to reassure the flying public of the aircraft's safety". "We are supporting this proactive step out of an abundance of caution. Safety is a core value at Boeing for as long as we have been building airplanes; and it always will be," Dennis Muilenburg, president of Boeing, said. Boeing, the company said, makes this recommendation and supports the decision by the FAA.

Earlier, President Donald Trump announced that the US was grounding Boeing's 737 Max aircraft, reversing an earlier decision by American regulators to keep the jets flying in the wake of a second deadly crash involving one of the jets in Ethiopia. The Federal Aviation Administration had for days resisted calls to ground the plane even as safety regula-



Inconsolable relatives at the crash site in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, on Wednesday

tors in some 42 countries had banned flights by the jets. As recently as Tuesday, the agency said it had seen "no systemic performance issues" that would prompt it to halt flights of the jet. "The safety of the American people, of all people, is our paramount concern," Trump said.

The order came hours after Canada's transport minister said that newly available satellite-tracking data suggested similarities between the crash in Ethiopia and another accident last October. The crash of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 killed all 157 people on board, and took place just minutes af-

ter takeoff. In October, a 737 Max 8 operated by Lion Air, an Indonesian carrier, crashed in similar circumstance and 189 people were killed. Marc Garneau, Canada's transport minister, had said that satellite tracking data of the vertical path of the Ethiopian jet at take off and similar data from the Lion Air crash showed similar "vertical fluctuations" and "oscillations."

The groundings in North America also come after Ethiopian Airlines said that one of two pilots on Sunday's flight reported "flight-control problems" to air traffic controllers minutes before the plane

crashed and told controllers that he wanted to turn back to Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa. The pilot was cleared to do so, three minutes before contact was lost with the cockpit, a spokesman for the airline said on Wednesday.

The disclosure suggests that a problem with the handling of the aircraft or the computerised flight control system could have been a factor. There has been no suggestion so far of terrorism or other outside interference in the functioning of the aircraft, which was only a few months old.

Officials examining the Lion Air crash have raised the possibility that a new flight-control system could have contributed to that earlier accident. As they banned flights by the aircraft this week, some safety regulators cited concerns that pilots would be unable to handle the aircraft if they were given inaccurate signals from key flight instruments.

Following the Indonesia crash, Boeing was expected to update its software and training guidelines so that airlines can teach their pilots to fly the planes more safely and easily. That software update is planned for April. AGENCIES

Pilots on US routes reported concerns about 737 Max 8

Airline pilots on at least two US flights have reported that an automated system seemed to cause their Boeing 737 Max planes to tilt down suddenly. The pilots said that soon after engaging the autopilot on Boeing 737 Max 8 planes, the nose tilted down sharply. In both cases, they recovered quickly after disconnecting the autopilot. As described by the pilots, however, the problem did not appear related to a new automated anti-stall system that is suspected of contributing to a deadly crash in Indonesia. The pilot reports were filed last year in a database compiled by Nasa. In one report, an airline captain said that immediately after putting the plane on autopilot, the co-pilot called out "Descending", followed by an audio cockpit warning, "Don't sink, don't sink!" The captain immediately disconnected the autopilot and resumed climbing. On another flight, the co-pilot said that seconds after engaging the autopilot, the nose pitched downward and the plane began descending at 1,200 to 1,500 feet per minute. AP

Trump campaign ex-chief gets 3.5 more years in prison

Manafort To Serve Total Of 7.5 Yrs Between 2 Cases

Washington: Paul Manafort, President Trump's former campaign chairman who was sentenced last week to nearly four years in prison, was ordered on Wednesday to serve an additional three and a half years for conspiracy, closing out the special counsel's highest-profile prosecution. Judge Amy Berman Jackson of Federal District Court in Washington sentenced Manafort, 69, on two conspiracy counts that encompassed a host of crimes, including money-laundering, obstruction of justice and failing to disclose lobbying work that earned him tens of millions of dollars over more than a decade.



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"It is hard to overstate the number of lies and the amount of money involved," Judge said of Manafort's case. She added, "A significant portion of his career has been spent gaming the system."

The sentence came six days after a different judge gave Manafort a lenient term of 47 months — just under four years — in prison in a sepa-

rate case in Virginia, with credit for nine months he already has spent behind bars. Judge Jackson said 30 months of her sentence will run at the same time as the sentence in the Virginia case. That means the combined sentence will be six years and nine months.

"This case has taken everything from me, already," Manafort said, running through a list of his financial assets that now belong to the government. "Please let my wife

and I be together," he added, speaking from a wheelchair because gout has made it difficult for him to stand.

Manafort's lawyer Kevin Downing told the judge that while he was not accusing the office of the special counsel, Robert S Mueller, of mounting a politically motivated prosecution, "but for a short stint as campaign manager in a national election, I don't think we would be here today."

But Andrew Weissmann, one of Mueller's top deputies, said Manafort had squandered his education and a wealth of opportunities to lead a criminal conspiracy for more than a decade. Once caught, he obstructed justice by tampering with two witnesses, he said, and then repeatedly lied to prosecutors and to a grand jury after he agreed to cooperate with the special counsel's office in September.

