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Tech textile researcher to visit India

India's booming textile industry may have positive impacts on US cotton growers



PHOTO COURTESY OF MURALIDHAR LALAGIRI

SESHADRI RAMKUMAR, AN associate professor at the Institute of Environmental and Human Health, demonstrates the use of a needlepunching machine for the production of nonwoven textile products. Ramkumar's research, in part, led to the creation of Fibertect™, a nonwoven cotton product which the Environmental Protection Agency approved for the cleaning of oil from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

By MERIDETH MURPHEY
STAFF WRITER

Seshadri Ramkumar, associate professor at Texas Tech's Institute of Environmental and Human Health, will be venturing to Coimbatore, India to speak at the Association of Nonwoven Fabrics Industry — or INDA — Nonwovens Training Course, which will be held from Aug. 12-13.

INDA, which has been holding the workshop since 2007, is a trade association which represents more than 300 leading global textile companies. According to its website, its mission is to promote the value and profitability of the nonwovens/engineered fabrics industry worldwide.

"They are the leading trade association for the emerging textiles called nonwovens," Ramkumar said.

INDA became familiar with the nonwovens research being done at Tech through their attendance of the International Conference for Advancement in Textiles, Machinery, Nonwovens and Technical Textiles — which was created by Ramkumar — and became interested in collaborating with Tech on the workshop.

"Texas Tech University is the first and only, so far, partnering with them to offer this workshop in India," Ramkumar said. "So in that way we are the lead to collaborate with the biggest trade association in the nonwovens area to offer the unique training program on nonwovens in India."

INDA also collaborates with

an India-based consulting firm called TecniTex Nonwovens, which coordinates the workshops.

Recently, Ramkumar has been generating media attention because the Environmental Protection Agency approved his cotton-carbon invention, Fibertect, which also sparks international interest in Tech.

Larry Hobbs, vice president of manufacturing at Hobbs Bonded Fibers — the company that manufactures Fibertect — said Fibertect has brought a lot of publicity to Tech.

"The Fibertect itself has generated a lot of publicity for Texas Tech," Hobbs said, "and made Dr. Ramkumar's department a leader in the U.S. for nonwoven technology."

Shawn Wade, director of communications for Plains Cotton Growers, Inc., said Ramkumar's forward thinking and connections in India helped foster this prestigious relationship and can greatly benefit Tech.

"The neat thing about Dr. Ramkumar's research is that it's very forward thinking," Wade said, "and it's kind of put him into some areas of research that a lot of Tier One-type universities are shooting for."

Although India is the second largest cotton-producing nation in the world, the amount of cotton they produce cannot support their growing textiles industry.

Wade said India's growing textile industry opens a new market for the U.S. because cotton can be exported to India.

"They've got so many people to feed that they don't really

have the cotton land — the extra land to grow a lot more cotton," Wade said. "So, any up-tic in their textile production is probably going to be reliant on a certain level of imported cotton to feed that industry and that's what is important to the U.S."

Ramkumar said that India's goals in the textiles industry are impossible to attain without importing cotton and using it to its fullest.

"When you grow the textiles industry into nonwovens and technical textiles, they won't even have cotton," Ramkumar said. "So they need to import and the United States can take that as a new and emerging market."

He said the relationships he is building in India will help Lubbock's economy, but also has major benefits for Tech.

"This puts Texas Tech on an international map," Ramkumar said, "particularly when we are aiming for Teir One. These are certain unique, niche things which Texas Tech can claim they were the first to do."

Hobbs has been in business with Ramkumar since 2004 and said, over the years, he has enjoyed working with the business relationship because of Ramkumar's positive attitude and willingness to share what he knows.

"He's fun to work with because he is so passionate about what he does," Hobbs said, "and I think anytime you find someone that passionate about what they do, they're going to be good at it."

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Tropical depression races toward BP's leaky well

BY COLLEEN LONG AND HARRY WEBER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ON THE GULF OF MEXICO (AP) — A tropical depression racing toward the Gulf of Mexico Thursday increased pressure on BP and the U.S. government to decide whether to evacuate dozens of ships at the site of the ruptured oil well.

Forecasters at the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said the storm system, which has already caused flooding in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Haiti, could become Tropical Storm Bonnie later Thursday and reach the Gulf of Mexico by Saturday.

Seas already were choppy in the Gulf Thursday, with waves up to five feet rocking boats as crews prepared to leave if needed. Nonessential vessels like barges and skimmers will likely be sent back to shore, Commander Terri Jordan told the crew of the Coast Guard cutter Decisive at a mid-morning briefing.

