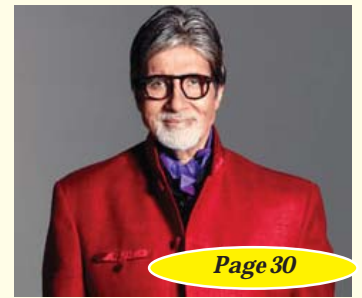


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Amitabh Bachchan was a boxer  
in school, old letter reveals



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# The Demon On My Palm

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# Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary celebrated in New York, 5 Honored by Shanti Fund



(News Agencies) Sandeep Chakravorty and many elite members of Indian American community. Gandhi's favorite bhajans 'Vaishnav jan tau tene kahiye je pir parai jane re' and 'Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram' were presented by Indian and Korean singers. A group of Korean youth also sang many songs in chorus with live orchestra.

The life and message of Mahatma Gandhi was shared by the scholars and honorees of the event -- Dr. Kirit Gosalia of Phoenix, Mr. Rajesh Jain of Kolkata, Dr. Kishore Kuncham, Superintendent of Freeport Public Schools, Amb. Sandeep Chakravorty and Publisher of The South Asian Times Mr. Kamlesh C. Mehta. All were honored

with Mahatma Gandhi Peace & Non Violence Award for their contributions to community while maintaining the Gandhian philosophy and ethics.

Honoree Kamlesh Mehta, publisher of The South Asian Times, was recognized by Shanti Fund for high ethics in his various publications. He is also founder of RANA - Rajasthan Association of North America and many other community groups, and has served quite a few leading trade & community organizations at senior positions. He was the Rotary International District Governor in 2015-16. He also served local Government as Director of Nassau County Office of Business and Economic Development for 5 years.

Shanti Fund is a not for profit volunteer-run or-

ganization dedicated to promoting Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of peace and non-violence through education. In existence for over 25 years, it is the only such organization in the State of New York if not the entire North America.

Shanti Fund is the founder of the unique Gandhi Peace Garden on earmarked 50 acres of land on the vast campus of SUNY Old Westbury on Long Island. Beautiful 150 trees brought from all 50 US States have been planted to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The Gandhi Peace Garden was virtually inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji from UN on 24th Sept in the presence of General Secretary of UN, Prime Ministers of Bangladesh and South

Korea and many other State Heads.

The event was attended by many dignitaries. Dr. Rajni Kant Shah, prominent jeweler Haridas Kotahwala, philanthropist Jack Poola, eminent attorney Jaspreet Mayall, Swami Param Anand, Rotarians Dave Vyas Sharma, Salil Zaveri, Mukesh Modi, Gautam Sanghvi, Roopam Mani, and Shashi Malik were in attendance along with Shanti Fund Founder Surinder Rametra. The event was managed by founder Shri Arvind Vora and President of Shanti Fund Mr. Bakul Matalia. Caption for Km honor: Kamlesh Mehta was conferred the Mahatma Gandhi Peace & Non Violence Award by Shanti Fund. He is seen here with Consul General of India Amb. Sandeep Chakravorty, Shanti Fund's Arvind Vora and Bakul Matalia.

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## International Society for Krishna Consciousness Celebrated Grand Janmashthami Celebration at ISKON Brooklyn

On Friday August 23rd 2019, ISKON Brooklyn has celebrated Sri Krishna Janmashthami Celebration and Festival at the ISKON New York Center at 305 Scharmerhonn St. Brooklyn, NY 11217. The event was attended during the day by more than 3000 devotees and there will be different drama, delicious vegetarian food as well as devotees participated in Abhishek. Event was graced by Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adam, who has also honored President Hansarupa Das with the Proclamation, Dignitaries which include Mr. Nair, Mr. Chauhan participated in the event.



## India Association of Long Island - India Feat 2019



India Association of Long Island biggest showcase of cultural event held on September 22nd, 2019 at HYATT REGENCY-LONG ISLAND, very big ballroom for cultural

program & roomy hallways for vendors. Program timing was from 12.00 Noon to 8.P.M. As it was like (Indian Mela) kind of atmosphere. There were

about thirty five vendors with all kind of merchandise like sarees, jewelry, bank, travel company, & also some non-profit organizations. IALI has their

own booth to teach how to wear saree & turban. First time in the history of IALI, association was able to pro-

vide food each attendee without any charge. IT WAS A COMPLETE FREE EVENT to all attendees. FREE FOOD, FREE AD-MISSION, FREE FOOD. With the generous donation of supporters for food. More than two thousand people attended this event with their family & friends & enjoyed all day cultural programs, fashion show, very professional musical group from India with singers. There were very professional (GATKA PERFORMERS) from Punjab & there were also drum players from the

state of Kerala. Indeed all day program was showcase the culture of INDIA. Mr. Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive & Mr. Kevin Thomas NYS Senator also honored the occasion with their presence. Fifteen past presidents of the association also attended the event. President Lalit Aery welcomed everyone on behalf of his whole committee & honored the sponsors with the plaques. It was very successful event keeping in mind the over two thousand attendance in spite the venue was far east in Long Island.

## US announces deployment of additional 3000 troops to Saudi Arabia



The United States has announced to deploy additional 3,000 troops to Saudi Arabia in view of the "increased threat perception" due to drone attacks on oil facilities. The US has blamed Iran for the attacks. "Today, an additional 3,000 troops will flow to Saudi Arabia," Special US Envoy for Iran Brian Hook told reporters at the State Department. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a tweet, "The United States is deploying additional forces and military equipment to Saudi Arabia to enhance its

defensive capabilities and to help restore deterrence against Iranian aggression." Pompeo said the Iranian regime should either "change its behaviour" or "watch its economy collapse". In an interaction with reporters, Hook said Saudi Arabia was a long-standing security partner of the US and had requested an additional support to supplement their defences and defend the rules-based international order. This decision is supported by many partners in the region, who were on the frontlines of the

Iranian aggression, he said. Hook added that since May, the Department of Defense had increased the number of forces by approximately 14,000 to the CENTCOM area of responsibility as an investment in regional security. Reiterating that the Trump administration did not want a conflict with Iran, Hook, however, said, "We stand with our partners and our allies to safeguard global commerce and regional stability." Hook also asked the international community be a part of the efforts. "Nations around the world need to hold Iran accountable, press it to de-escalate and join us in our commitment to providing stability in the region," he said, adding that "willful blindness" in the face of threats did not advance peace. Hook asserted that the US administration implemented their pressure campaign against Iran with two primary objectives.



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# New York's Museum of Modern Art set to reopen, bigger and better

MoMA, which moved to its current location in 1939, has undergone remodeling in 1950, 1962, 1980 and 2001 to cope with a growing collection and increased footfall.

(News Agencies) New York's heralded Museum of Modern Art reopens this month after a multi-million-dollar makeover that will allow curators to display hundreds more works every year. The museum has been closed for four months but will open again on October 21 following the latest renovations which increase the venerated institution's capacity. MoMA, which moved to its current location in 1939, has undergone remodeling in 1950, 1962, 1980 and 2001 to cope with a growing collection and increased footfall. Space was expanded by a third this time and director Glenn Lowry says the layout has been reinvented to reflect the philosophy of the museum's first director, Alfred Barr. "Barr imagined it as a laboratory to which the public was invited. The public would participate in the experiment of looking at and thinking about modern art," Lowry said. "He understood that the museum was to be a work in progress, changing and evolving as modern and contemporary art changes and evolves," Lowry told reporters at a preview. The museum took advantage of a real estate project by selling some land to a developer to build a luxury tower, in which MoMA would make use of the first three floors. By also making some tweaks to its existing buildings, MoMA has increased its capacity to 165,000 square feet (15,329 square meters). The upgrade, which cost \$450 million, means the museum will be able to exhibit around 2,400 works a year, compared to an average of 1,500 previously, Lowry said. The most radical change is that for the first time artworks will be presented by theme rather than by time period. The works will also have the benefit of more natural light. "What makes modern and contemporary art exciting is precisely the debates and arguments that are still taking place," said Lowry. "(We want to) make the public aware the questions are more interesting than the answers," he added. Themes and artwork will change every six months or so but the major pieces, such as Claude Monet's "Water Lilies" and Pablo Picasso's "The Ladies of Avignon" will always be on show.

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# The Sangh's annual message: Translate the sentiment of peace on the ground

**Mohan Bhagwat's message to the Sangh's workers to follow the rule of law is important. This, too, needs to be enforced strictly for some individuals claiming to speak for the Sangh have often justified such incidents.**

Mohan Bhagwat's message to the Sangh's workers to follow the rule of law is important. This, too, needs to be enforced strictly for some individuals claiming to speak for the Sangh have often justified such incidents.

The Vijaya Dashmi speech of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief is an annual affair in the organisation's calendar. But as the Sangh's political power and its penetration into different aspects of social life has grown, the speech

has assumed particular salience. It is the most definitive articulation of the Sangh's worldview.

Mohan Bhagwat's address on Tuesday had four key strands. The first is a reflection of the convergence between the Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in New Delhi. The RSS is happy about the latter's ideological direction, its moves on Kashmir, and its strong, anti-terror stance. It is also willing to give the government the benefit of

doubt on the economy. Two, while there is overwhelming convergence, Mr Bhagwat was clear in reaffirming the Sangh's ideological stance on Swadeshi economics. This broadly protectionist view emphasises self-reliance, imports and integration with the world economy only when necessary, boosting one's own national productive assets, and encouraging Indian capital.

Third, Mr Bhagwat also reiterated his belief that India is a Hindu rashtra.

This, he was careful to emphasise, did not mean that the RSS was anti-minorities; it sought harmony. This message, however, needs to be more effectively and consistently conveyed because what often percolates to the workers on the ground is that India is a country where Hindus have primary rights. The onus lies on the Sangh to ensure they do not interpret it this way. And finally, in the wake of growing instances of lynching, Mr Bhagwat was emphatic in condemning it,



distancing Indian culture from it, and clarifying that while no one from the Sangh was engaged in such activities, if at all someone was accused in such cases, he would have to go through legal channels. His message to the Sangh's workers to follow the rule of law is important. This, too, needs to be enforced strictly for some individuals claiming to speak for the Sangh have often justified such incidents. At a time when it enjoys unprecedented influence, the RSS must translate Mr Bhagwat's message of peace and harmony on the ground.

## Trump finally faces the impeachment challenge, but plans to brazen it out

**Democrats realised that they could not let Trump go unchallenged. But he has the numbers in the Senate**

This one has truly come in from the outfield. While impeachment has been whispered around the corridors of Washington DC since the beginning of the Donald Trump Presidency, it has never been a serious political reality chiefly because till the November 2018 mid-term elections, both the House and Senate of the United States Congress were in Republican hands. Most Republicans, whatever some of them may feel in private, have thought it politically expeditious to back Trump.

Even when the House math changed in favour of the Democrats in 2018, the impeachment idea did not gather strength though one controversy after another — obstruction of justice with regards to possible Russian collusion in the 2016 elections, campaign finance violations and so on — radiated from the White House. The somewhat wishy-washy conclusions from the Mueller report on the Russian collusion issue also did not add much wind to the sails. The canny

Democrat leader and House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, has been reluctant to push impeachment, possibly because a weak, fizzled-out impeachment process may have only ended up strengthening Trump's re-election prospects. She had in mind too that several moderate Democrats, elected from Trump districts, would then find it harder to be re-elected in 2020 and thus jeopardise the Democratic majority and Pelosi's speakership. Thus, despite provocations, the impeachment notion has been tossed around like a hot potato that one may want, but finds too uncomfortable to hold.

All that changed in the last two weeks. Washington was rocked by revelations in a whistleblower complaint about a Trump phone call to President Zelensky of Ukraine on July 25, in which Trump asked Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden and his son Hunter Biden. Trump officials had earlier put a hold on \$390 million of Congress-cleared military assistance for Ukraine. The Democrats

alleged that Trump had abused the Presidential office in appealing to a foreign county to get dirt on a political rival and influence the 2020 elections, using military aid as leverage.

This complaint, backed up as credible by the intelligence watchdog, has proved to be a tipping point and a consensus quickly coalesced around the impeachment idea. Seven first-time Democratic Congress members, not thinking in narrow careerist terms, wrote a joint op-ed in The New York Times asking Congress to proceed with impeachment if the allegations against Trump are true. Pelosi, sensing the mood of her Party, announced a formal impeachment inquiry for "betrayal of oath of office, betrayal of national security and betrayal of the integrity of American elections". Pelosi probably had little choice — if such allegations about the phone call, backed by evidence, went unchallenged, the credibility of the Democrats would be under question and the bar for the behaviour of any



future president would be abysmally low.

Since then, the story has moved incredibly fast, and instead of hushed whispers, we now have not one, but two whistleblower complaints, a reconstructed transcript, text messages, subpoenas issued to the White House for documents, and six House committees working on the issues.

So far, President Trump is being characteristically brazen. Describing the Ukraine call as "perfect", he has denied any quid pro quo. He has called the impeachment inquiry "the greatest witchhunt in the history of our country", and tweet-stormed the "Do Nothing Democrats" as well as the process in aggressive, colourful language. With an eye on his base, he has adopted the narrative that his actions are an attack on corruption

and have nothing to do with the 2020 elections. During a press gaggle on the south lawns of the White House, he called on China, currently adversary number one, to investigate Biden; even hard-boiled observers of Trumpian Washington are left gaping.

The enquiry is clearly gathering steam. The House Judiciary Committee will have to decide if the evidence is sufficient to frame articles of impeachment. These would require only a simple majority to pass in the House, and the Democrats have that. This would be followed by a Senate trial where a two-thirds majority would be needed to remove the President from office. This seems unlikely at present, and can only come about if the Republican support for

Trump crumbles. So far, but for Mitt Romney and some lone voices, others appear unwilling to buck Trump's base.

If the President were to be impeached in the House, but not removed from office by the Senate, he would be in the same position as two earlier presidents: Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998. Richard Nixon, who would have been removed from office by the Senate, preferred to resign. No matter which path the developments take, President Trump will continue to battle it out vigorously, running down the process and the Democrats, and presenting himself to his supporters as the embattled crusader. But what seems missing is a well-thought-out defence plan.

**Navtej Sarna**

# Larry Elder: Impeachment is just the latest Democratic attempt to take out Trump

The Democrats' purported outrage about President Trump's phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky might be taken seriously by the Republicans were it not for the Democrats' drive to oust Trump from the moment he won the presidency.

CNN's Van Jones, with zero proof, attributed Trump's victory to "whitelash." Trump received 57 percent of the white vote, actually a lower percentage of the white vote than the 59 percent received by Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate in 2012. In 2008, Democrat Barack Obama received a greater percentage of the white vote than John Kerry did four years earlier. Obama also received 95 percent of the black vote. None dared call it "backlash."

Stunned, angry and bewildered by Trump's win, some Democrats urged the Electoral College to refuse to certify his victory. In a Washington Post op-ed, John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, said, "The [Obama] administration should brief members of the Electoral College on the extent and manner of Russia's interference in our election before they vote on Dec. 19." Nearly 70 Democratic lawmakers vowed to boycott Trump's inauguration. Nearly a dozen Democrats refused to attend Trump's first State of the Union address. In explaining his refusal to attend, Rep. Bobby Rush, D-Ill., said, "This is a presidency that has been built on racism, stupidity and lies, which has already wasted enough of America's time and I will not waste any more of mine." Trump's refusal to turn over his tax returns provoked claims of corruption. Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-N.J., said: "What's unprecedented is [Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin] refusing to comply with our lawful, Article I request. What's unprecedented is a Justice Department that again sees its role as being bodyguard to the executive and not the rule of law. What's unprecedented is an entire federal government working in concert to shield a corrupt president from legal accountability."

There was the bill introduced in April 2017 by Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., with 67 co-sponsors, to determine whether to invoke the 25th Amendment, under which a president can be removed if "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." Raskin told Vanity Fair last month: "It is still very much on my mind and the time will come. I don't think of it as an alternative remedy for impeachment. They address different problems. The core of the concern of impeachment is high crimes and misdemeanors committed by the president. The core problem addressed by the 25th Amendment is the mental or

physical incapacity of the president."

Then there was the outcry over Trump's payments to former mistresses. About the payments, Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., said: "The president is a criminal. ... This criminal must be brought up by the Congress of the United States for impeachment."

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., said from "day one" Trump committed an impeachable offense for allegedly violating the emoluments clause of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits all persons holding federal office from accepting "any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State." Last year, Ocasio-Cortez said:

"I think that there are serious grounds in violations of the emoluments clause from day one. I think that is, first and foremost, one of the basic elements and violations. And then, once again, it's hard to predict what's going to happen over the next few months. There are one or more investigations happening."

In July, Rep. Al Green, D-Texas, wanted Trump impeached for his "racist tweets" that attacked several Democratic freshman House members known as "the squad." Green tweeted: "[Trump's] racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and Islamophobia can no longer be tolerated or ignored. We must impeach."

One can only marvel at how, with a straight face, Democrats call Trump "racist" while embracing as "kingmaker" the race card-hustling Rev. Al Sharpton and refusing to denounce anti-Semitic Minister Louis Farrakhan.

Of course, for 2 1/2 years, special counsel Robert Mueller investigated allegations of Russian "collusion," and he drilled a dry hole. On the issue of obstruction of justice, he punted. Before the Mueller report came out, House Intelligence Committee Chair Adam Schiff, D-Calif., claimed there was "direct evidence [of collusion] but ... also abundant circumstantial evidence."

If Congress impeaches Trump, the Senate will not convict. Meanwhile, all this Ukraine business just places attention on Joe's Biden's son. Hunter Biden received a lucrative monthly fee to sit on the board of directors of a Ukrainian energy company, despite his lack of energy expertise or his inability to speak the local language. Joe Biden's candidacy will be irreparably harmed, increasing the odds that hard-left Elizabeth Warren will win the Democratic nomination. Trump, post-impeachment, can credibly call himself a victim of a political vendetta and ride that narrative to victory in 2020. Well played, Speaker Pelosi.

# How one scandal softened the ground for impeachment

In 1972, President Richard Nixon's administration was plagued by scandal. But not the one you're thinking of. This was the ITT scandal. And President Donald Trump's White House would be wise to read up on it, because it just might explain the recent and sudden movement in national polls toward impeachment.

I was reminded of the ITT scandal when I noticed Trump's call with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky had come the day after Special Counsel Robert Mueller testified before Congress about the Russia inquiry. And then I thought about how quickly current poll numbers on impeachment are moving now, given that we saw no polling bump after Mueller's testimony. There are many differences between the 1970s and now. But it's possible that in Nixon's case, the initial corruption allegation around the ITT scandal may have softened the ground for impeachment by the time Watergate came around -- even if the ITT scandal didn't move poll numbers at first.

If that's true, it's also possible that voters simply reach a tipping point on presidents like Nixon and Trump who can't help but run back into the fire just days after almost being burned.

In 1971, the Department of Justice was conducting an independent investigation into ITT, the technology manufacturing company founded as International Telephone & Telegraph, when Nixon told then-Deputy Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst not to

appeal one of ITT's suits to the Supreme Court.

It was no coincidence that, around the same time, the DOJ's target in the investigation assisted the Republican National Committee and the President's campaign in a big way: ITT contributed \$400,000 (roughly \$2.5 million in today's dollars) to the Republican National Committee for the GOP's 1972 convention. The deal came to light about a year before Nixon's reelection. While some observers suspected there had been some sort of quid pro quo arrangement, it wasn't until a still-unknown whistleblower sent an internal memo to a syndicated columnist that things heated up. As if to emphasize the document's shadiness, the memo ended with the line: "please destroy this, huh?"

