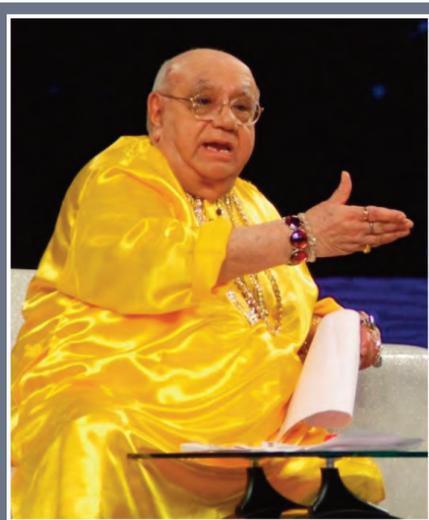


No doomsday, says Ganesha !

Pune



Huned Contractor speaks to well known astrologer Bejan Daruwalla about his book '2012 The End Of The World' and why he feels we have a long way to go before it all blows up

Majestic mountain peaks swallowed by swirling waters, the mighty Himalayas and the Alps submerged and choking in oceanic pools, large chunks of land completely inundated, fires raging everywhere and turning homes and people into ash – these are the many images that various Hollywood films have created in their frantic bid to capitalise on the assumption that the world is coming to an end this year.

According to soothsayers, this cataclysmic finale was predicted thousands of years ago and there will come a day this year when the great continents will be washed away and the Arctic and the Antarctic regions will turn into deserts. Is all this going to come true? Who better to answer this question than astrologer Bejan Daruwalla who has authored a book on this prediction titled '2012 The End Of The World'.

Excerpts from an interview:

Q:So, will the world end on December 21, 2012?

A:For a while now, the possi-

ble and imminent end of the world has been the most widely discussed topic in the media. Religious texts, astrologers, yogis, astronomers, crystal ball gazers, movie moghuls and even scientists have waxed eloquent on the possibility of the end of organic life on earth by adding their spin to the doomsday theory. On a more balanced, rational, objective and studied note, away from the mumbo jumbo of half-beliefs, scientists have reported holes in the magnetic field of earth similar to ozone holes.

It is believed that the magnetic poles will soon reverse and this will affect the earth's capacity to defend against heavy objects that could attack, leading also to huge solar storms. They say that the climax will be in 2012. Other schools of scientific thought, thankfully bringing some normalcy and less hysteria to the debate, discard these suggestions as mere empty rhetoric. I personally don't believe in any such catastrophe happening this year.

Q:Which would be the important years in the future?

A:The period April 15, 2033 to

of development and evolution. It would be a perfect state of affairs. I would therefore put the year 2012 as the turning point in

tures and theories. By learning more about our fellow human beings, we will understand each other better and this will raise the level of sympathy and compassion.

Q:How do you think the world will finally end?

A:The end will come with a huge asteroid ramming our planet. It might be even three or four massive humungous asteroids and comets joining forces and smashing down on our earth. Explosions of immense and unimaginable power and destruction will explode the world.

Q:What's in store for India?

Between January 1, 2018 and December 17, 2020, a new India free from corruption and poverty will certainly emerge and it will be superior to China. I also believe that India is going to benefit from U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to Mumbai on November 6. India is a Capricorn country and will never be tamed. America knows that and respects India for its values.



April 21, 2034 will be a time of the greatest possible compassion, kindness, sympathy and generosity in the history of mankind. I will not be there to witness it but what has started in 2012 will be at full bloom in 2033 and 2034. Lastly, around October 2052, we would have changed to our maximum level

history rather than the end of the world.

Q:Why do you say that mankind will become more compassionate in the future?

A:Thanks to the advancements in technology, we have started to communicate better. We are now opening exchanging ideas, opinions, values, cul-

Dawood is still ISI tool: Kiessling

Pakistan's shadowy Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency has an annual budget of \$300-400 million and despite drastic reductions in personnel "is now assumed (to have a) base strength of approximately 4,000 (people)", says German scholar Hein Kiessling.