She said they were awaiting an evacuation order.

"We are going to be here until everyone is safe and out of here,"

Jordan said.

Work on plugging the well is at a standstill just days before the expected completion of a relief tunnel to permanently throttle the free-flowing crude.

Worse yet, the government's spill chief said foul weather could require reopening the cap that has contained the oil for nearly a week, allowing oil to gush into the sea again for days while engineers wait out the storm.

"This is necessarily going to be a judgment call," said retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, who was waiting to see how the storm developed before deciding whether to order any of the ships to leave.

BP spokesman Scott Dean said Thursday morning that no decisions had been made yet.

Crews had planned to spend Wednesday and Thursday reinforcing with cement the last few feet of the relief tunnel that will be used to pump mud into the gusher and kill it once and for all. But BP put the task on hold and instead placed a temporary plug called a storm packer deep inside the tunnel, in case it has to be abandoned until the storm passes.

"What we didn't want to do is

be in the middle of an operation and potentially put the relief well at some risk," BP vice president Kent Wells said.

If the work crews are evacuated, it could be two weeks before they can resume the effort to kill the well. That would upset BP's timetable, which called for finishing the relief tunnel by the end of July and plugging the blown-out well by early August.

Scientists have been scrutinizing underwater video and pressure data for days, trying to determine if the capped well is holding tight or in danger of rupturing and causing an even bigger disaster. If the storm prevents BP from monitoring the well, the cap may simply be reopened, allowing oil to spill into the water, Allen said.

BP and government scientists were meeting to discuss whether the cap could be monitored from shore.

As the storm drew closer, boat captains hired by BP for skimming duty were sent home and told they wouldn't be going back out for five or six days, said Tom Ard, president of the Orange Beach Fishing Association in Alabama.

In Florida, crews removed booms intended to protect waterways in the

Panhandle from oil. High winds and storm surge could carry the booms into sensitive wetlands.

Also, Shell Oil began evacuating employees out in the Gulf.

Even if the storm does not hit the area directly, it could affect the effort to contain the oil and clean it up. Hurricane Alex stayed 500 miles away last month, yet skimming in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida was curtailed for nearly a week.

The relief tunnel extends about two miles under the seabed. It's now about four feet from the side of the well, although BP still has more than 100 feet to drill diagonally before the tunnel reaches the well. BP plans to insert a final string of casing, or drilling pipe, cement it into place, and give it up to a week to set, before attempting to punch through to the blown-out well and kill it.

BP's broken well spewed somewhere between 94 million and 184 million gallons into the Gulf before the cap was attached. The crisis — the biggest offshore oil spill in U.S. history — unfolded after the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon rig exploded April 20, killing 11 workers.

"South Park" critic faces terror charges in Va. court

By MATTHEW BARAKAT
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — A Virginia man best known for posting an online attack against the creators of the animated series "South Park" will spend at least one more day in jail on unrelated charges that he twice tried to join a Somali terror group linked to al-Qaida.

Zachary Chesser, 20, of Oakton, Va., made an initial appearance Thursday in U.S. District Court on charges of providing material support to the al-Shabab terror group, which earlier this month claimed responsibility for a July 11 bombing in Uganda that killed more than 75 people watching the World Cup.

Chesser did not have an attorney and requested a court-appointed lawyer. Dressed casually and shorn of the long beard that was a feature in Internet videos in which he appears, he otherwise did not speak in a hearing that lasted barely two minutes. He is being held pending a detention hearing scheduled for Friday. Prosecutor Gordon Kromberg said Chesser faces a potential maximum of 15 years in prison.

FBI agents say Chesser twice tried

to travel to Somalia to join al-Shabab as a fighter. An FBI affidavit says he was stopped once by his mother-in-law. The second time occurred on July 10, when he took his infant son with him and tried to board a flight from New York to Uganda. An FBI affidavit states that Chesser took his son to the airport so he would appear less suspicious. He was denied entry to the flight and told he was on the no-fly list.

He is also accused of using the Internet to spread propaganda on behalf of al-Shabab members.

Chesser gained notoriety earlier this year for warning online that the creators of the animated series "South Park" risked death by mocking the Prophet Muhammad.

A court affidavit also states that Chesser corresponded with the radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki last year, and received two responses. Al-Awlaki is a U.S. citizen living in Yemen who was recently designated a terrorist by the U.S. government. Al-Awlaki is believed to have corresponded with several alleged terrorists, including Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, the U.S. Army psychiatrist accused of killing 13 people in November at Fort Hood, Tex.