Brit Hume, then just a scrappy young reporter working under syndicated columnist Jack Anderson, confirmed the memo's authenticity in the Washington Post, saying he'd gotten confirmation from ITT spokesperson Dita Beard. (Beard later denied that she'd offered Hume this confirmation.) Vice President Spiro Agnew was involved in the affair, holding meetings with ITT officials. But Nixon was unchastened and persisted in his quest for reelection by whatever means necessary. His approval numbers sagged, but his support among Republicans actually increased in the early months of 1972. In fact, as the ITT scandal unfolded that spring, most polls were still predicting the President would win reelection.

(Contd on page 24)



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# To prevent cooperative bank scams, RBI can use its powers creatively

**The central bank should act on suspicion, rather than wait for facts. Cooperatives must pass the 'smell test'**

Benjamin Franklin is supposed to have said that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure". The same can be said of the manner in which we need to deal with scams like that at the Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank last week. It is frustrating that another financial scam has been perpetrated, despite Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s inspections. People familiar with the cooperative banking sector will accept that it represents a compromise between oversight and financial inclusion by lending to those who might otherwise not get loans. Recognising the risks in this sector, RBI has pointed out (Malegham report 2010 and R.Gandhi reports 2015) that the dual regulation of cooperative banks, by the Registrar of Cooperative Societies and RBI, inherently dilutes its effectiveness. In other commercial banks, RBI has powers to approve directors and key managers. In cooperative banks, it is usually the shareholders who select the directors, and this is often influenced by political considerations. Even a cursory look at the boards of most cooperative banks reveal an astonishing lack of professional expertise. Furthermore, the

combination of elected shareholders, community-based borrowers, and loose compliance requirements for such banks leads to cooperative banks being popular conduits for funds from politically-connected people. All of these are red flags for a normal bank.

Yet, since there is an apparent social and legislative sanction for a more lax regulatory regime for these banks, what more can be done within RBI's current powers to prevent fraud? RBI, we believe, would be well within its powers to act on the basis of suspicion rather than facts (usually available when it is too late).

The suspicions of a regulator are aroused in many ways. If, during an inspection, a regulator believes that the management doesn't meet a high standard of transparency, delays providing responses, claims its systems are not in order, or their managers demonstrate professional incompetence, RBI could ask for higher provisions, increased capital adequacy, and prevent the bank from reaching out to the capital market. RBI can selectively send a signal that if such a bank does not professionalise the board and management, it will set higher standards for provisioning. These are some of the disincentives to

playing fast and loose with depositors' money.

RBI can, similarly, act on auditors before a scam is unearthed. The managing director of the PMC bank has said that various audits were done in a superficial manner due to time constraints. It should be possible for RBI to prohibit firms from undertaking an audit if inspections find the firm has not highlighted the weaknesses. Perhaps it could use its good offices to ensure that other regulators such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority also place such firms on a blacklist before such events occur. In the PMC case, loans to the property company, Housing Development Infrastructure Limited, were allegedly routed through 21,000 fake accounts. This would require collusion among employees. Taking a leaf from the Securities and Exchange Commission and the United States' Food and Drug Administration books, RBI could make its whistle-blower mechanisms more remunerative. Whistle-blowers become more courageous if the incentive is large (say, the residual salary due to them for the rest of their lives). While the whistle-blower system must avoid becoming a channel for vexatious accusations, in light



of what we have seen across the financial sector, and given that the sector is a custodian for public funds, we must strengthen this mechanism. This is an easy step to take.

In cases where an organisation does not pass the "smell test", the approach cannot be one of correctness that stands up to legal standards of evidence. This is because when things go wrong, public money is lost, and at that point, relatively few stakeholders appreciate regulatory forbearance.

One would be the first to agree that none of these recommendations are simple solutions. However, given the politically-connected nature of these banks, it is highly unlikely that laws will be changed to strengthen banking regulations. In this situation, stronger and more creative use of tools at RBI's

disposal are required. These pre-emptive actions, even if done with bonafides, may sometimes be challenged in courts. However, a mindset to use these tools will test the extent of the powers of RBI, and also equip the central bank with better responses as to why they could not have acted otherwise. It will also force a debate on whether the public would like greater supervision or less.

RBI is widely regarded as a role model for many central banks, and has managed its role extremely well. It has enough credibility with the public and courts to realise that it is unlikely to act in a frivolous manner. In general, one hopes that after the experiences of the last three or four years, the central bank will choose to take proactive steps based on prevention.

**Govind Sankaranarayanan**

# Drone arms drop: A new security threat emerges on India's western border

**Pakistan's drone drop reflects inimical intent and enhanced capability. Our offensive defence must continue**

The media discourse over the past fortnight has been all about the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meeting. Lost in it was the significant news about the use of drones by Pakistan-based entities to airdrop arms and ammunition in Punjab. Pakistan-based Khalistanis have always planned to resurrect themselves. But what they lacked was an effective capability to arm their sympathisers in Punjab, and/or be a conduit for transfer of weaponry to terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), where supplies are choked due the security clampdown in the Valley. Be that as it may, a new security threat has opened up on our western border.

In the field of national security, a confluence of a nation's intent and capability results in action. While the intent is governed mainly by politico-economic factors, the availability of new technology becomes a catalyst in implementing the State's intent through enhanced capability. The

drone drop is evidence of the confluence of inimical intent and enhanced capability, and is actually an invasive action against India. It should be read as a statement of offensive intent, akin to the message the Indian Airforce strikes on Balakot terrorist camps sent.

Balakot changed the rules of the Indo-Pak dialogue, not just vis-à-vis J&K but on the wider canvas of inter-State relations. India upped the ante and signalled that there was a change in the way New Delhi would approach matters of security. The narrative until then had been one of strategic restraint, but Balakot conveyed that, hereafter, it would be offensive defence.

The strategy of offensive defence has generally been associated with the strategic culture of China. Andrew Scobell, a professor in the US Army War College, in a landmark 2002 study, brought out that Chinese officials "...broadly define defence as virtually anything, including a

pre-emptive strike". It was prominent in China's 1998 White Paper, where Deng Xiaoping was quoted as saying: "active defence is not merely defence per se, but includes defensive offensives. Active defence includes our going out, so that if we are attacked we will certainly counter attack."

The 2019 Chinese White Paper re-emphasises that "the military strategic guideline for a new era adheres to the principles of defence, self-defence and post-strike response, and adopts active defence". It keeps to the stance that "we will not attack unless we are attacked, but we will surely counter-attack if attacked".

India neglected this approach of China to its disadvantage in 1962, but has been resolute ever since vis-à-vis its northern neighbour — as seen in numerous border stand-offs, the last one being at Doklam. The same had not been so vis-à-vis Pakistan till Balakot happened. Can the drone drops result in a

response in the category of offensive defence?

The Indo-Pak narrative has always been led by Pakistan, with India reacting to events. This has been so right from the 1947-48 war, the 1965 and 1971 conflicts, and the last big skirmish at Kargil. In between, from the end-1980s, the Pakistani methodology changed to retaining the initiative via sub-conventional means. Till Kargil, it tried to blunt India's conventional advantage by attempting to lower the nuclear threshold, unsuccessfully. Balakot was the final proof that it has failed.

Nobody is buying the nuclear bogey raised again at the UNGA by Prime Minister Imran Khan, and hence the only option for Pakistan would be to keep the sub-conventional pot simmering. It is in this context that the gravity of the drone arms drop in Punjab needs to be seen. With India's new normal of offensive defence, the Indian military could well be authorised to take pre-emptive

action against an imminent drone launch from across the international border in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat. This would raise political temperatures in Pakistan, with the public demanding a response, and this cycle could easily get out of hand. So, the ball is squarely in Islamabad's court, and the leadership there will have to decide whether it should risk such a turn of events.

The almost insane proliferation of drones in the open market has added to the woes of the security establishment of every country. While its use as an "errand boy" in operations other than war is noteworthy, the misuse of the capability it brings to bad guys can have enervating effects on a nation's security. India can afford to take it easy on the drone drops in Punjab at its own peril. New Delhi must not leave any element of doubt in its approach to this serious development on its western front.



# Fadnavis aims to consolidate Maharashtra turf, tough test for Opposition

**In five years, Devendra Fadnavis has emerged as a leader in his own right. He has battled internal rivals, established a strong administrative grip, engineered large-scale defections from opposition parties to swell the ranks of the BJP in areas where the party had been weak, and set up a working relationship with Sena chief Uddhay Thackeray.**



For the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Maharashtra has always occupied a special place. It was here, in Mumbai (then Bombay), that the BJP was formed in 1980. And it is here, in Nagpur, that the headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the BJP's ideological fount, has been based since its founding in 1925. Yet, the BJP's own political quest for power in Maharashtra had always been unsuccessful. It had been a junior partner to the

Shiv Sena in an alliance that came to power in the 1990s. But never had the party been able to install its own leader as the chief minister.

And that is why 2014 was such a significant breakthrough for the BJP. Coming soon after Narendra Modi's spectacular victory in the Lok Sabha elections, the BJP emerged as the single-largest party in the Maharashtra assembly. It went on to appoint Devendra Fadnavis - a young, Nagpur leader, a Brahmin, in a state

which had been dominated by other castes politically; and a man with a strong RSS background -- as CM.

Five years later, Fadnavis faces a re-election. The politics of the nation has changed with the continued hegemony of the BJP; the politics of the state has changed, with BJP consolidating its gains and establishing its status as the senior partner in the alliance with the Shiv Sena; and the Opposition - of Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party - faces its toughest election. The state votes on October 21.

Elections to the Maharashtra assembly are happening in a particular national backdrop.

Modi has won his second term as PM. And he remains, by all accounts, the country's most popular leader. The fact that BJP is in power at the

Centre has enabled the party to bank on what Modi has been calling "double-engine" -- where having the same dispensation at both the central and state level would lead to greater coordination, more resources, and, therefore, more development. The argument resonated with the voters of Maharashtra in 2014, and could well do so again.

The BJP-led central government's moves too have helped. Its perceived strong stance on terror and Pakistan, and its decision to effectively abrogate Article 370, reports suggest, seem to have wide popular backing. Party president Amit Shah, at a meeting in Mumbai, declared that Article 370 is an election issue and asked Congress to come up with its stance.

BJP spokesperson Madhav Bhandari said the party's

endeavour would be to retain the party's vote share in the Lok Sabha elections in Maharashtra. "We have chalked out a plan to reach out to every voter and every household to ensure that they vote for us. We have planned the campaign in phases," he added.

There is one other element of the national picture which has salience for Maharashtra - the paralysis in the Congress's decision-making and its national projection. The party's inability to communicate a strong counter to the BJP, its leadership crisis wherein it took months to find a replacement for former chief Rahul Gandhi, and its organisational weakness have had an impact on all states -- including Maharashtra.

This national background is supplemented by a set of local factors, which appear to

give the BJP an edge.

In five years, Fadnavis has emerged as a leader in his own right. While Modi was the face of the national campaign, the fact that BJP and Shiv Sena got 41 of the 48 seats in the Lok Sabha is also seen, partly, as an endorsement of Fadnavis. He has battled internal rivals, established a strong administrative grip, engineered large-scale defections from opposition parties to swell the ranks of the BJP in areas where the party had been weak, and despite the Shiv Sena's consistent criticism, and set up a working relationship with Sena chief Uddhay Thackeray.

Ashish Chandorkar, a public policy analyst in Pune who has written a book on Fadnavis, said the CM turned on their head all the limitations he faced in politics.

## RSS backs govt on economy, says lynching a western idea

**Bhagwat also stressed that belief in a "Hindu Rashtra" did not mean being "anti-minority", and drew a distinction between the Sangh's call for cow protection and the violence by vigilantes, asserting that the Sangh's cadre are not involved in lynching, which, he said, was a "foreign" concept.**

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday defended the Union government against criticism of its economic policy, but underscored the need for protecting domestic interests, firming up trade agreements on India's terms, and insulating the economy from global turbulence.

Bhagwat also stressed that belief in a "Hindu Rashtra" did not mean being "anti-minority", and drew a distinction between the Sangh's call for cow protection and the violence by vigilantes, asserting that the Sangh's cadre are not involved in lynching, which, he said, was a "foreign" concept.

In his annual Vijayadashmi speech in Nagpur, Bhagwat chose to applaud the Narendra Modi government for decisions such as the nullification of Article 370, beefing up security, and the dip in terror incidents.

But it was concerns about the economy that were the

mainstay of the Sangh chief's speech.

At a time when even the RSS's own offshoots have expressed concern about the state of the economy and slump in production, Bhagwat tried to blunt the criticism of the government's policies by stating the Centre is sensitive towards the economy and has taken certain steps, and it is the responsibility of everyone to contribute to the nation's progress.

"The slowing down of the world economy has left its impact everywhere. Many countries, including India, have to suffer the result of the ongoing global trade war between the US and China," he said, adding "...personalities leading our economy are competent enough."

The RSS, which has traditionally opposed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in spheres such as multi-brand retail, food processing, defence production and the pharma sector, seemed to have

softened its stance on the issue.

"...To strengthen the economy, the government is compelled to take steps, such as allowing FDI and disinvestment of industries. However, while implementing many government schemes and welfare policies at the lower level, more alacrity and efficiency and avoiding unnecessary stringency can set many matters right," Bhagwat said.

He reiterated the concept of Swadeshi and echoed the concerns of offshoots such as the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) and the Laghu Udyog Bharati (LUB) when he pitched for more room and attention of the small and medium enterprises. He also quoted Sangh ideologue Dattopant Thengadi and Acharya Vinoba Bhave's push for self-reliance.

Without naming the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a trade agreement involving 15 other nations the

government is currently considering and which the Sangh's offshoots are vehemently opposed to, Bhagwat said India must formulate its own economic policy. The emphasis, he said, must be in creating more and more employment, with the least consumption of energy, and expanding trade relations with the world on the basis of its strength and terms. He also said India should not give into to any kind of arm-twisting when it comes to trade negotiations or feel compelled to give up its rights to self sufficiency.

"...This has been the stated position always. However, it is significant that Bhagwat ji has reiterated at this time, when officials negotiating RCEP are pushing India into an unequal and disastrous treaty, caving in to the demands of China and other countries, detrimental to the interests of Indian economy in general and manufacturing, dairy and



agriculture in particular, in the name of free trade. This needs to be stopped," said Ashwani Mahajan, the national convener of SJM. Govind Lele, general secretary of LUB, said centralisation of money power and monopolistic practices are challenges that have to be addressed. He said just as globalised economies use interventions, such as anti-dumping duties or tariff barriers, to protect their domestic sectors, India, too, should have mechanisms to offer equal opportunities to the local manufacturers.

This is not the first time that Bhagwat has raised the issue of MSMEs. In his speech last year, he

pitched for making the army self-sufficient and said while it was imperative to purchase equipment for the armed forces from countries abroad, it was equally important to ensure that the terms of the trade are not skewed. The Sangh chief also sought to dispel the notion that its cadre are involved in cases of violence against minorities by distancing Sangh volunteers from vigilantes. "The Sangh has never supported people who were involved in such incidents and it stands against each and every such incident.

Swayamsevaks are working in this direction so that such incidents do not take place.



# The Congress is failing in its democratic duty

***The party's job is to challenge the incumbent. But it seems to have given up***

In a fortnight from now, two key states — Maharashtra and Haryana — will go to polls. Both states have been Congress bastions in the past, with the party leading the government in Haryana for 10 years between 2004 and 2014, and 15 years in Maharashtra between 1999 and 2014. Both states have thrown up important leaders for the Congress in the past, been key avenues for resource mobilisation for the party, and contributed to its national dominance. But that is history. Even a

cursory glance at the Congress' preparations for the polls shows how weak it has become. For one, in both states, there has been a high degree of internal factionalism. The feud between Ashok Tanwar and former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda was resolved in favour of the latter only a month ago — but it has come at the cost of Mr Tanwar quitting the party. There has also been large-scale defections of party leaders in Maharashtra

and dissent by influential figures like Sanjay Nirupam. Two, the party's campaign has been lacklustre — even as the Bharatiya Janata Party chief ministers, Manohar Lal Khattar and Devendra Fadnavis, have been on the road for months. The Congress has been unable to mobilise public sentiment even though it could have capitalised on anti-incumbency. Three, the Congress' lack of clarity on key ideological issues is apparent. The party, at

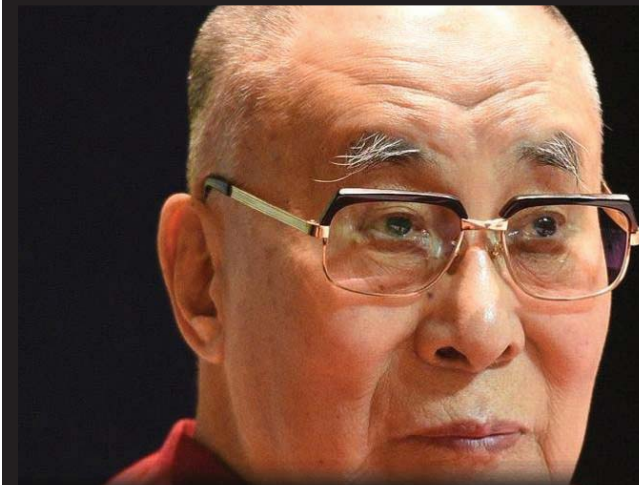
the national level, has criticised the government's moves on Kashmir — but in Haryana, Hooda is supportive of it. And finally, the party's organisational weakness and its inability to enthuse are visible. All these issues can be traced to a crisis at the top. Rahul Gandhi quit as president, and appears to have retreated from day-to-day functioning. Sonia Gandhi's political instincts remain sharp, but she will not be able



to actively spend time on the ground campaigning. Until the national leadership is able to firmly resolve issues in state units, carve out an agenda and political line, address discontent, and build a mass movement, the Congress' future will remain bleak. By almost giving up even before voting, it is failing in its task as the country's primary opposition.

## India must resist China's Tibet plan

**PM Modi should encourage Beijing to talk to the Tibetans, and facilitate a Xi-Dalai Lama meeting**



Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to arrive soon for his second informal meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The coming summit is taking place in the backdrop of important developments on which the two countries have taken confronting stands. While China advised restraint on rising tensions with Pakistan following the Pulwama and Balakot episodes, it has openly criticised India on the recent constitutional and administrative changes in Jammu and Kashmir. It reiterated its claim on all of Ladakh, stating the changes violated China's territorial integrity which it would not "idly watch". It supported Pakistan in the United Nations and has additionally objected to the army exercise currently underway in Arunachal Pradesh, which it claims as its own. So, apart from the

usual irritants in bilateral relations such as the border dispute and trade imbalance, not much progress is expected on the traditional faultlines in Sino-Indian relations. Even though Tibet does not seem to figure on the agenda, the meeting will be followed with particular interest in Dharamshala. This follows misgivings in some Tibetan quarters that New Delhi is gradually diluting its support to the Tibetan cause. This impression gained ground following the government's direction to tone down the "Thank You India" programme that the central Tibetan administration had planned in January 2018, and the subsequent directive that elected leaders and senior government officials should avoid sharing a public platform with the Dalai Lama. The recent war of words over the

issue of Dalai Lama's reincarnation has led to questions about whether there is adequate realisation, willingness and preparation within the Government of India to thwart China's design to ultimately install its own candidate in Potala Palace.