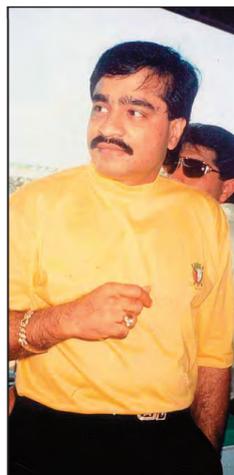
Kiessling, who represented the Hanns-Seidel-Foundation (Munich) in Pakistan from 1989 to 2002, has written this in a collection of essays in "Revisiting Contemporary South Asia" (Pentagon Press).

"The (real) ISI budget is top secret, only a few people know the figure," he says. "In fact officially, the ISI budget today is between \$300 and 400 million. The personnel strength of ISI has also been a secret, he says. "During Zia-ul-Haq's tenure it was estimated to be 20,000 men. In the 1990s and in the new millennium there were drastic reductions in personnel." Therefore, it is now assumed that ISI's base strength is approximately 4,000. Higher estimates often encountered in literature and

the press are grossly exaggerated."

According to the author, changes in personnel policies came out in 2009 under the command of Pakistan Army chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani. "Today with the exception of six-seven two-star generals, the military personnel in ISI come from the Intelligence Corps of the army -- a move that serves towards the professionalism of the service." A military-ISI staff member starts his career as a cadet in combat arms, not in the medical or engineering services. "After completing basic training comes an intelligence exam. The successful candidate goes on to become an officer in the Intelligence Corps, where he goes through additional courses," Kiessling says.

The book says that about five percent of the ISI personnel are formerly from the military on a contract basis. Approximately 45 percent are from the military. Today, the ISI has 50 percent of civilian staff members, who need to have "political knowledge



(current affairs), English and analytical skills".

It says: "Today the ISI is one of the most active and best intelligence services in Asia." It is controlled and efficiently run -- there is no ISI within the ISI. Although officially the Internal Cell was declared closed, it still exists. "The ISI is the eyes and ears of the military. The military forces see themselves as guardians of

Pakistan's survival. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the Internal Cell was closed."

The author says that ISI has again intensified involvement in "Azad Kashmir" (Pakistan-administered Kashmir). "The local jihad structures were upgraded again by bringing back experienced jihadis from Afghanistan and Pakistan." Other reports speak of ISI activities in the enlisting of new young fighters. "It adds that psychological pressure was being exerted on former fighters to reactivate them in Jammu and Kashmir, where a Pakistan-backed separatist campaign has cost thousands of lives since 1989.

The book says that Indian underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, "currently living under ISI protection in Karachi", continues "to be a useful tool for the ISI". Ibrahim, who the book says still dominates the "underground world of Mumbai and Dubai", is wanted in India for the March 1993 serial bombings in Mumbai.

(IANS)

new delhi



Divorcee takes Passport Office to court !

If you are a divorced woman, then you can renew your passport only after getting a no-objection certificate (NoC) from your former husband." This official diktat forced a 67-year-old divorced woman here to move court Tuesday for justice.

The pre-condition imposed by the officials, shocked Hema Gadgil who had approached the Regional Passport Office (RPO), Pune, to renew her passport in March. Numbed by the unexpected official requirement, Gadgil went home, feeling humiliated and bitter as all the sad memories of her broken married life returned to haunt him.

Not willing to take it lying down, Gadgil moved the Bombay High Court Tuesday against the unfair condition slapped by the passport office. "Although all the documents were in order, they refused to renew her passport. As a law-abiding citizen, Gadgil even mentioned her changed marital status, her new residential address

and other aspects to ensure there were no problems," said Alka Babaladi of Sahyog Trust, which is helping her in the matter.

Despite repeated attempts to convince the passport office authorities, they did not relent. Finally, Gadgil asked them to issue a letter which she could show to her former husband for seeking his NoC. The passport office promptly issued the letter on May 22 this year. "Since you are a divorcee and using the surname of your ex-husband, you need to submit 'No Objection Certificate' from him to use his surname," it said.