Manafort's case stood out in many ways, not the least of which is because it was brought by the special counsel investigating Russia's interference in the 2016 presidential election. AGENCIES

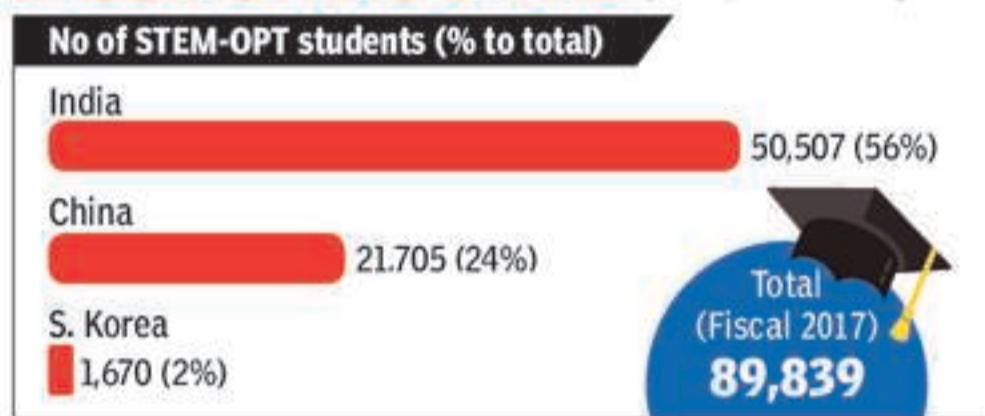
OPT for foreign students does not harm Americans, says US-based think-tank

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The National Foundation for American Policy (NFAAP), a US based non-profit research entity in its recent report has said there is no evidence that foreign students participating in the Optional Practical Training (OPT) reduce job opportunities for Americans. Foreign students are eligible for a 12-month OPT under which they can work in the US. Those who have completed their degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are eligible for applying for a further OPT extension of 24 months.

The regulatory agenda of the Trump administration has from time to time indicated a proposed overhaul of the OPT programme to reduce fraud and to protect the interest of American workers. NFAAP points out that the OPT is a win-win for foreign stu-

BAGGING A BIG SHARE OF STEM-OPT



Source: Student and Exchange Visa System (SEVIS)

dents and US employers. It enables employers to judge if a foreign student is a good fit before sponsoring him or her for a costly and scarce H-1B work visa. The OPT programme gives foreign students (and their employers) multiple shots at obtaining an H-1B visa, particularly if they are eligible for a STEM extension.

Based on statistical evidence, the report shows that foreign students working in the US via the OPT programme acco-

unt for a small share of new graduates — ranging from one to 13% of STEM graduates, depending on the degree levels and constitute a far smaller share of US workers. In fiscal 2016 (year ending September 30, 2016), OPT participants comprised of less than 1% of all workers with a bachelor's degree in a STEM field.

The OPT programme requires that foreign students work in a job directly related to their major, so a better gau-

ge of the relative size of the OPT programme may be the number of foreign students doing OPT as compared to the number of workers in STEM occupations. If this parameter is chosen, OPT participants comprised about 2.5% of workers in STEM occupations with at least a bachelor's degree, the report explained. Rajiv S Khanna, managing attorney at Immigration.com told TOI: "Anecdotally, from our own clients, we see difficulty in hiring qualified people in STEM professions. Several of our clients have opened offices in Canada, because US immigration policies are implemented by the administration inconsistently... We can see no rationale for any change in policy making it more difficult for US trained students to remain in the USA and for US businesses to hire and retain qualified people." Full report on www.toi.in

Oz cardinal gets 6 yrs' jail for sexually abusing 2 boys

Melbourne: The most senior Catholic convicted of child sex abuse was sentenced Wednesday to six years in prison for molesting two choirboys in an Australian cathedral in a crime the judge said showed "staggering arrogance." Cardinal George Pell must serve a minimum of 3 years and 8 months before he is eligible for parole, according to the judge's order. The five convictions against Pell carried a maximum possible sentence of 10 years each. "In my view, your conduct was permeated by staggering arrogance," Victoria state county court chief Judge Peter Kidd said.

Pope Francis' former finance minister was convicted by a unanimous jury verdict in December of orally raping a 13-year-old choirboy and indecently dealing with the boy and the boy's 13-year-old friend in the late 1990s, months after Pell became archbishop of Melbourne. A court order had suppressed media reporting the news until last month. The 77-year-old denies the allegations and will appeal his convictions on June 5.

The judge also took pains to note that he was sentencing Pell for the offenses on which the cardinal had been convicted — and not for the sins of the Catholic Church. "As I directed the jury who convicted you in this trial, you are not to be made a scapegoat for any failings or perceived failings of the Catholic Church," Kidd said.

But the judge also said that Pell had abused his position of power and had shown no remorse for his crimes.

Judge described the assaults as egregious, degrading and humiliating to the victims. Pell showed no emotion during the hour-long hearing and barely moved throughout.