Though the Dalai Lama has spoken of various possibilities regarding his reincarnation, he has consistently rejected any Chinese government role in the process. He has stated that if he reincarnates, it will be in a free country, thereby ruling out China or Chinese-controlled Tibet. He has instructed Tibetans to reject any Chinese appointee as an imposter. The Chinese have been equally emphatic, declaring that choosing the next Dalai Lama is their historical prerogative. Chinese officials conveyed a blunt message to the Government of India through visiting Indian journalists that New Delhi's failure to not recognise Beijing's candidate would adversely affect bilateral

ties.

To the Tibetans, the struggle to choose the Dalai Lama's reincarnation reflects the struggle for leadership of Tibetan Buddhism. More than political, the Tibetan struggle is a civilisational one for survival of its unique culture and identity. It is sustained by a deep attachment to their spiritual leaders, the highest of whom is the Dalai Lama. China has not been able to dilute this loyalty to any significant extent. Its experiment to install an imposter Panchen Lama has failed. Attempts to mould an indoctrinated monastic order have also not succeeded. Its repressive measures indicate China remains wary of civil unrest of the kind that erupted in Tibet in 2008. An authoritarian regime cannot countenance an institution not under its control. Therefore, appointing its own Dalai Lama is a strategic priority. What has encouraged Beijing to vehemently assert its intentions is its perception that international support for Tibet is flagging, and with its political and

economic clout, it can deter countries from coming forward on the issue. It perhaps also believes that Tibetans, who identify all hopes and aspirations with the person of the 14th Dalai Lama, will not only be demoralised at his passing on, but also fragment into ineffectual uncoordinated groups, bereft of financial and political backers. For New Delhi to acquiesce to any such Chinese design would be a folly. It must not fall prey to arguments that the passing on of the Dalai Lama would remove an obstacle to border settlement and normalise relations with China. Given its policy of regaining its lost territories, assertions on Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, its military build-up in Tibet, plans to build dams and divert river waters, and its undermining of India in its neighbourhood, there can be no assuaging China. On the contrary, supporting the Tibetans strengthens India's hand in dealing with China. New Delhi should take immediate steps to ascertain the

Dalai Lama's wishes on his reincarnation, and act proactively to ensure these will be endorsed by not just the Tibetans but the Buddhist world at large. The US Congress has already passed the "Tibetan Policy and Support Act of 2019", which has officially declared China has no role in selecting the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. Some Chinese scholars have argued that the approach to suppress Tibetan civilisational aspirations has neither succeeded nor is likely to. This should be our advice too to President Xi. The time has come for India to encourage China to convert its intermittent contacts with the Dalai Lama into formal or structured talks to find an acceptable solution. A bold step for Modi could be to facilitate a meeting between Xi Jinping and the Dalai Lama, like the one the latter held with Premier Chou en-Lai in New Delhi in 1956.

**Amitabh Mathur**



# 'Jobs lost, businesses shutting down': Uddhav Thackeray's caustic message

**Uddhav Thackeray said that vendetta politics should not be practiced, hinting at the use of investigating agencies such as Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against political opponents.**



In a veiled jibe at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said that whether one accepts the current economic slowdown or not the problems of job and business losses persist. "Whether there is economic slowdown or not we will see later but jobs are going, businesses are shutting down this is clearly visible and let us accept that," Thackeray said in an interview to party mouthpiece Saamana. In the second and final

part of the interview to Sena leader and Saamana editor Sanjay Raut, Thackeray spoke on a range of issues, including its opposition to the car depot at Aarey Milk Colony in Goregaon, Mumbai, about issues in Centre's crop insurance scheme, handling of the drought and flood-affected areas in Maharashtra, etc.

**Won't spare murderer of trees in Aarey'**

Thackeray also attacked the state administration over the felling of trees in Aarey for a Metro car

shed and said, "Babus who have murdered the trees will have to pay the price for it." He said they are opposing the site of car shed and not the car shed. The Mumbai Metro felled 2,141 trees at the Aarey Milk Colony, known as the city's green lung, before the Supreme Court stepped in to stop cutting of trees till further orders. The felling was preceded by massive protests by people

**'Vendetta politics'**

The Sena chief said that vendetta politics should not be practiced, hinting at the use of investigating agencies such as

Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against political opponents.

The 59-year-old leader said that vindictive politics has no place in Maharashtra. He was referring to the ED case against Nationalist Congress Party Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar. "If the government is acting with vengeance or with a mindset of vendetta [then] my firm opinion is that power and rights should not be misused and no one should

practice vendetta politics... Honestly, this climate change issue was not required before the elections," he said. He also took on the Congress-NCP party for vindictive politics in case of Sena founder Bal Thackeray in 2000 over an editorial in Saamana written during the mid-1990s.

**Maharashtra floods**

When asked if the state government has lagged behind in providing relief to flood-affected people and the ones reeling under drought in parts of Marathwada, Thackeray did not answer directly.

Instead, he spoke about climate change becoming an issue not just for Maharashtra but for the world. He said that lately the volume of rain received in a month is poured in a day. The Sena chief is on Tuesday scheduled to address a traditional Dussehra rally in Shivaji Park in Dadar, Mumbai. He is expected to speak on various issues faced by the state. Traditionally, the Dussehra rally is where the Sena chief gives political messages to its cadre.

## Ahead of PM Modi-Prez Xi meet this week, a shift in China's Kashmir stand

**The change in Beijing's position comes on a day when Prime Minister Imran Khan is in Beijing, and days ahead of President Xi Jinping's India visit where he will have the second round of the "informal summit" with Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.**



China on Tuesday said the issue of Kashmir should be resolved between India and Pakistan through dialogue and consultation, omitting the recent references Beijing had made about addressing the dispute in accordance with the UN Charter, UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreement. The change in Beijing's position comes on a day when Prime Minister Imran Khan is in Beijing, and days ahead of President Xi Jinping's India visit where he will have the second round of the "informal summit" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. China will announce President Xi's visit to India, and possibly Nepal, later this week at a special briefing on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Khan will meet Xi,

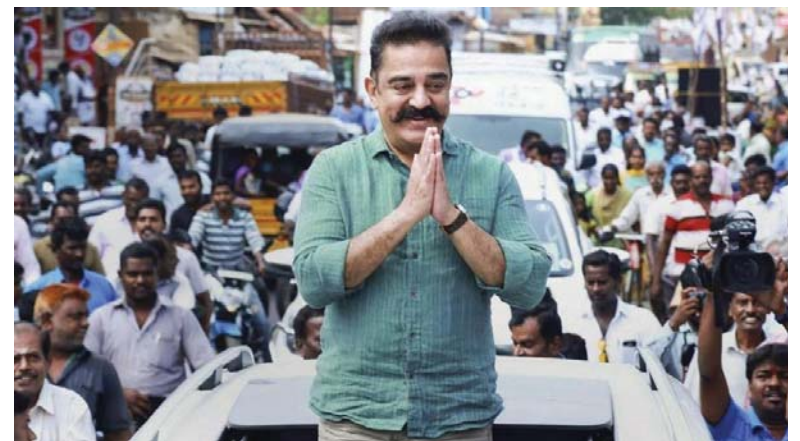
Premier Li Keqiang and head of China's Parliament, National People's Congress chief, Li Zhansu during his visit, his third this year. Pakistan army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa will hold a series of high-level meetings including with his People's Liberation Army counterpart. Answering a query on Khan's visit and whether Kashmir was discussed, foreign ministry spokesperson, Geng Shuang said Beijing's stand on the dispute has been consistent. "And, so you are paying attention to the Kashmir issue, right? China's position on Kashmir issue is clear and consistent. We call on India and Pakistan to engage in dialogue and consultation on all issues including Kashmir issue and consolidate mutual trust.

## SC must uphold justice, says Kamal Haasan on sedition case against celebrities

**Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan on Tuesday hoped that the Supreme Court will uphold justice in the sedition case filed against 49 eminent personalities pointing out that the case was against the letter and spirit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aspirations of 'harmonious India'.**

Actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan on Tuesday hoped that the Supreme Court will uphold justice in the sedition case filed against 49 eminent personalities pointing out that the case was against the letter and spirit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aspirations of 'harmonious India'.

Last week, an FIR was filed in Bihar's Muzaffarpur against personalities, including directors Aparna Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and writer-columnist Ramchandra Guha for alleged sedition over a letter they wrote to the PM in July, voicing concern over growing incidents of mob lynching. "The Prime minister seeks a harmonious India. His statements in the Parliament confirm it. Should not the state and its law follow it in letter and spirit? 49 of my peers have been accused, of sedition, contradicting the PM's aspirations," the veteran of close to 200 Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada movies wrote on twitter. The Tamil politician added, "I request as a citizen that Our Higher courts move in to uphold justice with Democracy and quash the case emanating from Bihar." Last week, an FIR was filed in Bihar's Muzaffarpur against



personalities, including directors Aparna Sen, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and writer-columnist Ramchandra Guha for alleged sedition over a letter they wrote to the PM in July, voicing concern over growing incidents of mob lynching. Over 180 members of the cultural community, including actor Naseeruddin Shah, cinematographer Anand Pradhan, historian Romila Thapar and activist Harsh Mander among others, condemned the FIR lodged against 49 celebrities for an open letter they wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In new letter issued on Monday, October 7, the eminent personalities questioned how writing an open letter to the prime minister could be called "an act of sedition". "An

FIR has been lodged against forty-nine of our colleagues in the cultural community, simply because they performed their duty as respected members of civil society. They wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister, expressing concern about mob lynching in our country. "Can this be called an act of sedition? Or is harassment by misusing the courts a ploy to silence citizens' voices?" the letter read. The signatories, including writers Ashok Vajpeyi and Jerry Pinto, academician Ira Bhaskar, poet Jeet Thayil, author Shamsul Islam, musician TM Krishna and filmmaker-activist Saba Dewan, promised they will continue to speak up against silencing of "people's voices".





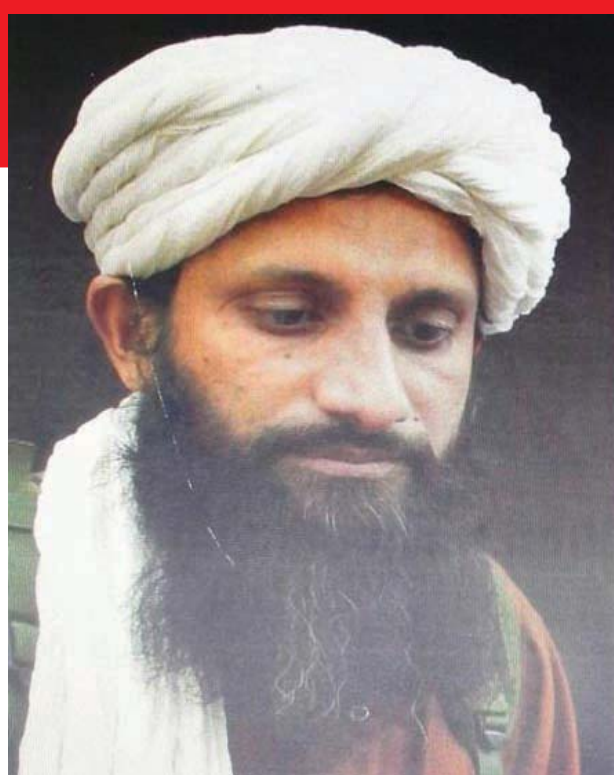
## Pak's Army Chief Talk Kashmir With Chinese Military Leadership In Beijing

**Chief of Army Staff Bajwa and Pak PM Imran Khan will meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang later in the day.**

(News Agencies) Beijing, the Inter-Services Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff Public Relations (ISPR) said. (COAS) Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and the Chinese military leadership on Tuesday discussed the Kashmir issue here in

visit, Dawn news reported. According to the ISPR, the Pakistani military's media wing, Gen Bajwa called on Commander Army General Han Weiguo of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and General Xu Qiliang, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), at the PLA headquarters. The two sides discussed regional security environment and Pakistan China defence cooperation, the ISPR said. "The COAS apprised Chinese military leadership about the ongoing situation in Kashmir if it's not amicably resolved, for which India needs to respect UN resolutions and ensure the human rights of Kashmiris," reads the ISPR statement. The military leadership of both the countries agreed that continued unresolved Pakistan-India tensions will have serious implications for peace and stability in the region. The two sides also discussed the developing situation in Gulf and efforts for peace in Afghanistan. Both sides agreed to enhance existing defence cooperation. Bajwa and Khan will meet President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang later in the day.

## India-born AQIS chief Asim Umar killed in Afghanistan



**A US treasury statement on Asim Umar's designation as a "specially designated global terrorist" in June 2016 gave his place of birth as Sambhal and said he was born between 1974 and 1976.**

(News Agencies) Asim Umar, the India-born terrorist who led al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) since its creation in 2014, was killed in a joint US-Afghan raid on a Taliban compound last month, Afghanistan's spy agency announced on Tuesday. Umar was born Shaan-ul-Haq at Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, and went to Pakistan in 1995 and joined the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Indian security

officials said. A US treasury statement on Umar's designation as a "specially designated global terrorist" in June 2016 gave his place of birth as Sambhal and said he was born between 1974 and 1976. The National Directorate of Security (NDS), the Afghan spy agency, tweeted: "#NDS can now confirm the death of Asim Omar, leader of #Al Qaeda in the #Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), in a joint US-Afghan raid on a Taliban compound in Musa Qala district of Helmand province on Sep 23." The NDS said Umar was killed with six other AQIS members, most of them Pakistanis. Among the dead was "Raihan, Omar's courier to Ayman al-Zawahiri", the head of al-Qaeda, it added. The NDS' tweets described Umar as "a Pakistani citizen", though people in Kabul familiar with developments said this could be because the slain terrorist was found with a Pakistani identity card. The NDS said the slain AQIS members were "embedded inside the Taliban compound in the Taliban stronghold of Musa Qala". US and Afghan forces conducted an extensive overnight operation in Helmand on September 22-23 and initial reports suggested that Umar escaped. There were also reports that some 40 civilians were killed in an air strike during the operation. Umar's death in a Taliban base raises questions about the militant group's pledges during talks with the US about breaking ties with al-Qaeda. One of the key conditions in the talks, which broke down last month, was that the Taliban would not allow al-Qaeda and other terror groups to operate from Afghan soil. "The AQIS chief's presence in a Taliban compound suggests the Taliban have no intention of cutting their ties with al-Qaeda," said an Indian security official who asked not to be named. In June 2016, the US state department announced the designation of both Umar and AQIS as terrorists. Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the formation of AQIS in a video in September 2014. AQIS subsequently claimed responsibility for the September 6, 2014 attack on a naval dockyard in Karachi, during which terrorists tried to hijack a Pakistan Navy frigate. AQIS also claimed responsibility for the murder of activists and writers in Bangladesh, including US citizen Avijit Roy and US embassy employee Xulhaz Mannan. While in Pakistan, Umar studied at Karachi's notorious Jamia Uloomul Islamia madrassa, which has produced several terrorist commanders, and at Darul Uloom Haqqani in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, another madrassa with close links to the Taliban. Umar came in contact with Osama bin Laden, the slain al-Qaeda chief, while training in Afghanistan. He also played a key role in al-Qaeda's online propaganda operations and was believed to have close ties with Indian Mujahideen and Ansar-ut-Tawhid fi Bilad al-Hind.

## Kashmir saved, and then drowned Imran Khan?

**To hide his failures, he ratcheted up the Kashmir rhetoric. But with little to show, he now stares at marginalisation.**

(News Agencies) Pakistan's "selected" Prime Minister Imran Khan has thrown everything he's got into agitating over the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, both on the international stage as well as at the bilateral level with India. Counter-intuitive though it may appear, the change in the constitutional status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir has given a temporary lease of life to Khan.

A little over a year in office, Khan has proved himself to be an utterly clueless and incompetent administrator. The rumour mills in Islamabad —

according to a Pakistani political observer, there are no rumours in Islamabad, only premature facts — had for some weeks been churning out stories about how the "selectors" (read Pakistan's military establishment) were unhappy with their selection, and were contemplating either changing the "team" or perhaps just the "captain".

But after August 5, these rumours receded. Overnight, growing panic over the collapsing economy and rising economic distress gave way to national hysteria over

Kashmir. For both the Pakistan government and the all-powerful military, whipping up emotions and passions over the enormity of India's actions in Kashmir also served the purpose of deflecting attention of the people from their existential crises.

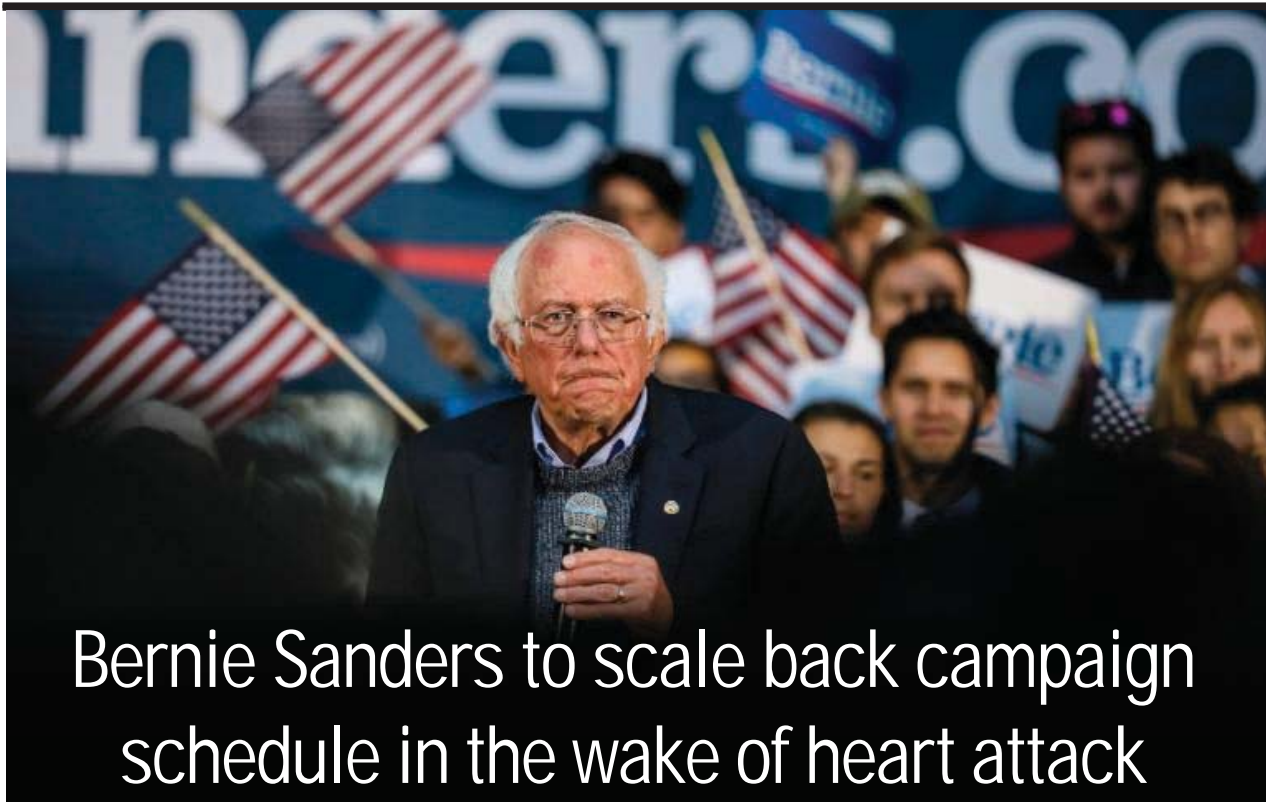
For nearly two months, the Pakistani media was saturated with news related to Kashmir. The country went into a propaganda overdrive to not just internationalise Kashmir, but also mobilise the people to make it the primary agenda of the Pakistani State and society. The entire domestic and

diplomatic effort undertaken by Pakistan was part of a build-up that would climax in what was expected to be a path-breaking speech by Khan at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The UNGA speech certainly wowed his diehard supporters back home. But once the high was over, questions started being asked on what it achieved. The hype around the speech had created an impression that as soon as Khan steps off the UNGA podium, India would be forced to abandon Kashmir. But Kashmir wasn't "liberated" and

Khan returned to a Pakistan which was in even deeper economic and political crisis than what it was when he proclaimed himself an ambassador of Kashmir.