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WEATHER

Today	Mostly Sunny	Saturday	Isolated Thunderstorms
	90 / 70		88 / 68

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THE DAILY TOREADOR

Tech hosts Hunt-Winston Solar Car Challenge

By TRISTIN WALKER
STAFF WRITER

In an effort to increase awareness of alternative energies, the Edward E. Whitacre College of Engineering hosted the 2010 Hunt-Winston School Solar Car Challenge Monday.

The solar car challenge is a cross-country solar car race for high school students — featuring 18 solar cars and their teams — which stopped in Lubbock Monday as the teams raced from Dallas to Boulder, Colo.

The event took place in the Jones AT&T Stadium parking lot, where those who were interested had the opportunity to learn more about solar car racing. There were a total of 90 vehicles and 216 individual participants, including students and advisers.

Also at the event, the Texas Tech Solar Racing Team, the Formula Society of Automotive Engineers and the Texas Tech University Challenge X team attended to raise awareness for their organizations.

The president of the solar racing team, Jordan Littlejohn,

is a junior mechanical engineering major from Round Rock who said his passion for solar car racing started in high school when he was given the opportunity to visit the Hunt-Winston School Solar Car Challenge event.

“Coming to an event like this when I was younger really spiked my interest in solar cars,” Littlejohn said. “The event really broadened my mind of all the opportunities Tech had to offer, including the organization I’m in currently.”

Littlejohn said he has always been interested in cars and mechanics ever since, and when he had the chance to be involved in an organization that promoted eco-friendly cars such as the solar car racing team, he took it.

Chad Austin, a senior mechanical engineering major from Lubbock, is a member of the Challenge X team. He said he believes the event was a great opportunity to inform people of an organization at Tech devoted to eco-friendly cars.

The Challenge X team’s purpose is to design, build and

demonstrate advanced automotive technologies using clean and alternative fuels. The team converted a Chevrolet Equinox into a hybrid electric vehicle known as the Eco-Car.

“We are at the future of automotive base,” Austin said, “and the Eco-Car we created as the start of what we can do to help improve our ways of transportation.”

The Exxon Mobile Bernard Harris Summer Science Camp was also at the event, where 40 incoming sixth, seventh, and eighth graders attended and learned more about the College of Engineering and the programs and organizations that help promote solar cars.

Becky Hambright, president of the event, said she makes sure the campers attend the event to give them the opportunity to know more about what types of organizations are out there for them.

“Students from Lubbock and the surrounding counties who would not normally have the opportunity to visit a college get the chance to see what it would be like if they pursue their educa-

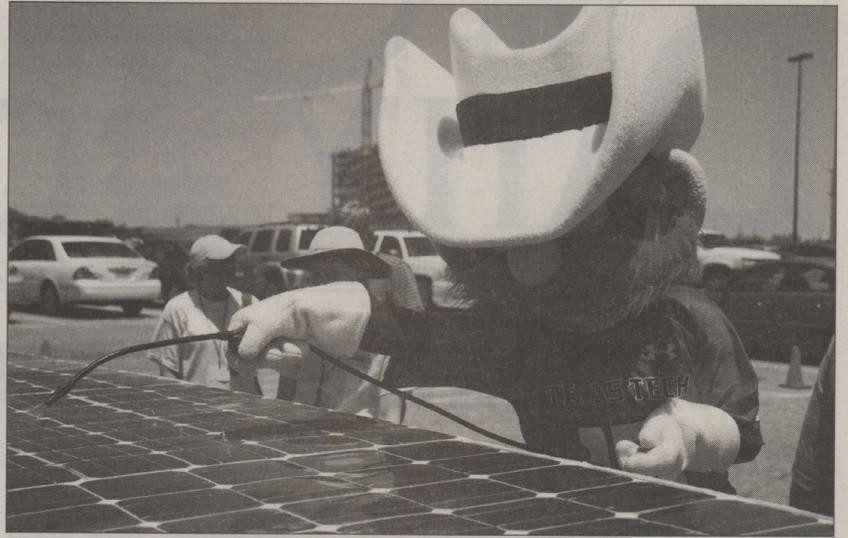


PHOTO BY PAUL HAILES/The Daily Treador
RAIDER RED APPLIES water to the solar panel of a solar race car Monday at the 2010 Hunt-Winston Solar Car Challenge. Water helps keep the panel cool and free of unwanted particles such as dirt.

tion more,” Hambright said.