In a statement, one of Pell's victims called the judge's sentence "meticulous and considered." AP

100 KIDS FEARED TRAPPED IN NIGERIA BUILDING COLLAPSE



As many as 100 children and many others are feared trapped after a building that houses a primary school collapsed in Nigeria's Lagos on Wednesday. A Reuters reporter at the scene saw a boy of 10 being pulled from the rubble covered in dust but with no visible injuries. The two were among eight children residents said had been rescued so far. Residents of the area said around 100 children attend the school

Xi's BRI faces criticism at annual political sessions

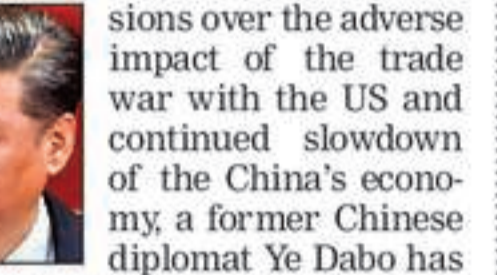
Beijing: Chinese President Xi Jinping's much-touted Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has come under criticism at the annual political sessions of the country, a rare dissent in China's one-party political system.

The annual sessions of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and the National People's Conference (NPC) began on March 3 and due to end on March 15. The CPPCC consisting of over 2,000 delegates is a national advisory body with nominated representatives from various walks of life. The NPC which also has over 2,000 legislators is often regarded as rubber stamp parliament for its routine endorsement of laws and policies formulated by the ruling Communist Party of China.

While dissent and disagree-

ments are a rarity in China, murmurs of criticism that too against Xi's BRI, which reportedly carries over trillion USD investment budget, surfaced during the discussions at the two sessions.

While the two sessions are being held in the backdrop of increasing apprehensions over the adverse impact of the trade war with the US and continued slowdown of the China's economy, a former Chinese diplomat Ye Dabo has questioned whether it was accurate to say in government work report that the BRI had made "important progress" last year. Li presented the work report to the NPC on March 5 for adoption. "We have achieved some results and some fast developments, but it also has problems," Ye said at the panel discussion. PTI



No admission for unvaccinated kids in schools in Italy

Gaia Pianigiani

Rome: Around 300 children in Bologna, Italy, were not eligible to attend kindergarten this week because a temporary measure relaxing vaccination requirements expired and a previous, stricter law returned to force. Dozens of other children across Italy were also likely to be affected, said Mario Rusconi, president of the Association of Head Teachers and Senior Staff in Lazio, Rome's region.

A 2017 law made 10 vaccines obligatory for children

who enrolled in Italian schools, a response to a worrisome decline in vaccinations nationwide and a measles outbreak that same year.

But last year, the health ministry, headed by a member of the Five Star Movement, one of the parties in the coalition government, adopted a temporary measure to allow children to stay in school as long as their parents attested they had been vaccinated. A doctor's note was not needed.

That measure expired March 10, and the 2017 law now applies again.

Children cannot attend nursery schools unless they are vaccinated, and parents of elementary and middle school pupils risk fines of up to 500 euros if they don't have doctor's notes showing that their children were vaccinated against the required diseases.

In Bologna, officials said the 300 children did not present the official document attesting to their vaccination on Monday, and so could not attend public nursery schools. Exactly how many children across Italy were affected was not clear on Tuesday.



SAFETY FIRST

AROUND THE WORLD



THINK INSIDE THE BOX: A hotel built with discarded shipping containers in Valparaiso, Chile

Italy court finds victim too ugly to be raped, sparks row

Italy's justice ministry has ordered a preliminary inquiry into an appeals court ruling that overturned a rape verdict on the grounds that the victim was too ugly to be raped. The ruling has sparked outrage in Italy, including a flash mob Monday outside the Ancona court. The appeals sentence was handed down in 2017 — by an all-female panel — but the reasons behind it only emerged when Italy's high court annulled it March 5 and ordered a retrial. The ministry says two Peruvian men convicted in the 2015 assault successfully argued the woman was too "masculine" to be a victim.

Kentucky student sues CNN for defamation, seeks \$275m

Kentucky teenager sued CNN on Tuesday for defamation, saying the network falsely conveyed to viewers that he was the "face of an unruly hate mob" confronting a Native American activist at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington in January. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of Covington Catholic High School student Nicholas Sandmann, seeks \$275 million in compensatory and punitive damages over the incident. In photos and videos that went viral from the incident, Sandmann is seen standing face to face with Nathan Phillips.

Germany to compensate gays probed after WWII German authorities on Wednesday extended compensation payments to more gay men who were investigated

under a law criminalising homosexuality that was enforced in West Germany after World War II. German lawmakers in 2017 approved the annulment of thousands of convictions in Nazi-era form until homosexuality was decriminalized in 1969. They cleared the way for payments of €3,000 per conviction, plus €1,500 for every year of jail time the convicted men started.

Spanish 'Robin Hood' leaves money at doorstep Residents of a tiny Spanish village have been left mystified by an anonymous donor who leaves envelopes of cash in postboxes or under people's doors. Since last week, around 15 people in Villarramiel, have received envelopes containing up to €100 in notes. Some local news reports have labelled him the "Robin Hood of Villarramiel".