The spike in his political stock because of his UNGA speech did not quite reflect in the stock markets back home. Pakistan's economy has continued to tank. With the opposition itching to oust him using his own dharna playbook, and reports of discontent within his own ranks, things are likely to go further south for Khan.





## Bernie Sanders to scale back campaign schedule in the wake of heart attack

(News Agencies) Sen. Bernie Sanders said Tuesday he is prepared to change the nature of his presidential campaign after seeing a cardiologist in his hometown of Burlington, VT. The exam served as a follow-up appointment after Sanders was hospitalized for more than two days when he suffered a heart attack last week on the campaign trail. Sanders told reporters outside of his home that he won't be able to keep up the robust schedule he and his supporters have become accustomed to during his 2016 and 2020 campaign. "We were doing (in) some cases five or six meetings today, three or four rallies and town meetings and meeting with groups of people. I don't think I'm going to do that," Sanders said. "But I certainly intend to be actively campaigning. I think we can change the nature of the campaign a bit. Make sure I have the strength to do what needs to be done."

The admission by Sanders marks the first tangible long-term adjustment to his campaign plan going forward in the wake of the heart attack. Later in the day, his

campaign manager weighed in.

"As Bernie said, we are going to have an active campaign," said Faiz Shakir. "Instead of a breakneck series of events that lap the field, we are going to keep a marathoner's pace that still manages to outrun everyone else."

Sanders was in Nevada last week when he experienced what his campaign described the next morning as "chest discomfort." Sanders had two stents inserted after doctors found an arterial blockage and remained hospitalized over the next few days. On Friday, the campaign confirmed that he had suffered a heart attack. Sanders returned to Vermont this weekend and is not expected back on the campaign trail before next week's Democratic primary debate in Ohio. While Sanders said he plans to scale things back, he gave no indication that he plans to end his bid for the White House any time soon. He did though acknowledge that his health issues may be something that voters take into account when they judge his candidacy.

"Everything that happens every day,

weigh on how people feels about you, and my own view is that it's the voters who view you look at the totality of who the candidate is," He said. "You look at what that candidate stands for the integrity of that candidate, the history of our candidates, I've been fighting for working families, for my entire adult life."

Sanders said earlier on Tuesday he had been "dumb" to ignore recent symptoms, including increased fatigue, that might have been related to the heart attack he suffered last week.

"I must confess, I was dumb," Sanders told reporters outside his home in Burlington, Vermont. "During this campaign, I've been doing, in some cases three or four rallies a day, running all over the state -- Iowa, New Hampshire, wherever. And yet I, in the last month of two, just was more fatigued than I usually have been."

In his most detailed in-person comments since falling ill, Sanders expressed regret over not having sought medical attention sooner.

## Saudi Arabia rules women can join armed forces

(News Agencies) Saudi Arabia announced Wednesday it will allow women in the ultra-conservative kingdom to serve in the armed forces as it embarks on a broad programme of economic and social reforms. The move is the latest in a series of measures aimed at increasing the rights of women in the kingdom, even as rights groups accuse Riyadh of cracking down on women activists. "Another step to empowerment," the foreign ministry wrote on Twitter, adding that women would be able to serve as private first class, corporal or sergeant. Last year, Saudi Arabia authorised women to join its security

forces. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, has approved a handful of reforms aimed at widening women's rights, including allowing them to drive and to travel abroad without consent from a male "guardian". But he has at the same time overseen the arrest of several prominent women's rights campaigners, including activist Loujain al-Hathloul. Saudi Arabia, the world's largest crude exporter, is pushing to improve its image and attract tourists as part of a plan to diversify its economy away from oil. First Published: Oct 10,

## Johnson & Johnson ordered to pay \$8 billion over drug side effect

(News Agencies) A Pennsylvania jury ruled Tuesday that US pharmaceutical giant Johnson & Johnson must pay \$8 billion in damages and interest for failing to warn that a psychiatric drug could cause breast growth in men. Johnson & Johnson and its subsidiary Janssen Pharmaceuticals were blamed as plaintiff Nicholas Murray told the Philadelphia court that the drug Risperdal, prescribed to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, had made him grow breasts.

The company challenged the ruling in a statement, calling the damages

awarded "grossly disproportionate" with the initial award in the case of \$680,000. "The company is confident (the ruling) will be overturned," the statement said, and "will be immediately moving to set aside this excessive and unfounded verdict." In the statement, Johnson & Johnson accused the court of preventing their defense team from presenting "key evidence" on Risperdal labeling. The company is facing a series of complaints in state courts for failing to properly warn of Risperdal's side effects, including in Pennsylvania, California and Missouri.

## China asserts it will protect ally Pakistan's core interests

**In a swift response, India's external affairs ministry said Kashmir is an integral part of the country and it was not for other nations to comment on India's internal affairs.**

(News Agencies) Two days ahead of his informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, President Xi Jinping said China was closely following the situation in Kashmir and will support Pakistan on issues related to its "core interests". Xi's remarks, made during a meeting with visiting Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday, reflected China's consistent support to its all-weather ally Pakistan – an issue that emerged as an irritant in the run-up to the second India-China informal summit on October 11-12.

After Khan called for efforts to avoid the deterioration of the situation in Kashmir, Xi said the "right and wrong of the situation was clear", according to state-run Xinhua news agency. Xi added that the two parties should resolve the dispute through peaceful dialogue. The Kashmir issue also found mention in a joint statement issued after the Xi-Khan meeting, which said the Chinese leader "reiterated solidarity with Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial sovereignty, independence and security". The statement further said China "opposes any unilateral actions that complicate

the situation" and that the Chinese side is "paying close attention to the current situation in Jammu & Kashmir". In a swift response, India's external affairs ministry said Kashmir is an integral part of the country and it was not for other nations to comment on India's internal affairs.

Khan was on a two-day visit that was primarily aimed at seeking China's support on the Kashmir issue.

China also sought to play down other irritants that have hit bilateral relations with India, with a top Chinese diplomat saying Beijing isn't worried about India

holding a large-scale military exercise in the "disputed eastern sector" as it hasn't taken place. After formally announcing Xi's visit to India, vice foreign minister Luo Zhaohui told a special briefing: "We have no worry at all because that is not true." He was responding to a question by the Chinese media on whether Beijing was concerned that the military exercise in the "disputed eastern sector" could impact the summit. To a question from HT on whether he was referring to the military exercise in Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as south Tibet, Luo said:

"As far as we know, the so-called military exercise is not a fact, it is not true." "Second, the region you mentioned is a sensitive region and we don't want to hear that reference," Luo said, seemingly setting aside, even dousing, a controversy ahead of the visit. The exercise in question is the Indian Army's "Him Vijay" drill, taking place 100km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Arunachal Pradesh. News reports from India said it is the biggest exercise to test the combat capabilities of new integrated battle groups.



# GOP presidential candidate Mark Sanford warns of 'financial storm the likes of which we've never seen'



(News Agencies) Mark Sanford, who is running for the Republican presidential nomination, issued dire warnings about the financial future of the U.S. A former two-term governor of South Carolina who also spent a combined 12 years in Congress, Sanford is making fiscal responsibility in government a central part of his campaign. The deficit is expected to top \$24 trillion next year, a rise of \$5.9 trillion since 2015, and the growth of spending shows no signs of slowing down. "I don't think we have eight to 10 years, that's why I'm running," Sanford told FOX Business. He admitted trying to unseat incumbent

President Trump is a Don Quixotic-like quest. "Obviously my running is preposterous at a whole number of different levels, it's a daunting task, an impossible David and Goliath story. But I'm running because the buddies who kept encouraging me to do so kept saying 'You've invested a long number of years in your life to financial prudence and financial restraint.' And we don't have the luxury of waiting four years 'til the next presidential cycle to have this debate." The federal budget proposed by Trump for 2020 is a record \$4.746 trillion, which would increase the deficit by \$1.1 trillion, according to estimates. The current federal budget for 2019 is \$3.4 billion and runs a similar deficit. "If we wait five years for the next presidential debate, the storm will already have come. I believe that they're right, I believe we don't have eight years," Sanford said. "I believe in the next four years, very much in our lives, very much impacting our retirement accounts, very much impacting our building and jobs, will be a financial storm the likes of which we've never seen because there is always a straw that breaks the camel's back." Sanford added that "our math doesn't add up in Washington." He likens the current financial

condition of the country to a family in the neighborhood with "an incredible lifestyle" that includes expensive vehicles and a large home. They were the envy of the neighbors with all their toys and gadget and a life of comfort. "But then years later, there comes a financial storm and they get wiped out," Sanford said. "Turns out they were just jacking up the credit cards and creating the illusion of real wealth. That's what is happening in our country right now. We're running the largest deficits we've ever run in our country's history in peace. We've had the largest debt relative to GDP that we've ever had in peace time. And not all of that is the president's fault, I want to make it clear. It doesn't all go at his feet; it has been accumulating for a while, but he's not doing anything about it. He hasn't even started the conversation." "When he ran, he said 'If you elect me, I will eliminate the debt over the eight years I might be in office.' That's what he said. Instead his own budgets propose raising the national debt by \$9 billion. If you look at the assumptions behind them, they are rather hopeful, I'll leave it at that. So the actual deficit increase will be more than \$9 billion."

## Iranian Instagram star 'arrested for blasphemy'

(News Agencies) An Iranian Instagram star famous for her radical appearance and cosmetic surgery has been arrested for blasphemy by the Tehran Prosecutor's Office, according to the country's semi-official Tasnim News agency. Tasnim News said the influencer, who goes by Sahar Tabar on Instagram but was identified as Fatemeh Kh by Iranian media, using the first character of her surname in Farsi, is accused of promoting violence, illicit education, blasphemy, insulting the Islamic veil, spreading hatred and encouraging youth to commit corruption. Tasnim reported that complaints were made about her to the prosecutor's office. On Instagram -- where her account has since been deactivated -- Sahar Tabar regularly posted photos of herself. Many believe she made herself up to look like a zombie version of the actress Angelina Jolie, with sunken cheeks, an

exaggeratedly upturned nose and extra-large pouty lips.

In some pictures, she also boasts a white plaster on her nose, reminiscent of the ones worn by plastic surgery patients.

Sahar Tabar became a minor viral sensation in 2017, when several media outlets published stories about her, claiming that she had undergone more than 50 cosmetic surgeries and weighed only 40 kilos (88 pounds).

In an interview with Russian

news agency Sputnik, published in December 2017, she debunked most of the claims made about her.

"It is Photoshop and makeup," she told Sputnik. "Every time I publish a photo I make my face more fun. It is my way of self expression, a kind of art. My followers know that this is not my real face."

In the interview, she denied reports that she was attempting to look like Jolie, saying "I had no interest at all to be like Angelina Jolie,



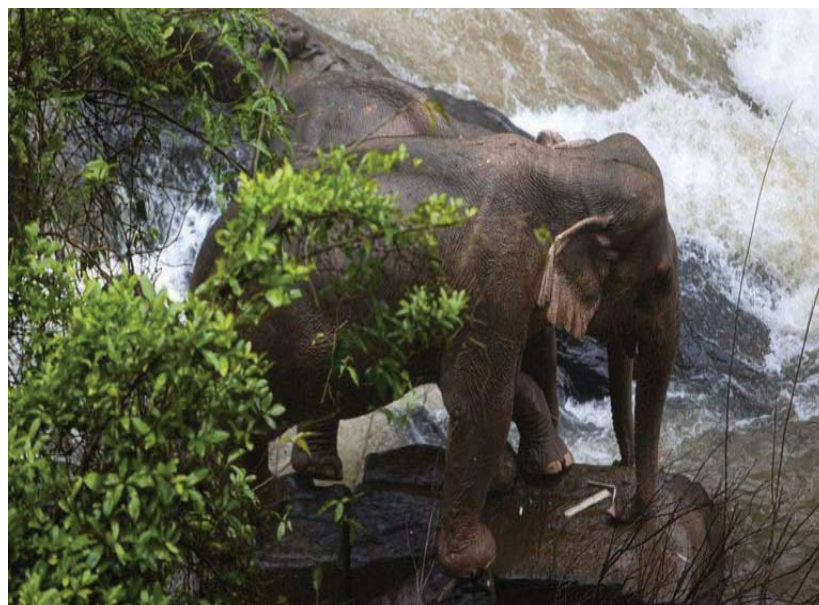
## 11 elephants are dead after falling from a Thai waterfall

(News Agencies) Five more elephants have died after falling from a waterfall in Khao Yai National Park in Thailand, bringing the total dead to 11. Drone footage showed five more bodies in the same ravine where six elephants had died earlier, Nakhon Nayok Gov. Natthapong Sirichana said Tuesday.

On Saturday, five adult elephants stumbled into the ravine in what authorities said was an attempt to free a 3-year-old calf stuck in another part of the Haew Narok waterfall. All of them died after falling from the nearly 500-foot waterfall.

It's the country's biggest loss of wild elephants in a national park, officials said.

Park officials managed to rescue



two Saturday that were returned to their herd.

Now, officials are working to quickly remove the 11 bodies from

Haew Narok, which means "hell abyss," so they don't pollute the stream, Thai news outlet MCOT reported.

and I did not want to look like the character from 'Corpse Bride.' I understand that I do have some similarities with them, but I am my own muse and I did not want to look like anyone. That was not my aim." She went on to say that she had only had a handful of procedures -- including enlarging her nose and lips and liposuction -- and her weight was in a normal range. "I was trying to lose weight, that is true. But I only lost 5-7 kilograms, not 40 or even 30. Now I weigh 54 kg (119 pounds)," she said.

In 2018, an Iranian teenager was detained for posting videos of herself dancing to Western music on Instagram.

Amnesty International reports that her "forced

confession" was broadcast on state TV.

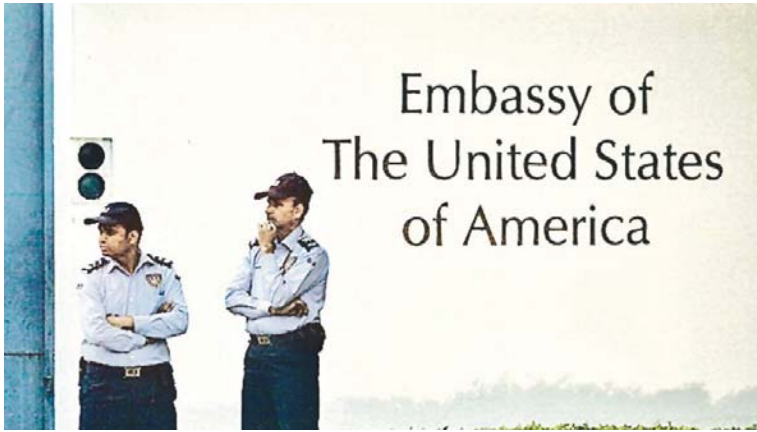
In 2014, six people were arrested for dancing in a YouTube video to the Pharrell Williams song "Happy." They were later freed after humanitarian groups launched an international campaign against their arrest. Williams himself voiced his support for the dancers.

This July, an Australian couple were arrested, accused of having taken illegal photos with a drone. They have since been released.

Instagram is the only major social media network that is not banned in Iran. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Telegram are all blocked, according to Amnesty International.



**Apply for visa 90 days prior to employment start date: US**



(News Agencies) The United States (US) Embassy here on Thursday asked visa applicants to apply up to 90 days before their employment begins.

"Applying for your work #USvisa? You can apply up to 90 days before the employment start date noted on your I-797 form," the US Embassy wrote in a tweet.

The I-797 form is a document the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) uses “to communicate with applicants/petitioners or convey an immigration benefit,” reads the USCIS website.

The US work visa for Indian nationals is one of the most important issues between US

and India bilateral ties. H-1B is considered as the most sought-after work visa among highly-skilled Indian professionals. It is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

## 7 killed as bus runs over Vaishno Devi pilgrims sleeping on pavement in UP's Bulandshahr

(News Agencies) Seven people were killed after a bus ran over them in UP's Bulandshahr early morning Friday. The deceased, who were returning to Hathras after visiting Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu-Kashmir, were sleeping on a pavement when the incident took place.

The pilgrims, including 4 women and 3 minors, died on the spot. The bodies have been sent for postmortem, police said.

(News Agencies)  
Delhi-NCR's air quality deteriorated on Thursday to its worst level in nearly three months as winds slowed down, the temperature dipped and an increasing



result in stagnant weather conditions such as low wind speed that does not allow pollutants to disperse," said Kuldeep Srivastava, head, regional weather forecasting centre (RWFC), India Meteorological Department (IMD).

AQI had risen to 223 - a level not seen since July 14 when the AQI was 235. The spike took place a day after Delhi saw its cleanest post-Dussehra air in five years.

Weather officials said the immediate change is due to climatic conditions typical of pre-winter period: As the monsoon withdraws, an anti-cyclone wind pattern has formed over Rajasthan. "This

Department (IMD).

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), a unit of the Union ministry of earth sciences, said air quality will deteriorate further over the next 48 hours.

The most prominent impact from slowing winds is the trapping of local pollutants - vehicle exhaust gases, road dust and industrial emissions.



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## Prince William and Kate Middleton's Royal Foundation REMOVES

Prince Harry and Meghan Markle from its website and abolishes an 'empowering women' programme after couple left to launch their own charity

(News Agencies) The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's Royal Foundation has wiped mentions of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle from its website, following the couple's split from the charity earlier this year.

Prince William, 37, and Kate Middleton, 37, are now listed as the only two 'principals', with the Duke of Cambridge credited with 'founding' the charity, despite launching the organisation with Prince Harry, 35, in 2009.

Projects launched by Harry while part of the Royal Foundation, such as The Invictus Games and Meghan's Together: Our Community Cookbook, have been removed from the Programmes section of the site. The site now lists Programmes

in five different categories, including Conservation and Mental Health, but it has removed

Empowering Communities, which highlighted Meghan's work on female empowerment.

It follows Harry and Meghan's decision to move out of Kensington Palace, where William and Kate are based, to set up home at Frogmore Cottage and establish their own own Sussex Royal charity foundation. The move will do little to help rumours of a fallout of the so-called 'fab four', believed to have stemmed from tension between the two Duchesses, as well as William and his younger brother.