The campers got to talk to advisers from the College of Engineering, visit with members of the organizations they find interesting and see the solar cars the Hunt-Winston brought.

John Strauss, interim dean of the Edward E. Whitacre College of Engineering, attended the event and said he was very pleased with his students and honored to be a part of what they are all accomplishing.

“I’m really proud of all our students,” Strauss said. “They are doing a great job at representing our school, and I’m looking forward to see what they do next.”

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Corrections

In the July 16 issue of *The Daily Treador*, the article headlined “Renovations to Jones AT&T Stadium set for completion in time for season opener” should have stated that, at this point, no

invitations have been sent for the Red Raider Club. *The DT* regrets the error.

If you feel there is an error in a story, please e-mail Editor Ralston Rollo at rolston.rollo@ttu.edu

Gunbattles paralyze Mexican city across from Texas

NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico (AP) — Late-night gunbattles with gangs who forced citizens from their cars and used the vehicles to block streets paralyzed a border city, sound of gunfire alarmed Texans on the U.S. side of the Rio Grande.

The Nuevo Laredo city government posted messages on Facebook warning citizens to stay indoors as the battles erupted at several intersections in the city across from Laredo, Texas.

Frightened people on the U.S. side of the border called emergency dispatchers after hearing the gunfire, Laredo police spokesman Joe Baeza said Thursday. But he said there was no spillover violence.

“We were getting reports from people who live on the river’s edge that they could hear gunfire and explosions from the Mexico side,” Baeza said.

“We didn’t have any inci-

dents on the American side. It’s hard for people to understand who don’t live here,” he added.

“They’re not Vikings, they’re not going to invade us, it doesn’t work that way.”

Nuevo Laredo city officials said they could not immediately confirm witness reports that several gunmen were killed.

Gangs used stolen cars and buses to block several main avenues in the city across from Laredo, Texas. Several residents called local newspapers to

report thefts.

“For your security, stay in your homes until the alert has passed,” the city government wrote on Facebook.

When the violence subsided, the government urged citizens to come forward and reclaim their stolen vehicles.

Nuevo Laredo is among several northern cities under siege from a turf battle between the Gulf cartel and its former enforcers, the Zetas gang of hit men. Violence has surged along the north-

eastern border with the United States since the two gangs split earlier this year.

Gangs have frequently blocked streets in the middle of the cities to thwart soldiers coming to the aid of colleagues under fire.

In the northern state of Chihuahua, a banner appeared on a bridge threatening violence against “innocents” unless the state government fires its chief of police intelligence, Fernando Ornelas, the *Diario de Juarez* newspaper reported Thursday.

The banner appeared in the state capital, also called Chihuahua.

Last week, drug gangs introduced a new threat to Mexico’s drug war, detonating their first successful car bomb. The attack killed a federal police officer and two others in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua’s largest city.

Los Angeles Times Daily Crossword Puzzle

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

ACROSS

- 1 Stage routines
- 5 Full of spunk
- 10 Shenanigan
- 14 Multilayer farm site?
- 15 Twaddle
- 16 “Ta ta!”
- 17 It’s entered and processed
- 18 Needle bearers
- 19 Pachacuti, for one
- 20 Opportunity to examine some headwear?
- 23 Grub
- 24 Recycled T-shirt?
- 25 Carol beginning
- 28 Proactiv target
- 30 One of a cup’s
- 33 Call-in broadcasting for chefs?
- 35 Pampas weapon
- 36 “Seinfeld” actress Julia — Dreyfus
- 37 Posed
- 38 Idol whose fans are known as Claymates
- 39 Gray area?
- 40 Northerners who dress with Scottish flair?
- 42 Condiment for pommes frites
- 43 Livers (up)
- 44 Delicate
- 45 Mendicant title
- 46 God attended by Valkyries
- 47 Hats that are soft and angular?
- 55 Plant used for first aid
- 56 More than 70% of Earth’s surface
- 57 Stretched just short of the breaking point
- 58 Tidings
- 59 Sudden movement
- 60 Gumbo ingredient
- 61 “Gee willikers!”
- 62 Keep an — the ground
- 63 McJob performer