"Making such a demand violates her fundamental rights," her lawyer Asim Sarode told IANS. She filed a petition in the court, demanding orders to the RPO to renew her passport with the existing relevant documents without dragging in the NOC.

A bench of Justice D.D. Sinha and Justice V. Tahilramani, while admitting the petition, gave the respondents four weeks' time to file their

reply, Sarode said. Sarode said that since there have been similar instances in the past, Gadgil sought general directions to all passport offices in Maharashtra.

Explaining Gadgil's mental trauma, Babaladi said the elderly woman had been using her 'Gadgil' surname for 42 years of her married life, it is also there on all her other legal documents like PAN Card, driving licence, ration card and bank accounts. "She has broken all contact with her former husband for the past nearly two decades and never met him during the hearings in the divorce proceedings. Now, to go back to him for his NoC is like a torture for a self-made woman who lived life on her own terms," she said. Gadgil had left her husband and home to go to the US to pursue a Master's degree in German literature. Besides working for the Tata Consultancy Services, she also looked after her children and is now leading a retired life.

(IANS)

Pune



Vaccination the most viable option for prevention

Cervical Cancer Deaths



new delhi



India, where over 70,000 women die of cervical cancer every year, should opt for preventive vaccination against the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) that causes the disease as this would go a long way in preventing its spread, health experts say.

Gerard Wain of the Westmead Hospital in New South Wales said that India, with its high incidence of cervical cancer, should opt for the HPV preventive vaccine that is administered free to young girls and women aged 12-26 in Australia. "The free vaccination was launched in 2007 in Australia and 85 percent of those vaccinated have shown improvement," Wain, director of the hospital's Gynaecological Oncology Unit, told IANS.

"The vaccine programme has been very effective and successful and the results have shown dramatic reduction in genital warts, which is the initial manifestation of the HPV infection. Cancer develops in 10-20 years if left untreated," said the specialist, who has been invited to India by the capital's Sir Ganga

Ram Hospital.

In India, cervical cancer is a "huge public health problem" and the vaccine "seems to be a very significant way to prevent the disease", Wain said, adding that the vaccine has been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration and in Europe. It is "disappointing that India is not adopting it", Wain said.

Anupam Sachdeva, a senior oncologist at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said cervical cancer is the biggest killer among women compared to breast cancer. Sachdeva, who is head and Senior Consultant Pediatric Hematology Oncology, Bone Marrow and Stem Cell Transplant Unit at the premier hospital, told IANS that India accounts for over 26 percent of cervical cancer deaths worldwide.

"Nearly 7.3 percent of India's total population is HPV positive," he said. According to Sachdeva, penetrative sex is not the only way to contract HPV. "In colleges, boys and girls fool around. They may not indulge

in penetrative sex, but even contact and handling of the sexual organs is enough to pass on the virus."

"It is very important that the Indian government realises the delay in introduction of the vaccine, which is a primary prevention programme," said the specialist. The vaccine is a "quadrivalent vaccine", he said, explaining that it tackles two viruses for cervical cancer and two for genital warts.

He said the vaccination should be done in a phased manner so that the immunisation coverage is high.

"Unfortunately the majority of women report in the last stages of the disease. The pap smear technique is not working well. When they report in the last stages of disease, the morbidity and mortality is much more," he added. He said that women do not usually address their health issues as much as men. "They always put families, children and husband before their own health," he said, adding that the cost of the lives lost is so high that the preven-

tion programme should be opted for.

"The cost of life years lost, of life snuffed out at 38-39 years age of women who could have lived on until 75 years, is very high. Women are the centre of the family, children are affected... we should also take in the psychological effect of cervical cancer deaths."

Over 80 percent of women newly diagnosed with cervical cancer live in developing countries and most are diagnosed when they are in an advanced stage of the disease.

The World Health Organisation has recommended that regular screening and routine HPV vaccination should be included in national immunisation programmes and that prevention of cervical cancer or other HPV-related diseases, or both, should constitute a public health priority.

Virtually all cervical cancer cases (99 percent) are linked to genital infection with human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the most common viral infection of the reproductive tract.