Royal sources have denied the

feud, saying the split was 'largely about preparing both couples for their future roles, which are obviously on divergent tracks'. But a backlash over the Sussexes privacy demands and their jet-setting lifestyle have led to further claims that they are growing apart from the Cambridges.

Despite launching the foundation alongside his brother in 2009, the site has been updated to remove all mention of Prince Harry as a founder of the charity.

The homepage of the site now reads: 'Driven by a desire to make a difference together, the Royal Foundation is a primary philanthropic and charitable vehicle for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.'

'Our programmes support a broad and ambitious spectrum of activities, ideas, and resources together to understand issues, explore creative solutions and be a catalyst for long-term impact.' The foundation is now listed as focusing on five main areas: Conservation, Service, Young People, Early Years and Mental Health. When Meghan officially joined the charity after marrying Harry, the site was updated to include Women & Girls as one of its Programmes.



## British grandfather thrown in Ukraine jail with murderers and rapists over £30k cheque that bounced THIRTEEN years ago



(News Agencies) A British shipping company manager was thrown in a Ukraine jail for more than a month after wrongly being arrested over a bounced cheque written 13 years ago. Robert Urwin had to share a cell with murderers and rapists while being held over the £30,000 cheque written in Dubai that he insists he didn't even write.

Despite being released from prison without charge, the 67-year-old still can't leave the Ukraine because an Interpol arrest remains in place.

Speaking to MailOnline from the city of Odessa where he is living awaiting clearance to return home to Newcastle, Robert said: 'It has just been a nightmare and I want to go home to my wife.'

'I've never committed a crime in my life and yet I ended up in jail for a bounced cheque that I had nothing to do with. I wasn't even in the country when the cheque was written and am the victim of identity theft. 'But until the Interpol notice is

lifted I am stuck here and it just seems so unfair.' Robert was visiting the Ukraine last November for Newcastle-based ASP Shipping Management when he was suddenly arrested at the airport.

He was told that he was being held on what is known as a Interpol Red notice - a request for an arrest - issued by the HSBC bank in Dubai.

The bank claimed that Robert had written a cheque from his personal account in 2006 that later bounced.

Robert had documents to prove that he had left Dubai the previous year and had not signed the cheque.

He said: 'The cheque was from my personal account but when it was written I had left the country.'

'I had not lived in Dubai for the previous six months. All I can think of is that someone used my identity and wrote the cheque. I did not even have access to the cheque book.'

'I could not believe it when the authorities told me why I was being arrested. I had nothing to

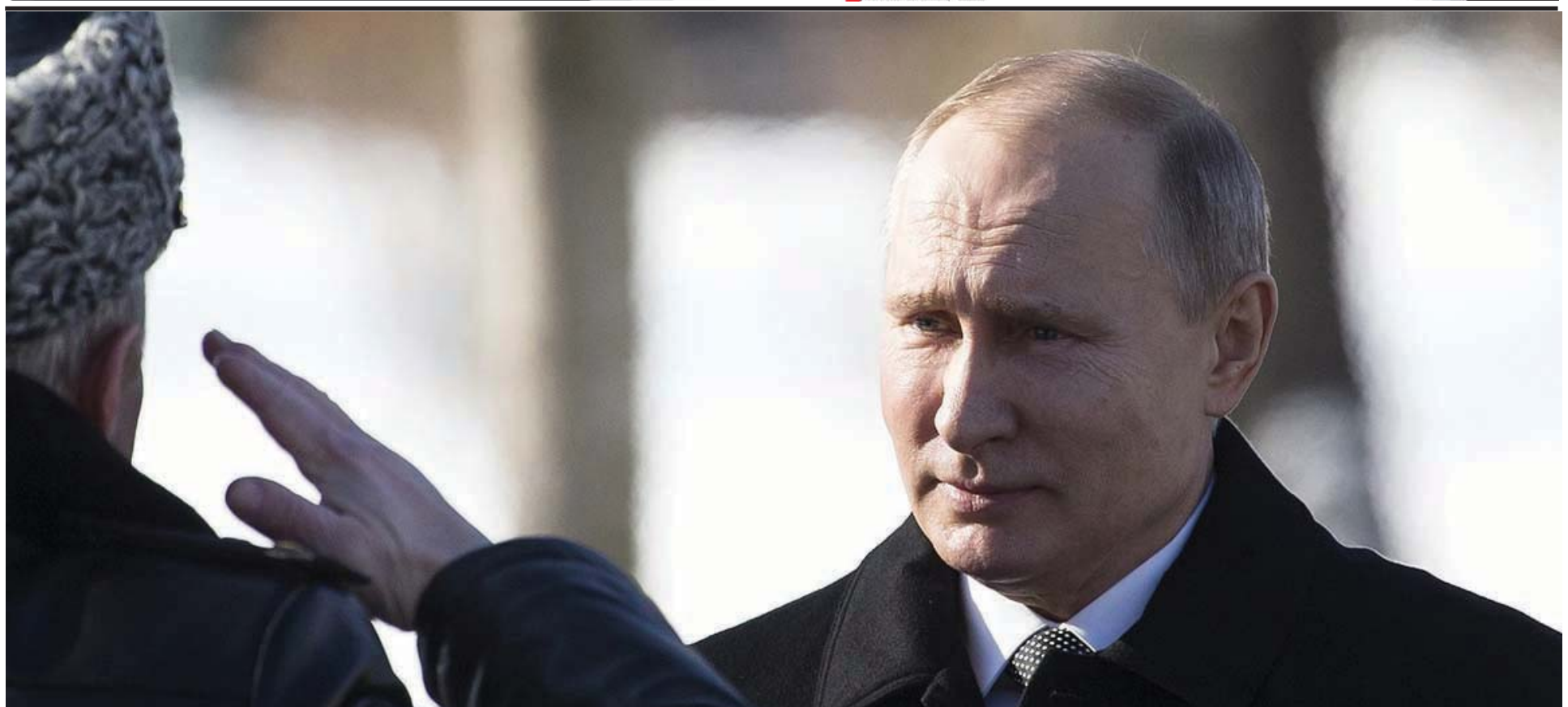
do with the cheque and to this day have no idea who wrote it. To say I was in shock at the airport when I was arrested would be an understatement. I just could not believe what was going on.'

After being held in a police station in Kiev he appeared in court and was transferred to a detention centre where his ordeal took a more sinister turn. Robert said the food consisted of inedible Russian war rations and there was no hot water for showers or washing. He was also victim of extortion from a mafia type gangster who ran the cell block.

'I asked for some water and had to pay 50 Euros for a single bottle, he said. 'The gangster who ran the cell was always trying to get money.'

After initially having a cell to himself he was pulled aside by prison guards who gave him a choice of either paying a £10,000 bribe or be put in with murders and a triple killer.





# *Want to Stop Russia From Messing With Our Democracy?*

## *Rethink U.S. Counterintelligence.*

(News Agencies) News that hackers backed by the Iranian government targeted a 2020 presidential campaign brings back vivid flashbacks of Russia's infiltration into the 2016 election—and raises concerns about what could happen next year. Congress is still investigating Russia's attempts to undermine U.S. democracy last election cycle, while dedicated intelligence and law enforcement officers, diplomatic, security and military personnel are doubling down on their efforts to keep it from happening again.

But looking back will not be enough to keep it from happening again—whether at the hands of Russia, Iran or any other foreign adversary. In all the reports and hearings over the past 2½ years, no one has identified the real problem: U.S. counterintelligence is not set up to preempt foreign intelligence operations directed against the United States. If the government doesn't empower U.S. counterintelligence to go on offense, we are destined to remain on our back feet.

It's not only our elections that are under assault. Russian intelligence services have been on a global offensive under President Vladimir Putin. They are poisoning people in England, working to undermine the hard-won beginnings of democracy in Eastern Europe and propping up brutal dictators like Bashar Assad in Syria. They're running

aggressive operations to recruit and plant spies, steal America's most closely guarded secrets, and hack into our computer systems to take what they want and disrupt our society at will. Moscow is far from alone, as evidenced by China's increasing efforts to recruit U.S. officials, ongoing cyberattacks, influence operations and defense technology theft. According to press reports, at least 20 CIA sources were executed by the Chinese government between 2010 and 2012—a sweeping roundup of men and women in China who had risked their lives providing information about Chinese plans and capabilities directed against the United States and our allies. It was a devastating blow to U.S. intelligence and to the policymakers and operators who depend on that intelligence to make critical decisions. Similarly, targeting of U.S. business and industry—especially by the Chinese—to steal proprietary information and acquire key assets is a purposeful, strategically orchestrated undertaking, in which foreign intelligence services play integral roles. There are trillions of dollars at stake, yet the principal U.S. response has been to chase export control violations and industrial security incident reports while we continue to lose ground.

It's time U.S. counterintelligence went on the offense. Hostile intelligence operations are not

uncontrollable forces of nature. Some can be deterred, and all have vulnerabilities that can be exploited given sufficient time, resources and creativity.

But here is the problem. Apart from the CIA's approach to the KGB during the Cold War, American counterintelligence has never had a standing strategic mission of finding and disabling hostile intelligence services before they target the United States. As a result, U.S. counterintelligence is not wired to preempt.

Unlike most other governments, the United States has never had a unified organization or a national counterintelligence "service" to carry out CI operations. Instead, the U.S. has a siloed system, with each branch organized, trained and equipped to accomplish agency-specific objectives. In simple terms, the FBI's job is to find the spies in the U.S. and arrest them, the CIA's job is to make sure our spies abroad succeed, and the military's job is to protect U.S. troops against enemy intelligence operations.

These are all vital CI missions, but all the incentives are to work one case at a time—Did we catch the spy? Did we find the hidden microphone or the embedded microchip? Did we expose the front company?—instead of going after the foreign service as a whole to disrupt its operations. There is no centralized planning to assess hostile intelligence services and their vulnerabilities—How and where do they operate? How are

they resourced, trained, tasked? Who are their leaders, their American targets officers, their liaison relationships?—in order to devise a coherent strategy to stop them.

This is a big problem. The rich diversity of complementary skills and capabilities across the CI enterprise should be an inherent strength of the United States, but without a national program to provide strategic direction or integration, America's counterintelligence will never be as effective as it could be. And since no one government organization has a common operating picture of foreign intelligence threats or the resources available to counter them, there are inherent holes in the CI architecture that adversaries can and do exploit. These structural flaws have been understood at least since 2002, which was the last time Congress took a hard look at U.S. counterintelligence. The country had just weathered betrayals by traitors like CIA officer Aldrich Ames, FBI special agent Robert Hanssen and DIA analyst Ana Montes, as well as the staggering theft of all U.S. nuclear design secrets by the Chinese. Something had to change. Congress decided it was time to put someone in charge. When President George W. Bush appointed me his national counterintelligence executive in 2003, I became the first statutory head of U.S. counterintelligence. I was charged with integrating and

providing strategic direction to CI activities government-wide. As a first order of business, my new office conducted a top-to-bottom review and concluded that the disjointed CI model was working about as well as it could. Clearly, we needed a new way of doing business. The first national counterintelligence strategy, signed by Bush in 2005, directed that the national counterintelligence enterprise be reconfigured to be able to work together to go on offense. A national team would do the centralized strategic planning; the execution would be distributed to the FBI, CIA and the Defense Department. The goal was to exploit where we can, and interdict where we must, degrading adversary intelligence services and their ability to operate against us. But just as our work was getting underway, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence was established, along with a new bureaucracy that had other priorities. The realignment of U.S. counterintelligence was put on hold indefinitely as the Bush and Obama administrations concentrated effort and resources on the war on terror. The prototype CI program we had designed was stripped of funding and never renewed. In 2014, my old position (which had been moved under the DNI) was renamed director of the National Counterintelligence and Security Center.



# The Demon On My Palm Mobile-Loving India Faces Strange Digital Disorders



She sits pretty on the railing of a bridge, smiling at the camera. A clear blue sky above her and a river far below. She is holding the end of her red saree about her head, as if bracing against the wind. If a picture says a thousand words, the 20-year-old's photograph tells the sweet story of a newly wed woman. What it doesn't say is, it is also her last photograph.

On August 16, when Rupali Patel toppled over the Mandleshwar bridge in Madhya Pradesh into a Narmada in spate, she and her husband were busy posing for selfies. A moment of distraction ended it all for her. That very day, some 300 km away at Mandsaur, a mother-daughter duo met with a watery end. They, too, were clicking selfies. They were the latest in a country that stands out as the world capital for selfie deaths.

It's not just death by selfies. In the sweet spot of the world's digital revolution, something strange is happening in India: a mysterious relationship between new technology and human behaviour. In August, dangerous stunts for video-sharing app TikTok killed two daredevils in Bihar and West Bengal. Weeks before, a Maharashtra teen stabbed his brother for not letting him play an online game. A 60-year-old in Rajasthan went to bed with a mobile

phone in his pocket and never woke up: the phone exploded. In Delhi, a man mowed down his three-year-old nephew: he was driving and talking on his phone. In Jharkhand, a WhatsApp message spread false rumours and turned a village into a lynch mob, killing an innocent man. In Uttar Pradesh, video clippings of gang rapes shot on mobile phones are being sold for Rs 100.

As screens, clicks, taps and emojis mediate experiences and interactions more and more, the lines between real lives and virtual realities are getting blurred. An unnerving new word is doing the rounds for unnatural attachment to digital devices: internet addiction. Yet, the phenomenon remains virtually undocumented in national surveys. In contrast, China, South Korea and Japan recognise internet addiction as a serious public health problem. In May 2019, online gaming addiction, or the unhealthy need to access online games, has been given the status of a unique disorder, similar to gambling addiction, by the World Health Organization. "Digital disorders are hugely under-recognised in India," says Dr Rajesh Sagar, head of psychiatry at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi. "But it is fast emerging as India's newest lifestyle disease."

Outlook decided to chronicle and analyse the health-seeking behaviour of a society in the throes of major socio-economic changes. Market researcher Karvy sent out field workers across nine cities—Delhi, Lucknow, Mumbai, Indore, Calcutta, Patna, Chennai, Bangalore and Vijayawada—asking 1,648 men and women, between age 18 and 55 years, about their attitude to health and sickness. Over 70 per cent respondents were executives or business owners, all graduate and above.

The survey reveals that many of the respondents

are aware of their unusual attachment to digital devices: 47 per cent believe they spend too much time on their mobile phones. Over 62 per cent admit they remain attached to their devices even when they eat. What's more, one in five across all age groups say they feel tired from excessive social media use. Hunched over their computers, smartphones or tablets for 7-10 hours every day, back pain is their biggest bane, forcing one in nine to pop painkillers regularly. Depression, anxiety, anger and guilt wear out 28 per cent respondents. Uneasy secrets lie behind closed bedroom doors: 64 per cent men and women say that they don't have the time to think about sex, don't have sex often, are bored or tired of sex. When questioned about the addictive potential of technology, 45 per cent readily confess they want to bring down the time they spend on their mobile phones. Powered by increased availability of bandwidth, cheap data plans and rising awareness driven by government programmes, India is witnessing the rise of a "new digital audience", according to a 2018 report by analytics company ComScore. They jam each other's phones every day with cheery "Good Morning" messages, unlike any other nation. They connect largely through mobile phones, each spending over 3,000 minutes online a year. India's massive 1.19 billion mobile users, 560 million internet subscribers and 310 million social media users record the world's highest data usage at 1GB a day.

The average young Indian checks mobile phones 150 times a day, streams music for 1 hour 29 minutes and watches videos for 52 minutes, loads up their phones with 200 apps, whether to use or just for a lark, spends 23 hours a week texting. One in every three texts and talks even when they are driving. One in two cannot survive beyond five hours without internet. And

like 95 per cent mobile-toting Indians, their device is their lifeline. In the first study of its kind, experts from AIIMS, Bhopal and IIT-Kanpur have shown that 50 per cent selfie deaths in the world occur in India. "No-selfie zones should be declared across tourist areas, especially places such as water bodies, mountain peaks and over tall buildings," they have pointed out.

India may embrace technology with open arms, but doctors are worried about the range of behavioural aberrations they come across: from anxiety and irritability to sleeplessness, neglecting important activities, avoiding face-to-face interactions with family and friends, and drifting away from intimate relationships. "Most sufferers don't realise they have a problem and most don't seek treatment," says Dr Manoj Kumar Sharma, associate professor of clinical psychology, who set up India's first digital detox centre at NIMHANS—the SHUT clinic or Service for Healthy Use of Technology. The disorders are often not severe enough to cause functional impairment, although in severe form they can be devastating, leading to loss of judgement, insight and control.

Reports do the rounds: sometimes, of a Mumbai college student making 150 calls a day to a girl from 64 different phone numbers; sometimes, of a Delhi husband filing a divorce suit for his wife's relentless late-night chats on WhatsApp; sometimes, of a Bangalore youth for his obsessive need to watch Netflix videos for seven to 10 hours a day. Queues outside doctors' chambers are getting longer with distraught parents. They complain of falling academic grades of their children, sudden behaviour changes, and avoiding friends, family outings, food or sleep. Doctors from AIIMS and Maulana Azad Medical College in Delhi report pathological mobile use

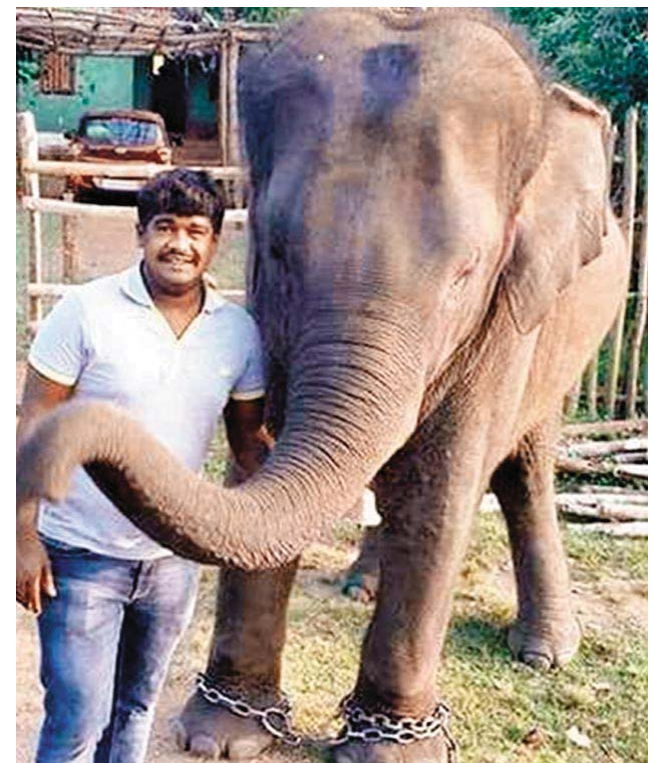


among 56 per cent young professionals, college and school students.

There are new names for new disorders (see). Foremost among them is nomophobia, or the fear of having no mobile phone, when you feel your cell phone is ringing when it is not. Linked to it are textaphrenia—you think a message has arrived, when it actually hasn't—and textxiety, or panic attacks over not receiving or sending text messages. And they are much more common than we believe them to be. When Dr Sanjay Dixit, professor and head of community medicine at the MGM Medical College in Indore, conducted the first ever study on cellphone addiction in India in 2009, he found nine out of 10 of the 150 medical students he studied had some of these disorders: 56 per cent felt compelled to keep mobile phones close to their body, 93 per cent got panic attacks if they did not get messages and 19 per cent had painful thumbs due to excessive texting.

oMO, or Fear of Missing Out, was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2014. It has been described as "the uneasy and sometimes all-consuming feeling that you're missing out—that your peers are doing...something better than you," by Andrew Przybylski, social psychologist and director of research at the Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, who has conducted one of the earliest studies on FoMO. The disorder starts with sadness and envy. Social media makes it worse, as one scrolls down the screen and stares at the "picture perfect" lives of others. And that leads one to check social media again and again. The unreasoning, yet relentless, fear of missing out on the joys of life induces a lot of stress.