DOWN

- 1 Versatile, electronically
- 2 Historic Newcastle resource
- 3 Miss Galt’s bête noire, somewhat literally
- 4 Garb for Apollo
- 5 Religious guardian
- 6 Astrological ovine
- 7 Fein
- 8 Blueprint item, briefly
- 9 “Just give me an answer already!”
- 10 Hockey infraction
- 11 After-dinner item
- 12 Step
- 13 Look down on the clouds, perhaps
- 21 Can’t take
- 22 Seven sheikdoms fed.
- 25 Rand’s shrugger
- 26 Shortbread cookie surname
- 27 Peer
- 28 Apple or ale lead-in
- 29 Pierre, e.g.
- 30 Perfunctory
- 31 Wintry woe
- 32 Flower name derived from the French for “thought”
- 34 PDQ cousin
- 35 Halter, perhaps
- 38 “Henry & June” role
- 40 Lady Hillingdon is a cultivar of one
- 41 Enlarge, as a house
- 43 Ante- equivalent
- 45 Meat
- 46 Victor Vasarelys genre
- 47 Explosion
- 48 It’s found in tubs
- 49 Awees
- 50 Tetra- times two
- 51 Fruit with a “check the neck” ripeness test
- 52 Steal
- 53 Slovenia capital
- 54 Ollie’s sidekick

By Donna S. Levin 7/23/10

Tuesday’s Puzzle Solved

USS PLATO ORBIT
NIL HIRED NOISE
CLOUDLINE ELLEN
LEON DAD OMELET
EXPOSE SALE
PINT TEACHER
TELEX RAT TRIPE
AVANT ALI BUSES
RENEE MAR ASSET
TRADEUP ELLA
NES OLDMAN
SWEATY CPA EASE
HELLO TEAFORTWO
EVIAN ENTER TAN
DEANS DEERE ENS

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Dallas woman accused of murdering her children admits to poison attempt, cites autism as reasoning

DALLAS (AP) — A suburban Dallas woman accused of killing her two young children told a 911 operator that she first tried to poison them because they were autistic and she wanted “normal kids,” then choked them with a wire until they stopped moving, according to the recorded call.

Irving police on Wednesday released recordings of the 911 call after Saiqa Akhter was charged with capital murder in the death of her 5-year-old son, Zain Akhter. Police said the children were attacked at the family’s apartment Monday

night. Another capital murder charge is pending in the slaying of her 2-year-old daughter, Faryaal Akhter, who died Tuesday night, police spokesman David Tull said.

In the recording released Wednesday, the woman identified herself as Saiqa Akhter and repeatedly told the operator she killed her two children. At one point, the woman hung up and the dispatcher called her back.

“I killed both of them. I told you,” she told the operator. Later, she explained that both children were lying motion-

less on the bed in the master bedroom.

“They are not doing anything. They are just blue and they are not taking any breaths and ... their heart is not beating,” she said.

She told the operator she initially tried to poison the children with bathroom cleaner but they refused to drink it. When that didn’t work, “I used a wire on their necks,” she said.

When the operator asked the woman why she attacked her children, she said, “They’re both not normal, not normal. They’re autistic. Both are au-

tistic.” Pressed further, she said, “I don’t want my children to be like that. ... I want normal kids.”

Later, the dispatcher asked the woman what she was feeling. “Nothing,” she responded.

At one point, water could be heard running in the background and the dispatcher asked what the woman what she was doing. She told the operator she was trying to wash the smell of cleaner off of her hands. The dispatcher then told the woman to go sit on a couch in the living room and wait for police.

At the end of the recording, police can be heard arriving at the home.

Akhter has requested a court-appointed attorney but one hasn’t been assigned to her case yet, an Irving jail official said. If convicted of capital murder, Akhter could face the death penalty, though prosecutors have not said if they will seek that punishment. Otherwise, she could face life in prison without parole.

Saiqa Akhter’s uncle, Wasimul Haque, told *The Dallas Morning News* his niece had been depressed since moving into a new apartment in Irving. Haque said Zain had autism and a severe speech impediment but had been improving and was in speech therapy.

The children’s father, Rashid Akhter, emigrated from Pakistan in the late 1990s, the newspaper reported. He married Saiqa, who also is from Pakistan, several years later, it said.

Zain was buried Wednesday in Richardson, another Dallas suburb. Faryaal’s funeral is scheduled for Thursday.

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European growth rallies US Stock Market sales

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks had their biggest rally in two weeks Thursday as earnings and economic reports reassured investors that the economy is continuing its recovery.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 201 points after strong earnings from Caterpillar Inc., UPS Inc. and other companies revived investors' optimism about the recovery. A better than expected report on housing and encouraging signs of growth in Europe added to the upbeat mood.