Przybylski documents how FoMO is linked to general discontent, insecurity, stress, fatigue and troubled sleep. Others report how FoMO often forces its victims towards "conspicuous sociality", attempting to convey an







uproariously joyous life. People even purchase fake friends and -followers on social network for this. The envy-related anxieties spectrum also -includes FoBO (the Fear of Better Options), FoDA (Fear of Doing Anything), MoMO (Mystery of Missing Out) and FoDO (Fear of Disappointing Others). Interestingly, at a time when online -rumours and falsehoods spark public anger and even lynchings, new research links FoMO to the rise of fake news online. Shalini Talwar, associate professor of -finance at the Somaiya Institute of Management Studies, Mumbai, and others have probed why people -forward such messages without authenticating them. Published in the Journal of Retail and Consumer Services this July, the researchers have linked the "sense of -recklessness" from fear of missing out to be a trigger that causes people to share fake news.

Addiction to screen time, whether -gaming apps or social media, is on the rise in the age band of 15-24 years," says -psychiatrist Dr Aniruddha Deb of Calcutta, who routinely comes across anxious young victims of cyberchondria, seeking -treatment for inexplicable or frivolous -symptoms after browsing the internet -obsessively for medical information. "They think they have all possible disorders and they want therapy."

The darkest side of tech addiction has emerged in the past few years, aimed at teenagers. Packed with bullying, sexual -deviance and violence, online games

offer a convoluted sense of reality. In 2017, when teen suicides broke out in Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala, the 'Blue Whale challenge', an online "suicide game", created hysteria among schools and parents. But it's not the only one lurking in the dark depths of the internet. The list of digital disorders is growing longer every day. There is technoference, when digital behaviour hampers our relationships, leisure hours, conversations and even intimacy in sex lives. There is the Google effect, when we forget to remember most things, because everything is just a few clicks away. There is the more elusive Truman Show delusion, a feeling of being persecuted along with a sense of being very special, which can happen to the hyper-connected, who lead a lifestyle based on reality TV and social media. There are tech injuries, like text claw, not an official medical diagnosis, but the pain along one's wrist and hands that many tech-savvy individuals suffer, along with Selfie Elbows and Texting Thumbs.

"The past 20 years have seen the rise of a new field, cognitive neuroscience, to -address the neural underpinnings of the human mind," explains neurobiologist Sumantra Chattarji, director, the Centre for Brain Development and Repair at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore. It shows that the human brain is capable of reorganising and re-engineering itself, both physically and functionally, throughout

life. And this happens in -response to environment, behaviour, thinking and emotions, he explains, a -concept called neuroplasticity.

Advances in brain scan technologies -reveal that internet addiction and gambling have a remarkably similar effect on the brain. Both trigger reward chemicals, dopamine, and hijack areas involved in -motivation (cingulate gyrus) and judgement (prefrontal cortex). Hence, people become fixated on digital devices, cease to care about the things that once mattered to them once, take extraordinary risks, -explains Chattarji. But functional MRI (fMRI) experiments show that relationships are key to the brain's feelings of -happiness, while social exclusion activates the same brain circuits as physical pain. The upward spiral of addiction eventually puts the brain into a downward spiral of depression, anxiety, insomnia and high-risk behaviour in the technology-addicted.

Mobile phones and social networking sites also put people in stressful environments. The stress comes from the unprecedented volume of personal information that increase occasions for social comparisons, say scientists: people compare their own achievements with those of others, and end up feeling frustrated and dissatisfied with their own lives. The more one -focuses on negativity, the more the brain creates neural connections supporting that thought process, slowing down the brain's ability to function.



Neuroplasticity has -enabled people to recover from stroke, -improve symptoms of autism and other brain deficits, pull out of depression, -anxiety and addictions, says Chattarji. "But it's because of neuroplasticity that bad habits can get ingrained in the brain."

Is it possible to switch off your mobile phone? No. Is it feasible to switch off the internet? No. Is it probable never to take selfies? No. Is it practical to sign off from social networks? No. But it is

possible to turn off phones at meetings, while driving, or having dinner with family. It is certainly feasible to exercise more caution when taking selfies. It is worth a try to keep your mobile phone out of the bedroom. Taking a step further, one can remove social media apps from phones and only access them from laptops.

The only way out of digital distress is being aware of dependence, because that is where everything begins to change. As

-neuroscience shows, you can rewire your amazingly adaptive brain: it will allow the negative impacts of smartphones, just as much as it will support your efforts to spend time on healthier activities—meditation, face-to-face socialisation, meaningful relationships, physical exercise and learning new things. Just remember to sleep more, to keep that upward spiral of your brain ticking.



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## 2 arrested for raping deaf and mute woman in Mumbai

However, the woman's mobile phone was active and it showed her location in Thane, the official said, adding on Monday, she was found at the Dadar railway station along with Kurhade.

The woman told the police in writing about her ordeal after which Kurhade was taken in custody, he said. During interrogation, it came to light that the woman was raped in a room in Thane, the official said, adding the police later picked up Kaale, too, from the adjoining city. Kurhade revealed he met the victim via a common friend and on Sunday he took her to his home in Thane to introduce her to his parents as he wanted to marry her, he said. But when Kurhade's parents denied him permission to marry the

woman, he asked his colleague Kaale to drop her to her workplace in Bandra, the official said. However, Kaale took the woman to a room in Thane and allegedly raped her, he said. When Kurhade came to know about the crime, he reached the spot and took the victim with him to drop her at her workplace in Bandra, but was arrested when they reached Dadar, the official said. An FIR under IPC sections 366 (kidnapping or inducing woman to compel her marriage), 376 (rape) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) was registered against both the accused, he said. On Tuesday, they were produced before a court which sent them in police custody till October 15, the official added.

## 'Joker'-a political parable for our times

Phillips clearly wants "Joker" to yank at the chains of a society that has increasingly found his shock-fueled style of storytelling less relevant and more problematic. (It's worth noting that since Phillips's breakthrough hit "The Hangover," his box office totals have trended downward in almost linear fashion.)

This goal was made explicit in Phillips's attacks on the "outrage culture" of the "far left" and his extended complaint to Vanity Fair that the anything-goes, douchebro comedy genre he helped launch had run aground on the iceberg of political correctness. "Go try to be funny nowadays with this woke culture," he told them. "Comedies don't work anymore," he said, because all of the comedians are afraid of offending people. "So I go, 'How do I do something irreverent... Oh, I know, let's take the comic book movie universe and turn it on its head.'"

After watching "Joker," it's easy to decode what Phillips really meant in this quote, and it's the same thing that fired "SNL" cast member Shane Gillis meant when he excused his repeated use of racist, misogynist and homophobic slurs as "pushing boundaries."

It draws from the same well of resentment that Trump strums with his racist rhetoric at his rallies -- the fear of no longer being at the center of the political, social and cultural universe, with everyone who isn't you positioned at its perceived edges. (After all, being racist, sexist and anti-gay only "pushes boundaries" if you define yourself as "normal" and define nonwhite, non-male and non-straight people as marginalized outsiders.)

It doesn't quite seem like coincidence that Fleck and his mother reside in a run-down building that seems otherwise occupied by nonwhite tenants (prompting mother Penny to assert that if her old employer Thomas Wayne saw how they were living, he would be disgusted), or that the movie opens with an attack on Fleck by black and Latinx youth, referred to by one of Fleck's fellow white-male clowns as "savages" and "animals." This man subsequently offers Fleck a gun -- "Gotta protect yourself," he says.

It also doesn't quite seem accidental that all the incidental characters Fleck encounters are black: the social worker who tunes him out during counseling sessions, the woman on the bus who fearfully shoos him away from her toddler, the admin who tries to prevent him from getting his mother's hospital records, and the object of his desire, played by Zazie Beets.

In 1968, after Richard Nixon was elected president, Peter Schrag cited "Forgotten Americans" as the primary reason for his victory -- white, working-class voters who were once the "hero of the civic books... 'the bone and sinew of the country,'" Schrag wrote. "Now he is 'the forgotten man,' perhaps the most alienated person in America."

Trump, in his 2016 victory speech, paid similar homage to the "forgotten men." But while Schrag pointed to Nixon's law-and-order based platform as his key appeal to the alienated, forgotten white male, Trump won by using outrageous statements, theatrical posturing and grimacing mockery to generate raucous mob energy -- the very opposite of law and order. White men, in particular, responded to his rhetoric and persona -- seeing in him a disruptor of oppressive correctness who could lead them back to the top of the heap and the center of the world. This isn't the first time Phillips' and Trump's worlds have collided. When his last film, "War Dogs," came out, Phillips said in an interview with Little White Lies, "Also there's a thing going on right now where the world as a whole is waking up to the fact that the system is rigged... It happens to be Trump's theme," even though, Phillips notes, Trump is part of the system that created these problems.

At the end of the movie, a triumphant Fleck -- seemingly dead, but magically revived by the cheers of a throng of clown-masked rioters -- does a grotesque soft-shoe on top of a shattered cop car, literally dancing on the destroyed remains of the rule of law. Imagine Fleck as Trump, shrugging off impeachment, rebounding with his roaring red-hatted supporters, winning reelection against every prediction and probability.

Phillips may not have intended for his film to be a political parable -- or maybe he did -- but it's hard to imagine a darker ending for our real-world horror-comedy than that.

## Teenager becomes first vaping fatality in New York



and nearly 1,100 people have been sickened across the U.S. with vaping-related respiratory injuries, according to the CDC and FDA. At least 18 other people have died. More than 80 percent of those illnesses have involved people under the age of 35, and public health officials are discouraging the use of all vaping-related products -- with an emphasis on those containing THC -- as they struggle to suss out the root problem. The vaping industry contends its reputation and business are being maligned for the problems caused by counterfeit and other illicit products, and the crackdowns imposed by New York and others are unfairly targeting them.

A Siena College poll released Monday found more than three-

quarters of New Yorkers surveyed considered e-cigarette usage to be either a somewhat or very serious public health problem. Sixty-eight percent of respondents supported the Cuomo administration's emergency directive prohibiting the sale of flavored e-cigarette products -- which a state appellate court put on hold late last week -- and more than half of those polled backed banning the sale of all e-cigarettes and vaping devices. The boy was hospitalized at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, Cuomo said. Mayor Bill de Blasio, speaking at a separate event at roughly the same time, said he had not heard about the teen's death.

## Social Media Sparked #MeToo. Now Facebook Could End It.

Their new startup, short for "Quick Bites," is an odd proposition -- and a risky one at that.

As the streaming wars heat up, companies like Netflix, Apple, WarnerMedia (CNN's parent company), NBCUniversal and Disney are all vying to be bigger and grander than their competitors. Whitman and Katzenberg are instead daring to go small. The two are wagering a lot of money -- and potentially their reputations as two of the business world's mightiest moguls -- on a bet that consumers will pay for a mobile-only, short-form video service. There's still a lot of mystery surrounding Quibi. While Disney+ shows off clips of "The Mandalorian," Apple TV+ gives a sneak peek of Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon's "The Morning Show" and HBO Max buys up familiar hits like

"Friends" and "The Big Bang Theory," Quibi has kept much of its programming close to the vest. This strategy has turned Katzenberg and Whitman into the faces of the product. They've been hyping the new service at South by Southwest, on CNBC, and in interviews in The Hollywood Reporter and Vanity Fair -- but to date, they have yet to release any trailers of the shows and or previews of the Quibi app. The service also arrives after decades of viewers being conditioned to long-form storytelling on TVs and big screens. It's entering a market that's already overrun by short-form content from the likes of YouTube, Instagram and Snapchat, which is mostly free of cost. In a world that has new streaming services pop up seemingly every week, will there be enough room for Quibi?



# Smaller cities take the lead in drive against plastic waste

**Data by Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) shows Indore generates nearly 50,000 kilos of municipal waste every day, 13,000 kilos of which is plastic waste.**

Towering landfills, garbage strewn around on the roads and plastic bags becoming the staple for stray animals; this has become a common feature of a large number of Indian cities, including the national capital.

While cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are still struggling to manage plastic waste, some smaller cities are far head in completing the daunting task of controlling manufacture and recycling of plastic already in circulation, by effective policies and partnership from citizens.

## **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**

Indore, Madhya Pradesh's most populous city, was choking on plastic waste till early this year. In January, the city's municipal body set up a plastic collection centre (PCC) to reuse and recycle plastic waste, and the results have made the city an example of how plastic can be effectively managed.

Data by Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) shows Indore generates nearly 50,000 kilos of municipal waste every day, 13,000 kilos of which is plastic waste. Till 2018, the agency used to dispose all of its plastic waste by burning it, which was also becoming a major reason for the deteriorating air quality in the city.

"We have tied up with an NGO named 'Sarthaak' to

come up with ways to recycle plastic waste. They are providing us with the technical expertise. Along with the PCCs, we have installed machines called 'plastic phatka machines', these are used to cleanse contaminated plastic for recycling," said Dhani Ram Dubey, zonal in-charge at IMC.

Dubey explained that rag pickers have been roped in to help the municipality segregate plastic waste that can be recycled. What is left is taken to the PCC and purified and shredded. The shredded waste is then bundled in blocks of 100 kg and carried to the cement plants to be used as a fuel for boilers.

IMC estimates show nearly 45,000 kilos of plastic waste is recycled every day.

## **Gangtok, Sikkim**

In 1998, this small city nestled in the Himalayas banned disposable plastic bags. In 2016, the capital of Sikkim set another example and banned the use of packaged drinking water in government offices and events.

Styrofoam and thermocol disposable plates and cutlery was also banned across Sikkim to cut down toxic plastic pollution and tackle its garbage problem.

"In the 1990s, because of excessive use of plastic carry bags, when a heavy rainstorm hit the state, the plastic got washed down and blocked major drains.

This resulted in a huge landslide. Looking at the damage caused, the state government banned plastic bags," said Rajendra P Gurung, CEO, Ecotourism and Conservation Society of Sikkim (ECOSS), a local non-governmental organisation that works in Sikkim.

In an action report submitted by the Gangtok municipality earlier this year to the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a Delhi-based research and advocacy organisation, the city administration said it is now on its way to clamping plastic bottle bans strictly. The ban will also apply to tourists.

"We are speaking to guesthouses and hotels to put up boards asking tourists to carry their own water bottles and fill water from restaurants before heading for their daily

sightseeing schedule," the report said.

**Ambikapur, Chhattisgarh**  
Innovation is at the centre of recycling and reusing plastic waste in this city in Chhattisgarh. Ambikapur, which bagged the title of the second cleanest city in India after Indore this year, has opened the first 'garbage cafe', which was built to spread awareness against the use of plastic, feeding homeless people, rag pickers and to empower women who have been hired to run the facility.

The concept of this cafe, located near the Ambikapur bus stand, is that people can get their waste weighed, receive a coupon and relish an Indian thali. The 'rate card' of the cafe says that one kilo of waste will get you a full thali, while half-a-kilo can get you a breakfast. "We are getting great support and recognition for

this initiative. We are now working to form a self-financing model for the cafe," said Ambikapur mayor Ajay Tirkey.

Tirkey said Ambikapur's efforts of recycling plastic waste began much before the launch of the garbage cafe. In 2015, the city laid an one-kilometre stretch of road by mixing granulated plastic waste with tar in Bhagwanpur. "We want to make our city an example for other cities to follow. If we can do it, everyone can," Tirkey said.

## **Ernakulam and Alappuzha, Kerala**

The Kerala government in 2017 released a 'green protocol' to manage waste, especially plastic. Apart from issuing strict directives to government offices across the state, the administration also announced incentives such as issuing instant marriage certificates to couples who have plastic

free weddings.

"The aim is to reduce the use of plastic. Even if we reuse non-degradable articles, over years there will not be much decline in its presence. Reducing its use is the more effective way to achieve our plastic-free society goal," Suchitwa Mission, the state's nodal agency for sanitation, said in an email response. The state also launched in 2017 the 'responsible tourism' mission where tourist destinations across Kerala will be given green certification based on how much they reduced plastic use. Kovalam, Munnar, Alappuzha, including Alappuzha backwaters, Muhamma and Marari Beach, Kumarakom, Fort Kochi, Wayanad, Kollam, Bekal and Thekkady promise to be completely plastic free tourist destinations by the end of 2019, officials said.







## 'You are a phony, you are a fraud': 5 takeaways from the Canadian debate

Justin Trudeau survived, Andrew Scheer went there on the blackface scandal and populists courted north-of-the-border Trump fans with a "Canada First" promise.

Two weeks before Oct. 21 elections, Canada's six party leaders took the stage at the National History Museum in Gatineau, Quebec on Monday night — and with only one official English language debate scheduled, none of them could afford to misfire. Canadians may be a polite bunch, but this was a raucous, squabbling debate.

All eyes were on the once-ascendant Trudeau; only recently an icon of global liberals, he's been hobbled by a series of scandals and came in with much to lose, including his majority government. For Conservative opposition leader Scheer, it was a final chance to overtake Trudeau's Liberals in a race that's neck-and-neck, according to national polls. Feeding into that cacophony were regional and fringe parties, including the People's Party and the Bloc Quebecois, which could play a huge role as spoilers and swing the election to Trudeau's Liberals — or condemn them to a minority government in a few short weeks. Early voting in the election starts Friday.

**Trudeau didn't lose — but he didn't win**

Justin Trudeau had the most to lose; he's had a bad few weeks since photos were

released of him in racist makeup, and that came after a bad few months of revelations about the SNC-Lavalin scandal. So Trudeau played defense most of Monday night, as rivals on the left and right tried to tackle him. It was always going to be hard for him to assert his prime ministerial authority. He could either wrestle with his five noisy opponents or look on passively from a distance. His efforts to do both made him look average, not unstoppable. After initially holding back from the fray, in the second half of the debate Trudeau tried to turn provincial issues — like Quebec's Bill 21 on religious headwear in government workplaces and the unpopularity of Ontario Premier Doug Ford — into national ones. It's not clear it worked. Trudeau's strongest moments came in explaining his "ambitious but feasible" climate policies. They were attacked relentlessly, and sometimes reasonably, but his opponents didn't demonstrate their own plans were more workable.

**Andrew Scheer passed the prime minister plausibility test**

Conservative opposition leader Andrew Scheer — largely unknown internationally — succeeded on two fronts, which delivers him a points victory rather than a knockout blow against Trudeau. First, Scheer proved

he can play a moderate when he wants to — something that is essential for him to win over suburban voters around Toronto. Canada's Liberals, after all, want voters to lump Scheer together with Donald Trump. But Scheer was able to brush past Trudeau's efforts to hammer him for his conservative past and present views on social hot-buttons like abortion. Scheer was also aggressive and successful in confronting Trudeau on his ethical and climate contradictions. He set up several exchanges that allowed voters to look at him and think "there's my next prime minister."