Investors who have been mostly selling on disappointing economic and earnings numbers had, at least for the moment, reasons to be buying. Caterpillar said its orders are growing and production will pick up in the second half of the year. UPS raised its outlook because of spending by businesses. Caterpillar's stock rose 2.1 percent, while UPS gained 5.9 percent.

Chris Hobart, founder of Hobart Financial Group in Charlotte, N.C. said the outlooks are especially important because if companies expect to grow, that might get them to ramp up hiring.

If improved outlooks lead to jobs growth, "then this can be better than a good quarter or good second half, (it can mean) we've got a good economy," Hobart said.

A report on the housing market, while still showing a slowdown, was reassuring because it wasn't as bad as investors expected. The National Association of Realtors said sales of previously occupied homes fell to an annual rate of 5.37 million in June from 5.66 million a month earlier. Economists forecast the sales rate to fall to 5.18 million.

Traders largely wrote off a jump in the number of people seeking unemployment benefits for the first time. The increase was likely skewed by seasonal factors. Instead, investors focused on earnings from a broad range of companies that showed businesses aren't seeing a slowdown in the recovery. News of corporate deals also lifted shares.

Meanwhile, European markets rose after a report showed unexpected growth in the 16-nation group that uses the

euro. In recent months, investors worldwide have been concerned that rising government debt in Europe would stall a global recovery. A jump in Europe's purchasing managers index reported Thursday was a welcome relief after forecasts of a possible recession on the continent.

The economic reports out of Europe were "a big surprise because everyone expects that to be the Achilles heel of the global economy," said Anthony Chan, chief economist at J.P. Morgan Private Wealth Management in New York.

It was problems in Europe that set off the big drop in stocks in late April. As Greece struggled to make debt payments and ratings agencies downgraded the

government debt of several companies, stocks plunged in the U.S. on fears that the domestic recovery was in jeopardy. Stocks then fell further as U.S. economic reports showed that the recovery was at best bumpy. Some investors feared a "double dip," or the economy falling back into recession.

According to preliminary calculations, the Dow rose 201.77, or 2 percent, to 10,322.30. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 24.08, or 2.3 percent, to 1,093.67, while the Nasdaq composite index rose 58.56, or 2.7 percent, to 2,245.89.

Only 397 stocks fell on the New York Stock Exchange, while 2,675 rose. Volume came to 1.2 billion shares.

"Dragon Quest IX" offers massive RPG adventure in a small package

In Japan, the "Dragon Quest" series is massive — about as massive as something like "Call of Duty" is for us, if not more so. In fact, the games in the main "Dragon Quest" line have to be released on Sundays because the country slows down after the product launches. Both children and adults have been known to skip school or work just to play the newest fantasy adventure.

The series has never achieved nearly that level of popularity here in North America, but that's not for a lack of quality. The games are good, and this latest entry is no exception.

"Dragon Quest" is a fantasy RPG, much like "Final Fantasy," but much more lighthearted. Players will explore a vast overworld map filled with enemies to battle and dungeons to explore. Battles take place in a turn-based fashion, with the player selecting actions for his or her party of one to four adventurers.

None of this is even remotely innovative, but "Dragon Quest IX" is somewhat unique for the series in a few ways. One is that it's part of the main

Britton Peele



series of games (in other words, it's not a side story or dumbed down port), and it was developed exclusively for the portable Nintendo DS, rather than a more powerful system like the PlayStation 3. This makes some sense, considering the DS is the best-selling game system of all time, and every Japanese citizen seems to own at least three of them.

The other main break from tradition is that this game is highly focused on multiplayer. Rather than being a story about a set cast of characters, "Dragon Quest IX" tasks you with creating every character in your party — primarily your hero. This opens up the possibility of playing with fellow owners of the game, while each of you plays as the character of your own making. This doesn't exactly make it "World of Warcraft," but it's neat to be able to affect your hero's look, and playing with friends can be fun.

On the downside, however, this dampens the story quite a bit. Since the game puts so many choices in your hand, the story can't do a ton to make you feel for the protagonist — you have to do most of that yourself.

This combined with the constant grinding for gold and experience points makes "Dragon Quest IX" feel very old school, but in a lot of ways that's perfectly

fine. Rather than feeling like the developers were taking steps backward, I felt they were looking back at what makes games enjoyable in the first place. While it may be lacking in plot or graphics, the game packs a lot of fun, especially for a portable title.

Since you can take the experience with you wherever you go, it's a good thing that the experience is pretty massive. Nintendo sent us a review copy of the game almost a week before its retail release, but that wasn't enough time to see everything there is to see in the game. You can easily play for several hours while barely scratching the surface of the main adventure, and there are plenty of side-quests and other things to do. If you set out to do everything, you could easily be playing for over 100 hours.