Scheer can also consider himself lucky that People's Party leader Maxime Bernier was fairly ineffectual in attacking him from the right, given that his moderate pitch left him exposed on that flank. For all that work and good fortune, Scheer did not deliver a knock-out blow: in fact, he was weakest during what should have been his strong suit, the debate section on pocketbook issues. It's still Trudeau's election to lose.

**Scheer weaponizes the blackface scandal**

Scheer brought up Trudeau's blackface scandal as Exhibit A of his broader case against the prime minister. While the controversy, amazingly, did not come up in the first French-language debate last week,

Scheer used the Monday exchange to call Trudeau a phony who's alienated the voters who believed in him. Remember: For Scheer to prevail Oct. 21 he needs progressives to abandon Trudeau for the NDP and Greens, splitting the vote on the left. So Scheer turned the blackface scandal into an assault. "He can't even remember how many times he put blackface on. Because the fact of the matter is he's always wearing a mask," Scheer said, alluding to how Trudeau, the self-proclaimed feminist, dumped female Cabinet members who crossed him. "Mr. Trudeau, you are a phony, you are a fraud, and you do not deserve to govern this country." It's notable that Scheer delivered his toughest shot right off the top; last week in the French debate, pundits concluded he'd had a weak start, when the most viewers are tuned in. Scheer's poll numbers subsequently sagged in Quebec.

**Populism is now part of Canadian politics**

For decades, Canadian political parties have embraced multiculturalism, yet on Monday night People's Party leader Maxime Bernier directly bemoaned current immigration levels. He said Canada adds "the equivalent of one Nova Scotia every three years." He also winked at pro-Trump Canadians with an early

reference to "Canada First." But it's unclear how much of a dent he truly made. Bernier's national poll numbers are atrocious, and, speaking in his second language, English, he wasn't nearly as polished as the mainstream Conservative, Scheer, whom he's hoping to challenge. Scheer almost certainly got the better of their exchanges. And he raised real doubts about the authenticity of Bernier's Canadian populist turn. Scheer alluded to Bernier once having been a Quebec separatist, and to his past as a small-government libertarian in a mainstream Conservative Cabinet before his recent, and sudden, mimicking of Trump. "I'm not sure which Maxime Bernier I'm debating tonight," Scheer said.

**Left-wingers won the battle of the minor parties.**

New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh and Green Party leader Elizabeth May landed more solid jabs against Trudeau, from whom they need to steal votes, than Bernier did in targeting Scheer. The debates hold outsized importance for minor parties because they're rare opportunities to get in front of millions of voters on an equal footing as the major parties. On the left, Singh made sure to set himself apart from Trudeau on everything from taxes to indigenous relations. He also went in on the Liberals'

climate record and the Conservatives' plan simultaneously, telling the voters they "do not need to choose between Mr. Delay and Mr. Deny." Having had the worst year of all the minor parties in national opinion polls, Singh had the most room for improvement and he used it.

May took all other leaders to task on their climate plans — a Green Party leader would do that — but she made sure to turn directly to Trudeau to register her disappointment with his climate record, noting that Canada is far from achieving the carbon emission reductions scientists say are necessary to avert the worst warming of the planet. Her main point: Trudeau does not deserve to govern alone in a second term, and the Greens deserve to be the junior partner holding him to account. Her killer line: "Voting for Green MPs is your very best guarantee, Canada, that you don't get the government you least want."

Scheer did a better job pushing back his fringe threat. In an early exchange on immigration, he dropped one of several allusions to Bernier being a fraud. "You have changed," Scheer told the self-styled populist. "Now you are making your policy based on trying to get Likes and Retweets from the darkest parts of Twitter."



# India Gets Its First Rafale Fighter Jet, Rajnath Singh Says 'Historic Day For IAF'

**India had ordered 36 Rafale fighter jets from France in a deal worth Rs 59,000 crore in September 2016.**

The Indian Air Force on Tuesday received its first Rafale fighter jet from a series of 36 aircraft purchased from France in presence of Defense Minister Rajnath Singh here.

Singh attended the handover ceremony of the first Rafale fighter jet acquired by the IAF along with his French counterpart Florence Parly at aircraft maker Dassault Aviation facility in Merignac, southwestern France.

"Rafale will boost India's air dominance exponentially," Singh said after receiving the aircraft.

Singh, who earlier held wide-ranging talks with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, said his visit was aimed at "expanding the strategic partnership" between India and France.

Arrangements were made for a traditional Indian Shastra Puja, or weapons' worship which forms part of Dussehra celebrations and this year also marks Air Force Day - IAF's 87th anniversary.

Singh also flew a sortie in the Rafale jet following the Shastra Puja, which concluded with the traditional breaking of a coconut before the new aircraft. "Today marks a new milestone in the Indo-French strategic partnership and indeed a new high in the bilateral defence cooperation. Such achievements encourage us to do more and that will be on my agenda when I meet minister Parly today," Singh said, in reference to the annual Indo-French Defence Dialogue scheduled for later on Tuesday in Paris.

"This is a historic and landmark day for the Indian Armed forces, which reflects the depth of strategic partnership between India and France. Today marks Vijayadashami - the victory of good over evil - as also the 87th Indian Air Force Day. And therefore a symbolic day in so many ways," he added.

India had ordered 36 Rafale fighter jets from France in a deal worth Rs 59,000 crore in September 2016. The first batch of four Rafale jets will fly to their home base in India by May 2020.

All 36 jets are expected to arrive in India by September 2022, for which the IAF has been reportedly undertaking preparations, including readying required infrastructure and training



of pilots. The Rafale is a describe it as a fully air defence, close air twin-jet fighter aircraft able versatile aircraft which can support, in-depth strikes, to operate from both an carry out all combat reconnaissance, anti-ship aircraft carrier and a shore aviation missions to strikes and nuclear base. The manufacturers achieve air superiority and deterrence.

## How to shut down an over-talker at your next meeting

**Meetings can be a bore, but they can really drag on when someone is talking too much or going off topic.**

If one person dominates the conversation, it can deter others from speaking up and mean missing out on new ideas and getting a variety of opinions.

"I've never led a team where there isn't some degree of someone who is an over-talker," said Ellen Faye, a productivity and leadership coach.

Leaders need to learn how to manage a meeting. They need to take charge when someone goes off the rails, but they also need to tread carefully when it comes to reining the person in.

"You want meetings to be useful, and if you have someone who goes on and on -- that meeting has become non-productive," said Faye.

**Set a firm agenda**

It's easier to keep people on track with a comprehensive agenda that includes topics and time frames. It provides a blueprint to what will (and won't) be discussed, which can help people stay on topic. Set the tone of the meeting from the start:



Telling attendees that you plan to keep things moving and on topic can make people more aware of their speaking time and make it less awkward if you have to step in.

**Create time limits**

Setting parameters can also help curb over-talkers.

You can request that people keep their comments to around one minute or two, or that they share their top thought and

then move on to the next person, Faye recommended.

Another option is to outline that you want to hear from each participant at least once, but no more than three times. "That way, everyone is compelled to speak up and participate, but the over-talkers will be more limited," said Faye.

Steer them back on track

We can all get into the weeds sometimes and risk getting bogged down with details that aren't relevant.

If that's happening, Faye suggested saying something like: Those are great details to work on. Let's keep a note of that for later.

"It takes a leader with confidence to know when enough is enough," she said.

**Create a 'parking lot'**

Making sure participants feel heard is important, but sometimes their ideas just aren't relevant to the topic at hand. Those ideas can be sent to a "parking lot," which is a list you create, either on paper or for everyone to see.

This validates an idea, but keeps the conversation on topic. Just make sure to circle back to the parking lot at the end of the

meeting.

"The actions in the parking lot need to be forwarded in some way," advised Hallie Crawford, a certified career coach. That could mean moving an idea to the next meeting's agenda, assigning someone to look into it, or dealing with it via email. Politely interrupt if there's a serial over-talker or someone has been going off on a tangent for several minutes, it could be time to interrupt -- just be polite about it.

If someone is being verbose and not getting to their point, Crawford suggested saying something like: "Joe, if I can interrupt, I think that is a great thought. Do you have any recommendations of how we can implement that plan or strategy?" She also said phrases like: "Sorry to interrupt, but in the interest of time" or "bringing us back to the agenda" can also get people back on track without coming off as harsh.





# India's opposition faces a tough test

**The Bharatiya Janata Party's possible success in the state polls will add to its national dominance**

Election fever is at its peak in two important states — Haryana and Maharashtra. After the return of the Narendra Modi government in the 2019 elections, this is the first test of whether the prime minister's popularity remains intact, or whether the Congress and regional parties have mustered the capability to challenge this. The polls will also determine the direction and state of politics in the days to come. A strong opposition is important in any democracy. Unfortunately, the opposition is missing entirely at present. These elections are an opportunity for the regional opposition parties to register their presence.

After this round of elections, polls will follow in Jharkhand and Delhi in early 2020, and Bihar at the end of next year. These five states send 119 members to the Lok Sabha and 49 to the Rajya Sabha. The mandate in these states will find resonance in the politics at the Centre. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) does not have a majority in the upper house, and needs as many seats in as many states as possible to fill this gap. Had the chief ministers of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana not cooperated, the government could not have taken such important decisions as the abrogation of Article 370 or triple talaq. In addition, when it comes to critical constitutional amendments, the government needs not only a majority in both the Houses, but a two-thirds majority. There are clear

national implications of the polls.

Maharashtra was, at one point, dominated by the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). But it has now become a severe challenge. This election is going to be an acid test for NCP chief Sharad Pawar who has dominated state politics for almost four decades. Important leaders in his party are drifting away; he himself is old and unwell; and his ally, the Congress, is very weak. There has been friction in the ruling coalition of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena. And there was speculation that the Sena was getting ready to take the plunge on its own, and contest separately, in this election. Uddhav Thackeray agreed to the alliance just before elections and said the understanding was that Shiv Sena would be the senior partner when it came to state polls. But the results of 2019 general elections made it clear to him that the BJP has now evolved from the junior to senior partner. The Sena has had to agree to contest a fewer number of seats. This is a decisive turn in the Sena's politics.

The other departure in Sena's politics is the decision of Aaditya Thackeray to contest. The party's founder, the late Balasaheb Thackeray, believed more in supporting candidates than contesting elections himself. The Sena remained in power for almost four-and-a-half years, but Matoshree — the Thackeray residence — remained more

powerful than the chief minister's secretariat. By launching Aaditya in these elections, Uddhav wants to send across a message to Shiv Sena workers that the masters of Matoshree will not remain in the wings but will lead from the front.

The situation is quite the opposite in Haryana. There are 90 assembly seats in the state. In the last elections, the BJP got more than half the seats (47). The ruling Congress won only 15 seats and took third place, while Om

Prakash Chautala's Indian National Lok Dal occupied the second slot with 19 seats. The BJP clearly got the mandate here, but the opposition was not quite finished. The general elections, however, completely annihilated the opposition. The ruling party got 58% of the votes and won all 10 seats. The Congress got only 28.5% of the votes. Like in Maharashtra, the opposition here also is a victim of discord and disintegration. It needs a strong political tonic to survive, but nothing seems to be in sight. It's certain that if no miracle takes place in

Maharashtra and Haryana, then the opposition will face another severe jolt. The first impact of this will be in Jharkhand, for the political ripple effect of BJP's victory will quickly extend to the state.

In Bihar, Nitish Kumar had contested the previous assembly elections in alliance with Lalu Yadav. This time, Nitish is with the BJP. If the BJP wins the elections in all these three states with ease, will it then consider Nitish the leader of the coalition or will it be tempted to contest on its own? As of now, the

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) narrative is that Nitish is our captain, but we have the example of Shiv Sena where the power balance quickly shifted. The Bihar story remains uncertain. There is one other key variable in the upcoming polls — the state of play in Delhi. Will Arvind Kejriwal be able to curb the BJP's winning spree? We do not know yet, but the answer will have significant implications.

Let me end with greetings for Vijaydashmi. Let's hope the bitterness of elections will not spoil the warmth of this festive season.

**Shashi Shekhar**

## Aarey case: The damage is done. But Maharashtra must introspect

The Supreme Court has directed the Maharashtra government to stop cutting more trees in Mumbai's Aarey Colony till October 21, and file a report on the status of saplings it has planted in the area. It has also ordered the release of those arrested during the protests against the felling of trees by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation for building a car shed. While the SC order is a welcome, the damage has already been done, with the state government saying it has already cut the trees it needed to cut to clear the area.

The 1,300-hectare forest land in the city's northern suburb, Goregaon, is considered the lung of the city. It is home to a variety of flora and fauna; is the catchment for the city's two rivers; and helps tackle pollution, floods, and brings



down temperatures. Almost 35 years ago, one of India's greatest ornithologists, Salim Ali, wrote to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi that Sanjay Gandhi National Park, including the Aarey Colony, must not be touched because they are the city's best ecosystems. What once used to be over 3,000 acres of forest land, however, has already been reduced to around 1,300 acres.

Even though the trees have been cut, the protest to save the Colony is an important

marker in India's environmental history. First, the activism shows that urban India is becoming interested in environmental issues. Second, while people are becoming aware, the government seems negligent of the importance of ecological resilience. It neither paid heed to a recommendation that the car depot could be relocated in north-central Mumbai, nor took into account suggestions for seven alternative sites. Many argue that India

needs development, and giving excessive importance to the environment will stall that process. While this is true, there has to be a balance between the two, and proper evaluation must be based on data. The good news is that ecosystem services can now be measured. It is time for the state to listen to experts, who have warned that Mumbai will face flooding, loss of open space and wildlife if the depot is built in the forest.



## New cases of HIV rise in Eastern Europe, decline in the West

Almost 160,000 people were diagnosed in Europe with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS, according to data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional office for Europe.

More than 130,000 people were newly diagnosed with HIV last year in Eastern Europe, the highest rate ever for the region, while the number of new cases in Western Europe declined, global public health experts said on Wednesday. European Union and European Economic Area countries saw a reduction in 2017 rates, mainly driven by a 20% drop since 2015 among men who have sex with men. That left Europe's overall increasing trend less steep than previously.

All told, almost 160,000 people were diagnosed in Europe with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS, according to data from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization's (WHO) regional office for Europe. "It's hard to talk about good news in the face of another year of unacceptably high numbers of people infected with HIV," said Zsuzsanna Jakab, director of the WHO regional office. Calling on governments and health officials to recognise the seriousness of the situation, she urged them: "Scale up your response now." The United Nations AIDS agency UNAIDS warned in July that complacency was starting to stall the fight against the global epidemic, with the pace of progress not matching what is needed. Some 37 million people worldwide are infected with HIV.

# Stay Healthy And Super Fit With Dried Fruits And These Healthy Bars

Dried fruits contain little to no fat. They also contain significant calories per serving, making them a natural source of energy for athletes. They are also a good supplement for people seeking to gain weight in a healthy way.



As healthy living has become a catchword these days, people have taken to eating dried fruits and health bars. Experts say these can give natural nutrients. V.V. Mani, Director, Operations, Unibic, and Suhasni Sampath, Co-Founder, Yoga Bars, explain how dry fruits and nuts used in health snack bars help the cause of healthy living:

Dried fruits generally contain more fiber than the same-sized serving of their fresh counterparts. Fiber helps in keeping your digestive system running smoothly.

The various dry fruits are packed naturally with a mix of nutritional elements like potassium, calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron, carotenoids, antioxidants, vitamins, dietary fiber, flavonoids, selenium and more apart from the good quality fat and protein that these provide. Dried fruits generally contain more fiber than the same-sized serving of their

fresh counterparts.

These help in various ways like increase of good cholesterol, reduction in bad cholesterol, maintaining blood pressure, blood sugar control, thyroid control, improving heart function, bowel

movement, skin health, hair control, cancer fighting properties, improving bone health, improved vision, easing digestion and fighting anaemia to name a few. Many of the dry fruits are low in glycemic index, and so, they help slow release of energy and control blood sugar.

Because most of the water is extracted from fruits, their nutrients are condensed into a small package. Dried fruits like apricots, raisins, prunes and figs contain high amounts of beta carotene, vitamin E, niacin, iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium. Dried fruits contain little to no fat. They also contain significant calories per serving, making them a natural source of energy for athletes. They are also a good supplement for people seeking to gain weight in a healthy way. Dried fruits like apricots, raisins, prunes and figs contain high amounts of beta carotene, vitamin E, niacin, iron, magnesium, potassium and calcium.



## Obese children more likely to develop asthma than kids of a healthy weight, warns study

**Parents, please take note. Your child's weight plays an important role in determining his or her asthma risk. Obese or overweight children are at an increased risk of asthma, a new study has found.**

US Researchers say it is likely to develop the lung condition than children of a healthy weight. The findings suggest that the incidence of an asthma diagnosis among children with obesity was significantly higher than in those in a normal weight range and that 23-27% of new asthma cases were directly attributable to obesity.

asthma is among the most prevalent childhood conditions and comes at a high cost to patients, families and the greater health system," said co-author Terri Finkel from Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando. "There are few preventable risk factors to reduce the incidence of asthma, but our data show that reducing the onset of childhood obesity could significantly lower the public health burden of asthma," Finkel added. For the study published in the journal Paediatrics, the research team analysed medical records of more than 500,000 children. The

researchers reviewed de-identified data of patients aged two to 17 without a history of asthma, receiving

care from six paediatric academic medical centres between 2009 and 2015. Overweight or obese patients were matched with normal weight patients of the same age, gender, race, ethnicity, insurance type and location of care. The researchers found that

obesity among children with asthma appears to increase disease severity. Being overweight was identified as a modest risk factor for asthma, and the association was diminished when the most stringent definition of asthma was used.





## Scientists who discovered the first exoplanet orbiting a sun-like star win the Nobel Prize for Physics alongside a Princeton cosmologist who studied the Big Bang

(News Agencies) The Nobel Prize in Physics has been awarded to three scientists for their work exploring the universe.

Professor Michel Mayor and Professor Didier Queloz, both working in Switzerland, were awarded for discovering the first exoplanet orbiting a sun-like star in 1995.

And Canadian cosmologist Professor James Peebles, who works at Princeton, was recognised for his work in the field of cosmology researching the origins of the Big Bang.

The three scientists were credited for their contribution to the understanding of the evolution of the universe and 'Earth's place in the cosmos'.

They will share a 9million kronor (£740,000)

cash award, a gold medal and a diploma.

Professor James Peebles will take half of the winnings while the Swiss duo Professor Michel Mayor and Professor Didier Queloz, will share the other £370,000. Speaking of the Swiss duo's work on exoplanets the Nobel Assembly said: 'The discovery by 2019 Nobel Prize laureates Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz started a revolution in astronomy and over 4,000 exoplanets have since been found in the Milky Way.

'Strange new worlds are still being discovered, with an incredible wealth of sizes, forms and orbits.'

Prof. Queloz and Prof. Mayor discovered 51 Pegasi b at the University of Geneva in 1995.

Theirs was the first

confirmation of the existence of an exoplanet, which is one which orbits a star other than our Sun.

It is now regarded as a pivotal moment in astronomy because no planet other than those in our own solar system had ever been found before.