Unfortunately, you'll be playing all those hours on one save file, with one character. The lack of additional files means you can never go back to earlier parts of the game without starting all over (and erasing all your progress), and it means you can't share your copy of the game with family or friends.

"Dragon Quest IX" is a great, though not perfect game. It makes some sacrifices, but it provides one heck of a portable adventure. It probably deserves a spot on any hardcore gamer's shelf, but if you're more into fast-paced action than the classic strategy and equipment management of old-school RPGs, then you should probably stay away.

■ Peele is The DT's former opinions editor. He will return to the position in August. E-mail him at britton.peele@ttu.edu

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OPINIONS

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FRIDAY, JULY 23, 2010

Marijuana legalization could have financial, security benefits

By CHRIS LEAL

"Two of my favorite things are sitting on my front porch smoking a pipe of sweet hemp, and playing my Hohner harmonica." - Abraham Lincoln (excerpt from a letter from President Lincoln during his administration to the president of the German Hohner Harmonica Co.).

The current financial crisis that began in 2008 has incited change in many aspects of The United States — from new regulations to new cultural lifestyles and, arguably, a new president.

Though one of the more curious circumstances its tentacles of change have latched onto has been the debate on the legalization of marijuana.

Though there has been a general global trend towards decriminalization of the leaf prior to the economic calamity, the financial crisis has escalated talks of full-on legalization in states that have been disproportionately hit with budgetary crises.

California, long a leader in the marijuana culture and trend-setter of the United States, is one such state battling with multi-billion dollar deficits due to drastic decreases in tax

revenue as a result of high unemployment (along with other structural deficit problems).

This November Californians will have the chance to vote on a variety of possible legalization/decriminalization options for their state. The bill with the most momentum behind it is the Regulate, Control, and Tax act of 2010 — or Proposition 19 for short.

Prop. 19 would fully legalize the growth and consumption of marijuana for people ages 21 and older, but would leave the authority to regulate, ban, and tax the leaf up to individual cities or counties. This seems like the most logical option.

One study suggests that the current price of marijuana in California would decrease by 80% after its legalization. Estimates say the state would save \$1.9 billion in costs related to detaining and imprisonment for possession of the substance, and would generate an additional \$1.4 billion through tax revenues. That figure may fluctuate if taxation is left up to individual counties.

If similar legislation were adopted in other states without steep budget deficits, the tax revenues could be used for purposes such as education — simi-

lar to how Texas currently uses its "sin tax" revenue from alcohol and tobacco to fund a lot of public education due to its lack of a state income tax.

Some see it as pitiful to consider legalizing marijuana due to fiscal austerity, but it certainly is a pragmatic solution for a state that is already laying off thousands of public employees including teachers, drastically cutting school budgets and shortening the number of required days for school attendance. Not to mention the absolute hypocrisy of its criminality compared to the legality of alcohol and tobacco.

Though much more harmful to the body, alcohol and tobacco continue

to be legal in the United States, and have been since the country's founding with the exception of alcohol during Prohibition.

The alcohol and tobacco industries have always had a place in our country, with even a number of our founding fathers and early presidents growing the crop or bootlegging the drink. Although less known, marijuana was also widely grown by early farmers and even by presidents such as George Washington (and yes, this is true; not some conspiracy weed hoax).

Though its use was primarily commercial and industrial, its recreational uses have long been known and were

surely occasionally used as such. It's strange that these three agricultural staples have been present since the nation's inception, yet only marijuana has been criminalized. Perhaps this is due to the rise of cotton and other textile alternatives replacing the practical uses of hemp.

Though it would certainly have economic benefits and would be less hypocritical than current US drug policy, an even more important reason for the leaf's legalization is one less discussed — national security. Demand for marijuana creates a highly profitable business for the drug lords of Central and South America, where the majority of the United States' marijuana comes from.

The drug cartels in Mexico have become so economically empowered by our huge demand for the illegal substance that they have become powerful enough to outright challenge the Mexican government, subsequently causing hundreds of deaths this year alone inside of Mexico, at our border and even on US soil.

With a single act of legalization, if the currently inflated market price for the plant fell according to the 80% estimate, that would prove to be

severely destabilizing for these drug cartel operations.

It would cut a majority of their funding right out from under them. Mexico has tried in recent years to legalize marijuana even if the US wouldn't, but eventually bowed under pressure from the US not to do so.