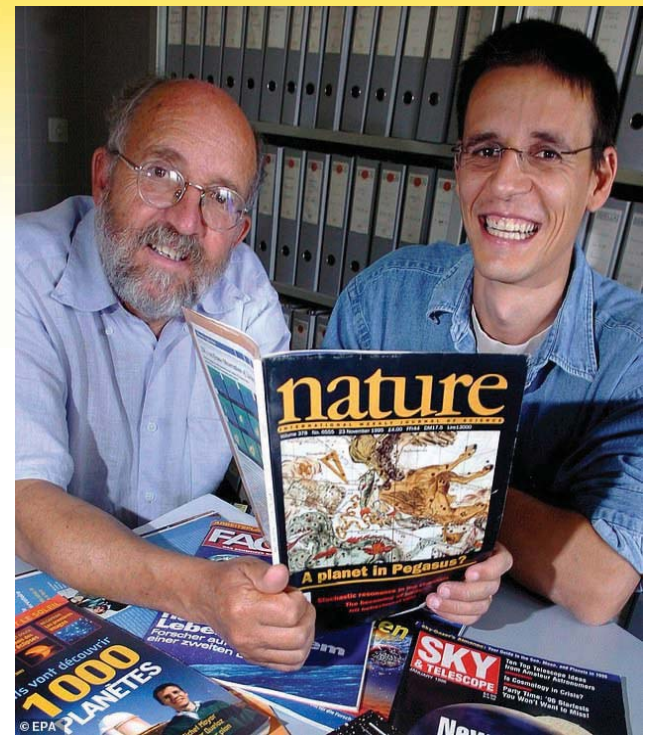
Since the discovery, Professor Queloz has successfully developed the Doppler technique to be more precise, leading to the discovery of further 1,900 or so confirmed exoplanets. One 10th of those were discovered by Queloz himself. Canadian cosmologist Professor James Peebles was also awarded for his work in cosmology.

Dr Göran K. Hansson, secretary general of the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said today: 'This year's prize goes to contributions to our

understanding of the evolution of our universe and Earth's place in the cosmos.

'James Peebles took on the cosmos, with its billions of galaxies and galaxy clusters. 'His theoretical framework, developed over two decades, is the foundation of our modern understanding of the universe's history, from the Big Bang to the present day.'

In adding a mathematical approach to understanding the cosmos, Professor Peebles is credited with various contributions to the Big Bang theory through the analysis of relic radiation left over from the light rays which once pierced the hazy universe. Speaking at the awards over the phone, Professor Peebles said: 'When I started working in



this subject – I can tell you the date, 1964 – at the invitation of my mentor, Professor Robert Henry Dicke, I was very uneasy about going into this subject because the experimental observational basis was so modest. ... I just kept going. 'Which particular step did I take? I would be very hard-pressed to say. It's a life's work.'

## New evidence suggests a huge asteroid **DID** hit **EARTH** 12,800 years ago causing an ice age, wiping out dozens of species and decimating humans



(News Agencies) A huge asteroid may have hit the Earth 12,800 years ago causing global climate change and extinction, according to new evidence found in South Africa.

Scientists analysed ancient soil at a site called Wonderkrater and found high levels of platinum - which they say supports the The Younger Dryas Impact Hypothesis that a disintegrating meteor hit Earth and caused a mini ice age.

The resulting ice age is believed by many scientists to have wiped out dozens of mammals species including the Mammoth and giant wildebeest and decimated the human population.

Scientists believe

'platinum spikes' found in ancient soil samples across the world are evidence of the meteor fragments that crashed into Earth.

Meteorites are rich in platinum and the Wonderkrater site in the Limpopo Province, north of Pretoria in South Africa adds to almost 30 other platinum spikes found worldwide, mostly in the northern hemisphere. Until now, proof that meteoroids had impacted during that period and potentially led to a mini-ice age had only been documented across the northern hemisphere.

A total of 28 areas with high levels of platinum had been found.

The findings from the researchers at the

University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa partially support the theory that a meteorite crashed into earth with global consequences – along with another meteorite site discovered in Chile.

An episode of rapid cooling named the The Younger Dryas is a well documented period believed to have contributed to the extinction of many species of large animals around 12,800 years ago.

Theories previously pointed to this post-ice age cooling as a result of changes in oceanic circulation systems.

Another theory was presented by American scientists in 2007 – that the cooling was triggered by the dust fallout of an asteroid impact. Dust circulating in the atmosphere after an impact could have reduced the amount of sunlight reaching the earth, affecting plant growth and temperatures

on earth.

Now Francis Thackeray of the Evolutionary Studies Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa believes a platinum spike found in South Africa proves the extinction of many large animals globally could have been caused by one or multiple meteoroid impacts.

Dr Thackeray who was working with researcher Philip Pieterse from the University of Johannesburg and Professor Louis Scott of the University of the

Free State, said: 'Our finding at least partially supports the highly controversial Younger Dryas Impact Hypothesis (YDIH).

'We seriously need to explore the view that an asteroid impact somewhere on earth may have caused climate change on a global scale.

'And [it may have] contributed to some extent to the process of extinctions of large animals at the end of the Pleistocene, after the last

ice age.' Many mammals became extinct in North America, South America and Europe at the time of the Younger Dryas.

In South Africa a few extraordinary large animal species became extinct around that period including the giant African buffalo, a large zebra, and a very big wildebeest each weighing around 1,100lbs (500kg) more than its modern counterpart. Human populations may also have been indirectly affected at the time in question.







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# Nusrat Jahan says 'I am God's special child' after drawing criticism for Durga Puja celebrations



Trinamool Congress (TMC) lawmaker Nusrat Jahan, who played 'Sindoor Khela' at a pandal on Friday, has said that she respects people of all religions. During the celebration, Bengali Hindu women apply sindoor on the forehead and feet of the goddess and offer sweets to her, which is followed by applying sindoor on each other's

face. Speaking to media persons on Friday, Jahan said: "I have already sent a message to the people that nothing matters more than humanity and love. I am god's special child and respect humanity and love more than anything. I respect all religions." Irked after Jahan, who is married to a non-Muslim businessman, performed the Durga puja a few

days ago, an Islamic cleric called her "anti-Islamic." The cleric said that she brought a bad name to the religion and urged her to change the name.

When asked about the remarks of the cleric, the lawmaker said: "I am engrossed in so much happiness and festivities today that I do not want to talk about the negative things."

## Amitabh Bachchan was a boxer in school, old letter reveals

Actor Amitabh Bachchan is known for his frequent tweets and posts on sports and sportspersons but few know that he himself was an ardent sportsperson and a boxer during his school days. Records of his alma mater, Boy's High School and College (BHS) of Prayagraj and a letter written by the actor to his school in 2011 is a testament to this fact.

As Amitabh celebrated his 77th birthday on Friday, people of his hometown extended their warm wishes to him in their own way. Academic supervisor of his former school CB Luke shared how Bachchan was an active athlete and

also boxed as a student during his seven years in the school, between 1949 and 1955. As a student from class one to class seven, he even acted in plays, a fact that he himself conceded in a letter written to the school on November 3, 2011—the year BHS celebrated its 150th anniversary

In the letter, the Bollywood star wrote about his athletic achievements on the playing field, the boxing ring, and also about his escapades on the stage. "During my years in BHS, the academic initiation that I imbibed became forerunners of whatever else I was to pursue in time to come," he wrote, adding that he

was member of the Blue House.

Remembering his principal "Mr Dutt", Amitabh recalled how under his disciplined guidance and care, there were many moral and social initiatives that were imparted to him as a student. "Those were the days my friend, the happiest and the most colourful. They shall never return, but living in the memory of those times with great nostalgia, shall ever be my greatest motivation," the actor, the 2019 winner of Dadasaheb Phalke Award for his 'outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema', had written.



## Ram Charan's wife just gifted 'Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy' actor Tamannaah Bhatia 5th biggest diamond worth Rs 2 crore!

Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy is working well at the Box Office, and the producers of the film appear to be happy with the team for the same. While Ram Charan has gone on to work with his father Chiranjeevi yet again for the latter's 125th film, his wife had a surprise for Tamannaah Bhatia.

Ram's wife Upasana Konidela took to Twitter and shared a photo of Tamannaah flaunting a huge diamond ring. Alongside she wrote, "A gift for the super @tamannaahspeaks from Mrs Producer Missing u already. Catch up soon. #SyeraaNarashimaReddy." Tamannaah too replied on the post stating, "This bottle opener shall have many memories attached to it. Felt awesome to catch up after so long, waiting to see you soon, miss u more." Interestingly the ring on Tamannaah's finger happens to be the fifth largest black diamond yet. In fact the cost of this diamond too is Rs. 2 crore. In the movie Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy, Tamannaah plays love interest to Chiranjeevi. Her performance was widely appreciated among viewers. Apart from Tamannaah and Chiranjeevi, the movie also starred Amitabh Bachchan, Kiccha Sudeep, Jagapathi Babu, Ravi Kishen, Niharika, Nayanthara, Anushka Shetty and Vijay Sethupathi in pivotal roles.





## War movie review

# Hrithik Roshan-Tiger Shroff drama is high on action, low on story

**War movie review: With swagger, style and sass in abundance, where is the substance in Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff's new**



War is an espionage thriller that serves you with just the right amount of action, humour and tops it with ridiculously good-looking people. However, don't expect too much from story because with two bonafide action stars fighting it out on the big screen, everything else is secondary. War opens with Kabir (Hrithik Roshan), a rogue agent, killing his own. Through a flashback sequence, it is established

how he met Khalid (Tiger Shroff) who went on to join his unit in an intelligence agency. Story takes an interesting turn when Khalid, who has always worshipped Kabir as his mentor, is assigned the task of finding and arresting him. Khalid is also supposed to find out why Kabir went bad and another flashback sequence post intermission reveals his reasons.

Throughout War, Hrithik and Tiger's onscreen camaraderie is on point. It is the USP of the film — just as makers intended. Each frame where the two appear together receives whistles and cheers from fans. Whether they're fighting or dancing, or just flaunting their six-pack abs and chiselled bodies — it's nothing short of a visual treat. The best aspect of

War is that no actor is aiming for one-upmanship, instead you see them feeding off each other's energy. There's a pleasant comic vibe, too, between Hrithik and Tiger and director Siddharth Anand uses it cleverly without it sounding awkward.

Hrithik — Bollywood's resident Greek god, unapologetically flaunts his age and swagger. You'd love those wrinkles. Tiger — the hot favourite among youth — delivers an honest performance even though he seems absolutely star-struck by his reel and real life mentor. But who's complaining? Unfortunately, War doesn't give any scope to its female lead to perform. Vaani Kapoor only appears in the film in its second half, and before you can even understand what her role in

the plot is, she disappears. The 20-minute forced cameo, with a song thrown in, doesn't impress one bit. Vaani's role seems to be limited to adding glamour to the film. It's sad that even in today's day and age, that's what many filmmakers cast female actors in their film for. And you'll feel the same for supporting actors too. Fine performers such as Ashutosh Rana and Soni Razdan are wasted in War, even though they somewhat justify their screen time with whatever little comes their way. Anupriya Goenka, however, does make her presence felt. The one element that you get in abundance in War is beautifully-choreographed action. The first half has these sequences in plenty and it only gets better in the second half. Shot at exotic

international locales like Morocco and Portugal, as well as Delhi and Kerala, the film excels in the action department. War gives a callback to action extravaganzas such as Mission Impossible and Fast & Furious, and Hrithik's earlier outings Dhoom 2 and Bang Bang.

Amid all this, you wonder what happened to the story if at all there was any. Just like we had Saaho a month back which was all things action but no story, War too makes you question why filmmakers don't put enough thought into having a substantial plot. War suffers from a relatively weak screenplay that does not go unnoticed as the two good-looking actors overshadow everything else.

## Joker movie review

# Joaquin Phoenix delivers Oscar-worthy performance in daring and distressing masterpiece

**Joaquin Phoenix and Todd Phillips' film might not incite violence, but it is sure to inspire heated debate. It's the best comic book movie since Logan.**



Joker is a comic book influences on director Todd Phillips' Joker. I couldn't think of a more thematically relevant quote to sum up this incendiary new film, which is at once a fable about moral decay, and a cautionary tale about societal division. Besides a couple of tacked-on moments (including a cute speech by the Trumpian Thomas Wayne about men who hide behind masks), Joker has very little to offer fans of comic book movies. It is, instead, inspired (heavily) by the bleak philosophy of Martin Scorsese's Taxi

Driver and The King of Comedy; an unrelentingly distressing drama about loneliness and unchecked mental illness.

From its gloriously gripping opening scene to its jaw-dropping final moments, it is nearly impossible to take your eyes off Joaquin Phoenix's incredible performance as Arthur Fleck, as much as you might want to. But it is this very repulsion that Phillips, I believe, is attempting to tap into.

There were several moments in the film, including Arthur's introductory scene, when I wanted to avert my eyes, as many of us do when confronted with things that make us uncomfortable. Our first instinct, understandably, is to get as far away from the discomfort as possible. But no matter how far we run, the source of our problems will remain, festering in its

own misery; drowning in its own despair.

Phillips looks at Arthur, a mentally ill loner, not with judgement, but with a mixture of pity and empathy. Despite his troubles, Arthur — crucially and controversially — isn't a bad person. He is eternally ridiculed, bullied, and beaten up; living at the mercy of a system that doesn't give two hoots about him or his ailing mother.

Now this may well be problematic for some audiences. God knows I've struggled with what to feel about it myself. A sympathetic portrayal of a someone who is clearly modelled after one of those mass murderers that we hear about on the news, especially in 2019, a year in which there have been a reported 334 mass shootings in America, seems highly irresponsible.

Joker isn't an easy film to watch; nor is it particularly easy to understand. It isn't meant to be. For instance, I don't for one second believe that Phillips could be tactless enough to glorify a psychopath in the manner that his film suggests. Arthur is most certainly humanised, but he is never idolised. He is a product of the same civilised society that has dedicated itself to pushing him to the fringes of existence and ignoring his frequent cries for help.

After an unrelentingly grim couple of acts, Joker transforms into a broad (but pitch-black) satire towards the end. This switch in tone, in my opinion, is what pulls the film off the ledge that it was fully prepared to leap from. And Arthur is, lest we forget, a highly unreliable narrator. Coupled with the knowledge that he is prone to imagining things — like

Travis Bickle and Rupert Pupkin, he has a tendency to bathe himself in delusions of self-grandeur — I fear that there is a very real chance for the film to be misinterpreted by precisely the sort of people who shouldn't be seeing it as a validation of their dangerous feelings.

The risks, tragically, are quantifiable. A Taxi Driver fan tried to assassinate Ronald Reagan. Mark David Chapman had a copy of The Catcher in the Rye in his pocket when he shot John Lennon. Charles Manson heard secret messages in the music of the Beatles. And only Shahid Kapoor knows how many sexist Tik-Tokers Kabir Singh has spawned.

That being said, I find it ridiculous that the same people who reject the notion of movies being responsible for inciting real-life violence are the ones panicking about Joker inspiring mass shooters.





## Teenager becomes first vaping fatality in New York

ALBANY — A 17-year-old Bronx resident has become the first New Yorker to die from a vaping-related illness, Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Tuesday. Cuomo called vaping a "public health crisis" and said the state Department of Health has begun investigating the boy's case. "Parents have to know, young people have to know, you are playing with your life, when you play with this stuff," he told reporters at an unrelated event at his Manhattan offices.

"These companies know exactly what they're

doing because they market to young people," Cuomo said. At least 110 illnesses have been confirmed in New York as of Monday, and nearly 1,100 people have been sickened across the U.S. with vaping-related respiratory injuries, according to the CDC and FDA. At least 18 other people have died. More than 80 percent of those illnesses have involved people under the age of 35, and public health officials are discouraging the use of all vaping-related products — with an emphasis on those

containing THC — as they struggle to suss out the root problem. The vaping industry contends its reputation and business are being maligned for the problems caused by counterfeit and other illicit products, and the crackdowns imposed by New York and others are unfairly targeting them. A Siena College poll released Monday found more than three-quarters of New Yorkers surveyed considered e-cigarette usage to be either a somewhat or very serious public health problem. Sixty-

eight percent of respondents supported the Cuomo administration's emergency directive prohibiting the sale of flavored e-cigarette products — which a state appellate court put on hold late last week — and more than half of those polled backed banning the sale of all e-cigarettes and vaping devices. The boy was hospitalized at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, Cuomo said. Mayor Bill de Blasio, speaking at a separate event at roughly the same time, said he had not heard about the teen's death.

## 2 arrested for raping deaf and mute woman in Mumbai

The Mumbai Police has arrested two men for raping a 25-year-old differently abled woman.



A 20-year-old man and his friend have been arrested for allegedly raping a deaf and mute woman in Mumbai, police said on Tuesday. According to a police official, the accused, who were arrested on Monday, have been identified as Lakhan Kaale and his friend Sandip Kurhade (22), both residents of adjoining Thane. The victim (25) worked as a maid in a residential society in upscale suburb of Bandra (East), he said. On Sunday afternoon, she suddenly disappeared after she went out of the housing society, the official said. When she did not return, her employer informed her parents who reside in Virar, a distant suburb of Mumbai, and they lodged a missing person complaint with the Kherwadi police station, he said.

(Contd on page 23)

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## 'Joker' -- a political parable for our times

"Joker," the Todd Phillips movie that reimagines the origins of Batman's killer-clown nemesis, opened this weekend to record-setting box office -- fueled by deft marketing and some of the most polarizing critical reaction of any mass-market film in decades. Further fueling the hype around

the movie: A shocking Golden Lion win at the Venice International Film Festival and a joint bulletin from the FBI and Department of Homeland Security warning about online threats of mass shootings at "Joker" screenings. Set in a very thinly disguised New York City, Phillips's version of the

### Social Media Sparked #MeToo. Now Facebook Could End It.

A defamation case pitting a powerful artist against an Instagram account could strip away a prized protection for survivors of assault — anonymity.

Do you like Steven Spielberg and scary TV shows? Well, he's currently working on one, but there's a catch: it will only be available on mobile phones, at night. Are you a fan of Jane Austen adaptations? That's great! There's a gay "Pride and Prejudice" inspired rom-com coming soon. How about home renovation shows? Everyone likes those, right? Sure, but this one is a cross between HGTV and CSI, in that it only includes houses where

infamous murders or crimes occurred.

Oh, and did we mention that these series will be diced up into short episodes — all just 10 minutes or less? They're all part of the lineup for Quibi, a new streaming service to be launched in 2020 by two veteran CEOs — Meg Whitman of Silicon Valley (she previously headed eBay and Hewlett-Packard) and Jeffrey Katzenberg of Hollywood (he led DreamWorks Animation). (Contd on page 23)



Joker story has as its protagonist Arthur Fleck, a middle-aged, working-class man who lives with his invalid mother. Fleck works as a clown for hire while fantasizing about romancing the lovely single mother who lives down the hall. He's brutalized by young thugs. He's beaten by suit-clad Wall Streeters. And his answer to this dual pincer of oppression by people of color and one-percenters is a murderous rampage of revenge, which catches fire among fellow angry citizens of Gotham and sends them looting through the streets.

While many reviewers have focused on Fleck as an "incel"

hero -- his status as a sexless loner who turns to violence -- the true nature of the movie's appeal is actually broader: It's an insidious validation of the white-male resentment that helped bring President Donald Trump to power. "Joker," at its core, is the story of the "forgotten man," the metaphoric displaced and disenfranchised white man whose goodwill has been abused and whose status has been reduced. A man who has been crushed underfoot by the elite, dragged down by equality-demanding feminists and climbed over by upstart nonwhite and immigrant masses. (Contd on page 23)