In conclusion, it's terribly misguided to criminalize a plant which grows naturally on this planet. The majority of the animosity and negative public sentiment against the crop is a result of the lasting effects of the government propaganda against the substance that was popular in the earlier half of the last century, and if you don't believe this it will prove itself to be true as current generations' age and younger generations come to power.

And if it supposedly makes people crazy or deprives them of motivation in life, I guess one can just point to scientist and astrophysicist Carl Sagan, or 14-time gold-medal Olympian Michael Phelps, or numerous US presidents including Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama.

■ **Leal is a junior finance and economics dual major from The Colony.**

► chris.leal@ttu.edu

“Demand for marijuana creates a highly profitable business for the drug lords of Central and South America, where the majority of the United States’ marijuana comes from.”

Today's
su | do | ku

			7		2
9		4	6	5	
	8	9		1	
				4	1
1			3		
	3	6			
		5		8	6
		1	7	2	5
6	1				

Puzzles by PageFiller

In Sudoku, all the numbers 1 to 9 must be in every row, column and 3 x 3 box. Use logic to define the answers.

1	6	3	7	4	2	8	9	5
9	4	8	6	5	1	3	2	7
2	7	5	3	8	9	1	6	4
8	9	2	1	3	4	5	7	6
7	3	1	5	2	6	9	4	8
6	5	4	9	7	8	2	1	3
5	1	9	4	6	3	7	8	2
3	2	6	8	1	7	4	5	9
4	8	7	2	9	5	6	3	1

Solution to yesterday's puzzle

Ombuds Office
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All change is not growth, as all movement is not forward.
~Ellen Glasgow

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Nolan lives up to his name with "Inception"

By THOMAS LOTT

Christopher Nolan has outdone himself. With movies like The Prestige, Insomnia and Memento, I did not think he could get more creative. Inception proved me wrong.

The movie successfully balances non-stop action with intense psychological

tampering. Not psychologically with the characters, but with the viewers. Nolan makes you think each and every second of the movie and, as you leave the theatre, you will still be thinking.

Only Christopher Nolan could have done this movie well. The story was so complex it bordered on out of control, but Nolan brought it together so effectively

the pieces fall together flawlessly.

There is not a single scene in the movie that looks the same. The colors are so diverse you would think they would clash. But the idea that every scene is dependent upon the personality of the characters brings the scenes together rather than running them into each other.

Leonardo DiCaprio plays Cobb. In

his dream, everything seems dim because he is fighting to hold on to his past. Tom Hardy, who plays Eames, is reminiscent of James Bond because he is a forger and has to assume certain roles to accomplish their mission. As a result, his dream has more of an espionage feel to it and looks like a video game. Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who plays Arthur, has a dream which has very earthy colors to it because he is the researcher, and in a way, must get down to the root of every person's secrets outside of their dreams.

The movie borders on absolute chaos. Certain scenes occur in unison with other scenes, while during certain moments you get lost because you were trying to figure out what happened in the scene before. But rather than producing confusion, the chaos produces intrigue.

You may not have figured out what happened in the scene before, but the movie moves onto the next sequence. You get upset because you do not understand what is going on, but you cannot look away from what is going on in the current scene.

Rather than not answering these questions at all, the answers are revealed scene-to-scene. All of the questions you have are answered in due time, but you have to wait patiently for those answers.

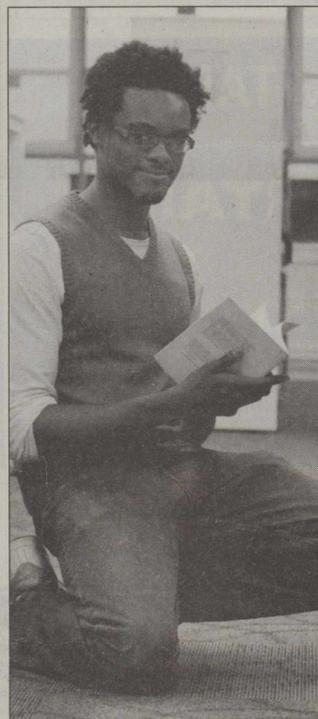
You will need patience because the movie is two and a half hours long, but it does not feel like it at all.

This stays true to the form of Christopher Nolan. This might be the most original movie I have seen since The Matrix and I did not have to listen to Keanu Reeves' pathetic attempts at acting.

The ending will make you question everything you thought you knew and force you to come back for more.

■ **Lott is a junior journalism major from Katy.**

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